Christ & the Caesars

The Origin of Christianity

Bruno Bauer

BERSERKER
BOOKS

Christ and the Caesars.

The Origin of Christianity from Greco-Roman Civilization

by

Bruno Bauer.

Berlin, 1877.

Printed and published by Eugen Grosser.

Contents

3. Seneca's teachers

4. Views on Seneca's Christianity

5. Seneca' view on politics

6. Seneca's new religion

7. Seneca's ideal

8. Seneca in the New Testament

9. Seneca's compromises

II. Seneca as a teacher and minister of Nero.

1. The dissolution of Roman particularism

2. Nero, nothing but a human.

3. The humanistic school of rhetoric

4. Seneca's rhetorical education

5. Seneca at the court of Claudius

6. The friend of humanity on the throne

7. The death of Agrippina

III The downfall of Nero and Seneca.

1. The cosmopolitan on the throne

2. Seneca's disgrace

3. Octavia

IV. The House of Flavian and Judaism.

V. Trajan and the first emergence of Christianity.

4. Pliny and the Christians

VI. Hadrian and Christian Gnosis.

1. The potentialized Nero

2. Hadrian's letter on religious mixtures in Alexandria

3. Jewish uprisings and the age of the messianic image

4. The path to the Gospel

5. Christian Gnosis

VII. The time of Marcus Aurelius.

1. Marcus Aurelius's self-reflections

2. Christianity as a heightening of Hellenism

3. The morality of Roman society

4. The fate of Marcus Aurelius.

VIII. The completion of the New Testament literature.

1. A great history and a late epic

2. The Beatitudes and the elevations of the law in the source texts of Luke and Matthew.

3. Variations on the battle cries of the original gospel

4. The history of the childhood of Jesus

1

Preface

On the previous interpretations of our subject.

Christ and the Roman Caesars, the subject of this work, are not just contemporaries who were brought together by chance of history or a predetermined fate and providence that watched over the fate of humanity in the first centuries of our era, either as friendly parallels or as a pair of enemies. As soon as the reader enters my picture gallery, he or she will feel, and this feeling will become certainty as he or she progresses, that the Christian Savior and the bearers of Roman imperial power are products of the same force that sought to consolidate the sanctions and immaterial goods of antiquity into a personal, all-powerful form, and that in their hostile sibling relationship, one and the same impulse that inspired the Orient, Greece, and Rome to a common purpose manifested itself.

1/2

I have already pointed out the parallel between Suetonius' imperial biographies and evangelical historiography, the Roman emperor figures and the Christian Savior image, when I first entered this issue (see my "Critique of the Evangelical History," Leipzig, 1841, 2,46. 47). I recalled that the world ruler, who held all rights in himself on his throne in Rome and judged the measure of everything, life and death, grace and rejection on his lips, already announced himself here as the world ruler and judge, who with a breath of his mouth overcomes the resistance of nature and strikes down his enemies, and will one day separate the elect of grace and the rejected of wrath from each other, even though he has a hostile brother but still a relative.

2

As I now proceed to describe the origin of both figures, their development

(for even the Lord of the Gospels undergoes a series of metamorphoses in the sequence of these writings), and the final victory of the Christian Judge over the Caesar, I have some preliminary remarks to make about my position with regard to the previous treatments of the same subject.

The mystery of the first two centuries of our era has been sought to be grasped in fragments until now. Instead of interpreting that period of world history in which antiquity gained its Christian form as a single whole, people have resorted to the division of labor and performed a separation of the body of these centuries, which a wise king of the Jews threatened to bring about to settle the dispute between two mothers over their child.

2/3

Thus, there existed on our field a secular and a spiritual economy that, by virtue of a self-explanatory agreement according to general belief, delimited their territories and made themselves comfortable side by side. The secular lord is the historian; he is at home in the histories of the activities and dealings of the emperors, in the civil and domestic life of the peoples, and distills from the products of these areas a kind of profane world spirit. On the other hand, the workers of the spiritual section are fortunate enough to see the genius of their field face to face when they enter their field of history, and they only need to follow him on his conquest and describe how he overcomes the resistance of the world and the domestic disputes of his believers, and finally takes possession of the Roman Empire.

3

At this separation of both workshops, it is irrelevant whether the spiritual master craftsman places his genius a couple of steps higher or lower on the ladder to heaven that connects him with the earth and the upper spiritual realm. Nothing changes in the contrast between the worldly historian and the spiritual chronicler. Even if the latter turns his guide into a sort of Socrates or, like Strauss, into the executor of a Messiah program drafted long before, the wall separating the sacred and profane worlds does not waver. Renan's romantic embellishment of Strauss's prose stands so alien to the Roman imperial world as the punitive visions of the New Testament Apocalypse to the cesspool of sin of the world city on the seven hills, and all secularization of sacred history only serves to petrify the illusion of the young Christian community about its opposition to imperial Rome into a prosaic historical proposition.

The division of labor is considered a gain of modern times, but the benefits it promises can only be achieved if the separate workshops serve a common

plan. However, the separate worker sections engaged in researching the first two Roman-Christian centuries lack such a guiding overview. Both groups finally reach out to each other and lend each other their products, but since they originated without regard for each other, they can only be mechanically integrated into the adjacent work, and while the workers confess their own helplessness in their mutual borrowings, their achievements in the new environment that seeks to complement and illustrate them spread no light around them.

4

The spiritual section, which has fallen into a harmful confusion due to its aversion to what they consider to be excessive criticism, and the disagreement within its ranks over the countless hypotheses of their attempts at mediation, we do not hold responsible for the uselessness of the loans that their secular counterparts receive from them. The antithesis of a corrupt world and a saving Deus ex Machina is one of the traditions of their circle.

The matter is more serious with the secular researcher. It is his task to seek out the seeds of the future in his world, but in this case, he moves in the fruitful time of imperialism, when the barriers of the caste system fall, the fetters of partisan compulsion crumble, individualism spreads its wings and the struggle of conscience against dogmas begins - when the treasure of immaterial goods is lifted from shattered political orders. However, these shining companions of imperialism do not even welcome historians as the dawn of the time that is beginning, and let the sun, which brings life back to the world, even in their view corrupted, break through the clouds like a surprising coincidence, without being able to explain how it was possible that it still found seeds to revive.

For example, Hermann Schiller, while describing the corruption of Roman civilization under the reign of Nero in his "History of the Roman Empire under Nero" (Berlin, 1872), had the books of the German theological left on early Christianity on his bookshelf, and took them down when Tacitus gave him the cue for the appearance of an exotic element. Thus, in the "deeply immoral time, in the corrupt imperial city where asceticism or bottomless depravity and their product, hypocrisy, prevailed," the "young Christianity" appears as a savior.

4/5

Earlier masters of landscape painting, in order to devote themselves entirely to the depiction of nature, had other masters insert human figures into their

paintings. Similarly, modern historians, when creating their pictures of the Roman imperial era and the person who is supposed to spread life and prosperity among the ruins of antiquity, have their theological neighbors draw them.

5

But the historian of that time already had to describe entire groups of people in whose minds the future was already dawning. He only needed to avoid reducing Seneca, in the spirit of Mommsen, to a superficial declaimer and to recognize in the heartening struggle of the schools of rhetoric for conscience against dogma, for love against national pride and social hierarchy, something more than "shallow and frivolous play and as mockery of human reason and truth" and he could have emancipated himself from the theological comforters on his bookshelf.

If Schiller, whom we mention here as a representative of philological historiography, had perceived the connection between those alleged declaimers and their illustrious contemporaries with the Christian innovators and still not liked them, he could have at least said so, but it had to be done in a larger context and with a different justification. Moreover, when he (Nero, p. 562-563) also "clearly" recognizes the "striking" character of the language that emerged from the "play" of the schools of rhetoric "in the works of the next decades," he overlooked that the same language, apart from the Pauline letters, persisted for centuries, even millennia, from Tertullian and Augustine to Bossuet and Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacher. And again, even if he did not like this language in such extraordinary vitality and enduring use, he could have said so, albeit only in a well-founded explanation.

5/6

In his "History of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire," Gibbon stands high above the modern German philological historians due to the force with which he summarized the historical-theological scholarship of France and Holland, England, and Germany for his image of the development of the Christian Church. The elements of his image are not yet united into a whole. At first, he bows to the answer to the question of the ultimate reason for the finite triumph of the Church, that it is due to the convincing evidence of the new doctrine and the commanding providence of its great author, and calls the answer obvious and satisfying. Despite all the appropriate submission to this information, he then remembers that the wisdom of providence often descends to the passions of the human heart and the general conditions of human life as a means of carrying out its plans, and he believes it is permissible to seek the secondary causes of the growth of the Church, rather than the ultimate ones. Finally, the disputes of the theologians of England

and Holland showed him the way that the so-called doctrine of the Trinity of the Platonic Academy found its way from the gardens of the Athenian sage through Asia and Egypt, through the mediation of Philo, into the Fourth Gospel and the fantastic dreams of the Gnostics of Alexandria. But his time could not give him more than these materials; in particular, the century whose Enlightenment he used for his historical picture still lacked the daring to seek the source of evangelical morality and soulfulness in the philosophical schools of Greece and their Roman disciples, thus discovering the true bond that connected antiquity with its Christian birth.

6/7

In this matter, the younger compatriot of Gibbon, Charles Merivale, stands alongside the modern historians at the lowest level, in his "History of the Romans under the Empire," which covers the period from Julius Caesar to Marcus Aurelius (London, 1862). The author of this beautiful monument of biographical art strictly confines himself within the bounds of the Anglican Church, calls the human appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ "the mysterious event in which the germ of Roman dissolution and the boundary line between ancient and modern civilization can be recognized," and lives with the conviction that the official protocol of the examination and condemnation of our Lord was sent by the procurator to the emperor and deposited in the archives of Rome.

7

And yet, Merivale's work contains beautiful critical achievements. He himself expresses himself excellently (at the beginning of Chapter 55) on how traces of another and more authentic script could be discovered beneath the visible writings that have been left to us about Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius, albeit now almost obliterated traces. He speaks of a "distorting and falsifying veneer with which the character of Tiberius is overlaid," and in the images of Caligula and Claudius, he sees "serious distortions of truth that must raise doubts about the authenticity of the features in which they are usually represented."

The careful pen of Gibbon's successor has also succeeded in correcting many of the features of those emperors that have been worked up into gruesome portraits in the writings of Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius. However, if he had investigated further the motives and sources of those compilers, including Tacitus, among whom he belonged despite his iron pragmatism, the anecdotal collections, hostile memoirs, popular jokes, and court legends they used, he would have further cleansed the palimpsest in which the history of those three emperors is presented to us. He would likely have allowed the benefits of his criticism to extend to the portraits of Nero and Domitian and explained some of the exaggerations of the legend arising

from the hatred of the noble capital city inhabitants against the divinity of these two emperors.

7/8

The fantastic and exaggerated character that distinguishes the historical compilations of the beginning of the second century and secured their entrance into the Roman literary public should have reminded modern historians to consider the attitude of the church literature of the same century. In that lively debate that was carried out by distinguished scholars of France, Holland, and Germany about the testimony of Josephus on Christ around the mid-seventeenth century, David Blondel recalled the audacity with which the authors of sacred literature went to work in the second century and the credulity with which Christian communities accepted these works of deception as authentic. He refers to the mass-produced gospels, acts of apostles, apocalypses, and prophecies, to the production of Sibylline books, and to the belief in the conversion of Seneca, as well as the relationship between the Stoic philosopher and the apostle of the Gentiles. Blondel cites the contemporary acknowledgment of the apocryphal nature of that literature to support his argument that this testimony on Christians was inserted into Josephus's historical work. However, since then, the scope of that literature has significantly increased for historical criticism, so that in the end, none of the names to which the spiritual literature of the first and second centuries is attributed has remained free from doubt, and the historian will have to use the Christian writings of these two centuries with the same caution he applies to the biographical descriptions of Tacitus or Suetonius.

8/9

Let us now enter into the two centuries that are most closely related to us in all the marks of history, and yet are least known because of the mystery that shrouds the rise of Christianity. Here the world monarchy rises in a classical and almost artistic form, and the birth pangs of which our present is suffering and will suffer for a long time. Here personality takes possession of the world, shines in divine glory on the throne, and remains unshaken in the chamber of the poor, in the wandering assembly of the streets, and on the chair of the wise. At the beginning of this period, still in the throes of civil wars, the author of our schoolboy's bench, Cornelius Nepos, placed personality at the forefront of history, traced history back to biography, and replaced ancient fate with the bold decisions and risks of individuals.

9

The literature of memoirs had begun. The great men who had risen through

the sword and statecraft wanted to secure the image of their lives in writing, against the hatred of their enemies and for posterity. Sulla wrote his biography, Nepos fulfilled Cicero's heartfelt wish and wrote his life. Caesar acquired the palm among his literary contemporaries through his Commentaries and his polemical writings; Augustus and Tiberius followed his example in writing, and after the fall of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, Vespasian published his diary and Marcus Aurelius, the last of this line, gained the time in the field to reveal his innermost and best self.

Suetonius and Tacitus each recognized in their own way the fact that world history had merged into biography. The former, who with greater justice than his older contemporary could say that he wrote "without anger or bias," assembled the image of his Caesars from the notes he had taken from their diaries or the compilations of their opponents, and did not disdain the anecdotes that the authors of slanderous writings had drawn from conversations in the Forum and high society. Tacitus's gaze is obsessively fixed on the person of the emperors; in his hand, Cato's dagger is transformed into a stylus, with which he records the secrets of the imperial palace, the intrigues of their women and freedmen, and the villainy of a system that, through cunning and violence, has thrust itself in place of the old warrior and governing aristocracy.

9/10

Just as in the biography of the heavenly world lord and judge, which was completed in the mid-second century as a declaration of war against the old forms of life, the opponents of the Savior, the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and nameless groups of people, remain unexplained figures, neither the collector's greed of Suetonius nor the allegedly philosophical pragmatism of Tacitus have been able to give us a picture of the social and popular classes of their time and their relationship to imperial power. And just as in the Gospels, the creative elements of Greek culture that surrounded Jerusalem and even penetrated the holy city in a fertilizing way, remain hidden in an impenetrable fog, so too do those Roman biographies of the Caesars lack a view of the luminous groups of spirits who moved at the feet of the imperial throne and used the freedom of world travel, which the victors of the civil wars had established, to spread the intellectual goods they discovered between the farthest west and east and to set up their schools as they pleased.

10

Nevertheless, the materials for this unknown history are readily available and we begin our presentation with the pioneer Lucius Annaeus Seneca.*)

*) We note that the present sheets/pages are a new revision of the beginnings which appeared in the 9 volumes of the "Quarterly Journal for Political Economy, Politics and Cultural History" edited by Dr. Julius Faucher, from Michaelis 1874 to the same year 1876.

I.

Seneca's Religious Foundation.

Before we begin, we will present the reader with the dismissive judgments passed by a newer school of history on Stoicism, the starting point of Seneca, for examination.

1. Recent judgments on Stoicism.

One of the signs of the impending imperialism that dominates our present time is a fraction of historiography that devotes itself to glorifying the founder of classical imperialism with a kind of emotional fervor. The distance that Caesar's contemporaries kept from him and his work serves as the standard by which the extent and value of their judgmental power is measured for this historiography. Devotion or resistance determines the judgment of supporters or opponents. The historian becomes an advocate for an institution and argues the case of their ideal with the irritability of an official defender.

Thus, in Mommsen's "Roman History," which began the literature of this kind when the newer imperialism received a boost from the year 1848, Cato was dismissed with the epithet of a "stubborn and half-mad" man. Since the dagger, with which Cato sought to save himself from Caesarism and whose point threatened the heads of the dictator's successors, was consecrated by the wisdom of the Stoics, they too get their share of criticism, and they appear in the aforementioned work as "the grandiloquent and tedious Roman Pharisees." Their moral preaching is reduced to "terminological babble," and their principles of life are reduced to "hollow concepts."

In the mildest terms, we might call this language the language of first enthusiasm, with which the discoverer of a new aspect of a person or institution seeks to protect it from desecration. However, German literature has already produced a brilliant explanation of the laws that determined the transition of the Roman Republic to autocracy. We recall the stimulating discussions that Friedrich Buchholz published in his "Philosophical Investigations on the Romans" (Journal for Germany, volumes 5 and 6, Berlin 1816), particularly in the sections on civil wars and on Augustus and Tiberius, under the influence of Napoleon's dictatorship. Buchholz provided a very fine

example of his understanding of Roman Caesarism in his explanation of the tragic suicide of Coccejus Nerva, the chancellor and friend of Tiberius (New Monthly Magazine for Germany, volume 5, Berlin 1821).

After such sober and fundamental preliminary work, the excitement with which Mommsen treats the opponents of the Roman dictatorship, which was only maintained through the Praetorian weapons for centuries, has no greater value than the literary value. It is comparable to the speeches delivered by French opponents of imperialism to satisfy their hatred of the Napoleonic regime, addressed to the memory of Augustus and his friends.

Therefore, Mr. Schiller did his writing on Nero a disservice by following entirely in Mommsen's footsteps in his portrayal of such important figures of the Neronian era as the Stoics. This outstanding philologist does acknowledge Stoicism, insofar as it was cosmopolitan in nature, as a preparation for the ways of Christianity, but he cannot let this concession stand purely, as he also presents the teacher of the nations as a strange character who stood opposed to his time and cut himself off from his surroundings with his exaggerated imaginations. In his envious mood, he does not realize that his criticism also affects Christianity itself, which already pulsated in its cosmopolitan predecessor, and that it remains incomprehensible how this impractical eccentric could have prepared the ways of the future.

13

"For example," says Mr. Schiller in his writing on Nero, "the two main features of Stoic ethics are ideal selflessness, which is expressed in the statement, 'only virtue is a good, everything else is meaningless,' and the rule of reason. The rigid application of both these principles had caused Stoicism to face many struggles and, most importantly, had made it impossible for it to have an impact on the masses. Life is not an ideal."

One might think that for a historian, the fact that a spiritual force had faced many struggles due to its lofty demands would not diminish its value. He is there to present and explain its efforts. Christianity, too, had to face many struggles before it gained popularity and recognition. It also presented the world with an ideal and asserted it with rigidity, and it had the same impact on the masses as Stoicism, which Mr. Schiller did not see because he was unaware that Christianity was nothing other than Stoicism transformed.

"If a moral system wants to have an impact on society," Schiller continues (p. 592-595 of his writing), "it must not only consider heroes but also ordinary people." However, Christianity, which did not work in vain, demanded heroes of holiness and renunciation, and it enforced its rigid demands because Stoicism and Cynicism had educated it as a nursery of heroism.

13/14

Christianity explicitly declared that it wanted to go beyond the realm of ordinary people. Nothing else is implied in the question (Matthew 5:46-47) of whether its faithful do something "extra" if they only love each other and are kind to each other, and whether the same is not also done by tax collectors or (as I have shown in my Berlin edition of the "Critique of the Gospels," 1851, volume 2, page 128, as proven by the original text we still have) by prostitutes. The call to the rich man to sell everything he has and give it to the poor demands heroes who rise above the level of ordinary life. Only extraordinary audacity could understand and follow the saying, "if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away."

14

Our historian speaks of the "high-flying doctrines of the Stoics and the foolish paradoxes and exaggerations" that they burdened their followers with. However, the author of one of the New Testament letters, in which we will demonstrate the incorporation of Stoicism, was not ashamed to be a fool before the world and praised the virtue of divine foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:25).

Mr. Schiller sees in Stoicism "the strongest development of cosmopolitanism that we have encountered thus far (except for Seneca), however it is also the announcement of the decline of Romanism." This "however" sounds like a sighing "unfortunately" and suggests regret, while the historian has to demonstrate his sympathy for the declining and ascending figures of power in the study of the laws that determine the change of world domination.

14/15

Charles Merivale expresses a similar sentiment when he speaks of the "harmful" baggage that the Romans acquired from their Greek teachers in the section of his work on Cicero's incorporation of Greek philosophy. "Looseness of moral principles and religious indifference," writes the author of Roman imperial history, "had their charms for the masses, while the noble

teachings of philosophy were appreciated only by the refined and educated minds in the ideas of justice and natural law." Aside from the fact that the Socratic, Cynic, and Stoic principles of justice and goodness were brought to the Greek masses through the plays of Euripides and the masters of the new Attic comedy, then to the Roman theater and the Latin audience, and finally preached by the Roman Cynics in the streets of Rome, the complaint about the indifference of the masses towards philosophy's influence on the altars of the ancient gods is of little use to the historian's task. The altars of Jupiter Capitolinus had to be abandoned if the Roman masses were to turn to the new God.

15

Schiller's work on Nero suffered greatly, according to the author, because he followed Mommsen's interpretation of the Stoic philosophy, which led to unfair treatment of important Stoic figures in the Neronian era. The author argues that it is unfair to judge a philosophy negatively simply because it has faced many challenges, as the historian's role is to present and explain these struggles. The author notes that Christianity, too, faced many challenges and presented an ideal that was just as rigid as that of the Stoics, yet it was able to spread because Stoicism and Cynicism had prepared a school of heroes for it. The author also argues that it is not appropriate for a historian to express regret or disappointment at the downfall of one empire or philosophy in favor of another, as his job is to present and explain the laws that determine the rise and fall of civilizations.

15/16

The fate of Stoicism and Christianity is closely linked to that of the Roman state and society. Both destinies are one and the same. Seneca's morality is based on his understanding of the political situation in Rome. The tone of his speeches is influenced by the emotions aroused in him by the civil wars up to the time of Augustus and the phases of the imperial period. The way he philosophizes and the resignation with which he orients himself in the political changes of the last hundred years form a single intellectual work. But before we present this work, we will take a look back at the most significant Roman precursor to Seneca, a man who also worked for the future of Christianity.

16

2. Review of Cicero.

Here we encounter Herr Mommsen again, who presents to us the man whose name will always be associated with that of Caesar and who will remain the subject of a comparison weighing the merits of both men, as a monster of mediocrity and insignificance. (By the way, with words that we will find again in Schiller's characterization of Seneca below!)

The author of the Roman History" cannot express strongly and vividly enough his contempt for the "dreadful emptiness of this writer who is as voluminous as he is unimportant" when he discusses Cicero. He finds him to be a "journalistic nature in the worst sense" in everything he has attempted as a writer, calls him a shortsighted egoist as he passes through the warring factions of his time, and even accuses him of being a superficial and heartless human being.

"The heartless Caesar dressed in purple," says Cicero in his writing "On Divination," thus making the same accusation on both sides.

As we delve into this topic, we are far from wanting to indulge in counter-accusations and bring the dictator down to the level of Mommsen's moral philosopher. We only want to seek the rights of both men in the confusion of their mutual historical works.

16/17

Cäsar also had something of a journalist's nature. He wielded the pen for his cause and let others write for him. His successors from his house wrote poetry, history, and memoirs, and knew how to attract poets and historians to glorify their person and family. Imperialism has always been literary; only Alexander, on his turbulent flight, had not yet had time to cultivate an official literature and was limited to lamenting that no Homer, like Achilles, could be found for him. The Napoleons increased the literary character of imperialism, writing Moniteur articles, brochures, and memoirs, and, when they constructed the universal machine of leaflet and newspaper production, continued Caesar's journalistic work.

17

The alleged superficiality of Cicero's writing has no reason to feel remorse in

the face of the uncertainty of Caesar's power structure. Hermann Schiller explains the failure of Caesar's, also admired by Mommsen, ingenious design of monarchy from the fact that after the dictator's death, execution was left in the hands of "men who appeared mediocre next to the genius of the first emperor." These men after the great founder would have had no sense for the "ideal trait" of Caesar's idea of combining monarchy with popular freedom, and yet completely misunderstood the "pleasant clarity and unambiguous form" that the sacrifice of the Ides of March had given his work. Indeed, Caesar's design would have had the error, due to his genius nature, that it was specifically the military monarchy that should be combined with popular freedom, and the disaster of the following time came from the "incomprehensible delusion with which his successors perpetuated this error and held it as an 'official lie'."

17/18

However, with every ascending imperialism, the princely powers (in Rome, that was the Senate) are mediated and, under the guise of recognition and protection, are kept as a council of co-regents, i.e., as a federal council, but are suppressed under the pretext of the democratic task of the emperor. The imperial absolutism of Caesar and his successors thus took on the form of the "official lie", as Schiller puts it, that in the name of democracy, he armed himself with the tribunician power against the federal council, but took away its old organization of consultation and legislation and instead offered it the benefits of plunder and robbery until he took over its daily sustenance. This transformation of citizens into a beggar population already began under Caesar, and he himself had to establish the military monarchy as a warlord and judge over war and peace to control the Senate and maintain peace among the masses.

18

This was the Caesarist organization admired by modern historians, which, after a two-hundred-year struggle between emperor and senate, was just good and strong enough, following its military character's intensification, before which the other offices accumulated on the emperor paled, to defend the Latin races against the onslaught of the Germans and to save up inspirations for later times. And furthermore, the Latins of Italy and the Latinized peoples of Spain owed their ultimate salvation only to the absolute emperors of Byzantium and the Arabs.

Despite all this, both Romans, whom Mommsen can only elevate in order to bring the other down, had a heart large enough to embrace and process the highest affairs and questions of the world in their time. Caesar recognized that the peoples who had been subjugated by the weapons of the Republic could no longer be treated as the private affair of a city and its families, and he withdrew them from the whims and exploitation of the Roman parties, to which he dealt a death blow. Cicero proclaimed a morality to the world born in the civil wars that went beyond the interests and particular law of the victorious city. "He who asserts," he writes (De Offic. 3, 6), "that we must take into account our fellow citizens but not strangers, is separating the universal connection of mankind, which is founded on charity, generosity, kindness, and justice." While Caesar created the apex from which the interests of peoples could be cultivated and taken away from the greed of Roman patricians, Cicero's mind was focused on the "natural society" of humans (ibid. 1,16) and on the eternal law which was neither "conceived in the minds of men, nor derived from a popular resolution, but governs the whole world through wise commandments and prohibitions" (De Legib. 2,4). He was monarchic in the sense that he sought to grasp the "highest and ultimate" after the example of the Greeks, "to which all rules of virtuous living and right action must refer" (De Summo Bono 1,14), and included "the whole world in a union, to which the gods and the humans related to them belong" (De Legib. 1,7.8).

19

He acted indecisively and often without guidance in the time of dissolution and pushed the cult of his own personality to the extreme. He devoted himself with equal enthusiasm to the memory of his consulship, as well as to self-observation of his crushing defeats, his melancholy and his own torment. He had to pay harshly for this cult and his vacillations through the literary perpetuation of his changing portrait, although, as the first among those who, in their confessions, exposed their weaknesses and errors to the judgment of others, through this openness, he increases sympathy for his irritable nature before the fair tribunal of posterity. Nevertheless, the cult of the Caesars could not permanently subjugate this personality that fluctuated in delusions, and it felt itself to be something so great and valuable that it had to perish rather than sink into mere leveling under the Caesars.

Cicero wrote his works on the new world morality during the dictatorship of

Caesar and then in the meantime until Octavian concluded the triumvirate against the optimates.

19/20

Before the break between Caesar and Pompey, Cicero had already expressed his conviction in his work "de Republica" that "the Republic, lost through the vices of its members, not through any accident, only existed in name." But after the "complete loss of the state," he declared (de Offic. 3, 6) that one could only be "in a state of war" against the tyrants and in the work "de Divinatione" (2, 2) he called the written philosophical address to the popular assembly the "only worthy" occupation left to him and the service he could still offer to his fellow citizens.

20

According to the testimony of the elder Pliny (Hist. Nat. 7, 31), Caesar wrote about his philosophical opponent: "The laurel of his triumphs is all the more glorious because it means having extended the limits of Roman genius more through the goods of the mind than through the empire." With this statement, Caesar acknowledged the personality that survived imperialism in the self-awareness of its own dignity, and also the ruling spirit of his opponent's language, which, with its periodic structure, was suited to the intellectual material of the time. As the victor, he could exercise this generosity. Cicero, the politically defeated, who rallied to the formation of a world community directed towards the highest ideals and sought his own salvation, had not yet been able to rise to the recognition that the democratic leveling of parties and peoples was necessary for the triumph of his world morality and that Caesar's beggarly mob provided him with the substance for his spiritual community.

But soon the impulses of Cicero and an increased influx of Greek wisdom had so worked on Rome that a Spaniard, to whom Rome's ancient memories were not dear to his heart, could come and use the leveled ground of the capital as the right place for his community foundation. That was Seneca.

20/21

3. The Teachers of Seneca.

Rome and the world had gained a new deity through the Battle of Actium. Rome had never seen a power like Augustus possessed after his victory over Antony. In the early days of his reign, he was the very embodiment of

shrewd calculation and ruthless disregard for human life, as evidenced by his founding of the Triumvirate. However, he had become a master of moderation. He himself was inclined to see his peace work as the fulfillment of a divine mission, looking back on his life and success, and the people were no less inclined to revere the conqueror of the civil wars and peacemaker as a messenger from heaven and the personification of Rome's power. Even the converted opponents in Rome adorned their submission to the victor with the elevation to divine providence, and poets such as Virgil celebrated the divine Caesar's offspring under the guise of Aeneas as the founder of the empire and renewer of the imperial cult, or hailed him, as did Horace, as the earthly representative of the supreme Jupiter.

21

According to the expression of Valerius Maximus (Prologue to Tiberius), Rome had placed the Caesars as the mediators between heaven and earth to the peoples, before the Christians appeared preaching about their mediator and anointed one. Hence, in the course of the next centuries, the division of the world between the worshippers of both incarnations, a struggle that lasted as long as the political power of Rome was in decline. The Christian incarnation triumphed when the Emperor turned away from Rome and laid down at the feet of the crucified one the halo with which his office as Roman high priest and mediator had marked him.

However, this struggle against Caesarism and against the divine radiance of its representatives had already begun long before Christianity appeared. Indeed, the course of victory had already been opened.

21/22

The trailblazer was Greek philosophy. The efforts of Augustus to renew the old cult were impeded in Rome itself by the convergence of Greek, oriental, and African elements, which flowed towards the capital and brought their own worship practices. Both high and low among the natives were seized by the charm of foreign cults and surrendered to their foreign services. High and low, from the palaces to the streets, were accessible to the preaching of the philosophers who taught the culmination of Greek wisdom: introspection, renunciation of the world, and turning away from the externals of temple rites.

22

The same Virgil who celebrates the piety of the Caesaric renewer of religion in his Aeneas, has woven one of the brightest passages of his poetry with the praise of the Stoic world-soul (Aeneid. 6, 724 ff.) and in his poem on

agriculture (Georg. 2, 490-496), he is so carried away by his admiration for the Epicurean explanation of the world and the Latin proclaimer of Epicurus' greatness and divinity that he glorifies with the words of Lucretius "the unbending spirit of the happy man who has recognized the origin of the world, before the authorities of the people and the purple of kings". And the same Horace who sings the praises of Augustus as the one closest to Jupiter, dedicates one of his most moving poems to "the just and steadfast man whom neither the unlawful command of the mob, nor the menacing face of the tyrant, nor even the mighty hand of Jupiter can shake".

22/23

Augustus himself followed in Cicero's footsteps and wrote an exhortation to philosophy (exhortatio ad philosophiam), which he read to his trusted friends. He had his own philosopher in Areus, a Stoic from Alexandria, as was the custom among the greats since the time of the Scipios. Livia also turned to him for comfort after the death of her son Drusus (Seneca, ad Marciam, cap. 4). Augustus had him in his retinue when he entered Alexandria after the Battle of Actium, and in his speech to the Alexandrians announcing forgiveness for their support of Antony, he mentioned Areus as one of the reasons for his clemency (Dio Cassius 51, 16). These same spiritual leaders were also responsible for the spiritual needs of the elite in other palaces and houses. Former teachers of new theories, they had become practical spiritual guides, directors, comforters in times of misfortune, and confessors. They accompanied the victims of Caesar's tyranny to their deaths, giving them their final words of comfort. Canus Julius, who received his death sentence from the Emperor Caligula with gratitude and died with calm and composure, was accompanied on his final journey by "his philosopher" (Seneca, de Tranquill. c. 14). Thrasea took the Cynic Demetrius, as if he were his spiritual guide, into the room where he opened his veins, and kept his eyes fixed on him during the agony of his slow death (Tacit, Annal. 16, 35).

23

To gather oneself, work on one's own improvement, suffer, endure, and die had become the goal of life.

The later evangelical word, "One thing is needful" (Luke 10:42), had long been the saying of the time. "Press with all your might towards the one thing, and leave the back-and-forth talk and the drawing of conclusions and the other trifling of vain acumen," writes Seneca (Epistle 108). "We want to work towards the one thing, so that we are not surprised by the fleetingness of time" (ibid.).

The one thing on which the first masters of the Stoics insisted was the inner

peace of the soul. The Socrates of Plato had preceded them in this concern for the soul. On the way to "Protagoras," he asked the young friend who was expecting wonders of wisdom from the sophist whether he had also thought about the danger he could bring to his soul, the most beautiful jewel on which all happiness and unhappiness of life depended. This care for the soul had become so widespread in the early days of the Roman Empire that the dialectical and logical investigations of the Stoics, which had fallen into disrepair, were held in contempt. Seneca expresses the mood of his time when he mocks the logical instructions of the Stoic school. "Is this how one walks towards the stars?" he asks, thinking of the "dialectical trifling" of the school. Is this the philosophy that can promise us "to better ourselves and become like God?" (Epistles 48, 49).

24

Seneca and his contemporaries knew that the intellectual goods they circulated in their speeches and writings were not generated by them. They had inherited them from the Greeks, and sometimes their hearts were troubled when they asked themselves what they had done to increase and process the foreign treasure. Seneca consoled himself with the thought that the Romans had sought and found the application of the "remedies" left by the ancients (Epist. 64). He himself believed that one had to animate and make the censure of vices effective with "rhetorical fire, tragic grandeur, comic finesse" (Epist. 101). In this sense, his predecessors had already given their recommendations of Greek wisdom rhetorical emphasis. They were the tribunes of the imperial era and continued the effectiveness of the forum's orators in the times of Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius. But constrained by the peace, which had put an end to the struggle of eloquence between applicants and persons and as well as between the large political parties, they were limited to generalities in their thundering speeches, and exaggerations were all that remained as expressions of their conviction and as weapons of attack. They became the forerunners of the Christian sermon of the fourth century and the later Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Reinhard. They spoke as if they were sitting in judgment over the world and its rulers (Seneca writes about one of his teachers, "Attalus" (Epist. 198), "He called himself a king; but the one who could sit in judgment over the rulers seemed to me to be more than a king.").

24/25

The rulers, whom these preachers brought before their judgment seat, were impersonal but nevertheless real powers of Rome at that time, above all wealth, greed with its companions: the merging of private life into luxurious pleasure and the paralysis of the general workforce. Rome, its great men and its financial lessees from the judiciary had regarded the provinces as a field which belonged to their plundering and squeezing, and had heaped up the

treasures of the world in the capital. There were only two ways to alleviate the pressure of this loot weighing on Rome, until the foreigners from the north came and took the rest from the houses of the great and small: the imperial confiscations, the proceeds of which soon melted away again in the hands of the high robbers, and the calls for sobriety and the exhortation to the oppressed to enrich themselves through spiritual goods. The same protests against greed have passed into the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament.

25

Just as the frenzy with which the rich displayed their plundered loot to the world and the emperors filled the emptied treasury through confiscations and executions reached its peak under Nero and then weakened as the wealth was consumed, so did the fire of the Stoic preachers wane towards the end of Nero's reign. The school of preachers in which Seneca was educated - "the Sextian school of Roman strength, which began with great momentum," as Seneca himself says in one of his last writings (Natural Questions 7, 32) - "has died out." He believes that it is no longer represented by any great orator and leader. However, the school had accomplished its mission. The seed that it had sown in the minds had sprouted and bore fruit in Christianity.

25/26

The founder of that school, Quintus Sextius, refused honorary positions (Seneca, Epist. 98) and also declined the broad purple stripe and a seat in the Senate, which the dictator had offered him, although he was entitled to apply for public office by his birth. Inspired by Cynicism and Stoicism, he opened a free school and ignited his time both through his lectures and his writings. "What power, what nobility!" exclaims Seneca when he reports on the reading of a work by Sextius in his household (Epist. 64). "Whatever state of mind I may be in when I read him, I would like to challenge all the vicissitudes of fortune and cry out: "Step into the arena with me, fate, I am ready." I would like to have something to overcome, something in enduring which I could practice."

26

Seneca learned the daily self-examination (recognitio sui, de Ira 3, 36) from Sextius, the son, who renewed Pythagorean discipline in his life and lectures and abstained from meat. Since then, he would stand before himself in his chamber every evening after the end of his day's work to take responsibility for his actions. Another one of his teachers, the Alexandrian Sotion, convinced him to abstain from meat completely. However, during the time of

Tiberius, when foreign cults were expelled from Rome, he returned to his usual diet due to his father's fears of being accused of foreign superstitions. He also owed his enthusiasm for abstinence from food to Attalus, another one of his teachers, who sought to rival Jupiter in his simplicity of needs (Epist. 110).

The work of Sextius found its successors in the Cynics. When the youth lost their distinguished speakers, the bearded street philosophers drew their audience and also attracted the attention of the elites. Demetrius, who flourished under Nero and was later expelled from Rome under Vespasian, was the most significant of these street apostles. Seneca had great admiration for him, calling him powerful and noble; his words still resounded in Seneca's mind, and he heard his sayings in a different light when he found him half-naked lying on the ground in his dwelling. In his thoughts, he always had him as his companion, not conversing with the powerful among the purple-clad at court, but as a witness (testis) and not just a teacher of truth (Provident. cap. 5, Epist. 20. 62).

27

In a time when Pythagorean self-examination, self-control, and diet penetrated noble houses, the Cynics were regarded as a kind of saints. Their master, Diogenes, still held esteem, as in the time of Alexander. Seneca admiringly calls him "a man of great spirit" (Tranq. cap. 8) and exclaims in amazement about the power of this man who lacks material possessions: "It is a kingdom, to be the only one among the miserly, deceitful, robbers and soul-sellers who can be harmed by no one."

For this spiritual kingdom, the Roman successors of Diogenes and Seneca's contemporaries practiced renunciation of home, wife, and child, which the later saying of the Gospel (Luke 18:29) demands of the faithful. They already knew that reveling in unhappiness which the Beatitudes of the poor, the mournful, the hungry in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-6) express. And when Demetrius told Seneca, "nothing seems more unhappy to him than a person to whom no adversity has ever happened" (Provid. cap. 3), he was not far from the woes of the rich, the well-fed, the laughing, and the flattered in Luke's Gospel (Cap. 6:24-26). The same Demetrius gave an equally energetic expression to the joy of suffering when he (Seneca Epist. 67) called a life without disturbance and without any onset of misfortune "a dead sea."

During the first Athenian flourishing period, the Cynics had already developed an apostolate of warning and conversion. There were door-breakers among them, soul-inspectors who announced to the carefree and

laughing the time of repentance. The idea of this apostolate still lived in the Stoic and Cynic itinerant preachers from the end of the first and beginning of the second century after Christ. For example, Arrian writes (Epictet. Diatr. 3, 22): "The true Cynic is a messenger of Jupiter to open people's eyes to their errors and, with raised hands, to call them to repentance from the path on which they seek their well-being in external things."

28

Seneca, like Tacitus, knew nothing about the interior of Judaism when he unwittingly compiled a rich collection of sayings from the theological material of Stoicism and with the help of the ascetic mood of his time, which was to bear fruit in a spiritualistic offshoot of the Jewish community. However, when that spiritualization of Judaism, with a union of Roman, Jewish, and Greek elements, spread, which was the dawn of Christianity on the Roman horizon, those wandering philosophers found a new field of work on which they could give their gnomic wisdom an unexpected concentration and appear with greater weight than before. It is certain that many of the first Christian teachers wore the Greek philosopher's cloak, and the Cynics were so numerous among them that Lucian, when he wanted to portray a parody of the apostle Paul in his Peregrinus Proteus, as lawgiver, prisoner, and circular-letter writer, had to place a group of Cynics next to the saint in order to give his picture the right local and temporal color. At the time of Tertullian, the Christians and community teachers who emerged from Cynicism still wore their cloak, and the fiery African exclaims in his writing "De Pallio": "Rejoice, Pallium, and shout for joy; a better philosophy has dignified you as an adornment, since you began to dress the Christians."

Now let us consider Seneca's preparations for Christianity.

4. Views on Seneca's Christianity.

The first Christian writer whose name, era, and literary activity are beyond doubt, Tertullian, a contemporary of Caracalla according to one of his writings, says of Seneca (de Anima cap. 20) that he is often "one of us" (saepe noster). " So”in general, the teacher of Nero is a heathen to him.

28/29

Lactantius, the tutor in the household of Constantine the Great, admires the frequent agreement of Seneca with true theology alongside the Christian sayings of Cicero (e.g. Divin. Instit. 1, 5), but believes (ibid. 6, 24) that Seneca lacked a guide to lead him away from Zeno and his teacher Sotion

towards perfect devotion to God.

29

A century later, the small collection of letters was created in which the apostle Paul exchanges greetings and heartfelt expressions with Seneca, the Christian believer and minister of Nero, during his supposed stay in Rome. Although Augustine mentions (Epist. 153) the circulation of these letters without expressing his opinion on their authenticity, he is convinced of Seneca's thorough initiation into the Christian mysteries and only criticizes him for not "daring" to mention the Christians in his numerous writings. This striking silence, according to the Church Father, is explained by Seneca's fear of offending the old customs of his homeland by praising the Christians or of denying his own convictions by their criticism (de Civit. Dei 6, 10).

Jerome even calls Seneca "one of ours" (Seneca noster. Adv. Jovinian.). Although he is just as cautious as Augustine about the likely correspondence between Paul and the Roman Stoic, he only says that it is "read by many". Nevertheless, he is persuaded by it to include Lucius Annaeus Seneca in his catalogue of saints in his book "De viris illustribus" (On Illustrious Men).

29/30

This veneration that the aforementioned church fathers give to Seneca also carried over to the Middle Ages. The second council of Tours (in December 567) refers in its 14th canon to one of his sayings about adultery, which is no longer found in his existing writings, but is certainly found in the collection of sayings "de moribus," which is largely an anthology from his works. This collection, which Fabricius ascribes to Martin, bishop of Braga in Lusitania, born in Hungary and a contemporary of that council, was a popular manual during the Middle Ages. The "Imitatio Christi," written at the end of the Middle Ages, also cites extensively from Seneca's formulas and quotes from memory a passage from his writings in which the Roman sage extols the retreat from human interaction.

30

The conviction of Jerome regarding the almost complete agreement between the Stoics and Christianity (Comment in Jesaiam c. XI: nostro dogmati in plerisque concordant) also found significant advocates after the restoration of knowledge. Justus Lipsius was the most enthusiastic admirer of the Christian spirit of his Stoic heroes in his writings on Seneca and Stoic philosophy. Even the prudent, critically minded Pierre Daniel Huet (died 1721) found the Christian doctrine of the Trinity literally expressed by

Seneca.

Despite the continued efforts of German and Western scholars to highlight the differences between these lines of thought, the literal connections between them did not cease to surprise the minds. Can it be called natural, asked Schöll in his History of Roman Literature, that a well-intentioned man, when reflecting on the relationship between God and man, arrives at the same moral truths found in the Holy Scriptures? But why is there nothing similar in Aristotle, Plato, or Cicero? Why in Seneca, not only the principles of Christianity, but also expressions that are not used by secular authors and are only found in the New Testament in the same sense?

30/31

De Maistre, in his Soirées de St. Pétersbourg, can only explain this convergence, which makes many of Seneca's letters suitable for the sermons of Bourdaloue and Massillon with slight modifications, by the fact that Seneca had a fairly thorough knowledge of Christian doctrines. Finally, Troplong, in his work De l'influence du Christianisme sur le droit civil des Romains (Paris 1843), traces the reflection of Christian ideas and language in Seneca's writings to the atmosphere in which Christianity enveloped this author, secretly and unnoticed transforming and purifying the mind and language of the Stoic.

31

Recently, the industrious French have produced two works which bring the question of the relationship between Seneca and Christianity closer to a decision, a question that has been lingering since Tertullian's time.

The first work, misguided but so thoroughly and with such an immense expenditure of erudition that it can be called epoch-making for the question, comes from Amédée Fleury and is titled "Saint-Paul et Sénèque, Recherches sur les rapports du Philosophe avec l'Apôtre et sur l'infiltration du Christianisme naissant à travers le Paganisme" (2 vols., Paris 1853). The author, who, for his literary history of the question, has even dug up German school and university programs, dissertations, and doctoral dissertations from the dust of the centuries, seeks to prove the reality of the Paul-Seneca exchange and believes that Seneca drew from the writings of the Old and New Testaments. But more important than this argument, whose failure is further highlighted by the foil of its erudite apparatus, is Fleury's assertion that the ideas of universal love, the thought of general equality with its consequence, the abolition of slavery, the supremacy of the spirit over matter, of right over violence, are owed solely to Christianity. In this sentence lies the crux of the matter, and it is here that the question arises as

to the fact that the ideas that Seneca is said to owe solely to Christianity had already developed in the Greek schools centuries before and had since spread in the Greek and Roman public. Without investigating this fact, the investigation into the personal connections between Paul and Seneca sinks to the level of insignificance.

31/32

In his work "On Indifference in Matters of Religion," in which he defended the authority of the Roman Church as the only norm of certainty, Lamennais tried to show that Christianity did not bring anything new or essential in the series of moral ideas and teachings that had not already been discovered and presented before it.

32

This is the chapter that is relevant here, and in this regard, Mr. Charles Aubertin in his "Seneca et Saint-Paul, Étude sur les rapports supposés entre le philosophe et l'Apôtre" (Paris 1872. Third edition) has effectively demonstrated the weakness of Fleury's work. However, there is one point of investigation that he was not able to fully address: the literary dependence of one of the two, Seneca or the Apostle, on the other. His aversion to Fleury's hypothesis prevented him from considering the possibility of the opposite, and his belief in the authenticity of the Pauline epistles as well as the historical character of the Acts of the Apostles blinded him to the transfer of Seneca's wisdom to the Pauline epistles and the Gospels.

We will now demonstrate this transfer.

5. Seneca's View on Politics.

The gospel view on state power is: "The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant." (Matthew 20:25)

This contrast between exercising secular power and mutual service in a union encompassing the world had already been established by post-Socratic philosophical schools and introduced into the practice of life. The Cynic was eager to bring salvation to his neighbor. Epicurean school spread across the world as a league of friends and helpers; Seneca says of the Stoic school (Clement. 2, 5), "none are kinder, gentler, or more humane, so that helpful service to all and each individual can rightly be called its soul."

32/33

These masters of unbroken hearts replaced the dissolved states with their schools, and Seneca also looks back on the downfall of the republic without painful regret. In his eyes, Brutus went against the principles of the Stoics and their aversion to involvement in political power struggles when he hoped that the state could be restored to its former constitution after the old customs had been lost and a uniform legal status had arisen, as the question among the thousands under arms was not whether, but whose slaves they should be (Benef. 2. 20).

33

Similarly, he asks Cato what he had to do with the quarrel over whether Caesar or Pompey should take possession of the state, and why he, by renouncing his school, got involved in the question of who should win, since the winner, even if he were the better man, would become the worse through the victory (Epist. 14).

To him, the leaders of civil wars are selfish individuals who sought their majesty and greatness in seeing the state and the people low and oppressed at their feet. He goes through the series of these "malicious ungrateful" individuals, who turned the power and armies of the state against it, from Marius to Antony (Benef. 5, 15, 17), and says of Pompey that he had brought the Roman people to a point where the loss of freedom was a blessing and salvation.

Regarding Augustus, who laid his hand on the neck of the republic before it was brought under the yoke, he does not want to call it mercy when his mildness entered only after his cruelty had worn itself out (Clement. 1, 10). His vehement attacks on Caligula are only declamations; his unfavorable judgment of Claudius (Benef. 1, 15) will only concern us later when we present his passage through the imperial court. Nero, on the other hand, is to him (in the letter addressed to him on mercy, Clementia) the ideal of what was still possible on the ruins of the republic, but still surrounded by so much terror that the wise man must seek his salvation in solitude and can only occupy himself with the founding of religion.

33/34

He attributes to the emperor a monologue, in which he (in Clementia 1, 1) says among other things: "I have been chosen by divine favor to represent the gods among mortals; I am the arbiter of life and death for peoples; it is in my power to determine the fate and position of every individual. What fate has in store for any mortal, it speaks through my mouth; my word is the

source of joy for peoples and cities. There is no prosperity anywhere except with my will and favor. Every person, even if nothing else recommends them, is in my favor just because they bear the name of human."

34

In this proclamation, we have before us the basic constitution of the empire of humanity. The draft comes from Seneca himself and is intended to show the world to what principles he has trained his pupil. Later we will show that the teacher correctly grasped the spirit and tendencies of his student, and that both agreed fundamentally in their views. In explaining that proclamation, the master goes so far as to portray the emperor as the gracious one "before whom no one will be able to claim his innocence, but rather will look to the source of grace which helps human weakness" (ibid.).

However, the teacher himself is not entirely comfortable with the praised omnipotence. The powerful one has surrounded himself, at the top of his human empire, with an arsenal of terror alongside grace. There are "iron and fire, the horde of beasts to set upon human bodies, dungeons, crosses, torture, hooks to drive into human bodies, carts that tear apart the limbs of the victims of violence, and that shirt covered in flammable substances to throw over the unfortunate" (Epist. 14).

34/35

The Lord of the world, who wants to accept all and everyone as humans, is also a jealous ruler who does not even allow the appearance of doubt to arise about his right and purges the crowds at his feet from the disobedient with a word from his mouth, those who even suggest their independence from his circle of grace with a single gesture.

35

Earlier, says Seneca (ibid.), it was the people or the Senate that one had to fear, now it is individuals to whom the power of the people is given against the people. To have them all as friends is difficult enough, if one does not have them as enemies. Instead of provoking the powerful, the wise man will avoid him, but he must be careful not to seem to avoid him, because part of his security depends on not seeking it out.

In this life of fear under the powerful, the wise man has only one refuge, the same humanity to which the Emperor has flattened Rome and the peoples. So humanity against humanity, a human community against the human masses, with which the Emperor fraternizes, world against world, the universalism of the wise against the orbis terrarum of the Emperor!

"If one has lost the office of citizen," Seneca writes in this sense (Tranquill.) chap. 3), "one should exercise that of a human being. Therefore, with a lofty spirit, we have not enclosed ourselves within the walls of a single city, but have extended ourselves to the whole world for intercourse and declared the world to be our fatherland, in order to offer virtue a broader field. Look behind you, which vast territories, how many peoples are up to you!"

Thus Seneca rises as a rebel against the authority of the Emperor, whom he wants to win over to the world. In his idea of an apostolate in the great republic of humanity, he strengthens himself by looking at the masters who, among the ruins of the Greek cities that Alexander and his successors stormed and burned, looked at the world and drew the law for that great republic from their own inner being. He often celebrates them as the men who worked for humanity, and once (de Brevit vit. chap. 14) as the highly renowned founders of religion (as Moser aptly translates in the Stuttgart-Metzler edition, conditores sacrarum opinionum), who brought a new faith to the world.

Despite the peaceful era that reigns under the human emperor, he sees the dawn of a similar time to that which the masters of the Stoa referred to in their inner selves. "I would not know any state," he writes, "that would be right for the wise man or the wise man for it" (de Otio. 31, 32); let us now see what inner peace he brings to his time and what he added as a world apostle to the religious foundations of his predecessors.

6. Seneca's New Religion.

The scenery around us undergoes a complete change. Just now, Seneca opened up the dazzling scene before us, where the emperor from his throne dispenses his treasure of grace and brotherhood with humanity. Once again, Seneca describes to us humanity as the working field of the wise, who becomes uneasy in the proximity of that throne. Now, Seneca describes the world as a great hospital.

To his friend who sought assistance to better himself, he replied (Epist. 68), "Here, there is no physician, only a sick person. I am lying with you in one and the same sickroom and can only talk with you (Epist. 27) about our common illness."

Just as before the emperor, all are equal and no one can think of themselves as more than another, in the general hospital of the world, no one can elevate themselves above the others. There is no reproach, gentleness

prevails, and the advanced will treat the pressurized with benevolent sympathy. Will he be surprised that there is no fruit hanging from the thicket? Will he be astonished that hedges and thorns do not bear useful fruit?" (de Ira 2, 20). In this community of patients, fairness of judgment is the first commandment, and everyone must remember that "no human being is without guilt" (ibid. 2, 27). Whoever claims to be innocent only thinks of witnesses for whom nothing remarkable can be noticed about him, not of his own conscience (ibid. 1, 14).

36/37

"I have not reached the state of health," Seneca continues this theme, "and I will not reach it either. I weigh on a sea of pure ailments" (On the Happy Life, chapter 17-18). "We have all sinned (peccavimus omnes) and will stumble even until the extreme old age" (On Clemency, chapter 6).

37

In the above passage about the mistake of expecting useful fruit from a thorn bush, Seneca says that anger and rejection are not appropriate where "nature excuses the error." In this sense, he finds the difficulty of achieving recovery in the ignorance of self-deception about the internal seat of the disease. "What do we deceive ourselves? Our trouble (malum) is not outside us; it lies in ourselves and clings to our entrails" (Epist. 50). "The body is a burden and punishment to the soul; it presses on the spirit and holds it in bonds" (Epist. 65). "Through this bone, the soul is obscured, whitewashed, infected, separated from what is true and its own, and thrown into deception; its whole struggle is with the oppressive flesh; it strives to return whence it was sent out: there awaits eternal rest, where after the moderate and confused of this world, it beholds the pure and clear" (ad Marciam c. 23).

Thus, the homeland of the spirit is above, in the sphere of heaven, where the stars revolve, where the divine throne is located, and where it performs its duties. Earthly life is a fleeting sojourn in a foreign land, and what surrounds the spirit here is only the debris of a guesthouse; it considers nothing of it as its property and uses it like a passing stranger as something borrowed. Great spirits have never loved long stays in the body; they yearn to break free. The body, the temporal dwelling of the spirit, is the shell that is only temporarily laid around it and on the day that is "the birthday of eternity," it will be taken away from it. "The day will come," Seneca writes to his friend, "which reveals you and takes you out of the tent community of ugly life. Already now, rise up as high as you can" (Epist. 102, 120, Ad Marciam cap. 23).

38

Let us also mention that according to Seneca, in agreement with the Stoics, for whom the human spirit was a fraction of the divine, there is a God who dwells in the human body as in his lodging (e.g. Epist. 31).

The attentive reader will have recognized almost all of these sentences as old acquaintances with whom he has become familiar since childhood. They are known to us from the first Bible lessons. The body as the dwelling place of the divine corresponds to the temple of God, which the apostle (1 Corinthians 3:16) considers to be in the body of the believers. If Seneca groans despite this significance of the body for the liberation from its oppressive burden, the apostle (Romans 7:24; 8:3) also sighs no less for liberation from this body of death. The desire of the heavenly citizens of Seneca to be freed from this burden is echoed in the New Testament: "To die is gain. I desire to depart and be with Christ" (Philippians 1:21, 23). When Seneca exclaims (Epist. 102): "We can still only view the heavenly homeland from afar," the apostle consoles himself (1 Corinthians 13:12): "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." Just as Seneca recommends ascending from the body even before the birthday of eternity, on which the soul is stripped of its bodily envelope, so the apostle says (2 Corinthians 5:1-9): "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens... Therefore we labor, whether present or absent, to be pleasing to Him." "Our conversation is in heaven," says Philippians 3:18-20, continuing these considerations, while for others their "belly is their god," and the centerpiece of this entire train of thought also dominates the letter to the Hebrews, where the patriarchs (ch. 11:13-16) confess on their journey to the heavenly homeland as strangers on earth.

38/39

Let us now look back into antiquity from Seneca, and none of his sentences offer anything new. Only the plaintive and cutting accent with which he delivers them, the presence with which they constantly impress themselves upon him, and their ensemble is original. The content itself, however, that "sighing of the creature" (to use a post-Senecan expression), all that concern for the "one thing needful" (to use a later formula), had already emerged earlier in the world. The authors are Plato and the Stoics.

39

The most eloquent student of Socrates laid the foundation for later theology. The attempts of the ancient philosophers, from Thales to Democritus, to explain the formation of the world through the development of real elements, failed due to the weakness of natural science and the power that the declining Greek religion still possessed in its dissolution. It was left to a

later posterity to take up the attempts of the Ionians and Democritus on the basis of a richer knowledge of natural laws and to replace theology with mechanics and physics. For two thousand years, Plato dominated the intervening period with his legislator, who formed the chaos of material substances according to the ideas of an upper world and had to leave the responsibility for the constant disruption of his world plan to the superficiality of this influence of matter and the remainder of its autonomous power.

39/40

Aristotle said in his Metaphysics of Anaxagoras, who first elevated the mind (nous) as the ordering power of the world, that he appeared like a sober person among those who spoke at the banquet. This sober person, whom the author of the collection of teachings of philosophers (falsely attributed to Plutarch) describes as having a supreme principle "smelling of the insipid jokes of the ancient world," inspired Plato to prescribe a guiding directive for divine intervention in matter at the upper world of ideas, thereby creating a formula to which the gods expelled from the world of atoms by the atomists and their later renewer, Epicurus, could cling and draw new life. The further development of philosophical content was limited to the transfer of purposiveness, which was achieved in Plato by transferring the idea forms to the chaotic mass, to the interior of things (by Aristotle), above which the sky of the divine continued to circle in ancient sublimity within the inner world-factory (also in Aristotle).

40

The Stoics behaved as heirs and continuers of a philosophical system in which the development of the real world and its rational law (the Logos) had not yet experienced the Platonic separation, but they were under the impression of the sublimity (or popularity) of the wisdom of the founder of the Academy and did not want to do without the technique that seemed to solve the problem of the world in the most illustrative way. Although the separation of the divine and the material, of thought and being, of the active and passive, is only one thought among them, the moment of one thought in which the active and passive, the soul and its world, the fertilizing and receptive, the law and the substance stand apart, the thought has the power of a ruler in a philosophical system, and this power of the ruling lord wielded in the Stoic description of the calculating purposefulness of the creative principle that provoked the laughter of antiquity and is still preserved in the library of teleological works of the previous century and in the current opposition to the latest English natural science.

40/41

This fleeting idea that brought the separation of the spiritual and material into the system of the Stoics also forced them to include in their teachings from Plato the responsibility of the latter for the flaws and errors of the spirit, the struggle with the flesh, and the longing for separation from it. Plato is the one who brought these formulas for the longing for the upper homeland to dominance for the following millennia. The founder of the Academy, who invented the vivid image of the fall of the soul from the upper ether world into the sensory realm for the guilt of mortals, also added the lament for the burden of the body to this image and sighed for escape from its prison. Plato coined the classical expression for the anxious pursuit of dying (μελετᾶν ἀποθνήσκειν); Seneca refers grieving Marcia (chapter 23) to this statement of the divine sage about the ascent of the soul after death; Philo borrowed the same formula from the creator of the world of ideas, and it has also passed into the books of the New Testament. "For you died," it says in the letter to the Colossians (3:3-5), "and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature."

41/42

The path, however, that leads from Plato and the Stoics to Philo and Seneca, and through the latter two into the writings of the New Testament, is dominated by a shining height of Heraclitus. The Ephesian still stands above the mythological course of history in which Plato finds the interpretation of the divine approaching the matter of chaos. He is also innocent of the thought in which the Stoics allow thought and being to be separated until the latter is formed purposefully. In every moment of the world process, the struggle of ascent and descent, of the Logos' own "way up and down," appears, but also in every moment, the unity of the opposition. If he regards sensory existence as a momentary standstill that brings only deception, distress, and toil instead of the hoped-for rest and satisfaction, as a hindrance to the eternal process according to the rational law of the Logos, then it is not the matter of the Stoics, not Plato's hylomorphic addition to the sensory that misleads and misleads the spirit, but the individual self-will that seeks to oppose the world process of the Logos, causing the tension that must be resolved according to the law of the Logos that moves upward and downward. And indeed, voluntarily, through the elimination of opposition and through the peace of merging with the world law, which also pervades the individual - in fact, through death, which atones for the injustice that the mortal wishes to maintain the mixture with the immortal. The calm in which the individual self-will believed it was lulled into its sensory existence was only an illusion; in death, eternal peace, rest (ἀνάπαυσις), and harmony with one's own being are born.

42

These metaphysical statements of the Ephesian are the ones that have

taken the form of moral maxims on the way through the Academy and Stoicism and finally, through the influence of Philo, have become the foundations of Christian asceticism. For Heraklit, it was a metaphysical statement arising from the constant shifting of the logical path downwards and upwards, that life and death are together and one in humans every day. It was also an interpretation of the actual in the light of that statement when the dark one said: we live the death of the gods and die the life of the gods. Finally, Heraklit described, in the sense of his teaching of the Logos that enters the scattered and isolated existence on its way downwards and leads it back to unity and rest on its way upwards, the constant fact when he said that God heals the ailing world by bringing inequalities into balance. It was also a description of the factual when the Ephesian called individual life a microcosm, which is an imitation of the universe and its changing process.

42/43

Later thinkers transformed these statements into demands for morality and commonplaces of instruction as the self-consciousness and ego emancipated themselves through the experience of history and dialectic. Plato recommended careful pursuit of death, the Stoics populated the world with renouncing monks, Seneca indulged in thoughts of death, even if he transformed Heraklit's saying about daily dying into the simple truth that life diminishes every day (e.g. Epist. 24), and the New Testament, in which the most eloquent representation of the individual's completion in dying was given, allowed its Logos to proclaim true rest on his path (ἀνάπαυσις Matth. 11, 28 [corrected from 23]) to the weary and burdened. And the Heraklitean proposition that the human microcosm and the macrocosm of the universe are each other's image became Plato’s exhortation to imitate divinity as much as possible, the Stoic commandment to follow nature, the theme of Seneca's sermons on the imitation of God, as well as in the New Testament an exhortation (e.g. Ephesians 5:1) to become imitators (μιμηται) of God. The Christian Middle Ages ended with an echo of Heraklitean wisdom in the "Imitatio."

43

7. Seneca's Ideal.

Plutarch, in his dialogue "Against the Stoics," cites the statement as an example of their nonsense that "if a single wise man at any place only points his finger in a reasonable way, all the wise men on earth will benefit and gain from it."

The popular philosopher of the second century did not know that the Stoic association was a mystical community of the holy, to whose treasury of

grace the works of its members belonged and in which a master could not think and speak without the whole being fruitfully stimulated. This association had helpers and spiritual assistants before whom the worldly rulers and sensual images of the gods lost their significance. It had its own ideal of the wise person, who, though unattainable in his perfection, floated in the distance but still provided the norm that seekers must strive for. They sought the monarchical summit.

43/44

Seneca also aimed to capture and shape this ideal. For example, the statement of Epicurus, "we must choose some noble person whom we always have before our eyes, so that we live as if he were watching and act as if he saw it" (Epist. 11), corresponds entirely to his intentions. He finds it useful and salutary. "We need," he continues, "a guardian and educator. A large number of sins disappear when the faltering have a witness at their side. The mind must have someone whom it reveres with a reverence that also sanctifies its innermost being. The mere thought of such a helper has a regulatory and corrective power; he is a guardian, an exemplar, and a norm, without which one will not bring the wrong into balance."

44

"In Epistle 67, it says "Put on (indue) the spirit of a great man" - just like in the New Testament: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 13:14) or "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

Seneca makes attempts upon attempts to design the shape of this renewing ideal. He always has it in mind, especially in the letters. He wants to grasp it entirely as it is and hold it firm in association with the frail. "If only the vision of the soul of the virtuous man were granted us," he exclaims in Epistle 115, "oh, how beautiful, how holy it would shine in gentle dignity! If someone saw this figure, higher and brighter than everything the eye is accustomed to see in this human world, wouldn't he, as when meeting a god, pause in amazement and pray in silent prayer that he might be granted the sight without sin? And when it then encourages him to approach with the inviting kindness of its face, how will he bow down to worship and break into the words (of Virgil), "Be a savior and relieve us, whoever you are, of our toil!" And she will support us and raise us up if only we will honor her. But she will not be worshiped by animal sacrifices and the fat of bulls, nor by images of gold and silver, but by pious and right-minded disposition."

On another occasion (Epistle 120), he describes this ideal of virtue in the

man who, in everything he does, is equal to himself, no longer intentionally or with purpose, but by his nature and habit, he had arrived at the point where it was impossible for him to do wrong. In him, that blessed life was to be seen, which flows unrestrictedly and follows no law except its own. This perfection shone forth from the fact that he never cursed fate, never received anything that happened to him with displeasure, and revealed himself like a light shining in the darkness."

45

In Constantia sapientis chapter 7, Seneca writes, "Do not come to me with your usual objection that this wise man cannot be found. No, I do not invent a vain spectacle of human intelligence, nor do I design a lifeless image of the powerful. Rather, as I hold him in my conviction, I have presented him, and I would present him even if, like all things great, extraordinary, and uncommon, he does not often appear."

Seneca often draws features for the image of his ideal from the experiences of Cato. For example, he asks in Constantia sapientis chapter 14, "What will the wise man do when he receives a slap in the face?" The answer is what Cato did when he was slapped in the face: he did not become angry, he did not retaliate for the insult, he did not even forgive it, but rather, he stated that nothing had been done to him. At another time, he reminds readers how Cato "places his undefiled hand on his holy breast" (Epist. 67). Being crucified, bound, mutilated, and offering oneself as a sacrifice (Provid. cap. 5) are signs of the virtuous who toil for the great commonwealth of humanity.

In an epistle (41) in which he speaks of the closeness and indwelling of God in the good, Seneca continues, "When you see a man unbowed in danger, untouched by lust, happy in misfortune, will you not say, 'A divine power has come over him?' Thus, in his better part, he is there, from whence he came. Just as sunlight strikes the earth but is still in the place from where it emanates, so too is a great and holy soul, sent down for our closer understanding of the divine, while in communication with us, but inseparable from its origin."

45/46

Finally, Seneca calls it the duty of the fighter to nourish the hope that victory will appear in the sublime form of the wise man, since the nature of humanity implies that this representation of the perfect becomes visible. "That there is someone (aliquem) whom nothing can conquer, that there is someone whom fate cannot overcome, is inherent in the commonwealth (e republica est) of the human race," he writes (Constant. sap. cap. 19).

The overview of these traits that Seneca combines to form his ideal image, and the close connection with the messianic figure of the New Testament, will make it understandable to the reader why learned and scientifically educated men can only make sense of such language from the minister of Nero through his interaction with a chief apostle and the use of Christian texts. For us, to whom criticism has turned Christian literature into a gradual product of the period from the end of the first to the end of the second century, Seneca's views acquire a higher value than those who see them only as a reproduction of what some apostle communicated to the pagan teacher of Rome. Seneca becomes a real collaborator in early Christianity. If Philo made Heraklit's Logos into a priestly mediator who, hovering between heaven and earth, relates the extremes of the divine and the human to one another, then the Roman brought this mediator as a real and suffering intermediary to earth and into human interaction. What is still a vision in Philo becomes, in Seneca's own words, the power of conviction and tangible experience. Philo, from his Jewish perspective, made Heraklit's Logos a priestly representative of humanity on his way up and down; the Roman started from the essence of the Stoic cosmic unity and held on to the conviction that it was not just a figment of the imagination and that it must manifest itself in one person as a savior and uplifter. The later combination of the Oriental and Occidental, the Jew and Roman, Philo and Seneca, the Heraklitian Logos and the Stoic Sage, then brought about the living figure sought on both sides.

8. Seneca in the New Testament.

The founder of a community not only imparts a new content to those who gather around him or derive sustenance from his writings, but also binds their thinking and speaking in expressions from which they can only free themselves through a complete break with the revered master. Each philosophical school has its own style, each religious association its own phraseology and particular sentence structure, and from their linguistic expressions we can immediately recognize the individual factions or shades of such a group.

We will now demonstrate the preservation and transmission of such characteristic formulas through a characteristic example. We will show that Seneca's wisdom sayings formed the first point of unity in a community in which the elements of a spiritual opposition to the Roman military dictatorship and the associated state priesthood gathered, and that even when they became intertwined with Jewish views, they retained the influence

of the new formation. The fact that we present in the following lines will provide evidence that Seneca's sayings not only circulated in oral tradition and formed the stem on which new formations were based, but that the teachers of that Roman-Jewish association also derived significant inspiration from the master's writings and also took stylistic constructions from them.

It is about the parallel connections between Seneca's sayings and those of the New Testament.

47/48

We start with a passage from the letter of consolation to Marcia. Seneca derives from it his view (chap. 10) that the passage through this life is just a fleeting journey through a foreign land, and therefore "all that glitters as a gift to us - children, honors, the adornment of a woman - is not our property, but only a loan, which adorns the stage of this life and, like the refuse of an inn, returns to the owner after the traveler has departed." Therefore, one must love one's loved ones as if they were a fleeting possession, and possess what happiness has given as something about to depart. "Quickly," he concludes, "pluck therefore the pleasure from the children and indulge in the children on your part; grasp without delay every joy that is in a hurry!"

48

"The time is short," says the Apostle (I Corinthians 7:29-31), "that those who have wives should be as though they had none, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they possessed nothing, and those who use this world as though they did not consume it, for the structure of this world is passing away."

Thus, the same construction, the same idea on both sides, but with Seneca's original composition with the thoroughness and motivation of the first invention!

One of the most significant documents of the Gospel of Matthew presents the contrast between the old and new commandments in the formula: "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder,' and 'anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment" (Matthew 5:27ff.). Likewise, in the same place, the old restriction of love to reciprocal love is dismissed in light of the new commandment of universal love, with the question of what reward such narrow-mindedness may expect, whether even the tax collectors do not do the same, and whether anything special is done by this means (ibid. 5:46-47).

The framework for this construction was created by Seneca when he attempted to express the exuberance of his new understanding of the law in a series of phrases. "That is still not enough," he writes (e.g. Epistle 95), to follow the rules of virtue, "because it is not the action that deserves praise, but the way in which something is done." "Someone may hear what rules to observe when making sacrifices, how far to stay away from the burden of superstition; this will never be enough if he does not conceive of the deity, as it is fitting, in his mind as the all-encompassing, all-encompassing one, who dispenses benefits for free." Furthermore, in the same place, "the other question arises, how to interact with people? What do we want? What instructions do we give? That we should spare human blood? How little it is to harm no one whom we should benefit! Truly, it is a great praise if one is tame towards another! We prescribe that one share his bread with the hungry," and so on.

We can see from this how eagerly Seneca occupied himself with these expressions for the exuberance of his new demands. For example, in Epistle 110, he returns to this opposition, saying, "You do nothing great if you do not value the superfluous; I only admire you if you despise the necessary."

He also eagerly sought a comprehensive formula for his new commandments. For example, in the aforementioned Epistle 95, he asks, "When will I say everything that needs to be done and left undone? In short, this is the formula for human duty: everything you see that contains both divine and human qualities is one; nature has created us as relatives and implanted mutual love in us; our hands should be ready to help according to its commands" - so the same question about the formula on which the law hangs, as in the Gospel (Mark 12:29-31), the same answer, and the unity of the command derived from the unity of the absolute.

A structure as mature as the one Seneca gave to his antithesis of the new and old, the traditional and the personal, and the supreme formulation of the command corresponding to the unity of the divine and human, was well suited to be modulated and developed within the circle of the gentle ones who confront us at the time of Domitian until it acquired its present-day evangelical form.

Another framework of Seneca the stylist! "Throw all of that away from you (projice. Epist. 17; referring to property matters) and strive for a wise mind. If something is holding you back, free yourself from it or cut it off." Furthermore, "throw away (projice) what tears your heart apart, or if it cannot be removed in any other way, then the heart itself must be torn out with it." The new clothing in the evangelical exhortation to the rich and in the saying about plucking out the eye still clearly shows the original framework.

50

The evangelical saying (Matthew 6:8), "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him," is a literal repetition of Seneca's saying (Epistle 100): "What is meant to serve us well, our God and Father has placed in our nearest proximity; he has not waited for our request; he has given it of his own accord."

The stylistic construction of one and the same thought cannot be more uniform than the one we find in the description of a spiritual metamorphosis in Seneca and in the letter to the Philippians. The Roman writes (Epistle 6): "I find, my Lucilius, that I am not only improving, but transforming (transfigurari), not as if I had already taken hold or hoped that there was nothing in me left to change. Why should I not have many things in me that need to be strengthened, moderated or lifted up?"

On the other hand, the author of the letter to the Philippians (3:10-12) is cognizant of the death of his Lord (ουμμορρούμενος) and hopes to attain to the resurrection of the dead, but adds: "Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect; but I press on if indeed I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus."

The metamorphosis of which Seneca speaks, which he nevertheless does not yet present as the absolute perfection with cautious restraint, is the rebirth, which was one of the dogmas of the Stoics and in which, according to their view, man rises as a new creation from the old. Plutarch, their passionate opponent, caricatures this dogma and cites in his treatise on their "inconsistencies" as one of their follies the teaching that "whoever was perhaps the worst villain in the morning, could be the most virtuous person in the evening."

51

Once again, the same sentence structure dominates the antithesis in which the New Testament opposes the natural and the spiritual man, and Seneca opposes sensuality and reason. "The natural man," it says in I Corinthians 2:14-15, "receives nothing of the Spirit of God; it is foolishness to him and he

cannot understand it, because it must be spiritually discerned. But the spiritual man judges everything." In Seneca (Epistle 66), the antithesis reads: "Sensuality (sensus) cannot judge good and evil; what is useful and what is not is unknown to it. It cannot speak about anything that does not immediately concern it. It does not see into the future, does not remember the past, and does not know the sequence and order of the consequences in which the unity of life progresses to its completion. Therefore, reason is the judge of good and evil."

Of the many other literal connections between Seneca and Paul, we highlight the following short sentences, on the side of the former (On Anger 1.13): "Man is born for mutual assistance," of the latter (Galatians 6:2): "Bear one another's burdens," of the former (Epistle 9): "What is the use of gaining a friend? To have someone for whom I can die, for whose life I will put my own at risk, and for whom I will sacrifice myself," - of the latter (II Corinthians 12:15): "I will gladly spend and be spent for you."

51/52

Both Seneca and Paul warn against associating with those of different beliefs, although they agree in their admonition of being lenient towards the faults of others and in the statement about the universality of sin. Paul commands (II Corinthians 6:14), "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?" Seneca (for example in Epistles 123 and 32.10) even quotes the Cynic philosopher Crates, who also said, "Beware and take heed that you do not speak with an evil person." The association of Stoics, which was based on the conviction of its members and whose spirit of community arose from the constant generation through the intense participation and activity of its members, already had a religious character, and, like the later church, viewed the temptation of one of its own by "profane" people with the same fear and jealousy.

52

Because of a parallel that will immediately occupy us, we mention the literally identical saying with which both authors find their way out of the contradiction that the adverse fates of the good seem to form with divine providence. Seneca believes (Provid. cap. 1. 2): "God has a fatherly attitude towards the good and exercises them, whom he likes to strengthen, through pain and harm. God tests (experitur) the good, hardens him and prepares him for himself." Likewise, it says in the Epistle to the Romans (9:18): "Whom God loves, he hardens," and in the Epistle to the Hebrews (12:6-7): "Whom

the Lord loves, he chastens, and he scourges every son whom he receives."

The tranquility of the stoic sage arose from the approval with which he accepted the sufferings and misfortunes of the divinely ordered world course, on which he exercised and put his inner strength to the test. However, this satisfaction with the world order was also a kind of self-reflection in the multitude of sufferings and trials that rushed towards the sage and broke against him. The darker the background of the world, the more brilliantly the heroic calm of the tested one emerged. The antithesis to the world is thus part of the image of the sage, and in the midst of his calm, something trembles from the irritability of the fighter over the attacks of the race.

This excitement over the hostility of the world also affects Seneca's soul, despite its triumphs, in trembling vibrations, and his imagination is nourished by the depictions of suffering in which the sage proves his exaltation. "The sage," he writes, for example, in Epist. 85, "is a master in the art of controlling evils. Pain, poverty, shame, prison, banishment, terrible everywhere else, become mild when they come upon him."

52/53

The sufferings of imprisonment form the background of most of the so-called Pauline epistles, and the overall picture that the Apostle gives of his troubles and afflictions (2 Corinthians 11:23-28) unmistakably displays his independence from Seneca's terrifying descriptions. "I have worked much harder," the Apostle is said to write, "been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea." We can safely leave the much-extended list of endured dangers after this stay in the depths of the sea.

53

Amédée Fleury, the learned author of "Deliciae theologicae Pragenses," reminded us (Tom. II. pag. 247-249 of his work) how Abraham Scultetus, the court preacher and ecclesiastical-political advisor of Elector Palatine Frederick, found time to write his book while participating in the diplomacy of the short-lived Bohemian kingdom of this prince in Prague in 1620. In it, he demonstrated that the Apostle Paul had visibly been inspired by the letters of Heraclitus. Although Fleury also found the connection between Pauline literature and the letters of Heraclitus noteworthy, he hastened to conclude by pointing out their apocryphal character and their late origin, and surmised

that it was more likely that the author of the two letters in question had had the Apostle's epistles in mind and had copied them.

53/54

After proving the late origin of the Pauline epistles, the possibility of the reverse is not precluded for us. However, both Heraklitic letters, which belong to the first Christian century, have a special interest since they prove the entanglement of the admired Heraklit by Christian writers of the second and third centuries with Platonic and Stoic asceticism. When the supposed Ephesian writes to his friend Hermodorus (in the fourth letter of the collection of "The Heraklitic Letters" edited by Bernays, Berlin 1869): "I have successfully fought many terrible battles," and then lists all his victories and triumphs, he leads us, even though his opponents are moral desires and defects, into the atmosphere of an era whose representatives present themselves to us in the position of combat-ready or triumphing fighters. The other passage admired by Scultetus in the letter to Amphidamas (the fifth in the aforementioned collection): "my soul already senses its liberation from this prison and, peering out from the shaken body, remembers the homeland from which it descended into the husk of a flowing and dead body," has its parallels in the previously demonstrated sayings of Seneca and the letter to the Philippians, and provides additional evidence of the escapism of a time that wanted to escape this world altogether.

54/55

We hasten to a conclusion! Only in passing can we mention the view of significant men such as Huet, who wanted to find in Seneca's writings evidence of his acquaintance with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. However, the insightful Bishop of Avranches had already been countered by contemporary Germans, who argued that the Roman Stoic's attributes for the creative and ordering principle were taken too personally, while in Seneca they are merely names for the same One that can be chosen arbitrarily or according to the various relations of the One. For example, in the consolation letter to Helvia, chapter 8, when it says "whoever he may be, let him be an almighty God, or an incorporeal, creative reason in mighty works, or a divine breath (spiritus) stretched out in uniform tension through everything great and small," the choice of which attribute to ascribe to the One is left to everyone's discretion. The continuation of this freedom of designation, "whether he be fate or the unalterable sequence of interconnected causes," would have to yield a quaternity or a fivefold personification of the One to men like Huet or Fleury, rather than the Trinity.

55

The freedom of choice is most clearly demonstrated in the Quaest. natural. (2, 45), where Seneca explains that Jupiter can be called "not the one worshipped in the Capitol and other temples, who is made to play with lightning, but the one who, according to the conviction of the enlightened, is the guardian and ruler of the universe, the animating spirit, the master and craftsman of this earthly world. One may call him Fate, the foundation of all, Providence, Nature, the world, the whole, everything visible, completely united in its parts and carrying itself through its own power, and one will not err."

Philo preceded Seneca in these matters and was able to penetrate the construction of the divine before his Roman colleague in the new community that formed under the influence of Alexandria and Rome. His combination of Stoicism with the Platonic world-maker, who transformed matter after the model of ideas, gave the Stoic logos a separate scope between the anonymous being and the world and allowed it to emerge as the mediator, in whose form and office we find him especially in the Pauline letters and in the fourth gospel. Seneca's influence on the formation of that community, on the other hand, is based on the ascetic character of his considerations on man and his relationship to his creator and on his efforts to personally embody the ideal of a mediator between earth and heaven and to impart to him the utmost seriousness through the test of struggle and suffering.

The value of his Stoic formulas about the true Jupiter's polyonymy was not entirely wrongly assessed by educated men like Huet, even against their knowledge and will, when they extracted from them the germ of the later doctrine of the Trinity.

The asceticism of his view of humanity led him inevitably to a spiritualistic transformation of Stoic theology. Thus, although he confesses a couple of times (e.g. Epist. 106, 117) to the orthodox belief of the school that everything active is a body, he could not bring himself to call the creative reason, which he lists as one of the names of the world ruler in the passage cited in the letter to Helvia, corporeal. The speculation of some scholars that "incorporalis" is a Christian alteration is unnecessary; "corporeal" would have been too harsh for him. He goes so far beyond the theory of his master that in the preface to his investigations into nature, he poses the question of whether God created once and for all or creates continually, and it would be nice (utile) to know "whether he creates matter himself or finds it already given."

Now a word about the position of Seneca and the Pauline letters regarding slavery! Fleury believes that the influence of Christianity led Seneca to adopt views on the human rights of slaves, and that the later reforms of Roman law were thus indebted to the authority of Nero's teacher. However, we need only recall the major shift that occurred in the Stoic doctrine with regard to the general perception of the master-slave relationship. The Cynics had already broken the conventional barrier and boasted of their slaves as members of their brotherhood. Zeno leveled the class distinctions in the name of virtue; the tragic and comic stages of Athens made the freedom of the soul the regulator of human esteem, and Plautus brought their teachings to the Roman stage. To prove the harmony of the Greek poets and philosophers with their time, shall we recall the opening up of the bourgeois class by the wars between Greek city-states and by Alexander and his successors' devastation, and the inclusion of slaves in the citizen armies? Or the economic upheaval in labor relations that transformed slave labor into wage labor and eventually into free labor? Or the similar reversal in Rome, which led to numerous manumissions and, under Augustus and Claudius, produced laws for the milder treatment of slaves?

Enough, Seneca had learned to hold in high esteem the general human right of slaves from the Stoics (and also from Epicurus, compare Epist. 107). In the third book of his work "De Beneficiis" (chapters 18-28), he draws numerous examples from the history of the Roman civil wars of slaves who, in a time of general brutality and cruelty, saved their masters by dedication and self-sacrifice, thus providing evidence "that virtue is not closed to anyone and that even the slave can be just and magnanimous."

Furthermore, he was also ahead of later reformers in establishing the intimacy between master and servant on the basis of their shared dependence on a common superior (fate). His statement that slaves are not only "human beings, household members, friends, but fellow slaves" (conservi; Epist. 47) became, in Christian form (Ephesians 6:5-9), the union of servant and master in the same service under Christ.

Yes, Seneca was even ahead of Paul in the letters in rejecting dangerous consequences. In the above-mentioned letter, the Roman had to deal with the objection that "he would thus put the freedom cap on the slave and bring the masters down from their heights, if he demanded that the slave should obey his master without fear." And he, as the original, had the audacity to insist simply that he should honor him as he would honor a superior, as a client whom he respects. The composition of the letter to Philemon, in which Paul sends back to Philemon an unprofitable slave (Onesimus, meaning "useful"), who had run away from his master but has now been won for Christ by him, and asks for his friendly acceptance as a dear brother, is

nothing more than Christian apologetics against the same accusation that the new association would ultimately dissolve the relationship of slavery.

58

It remains to be noted (without digressing to Heraklitus and the earlier Stoic philosophy) that Seneca provided Christian authors with materials for their depiction of the Last Things through his description of the world fire that precedes the renewal of the universe. In his writing to Marcia, he states that the world will burn in fire, everything will be consumed by its own energy, star will collide with star, and everything that now shines in order will burn in a single mass of fire. The same imagery appears in the New Testament's portrayal of the end of the world (2 Peter 3:12-13). Seneca also contributed to the development of Christian funeral rites, as his notion of the Heraklitean calm after death (avánavots) and the belief that the deceased rests in eternal peace and quiet (ad Polybium cap. 28; ad Marciam cap. 19, 24) influenced the Church's view of the afterlife. Seneca's letter to Marcia (cap. 25), in which he comforts her by saying that her deceased son is purged of the earthly remains and infirmities before ascending to the realm of blessed spirits, gave rise to the doctrine of purgatory.

As we conclude this section, some of our readers may still wonder whether it was really the case that the authors of several New Testament writings had Seneca's letters and essays in their hands.

58/59

First, let us recall the biblical authors' own citations of literary works, which prove that they were not unfamiliar with classical literature and were well aware of its intersections with their message. When the Paul of the letter to Titus, whom he had left behind in Crete to combat local seducers, exhorts him to perseverance, he refers him to a Cretan poet who had characterized his compatriots by saying that they "are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." According to the Church Fathers, who were still in possession of the relevant literature, it was the Cretan Epimenides who was supposed to have dedicated this kindness to his compatriots in one of his mystic-philosophical poems.

59

The author of the first letter to the Corinthians (15, 33) weaves the verse "Bad company ruins good morals" into his exhortations. Jerome tells us that the trimeter belongs to Menander; Grotius and Meineke believe they can assert that it is from that playwright's "Thais" that the apostle took his citation. However, the tragic poets of Athens, as well as the masters of the

newer comedy, also brought the teachings of philosophers to the stage as a moral guide for life; their works therefore offered the apostles of strict moral guidance many opportunities for inspiration and connection.

The popular teachers of the time also turned to the more serious exponents of stoic philosophy. The author of the Acts of the Apostles is aware of the intimate relationship between the new faith and the teaching of the Stoics and has the Apostle Paul appeal to the Athenians for the agreement of his message with the sayings of one of their poets in his speech. The poet is Cleanthes, Zeno's successor in the leadership of the "hall"; the apostle's quotation "we are of his offspring" is taken from his hymn to Zeus, and in the opening of the speech, "in him we live and move and have our being," is from Aratus' saying (in his "Phenomena") about the omnipresence of God - a passage that also inspired Virgil in his aforementioned stoic apostrophe.

59/60

The Christian authors also found inspiration in Plato. The phrase with which the leaders of the early community twice defended themselves before the high council in Jerusalem (Acts 4:19, 5:29, "We must obey God rather than men") is taken verbatim from Socrates' speech to his judges in Plato's Apology. And just as the Athenian sage continues, "I will not cease to practice philosophy as long as I breathe," so too the disciples of the Christian community, even in the face of threats from the high council, continue their preaching with unwavering commitment.

60

But one might object that Seneca is not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament parallels. Neither is Plato's name, when a saying is borrowed from him, nor that of Philemon, the author of the comic stage, when, for example, in 1 Timothy 2:11-12, his words are used to recommend the subjection of women to men. Nor is Menander's name mentioned when, in the question of the first letter to the Corinthians (6:7), the saying of the master of the comic stage, "The best man is he who knows how to suffer the most injustice," is clearly implied by the author.

Seneca could not be cited for two reasons. Firstly, his Latin did not fit into the literary exchange that was conducted in the Greek language between Greece, Alexandria, and Rome in the Greek lingua franca. Furthermore, we have in the so-called Pauline letters only a late literature that was preceded by many modulations of Greek and Latin fundamentals, just as in our present three first Gospels, various types and attempts that underlie them are still visible today. It can, therefore, be assumed with certainty that the Roman-Jewish circle that formed in Rome during the Flavian period had already been

engaged in transforming Seneca's treasures into symbols of their community in many ways, and that the new wisdom of sayings had been spread by the Jewish wandering people and their foreign connections to Greece and the Orient, without the final compilers of such sayings always knowing the original source.

60/61

The similarity in style that occurs between Seneca's main clauses and the New Testament parallels remains, despite all this, a strong indication that the authors of such parallels, such as the one we started this section with, had the Roman philosopher's writings in mind. Fleury has only juxtaposed brief sentences or dogmatic catchwords from Seneca and the Bible in parallel; but if one considers the stylistic form of composition and diction on both sides, one will recognize that on the side of the Roman, content and form develop originally and have their natural motivation, while on the side of the New Testament, a given material is sharpened into new points.

61

9. Seneca's Compromises.

After having presented Seneca as a religious founder and the extensive influence of his foundation in the writings of the New Testament, we can leave it to the judgment of our readers to decide whether the harsh and dismissive hardness with which Mr. Schiller (p. 626 ff. of his work) speaks of the Roman sage can give a picture of his historical significance.

"Seneca," says Schiller, "wrote because it was fashionable and writing was a power. The phrase dominates the presentation (in his writings) completely; for it has the task of replacing the warmth of feeling and moral depth that he lacked and without which an ethical writer can never be effective. It is not the thought that determines the expression, but to gain a piquant antithesis, everything is distorted and skewed, and to seem witty, the writer often only grasps at the external means and characteristics of wit. In his own consciousness of his limited talent for dialectical and representational art, Seneca sought to replace the noble popularity that the Greeks had achieved, because they were able to draw from the abundance of material and life with full hands and the linguistic presentation of the right thought followed naturally, through bons mots and aphorisms, even through forced means of rhetoric."

61/62

The fact that the Greeks drew from the abundance of material and life is as

little said as with the modern call: "Just reach into the fullness of human life!" As for the Greek philosophers who are of particular interest to us in this matter, it was rather the misfortune and emptiness of their surroundings that drove them to seek inner peace and lasting happiness. The absolutism of democracy and its kinship, as well as its apparently futile struggle with the rising military dictatorship, heralded to them the loss of their homeland and made politics unattractive, for the shattered principles of which they sought compensation in the world order and its conformity with their own ego. Originality, which Herr Schiller completely misses in Seneca, is rare in the world as a whole; during the time from Heraclitus to Christianity, and even until the end of the Middle Ages (if we disregard Luther's affinity with the ancestor of Greek philosophy here), we had to be content with the processing of the wisdom of the Ephesians in the highest questions.

62

The "bon mots" with which Schiller's Seneca is said to embellish his poverty of talent for dialectics and composition are rather a concentration of the wisdom that came from Heraclitus through Plato to the Cynics and Stoics into gripping sayings, a reduction of philosophical research to the one thing that is necessary, and an application of theory to the needs of the soul.

62/63

The supposedly witty antitheses that Schiller's Seneca is supposed to use to produce the appearance of wit are rather the opposites in which his time lived, and which he formulated in a concise language. Spirit and flesh, illness and deceptive health, the wealth of poverty, the blessing of misfortune and the joy of misery, the invigorating and uplifting power of suffering - this disharmony that triumphs was what the time since the calamity of the civil wars felt as a solution to the general misfortune, and Seneca brought it to clarity with his cutting sayings. The perseverance of the Stoic under the blows of misfortune and the jubilation of the Cynic over his unreachability for the attacks of the world had provided the first structure for these sayings, and the devotion that had spread for a time after the victory of the Prince of Peace at Actium in the general mood and in the language of the poets, as well as in the reorganization of the state, had brought about the religious attitude with which Seneca traced the solution of his antitheses back to the world order of his organizing deity.

63

Another feature of Schiller's Seneca's portrait is that, according to the historian of the Neronian period, "he is not rigorous towards circumstances, and his basic idea about moral progress is that life consists of compromises,

and by constantly seeking to achieve such compromises between his teachings and his life, between Epicureanism and Stoicism, and between form and content, he comes to the view that a small and hardly noticeable step forward is to be preferred to the complete rejection of a too rigid demand."

Seneca's willingness to compromise should not be understood as petty. He usually expresses himself differently. For example, in his fifth letter he says, "the name 'philosopher' is already offensive in itself, even if it appears very unassuming, so one should not further provoke people with a contrived appearance and rather strive for a better way of life than that of the world and not alienate those one wants to improve by acting in the opposite way; also, the contentment that philosophy demands is by no means a mortification and torture of the body; one would scare away those one wants to improve by living conspicuously."

Similarly, in the first letter to the Corinthians (9:10-22), Paul states that he has adapted to everyone in order to win some: "To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."

This condescension towards the world does not hesitate to address even the most ordinary detail of casuistry. Philo (see my work on him) deals with the question of whether the wise man may allow himself to become intoxicated, and answers in the affirmative. Similarly, Seneca believes (in Tranquill. cap. 1) that "one must do something for the sake of the soul and sometimes allow it some leisure, which serves it for nourishment and strengthening. Sometimes even a little drunkenness is permissible, not that it drags us down, but it submerges us a little. This washes away our cares and shakes up the spirit in its depths." And does not the passage in the first letter to Timothy (5:23), "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" also belong to this category?

In my critique of the Pauline epistles, I have shown that the two letters to the Corinthians, which are usually considered, along with the letters to the Romans and Galatians, as the pillars of the alleged Pauline literature, are a compromise attempt from the second century. This century was a time of lively oscillation between conflict and compromise, and one should not interpret the latter, from which the universal (Catholic) church emerged,

along with the previous strife, according to the schema of the conflict and entanglement between Jewish and Gentile Christians, on which theology has been working until this moment without arriving at a sustainable result.

The period after the downfall of the Greek and Roman republics was generally a period of compromises, as criticism of its mythological philosophy went beyond the powers of antiquity and only the mythological fusion and unification of its acquired laws of life remained for the expanded world circle.

64/65

Entering into a compromise by itself does not make a flaw. Seneca's religious foundation was based on the combination of the unshakable wisdom of the Stoic philosophy supported by Platonic asceticism with the gentle ideal of the martyr who proves himself in suffering and shame, which shone out of the darkness of civil war. And in the maturity of his development, he also befriended the morality of Epicurus, a man whom he often mentions in the letters to Lucilius, even though he, figuratively speaking, walks in female attire. He needed the tranquility and inner peace of this man to fully reconcile himself and his friends with the withdrawal from the world and its activities.

65

Nevertheless, Seneca's life is marked by a compromise that involved him in the intrigues of the Claudian court and the bloody state actions that, prepared in these intrigues, came to maturity under Nero, and has occupied the judgment of the world about him until now. He, the wise man who estranged the minds of the people from the affairs of state with his doctrine, undermined the imperial throne, and called into existence a band that could only maintain itself at the cost of Rome, accepted Agrippina's invitation to become the tutor of her son, became Nero's leading minister, and was close to the tragedies that spread terror over the reign of this emperor. Finally forced into actual retirement by the displeasure of his lord, he looked with sympathy on a conspiracy that threatened to overthrow the emperor and elevate the wise man to the throne. Let us now attempt to describe and interpret the risk of this compromise.

II.

Seneca as teacher and minister of Nero.

1. The dissolution of Roman particularism.

With Nero's self-inflicted fall, the Julian dynasty disappeared from the world stage. The empire, established by the great Julius and his adopted nephew Augustus through the force of arms, was considered the inheritance of a family that intimidated doubters of their right with their military might. Since the two founders of the family lacked their own male heirs and the Julian bloodline was only maintained through the female branch, the adoption of the Claudian lineage into the collective household brought about a conflict between two lines. While the numerous deaths that had already thinned the family under Augustus and cast a shadow over his reign were wrongly attributed by popular legend to poisoning, there was no shortage of actual murders among his successors, in which Nero's mother eventually proved herself to be a master, until this emperor cleared the way around him and stood as the last sprout of the Caesar family.

66/67

The descendants of the men who fell in battle against Caesar and Augustus had been called to share in the glory of the victors through marriage into the imperial family, and they all suffered the same dark fate that plagued the descendants of the triumphant. When the last of the Julians begged a freedman for the mercy of a death blow, the corpses of the Antonii, Aemilii, Junii, Pompeii - all related to the Caesars - as well as the last scion of the dictator Sulla, had piled up for a hundred years at the foot of the throne. A vast grave covered the memories of the civil wars; victors and defeated who had been granted mercy were consigned to the same oblivion by generations that lived for new ideas and interests.

67

Even among that part of the nobility which had not succeeded in achieving the dangerous and ultimately murderous honor of being admitted into the Caesar family, the first century of the empire had made a tremendous impact. After the civil wars had decimated numerous families and the proscriptions of the last Triumvirate had deprived the old clans of their heads

and possessions, the remaining houses fell into decline through extravagance, involvement in court intrigues, or imperial revenge, which punished their representatives for their participation in the numerous conspiracies.

Caesar and Augustus had widened the gaps that the civil wars had torn in the ranks of the Senate, expelled the impoverished and downtrodden who could no longer represent the dignity of the high body, and removed supporters of the republican past with a commanding nod or the force of their dictatorship. In the vacancies created on the benches of the noble corporation by time and the censor's command, they brought low-born followers who had proven themselves in civilian service and in the army during the civil wars, as well as those who had demonstrated themselves as pillars of the new regime in the provincial colonies.

67/68

Meanwhile, a transformation was taking place among the common people, which, like the transformation of the Senate, weakened Roman urban particularism and prepared it to merge into the broad currents of a world community. The Triumvirs had won their battles with the help of foreign peoples, who were still considered barbarians at that time, and rewarded the foreign hordes with citizenship and a share of the Italian estates, the loss of which was a punishment for their opponents. Mixing and daily interaction with these newcomers gradually smoothed out the peculiarities and memories of the lower classes, especially in the capital, and the nobles found themselves, as far as they managed to maintain themselves above the new mixture, isolated in the middle of a mass with which they had lost their connection.

68

Emperor Claudius completed this isolation of the old nobility – when the Senate was once again thinned out despite the latest replacements – by invoking the example of his ancestors from Julius Caesar to Tiberius, who had brought freedmen and the flower of provincial cities and colonies into the Senate, and also introduced representatives of the Gallic Aedui into the corporation of the nobility.

And so it happened that the old gentlemen of the curia and representatives of Roman particularism in the Senate, after the old bond connecting them with the local public had been loosened and almost cut off, saw themselves surrounded by a new elite drawn from those just-defeated barbarians, who were better equipped to sympathize with the more recently arrived world public teeming in Rome than could the Calpurnians, Cornelians and other

important members of the old regime.

The last remainder of these high nobles was still exhausted by the harsh fate imposed on them by Nero's government, and under the Flavians, the era of the new Senate could begin, which was supplemented by representatives from rural towns, colonies, and barbarians, just as the emperors from now on had their origin outside of Rome and then outside of Italy, and finally emerged from the barbarians.

68/69

The decline of the Caesar family also manifested itself in the weakening of the military prowess of its leaders. The victor of Actium, who left the school of Apollonia as a young man to take up the fight for his uncle's will against all Roman factions and, in alliance with his general, put an end to the civil wars, was strengthened in the wisdom of his decision by the destruction of his legions in Germany in the last years of his reign, that the risks of foreign ventures must yield to the fusion of the imperial peoples. His two stepsons, Tiberius and Drusus, had to be content with securing the Rhine and keeping the peoples south of the Danube in check, and the futile incursions of his nephew, Germanicus, into Germany forced Tiberius to order the legions on the Rhine to stand down. Caligula continued this policy in the north but himself stormed into Gaul to depose and execute Lentulus Gaetulicus, who had aroused suspicion with his troops on the Rhine against Tiberius with impunity and had now conspired in collusion with the emperor's sisters. Claudius even took command of the army that invaded Britain under Aulus Plautius and his legate Flavius Vespasianus, personally laying the foundation for Roman rule beyond the Channel, while his predecessor had only negotiated with British friends from the coast of Gaul.

69

Nero, on the other hand, never led troops or commanded an army and, in the final moment when Vindex in Gaul and Galba in Spain rose up, he was so overwhelmed by the rumors that alarmed the Roman crowds that he himself robbed his bodyguard of the desire to draw their swords for him.

69/70

Tacitus already pointed out (Annal. 13, 3) a characteristic that distinguished Nero from his ancestors on the throne. In the context of the funeral speech for Claudius, written by Seneca, the author of the history of the emperors mentioned that at that time it was noted how Nero was the first of the Roman rulers to use foreign eloquence. Julius Caesar, Tacitus adds to explain this retrospective, could compete with the greatest masters for the palm of

speech. Augustus spoke fluently off the cuff, had a dignified delivery befitting a prince, and practiced a devoted and expressive style that contained all sought-after phrases and flowing expressions. Tiberius was a master of careful word weighing and made an impression with the power of his thoughts, if he did not prefer to speak ambiguously on purpose and leave the interpretation to the listeners. Even the disturbed mind of Caligula, the opponent of the Julian family, was said not to have ruined the power of the imperial eloquence, while we hear from Suetonius (Calig. cap. 53) that the son of Germanicus gained great ease and skill through a thorough study of eloquence and believed himself to be far superior to his teacher Seneca, whose delivery he considered artificial and contrived and whose speeches he despised as mere panegyrics. Probably the threat attributed to him, that he would "draw the sword of his nocturnal meditations" if he wanted to speak (in the Senate to defend or defeat a high accused person), was only a caricature with which his opponents in the noble circles made fun of the passion that sometimes emerged in his speech. Tacitus credits the allegedly dimwitted Claudius, who occasionally allowed himself some naive combinations in private conversations, with the fame that, when he appeared prepared, he combined elegance with understanding, and even Suetonius admits (Claud. 40) that he was not without the gift of speech as a whole.

70/71

With Nero, the art of living speech had completely come to a halt, and while his arm for wielding the sword with which his ancestors won world domination had grown weak, his mind also possessed none of that power with which the founders of the Julian power, before drawing the sword as evidence of their right, wrestled with their opponents on the forum and in the curia. The forum had long been silent; the Senate, whose willingness and compliance the emperors from Augustus to Claudius knew how to gain or enforce depending on the nature of their minds and changing circumstances, was finally appeased by a rhetorical prompter until the assembly of the fathers was convinced of the end of their rule by bloody executions. After Nero's fall, the storm of eloquence between the collaborators of the Neronian government, the accusers of the opposition, and the republicans broke out once again in the curia, but was soon pacified by a hint from Mucian and Domitian, the deputies of the still absent Vespasian.

71

The Julio-Claudian period, during which the fiction of hereditary succession was supported by military might and Roman eloquence, is over and the rulers of the world could now come from any corner of the earth.

Another aspect in which Nero's person marks a turning point in the history of

Roman genius deserves special attention. We mean his position on the world of gods, in which he shared neither Augustus's conviction of his alliance with the heavenly powers nor Caligula's fanatical belief in his real divinity. He wanted to be nothing more than a human being, a pure human and a mere mortal, but to represent in his person the highest that human nature can produce in power and intellectual ability.

2. Nero as nothing more than a human being.

He was, as Suetonius (Nero, ch. 56) puts it, "a despiser of religion throughout." The worship of the Syrian goddess, which he once dedicated himself to, he soon abandoned after having desecrated the image of the goddess in a proud and contemptuous manner. He then developed a lasting affection for a girl's toy, a doll, which an unknown man from the people had given him as a countermeasure against hostile pursuits. When the amulet proved effective in the discovery of a conspiracy, he elevated it to his highest being, offered it a triple daily sacrifice and used it to keep his opponents in fear by pretending that it provided him with insights into the future.

71/72

His profane-autonomous nature, which was primarily focused on the acquisition of power, also manifested itself in his practice of "false arts," to which he devoted money, effort, and study, according to Pliny (Natural History 30.5). As a sorcerer and necromancer, he exerted control over the shades of the underworld and forced them to appear before him and speak to him about the future. When Tiridates came to Rome to pay homage and receive investiture with Armenia, he had to provide Nero with new insights into magic and initiate him into the secrets of magical rites. Commanding the shades and rulers of the underworld was almost as important to him as his desire to be the foremost in playing the zither and singing tragedy.

72

While there are many reports of public expiatory, supplicatory, and thanksgiving festivals during his imperial reign, as Tacitus expressly notes, it is mostly the Senate that arranges such events. For example, the Senate orders thanksgiving festivals for individual favorable turns in the Armenian War, as well as for Nero's rescue from the hostile plots of his internal enemies such as Sulla, Plautus, and Piso, or for the redemption of the vows made by the assembled fathers during the pregnancy of Poppaea. When the augurs, as well as the Sibylline Books, spoke out for the purification of the city and for penitential festivals following notable events such as the fire of

Rome, the Senate had taken the initiative for consulting the soothsayers and the sacred books.

The Senate did a service to the emperor by calming the people with supplicatory festivals after the fire of Rome left them homeless and distraught. The accompanying thanksgiving festivals for the Armenian War were a tribute to the overlord, to whom the successes of his military servants were laid at his feet in his palace, and the arrangement of festivals for the defeat of his mother and noble opponents expresses the renewed recognition of his rule.

72/73

Religion had become a dead machinery of state service. The relieved sigh with which Augustus acknowledged the favor of the gods after the defeat of Antony, who had accepted him as co-ruler over the earth, belonged to a bygone era. The admiration that came to Virgil when he glorified the renewal of religion in the cult celebrations of Aeneas on his travels was soon limited to his brilliant praise of the Roman profession of world domination and to the episodes in which he celebrated the heroes of the recent historical past. Perhaps one gradually felt the groan in the verses of the national poet, with which he brought out the features for his picture of the Trojan emigrant from the treasure trove of his cult scholarship and laboriously united them into holy idylls. The religious consecration, which Ovid spread over the daily life of the household and the people in his "Fasti," was soon only enjoyed aesthetically, as the restoration poets of the Augustan period owed their success, in which they basked, certainly primarily to the smoothing of their diction, which flowed without gaps, extravagances, and disturbing exhaustion.

73

Alongside these artists of language, however, there were also two true and still touching poets who kept themselves apart from the political interests of their time and created their eternity through the depiction of their soul experiences. The one, who allegedly died in the year of Virgil's birth, always called upon with respect, even forced, until the time of Macrobius, the recognition of the originality of his diction, which was used by the singer of the Aeneid; the other, who emerged in the last days of Augustus, was revered in a circle of quiet people whose private cult he owed, which allowed him to survive the dangerous path to the Middle Ages in some manuscripts. Both Lucretius and Manilius have set themselves to the interpretation of the mystery of the universe and have put their poetry into the inner experience and the mastery of the powerful material through the bound speech. Both proud to have broken new paths for the spirit, the former the creator of his diction, the latter in possession of his own power, which he strengthened by

the example of his predecessor and occasionally adorned with the rhetorical combinations of later times, while he remained independent of the small change of formulas from which the poets of the Augustan era gathered the poetic language treasure of the nation.

74

Both of them stand far above the official service which the poets of the Latin golden age dedicate to the glorification of the nation and the rulers. Free from Roman particularism, they cast deep glances into the course and law of history, and dedicate their interest mostly to the experiences, troubles, and inner triumphs of the soul. Though they practiced their poetic gift on opposing systems, the older one on the Epicurean formation of the world from itself and on the liberation of man from the terrors of the old temple service; but the younger one also brought the modern spirit of freedom into the heavenly absolutism of the Stoics, and transformed the harmony of the world, nature, and man with their divine archetype and source into a free assent of the image (alterno consensu, Astronomicon 2, 60 ff.). The encounter and covenant between the heavenly and the earthly, the supreme reason and the upward-striving and expanding soul, is based on their mutual need, by which they seek each other and confirm the kinship in a free alliance. Thus, Manilius gave bold expression to the sense of god which expanded the breast of men at his time, stating that man, as a related image, goes up to seek himself above, in heaven, in his father (4, 883 ff., 905 ff.) and, on the other hand, God descends into the breast of man, takes up residence there, and likewise allows Himself to be sought (2, 108).

74/75

Lucretius, the enemy of the gods, has only declared war on the higher beings of antiquity. Even in his world created by his own power of imagination, gods emerge; for him, one god is Epicurus, who freed humanity from the terrors of the old service, and even Empedocles, whom he celebrates, can hardly, as he believes, have come from human seed (On the Nature of Things 1, 734). If Manilius attributes the divine status to Augustus a few times (Astronomy 1, 9) or presents it as certain and assured, he is far from the courtly service of Horace and only celebrates the "divine horizon" of humanity, which makes gods itself, sends divine beings to the stars, and under the rule of Augustus will expand the heavens (4, 963-965).

75

Although Lucretius and Manilius did not have a great reputation among the public, the simplicity of their diction echoes the ideal that their time aspired to. The ideal was a god-man, emerging from the power of the autonomous world or from the mutual attraction between the upper and earthly regions.

Against this background of the zeitgeist, Nero's purely human nature and his separation from the higher powers appear all the more peculiar, but even more striking when compared to Caligula with all the pomp of his divinity.

Nero wanted to embody all the greatness attainable in the world as a human being and rule over humanity; in contrast, Caligula adorned himself with the attributes of divinity to demonstrate his omnipotence. Manilius saw the expansion of the heavens through the naturalization of a god-man as evidence of the divine power of humanity; for Nero and Caligula, the choice between being a pure human or a god-man was also a matter of power. Both wanted to prove the extent of their own personality; Nero insisted on himself, and the son of Germanicus refused to bend to anything in the world and, like a Stoic, said that nothing was dearer or more honorable to him than his "steadfastness" / "imperturbability" (ἀδιαταραξία), as he expressed it scholastically (Suetonius, Caligula 29). He thought his predecessors were weak and timid because they did not yet know their power well: as he told his grandmother Antonia (Suetonius, Ibid.), he had realized that he was free to do anything and everything against everyone.

75/76

Caesar and Augustus had fought their way to power with the sword and had to face the strength of their opponents, and then established their principate through leniency and respect for old customs. Before retreating to Capri to avoid personal friction with the nobility, Tiberius had ingratiated himself with the watchword of liberal absolutism, that he was nothing but a servant of the state. "I have said it now and often," he told the Senate (Suetonius, Tiberius, chapter 29), "a good and prosperous ruler must be a servant of the Senate and the people, for the general good and also for the private good, and I have had and still have masters in you who are good, fair, and friendly."

76

This modesty and such detours seemed outdated to Caligula's self-esteem; he no longer wanted to recognize any dangers, to possess the basis of his power within himself, and as the sole owner of the world, to be master over everything that his granting and grace still allowed the private individuals to enjoy. Compared to Nero, and probably also in his eyes, he was still a novice and beginner in this exercise of power, because he hid behind the masks of the heavenly ones to impress his contemporaries.

As this mighty overlord of the world, he emerged from his palace with the crown of rays and other insignia of the ancient gods, let himself be greeted by the cheering people as the present deity, threatened the Senate with the sword, stormed to Gaul to crush conspirators, made the impossible possible in colossal buildings, delighted the masses as a singer, dancer, charioteer,

and fencer, dealt with disagreeable persons who wanted to be something special with humorous sparks, planned the reform of the law according to his own dictates, directed world literature with his not uneducated taste, and had a special eye on Virgil, whom he (Suetonius, Calig. Chap. 36) denied creative spirit, probably because he had struggled to revive the ancient gods in their worn-out majesty.

76/77

Caligula was right. The heavens could become the prey of the bold. The gods no longer felt entirely safe in their old seats, and among the people, there spread the legend that they were considering fleeing and bidding farewell to their homes. In Alexandria, for example, as Plutarch tells us in "Antony," on the night before the battle of Actium, they had heard the gods leaving the city, filling the air with their voices and the noise of departure, while the sound of holy instruments accompanied their flight. The departure of the gods went out through the northern city gate, which faced the enemy camp. Josephus has told us about the same departure of the national God of the Jews from his sanctuary, informing the last defenders of Jerusalem that their God had gone over to the Romans and now resided in Italy. The gods, both Jehovah and Isis, had become wanderers, seeking refuge with the victors.

77

While the foreign invaders turned some souls away from the Capitoline god, the Romans also felt something of the fickleness of their divine protectors. The Republican cursed their treacherous fickleness. In the evening of the battle of Pharsalus, Lucan has his Pompey recognize (Phars. 7, 647) that the gods had fled his camp, that is, according to the view of Magnus and his poet, from Rome, the Republic, and the Senate. However, the poet of the Pharsalia also has vengeance in store and in sight for this injustice that the ancient gods have committed against the freedom and destiny of humanity: Rome adorns and arms (7, 455ff.) the spirits of its great men with lightning and divine rays, sends them to the heavenly civil war against the old deities above, and below in the temples of the traitors, swears by its chosen shades and blessed ones.

77/78

The supposed disturbed mind, as Tacitus expresses it, or the excessive ambition of Caligula consisted in wanting to walk and command among men as a god while still alive. The idea itself was not new. His ancestor, the triumvir Antony, had already shown himself as Dionysus, according to the fashion of the Greek-Macedonian rulers, in Egypt, Asia, and even to the Athenians who went out to meet him with his wife and children and greeted him as Liber Pater. On this last occasion, the daring Athenians got into

trouble when they invited him to marry their Athena, for which they had to pay their goddess's dowry of a thousand talents (Seneca Rhetor, Suasoria I). The court of the triumvir with Cleopatra was that of a god, and Plancus, the traitor of all the parties of the civil war, dressed up as his divine servant Glaukus in Alexandria to please Liber Pater, sliding naked and blue-painted on the ground with a reed crown on his head and ending in a fish tail before his divine master (Vellej. Paterc. II, 83).

78

However, this was in barbarian lands or in the provinces. Augustus allowed himself to be worshipped in temples in provincial towns in connection with the deity Roma. The modest and even timid Claudius founded a temple in the military colony of Camulodunum in the newly re-opened Britain, where he was worshipped as a deity while a native priesthood officiated. What was new about Caligula was only the openness and recklessness with which he presented himself as a living pantheon in the middle of Rome, in front of the eyes of the Senate and the high aristocracy. Suetonius has transmitted to us numerous sayings of this emperor, but none of them testified to folly or an insane mind. Either they contain a witty and pointed characterization of outstanding personalities of the early imperial period, the nobility, and literature, or they are the stark expression of the arrogance with which he looked down on the broken and abandoned Rome at his feet, abandoned even by his own nobles. Some sayings of the latter kind may have been invented by his aristocratic opponents.

78/79

Whether Nero, by taking a different path to assert his state power, was warned by the violent death of his maternal uncle, or whether he lacked the elemental fire and sanguineous energy that propelled Caligula's will and imagination upwards and onto the throne of the Capitol, we shall not inquire here. Enough, he wanted to exercise sovereignty over the world as a prince, without divine attributes, and stand at the head of humanity as a human being. "No prince," he said, "has known what he may do" (Suetonius, Nero Chapter 37). He wanted to show how far the power of the human ruler could go.

79

The Greek-Macedonian spirit of the Orient did not hesitate to flatter Nero on coins as Zeus and as the savior of the world (σωτηρ της οιχουμενης), and his mother as the mother of God (θεομητωρ). However, Nero himself did not follow through on the request of Senator Cerialis Anicius, after the suppression of the Pisonian conspiracy, that a temple be immediately built for him at state expense. Being human and achieving all human triumphs for

his person was the highest goal for him. Tacitus suggests in his confused pragmatism and convoluted language that he did not want to comply with his enemies, who wished for his imminent death and the orderly and prosaic condition of his apotheosis (Annal. 15, 74). Moreover, that proposer took his own life shortly thereafter, as he had been denounced as an enemy of the prince in his will by the father of Lucan, who was allegedly an accomplice of his son and Piso in the death sentence. Nero had probably already known his man before.

But to get a complete view of the field on which Nero and his teacher and minister worked together, we still need to visit a special school of humanity, the exercise halls of controversial debates.

79/80

3. The humanist school of the rhetoricians.

The father of our wise man, the rhetorician Annäus Seneca, wrote down his memories of the controversial exercises of his time for his sons, the oldest Novatus, who was later adopted by the rhetorician Gallio, the philosopher Lucius Annäus Seneca, and Mela, the father of Lucan, and provided prefaces to the ten books of his work, five of which are preserved in their entirety, and the others only in extracts, which are highly important for the history of Roman intellectual life. He reports that if he had not been held back at home in the Spanish city of Corduba by the civil wars that engulfed the whole world, he would have been able to hear Cicero, and so had fully experienced the catastrophe that Roman eloquence suffered under the last triumvirate.

80

In one of the declamation exercises that he presented to his controversy group (Suasoria 6), the question is debated whether Cicero should make amends to Antonius, and the majority of the speakers declare it impossible for the great orator to re-enter a Senate that had been cruelly purged and ignominiously replenished, and in which he would find himself like a stranger in a foreign world, condemned to silence. Such is the fate, exclaims a hot-head, that has befallen the Roman people, that we must ask whether it is better to live with Antonius or to die with Cato.

After this confession of the times, we need not emphasize further that interpreting the law in the interest of political disputes was no longer possible or necessary. At Actium, the issues of the forum were decided and the debates were closed. The exercises of the school had to avoid questions for which there was no longer a field of inquiry and instead focus on pre-existing themes. When the new school had taken off and attracted general

attention removed from politics, Augustus was occasionally present as a listener and did not withhold his judgment on the remarkable heads in private, such as when he wished one person, who spoke too fast and too fiercely, to be restrained and said of another, who was particularly strong in extemporizing in court, that he had his genius in bearing, so he did not always need to change his approach.

80/81

Once he attended a controversial exercise with Agrippa and Maecenas, in which Latro, a friend and compatriot of Seneca and one of the leaders of the new school, dealt with the topic of adoption and the elevation to the nobility associated with it (Controv. 2, 12). However, in the heat of his discourse, he was reminded by a hint from Maecenas of the low origins of many noble families, while a prince sat before him who was in the process of adopting his two young grandsons, and that Agrippa, their father, was one of those who had earned nobility through their deeds. His friends regretted that an excuse would only have caused more offense. Nevertheless, the matter passed without further incident, and Seneca concluded the chapter with praise for the freedom that was granted under the divine Augustus.

81

During the reign of Augustus and the first half of Tiberius' rule, there developed an intellectual activity whose significance even the emperors themselves could not yet fully grasp. Seneca explains this to his sons in the preface to the first book of his Controversiae: "Cicero also practiced declamation, but on theses; the subject matter in which we trained was so new that it required a new name; we call it Controversiae, Cicero called it Causae". The old master of eloquence thus trained himself on invented cases that remained within the limits of existing law and did not go beyond the questions that arose in public actions. The more recent rhetoricians, who could no longer attain the reality of the republican proceedings of the Forum, exercised themselves on chimerical questions that affected the law itself and subjected it to doubt and scrutiny, even calling for its denial.

81/82

The outer aspects of these debates later gave them a bad reputation, after they had achieved their purpose and borne fruit. Tacitus complains in the essay de Orat. Chap. 35 about the harm suffered by the spirits in the rhetoric schools, about the refined declamation subjects that are far from all truth and reality, and cites as discouraging examples of these topics the praise of tyrant murderers and the choice of prostituted women for the office of virgin

priestesses. Quintilian (5, 12, 17-20) sees in the declamations only the pleasure of a castrated and dissolved being. Even Petronius, who still stood on the border of the time that saw the flowering of these studies and who otherwise shows a fine sense receptive to the noble efforts of his time in his "Satyrikon", speaks harshly about the "madness of the declamators, who introduce the students into a foreign world and estrange them from the forum". Indeed, the rhetor Seneca portrays (Preface to Controv. Book 4) the heroes he presents to his sons in a dubious way, making them appear as self-satisfied speech heroes. Such a declamator, he writes, brings together all the means of attraction; he disregards argumentation because it is tedious and offers little occasion for rhetorical flourishes. He wants to bring himself, not the matter, to the fore. Accustomed to the applause of a habitual circle, he becomes weak on the forum or collapses altogether.

82

However, the topics of those exercises are sought and absurd, the hair-splitting of casuistry petty, and the language, when the declaimers crush the law of the Twelve Tables in invented collisions, overly pointed. But only at first glance. Rather, if we examine the fabric of these subtle distinctions, points, and exaggerating antitheses more closely, we see a dawn shimmering through it, heralding the rise of a self-aware spirit.

The easiest exercises of the rhetoric school are the Suasoriae. The speaker descends into the soul of a great man who decides about himself and at the same time about the future of the world. There, Cicero advises whether it is appropriate and possible for him to make peace with the conquerors under the new conditions. There, in Suasoria 1, Alexander the Great stands at the edge of the old world and deliberates whether he should venture the journey across the ocean, whether there is another world over there, and whether man needs one such as his old one.

83

It is told of a painter of antiquity that a single brushstroke was enough for him to transform a weeping face into a laughing one. The painter called the stroke that gave his picture the right touch a "printer"; with a bold shadow, he completed the roundness, with a stroke of light, the life of his work. In this sense, the rhetoricians vied with each other as colorists in mastery. A true color caused a sensation; the discoverer was congratulated on his immortality, and once Latro was so delighted with a striking color that he exclaimed (Controv. 1, 2) that he wanted to kiss it.

83/84

We cannot imagine how feverish the excitement that prevailed in these

controversy halls. To the minds compressed by the Caesarist conditions, the cutting antitheses and pointed sentences were a delight. They tore apart the frozen atmosphere of the present and opened up a view into the great human life. In place of the former party motives, general maxims, moral laws, and the secret driving forces of the soul's life came to the fore. The fact that the masters of this rhetoric were no longer at home in the forum, as Seneca, for example, recounts (Controv., Book 4, Preface) before the great declamator Latro, that he once, in defending a compatriot, completely lost his composure, started stammering, and only came back to himself when his request was granted and the hearing was moved from the forum to a basilica, does not diminish the merit of these men. There was no longer any room for rhetorical heroics in the forum, and large actions that gave wings to eloquence occurred only in exceptional cases under the Caesars until Nero.

84

Let us not fail to mention that the Greeks were the first to develop controversies, topics, and their execution in their political leisure, as Seneca noted once (Controv. 5.33) that a particular topic was especially famous among the Greeks, and another time (I, 1) he draws attention to a legal subtlety that the Romans added to the Greek treatment of the topic. Nevertheless, the main thing is that this struggle between morality and law, human rights and state laws, was transferred to the imperial capital and took place before the eyes of the Caesars and guardians of the law.

84/85

Now for some examples! It concerns (Controv. I, 1.) the son who, against the will of his father, supports the father's brother in distress, and is therefore disinherited and rejected, adopted by the uncle who has in the meantime become rich, and again rejected by him because he feeds the father, who has in the meantime become poor, against his will. The batteries in favor of the disobedient son thunder: nature stands above paternal command, the world would perish if pity and compassion did not extinguish anger, not every command is owed obedience, the destitute is human. Shouldn't we extend him the necessities of life? The voice of the people is sacred, which condemns the harsh command, justice decides against the law for the condemned, we alone have control over our emotions and they are not subject to any foreign power, there are unwritten laws that stand above all written laws, it is unjust not to extend a helping hand to the fallen; that is the universal right of mankind. Finally, Latro brings the color that the young man has not to excuse himself, but to boast, and Fuscus the color of religion, which he usually employs, that piety justifies the accused.

85

In another controversy (1, 6), the debate is about nobility of birth. A son, taken in by a pirate captain, is not redeemed by his father despite his pleas. He is then freed by the pirate's daughter and accompanies her back home, where he marries her. His father disowns him for not abandoning her and choosing a woman of his own class. But, as the defenders of the pirate's daughter argue, birth and innate status cannot be a stain on her. We are not asked which class we belong to; nature determines that. Our merit only begins where we belong to ourselves and can determine ourselves. Marius created himself when he won his consulates, and Pompey became Magnus without inherited ancestors, while some illustrious individuals defile the images of their forefathers with their vices.

85/86

It was a similar controversy in which Latro, facing Augustus and his court, believed he had committed a serious offense. At that time (II, 12), the father, whose disinherited son marries a prostitute and has a son with her, was guilty. He had come to the same son's request, who was on his deathbed, had also granted his request and adopted his son, but was accused of madness by the deceased's brothers. Perhaps Augustus was more embarrassed than the rhetorician of the moment, not so much because of the chapter of adoption, with which Roman society was just dealing with his plans with the sons of Agrippa, but because the orator opened up a train of thought for him with his antithesis of the intrinsic value and the ancient, often degenerate nobility, which he would have liked to pursue completely and make useful for his rule. Nothing could have been more welcome to him than to remind the old families, to whom he had to deliver bloody battles, of the dignity of the lower classes and to remind them of modesty after their defeat. But he could not and should not pursue this thought too far yet; for now, such a profound upheaval was still confined to the classroom, and he himself had to be satisfied with a cautious internal policy and with the art that his court poet Horace used to lull the restless claims of the high nobility to sleep.

86

However, the rhetoricians worked on breaking down the barriers that separated the social classes from each other. In another controversy (Controv. II, 9), there is again a rebel, whom his poor father had disowned because he refused to accept an offer of adoption from a wealthy man who had disowned his own three sons, despite his father's command, out of love for him. The defense of this noble rebel and outcast gives the colorists an opportunity to curse the Furies of desire and slavery that have entered into the "one and blood-related family" of humanity and are tearing it apart, and to outdo each other with expressions of hatred against wealth. Fabianus Papirius thought he had accomplished much with his words, "I do not want to

be rich!" but Rufus Vibius triumphed with the statement, "I do not say I do not want to, but I do not know how to be rich." They did not realize that soon a humane emperor would come who would make everyone poor.

86/87

One important controversy (V, 33), whether the poor man who raises and mutilates abandoned children to use them for begging damages the commonwealth, is directed against the slavery of the rich and the tolerance of gladiatorial games. The colorists who took on this cruel egoist only do so in order to accuse the entire society of complicity in the same crime. You should be concerned, Labienus asks, if someone picks up your children from the desert and abandonment, which they would have to perish if no one picked them up? Do you also care that the lords among you keep herds of castrated men and mutilate their favorites to keep them usable for their debauchery longer? Does it bother you that those fortunate ones cultivate their wastelands with slave hordes of freemen, that they seduce the inexperience of unhappy youths and throw the most beautiful ones who were fit for the war camp into the gladiatorial games? What do you think of the fencing master who presses a young man to the sword and yet is not accused of damaging the commonwealth - of the pimp who guards female prisoners and goes free?

87

Finally, the Colorists call upon their allies from heaven to destroy the earthly accusation with their protection. For example, in contrast to the law that "the priestess must be chaste of chaste, pure of pure descent", there is the following case (Controv. I, 2): a young woman is captured by pirates, bought by a pimp, and exhibited; she kills a soldier in a struggle, whom she could not convince to spare her, like her previous visitors; acquitted by the court, she is returned to her family and applies for the position of a Vestal Virgin. After the advocates of wickedness exhausted their skills and disputed the purity of the girl, the artists of light come and create a halo of sanctity around the pure and chaste one. The gods, says Fuscus, wanted to demonstrate their power through this girl, so that it would be visible that no human force could resist the divine. Freedom should appear in the captive, modesty in the prostitute, and the innocence of the accused as a miracle. Marillius, Latro's teacher, after describing the grandeur and majesty that radiated from the face of the young woman, exclaimed: boldly say it, everyone came to her like to a prostitute and left as if from a priestess. (This is the color that Latro could not admire enough.)

87/88

Another, Albutius, explains that the gods instilled fear of the future priestess'

chastity in the wild and violent, and gave the young woman the strength to kill the soldier who refused to heed the heavenly warning. They have saved the young woman in her danger for themselves and given her the first voice for the priesthood. Silo Pompey added the turning point at a time when even matrons give instruction in lust, the girl was proof that the pure can also preserve their innocence unharmed in the brothel. Finally, Triarius allows the accused to contest in court that the soldier fell by her hand. "A figure beyond human," she tells the judges, "surrounded me and infused my arm with a strength more than masculine. Whoever you are, immortal gods, who wanted to rescue chastity from that dishonorable place with a miracle, you have not helped an ungrateful person. She dedicates her modesty to you, to whom it is due."

88

These are the outlines of a new world that the striving spirits of the time of Augustus and Tiberius were constructing. In those lecture halls, the youth was inspired by a way of life in which moral freedom triumphed over the precepts of a declining era, and humanity was united in a new covenant. Latro and his companions thus prepared the ground for Christianity, or rather, to express it more accurately, the later Christian teachers merely filled out the framework that the contemporaries of the first Caesars had erected for their world-building. These first builders designed those antitheses of the moral and the legal, the heavenly and the earthly, in which the Christians later moved, and they created the extravagant language in which a heart dissatisfied with the legal order expressed its desires and puzzles. Here, under the eyes of Augustus, the framework for those stories of saints and miracles was laid out, which then edified the Christians; indeed, the controversial debates also drew the outlines for those legends in which Christian martyrs and holy virgins maintain their purity against the enticements and torments of the world.

89

4. Seneca's rhetorical education.

In the preface to the first book of his Controversies, the rhetorician Seneca refers to his sons' regret that time and age prevented them from hearing men of such great intellectual power as the declaimers. However, the moral philosopher Seneca personally knew some of them and attended their speeches. In his later letters (e.g. Epist. 40), he speaks of those he still heard himself and criticizes their style of delivery. Fabianus Papirius, whose "Colores" his father often mentioned, was even one of his teachers, whose memory he held in high esteem at all times (Epist. 100).

Fabianus had written almost more about philosophy than Cicero and also had a respected name in natural science. He made an impression on Seneca, particularly through his delivery and his focus on the attitude of the audience. As our sage explains in the quoted letters, Fabianus still leaned towards Cicero's detailed, calmly calculated conclusion in his speeches, while the others sought to captivate the audience with dazzling surprises and wanted to overwhelm the masses with the sound of their rhetorical figures and cadences.

89/90

Seneca had the choice of which direction to follow. Cicero was still considered by the older generation as the model of the coherent style devoted to the subject matter yet asserting its authority, but the younger generation demanded stimulants and in the midst of the roaring current of speech the glitter of the play of colors, sparks of light, and dazzling flashes. The impetuosity of the last masters, such as Asinius Pollio, who played a significant role in the controversies, and the hasty rush of Haterius could not satisfy the future master who wanted to take the lead for his time. He missed in them a penetrating depth of power. "He who does not control himself cannot rule," he writes (Epist. 40), "he who does not allow himself to be led cannot lead. A speech that is supposed to serve to heal our souls must penetrate our inner selves."

90

To find this path to the inner self, he purified the language of his time from the restlessness of superficiality and the haste with which the declaimers attacked their listeners. He did not want to and could not do without the ornaments of the newer style, the "Colores," which had made the rhetoricians popular, but he subordinated them to his ideal purpose and made them means. He agreed with Petronius (Satyr. 2) and Emperor Augustus (Suet. Octav. K. 86), who condemned the newer pointed writing style as an Asian deception of language that came to Rome through Greece, to the extent that he derived the newer style (Epist. 40) from the Greeks, but he accepted its services and combined it, as he expressed it, with Roman prudence and dignity.

90/91

He could even less do without the antitheses and invigorating lights of the new style, as his speech was based on a great antithesis. The background of the picture to which his works unite is formed by the horrors of civil wars and the arbitrary power of the great men who unleashed and exhausted themselves in them. Standing high above Tacitus in this regard, for whom the principate was a rootless phenomenon or a dark deus ex machina, he

sees the announcement of Caesarism in the earlier struggles of the great men for the principate. The republican strife is considered by him to be settled, the principate as an irreversible phenomenon, and the only question for him is what to make of it. Equally generous and far-sighted as Tacitus, he lets nobility and self-sacrificing sympathy shine on the dark picture offered by the degeneration and dissolution of the great men, which the slaves showed their masters during the civil unrest, and condemns the people and the great men who take pleasure in the bloody spectacles of the circus. The world with its conflicts and sufferings was for him the starting point for his comprehensive antithesis, from where the soul rises to a higher order full of light and peace, the principate a passage to a moral world empire. Finally, he condensed the sparks with which the rhetoricians delighted in the struggle for the laws of nature and conscience against positive law into guiding stars, stripping them of the appearance of momentary impromptus and giving them the weight of commanding truths.

92

Cicero had the composure amidst the tumultuous battles of the civil wars to design and refine the grand structure of his speeches. There was only one question that occupied people's minds, whether to burden the scales of the Senate or the democracy with the weight of words. Now, in the midst of an expanded horizon, the time had become restless and impatient, and while they had the anticipation of a great moral task, they were tormented by the emptiness of the moment, where a moving verdict or a meaningful antithesis were welcome.

Tacitus, who is not fond of the statesman Seneca, also speaks (at the beginning of the second century) somewhat unfavorably of the writer, calling him (Annal. 13, 3) a poet who catered to the taste of his time. Quintilian, the contemporary of the historian, cannot express strongly enough (Instit. 10, 1, 125-131) his corrupt writing style that is prone to all kinds of seductive excesses. Fronto, in his correspondence with the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (around 160 AD), only writes bon mots to him, not real maxims, and compares his aphorisms to stiff passers-by who thunder through the field in their heated rush but cannot hold their ground or stand up to a serious fight.

91/92

These unfavorable judgments arose from that reaction of ancient Rome whose beginning we will encounter during the time of Domitian, while under the reign of the same emperor, the fusion of European asceticism with Jewish monotheism already began. Since the beginning of the second century, both directions have solidified alongside and against each other, and Seneca was compensated in the circles that laid the foundation for Christianity from Rome for the rejection that his countrymen expressed about him until he

belonged completely to the Christian Church. But the impatience of his time, which he wanted to calm and satisfy with his maxims, had also not remained foreign to him. He wanted to reap what he sowed himself, and not satisfied with the role of teacher and preacher, he trusted himself with the power to rule Rome from the pinnacle of power and lead it to the right path.

92

5. Seneca at the Court of Claudius.

With his rich talent, which he developed from studying rhetoric to natural sciences, Seneca could count on an outstanding position among his contemporaries. He was also not lacking in self-esteem and entered society with the confidence that no level of it could be denied to him, while the simplicity of his demeanor showed everyone that he had an inner life into which he could withdraw from the world according to his own choice.

Born in Cordoba at the beginning of the first Christian century, he was in Rome in the midst of his philosophical studies when his old-fashioned Roman-minded father persuaded him to give up the Pythagorean abstinence from eating meat, which he had been enthusiastic about through his teacher Sotion. The edict of Tiberius against the Jews and followers of Isis, which made the rhetor Seneca fear for his son's becoming a suspect, falls according to Tacitus in the year 19 AD. Seneca was then about nineteen years old, and this coincidence of two dates is one of the most striking proofs of the unreliability of Josephus's chronology, who dates that edict in the last year of Tiberius's reign (37 AD).

92/93

As a young man (Juvenal, *Quaest. Natur*. 6, 4), Seneca wrote a book on earthquakes, and his memory of observing a fiery meteor under Augustus (died 14 AD) proves the liveliness of his early interest in nature, which he kept up until his old age. Pliny (Hist. natur. 6, 21) refers to his book on India, and Servius, in his notes on the Aeneid, speaks of a book on the country and religion of the Egyptians. According to his own hints (ad Helv. Kap. 17), he accompanied his mother's sister from Egypt and was present when she lost her husband on the ship after a sixteen-year administration of that province and returned to Rome. He himself talks about it (Epist. 49) as if he acted as a lawyer earlier, and probably the speeches that Quintilian (10, 1, 129) lists among his writings alongside dialogues are documents of his earlier judicial practice, while the dialogues, dedicated to the orientation in the philosophical systems of the Greeks, are modeled after Cicero's and Livy's.

93

So we have reliable information about a rich and diverse literature that made Seneca famous until the end of the reign of Tiberius. In any case, the consolation letter to Marcia belongs to the early time of Caligula, as the author (chapter 1) speaks of the changed times that made it possible for the grieving widow of her son to retrieve the writings of her husband, who had been sentenced to death by Sejan. Caligula was the one who, among other banned writings (Suet. Cal. chap. 16), sought out and allowed the writings of Cordus Cremutius to circulate freely.

The depressed circumstances of the last years of Tiberius's reign, spent in seclusion at Capri, weighed on society in Rome and restricted the space for talents. Seneca had become an adult, also a man of a circle of admirers, but without the court, a high-spirited mind lacked the lever to effectively intervene in society. The reckless and agitated time of Caligula's reign made room again, and Seneca could hope for a future with his enterprising spirit, if only the audacious genius on the throne had wanted to allow someone other than himself to benefit from the new freedom!

94

Moreover, Caligula, who summoned the world with its old gods before his judgment seat and took away the coats of arms and badges of honor from the noble families like discarded creatures, was also a strict and dangerous critic in literature. The Roman reaction, which had been spreading in wider circles since Domitian, was already announcing itself in him; for example, he no longer considered Livy's language to be the correct expression of original Latin, let alone Seneca's adorned style, lacking weight and full rounding, which he called "sand without lime" (i.e., not mortar). He, who was proud of his eloquence, competed with the most famous lawyers and invited the knights to his speeches in the Senate through edicts for his accusation and defense speeches, once wanted to have Seneca's life (Dio Cassius 59, 19) because he had skillfully conducted a legal case in front of him, and he only let him go again when one of the women in his circle said he was emaciated and would not live much longer.

But was it really just the style that annoyed the emperor about the teacher of the time? Only the fame of his eloquence that aroused the envy of the high rival? Or did he fear that Seneca, with his intimacy with the two imperial sisters, Agrippina and Julia, whom he had included in the prayer of the consuls and the homage oaths of the senior officials at the beginning of his reign, pursued political purposes?

94/95

We find one of Seneca's closest friends, Lucilius Junior, to whom he dedicated the writing on providence and the investigations into nature and to whom he directed his collection of letters, in close relations with the commander of the legions in Germania, Gaius Suetonius Paulinus (Gätulicus), whom Caligula executed because he had conspired with the sisters and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus to overthrow him. In the preface to the fourth book of his investigations into nature, Seneca reminds Lucilius, when looking back at the most critical situations of his life, that "the friendship of Gätulicus had not deprived him of the trust of Caligula." Until the final catastrophe, we will get to know Seneca's friends and relatives as helpers and confidants in his most complicated situations. Did Lucilius really not know anything about the conspiracies of the field marshal in his immediate vicinity and did he really not deceive Caligula's trust? Was Seneca really not privy to the secret of Julia and Agrippina? Let us first ask these questions.

95

One of Claudius's first acts, when he ascended to the throne after the downfall of his predecessor, was to recall the two sisters whose banishment Caligula had deemed sufficient in the punitive expeditions in Gaul. Already in the first year after their return (41 AD), the younger sister, Julia, was sent back into exile, where she lost her life before the end of a year at the hands of her mortal enemy. Messalina, Claudius's fifth wife, had already noticed, hurt by her arrogant behavior towards herself, with jealousy her fawning indulgence towards the emperor and, fearing that she would alienate the weak man towards the women, used the rumors of her debauchery to overthrow her. Seneca's name was also mentioned in these rumors, and when he was still at the height of his favor with Nero later on, Publius Suilius called him the adulterer of the imperial house in his heated speech against him, in the midst of the Senate (58 AD Tacit. Annal. 13, 42. 43).

95/96

Dio Cassius, meaning one of the epitomizers who abbreviated and distorted his text with insertions after centuries, begins (61, 10) a list of all the weaknesses and vices of Seneca that contradicted his philosophy with his adulterous affair with Julia. This long digression, for which hardly anyone had the passion at the beginning of the Middle Ages, and which is probably taken from a writing from the time of Marc Aurel, who disliked Seneca, even undermines his credibility when he takes up rumors of his illicit dealings with Agrippina and accuses him, the "husband," of still enjoying pleasure boys and receiving instruction from Nero in the same vice. Some of these antitheses say, "He, who despised the company of the powerful, could not be

removed from the palace. He attacked the flatterers and courted Messalina and the freedman of Claudius to such an extent that he sent them a writing from his island that contained praises of them, which he later suppressed out of shame." There is so much truth to this accusation that Seneca sought the heights of society and considered them the right place for a reformer. He had aroused rumors about his more than intimate relationships with Julia by believing in the power of the female sex, which he shared with the Greek reformers. The Cynics, who first proclaimed the equality of women and their vocation to wisdom, found enthusiastic female supporters and prophetesses of their doctrine. Women belonged to the friendship bond of Epicurus, were the most eager proselytes of the oriental cults in the first century of our era, which penetrated into Roman families through their mediation, and they also held a prominent position in the first Christian communities. Seneca himself assumes that the women to whom he addressed two consolation letters, the Marcia and his mother, have the most complete knowledge of his philosophy and has given the most winning expression to the presentation of his wisdom in these two essays. However, if he once believed that his doctrine would spread its rays in the widest form from the highest points of society, it cannot be surprising that he also sought to win the power of women for himself at that height. As for his punishment on the island, he was still lucky this time (because later, he paid for his upward striving with his life) as Claudius pardoned him with banishment to Corsica.

96/97

The writing that he sent from here to the cabinet secretary of Claudius and later wished to see forgotten was prompted by the death of the brother of Polybius and the weak hope that, through the intercession of this powerful freedman, he could change the stubborn mind of the emperor towards him. His calculation failed, as the emperor's confidant, according to Dio Cassius, who followed the later view of Messalina's wickedness, lost his life through her intrigues soon after the dispatch of that writing. The authenticity of this writing, which some admirers of Seneca would like to attribute to forgery, is proven by its style and conformity with the consolatory reasons of other letters to the distressed. The extravagance of the glorification of the emperor, in which Seneca instructs the mourners to "elevate themselves by looking at the great and radiant protective deity, the physician of the sick and broken humanity, and the common consolation of all people" (ad Polyb. chap. 31-33), he may have regretted later. But it conforms to the ideal he had formed of the emperorship, and even if the lost chapters, which, according to the allusion of those Dionysian antitheses, contained some incense for Messalina and therefore fell victim to the later excitement against this woman as the scum of the female world, were still available to

us, they could not testify against the authenticity of the document.

97/98

This passage discusses Seneca's family background and their social standing. Seneca's wife, Paulina, came from a wealthy and respected family, and his father had a successful career in oratory that brought great wealth to others. Seneca himself, as an advocate, likely accumulated a fortune that he believed was necessary for achieving a high social position. Seneca's brother, Mela, sought wealth by applying for procuratorships to manage crown revenues in the provinces. Mela's son, Lucan, enjoyed independence at the Neronian court, likely due in part to his wit and the support of his beloved Polla. Seneca's elder brother, Novatus, also gained a considerable inheritance through adoption by Gallio, who was also active in the book of controversies. The Annii, Seneca's family, understood how to provide a solid foundation for their social appearance in the world, using the spirit of the late republican and early imperial era.

98

It is suspected that the prefect of Rome's grain supply, Paulinus, to whom Seneca dedicated his treatise on the brevity of life, written soon after the death of Caligula, was a young relative of his wife. A son from this marriage died three weeks before the father's banishment to Corsica (ad Helv. Chap. 2).

The dispute between two women and the victory of one finally paved the way for the exile's return. What Messalina could not achieve, perhaps because of his previous relationship with Julia, the victor, Agrippina, accomplished. The latter brought a wild storm into the harbor of rest in which Claudius, who had been sheltered by his fifth wife, who had given him Britannicus and Octavia, believed he was safe, a storm that eventually uprooted the entire Claudian dynasty.

98/99

Claudius, a sensible and benevolent prince whose legislation, bold constructions, the cleansing and rejuvenation of the Senate with fresh blood, and his expedition to Britain are evidence of his activity, was served by energetic freedmen who spared him the vexations and haughtiness of the aristocracy. Besides his inclination to overindulge at the table, he only had the weakness of being bound to the endearments of women by sensuality, and his innate timidity, intensified by previous setbacks, made him feel a

need to be urged and persuaded by them. The man who pursued a measured course in his military policy and civic legislation, who could not be deterred by any objections or difficulties in carrying out his plans, such as his regulation of the Tiber, was capable of being worked up by female advisers and of dictating the most impulsive commands in a fit of excitement, expressed with stuttering and blustering speech.

99

Both women who vied for him since the first days of his ascent to the throne (41 AD), equally endowed with beauty, had a mixture of Antonian and Octavian blood. Julius Antonius, the son of the Triumvir and Fulvia, spared at the request of Octavia, sister of the victor of Actium and abandoned wife of the defeated, was raised and married to Marcella, Octavia's daughter from her first marriage to Marcellus, and fathered two Antonias in this union. The younger Antonia, married to a Domitian, Lucius Ahenobarbus, gave birth to Domitia Lepida, who was married to M. Valerius Messalinus, who gave birth to Messalina. The younger Antonia, in her marriage to Drusus, Tiberius's brother, bore Germanicus, who fathered the younger Agrippina with Agrippina I, daughter of Agrippa and Julia, and therefore granddaughter of Augustus.

99/100

In the family memories of the latter, the rival of Messalina, memories of the deadly hostility of the Claudian family towards their ancestors were stacked one on top of the other. Germanicus, although himself a Claudian, fell victim to the envy of his uncle Tiberius, according to popular belief. His wife Agrippina I had incurred Tiberius's displeasure when she threw herself onto the bridge over the Rhine during the retreat of her husband's lieutenant from Germany and prevented its destruction by the settlers on the left bank who already feared the arrival of the enemy from the other side. The emperor, who was tired of Germanicus's ventures as useless quests for glory, was reluctant to see her interfere in military policy as a manly woman and want to maintain the way for the future in the fateful forests and swamps. That famous cameo, kept in Paris, which depicts Germanicus and Agrippina on the occasion of their journey to the eastern provinces, the latter holding the role of Demeter with her mild laws in her hand, and the former as Triptolemus, blissfully sowing the earth with his seed on a dragon chariot, also shows that the couple had higher ideas than their abilities and circumstances allowed. It was as if in Agrippina, as well as in her elder sons Nero and Drusus, the wild

blood of Antonius and the raging Fulvia boiled, and the hidden gloom with which Agrippa looked upon the successes of the one he wanted to serve alone on earth had come to life and finally wanted to seize the rule, which he also believed himself worthy of. As long as Livia lived, who pretended to moderate her son's suspicion of the Caesar blood in Agrippina and her desires for power, Tiberius still held on. Driven into exile with her oldest son Nero after Livia's death, Agrippina died of hunger like him. When she was dragged into exile, she attacked the captain who was to take her away and lost an eye in the struggle. Shortly before, her second equally passionate son Drusus had succumbed to the three-year torment he had suffered under the abuse of his guards in the underground dungeon of the Palatium. Finally deprived of food, he still managed to cling to life for a week with the straw from his bed and avenged himself with curses and imprecations on Tiberius, who was vainly pursuing the blood of Caesar and would not escape the revenge of the hated house's descendants.

100/101

This thirst for revenge, which she begged for in the depths of the Palatine, was now present in Agrippina. The caresses with which she lured Claudius were meant to pave the way for her and the son she brought with her to ascend the throne. As power-hungry as her mother and brothers, she, the daughter of an emperor (Germanicus), sister of an emperor (Caligula), and wife of an emperor, wanted to become the mother of an emperor through her son, which was only possible through the death of Claudius and the downfall of his hated house.

101

Tacitus attributes to her, in one of her later outbursts of rage when she was deceived in her calculation of ruling through her son, the threat to reveal all the harm that she had caused to the Claudian house through the secret of her marriage (Tac. Annal. 13, 14). The way to the emperor's bed had been made possible for her through the comedy of that sham marriage, which Messalina consummated with the consent of Claudius with Silius, and which ultimately led to her downfall. Claudius had given her permission to marry Silius through a divorce decree because he had been convinced that this sham act could only prevent a dangerous conspiracy. However, his freedman Narcissus had frightened him during the wedding celebration of the new couple by pretending that it was serious and the first step towards his downfall, and thus Narcissus gave the enemies of Messalina the opportunity

to remove her from the way. It is very likely that Agrippina, the mistress of intrigue, had her hand in this complicated and bloody affair, as later through the rumors of her circles and in her memoirs, she depicted Messalina as a lascivious woman who had her own pleasure chambers for her lovers in the palace and who would sneak away from her drunken husband's bed at night to satisfy an insatiable desire in the public pleasure resorts of the masses, as Juvenal portrays it in his gruesome caricatures of the emperors.

101/102:

After the removal of Messalina, the timid Claudius was hesitant about marrying his niece, a union that was considered incestuous according to Roman custom and legal opinion. When the Senate, at the instigation of Agrippina, had lifted the disturbing law, the powerful freedman Pallas helped by pointing out to the emperor that this connection would reconcile the quarrel between the Claudians and Julians and secure his own house against the danger that could arise from Agrippina's marriage with another family. But his niece already had a son who was older than his own Britannicus and who had to transfer the conflict between the two imperial houses to the bosom of the family.

102

The elder of the two Antonias, in whom the blood of the two men from Actium was mixed, had bestowed the Domitian family with the dangerous honor of marriage with the imperial house. Cnejus Domitus, her husband's son, was married by Tiberius (29 AD) to the granddaughter of the younger Antonia, our Agrippina, and was the father of the later Nero.

Suetonius tells some traits of the grandfather of the last Caesar (Nero, chap. 4) that, though in the color of the imperial era, correspond entirely to the hard and arrogant family character of the Domitians. In his youth, he had a name as a master in racing and later, in the Germanic War, he was one of the numerous sub-commanders to whom Augustus awarded triumphal decorations. He was presumptuous, extravagant, and cruel, forced the censor Plancus to avoid him on the street in his aristocratic pride as an aedile, had Roman knights and women appear on stage in the mime game as a praetor and consul, and held animal fights and fencing games in all parts of the city with such cruelty that Augustus, after warning him seriously in secret, had to rein him in through a public command.

102/103

Whose son, one of the four nobles whom Tiberius had appointed as

distributors of the aid intended for rebuilding Rome after the fire of 36 AD, was soon involved in the case of Albucilla, the wife of a public informer, and accused of involvement in her majesty's crimes and excesses, but saved from further harm by the death of Tiberius, which occurred soon after while he was trying to gain time to prepare his defense (Tacitus Ann. 6, 45, 47-48).

103

The traits that Suetonius (Nero, ch. 5) attributes to his portrait, such as his cheating in private and official matters or even the accusation of incest with his sister Domitia Lepida, may be exaggerated or partly invented. However, the incident where, as a companion of young Gaius, grandson of Augustus, at a banquet in the East, he knocked down a freedman who refused to get drunk on command and was subsequently dismissed from the prince's entourage, and then on the market place in Rome knocked out an eques who spoke somewhat too freely in a dispute, seems to be quite in keeping with the recklessness of earlier Roman noblemen, which was intensified by the leisure of the time and ultimately by the princely position of the nobleman admitted to the imperial house. His description by Velleius Paterculus (II, 10) as a "young man of the most noble simplicity" is of no significance to a historian who writes in the glory of the Sejanian regime and finds everything related to the house of Tiberius praiseworthy.

The death of Tiberius in the spring of 37 AD opened the prison for Cneius, and at the end of that year, on December 15th, a son was born to him, Lucius Domitius. The joyous and jubilant life into which Agrippina and her sister plunged after Caligula's accession to the throne, and perhaps also his wife's intimacy with the young emperor, seem to have made life at court unbearable for him; besides, he was sick. He moved to Pyrga in Etruria, where he died of dropsy in the third year of his son's life. In his will, he made the emperor the heir, and his son the third part, but Caligula, together with his own property, seized the young Lucius' share, so that when his mother was immediately banished, he was left as an orphan.

104

This is the beginning, very early on, of the story of the later Nero, with dates that have been taken up and used by historians with no small degree of haste to explain his character. "Here," for example, says Schiller, when Suetonius (Nero Chap. 6) relates that the "almost helpless and poor" boy was raised by his aunt Octavia Lepida, mother of Messalina, under two tutors, a dancer and a barber, "the first seeds of his later follies and crimes were sown." Lepida, Schiller continues, "seems to have done everything to alienate the boy from his mother. Here the hypocrisy and lack of deeper feelings, which are so characteristic of Nero later, received their first

foundation and development." However, the poor portrayal that Suetonius gives of this period of Nero's childhood recalls his portrayal of Domitian growing up in abandonment and degradation and is subject to the same suspicion of exaggeration. Furthermore, in the service of his pragmatism, Schiller cites a passage from Tacitus' Annals (12.64) that describes Lepida trying to win over her nephew from his mother through flattery and gifts. But this dispute between the aunt and the strict and harsh mother, who also demanded from her son the strict demeanor of a future ruler, occurred thirteen years later, at a time when Agrippina was preparing to eliminate Claudius, was in a hurry because she feared Lepida's increasing influence with the Emperor, and as a prelude to the main blow, pushed through the bloody execution of her sister-in-law as a conspirator (ibid. Chap. 65). Moreover, the period in which Nero was left to the education of the supposed servant couple can only be counted in months, as the death of his father was soon followed by that of Caligula, and his mother immediately returned from exile and received the entire inheritance of the deceased Cnejus.

104/105

Nero was eleven years old when, after the fall of Messalina, his mother secured permission from Claudius for Seneca to return from Corsica and also obtain the praetorship in 49 AD. The celebrated orator and thinker, moral philosopher and polymath, was to make the boy interesting to the public and raise Rome's expectations of his future maturity to the highest level. Tacitus suggests (Annal. 12, 9) that she also counted on the worldly-wise philosopher to stand by her side in the struggle for power, assuming that besides gratitude for her release from exile, she could also expect from him a provoked attitude towards Claudius.

105

Thus arises the question in every scene of the court drama that developed up to the emperor's death: did Seneca know what they meant, did he know the end they were working towards, and to what extent did he help achieve the goal?

The woman who led the dangerous game had no feeling for difficulties and proceeded from success to success. What were Seneca's thoughts when he saw her rise to become the co-regent of the emperor with such speed and the spirit of the mannish women who had previously been close to the throne return with increased passion? Claudius had to confer upon her the title of Augusta in the Senate. She did not fail to attend when the emperor received foreign envoys, and she sat beside him on his tribunal, surrounded by the bodyguard, when the captured British leader Caractacus was presented. The gentle, but later hardened forms of diplomacy of Livia had taken on

imperious severity and a military costume in her. She appeared as a military colonel at the reviews of the Praetorians; and she attended, alongside Claudius, the naval battle he held to celebrate the draining and regulation of Lake Fucinus, wearing a military cloak. To show her military greatness abroad (Tacit. Annal. 12, 27), she ordered the dispatch of a veteran colony to her birthplace, the town of the Ubii, which was subsequently called the Agrippinian Colony (Cologne on the Rhine).

She was, in a colossal sense, what the last wife of Caligula, Milonia Casonia, was, who (Sueton Cal. chap. 25) delighted her husband when she rode alongside him in warrior's garb during military reviews. What her mother had enjoyed, imperial power combined with military splendor, was her ideal.

Like her brother, she revered power as the highest and her natural dowry. With him, she already shared the desire for revenge against the enemies of her father and mother, brooding over it, when after their banishment along with her sister and brother by Tiberius, they were entrusted to the care of their grandmother Antonia, the only woman of maternal tenderness we hear of in the history of the Caesar house. The only difference was that she did not share his divinity complex or the fervor for his deification. She was profane, and power was evidence of human strength to her.

We ask further: Did the freedman Pallas act alone with Agrippina's consent when he induced Claudius in 50 AD to adopt Lucius Domitius as Nero Claudius Caesar Drusus Germanicus and to betroth him to Octavia, who was now his sister and therefore had to be transferred to another family by adoption? Did the boy's educator and secret minister of the Agrippinian circle not anticipate that it was now happening to Britannicus, who was three years younger than his older brother Nero, and that he was being surpassed?

The secret was quickly revealed because before Nero reached the age for the male toga in December of 51, he was already introduced into the Senate by Claudius in March, appointed by him as consul for the twentieth year, and immediately invested with proconsular power and the title of princeps juventutis, thus designated as the heir to the throne. And at the end of the following year, the fifteen-year-old prince was married to the thirteen-year-old Octavia

Did Seneca also remain unaware of the significance of the appointment of Burrus Afranius as commander of the praetorian guard, which Agrippina had secured after the dismissal of the double command that dated from the time of Messalina? Was it by chance that the command of a unit suitable for action was entrusted to a reliable, uninspired man, whose performance of duty could be confidently expected? Was it a mere coincidence that the new commander, with his stern severity and loyalty, was suited to a Stoic diplomat who also, no matter what the cost, stood firmly on the line that he believed led to the welfare of the world?

107

Was that Seneca's main job at Agrippina's court, to prepare speeches for his pupil, with which he secured pardons for individual cities in the Senate, such as Ilium, the homeland of the ancestors of the Julians, and for Rhodes, or support for other cities that had been hit by misfortunes?

Gradually, things become gloomy at court. Narcissus recognizes the danger that if Nero were to come to power and destroy the entire Claudian house, he would have risked his life in vain at the downfall of Messalina. The Empress senses his mood, perhaps also knows that he has accused her to her husband for her dealings with Pallas, and accuses him of embezzlement in front of the emperor when his construction project at Lake Fucine does not go according to plan, to which he proudly accuses her of licentiousness and overly bold plans.

Claudius is introspective and grumbles in his evening drunkenness about the suffering he has with the women, whose scandals he must endure and then punish. Agrippina, warned by this, hastens to eliminate her supposed rival, Octavia Lepida. Narcissus, who opposed the murder, sees it as a harbinger of his downfall if he does not succeed in protecting his master's life from stalking, and begs the gods and the unfortunate boy, Britannicus, embracing him tenderly, to grow up, drive away his father's enemies, and punish the murderers of his mother (even if he himself has to pay for it).

108

Did Seneca not notice anything about these gloomy domestic stories, was he also unaware of how Agrippina, when Narcissus suddenly fell ill, sought healing in the Sinuessa bath, poisoned her husband with the help of a freedman, and had him finally killed by a doctor? Was he not present during the confusion that prevailed in the Palatium on the morning and afternoon

after that October night (54 AD) - not involved in the appeal to the Senate to pray to the gods for the emperor's recovery, who was already dead, no eyewitness to how Agrippina had mimes come to keep the people in ignorance of the events of the night through their performance before the emperor until the noon hour calculated by the astrologers, and sought to hold back Britannicus, as well as his sisters Octavia and Antonia, with tender caresses and consolations in the Palatium?

Certainly, Seneca was also in the palace when at noon the doors opened, Burrus stepped out with Nero, presented him to the shouts of the bodyguard and then accompanied him to the Praetorium, where he was greeted as emperor after the promise of the donative.

That it was aimed at the elevation of Nero since Agrippina's entry into the palace, could be in no doubt. The meaning of the boy's earlier appointment with the proconsular power was explained to the Praetorians by a donative and to the people by circus games and a gift of provisions. What everyone saw coming, Seneca and Burrus must have known all the more surely, but no word is transmitted from them from which we could draw conclusions about their opinion on the public secret. In one case, however, their silence is alarming. Narcissus made an effort to prevent the murder of Octavia Lepida, and perhaps it would have cost Seneca and Burrus only one word to let the freedman achieve his noble intentions; why did they not speak this word?

108/109

In the first days of Nero's reign, Agrippina had Julius Silanus, whom we will encounter again when Nero kills the last representative of the Junian branch of the Caesar family, who was related to her by marriage, poisoned. Equally arbitrarily, she had Narcissus, who had burned the letters of Claudius against his murderer with brilliant magnanimity, imprisoned and put to death. The former crime was committed without Nero's knowledge, the latter against his will; but this time Seneca and Burrus stood up to the Empress Mother, forbidding further bloody arbitrary actions and calling out a stern "stop!" to her. They could not previously speak such a word in favour of Nero's aunt, as it would have aroused an embarrassing storm against Agrippina and shaken the structure on which they were working for Nero's benefit. They agreed with the mother of Nero's haste towards the throne and with the means she used to conquer power against the former rights of Britannicus. The wise philosopher and his military-minded comrade persuaded themselves that the questionable incidents on their way would ultimately be beneficial to the rule of virtue, morality, and kindness. We can only assume for their benefit and must accept that they were not informed about the way in which Agrippina hastened the end of her husband's life.

109/110

The philosophical instruction that Nero received from Seneca was likely to have been very summary, and in any case, Seneca only provided the main direction, as two notable philosophers were at his side for the details. Agrippina's alleged warning to her son not to forgive his high destiny and not to delve too far into philosophy would have been in vain, as the tutor himself had no inclination to lose himself in the dialectics of ancient systems. The historical backdrop of his moral instruction, as in his writings, would have been the teachings of the civil wars, that the arbitrary and violent actions of the ancient families made the rule of a single individual necessary, with admonishing references to the late mercy of Augustus, the dark severity of Tiberius, and the excesses of Caligula's godliness. Grace, kindness, and benevolence were already the themes that the teacher had impressed upon the student in the first senate speeches he had prepared for him, and by adding the ideas of equality of the rhetorician's school and human rights above traditional customs, he would have presented to the pupil his destiny in the picturesque image that all graces would flow down to the earth from him as the pinnacle of humanity.

110

His treatise "On Grace," published at the end of Nero's first year of rule, was intended to remind the world that his ideal had been realized, and the golden age had returned to humanity.

6. The Humanitarian on the Throne.

The period in which the young prince, who was elevated to the throne at the age of seventeen, exercised the mercy and power recommended to him by his teacher, spans five years and lives on in the memory of later times as the Quinquennium of Nero. Trajan is said to have stated that all Caesars pale in comparison to him (Aurel. Victor. cap, 5.).

First and foremost, the "clemency" of this time was beneficial to the Senate. The People's Tribune and guardian of democracy, who lived on in the tribunician power of the empire, gradually stirred.

110/111

Later, nothing was more flattering for Nero and his democratic pleasure than the expression of his humorous confidant Vatinius: "I hate you, Nero, because you are a pater conscriptus (senator)!" Although Seneca frequently mentions in his writings that after the irrevocable destruction of the Republic

by the war of the faction leaders, the salvation lay in the rule of one, he never goes into detail on the position of the Senate in the new regime, let alone bestowing a benevolent and sympathetic glance on it. In his writing "On Grace," which is akin to the official extract of the spirit of Nero's first year of rule, the position of each individual is derived from the gracious decision of the prince, without thinking of a unique position of the Senate and its own rights. Furthermore, Seneca (de benef. 7, 4) has already expanded the king's law of the prince to the extent that everything belongs to him according to civil law, and his ruling power, even if each individual has property rights over their possessions, can claim it as his own in other respects, what is denied to him as his own. The teacher of Nero makes this statement clear with the dangerous example of the wise man who, according to law and ownership, possesses only his own, but according to the idea (as Moser aptly translates "animo"), possesses everything and receives what others give him from his own. Even in this context, no consideration is given to the participation of the senatorial legislation in the arrangements concerning private property.

111

However, Nero still bowed to the Senate, and Tacitus praised the dignified and conciliatory manner in which Seneca, as the chief minister of the prince and leader of the Senate, recognized and upheld the rights of his peers within it. Even as a ruin, the Senate remained the only constituted power alongside that of the prince; under Augustus, the imperial regime had been established in a pact with it, and the empire had yet to conceive of a form in which it could outlive its decrepit partner's final fate.

Thus, the program Seneca had prepared for his pupil's first address from the throne (Tacit. 13, 4) included assurances of loyalty to the Senate. The Augustan division of powers would remain, with the Senate retaining legislative and judicial authority over its own rank, as well as sovereignty over the provinces still under its control, and the emperor holding the imperium over the armies and overseeing the provinces reserved for him.

111/112

The recognition of this parity with the archaic corporation and the republican upper officials was also acknowledged by Nero when he did not allow his fellow consul, Antistius, to take an oath of allegiance to his decrees on assuming his first consulate as emperor in 55 AD. The Senate praised this compliment and hoped to spur the young man to more substantive demonstrations of his obedience. Shortly thereafter, it acted unilaterally to the benefit of the aristocracy's rights and obtained Nero's confirmation of a

resolution that resolved an old issue against the interests of democracy.

112

It was about the fees of the advocates in court. Two centuries before the Christian era, a law had forbidden them, but had not prevented eloquence from making some powerful and rich, especially since the last political struggles of the Republic. However, under Claudius, the Senate's hatred of one of the boldest public prosecutors, Suilius, had inspired the aristocratic class with a real enthusiasm for the selfless defence of the law and for contentment with posthumous fame and the consciousness of doing good. Claudius, besieged by both parties and reminded of the plight of the plebeians who, dependent on the peaceful work of study, could not survive without the moderate income from it, nor could they contribute to the promotion of legal and rhetorical knowledge, sided with the democracy and was against the monopoly of the rich, who could expand their clientele through their unpaid legal assistance. He was not swayed by the aristocratic viewpoint (which Tacitus shares in Annals 11.7) that emphasizing the monetary aspect was not quite proper, and struck a middle ground between the two interests, according to which the sum of ten thousand sesterces (about four hundred and fifty thalers) was set as the maximum for the lawyer's fee.

112/113

Agrippina expressed her dissatisfaction with her son's deviation from this Claudian compromise. However, both the influence of Seneca, who could not forget the origin of his civil independence, and Nero's own democratic inclination led to the later resolution, according to which (Suetonius, Nero, chap. 17) the parties were required to pay a "specified and fair" amount for the legal representation, while the court proceedings, the costs of which were covered by the state treasury, were free of charge.

113

The senators made a new attempt to assert their master interest in the following year (56 AD) when they sought to enforce a resolution that would subject freedmen to their arbitrary disposal again. The "arrogance" of freedmen was to be broken by the provision that patrons were given the right to withdraw freedom from the "non-useful", but the views of the prince were in favor of those who pointed out the injustice of making the whole pay for the offenses of individuals, the wide dissemination of this group, their significant representation in the city, also as servants of the administration and the priesthoods and as the cohort of night watchmen, finally on the origin of most knights and many senators from their own ranks and on the

Roman principle, according to which, despite the division of classes, freedom must be a common good. His proposal that in individual cases the guilt of the freedmen should be examined, but their rights should not be curtailed in general, was passed (Tacitus Annals 13, 26-27).

113/114

Later (61 AD) he had a difficult time when he had to decide between the popular agitation that arose against the execution of the entire slave gang of the city prefect Pedanius Secundus, who was killed by one of his household servants, and the aristocratic harshness that demanded the execution of the old law (Tacitus Annals 14, 42-45). No lesser figure than C. Cassius, a Stoic and one of the leaders of the republican opposition, and a descendant of Caesar's murderer, was the main speaker in the Senate this time. He, who had hitherto kept silent about all changes and innovations that had always appeared to him as "deteriorations" of the traditional, in order not to be too much stigmatized as a defender of the old, believed this time that he had to take the floor because the general mood seemed to have decided for leniency. In fact, his speech, in which he praised the system of suspicion against slaves of the ancestors, but now, since one had nations with different religious rites, with foreign worship or even none around, called the fear of controlling this scourge of the world absolutely necessary and justified the injustice of a great example with the decimation in military discipline, was accompanied and answered by confused voices that countered him with the number of those threatened (the household of the murdered man consisted of 400 heads), the age, the sex, and the undeniable innocence of most. But no one from the respectable but intimidated minority dared to speak out openly and in detail in favor of the opposite. The prince also did not consider it possible to change the majority, which a few years before (57 AD Tacitus 13, 32) had equated the freedmen who were freed by will with slaves in a similar case. After he had scolded the crowds who threatened with fire and demolition through an edict, he had the streets through which the condemned were being led, occupied militarily on both sides.

114

On the other hand, he opposed the proposal that even the freedmen who had lived under the same roof as the convicts should be deported from Italy. If compassion and mercy, he declared in Seneca's style and slave-friendliness, had not softened the ancient custom, then one should not exaggerate it further. This same slave-friendliness led to his appointment of a special judge who had the task (Seneca, De Beneficiis 3.22) of investigating mistreatment of slaves by their masters and putting limits on the cruelty and arbitrary behavior of masters, as well as their stinginess in

providing food.

114/115

Now let's hear how another Stoic and leader of the aristocratic opposition expressed the dissatisfaction of his group with the emperor's interest in another segment of the oppressed masses. Nero remained faithful to the principle of his ancestors, which was to remove the provincials from the exploitation by the administrators as much as possible. He himself determined by an edict (Tacitus, Annals 13.32) that no administrator of a senatorial or imperial province should provide gladiatorial games, animal hunts, or other performances, so as to deprive them of the occasion for extortion, through which they compensated themselves for their expenses, or the means to bribe the large masses, who after such pleasures did not easily bring up an accusation for any abuse of power. However, the audacity of a rich Cretan magnate, Claudius Timarchus, who publicly boasted that it depended on him whether the administrators of Crete would be granted thanks for their performance, gave rise to a detailed discussion in the Senate (62 AD). It was conducted in the grand style, as even the noble, condescending speech of Patus Thrasea, which Tacitus (Annals 15.20.21) cites as a masterpiece, still proves. The right of accusation, Thrasea, this leader of the Republicans, thinks, may remain for the provincials to boast of their power, but false praise obtained by the entreaties of officials should be prohibited. Otherwise, if praetors, consuls, or even private individuals were sent for reporting, the provinces trembled before the judgment of an individual; now, they came to meet the "outsiders," flatter them, and encourage them to assume the judgment of the administrators, which was only the prerogative of their peers, the "citizens," and their court, the Senate.

115/116

Apparently, there was a profound shift in the tendency in which a part of the Senate wanted to perceive and decide on the matter at hand. For the aristocratic nobility and rigidity of Thrasea, only the high officials who grant the right of accusation as an act of grace but reject false praise, and who generally do not want to place any weight on recognition from the provincials, exist. Meanwhile, the more humane members of the Senate had the interests of the provincials in mind and wanted to free them from the pressure of the officials by prohibiting all expressions of gratitude or deputations.

116

The consuls, who certainly also knew the emperor's view, did not dare to let

the resolution come to perfection despite the noisy applause that Thrasea received. Only when the emperor had informed the Senate of his view did they unite in a resolution that no longer allowed Thrasea's contemptuous motivation to shine through.

The prohibition for governors to give festivals and other games in their provinces indirectly led to a restriction of gladiatorial massacres. Nero also set an example for the elimination of atrocities in Rome itself, from which the more lenient customs and views gradually moved away. So, during the game he held in the wooden amphitheater erected in the Campus Martius area, he did not allow anyone, even the convicted, to be killed.

"But he committed a highway robbery," is the dialogue that Seneca introduces after describing the massacre at the gladiatorial games (Epist. 7). "Well then, he deserved to be hanged." "He killed a man." "If he killed, then he deserves to suffer the same fate." "But what have you, miserable person, deserved to see such things?"

In our account of Seneca's spiritual interpretation of Roman universalism, we highlighted the statement in which he praises it as proof of Roman magnanimity that the children of Rome did not confine themselves within the walls of a city, but extended themselves for interaction with the whole world and recognized the world as their homeland. Nero wanted to make this free exchange of spirits true in the exchange of earthly goods as well. "Through the complaints of the people," writes Tacitus (Annals 13, 50-51), "he came up with the idea (in 58 AD) whether it would not be better to abolish all customs duties and thus make the most beautiful gift to mankind." He aimed to eliminate port fees, for "the elders, who moderated his ardor and prophesied the dissolution of the empire if the necessary income to maintain it was reduced," expressly stated that after the abolition of "port duties," there would also be a demand for the fall of direct taxes. The experienced ones who cooled the emperor's enthusiasm for freedom of communication also pointed out the finance leaseholder societies sanctioned by consuls and tribunes of the people and what they call the still jealous sense of freedom of the Roman people, which would not easily submit to an infringement of its rights. But this "Roman people" were the moneylenders of the capital city who, involved in tax payment in the provinces, had to be significantly affected by a reform of the customs system. Nero was therefore forced to be content with a reform of the tax system: he abolished some inventions of the finance genius of the leaseholders, clarified the confusion of the tax edicts, in which the leaseholders felt comfortable, facilitated and organized the recourse against the tax collectors to the praetor in Rome and the courts in the provinces, and sought to promote shipping through some benefits. It was only granted to a later emperor, Pertinax (192, 193 AD), to enforce the

abolition of customs duties on the banks of rivers, at the ports of cities, and at crossroads (Herodian 2, 4).

117/118

7. The Death of Agrippina.

In the records of Nero's early years of reign, he appears to us as a capable child, capable of being moved by noble ideals. He willingly followed the guidance of his teacher and was personally attached to the humane tendency of his time, which valued humanity over national identity. Both his own nature, inclined towards waiting, and the wise policy of his minister, led him to be flexible with the Senate, if their decisions could not be rejected without a harsh collision. At the same time, as in the case of the slave question, he did not hold back his views, which differed from the aristocratic point of view, and patiently waited for the time to come when he could soften and correct the harshness of a senatorial decision.

118

His mother was the first to contribute to his growth out of childhood. The struggle with her tyranny, which according to Suetonius (Nero, ch. 34) once led him to the alarming and unsettling threat that he would withdraw as a private person to Rhodes in order to avoid constant criticism of his words and actions, lasted five years. Seneca, who saw both the dignity of the throne and his own influence endangered by the interventions of the Empress Mother in the government, stood by the growing child with advice and action. It was he who, in alliance with Burrus, put an end to Agrippina's bloody orders in the early days of her son's reign. He finally gave her a painful lesson. When she appeared again in the Senate to attend the audience of Armenian envoys and their request for help against the Parthians on the imperial throne, the minister gave the emperor a hint to go down from the throne and interrupt the audience on a pretext (Tacit. Annal. 13, 5. Dio Cass. 61, 3).

Seneca was also not against the love affair that Nero began with the libertine Otho and Claudius Senecio, the son of a freedman of Claudius, with the freedwoman Acte. The Stoic prince's tutor dismissed his doubts with the comforting thought that his pupil seemed unable to overcome a certain unfamiliarity with Octavia, his wife, and also took into account the fact that the unpretentious, probably Greek girl would not affect anyone in the prince's immediate circle. The mother, however, became suspicious and let herself be carried away by jealousy of the influence of a foreign woman to use harsh words about the freedwoman, which irritated the son and only drew him closer to the indulgent teacher. Indeed, a relative of Seneca,

Annäus Serenus, commander of the bodyguard, to whom the writing "On Tranquility of Mind" is dedicated, and whose death later (Epist. 63) was very painful to his older friend, was chosen to take on the striking character of the love affair. Serenus publicly plays Acte's lover and presents her with the gifts that Nero had dedicated to her. Agrippina then yields, flatters her son, gifts him from her private treasure, which was not inferior to the imperial one, and offers to entrust his love affair to her participation and knowledge. But Nero was no longer deceived and his closest friends, including Seneca, warned him of the deception of the harsh woman.

119

So the bitterness between mother and son escalated. Agrippina, who had recently received jewels and ornaments from the treasury of the imperial women sent by Nero, declined any further gifts that belonged to the imperial household, which he could only have given through her. In retaliation, Nero dismissed Pallas, who was in charge of the Fiscus, and (incidentally) left the palace in pride, accompanied by a group of loyal friends. Then came Agrippina's threat that she would go to the Praetorium with Britannicus, whom the gods had reserved for her revenge, and boldly compete with the invalid Burrus and the "exiled Seneca," who wanted to exercise dominion over mankind with his schoolmaster-like ways, and finally Britannicus' death.

119/120

Tacitus clearly hints at Seneca when he remarks (Annal. 13, 18) that when Nero distributed the estate of his murdered brother among his friends, some men who professed strict principles were very suspicious that they were dividing the palaces and villas like loot among themselves, while others attributed it to the pressure which the prince exercised to secure a kind of forgiveness by obliging the most eminent men. Merivale outrightly refers to Seneca as the author of the crime and the crime itself as a masterpiece of statecraft. However, the report of the Roman annalist is contradicted by a very weighty testimony, that of Josephus.

120

Nothing can be more vivid and dramatic than Tacitus' portrayal. First, Nero's mind, already agitated by his mother's threats, is further unsettled by an event during the first Saturnalia festival he celebrated as emperor. Chosen by lot as the king of the festival, he challenges Britannicus to sing a song before the guests, hoping that the awkward boy will become the subject of ridicule among the great company. But when the prince steps forward with determination and sings a song that depicts the woes of one deprived of his inheritance and rightful rule, and instead of laughter wins the sympathy of the drunken guests, Nero conceives his plan of murder. The execution took

place in the presence of the court and a large company, during the meal and at the moderately occupied table where Britannicus was dining with noble peers in accordance with court custom. The boy fell lifeless as he drank from the cup into which he had just diluted his hot wine with water, which had been mixed with the poison prepared in a true hellish scene. "The guests were horrified; the impulsive ones fled; those who understood the ways of the world better did not move and watched Nero, who pretended to be ignorant and called the whole thing one of the ordinary and soon passing fits; Agrippina suppressed her horror, but it showed in her face; the immature Octavia had already learned to conceal pain, love, and emotions." (Annal. 13, 16).

120/121

Tacitus also wants us to believe that Nero had already had the pile of wood on which the murdered prince was burned erected beforehand. With his interlocking insinuations of his pragmatism, he lets the crowd in the stormy rain that accompanied the burial of the ashes on the Campus Martius recognize the wrath of the gods over the crime, but many also forgive the fratricide in accordance with the judgment of heaven because it cut off the further horrors that the strife between brothers for power would have produced. Indeed, he crowns these religious interpretations with the thoughts of contemporaries of the event who, because of the violation and defilement of Britannicus by Nero in the days leading up to the catastrophe, declared the boy's death a blessing.

121

All these chasing scenes, interpretations, and manipulations disappear before the testimony of a man who explicitly opposes his impartial judgment of Nero to the portrayals of flatterers and haters. Josephus had every opportunity during his first stay in Rome, at the height of Nero's reign, to study the sentiments and judgments on the spot. Later, settled in Rome himself as a Flavian, he had years to examine the works of his Roman contemporaries for his historical work. He also lists the crimes of the dead emperor with the coldness of a stranger, but he distinguishes (Antiquities 20, 8, 2): "Nero secretly poisons Britannicus, but publicly he kills his mother." These few words decide against the painting and pragmatic confusion of Tacitus for us. Whether the death of the unfortunate boy was due to poison or an epileptic fit is naturally no longer possible to determine. Seneca's involvement in this episode was limited to the drafting of the edict in which Nero declared, after the death of his brother, that as the only surviving representative of the Claudian family, he would be all the more devoted to the Senate and people.

121/122

In the same year (55), Seneca appears as a member of a domestic jury appointed by Nero under Burrus' chairmanship and with some freedmen as assessors and sent to Agrippina when she was accused by two enemies of the conspiracy against him. They were the elder sister of Domitia Lepida, whom Agrippina had murdered, who could not forget that she had taken away her husband, the wealthy orator Crispus Passienus, after her return from exile and had inherited him after a few years, and Julia Silana, who had lost her husband Silius through his fake marriage to Messalina and wanted to revenge herself on Agrippina for a fresh insult. Both had used the growing estrangement between mother and son, the dismissal of the former from the Palatium, and the public talk of their intrigues with the old nobility and the chiefs and leaders of the Praetorium and their displayed sympathy for the neglected Octavia to incite Nero through their freedmen with the specter of a conspiracy against his mother. However, she succeeded in calming the domestic court again through passionate appeals to the impossibility of seeking her salvation from her and her son's enemies, and in obtaining an opportunity for some thoughtless words that had been snatched from her by the irritability of motherly love before the supreme tribunal of her imperial son. This audience led to the exile of Silana and her two freedmen and the execution of Domitia's freedman.

122/123

The final downfall of Agrippina was to be brought about by a woman who, just like herself, had coveted the bed of Claudius and was determined to pave her way to Nero's throne over her dead body. It was Sabina Poppaea, a coquette of gentle beauty, who knew how to exploit her intellectual education, the charm of her conversation, and the grace of her figure for her social advantage under the guise of modesty. Married to Rufus Crispinus, with whom she had already borne a son, she lured Otho, the friend and table companion of the emperor, to herself in order to win the prince through the confidant of the ruler. Otho, married to her, makes his master a household friend and, to make room for him, is compensated with the prefecture of Lusitania.

123

And again Seneca appears. Plutarch tells in his biography of Galba that Seneca was friends with Otho and got him the governorship of Lusitania. But did the emperor's confidant need a recommendation? Was it not rather a matter of dissolving Otho's marriage and sending him to the end of the world? Did Seneca therefore at least become involved in this matter to the extent that he helped his pupil to get rid of the annoying talk of an adulterous household friendship and sought with Nero the corner of the empire in which Otho could be hidden?

Now came the time when Nero shed the mantle of childhood and the man was born. The birth pangs were severe, and Seneca had to help once more. Poppaea urged Nero with her request to free himself from his mother's guardianship. In her, the guardian Octavia saw the only obstacle that stood in the way of her connection with the prince; she did not think of Seneca's and Burrus's participation for Nero's wife or she hoped to easily remove these supervisors after the fall of the mother.

So in March of the year 59, there was the banquet that Nero gave for Agrippina at Baiae, and the passionate demonstrations of his filial devotion and gratitude - the crossing of the mother to her neighboring country house at Bauli on the treacherous ship, which was to be handed over to the waves by the freedman Anicetus, admiral of the fleet of Misenum, her injury during the rescue, and the dark hours of the night in which mother and son stared at the abyss of nothingness that lay before them.

123/124

After the events of the night, the mother realized that the love and devotion her son had professed at the banquet in Baiae was only a pretense to lure her onto the ship. After this betrayal, there was no hope of reviving the childish affection between them, but rather it was certain that the exposed criminal, tormented by shame of his discovery, would pursue his plan with sure means. For the moment, the only way out was to gain time and pretend as if she did not suspect his intentions.

124

The son was no less shaken when instead of news of his mother's death, a messenger arrived and reported that she had narrowly escaped a serious accident with only a slight injury, thanks to the kindness of the gods. With his knowledge of his mother, he saw at a glance that forgetting what had happened and restoring a peaceful relationship between them was impossible.

Burrus and Seneca, whom he called in his stupor, remained silent for a long time after he had explained the situation to them. Tacitus says that it is not known whether he revealed everything to them, but they saw through the matter, realized the futility of abstaining from violence, and did not dare to speak until Seneca gave Burrus a hint with a glance whether to assign the murder to the military. The commander of the Praetorian Guard replied, "Certainly not against a member of the House of Germanicus," and assigned the matter to Anicetus. Nero breathed a sigh of relief and finally felt like a man when he took on the execution. The freedman rushed with his men from the fleet to Agrippina's country house and had them knocked down by a ship

captain and then killed by a captain with a sword. Seneca concluded the matter with an imperial report to the Senate in which Nero turned the messenger of the mother into a hired assassin and reported that she had committed suicide out of guilt. The antithesis of this report, preserved by Quintilian, "I cannot yet believe in my rescue, nor rejoice over it," proves its Senecan origin.

124/125

Sallust says that rulers would maintain their power with the same means they acquired it, but the correct conclusion would be that they would also lose it with those means. The great connoisseur of the world and of life, Lucretius (de Rerum Natur. 5, 1152), knew better: "Violence and injustice recoil upon the head of him who caused them." Agrippina succumbed to this justice, which runs through history and resolves the discord into the symphony of the whole; and Seneca, too, will pay the price for the activity with which he used the arts of deception for his purposes at the Claudian and Neronian courts, in order to establish the reign of virtue on earth and ultimately reached out his hand for supreme power. Nero, as a man, will bring the measure of violence with which his predecessors, up to the dictator Julius, founded and maintained their autocracy, to overflow and collapse under the weight of his deeds. With him, the house of the Julii-Claudian Caesars will fall.

III.

Nero's and Seneca's downfall.

1. The Cosmopolitan on the Throne.

Nero was no longer a Roman national patriot in that exclusive sense in which the ancient Roman, in pride of his blood, claimed the privilege of superiority over the peoples of the earth. Virgil had expressed this sense of nationalism once more in some of his most bombastic verses, but already at the dawn and midnight edge, the dark masses that were to humble this pride were standing, and within the empire, the emperors began to work towards a reconciliation of rights and blood opposition. Nero, the philanthropist, boldly advanced on their path and wanted to bring forth the universal spirit of his world empire.

Just as Seneca praised the magnanimity with which the Romans expanded their urban nature to global interaction, in which human beings stand side by side as equals, so did the imperial disciple of the philosopher look down from his throne upon a community of human beings in which his "clemency" did not tolerate any difference in rights and sought to erase the memory of their previous defeat in the circle of the vanquished. But what guaranteed that a Roman ruler would always be at the head of this great community? That the community would once again fall apart or split in two, with the center of gravity shifting to the east?

The idea of dividing the world had already haunted and taken shape during the time of the civil wars and triumvirates, with Augustus buying the possession of the West by leaving the East to Antony. Barely a century had passed since Nero's death when, at the court of the widow of Alexander Severus, the plan was considered to reconcile the brotherly strife between Geta and Caracalla by dividing the East and West between the two princes. In his passion for world unity, Nero no longer trusted Rome alone, with its dying or disillusioned dynasties, to hold together the peoples of the earth in the long term, and all unity of administration and centralization of power could not erase the difference between the Latin half in the West and the Greek half in the East.

Roman language and literature did not make comprehensive conquests in

the East. Horace and Virgil were not popular poets among the Greeks, anyway, the latter possessed the originals that the Latins imitated. Also, for the eloquence of the forum and the senate, the descendants of Demosthenes and Aeschines could consider themselves as the masters of their Western pupils. Latin was the official language in Greece and Asia, through the law and through the administration and army bureaucracy, but in the community, cult, and household, Greek maintained its dominance. And although politically the subjugated peoples, the Greeks exercised a spell over the West with their schools, literature, and the artworks of their temples and public spaces, which made them victorious.

It is as if the waves of the Bosphorus were rolling over the axis around which the destinies of the East and the West revolve, and which with its centralizing power constantly draws the emancipated refugees of the West back under its spell. Justin and his author Trogus Pompeius had no bad idea when they spanned world history within the framework of the Macedonian union of East and West and their preparations and disruptions.

Before seven to eight decades pass after Nero's death, we will see Greeks in philosopher robes enter Rome and dedicate their defense of the message that the Logos of Ephesians Heraklit has appeared in human form and has called the peoples of the world to his community to the emperors. And a century and a half later, Constantine the Great will take the lead of these preachers and confessors of the Greek-Oriental Logos and, far from the Roman Senate, establish his headquarters on the Bosporus. From this eastern center of the empire, for three centuries, alongside the emperors, the confessors of that Logos, with their dialectical disputes over its relation to the primal cause and human nature, will fill the world and prescribe to future generations the metaphysical basis of their faith.

Nero moved in this current, which was heading towards the Greek center of the empire, when he sought to bridge the gap between West and East, Hellenize Rome and realize his ideal of a united world in which the ruler of the West and Athens would join hands. He wanted to preempt dangers that he anticipated, but the bitter seriousness of which he still could not clearly conceive. At the same time, he continued the assimilation of Greek culture in Rome, which had made rapid progress since its beginning during the last Punic wars, through the civil wars and under the early emperors. We only need to recall the enthusiastic praise that Lucretius (Rer. Natur. 6, 1-33) dedicated to Athens as the consoler of the sick world and mother of Epicurus, the heart-purifier. Cicero revered the philosophy of Athens as his household goddess and companion throughout life. From Greece, the news of human rights and its superiority over law has come into the Roman lecture halls of the imperial era, and Seneca has given philosophical sanctification to the

imperial leveling through his doctrine of universal equality borrowed from Stoicism and the Garden of Epicurus.

129

When Cicero's friend Cornelius Nepos drew the contrast between Greek and Roman ways of life in the preface to his biographical sketches and in the section on Epaminondas, he had already lost some of his harshness. It was no longer entirely accurate when he described dance and music practice, in which Epaminondas was instructed by the most famous masters, as something that Roman custom considers to be debauchery. Nero was not the first to consider the old Romans a one-sided figure and to supplement them with the artistic versatility of the Greeks. Even during the time of the last Punic War, there were senators who combined Greek virtuosity with the seriousness of military rulers. For example, the Cato of that time referred to a senator who, having just dismounted from his warhorse, made himself a "jester" and performed a minuet. He appears, says the stern censor of the same, as a singer where he chooses, puts Greek verses on stage, performs farces, and makes puns. Scipio Aemilianus Africanus the Younger complained in a speech that people of this kind practiced dishonorable antics, went to the comedian school with stringed instruments, learned to dance and sing. Young girls and free boys flock to the same school: when I did not want to believe the account of this activity, says the conqueror of Carthage, I was taken to such a dancing school and truly saw there more than five hundred girls and boys, and among them a child, the son of a candidate for state office, not more than twelve years old, dancing with castanets. The triumphator Appius Claudius, a member of the Salian priesthood until his old age, was proud that he danced better than his colleagues in the processions of his priesthood. At Cicero's time, three noble greats, including the son of the triumvir Crassus, boasted of being the most accomplished masters of the art of dance, and the dictator Sulla himself was, according to Macrobius, to whom we owe these notes on the early Hellenization of the nobility (Saturnal-3, 14), a virtuoso in singing and gave the actor Roscius, whom he held in esteem, a golden knight's ring.

129/130

After the murder of his mother, Nero triumphantly returned to Rome as the victor over her alleged plots against his life. He then set the stage for the metamorphosis of Rome into a Greek form. The old Roman spirit, which his

mother had preserved in the midst of the democratization and leveling of Roman society, no longer stood in his way. He was now free. According to Tacitus, when the fleet prefect Anicetus declared himself ready to carry out the deed, Nero exclaimed with a meaningful glance at his hesitant tutors Seneca and Burrus that he owed the actual assumption of power to a freedman. In his view, ruling meant transforming the world, and he was convinced that he was called to play the leading role in the more beautiful world that his imagination envisaged.

130

Tacitus (Annal. 14, 15) calls the Juvenalia that he gave in 59 AD to celebrate his first shave a preparatory attempt and transition, since he did not want to disgrace himself immediately by appearing on a public stage. He had therefore invited a select audience; the upper classes themselves took to the stage, and Tacitus reports with an angry expression on the dishonor of the high-born that no nobility, age, or fame in the highest state service prevented anyone from exposing himself like Greek and Latin stage heroes and acting and singing in an unmanly manner. Nero himself appeared as a singer and played the zither. Praetorians, soldiers, captains, and officers surrounded the scene; Burrus, with sadness on his face, as Tacitus puts it, also praised him. The author of the Caesar's history also places the formation of the Augustiani corps in that time, consisting of knights who wanted to make their fortune and counted it an honor to praise the beauty of the prince and the divinity of his voice.

130/131

In the following year (60), the foundation of the Neronia took place, which were to be celebrated every five years and, after Domitian had renewed them as the Capitolian games, continued until the time of Constantine. They were entirely dedicated to the muses and followed the Greek model, featuring music, poetry, rhetoric, wrestling, and chariot racing (Suetonius, Nero 12. Tacitus, Annals 14, 20, 21). The audience was once again select, and the stage was set for the prince. On this occasion, Lucan was introduced to the court by reciting his poem in honor of Nero. Nero himself received the first prize in oratory without reciting a poem or giving a speech. During the repetition of the Neronia (Tacitus, Annals 16, 4) in 65 AD, the Senate wanted to spare him the appearance on the stage and offered him the prize in singing and oratory. However, Nero stated that he would put himself on an

equal footing with the other competitors and receive the deserved praise from the judges. He first recited a poem and then appeared with all the ceremony of these virtuosos as a zither player.

131

Let us pause for a moment at Tacitus' statement (Annal. 16, 4) that the audience rewarded the emperor's artistic performance with an applause that was harmoniously tuned and moved in melodious figurations (certis modis plausuque composito). Suetonius, who (Nero Chap. 20) suggests that the prince formed the Agustian cohort from the knights only after the approval he received from the applause of the Alexandrian guests at his later performance in Naples, also describes them as harmoniously tuned (modulatae). Then, let us recall that Augustus (Suetonius Octav. 57), when returning from the province to the city, was greeted by the people with melodious songs, so we must not overlook a certain religious character in these tributes.

131/132

Indeed, the Neronia were a kind of cult to celebrate the deities that inspire poets and artists in their works. The five-year games that Augustus established at the site of his former headquarters after the victory at Actium and dedicated to the Actian Apollo, the original of the Neronia, were also holy and were called the "Actian religion" by Tacitus. However proud Nero was of his humanity and his human abilities, he could still reconcile it with his enthusiasm for art, so he enjoyed himself with his highest human achievements as a virtuoso, in the role of the select priest of the Muses and the god of light. His Augustiani, whose name recalls the priesthood of the Augustales, which Tiberius (Tacitus Annal. 2, 95) dedicated to the Julian family, were, as it were, the choir that followed the action of the high priest with an affirming shout.

132

(By the way! Later emperors, first Trajan, as can be seen from Pliny's Panegyricus, received a similar tribute of melodiously tuned acclamations from the Senate within its four walls. Aelius Lampridius, in his Life of Alexander Severus (Chap. 6-9), has reported to us the choral or canon with which the Senate received this emperor in its midst, taken from the official state records.)

132/133

Let us pause for a moment at Tacitus' assertion regarding the first Neronian celebration, where he, under the guise of old-fashioned sensibilities, laments the elaborate arrangements that lead to the corruption of the Roman elite. Finally, he admits that the Greek dress, which was prescribed for the audience of those performances, had become somewhat commonplace. The influx of nationalities in Rome had long pushed the Roman toga into the minority, and after the civil wars, the impoverished natives no longer attached any importance to the ceremonial dress that Virgil still glorified (Aeneid. 1, 281). "Look at the Romans," Augustus once said, echoing the poet's words, when he saw a swarm of people in dark mantles during a public meeting, "look at the masters of the world, the toga-wearing people." Augustus' command to the Aediles not to allow anyone with a mantle on the Forum and its surroundings did no more than Domitian's later attempts to restore the toga to honor in the bustle of Rome; the dark covering remained dominant. The elite had learned from their villa life in Greek southern Italy to be comfortable in light draping, and even Claudius, who otherwise insisted on Roman decorum, lived entirely in the Greek style with his court when he visited Naples.

133

The imperial compulsion that senators and knights were subject to when appearing on stage, as Tacitus and Dio Cassius report, probably did not take place in the way these writers want their readers to believe. The great mime writer Laberius, whom Julius Caesar urged to also appear as an actor after his dictatorship, lamented in his moving prologue about the compulsion that, in his old age, forced him, who had been unable to be moved by ambition, gifts, fear, violence, or orders, to a position from which he would no longer see his hearth as a knight, which he still was that day (Macrobius, Saturn. 2, 7). Laberius lamented that he, to whom the gods themselves could not deny anything, as a man could not refuse anything. Since Augustus, the emperors had made futile efforts to stem the flow of knights and noblewomen to the stage; Tiberius (Suetonius, Tiber. 35) punished young men of the senatorial and equestrian orders who sought to incur disgraceful judgments to indulge their passion for the stage and arena with exile. Caligula's passion for dance and tragic theater revived among the higher classes such a lively desire to appear in public that Claudius could no longer hold them back.

The obsession with which the high nobility in France under Louis XV maintained an intimate relationship with dancers, singers, and actresses and laid their fortunes at their feet is an example of the dissolution of class differences in the early stages of imperialism and the voluntary relinquishment of the upper echelons of their ruling position, which they no

longer felt capable of handling. With the recent maturity of imperialism, numerous marriages have replaced this free association.

133/134

In this adjustment, Rome went so far with ancient ruthlessness that the nobility themselves took to the stage, whose brilliance and changing life images enchanted them. Although some friends of the old days may have still lamented the degeneration of their peers, the people must have cheered when they saw knights and senators making themselves common as actors and appearing as their equals. The time of internal peace, which was also reflected in the harmony between the prince and the Senate and the display of wealth, received a fantastic expression in the artistic image of universal equality.

134

"As Merivale says, when his people, after describing the humiliation which Nero inflicted on the nobility through temptation or pressure to take the stage, were sufficiently corrupted, he himself ascended to the public stage to crown the general degeneration.

But he was the prince of democracy, the first in the world community of equals. When the nobles and knights were seized with vertigo at the sight of the surging masses that dragged the social heights into their whirlpool, and could not resist the desire to plunge into this whirlpool, Nero felt himself the leader and moderator of this leveling and considered it his duty to show himself as the pinnacle in the exercise of the highest art.

However, he demonstrated patience in waiting, in which he was also a master. It was not until 64 AD, the tenth year of his reign and the fourth after the opening of his private stage, that he went to Naples (Tacitus Annal. 15.33) to appear there as an artist before the public, as a Greek city. Until then, he had watched the art performances of his nobility, as well as their gladiatorial exercises, from his box in his standing wooden amphitheater in Rome. That he also "placed" the senators and knights in the arena, which he opened for their desire for combat, as Suetonius (Nero 12) expresses it, or forced them to perform, as Dio Cassius (61.17) claims, is an exaggeration of later times, and the former's statement that he put 400 senators and 600 knights to fight is entirely baseless.

134/135

After the success of his debut in Naples, he showed himself to the great

public of Rome in his favorite roles as "mad Hercules, circling Canace, Orestes the matricide, as blinded Oedipus." Let us now allow him to celebrate his triumphs on the classical soil of Greece from the autumn of 66 to the spring of 68, collecting the laurels of all the combat games that the Greeks had to postpone to the same year because of him, placing the land of art, whose freedom he proclaimed in Corinth, alongside Rome as an equal sister, and finally taking on the task, which other absolutist nation-benefactors tried and never completed, of piercing the Corinthian Isthmus to promote free trade, leaving it unfinished when the restless signs of the West called him home."

135

Let us turn to another aspect of his imperialist populism!

In the following century, we encounter a Christian circle that awaits the imminent arrival of a thousand-year period in which an almighty ruler will take away the worries of possession and work from the children of his realm and grant them effortless enjoyment of all the gifts of nature. The city of this thousand-year empire will shine brighter than the sun, moon, and stars and sparkle with gold and precious stones. The voluntary fruits of the earth will beckon for enjoyment, streams full of wine will flow into the plain, and rivers will overflow with milk (Lactant. Divin. Instit. 7, 24); the citizens of the empire will revel in the defeat and enslavement of their enemies alongside their enjoyment of earthly goods.

135/136

A prelude to this happy age was Nero's interaction with his people. During large theater performances, he (Sueton Nero 11) had small tablets with instructions for food, clothing, and jewelry, and finally, houses and lands thrown to the people. The Circus Maximus, the Campus Martius, and the streets were his dining room, and the people were his guests with whom he banqueted and fraternized. When he sailed down the Tiber to Ostia or along the Gulf of Baiae, arbors and improvised guest halls were erected on the banks, with noble women standing in front of them, portraying themselves as hostesses and inviting passersby to enter. The feast arranged by Tigellinus (Tacit. Annal. 15, 37) on Agrippa's pond was famous. The guests dined on a raft that was pulled by magnificently decorated ships. In the evening, the company gathered in the forest and villas on the banks, while the scenery was enlivened by singing performances and illuminations.

136

"Feasting and drinking," says Merivale, "were not the only excesses that he shamelessly and publicly displayed. He had already morally corrupted the

citizens to such a degree that they were no longer offended even by the most naked displays of lust." Although the English historian allows for the possibility that some of the descriptions by Suetonius and Tacitus may be attributed to the exaggerations of later outraged moralists and the lavish imagination of the storytellers, the fact that prostitution was encouraged, recommended, and even enforced is to him beyond doubt.

136/137

However, let us consider only the scene that Suetonius (Nero 29) and Dio Cassius (63,13) describe from such country and garden parties, which is also embellished by the brief epitome of Aurelius Victor (cap. 5), and we cannot doubt the rich contribution that the opponents of Nero's had to these extravagant descriptions. The fact that the prince allowed himself to be placed in the skin of a wild animal and then attacked the genitals of boys and girls who were tied to stakes from a cave seems too much in the taste of the crassest popular imagination for us to consider a young emperor who was not devoid of intelligence capable of such perversion. The same imagination could not imagine the imperial country parties without the evening finale, where prostitutes displayed themselves naked during the park's illumination, and noblewomen were at the guests' disposal, and even that market, in whose stalls at the Augustus pond Nero offered the guests a selection of brilliant gifts in exchange for tokens, had to end (Tacit. Annal. 14, 15) with the debauchery of noblewomen.

137

When imperialism stages the conclusion of the history of nations, the people find a table already set. The democratic absolutism of Athens began with the extortion of its allies, the marble embellishment of the capital city, and the free theater for the city's population under Pericles, and ended a century later with bread distributions. Caesar stormed the Mediterranean coastlands to disarm the aristocracy and to bring home the promised booty for the people. Augustus would have been lost if he had not gained control of Cleopatra's treasury to satisfy his army and the "toga-wearing" people. Later, he made unsuccessful efforts to end the grain doles to the people and only managed to limit them, allowing the tenants of state lands and corn dealers to continue to exist.

This was the case during the time of Nero and remained so afterwards, such as with Aurelian, the conqueror of Zenobia, who contemplated using public funds to terrace the land from the Etrurian mountains to the Alps and donate the wine produced to the people (Fl. Vopisc. Aurel cap. 48). Although the prefect of the Praetorian Guard dissuaded him from implementing this plan, which would have almost literally realized that Christian fantasy of vineyards, by saying that he would also have to give young chickens and geese to the

people along with the wine, the emperor did manage to provide wine to the people at a low price in the temple of the sun that he built.

137/138

A man like Nero, who wanted to merge the genius of the Western and Eastern worlds, maintained harmony with the Senate until the last years of his reign, fraternized with the people, did not neglect the administration of the provinces, and had a good eye in choosing great army commanders, could hardly have lived in such a depraved private environment as ancient authors claim. No court, says Tacitus (Annal. 14, 13), was ever so rich in bad people" as this one, but men like Seneca, Lucan, Petronius, and Vespasian would not have lasted more than a few weeks in a court whose corruption modern historians compete to describe.

138

The reputation that Petronius gained as an arbiter of taste at court does not quite match the prevailing assumption that this witty man only excelled at arranging banquets. If Tacitus (Annal. 16, 17) presents the matter as the charming and avoidance of excess and oppression that made his arrangements at banquets exemplary for Nero, he must also provide traits that indicate that conversation was his strength, and his secret lay in making intellectual exchange the main thing even at banquets. His posture and words were marked by a casual laissez-faire, unpretentiousness, and a lack of insistence on dignity and pathos. He captivated the company when, in his humorous mood, he portrayed a significant picture that reflected the ordinary world in his naive yet great nature, and he surprised listeners with the natural truth of a painting that revealed deeper and noble aspects of human interaction hidden from the ordinary eye.

138/139

Rarely would there have been such a sophisticated conversation at a great court as there was at Nero's court during his evenings or nights. Lucan was just the man to illustrate Petronius's genre pictures with his resounding and fiery accents and to review the adventures and deserved fates of the great men of the last hundred years. Seneca, who infused his writings with historical anecdotes and details from the history of the rulers during the civil wars and the early imperial period, would not have failed to supplement the descriptions of the witty genre painter and the stormy poet and bring them together into a comprehensive picture. They had all seen and observed the world, were interested in the secrets of nature and distant parts of the world, up to the problem of the sources of the Nile, and had rich material for stimulating hypotheses and world constructions. Nero may have concluded with his latest poem and perhaps even sung a song with his somewhat

hoarse and purring voice, as the authors say.

139

If we can infer from the loyalty and competence of Helius, whom Nero left behind in Rome as his alter ego during his year and a half of Herculean labors on the artistic arena of Greece, and from the military diplomacy of Polyklet, the former imperial household slaves were also significant men. For example, Nero sent the latter with considerable reinforcements to the northern army camp when the legate Sueton and the procurator Paulinus disagreed about the conduct of the war in Britain, relying on him to establish a peaceful relationship with the natives whom Sueton had driven to despair with his victories. Polyklet knew how to assert the authority entrusted to him against the general and, at the same time, gain respect (terribilis; Tacitus Annal. 14, 39) from the soldiers who loved to ridicule the former household slaves on military missions.

139/140

Tacitus aimed his excursions against the "creatures" of the court, especially Vatinius. He called him (Annal. 15, 34) a "dirty monster, a product of the hostelries, a person with foolish ideas, at whom the court initially amused itself and ridiculed, but who, through the suspicion of the good, gained favor, money, and influence, and rose to the top among the bad elements of the court." He was the democratic court jester of the emperor, and Nero felt both tickled and elevated when he mocked him as one of his own enemies, a born aristocrat and a senator. When Nero returned to Rome after his theatrical debut in Naples, Vatinius had already come so far that he gave a fencing game in Benevento, which was attended by the emperor.

140

If Tacitus does not even want to give him a little bit of skill in verse, and tells that he gathered insignificant poets who had to keep an eye on his impromptus and verse attempts in his dwelling and fabricate a makeshift poem from them (Annal. 14, 16), that is quite poor and also contradicted by Suetonius (Nero 52), who has seen poems by Nero's hand with diligent corrections. His assertion (Annal. Ibid.) that the emperor dedicated the time after the table to philosophers to amuse himself with their learned disputes is very poorly placed, given his familiar interaction with Seneca and Lucan.

2. Seneca's downfall.

The glance that Nero cast at his teacher that night when a freedman promised him the death of his mother marked a turning point in Seneca's fate. This time, he stood there at a loss and left his pupil, who reached out his hand for the entire empire, to fend for himself. As the chief state secretary, he did help him once again overcome the difficulty of how to explain the murder of his mother to the Senate. Burrus also provided his support, bringing the commanders and chiefs of the Praetorian Guard to Nero and congratulating him on his success. However, Nero accepted these services as a routine duty of his officials and marched firmly and confidently towards the barrier that separated him from the capital.

140/141

The assertion by Tacitus (Annal. 14, 10) that Seneca sat silently after receiving news of the execution of his mother, often rising shuddering and like a man out of his mind, full of anxiety about the disaster that the day would bring, has as much historical value as his vivid descriptions of the crushing effects of a couple of night-time messages regarding conspiracies on him. From the one and a half years of the Greek journey, we are given almost only anecdotes of the life-threatening compulsion to which the listeners were exposed during the emperor's artistic performances, and of his attacks on the lives of competitors or even on the statues of earlier victors, so that we cannot believe the reports of Nero's conscience scruples, which are said to have prevented him from being initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries or from visiting Athens as the seat of the Erinyes (Sueton, Nero 34, Dio Cassius 63, 14).

141

It was only after the break with the Senate that the news spread among the people that Agrippina had fallen at the hands of her son, and satirical verses circulated about the new Orestes and Alcmene, who killed his mother after having made her his wife in incest. Nero, however, looked down on these pasquinades, as well as on literary attacks in general, with cold contempt and did not hesitate to appear as a singer in the roles of Orestes and the mother's husband Oedipus. He was content to punish the actor Datus, who, on the Atellane stage, made a movement of drinking and swimming during the verses: "farewell father, farewell mother," with reference to the end of Claudius and Agrippina, and pointed to the Senate benches during the words: "the underworld draws you down by the legs," with exile from Rome and Italy (Sueton, ibid. 39).

141/142

Seneca had also cold-bloodedly disregarded all concerns when, by Agrippina's side, he deprived the son of Claudius of his rights; but in his student, he saw a master rise who was even better at suppressing all doubts. The teacher had adorned his involvement in the intrigues of the Claudian court with the interest of virtue, which was to ascend the throne with his pupil; Nero, on the other hand, showed what the belief in humanity can achieve and that before the power of the person, right and crime sink into an indifferent nothingness.

142

The next goal he marched towards was the elimination of his wife, Octavia. To put Poppaea on the throne, he had murdered her mother; however, Burrus wanted nothing to do with the dismissal of Claudius's daughter and once dryly said, when Nero brought up the divorce, that then he would have to give back Octavia's dowry, which was the power. After three years of waiting, the commander of the Praetorian Guard freed the prince (62 AD). Burrus was fed up with life at Nero's court and behaved towards him with deliberate coldness on his deathbed; when Nero, during his daily visits to his sickbed, once asked him the usual question about his condition, he answered, turning away from him: "I am well."

Seneca was now without support, and his downfall was inevitable. In his childish pragmatism, Tacitus cannot explain this turn of events differently than through the whispers of the bad elements of the court, who pointed out to the prince the wealth of his teacher, the beauty of his park, and the splendor of his villas. Then the state minister is said to have strived for the first prize in eloquence and to have practiced more than usual in the art of verse since Nero had developed a taste for it. It is also known that the schoolmaster accompanied the prince's singing with his ridicule and did not want to recognize his mastery in horsemanship.

142/143

Seneca, who like his pupil lived in Greece with his innermost thoughts, but saw in Greek wisdom the salvation of the world, would not have been satisfied with the idea of Hellenizing Rome and unifying the world through the introduction of Greek boxing and the construction of gymnasiums (as in Rome and Ravenna), as his student did. Nero's belief in the world-uniting power of circus performances and zither and flute playing would have pained him. But to mock the emperor's singing performances, to ridicule his circus driving, to sit down and write verses because his pupil has a passion for this art?

143

The matter was different and more serious. Sophonius Tigellinus, whose name is the emblem of the coming period, already had so much influence before the death of Burrus that he was able to bring his son-in-law Cossutianus Capito into the Senate and through him, at the beginning of the year of the old Praetorian's death, bring the first charge of high treason since Nero's ascension to the throne before the Senate. It concerned (Tacit. 14, 48, 49) the Praetor Antistius, who had read out satirical poems about the emperor in aristocratic society. The Senate's decision was to banish the author, and Nero's only concern was to give a hint to the aristocratic circles in which, as this incident shows, there was agitation.

Tigellinus, who, after Burrus' death, with Fanius Rufus, a supporter of the old Claudian era, received joint command of the Praetorium, expressed himself on the understanding of his office, when it was soon to be a major blow against the aristocracy, (Tacit. Annal. 14, 57) that his focus was on the person of the ruler and its safety, and he did not look in any other direction. This also indicated Seneca's consideration for the Senate. The new prefect was loyal to the emperor, Seneca saw the princeps senatus in the ruler. It was the same difference that Alexander the Great had in mind when he said that Parmenio loved Alexander, but Kraterus loved the king.

143/144

Seneca was only hurt by the accusations against him before the emperor, particularly the reference to his wealth. This touched a wound that had not yet healed since a fierce battle in the Senate and would continue to pain him throughout his life. In 58 AD, P. Suilius had struck this wound in the middle of the Senate. This man, an informer, i.e., prosecutor for the emperor in the Senate, had fought against any fees for legal advocacy on behalf of the aristocracy under Nero's predecessor. When the compromise that Claudius had achieved in this matter was rescinded in the first year of Nero's reign, and any remuneration for the efforts of advocates was forbidden by Senate decree, tension arose between Suilius and Seneca, to whom the former attributed the blame for favoring the aristocracy. This tension finally erupted into open conflict four years later (58 AD). Suilius, who carried the banner of Claudian democratic rule even under Nero, accused Seneca, then a powerful leader of the Senate, of accumulating millions during his four years of royal friendship by asking him which wisdom or philosophical principles made it possible for him to deny the defender of the citizens the reward for his honorable efforts. He then pointed to usury and the immense interest rates he drew from his debtors in Italy and the provinces. (This last accusation is consistent with Dio Cassius's assertion (62.2) that the Britons' rebellion under Nero was also caused by Seneca imposing 10,000,000 denarii on them at high interest rates and then collecting everything with harshness).

144

Seneca considered that declaration of war so important that he aimed to annihilate the bold and dangerous opponent. At first, he wanted to overthrow Suilius by accusing him of embezzlement during his administration of Asia. However, since summoning witnesses would prolong the trial, Seneca's numerous allies tried to ruin Suilius for his urban offenses, namely the blood guilt he had incurred as an accuser of senators and knights under Claudius. However, they only managed to obtain a fairly mild exile to the Balearic Islands as punishment.

144/145

The weak outcome of the trial offered Seneca no real compensation for the most sensitive blow his reputation had suffered, and it was easy to see that the Emperor had little desire to become particularly heated against the former servant of his adoptive father. The minister therefore turned to the public, dedicated his work "On the Happy Life" to his older brother Gallio, and in a large part of it addressed the question (ch. 21), "why does this person and that person engage in philosophy and yet live as a rich man? Why does he teach contempt for wealth and yet have it?" His answer is weak and moves along the stoic principle that "among indifferent things there are also some that have some value in themselves and that one thing is superior to another." Only once does he become bitter when he writes (ch. 23): "The wise man will give away what he has, what are you pricking up your ears for? what are you holding out your pockets for? he will give to those who are good or whom he can make good. He will remember that we must give an account of giving as well as of receiving. He will have open pockets, but not perforated ones, so that much goes in but nothing comes out."

145

(By the way, a question for those who see the proconsul of Achaia Gallio, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (ch. 18, 12), as Seneca's brother, whether such an official, when a fever attack is announced, can immediately (Seneca Epist. 104) go aboard ship and leave the fever-stricken land of Achaia with the witty remark: "the disease comes from the locality, not from the body"?)

His treatment of the property issue in the essay "On Benefits" is finer and more noble than in the work dedicated to his brother. Here (6, 3) he bases himself on the principle that "everything that inflames the toil of men is not their own, but only a trust", and he gives the answer to the question of how one can make it one's own: "Give it away. Once you have given it away, it is a benefit. Before that, it is only a common name. It is just a house, a slave, money."

145/146

He felt his wealth, as he found everything around him at the court, even the Prince himself, a stranger after Tigellinus' arrival, to be a burden. He begged Nero, whose grace he owed it to, to take back his possessions as his own and to allow him to devote his remaining time to the refinement of his spirit. The flattery of the Prince, who could not accept the offer and asked him to continue to provide him with the support of his experience, could not deceive him about the new situation, and he held himself since then in that seclusion from which he dedicated his Lucilius to the wisdom of secrecy. "Do not let others notice your leisure," he writes among other things (Epist. 68). "The title of philosophy is irrelevant; give your intention any other name; call it sickness, weakness, lazy unwillingness. Do as the animals do, which, to make themselves invisible, scatter the footprints around their lair in disorder."

146

3. Octavia.

The death of Burrus and Seneca's resignation did not yet give Nero the sufficient security for the blow he had been plotting against his wife Octavia for more than three years. There were still noble men who, being related to the imperial house, could arouse the sympathy of the people for the victim of princely cruelty and turn their own eyes to the throne.

146/147

Antonia, Octavia's older sister, daughter of Claudius from his fourth wife Aelia Petina, Messalina's predecessor, was married to a descendant of the dictator Sulla. Faustus Sulla had already been accused in 55 of conspiring with Pallas and Burrus to overthrow Nero and seize the throne, but was acquitted by an in-house court of the emperor, to whom he did not attach much weight, Burrus himself having been appointed as an assessor (Tacit. 13, 23). However, a certain suspicion seems to have arisen in Nero later on and increased over the years, for in 58 he took the fabricated offense of Sulla's men, who were supposed to have wanted to watch over him on his way back from one of his nocturnal city wanderings, as a pretext to exile him to Massilia, where he had him murdered in 62 because of the proximity of Germany and the legions there, which his name, like his connection with the Claudian house, could have brought to his side.

147

Rubellius Plautus, son of Rubellius Blandus, who had been given Julia, daughter of Tiberius' son Drusus, in marriage, suffered a similar fate. Plautus

had been accused in 55 AD, when the struggle between Nero and his mother was uncertain, of being involved in a conspiracy against the throne and Nero's life. He was said to have been selected by Agrippina to join her in marrying into her family and overthrowing her ungrateful son. The mother of the emperor managed to dispel the uncertainty which the accusation brought upon herself in a conversation with her son, and Nero did not act on Plautus' involvement in the accusation. But not forever. Five years later, he could no longer bear the seclusion in which Plautus lived with his wife Antistia, who had been brought home in the meantime, and who could not prevent the growth of his reputation and the general respect he earned through his strict and morally pure behavior. A few lines from Nero's hand, in which he recommended his inheritance in Asia as a suitable place for freeing the capital from disturbing rumors and for nurturing his youthful family happiness, drove him (in 60 AD) to Asia, where the murderers sent by Nero found him in the company of the Greek Köranus and Musonius, who had urged him not to trust the illusions of his Roman friends and father-in-law Antistius Vetus, that a bold decision on his part would bring all of Asia to his side.

147/148

Now only the act of violence against Octavia could follow, which he justified in his report to the Senate by his obligation to watch over the welfare of the state. He himself led the proceedings against Octavia as the head of the household; Tigellin assisted him with the formalities. First, the unfortunate young woman was accused of adultery with the flutist Eucarus, and then, when no sufficient testimony was found, she was dismissed on the grounds of infertility and sent to Campania. When the popular rumor of her recall caused a riot against the Palatium and the new empress, the last resort was used against Poppea's victim. Anicetus, the fleet prefect who had agreed to murder Agrippina, was forced by Nero to fabricate Octavia's adulterous relationship with him and the killing of the fruit of their union. The Emperor then sentenced Octavia to exile on Pandateria, where she soon met a violent death.

148

Octavia walks through Nero's history like a speechless shadow. No word is reported from her, no action, and there is no expression on her face. When Tacitus says of her that there was no movement in her face when her brother Britannicus collapsed fatally, because despite her immature years she had already learned to conceal her emotions, even the seemingly speaking motionlessness of that moment is only a fiction like the entire scene of her brother's murder. From the moment she helped to overthrow and replace her mother with her future stepmother, then deprived her brother of his right to the throne, finally chained herself to the robber and

was overtaken by a freedwoman, Acte, until she was tortured for more than three years by a female usurper, Poppaea, and perhaps, if we can believe Suetonius (Nero 35), suffered under the wild rage of her husband, who tried to strangle her several times, we see her only in a state of paralysis under the pressure of her situation, without being able to guess whether she felt horror in front of her husband or whether he himself regarded the victim, which Agrippina and Seneca had tied to him, with a movement of horror. The careless report of Suetonius (loc. cit.), that Nero soon or early (cito) rejected her company, cannot even clarify this question for us.

149

Her older sister, Antonia, is not entirely distant from a later conspiracy, the Pisonian, and is likely to have been active on Sulla's side, making connections to overthrow the man who was ruinous for her father and brother. Whether Octavia ever thought of stirring up the memory of her father among the nobility and people against her husband, we do not know, and she herself remains a mystery to us. From her moment of death, Tacitus (Annal. 14, 64) wants to report to us the words with which she called for the pity and mercy of her murderers on Pandataria: as a widow, she was only the sister of the prince; she had also invoked her and her former husband's common origin from the Germanic tribes of the Tiberian house for help, and thought of the name of Agrippina, whom she had to endure an unhappy but not yet deadly marriage during her lifetime. However, this genealogical appeal to the murderers is nothing more than one of those many unsupported speeches in which Tacitus seeks to accommodate his pragmatic reflections.

Once Seneca's resignation sealed the rupture of the peaceful relationship with the Senate, the state of war demanded one sacrifice after another. The earlier denunciations of the relatives of the imperial house would have been completely impossible if the eyes of many were not focused on them; the calls from Rome to Rubellius Plautus also prove that the aristocratic circles were busy with plans for a rebellion, and Nero, who could not remain unaware of these movements, was thus dragged ever deeper into his bloody defense system.

149/150

There was another family related to the Julian house, the Junii. Appius Junius Silanus was married to Aemilia Lepida, a great-granddaughter of Augustus from the line of Julia and Agrippa. Of his three sons, Lucius, who had been engaged to Octavia, was pushed out of the Senate on the instigation of Agrippina when she was close to achieving her goal of the marriage bed and the throne of Claudius. He was murdered on the wedding day of his enemy (in 48 AD). Marcus was immediately slaughtered on the orders of the

Empress Mother as proconsul of Asia upon Nero's accession to the throne. Now only Decimus Junius Silanus Torquatus was left, whom the emperor had accused of high treasonous plans through a majestas prosecutor while he was on his theater trip to Naples in 64 AD. Decimus, who was said to have shown his ambition beyond the private sphere by organizing his household administration on the model of the emperor's chancellery, cabinet, and finance office, cut his veins before his conviction.

150

So now everything that belonged to or was blood-related to the imperial house was almost cleared away. But in the whole aristocratic Rome, the emperor seemed to be uneasy. He had originally had the idea of crossing over to Greece and collecting his art trophies there. However, the incident with Decimus Silanus brought him back to Rome, where he staged a scene in the Temple of Vesta, letting himself be determined by disturbing visions to stay with the people, his people who feared for him.

That was a hint for the restless nobles! However, the emergency and excitement caused by the city's fire brought a pause to this state of war.

150/151

4. The Fire of Rome and the Christians.

The poets, rhetoricians, and philosophers of the early imperial era founded a spiritual Rome, on whose fertile soil the archetypes that came to the masses of the empire in the formulas of the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles flourished. Tacitus, on the other hand, who has no idea of this Roman Christianity, suddenly introduces veritable Christians onto the scene, and the interpreters, both secular and spiritual, who share his ignorance of that early Christianity, have been laboring in vain to solve the mystery of where those guests of pagan and Jewish Rome come from.

151

For us, the question is initially only whether Tacitus's statements really deserve the name of a report.

Even the occasion that, according to his account, brought those Christians to light, cannot create a favorable opinion of his report on the origin of these guests. It is a work of appearance and legend that is supposed to motivate the bloody scene of Christian persecution. If that motive dissolves into mist,

will the tragic consequence be able to assert itself?

The entire section is designed to convince readers that Nero instigated the fire that broke out in Rome on July 18, 64, and that the people were not entirely wrong to consider him the author of the disaster and thereby force other people, namely those Christians, to be scapegoats.

The beginning of the section immediately makes it uncertain whether the fire was accidental or ordered, and at least does not rule out the decision against Nero, as it relies on the fact that there are supporters for both explanations. If the public saw itself prevented from extinguishing the fire by the appearance of dark figures and some people who claimed to be following higher orders unashamedly threw fuel into the houses, it should be an open question whether these people were following a command or merely using one to pursue their predatory profession - what impression must, however, be made by the defiant confidence of these dark figures!

151/152

The prince, who was staying in Antium at the beginning of the fire, did indeed come to Rome upon receiving news of the event, but "not until" (Tacitus, Annals 15.38-43) his house, which connected the Palatine with the imperial inheritance of the Maecenatian gardens, caught fire. Although he then did everything possible to alleviate and control the disaster, as Tacitus later unintentionally reveals (Annals 15.50), running through all parts of the city at night without an escort and taking effective measures to provide shelter and nourishment for the homeless masses in his gardens and palatial houses, as well as in the colossal buildings of Agrippa, all of it was in vain and the rumor spread that he had mounted his stage during the fire and sung the burning of Troy as a counterpoint to the day's misfortune. What kind of villainy, then, must he have been capable of, which everyone knew, and what historical effect does the scene contain, as he presents a poetic counterpart to the general misfortune at home?

152

When the fire, which had been brought under control after six days of effort, broke out again on the property of Tigellinus, "it seemed" as if Nero was once again intent on the complete destruction of the city and desiring the glory of founding a completely new city, which would naturally bear his name.

Once again, Seneca had to appear and testify to the godlessness with which Nero allegedly plundered the temples of Greece to adorn the new Rome with statues. To remove any appearance of complicity in this crime, Seneca

supposedly requested leave to retire to a rural life in a distant land, and then feigned illness and bedridden status when his request was denied. However, he had already rarely been seen in the city, and shortly thereafter, according to our author's own account, he was undisturbed in Campania, coming to Rome only for special business. It is more likely that he disposed of the burden of his money, which he allegedly gave to the prince for his buildings, on the occasion of the new city construction.

152/153

Finally, that praetorian colonel who played a leading role in the Pisonian conspiracy must deliver a penetrating and painful blow to the prince, as Tacitus (Annal. 15, 67) notes with true relish. When Nero asked him why he had allowed himself to renounce his allegiance, he is said to have replied, "I have hated you ever since you became a murderer of mother and wife, charioteer, comedian and arsonist." According to our author, nothing hit Nero's ear more sensitively than accusations he could not bear. Nothing? But he had long been used to the accusation of matricide, and nobody could shake his belief in his virtuosity, so only the blot of arson remained! If only Tacitus hadn't put that memory into the mouth of the brave colonel! Dio Cassius, who like Tacitus and Suetonius portrays the prince as the intentional author of the fire, has probably given us the answer of that Flavius Subrius in an older, more reliable form (62, 24): "I do not wish to serve a charioteer and zither player."

153

This is how Tacitus uses his art to weigh the scales, which he initially only presents to the readers as wavering, to the disadvantage of Nero. The pragmatism with which he moves under the horrors and storms of imperialism often has the naivety of a child who scares himself in the dusk and wants to scare others; but the horror picture he has composed from Nero's connections to the Roman fire has the character of petty malice.

Now let us turn to his image of the Christians!

It is striking that during the time when the city had just been reduced to ashes and the ruins were still smoking, we hear nothing of an outburst of anger from the people against the allegedly hated Christians. Nero, on the other hand, came up with the idea of exposing the hated ones and blaming them for the disaster, and only later, after the damage had been healed by his strong measures and by the generosity with which he supported all classes, according to their rank, in the reconstruction of their houses. Only the alleged stubbornness with which the belief in his instigation of the fire persisted, despite all evidence of his involvement and care, is said to have left him no peace.

154

The way in which the hated Christians are introduced is abrupt and confusing. "First," it is said, "those who confessed were arrested." Aside from the fact that those who confessed did not need to be arrested, grabbed, or seized, what did they confess to? Commentators, both secular and spiritual, are divided into two points that are mentioned throughout the entire section. Some believe that they confessed to the crime of arson, which was Nero's plan, while others believe that they confessed to their religious beliefs. However, the author says that they were "handed over not so much for arson as for hatred of the human race," in accordance with their confession. So they had confessed to their beliefs, but it remains an incomprehensible surplus that they were still subjected to investigation after they had already confessed, and after a huge number of people who could only be apprehended as accomplices to that conviction had been indicated, making any judicial formalities unnecessary.

So what had helped Nero in his fear of the persistent popular belief in his arson? Neither in their confession nor in the police or judicial (and entirely unnecessary) investigation or determination was any mention made of the city's misfortune. In fact, when they were tortured to death by Nero in his gardens, the people bestowed their sympathy upon them and regretted that they were being sacrificed not for the common good, but for the pleasure of the emperor's bloody spectacle. Only the author takes the opportunity to give these objects of public pity another blow and to call their exemplary punishment (for their superstition) deserved.

This is not history, and it cannot be made into one.

155

Tacitus has nothing terrible or shameful to say about the supposed Christians of Nero's time, except for what he accused the Jews of in his earlier work, namely hatred towards all other nations (Hist. 5, 5). And the fact that the founder of the Christian name was sentenced to death under Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate is likely to have been taken from the same state archives in which, according to Tertullian (Apologet. 21), the fact that at the moment of Jesus' death, at noon, the sun was darkened, was recorded.

When historians have struggled in vain with the confusion of Tacitus' Christian portrayal and imposed an equally chimerical and baseless connection to it, they ultimately (like Schiller) follow the path of Gibbon and assume that our author has transferred the color of the later Domitianic persecution to a calamity that affected a community in which Christianity and Judaism were not yet sharply distinguished. However, firstly, the Roman

reaction of Domitian, as I will demonstrate in the section on the Flavian period, only affected certain heights of society, and only then those souls that had attached Romanism to the monotheistic law and combined with it an inwardness and renunciation of the world that was originally foreign to Judaism.

155/156

The distorted image presented by Tacitus can only be explained in the context of the influences of the time in which he wrote his Annals, during Trajan's reign in the second decade of the second century. By then, there were indeed Christian elements in Rome, and he might have heard of a Christ and his fate under Pontius Pilate. He could have also formed the opinion that the disaster, which seemed to have been suffocated in the death of this Christ, had later broken out again and spread to Rome, the gathering place of all that was impure. Suetonius' biography of Nero (chapters 16-17), written under the same influences and during the same time, also mentions the punishment of the Christians as adherents of a new and shameful superstition, among the police measures taken by this emperor.

156

Therefore, in the portrayal of Christianity in its development in relation to the second century imperial system, we can only conclude our judgment on that episode of the Neronian era.

Moreover, if we consider Tacitus to have been influenced by the Trajanic period in this episode, it does not necessarily mean that there was a massive slaughter of Jews under Nero. Dio Cassius, who goes further than Tacitus in the section on the fire of Rome, and who repeats Suetonius's direct accusations against Nero as an arsonist, believed he had no reason to mention a persecution of Christians and Jews on this occasion. If Josephus had positive information about Nero's arson, he would have mentioned the calamity that befell the city in order to include it among the Emperor's crimes. If the Jews had suffered as a result of this catastrophe, up to being crucified and dressed in burning garments, he would have mentioned the case.

I only mention in passing, with regard to historians who assume the early existence of a Christian community in Rome in accordance with the New Testament's "Acts of the Apostles," my critique of this text (Berlin, 1850). If they form an image of this community from the greetings of the apostle Paul at the end of his letter to the Romans, I remind them of the result of my critique of this letter ("Critique of the Pauline Epistles," Berlin 1852), which shows that it gradually developed by the addition of heterogeneous articles

to the fundamental article, and that the Gnostic Marcion still had this letter in Rome without the last two chapters in 140. These chapters, including the sixteenth consisting only of greetings, were created after 140, and the community in the house of Narcissus, which is usually seen as belonging to Claudius's freedman, is therefore very late.

157

5. The Death of Seneca.

Let us now turn from the Christian-hating people of Tacitus to Tertullian's Christian, the teacher of human love, Seneca. His end is near. A fortunate fate had once again led him away from the abyss, where he walked and sometimes stumbled, in order to reshape the world from the lofty heights of earthly power. He lived in solitude, which he often glorified during his court life, and talked with his Lucilius about the fusion of Stoic courage with the gentleness and inner peace of Epicurus.

However, he was tempted again, and he could not resist. He put himself in danger and perished.

In Stoic circles, there were two different movements at work. The teachers and preachers of the sect, such as Musonius and Köranus, who urged Rubellius Plautus to submit to the death blow, held fast to the school's political renunciation and wanted to know nothing but the work on one's own soul. However, the aristocratic leaders were not always satisfied with this silent despair at the world's course and understood under the philosophical manliness the means to reform the empire and to bless it with the freedom of the old times.

This trend was known at the court. When Tigellin demanded the blow against Plautus, he said that he gave the appearance of an old Roman spirit and confessed to the party and presumption of the Stoics, who made the spirits restless and eager for innovation (Tacitus Annal. 14, 57). Similarly, Cossutianus fired Nero's rage against Thrasea with the words that he was the leader of the innovators who, in order to overthrow the imperial power, showed off their freedom, and when they had overthrown it, they turned against freedom itself (Tacitus Annal. 16, 22).

157/158

Seneca had in one of his letters to Lucilius (Ep. 73) aligned himself with those who renounce the world and remain silent, and declared it a mistake to believe that "the followers of philosophy are rebellious and disobedient people who despise authority. On the contrary, nobody is more grateful to

the philosophers than they are, for it is thanks to them that they are allowed to live in peace and tranquility. Therefore, it is necessary for those whose lofty goal is to live rightly, and who benefit from public safety, to honor the author of this good (the prince) as a father," continues the wise man.

158

However, Seneca succumbed to the temptation that brought him back into public life. The agitation that had been stirring in the aristocracy and the equestrian order for some time had finally taken shape as a conspiracy, which found its center, actually only its name, in Gnaeus Piso. Its strength lay in the military. Capable colonels and commanders of the Praetorian Guard, who had become estranged and alienated from the prince by his excesses, provided support for the enterprise and guided it secretly according to their own views. Piso, from the illustrious Calpurnii family, one of Rome's great men who created a large clientele through their financial power and advocacy in the courts, fond of splendor and not averse to the pleasures of his time, seemed insufficient for them to replace Nero. Even Fanius Rufus, Tigellin's colleague in command, did not feel safe beside his favor at the court and brought his unblemished name to the secret association.

158/159

Piso himself had inherited from his ancestors the desire for power and claims that, despite their greater toughness and willpower, they had not been able to satisfy. That Calpurnian, who, after the civil war under Augustus, refused to accept offices and honors, still allowed himself to be persuaded by the prince to take on the consulship. His son Cneius, in his pride (Tacitus Annal. 2, 43), scarcely gave the Tiber the priority and saw his children far below him; he was that tough nobleman who, on Tiberius' orders, was sent as an advisor with his nephew Germanicus on his oriental journey and used his position to torture the weak-willed prince to death, and then preempted the outcome of the investigation in the Senate by committing suicide. The current Piso, the nominal head of the conspiracy, was well aware of his intellectual insignificance, feared competitors, and viewed, for example, the reputation of L. Junius Silanus, nephew of Decimus Junius Torquatus, formed by C. Cassius with suspicion, as the young man, the last scion of the Junian family, could attract the eyes of the uninvolved people in the event of his success.

159

In certain circles of the conspirators, the name of Antonia was mentioned, but it seems that they did not know exactly what to do with her in the end, as Piso's affection for his wife stood in the way of the plan to marry him to

the daughter of Claudius.

The women seem to have harbored a real bitterness against Nero because of his harsh treatment of Octavia, such as that servant of this unfortunate woman, who, when asked about her mistress's relationship with Eucarus, spat in Tigellinus' face in the presence of the judge, saying, "My mistress's shame is purer than your mouth!" A similar bitterness seems to have guided that Epicharis, who urged the hesitant members of the Pisonian conspiracy forward and made advances on the current fleet prefect of Misenum, Volusius Proculus, urging him to prepare the fleet crews against Nero, whom she saw as having inadequately rewarded him for his participation in his predecessor's plot against Agrippina. She was also the only person from whom no name could be extracted by torture after the disclosure of the conspiracy, and she strangled herself in the straps of the torture chair.

159/160

The first report came from the house of a participating senator, Scävinus. On the eve of the conspiracy, he had drawn attention to himself by a special celebration and by alternating between deep thoughtfulness and seemingly cheerful frivolity. He had sealed his will, granted freedom to his favorite slaves and gifted others with money. After a more than usually lavish meal, he had had his rusty dagger sharpened and his bandages prepared by his freedman Milichus. Milichus reported these suspicious circumstances to the emperor and, in the immediate confrontation with his master, added as further indications Scävinus' secret consultations with the knight Natalis and both their intimate friendship with Piso.

160

Later, the public wondered how Scävinus, known for his extravagant lifestyle, had become involved in the conspiracy. His testimony during the interrogation, that he had worked on his will several times and had given his slaves more money this time because his fortune was dwindling and he could no longer trust the will with the pressure from creditors, proves that he was also in debt.

Natalis, after whose citation Piso opened his veins, finally revealed Seneca's name. His testimony provides the best explanation of the conspiracy. He was the messenger between the philosopher and Piso. When Seneca was ill, Piso sent him to express his regret that he was making himself inaccessible. However, Seneca replied that exchanging words and having frequent conversations would not be beneficial for either of them. Furthermore, Seneca's own well-being depended on Piso's survival.

The nominal leader of the plot had also been afraid of Seneca, and in his reticence had seen a sign that he had his own intentions. Seneca had kept himself in the background and had wanted to wait and see if the promises made to him would be fulfilled.

160/161

Seneca had just arrived from Campania at a villa near Rome on that day. His evasive explanation, which Nero immediately demanded from him through the Praetorian prefect Granius Silvanus, was not enough for him, and he ordered the prefect to return to Seneca and command him to bid farewell to life.

161

At that moment, the military side of the conspiracy had not yet been discovered, and Fanius Rufus was still a member of the court presided over by Nero, and was conducting the questioning of the detainees. It was only when he pressed Scävinus for further information that the military aspect of the plot was revealed. When the senator mocked Rufus to his face, saying that no one could serve the emperor better than he could with revelations, it was then that the military members of the conspiracy began to be uncovered.

The officer who was to bring the death sentence to Seneca did not go straight to the villa outside Rome, but first went to the praetorium of Fanius, who was still a member of the court, and asked him if he should carry out the emperor's order. Fanius told him to do so, and to spare himself and Seneca the pain of the sight, he sent a captain into the villa to deliver the message.

The military members of the conspiracy seem to have truly believed in the philosopher's calling to rule. They treated Piso's pretensions with the same arrogance that the military later showed in making their own emperor. For example, Flavius Subrius said that it made no difference whether they sent the zither player or the tragedian (Piso also performed in tragic roles).

Seneca died a slow death; the blood would not flow freely from his opened veins, and the poison kept by his trusted physician did not work in his dying body. In the end, he was suffocated by the fumes of a hot bath, from which he gave a few drops to the "liberator Jupiter." According to a regulation from the time of his glory and power, he was immediately burned without any ceremony. Such a power of thought and language still animated him in his dying moments that he dictated a series of sentences to summoned scribes, which were published as the legacy of his wisdom and were still circulating at the time of Tacitus (Annals 15, 64).

His wife Paulina, who embraced him at the farewell, could not be dissuaded from dying with him; however, Nero, upon hearing of this, gave the order to tie off the wounds in order to avoid being held responsible for this scandal. She remained as a witness to this episode of the bloody trial in which the Pisonian conspiracy was suppressed, with her corpse-like appearance for a long time afterward.

Seneca's older brother Gallio was accused of complicity in the conspiracy in the Senate when the course of imperial revenge had weakened, but he was let off lightly once more because the majority of the assembled senators did not wish to reopen the hardened wound in the emperor's mind. Dio Cassius (62, 25) later reports that he was eventually dropped.

The younger brother Mela concludes the tragedy of the Annia family as a victim of the family's understanding of money. The zeal with which he alarmed the debtors of his son Lukan, who was involved in the conspiracy and convicted, by collecting their obligations, provoked one of them to seek revenge by accusing him before Nero with forged letters that indicated his complicity with his son. He opened his veins in terror over this kind of payment and relieved the creditors of their anxiety.

6. Seneca and the Satire on Claudius' Ascension to Heaven.

Posterity has sometimes suspected Seneca of sacrificing his inner peace to his belief in his calling to rule and of often denying the severity of his moral teachings at the courts of two emperors. But from a Christian-religious standpoint, there is least right to condemn the man who laid the foundation for Christian Rome. The community that inherited his moral teachings also inherited the Stoic conviction of the supremacy of the wise man's claim to world domination.

Tertullian declared, in the sense of renouncing the world, with which the community appeared (Apologet. cap. 21), "that the Caesars would have confessed their faith in Christ if they were not necessary to the world, or if the Christians could have been Caesars." However, after the leaders of the community had practiced the condemnation of all divergent opinions and then used the imperial power to destroy those who did not fully support their doctrinal provisions, the stoic principle awoke in them that the wise man was the true king, with unprecedented force. And after they succeeded in making the secular kings their servants in the Middle Ages, they surprise the present

by renewing the stoic belief in the sublimity of spiritual sovereignty, even against the secular bond of kings.

So let the stone fall that one wants to throw at Seneca, and spare the Roman Levite the Pharisee gaze.

In addition, Seneca is now plagued with the attributed "Ludus" (fun, jest, gaudium) about the death of Emperor Claudius, about his experiences in the council of the gods on Olympus, and his banishment to the underworld. For example, Schiller accuses him (in his treatise on Nero, p. 295, 296) that he "had thrown mud at the dead emperor, who had once pardoned him and tolerated him at court in the last years and had raised him to positions of honor, and had expressed approval of the murder of the unfortunate man through bland jokes."

The essay, a masterpiece of lightness of language and agility of overbearing delivery, would discredit anyone else who might have written it, but written by Seneca's hand, it would remain a blot on his name.

163/164

This passage describes a satire written by Seneca, soon after Nero's ascension to power, in which he glorifies the young emperor. The plot involves Mercury coming to fetch the dying Claudius, and while Klotho makes a joke about the emperor's struggles with death, Lachesis allows Nero to live on and Apollo sings to the lyre of Nero's qualities as the world's savior. The description of Claudius's experiences in the heavens is full of allusions to his physical deformities. He is portrayed as a monster with an awkward gait and a voice like a sea monster's, and his fever, which has plagued him throughout his life, is also referenced, as are his Gaulish origins. In the underworld, he is degraded to the status of a slave, and Aekus devises a new punishment for him, in which he is forever playing dice with an empty cup.

164/165

It is unlikely that Seneca, who was himself once a candidate for execution during the reign of Caligula and was never of strong physical constitution, would have made fun of someone else's infirmity. Furthermore, would he have allowed Mercury to utter the frivolous words, as he was taking the dying Claudius from Clotho, that he had been fighting death for all of his 64 years? Could the protector of slaves have sentenced the deceased emperor to eternal slavery, and to that end, invent the refined hierarchical structure that allows Caligula to claim his successor as his slave, subjecting him to beatings and slaps by witnesses, and then giving him to his freedman as a scribe? Is it also conceivable that the defender of human rights and the

solidarity of the human race could have ridiculed Claudius for admitting the Gallic Aedui to the Senate, and could have put into Clotho's mouth the taunt that he had yet to fulfill his favorite desire and give citizenship to all Greeks, Gauls, Spaniards, and Britons?

165

It is also crucial that Seneca's writings nowhere betray a trace of the light humor that pervades the "Ludus," despite all its bitterness and low tendency; on the other hand, the often intricate structure and combination of Seneca's points are entirely foreign to the Ludus. Furthermore, when Seneca castigates the elevation of the great men up to Augustus against the Republic countless times as the fruit of self-interest, he does so with sharpness and striking power; he is no longer capable of characterizing the emperors. His attacks against Caligula, for example, whom he particularly dislikes and to whom he has devoted numerous barbs, are weak, and the points are dull. How awkward and feeble, for example, is his sentence about this emperor in the treatise "de Ira" (1.16): "Cajus Caesar was angry with heaven because his thunderclap disturbed the ballet dance, in which he preferred to participate rather than to watch, and the play he was staging was frightened by lightning that did not take the right path" (namely, on his head).

He only mentions Claudius twice (apart from the letter to Polybius). The one in the treatise on Benefits (1.15) is at most incriminating: "Crispus Passienus used to say that he would rather have the respect of some people than a favor, and the favor of others than their respect, and he gave the example: "I prefer the respect of the deified Augustus, but I prefer a favor from Claudius." "But I," Seneca continues, "believe that it is not desirable for anyone to seek a favor whose respect is worthless. So what then? Should he not accept the favor offered by Claudius? Indeed! But just like fortune, which, as you well know, can change in an instant."

This is not beautiful, but as the saying goes, it is not a mortal sin. It is unbecoming for a significant man and punishes itself through its stiff and anxious affectation.

166

In short, two authors could not differ more in language and style than Seneca and the author of the Ludus.

The Ludus was attributed to Seneca only after its isolated discovery because it was believed to be the "Apokolokynthosis" (i.e. Pumpkinification), which

Dio Cassius (60, 33) attributes to Nero's teacher in a context where his brother Gallio's pun about the deification of Claudius is mentioned. But firstly, as A. Stahr, whose discussion of this issue in his "Agrippina" I agree with, has pointed out, the tone and content of this work, which also has no connection with the Ludus according to its title, remain completely unknown, and secondly, the notes about Seneca in Dio's later abbreviated and interpreted history book are recognized as unreliable.

7. Nero's End.

Caligula acted in accordance with that later evangelical saying, that the kingdom of heaven must suffer violence and robbers belong to its conquest. He reached with bold hand into heaven and brought its glories home. But when he looked down upon his earthly world in the fullness of his divinity, he grew angry and knew nothing better to do with it than to wish for a single neck, so that he as judge of the world could do away with it with a single blow.

Nero approached it differently. He wanted to serve from below. Like Tiberius, who called himself the servant of the state, he considered himself the servant of humanity. Being a human among humans was his highest aim. But he, too, grew angry. The last representatives of those families who once wielded the scepter of the world did not want to acknowledge the omnipotence that he attributed to himself as the head of humanity; for him, the world was therefore divided into proud rebels and the good people, who joyfully bore his gentle yoke.

The suppression of the Pisonian conspiracy marks a turning point in Nero's reign, whose subsequent course is only a lingering of the wound inflicted on the aristocratic party. After the death of Seneca, the consul Atticus Vestinus, an enterprising man whose zeal for freedom Piso feared would thwart his enterprise and who probably knew of the conspiracy but did not approve of it, also fell. The following year (66), Petronius, who was in Cumae when he came to meet the emperor on a trip to Campania, supposedly because of his relationship with Scavinus, Piso's associate, also fell. However, Tacitus is not very credible when he (Annal. 16, 19, 20) suggests that the emperor deliberated for a long time on the malicious revelations of his sexual refinements in the victim's will and finally attributed them to Silia, the wife of a senator and alleged friend of Petronius. If the refinements of the imperial bed were really a fact and not just the talk of the public, they would have had to be known to the confidant of the palace without the help of that woman.

Then it was Thrasea Paetus' turn, whose alleged tragedy Tacitus had already dedicated an in-depth analysis to since the fall of Agrippina, without giving the most basic idea of the development of the drama and the final crisis and accusation, as Schiller has impressively and brilliantly demonstrated. The last Junius, the nephew of Decimus, L. Silanus, on whose reputation and influence Piso was jealous, was also sentenced by the Senate to exile with C. Cassius, his Stoic tutor, and was killed on his way to exile while Cassius remained until Vespasian's rise to power.

167/168

The time had now come when voluntary accusers of majesty were emerging, who, like Aquilius Regulus (Tacit. Hist. 4, 42), still called it negligence that Nero was struggling and fragmenting himself and the informers with individual houses of the great, while the whole Senate could be overthrown with a single word. This situation corresponds to Suetonius' statement (Nero, chap. 37), that the emperor often threw out the remark during his Greek journey that he would not spare the rest of the senators and would completely eradicate the order, and at the inauguration of his enterprise on the Isthmus, in his blessing, he thought only of himself and the Roman people, ignoring the Senate.

168

During his stay in Greece, this state of war claimed the lives of the two brothers Scribonius Rufus and Proculus, as well as Domitius Corbulo, all three summoned to court and forced to their deaths. In addition to their illustrious lineage, their significant military positions, with the Scribonian as governor of both Germanias, and Corbulo's in Syria, along with the power he had gained from commanding the Illyrian and Egyptian legions, as well as his military and diplomatic successes in settling the relations between Rome and Parthia and establishing Armenia as a vassal state, contributed to their downfall.

Nero had now cleaned up around him and stood alone, until Helius, who had unsuccessfully presented the necessity of his return in a letter, personally sought him out in Greece and convinced him to return home.

168/169

There was unrest in Gaul. When the prince with the Greek triumphal wreaths made his triumphant entry into Naples in March 68, the news came that C. Julius Vindex, the governor of Gaul, a romanized Gaul, had raised the banner of rebellion. In Rome, he received the news of Galba's uprising in Spain. The Gaul, the forerunner of the Batavian Claudius Civilis, who would soon establish a Rhine confederation with Gaul and Germany, had risen for the

liberation of his country and lured Galba with the idea of acquiring the imperial throne in collaboration with him. Galba, for his part, wanted to use the Gaul's uprising for his own elevation against Nero without giving him any assurances for his own possible plans. However, when Vindex fell with his national army through Virginius Rufus and his legions, Galba, who was deprived of his support, despaired of his cause, and only Nero's hesitation was saved by swift military operations.

169

The people in Rome were left to the confusing rumors of further uprisings and betrayals. Nero seems to have reserved the Praetorian Guard as his personal reserve while slowly advancing troops against Galba. Nymphidius, the successor of Fanius Rufus, used the leisure of that corps to his own ends, taking advantage of the uncertainty hanging over Rome. In the period between Nero's death and Galba's arrival, he himself reached for the imperium, but was killed in the Praetorian Camp after Galba's arrival. Tigellinus, who had hidden in the background during Nero's final days, earned the favor of the new emperor by rescuing Galba's daughter during the interregnum's chaos, and may have also pleased the Senate. However, he also met a bloody end and cut his throat in Sinuessa when the people demanded revenge against him from Otho.

169/170

The colorful collection of anecdotes that embellish the last weeks, days, and hours of Nero's life, such as the one where he supposedly called senators and knights to his palace during the Gallic uprising, as if he wanted to consult with them about the events of the day, only to reveal to them that he had discovered a way to produce a stronger and brighter sound from a water organ, is the work of a playful imagination that enjoyed using the fruitful theme of the foolish virtuoso in contrast to the Gallic rebellion and the approach of Galba as variations. That anecdote from Dio Cassius is even formed according to the same pattern as the one Juvenal used where Domitian asks a night council about how to serve a large turbot and the one where Caligula, according to Dio Cassius (95, 5), summons senators to an important consultation only to meet them dancing out of his cabinet and perform a solo dance.

170

It is certain that Nero, at the age of thirty years, five months, and twenty-six days, on June 9, 68 AD, ended his life by suicide in the villa of a freedman outside Rome, where he had fled in his last desperation. Epaphroditus was reputed to have assisted him in this act of mercy, which the freedman paid for bitterly in the last year of Domitian's reign.

His third wife, Statilia Messalina, widow of the consul Vestinus whom he had married after the death of Poppaea in 65 AD, survived him and lived a quiet and scholarly life of retirement. We do not know what became of Antonia, Octavia's sister. Suetonius (Nero 35) says that Nero had her executed as a conspirator after she had refused his proposal of marriage following the death of Poppaea.

170/171

As soon as Nero closed his eyes, the people awoke from the stupor of the last days. The jubilation of the senators and knights brought them back to themselves and forced even the ephemeral rulers of the next months to pay homage to his memory. Icelus, Galba's freedman, thrown into prison in the tumult of the last days and released after Nero's death, now an authority figure, "allowed" the last wish of the dead to be fulfilled, to be burned (Suetonius, Nero 49:50). His two wet nurses and Acte placed the remains in the ancestral tomb of the Domitii. Otho, although he had joined the uprising against Nero with Galba in Lusitania, relied on his previous association with the prince he had betrayed in his rivalry against the winner of the day. He gave himself the name Nero in his first edicts to the prefects, was happy when the people and soldiers called him "Nero Otho," had the statues of his outlawed friend erected again, and obtained a Senate resolution restoring the statues of Poppaea to this honour (Suetonius, Otho 7; Tacitus, Histories 1, 78). Vitellius, the former flatterer of the imperial singer, organized a funeral for him to the delight of the people, with the Augustals of the Julian house serving (Tacitus, ibid. 2, 95). Indeed, from afar came the urgent request of Vologesus, the Parthian king, for the care of Nero's memory.

171

Suetonius tells (Nero 57) that there were still many people who adorned his grave with flowers in the spring and summer, and appeared on the stage of the orator with his image or his edicts, as if he were still alive and about to return soon to destroy his enemies.

The same compiler tells at the end of his biography of Nero that he himself, as a young man, witnessed twenty years after Nero's death that a pseudo-Nero found lively interest and support among the Parthians and was only surrendered after serious negotiations. According to Tacitus (Hist. 2, 8, 9), during the civil war between Otho and Vitellius, Greece and Asia were disturbed by the rumor that Nero was returning, and a slave or freedman who actually claimed to be Nero and held out on the island of Cytherus with deserters and slaves was made harmless.

8. Nero as Antichrist.

Nero had always striven for the highest attainable position, but he could not have foreseen that a community appearing after him, which claimed, like Rome, to encompass the entire earth, would assign him a role in their "divine comedy" of the last things, whose brilliance and fire would pale his favorite roles on the Roman stage.

171/172

I consider it probable that the author of the "Revelation of John" had Nero in mind as the Antichrist or his forerunner with his beast with seven heads and ten horns, but this incorporation of the last of the Julii into the biblical drama was only possible after Tacitus had presented his horrific depiction of the Nero's persecution of Christians. And after these inspirations for a bloody and fiery portrayal of the struggles of a final judgment, those preliminary studies had to be drafted that present Nero, the matricide, as returning from the Euphrates and ascending to the place of God in the fourth and fifth books of the Sibylline Song Collection. The form of the latter image in the fifth book originated from the chronological surroundings in the last time of Hadrian, so the Revelation of John was created later, at the earliest in the middle of the reign of Marcus Aurelius. However, we can only focus here on the fact that the woman of the Apocalypse, the great Babylon, sitting on the beast and drunken with the blood of the saints (Revelation 13:8) is the Rome of the seven hills, and we can only be interested in the contrast that the vengeance of the apocalyptist against the adversary of his God forms with our portrayal of the eternal city as the birthplace of Roman Christianity during the time of the first Caesars.

172

The Christian church had no regard for the universalistic, humanitarian, and self-advancing direction of Nero's government, and in its excitement against the Roman seat of evil and godlessness, which was also fueled by Tacitus, it did not consider that Seneca and his predecessors had paved the way for them there.

172/173

Seneca's sayings shine in the Gospels and Pauline epistles; his structure of contrast between the old and new law determined the organization of the same theme in the Sermon on the Mount, and his struggle with flesh and sin inspired the author of the Epistle to the Romans to intensify the contrast between flesh and spirit. In the rhetorical schools, the break with the law is decisive, echoing in the Gospel's renunciation of Moses' law. Augustus, the

peace prince, and the jealousy with which the emperors guarded their princely privilege, directed the Romans to care for their spiritual well-being and elicited from the despairing, who believed they were standing at the end of the world after the fall of the Republic, the cry for a new spiritual world. Finally, in the leveling of the social classes, the belief in human rights was born, and in the interaction between human beings, a communication between high and low, a need for mutual affiliation emerged, of which the republics of antiquity, including the oriental theocracies, had no conception.

173

Does this ascetic, self-denying Rome, seeking an immaterial homeland, deserve the name of the mother of all prostitution on earth? And in the death that under Nero swept away the old families to the point of erasing the memory of them and also seized the imperial line until the last scion of the Caesar family threw himself onto the general burial ground, was not a new Rome born, freed from the jealousy of its former greatness, which became the rightful place for a new universal community?

The fruit of this ancient Rome will ripen in the following section among the no longer anonymous Christians. Before that, a few words about three poets of the Neronian era who also worked for Christianity.

173/174

9. Persius, Lucan and Petronius.

A poet may have only received the inspiration of the muses in a meager manner, yet still be an interesting witness to the state of mind of his time. **Aulus Persius Flaccus** works hard; his images are anxiously constructed and dryly executed. He is melancholy because the world does not conform to his Stoic ideal, and he concludes that everything, from the nobility and knights to the soldier and common people, has degenerated, gone astray and become corrupt. Should he therefore be rejected and dismissed as "the right ideal of a haughty and faint-hearted youth devoted to poetry", as Mommsen does? Or should he, like Schiller, be discarded as a "juvenile versifier who has borrowed all the noble arrogance and self-satisfaction from the Stoics as a faithful imitator"? And if one were to relate this position of Persius to the world of humanity with the Gospels and Epistles, which also call for repentance and condemn all to sin, and wanted to treat the entire series with the same rejection as Persius, what would the historian have accomplished with this summary process?

174

The sayings of Persius with the mood expressed in them are valuable, because they belong to the circle of tools that have stimulated and nourished the production of the evangelical and so-called Pauline sayings. His saying (Sat. 2, 71 ff.): "Let us offer to the gods a mind for justice and duty, a sacred peace of the inner self, and a heart consecrated by the nobility of virtue," his call "It is for freedom" (Sat. 5, 73 ff.), not the one given by the praetor or the illusion of arbitrariness, correspond to a direction that wanted to be free from the ancient temple and state service. His exclamation (Sat. 2, 61 ff.): "Earthly souls, who are alienated from heavenly things, what good does it do to transfer our nature into the temples and to bring offerings to the gods from this sinful fleshly life?" the application of that doctrine which Numa received from Pythagoras about the perversity of ascribing pleasure to the gods in the blood of animals (Ovid's Metamorph. 15, 27 ff.) explains the gradual alienation of the time from the sacrificial cult. Finally, the intimate relationship of the solitary ascetic and Etruscan who died in his twenty-eighth year (62 AD) with Thrasea opens up a view into certain Stoic circles of Rome, which will be of service to us in the later summary presentation of the budding of the Christian blossom.

Marcus Annaeus Lucanus also belongs to the boys and reprobates. His judgment on political matters is called "childish" by Schiller; perhaps the fact that the subject (the civil war) was nothing in itself just stirred the young man's vanity; he wanted to make it into something by his stirring declamation.

175

Lucan already had his enemies in antiquity. Martial speaks (Epigr. 14, 194) of those who do not want to consider him a poet. Servius (on Virgil) believes that he does not deserve his place among poets because he seems to have composed history, not a poem. However, it is dangerous that even the man of refined taste, Petronius, has doubted the poetic value of his "Civil War", the Pharsalia. For it is evident that the ballad sung by the elderly poet of his Satyricon, Eumolpus, is a satire of Lucan's work, and the utterance of the same singer, "The Civil War is an enormous undertaking; whoever tries it without complete poetic training will collapse under the burden; it is not enough to put historical facts into verse, for that is the task of the historian," must, in any case, hit the historical posture of the Lucan work. The remark that the flashes of thought must not stand out from the whole, but must appear as the body's own luminosity, also points in this direction.

However, it is only a joke related to the caricature poem of Eumolpus when Petronius lets the elderly poet say that the poet must torture the reader with the intervention of the gods and give the appearance of an inspired prophet. The time of this machinery of the gods was forever gone, and no one knew it

better than Petronius.

It was nonetheless a bold idea of Lucan's to make real historical figures with their feelings, passions, and reflections on their own right and actions the subject of an epic, even if the attempt failed. Far from being "nothing in itself," the civil war as a collision of power that feels superior to the old forms and of law, which remains certain in its defeat, is a topic that will never cease to arouse the most intense, even passionate interest of the world. However, Lucan had to fail because the subject is too big and comprehensive for poetry and can only be tackled by prose.

176

Imperialism did not find Homer, whom Alexander the Great called for in vain, and it will not find him. It cannot escape its business of trickery, deception, outwitting, and deceit, and this machinery is not a subject for poetry. Lucan chose the representative of law, the Senate, as his hero. One may laugh at the weak and declining Senate in the heroic role, and also at the idea of making a council the actor of an epic. But people will not stop calling for this actor, despite all the mistakes and errors, and then: the idea that Lucan had in mind was fulfilled in that Senate which, beyond the ocean, created a new world in the face of England's imperialistic arrogance.

Pompey appears as the agent of the Senate and, driven by the impatience of the party that forces him into battle against his plan, he falls into misfortune, a beautiful hero! one exclaims, and again Lucan's idea has become a reality in the general who, in agreement with the council in Philadelphia, defeated England and the imperialism of the old world.

Cato stands at first, until the death of Pompey frees him and he devotes himself entirely to freedom (Pharsal. 9, 29-30), forming with Caesar the fighting pair that Rome will keep since the day of Pharsalus, and remains uninvolved and unable to choose between Pompey and Caesar. An empty, melancholy position for a hero, one exclaims again: but from the pain of this isolated figure came the wish that is very close to later Christian views, that his head should bear the punishment of all others and that his death should atone for the guilt of the general ruin that led to civil war (2, 306 ff.).

176/177

The solution to the bloody collision that drives the poem is given right at the beginning. It reads: Nero. Around him, the warring brothers fought, he is the spoils of civil war, and the atrocities of war paved the way for his reign, just as after the battle with the Titans, the gods took over and obeyed the Thunderer of the Heavens. Even when the Prince of Peace reigns as a divine star in the sky, he will maintain peace for humanity, in which they will find

their salvation, and the bond of love will unite the nations (1, 33 ff.).

177

It does not help to dissolve the work into two sections, in order to eliminate the alleged contradiction of this theodicy of civil wars within the body of the poem. In the first three books, the poet is said to be a supporter of Caesar, while he represents the Pompeian interest in the last seven books. Even in the first three books, Caesar enters Rome as an intruder, robber, and violator of rights, while Pompey stands on the side of the legitimate Senate.

Seneca saw the leaders of the civil wars, such as his nephew, as Titans of self-will and wickedness, in Caesar as a multiplied Catilina (ad Marciam, 20), in Cato as the last representative of freedom (e.g. de constant. Sap. 2. Epist. 104), and in the future the bond of love among peoples. Both were convinced that Nero would close the Janus temple in harmony with the Senate for the internal wars. The reversal, which was indicated by the entrance of Poppaea into the Palatium, clarified to Lucan as to Seneca that they had been deceived. The legend that Nero's jealousy of Lucan's poetic talent led to the break-up had no more value than most of the court anecdotes of Suetonius and Tacitus.

When Lucan was faced with the choice between Cato's and Brutus' daggers and reached for the latter, his poem had become a historical document to him, and it would have seemed petty to him to delete or change its beginning.

He was sure of his eternity. In that passage where he (9, 980-986) calls on Caesar not to envy him his holy posthumous reputation, he assures that "as long as the honors of the Smyrnaean seer (Homer) endure, those who come after us will read me and you; our Pharsalia will live forever".

178

"Me and you and ours" - that is meant seriously. Immediately before, he had described how Caesar, in pursuit of his defeated opponent at Ilium, visits the immortalized sites of Homer and pays tribute to the celebrated heroes of the Iliad; thus, he believes, my Pharsalia will also remain the monument of your own, my Pharsalia the protest of the seer against your victory of violence at Pharsalus - a compelling connection which does not allow the assumption that the poet turns against Nero's alleged poet envy and promises his poems the same eternity as his own.

Lucan was 27 years old when he died because of his involvement in the

Pisonian conspiracy. He is said to have initially steadfastly denied his involvement and, when promised impunity, to have reported his own mother Acilia to excuse his restraint. Perhaps this anecdote was only an official fabrication to ruin the man's reputation even in death. Acilia allowed the government to pass by without acquitting it (Tacit. Annal. 15, 56.71).

The tumultuous and future-filled time of Nero had the fortune that only a few epochs have been given. A master of humor, **Petronius**, has given us its image, and the charm of his simple language, the artistically processed exuberance of his life images, and the kindness of his attitude and sympathy for the noble impulses of his time give us so much that we almost forget the loss of the greater part of his work in enjoyment. Only the Don Quixote of the Spaniard and the humorous creations of Shakespeare are to be placed alongside him. Ferdinand Raimund can be added to this list, in German dimension, as an equal.

178/179

In the one half of the fragment that has been preserved, the master passes through the scene like the sun, where adventurers sacrifice their pleasure and in the service of their deity show the self-sacrificing ardor of martyrs; impartially like the sun, he illuminates the joys and sorrows of their cult and takes pleasure in the judgments of the student and the dissolute poet about the fate of language, art, and science.

179

The banquet of the freedman Trimalchio can be called the feast of the citizen world inspired by the ideas of the Neronian era. Petronius, in innocent exuberance, has the freedman recite Seneca's death sermons and boast about the philosopher's admonitions on the brevity of life. Trimalchio has to show off the etiquette of his wine jug: "Falernian from Opimius' year, a hundred years old," so he can clap his hands over his head and groan, "so the wine lives longer than mankind." A slave must bring him a movable human skeleton so that he can throw it on the table a few times and make changing figures, exclaiming, "we miserable creatures, how man is so nothing; we will all be like that when the underworld takes us." Seneca, who understands how far the wise man can indulge in a little drunkenness, will not mind if Petronius spices up the philosopher's thoughts on death with an invitation to wine and the cry of "Water out, wine in!" "Ah, ah! What is man! An inflated bladder!" cries a guest who came from a comrade's funeral, whose bladder had lost its contents.

Like Seneca, Manilius also gets his share of the heavenly machinery, and Trimalchio arouses the cheers of the company with his bold explanation of

the zodiac and the enumeration of what each of the twelve signs brings into being. The host dismisses the controversies of the rhetorical schools in a snap, and the tailor Echion dismisses the gladiatorial games, which appear as worn-out ghosts, for whose rabble the small citizen claps with one hand, believing he has given even more than the host.

179/180

But a theme runs through the whole gibberish in which the banquet of freedmen reveals their wisdom; their foolish chatter is interwoven with the expression of pride in being able to be human among humans. Trimalchio blesses the memory of his patron, who wanted him to be a man among men. "I am a man among men, I can hold my head high," says the freedman Hermeros, and he still rejoices today when he remembers the forty years of service in which no one could tell whether he was free or unfree. "That was fighting and toiling," he exclaims; being born a free man is no art and as easy as "come here!"

180

One joke and boast of Trimalchio's grants freedom. He calls out to the beautiful slave, who is adorned with grape leaves and ivy, presents himself as Bromius or Lyaeus, carries grapes around in a basket, and sings verses of his master, "Dionysus is free!" and then triumphs: "Now you will not deny that I have the Father Liber!"

"Friends," he exclaimed, as he had his slaves come into the hall and take the guests' cushions after the table was cleared, "the slaves are also human and have drunk the same milk as we, even though a bad 'fatus' is upon them; but if I remain alive, they shall soon taste free water. In sum, I will free them all in my will."

Seneca celebrates his humanity and his friendliness towards slaves at Trimalchio's banquet with a brilliant triumph.

The 16th century of our era has something in common with the first century of the Roman imperial period. In both periods of history, the personality sheds the shell in which antiquity raised it, and great minds have portrayed this liberation work in humorous creations. However, the later ones did not surpass the poetic product of the Neronian era, as it still stands above the local liberation attempts of the Renaissance and the later revolutionary era with its world-embracing idea.

180/181

Cervantes initially pursues only a literary goal in his Don Quixote, and aims to discourage the public from reading chivalric romances, which were in vogue at the time. Only incidentally, by imbuing his knight's exaltation with a noble-minded sympathy for all kinds of suffering, and giving his faithful squire enough common sense to criticize his lord's chivalric mission, he holds up a series of mirrors to the public in which the noble, enduring core of the Middle Ages, its excesses, and its recoil from realistic personality come to light.

181

But Cervantes was not able to unify these various reflections.

In contrast, Petron's Trimalchio himself takes great pleasure in oscillating between boasting and kindness, grandeur and helpfulness for the suffering, and observing and expressing the intermingling of his plain common sense and his human kindness. He is Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in one person, and even his squires, the freedmen at his table, burst into hearty laughter as they knock at the gates of a new historical world with their coarse humanity and stride broadly through it.

Cervantes also made sure to make his knight a plaything of others and ultimately have his feats of genius suggested by strangers. That the errant hero prepares for battle with the plague spirits of the world in the Black Mountain by fasting and penance is still the inspiration of his own mind. However, in the second part, where he admits to his squire that his descent into the cave of Montesinos and his liberation of the prisoners of the underworld were mere illusions, the problematic turn begins, which ultimately leads the author to the point where the knight's ascension to heaven and his triumphal entry into Barcelona, before being dealt the fatal blow by the Knight of the Moon, are seen as mere whimsical arrangements by the ducal couple and the gentlemen of that seaside city.

182

Trimalchio's humanistic foolishness and his liberating largesse, on the other hand, stem from his own genius, and at his table, Petron has let the clearest, most understandable, and at the same time greatest subject that could exist play out, the emergence of a new world from ancient Rome.

We owe the German aftermath of Spanish and English humor to Ferdinand Raimund. His subject is the eternally comprehensible foolishness and goodness of the human heart, and in one person, the Austrian poet has almost provided a brother to Trimalchio - in Longimanus, who with his follies and demonstrations of kindness in his sky of clouds comes closest to Roman poetry.

IV.

The House of Flavia and Judaism.

I. The Invasion of the West by the East.

Rome was not able to enjoy its power, at its peak, with a joyful heart. In the rising and setting of the sun, there were images of terror and danger that it did not feel capable of facing in the midst of its military glory.

Horace only expressed the fear of his contemporaries when he cried out to them, "Who will fear the Parthians, the Scythians, and the children of Germany, as long as Augustus reigns?" Lucan, the poet of civil war, often returns to the lament about Roman fratricide, which has filled the Parthians with joy and driven freedom into the forests of Germany. This has always been the case and still is today. The Greeks lived under the pressure of the Great King (of Persia) and today's divided Europe sees its ominous fate in the Emperor of the East, while in the West, America has taken on the role of Horace's children of Germany and the barbarians of Tacitus.

In the balance of power, in which the West and East measure themselves against each other, the weight with which Vespasian enters the eternal struggle of both worlds forms a complex episode. Seneca had just before (according to Augustine's quote from a lost work) complained about the customs of the Jews winning out in all countries and the vanquished imposing their law on the victors, and although Vespasian avenges the Italian Jupiter in the burning of the temple of Jehovah, he is celebrated by Roman historians as the one who proved the superiority of the East over the West. He is accompanied by the prophecy of ancient priesthoods of the East, that the East will grow strong and the lord of the world will come from Judaea (Tacit. Hist. 5, 13), after the West, and yet the Emperor, in whom the renewed power of the East was to be proven, brings the sanctuaries of Jerusalem to Rome and the images of his trophies still adorn the triumphal arch erected by his son. And the contradictions that permeate the person and memorable achievements of this emperor are not yet exhausted. For in truth, in the same palace in which he as a conqueror laid down part of the Jewish temple booty, Judaism was to rejoice in a decisive triumph over his own house and over Rome.

184

Tacitus regards the turn that Vespasian brought about as too small when he (Hist. II., 6) limits it to the attitude of the Roman legions of the East, which felt their strength during the conflict between Otho and Vitellius and no longer wanted to comply with the obedience that the East had shown to the West since the days of Pompey until the time of Otho. The civil wars had been, since Caesar's time, as Florus (Epit. 4, 2) rightly expresses it, both external and in the same sense Lucan opposes the barbarian hordes of Gaul, Belgium, and the Rhine, whom Caesar drives to plunder Rome (1, 392 ff.), to the kings of the East, the Scythian masses, and the Nile land, whom Pompey calls under his banners.

184/185

After the loss of the battle, Pompey, according to Lucan, wants to establish a world empire in the East and humble Rome through the Parthians. In the council meeting in Selinus, Cilicia, which he shares with the senators who share his flight, he declares, "I seek the beginning of a new era; show a great spirit. Let us hurry to the East and fight the civil wars with Parthian warriors" (Pharsal. 8, 264 ff.). The victor himself believed that he could only establish his true royal castle on the Pharos of Alexander or on the Bosporus and wanted to conquer the crown in a Parthian war (Sueton, Cal. cap. 79). Even in the republican camp of Brutus and Cassius, after the defeat at Philippi, the eye was turned towards Parthia, and Titus Labienus, the son of Caesar's opponent, was sent to the King of the East to obtain auxiliary troops from him, but he fell as a victim of Roman swords when he actually invaded Syria and Cilicia with a Parthian army.

185

Once again, the forces of the East on the side of Antony threatened the world city. At Actium, the question was even more urgent than at Pharsalus whether the invasion of the East should succeed sooner, before it entered Rome in the guise of a Christian philosopher. Virgil was right when he (Apin. 8, 696 ff.) saw the battle at Actium as a battle of the gods, in which the Italian deities battled with Isis and her monstrous beasts, and Apollo drove the peoples of Egypt and the East into flight. The lot was uncertain, Lucan sings (10, 67), on the Leucadian rock, whether the stranger with the sistrum would conquer the Capitoline and rule the world.

185/186

At the fall of Nero, the West, whose power Caesar and Augustus had united

against the East, was divided. The uprising of the rival emperors was also a declaration of war by the provinces against the rule of the capital. Galba formed his troops, with which he set out for Rome, from the natives of Spain. Gallic and Germanic auxiliary troops forced Vitellius to invade Italy, and his general Cacina frightened the municipalities and Roman colonies of Upper Italy when he, dressed in a colorful barbarian military cloak and wearing trousers, transformed into a Germanic chieftain and gave orders to those wearing togas. Alongside the struggle of the rival emperors and their foreign auxiliaries, there was an open rebellion of the Gauls, Batavians, and Germans. The fire of the Capitol, in which Vespasian's older brother Sabinus and his son Domitian defended themselves against the troops of Vitellius, meant the downfall of Rome for the Gauls. The Druids had raised their voices again and announced that world domination would pass to the Gauls, who had once conquered Rome, populated Italy, overrun Greece, and settled in the Caucasus. God-men and prophetesses preached the new era of salvation to the far West. A Mariccus appeared as the god and savior of Gaul. The Germans and Batavians swore to support the renewal of Gaul, but Civilis, the Batavian chieftain, also worked on the foundation of a separate Germanic Rhine League and sent the trophies of his victories over the demoralized Romans to the Weleda, the seer at the Lippe.

186

During this turmoil of the West, Vespasian, the most practical and sensible man of his time, was in Palestine leading the legions with which he fought the Jewish rebellion. He was the son of a freedman and was born in Phalacrine near Reate in the Sabine country. His father had acquired some wealth as a tax collector in Asia and then retired as a moneylender, whose clientele was mainly in Switzerland. Vespasian himself had worked his way up from the bottom through hard service, as a military tribune in Thrace, as a quaestor in Crete and Cyrene, as a legate in Germany, as a general under Aulus Plautius, and then under the leadership of Emperor Claudius in Britain, and as an honest administrator in Africa, leaving nothing behind and finally acquiring a respectable fortune as an importer of animals and slaves in Africa. He was with Nero on his art tour in Greece and was sent by him to quell the rebellion in Palestine at the head of the local legions because of his reliability in service when the Roman army suffered a defeat outside the gates of Jerusalem.

186/187

Vespasian personally adhered to the same strict discipline that he had demanded from his own legions at the various stages of his service. When Galba advanced towards Rome without encountering any resistance, he sent his son Titus to pay homage to him. However, the young warrior, who had fought alongside the general in the Jewish war, learned of the new emperor's

death in Corinth and abandoned a journey that would have delivered him as a hostage to either Otho or the advancing Vitellius from Gaul. Vespasian continued to maintain military punctuality even at the moment when he summoned his army to pay homage to Vitellius, but their silence proved to his friends that they had made the right decision in choosing him as Caesar and savior of the disintegrated empire in their deliberations. Mucianus, prefect of Syria, a brilliant orator, skilled general, and energetic administrator, had bowed to Vespasian, mindful of his own inclination towards enjoyment of life, and made his own legions available to him, also bringing about the declaration of the military leaders for the general in Judaea. The prefect of Egypt, Tiberius, was among the men who believed in Vespasian's intelligent superiority over the wild genius of the Neroan era and, a few days before the public homage of the Syrian legions on July 1, 69, had his own troops swear loyalty and handed over the important province that Caesar and Augustus had had to conquer on the battlefield.

187

Vespasian felt so secure in his military camp, which stretched from the Danube to Egypt in the eastern part of the empire, that he awaited the complete downfall of Vitellius and the direction of the legions towards the rebellious Gaul by Mucianus in Alexandria, where he guarded Rome's granary. He did not go to Rome until the summer of 70 when his representative there had removed the odium against him by taking action against the last opponents, as well as against the resurgence of the old factions and the wildness of the people, to prevent any discord in his entry as emperor through acts of reaction or the punitive office.

188

The news of the signs from the gods that had foretold his future in the East preceded Vespasian's return. The deities of the Orient, who had been defeated with the opponents of Caesar and Augustus at Pharsalus and Actium, had declared themselves in his favor and recognized his rule in advance. Oriental wonders, signs, and prophecies had inaugurated the Flavian period of the empire, and the Druids and gods of Gaul and the prophetesses of Germany had to withdraw into the darkness of their forests before the favor with which the gods of the East had accompanied the new emperor on his ascent.

When Titus was traveling to Rome to convey his father's and his legions' homage to Galba, it was generally rumored that adoption by the elderly emperor awaited him. The news of his assassination, which he received in Corinth, opened up a separate future for him and his father, and on his return, he consulted the priest in the temple of the Paphian Venus on Cyprus in such a vague and indefinite manner that it was easy for the priest to

satisfy the desires of his heart. He hurried to his father with a lifted spirit (Tacitus: aucto animo). The gods themselves gave their approval to him when the legions, Mucianus, and the leaders awaited his declaration, and when he inquired at the sanctuary on Mount Carmel, it was understood that the priest promised him the fulfillment of his thoughts directed at vast territories and many peoples.

188/189

The supreme deity of Egypt could not lag behind the legions there and met the emperor in Alexandria with the same readiness as the prefect of the province. Serapis advised a blind man to moisten his eyes with the Emperor's saliva, and likewise, a paralyzed man to have the Emperor step on his sick limb. Vespasian, after some hesitation, performed this service for the sick. If Merivale, in agreement with Champigny (in his Rome et Judée), sees only imitations of Jesus' miracles in these wonders of Vespasian, while Keim (History of Jesus, 1871, Part I, 160) sees an analogy to the deeds of the Savior and one of the numerous historical testimonies to the dominion of the spirit over the flesh, I will neither offer a natural explanation of the two Alexandrian miracles nor attempt to extract any real foundation from the reports used by Tacitus of the official chroniclers of the Flavian house. Nevertheless, let me please modern theologians by saying that the late author of the fourth Gospel and the subsequent reviser of the Ur-Evangelium contained in the Gospel of Mark borrowed from Tacitus the use of saliva in the miracles of Jesus (John 9:6, Mark 7:33, 8:23).

189

Of the miraculous Arabesques with which the life of Vespasian is embellished, I mention only briefly the magic trick that Josephus (Antiquities 8, 2, 5) has the Jew Eleasar perform before the emperor, who healed a possessed person with the secret remedy left by King Solomon, and forced the demon he cast out of the unfortunate person to overturn a nearby vessel of water as proof that it had indeed succumbed to the magic. On the other hand, the statement in which the same Josephus combined the downfall of the Jewish sanctuary with the fortunes of the Western world will seriously occupy us. This is the true, heaven-ordained banner under which Vespasian entered Rome.

2. The historical sources on the Jewish War.

The statement was: "At that time, someone from Judea would rise to world domination" (bell. Jud. 6, 5, 4.).

189/190

The fortunate man who established a world-historical name for himself in the midst of the misfortune of his nation, by discovering and interpreting this prophecy from his holy books, called it ambiguous. The Jews had mistakenly applied it to themselves, and many wise men among them had been deceived by its obscurity regarding the outcome of the crisis that ended with the burning of the Holy Temple. In truth, however, the prophecy had meant the elevation of Vespasian, who was proclaimed Lord of the World in Judaea.

190

After the fall of the fortress of Jotapata, which he had defended, Josephus was brought before the Roman victors as a prisoner of war in the summer of 67. He announced his great future to Vespasian, who ordered him to be put in chains as if he were going to send him to Nero immediately. However, Josephus insisted on a private conversation with him, and Vespasian dismissed the soldiers and war leaders who had gathered except for Titus and two friends. Josephus presented himself to Vespasian as an ambassador of his God, and said, "Do you want to send me to Nero? (bell. jud. 3, 8, 9.) How is it possible that those who have come before Nero, up to you, will be able to maintain themselves? You, Vespasian, will be emperor and imperator, and this will be your son. Just put me in stronger chains and keep me with you. For you will not only be my lord, Caesar, but also of the earth and the sea and the whole human race."

190/191

The saying that served as a thread through the maze of those war years for the Jewish historian has also passed into the writings of Tacitus and Suetonius. In the former's "Histories" (5, 13), still with clear echoes of the interpretation given to it by Josephus. When Tacitus speaks of the signs that foreshadowed the downfall of the temple, he adds that only a few (among the Jews) found cause for concern in it, and that most relied on the saying of the old priestly scriptures that at just this time the East would grow strong and the rulers of the world would come forth from Judea. Suetonius has given the saying, retaining its key words, a wide distribution and turned it into an ancient and unanimous opinion that has become known throughout the whole of the Orient, namely, that it is predetermined by fate that at that time the rulers of the world will come forth from Judea.

191

This Suetonian expansion of the terrain on which the ancient expectation of the world ruler coming from Judea occupied people's minds has been a welcome service to Christian theologians. Only forty years ago, the

apologists saw in the future hopes of the Orient the inclination of the heart that kept the Magi of the East waiting for the star of the expected world king and led them, under the guidance of the sign from heaven, to the crib in Bethlehem. But since the confidence of the faithful interpreters has declined significantly, Keim (1, 240) finds the legend of the world rulers who will arise from Judea somehow "expressed" in our gospels in the form of venerating Magi (thus through the art of fiction or legend), "especially after the Christian persecution of Nero, during the Jewish War, and in the year 69, when the East was full". Finally, Charles Merivale (Chap. 59) believes that it was the Christians who, in harmony with the messianic visions of the older prophets, took up the priestly tradition of the strengthening of the East and the emergence of world rulers from Judea, and set out from Judea after their departure from the endangered Jerusalem to conquer the empire and the world morally.

Whether Tacitus, as the author of these lines assumed in the Berlin edition of his gospel criticism (1851), used the history of Josephus, we will examine in due course. He had at least a rich literature on the Jewish war before him and, if thorough research had been his concern, he should have used it.

191/192

The historian Josephus used a prophecy about a future ruler from Judea as a guiding thread throughout the tumultuous years of the Jewish War. This prophecy was also referenced by the Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius, with Tacitus explicitly alluding to Josephus' interpretation. Suetonius expanded the scope of the prophecy, stating that it was widely believed throughout the East that a ruler would come from Judea. Christian theologians have used this prophecy to support their belief in the messiah, with some even seeing it as an allusion to the magi visiting the baby Jesus. However, this interpretation is now considered unlikely by many scholars. Josephus wrote his history in the language of his people, intended for both Jews and neighboring peoples, such as the Parthians, Babylonians, and Arabs. He sought to gain support for his interpretation of the war's outcome in these regions, which were closely following the events in Jerusalem. Josephus' work faced competition from other authors, some of whom had not witnessed the events themselves and relied on hearsay or myth, while others had personal biases that influenced their writing. After presenting his work to Vespasian and Titus, Josephus received their approval and the latter even signed off on its publication.

192/193

Only after completing his "Antiquities" in the 13th year of Domitian's reign (94 CE) and dedicating them to Epaphroditus, Josephus found himself compelled to debate with a fellow countryman in his so-called

autobiography, which he attributed to the same patron. Justus of Tiberias, his rival in the early Galilean campaign, had emerged with his own history of the Jewish War twenty years after its occurrence. Josephus was so incensed by Justus's account that in that same Vita (c. 65), he declared, "Now I will speak out what I have until now kept secret or treated with the discretion appropriate to my nature." He intended, therefore, in this article, to reveal the real mystery of the war and to speak openly about the authority that the central government had entrusted to him to conduct the war in Galilee. As we shall hear later, this mandate, which called for war, made it his task to bring about a peaceful resolution to the crisis wherever possible.

193

For now, we refer to a remark made by Josephus in his work dedicated to the same Epaphroditus, but before the publication of his biography, against Apion (1, 10), in which he complains that "wicked people have called his history (of the Jewish War) a textbook for children". Since he defends himself against this alleged "slander" by arguing that the critical opponents of his military campaign against the Emperor, who were not eyewitnesses and therefore could not provide evidence of his actual opposition to Rome, we must assume that these literary opponents regarded his work as a novel and accused him of treason against his people and of flattery towards the illustrious conquerors of Judaea. The expression "textbook for children" is thrown about so lightly by the opponents of the Jewish historian, as if everyone would immediately understand it in this context and think of the kind of writings that they want to downgrade his work to. They are the official brochures that prepare a major contemporary event in line with the ruling house and direct the admiration of the growing youth towards the person of the divinely favoured ruler.

193/194

Therefore, Josephus's own statements inform us about the development of an extensive literature that competed with his historical work for the prize, but has been lost to us, while the work that enjoyed the favor of the Flavians has been preserved only through the interest shown in it by later church scholars. The zeal with which the Jewish historian returns to the writings of his contemporaries makes it likely that he plays a role in almost all of them. The Jewish enemies could not spare him as defender of the stronghold of Galilee, the supporters of the interested nationality subjected him to the hatred of his people, while the official literati of the Flavian house followed the type of his original manuscript authenticated by Titus and did not fail to let his message from Jehovah delivered to Vespasian shine among the favorable declarations of the gods of the East for the emperor. Surely Vespasian also mentioned among the messengers of the gods who proclaimed his elevation to the Caesar's throne in his memoirs.

194

Before we examine the credibility of the basic script preserved for us alone, a few words about the position of the Jews in the Roman world at that time!

3. The position of the Jews up to the outbreak of the war.

"This people," writes the geographer Strabo (died 24 AD, cited by Josephus, Antiquities 14, 7, 2) about the Jews, "has infiltrated into every city, and it is not easy to find a place on the earth that has not accepted it and is ruled by it."

What were the means of this rule, to which the old citizens of those cities reluctantly submitted and against which the lower classes of those same places avenged themselves with bloody uprisings, which the Romans barely managed to control? The Greek also belonged to a wandering people and asserted himself on the same line that the Jews occupied from the Euphrates to the farthest West, but he openly announced himself as the teacher of a culture and wisdom that he wanted to make the common property of the world. The Roman had traversed the lands around the Mediterranean and paved his way into the interior with the sword and established world peace, as Virgil expresses it, imposing the rule of peace (pacis morem) on the peoples. In contrast, the Jewish enemy Apion (Josephus contra Ap. 2, 12. 14) said that only the Jews had not earned themselves any general culture, not promoted the public welfare with any discovery, and not produced any outstanding men, such as inventors in the arts or pioneers in the sciences.

195

When Agrippa, the friend and collaborator of Augustus, traveled to the East after the Battle of Actium, the Jews of Asia Minor flocked to his tribunal in Ionia and presented their grievances to him. They complained that they were being hindered in the practice of their laws, summoned to court on holy days, deprived of the gold they had designated for the Temple, and forced to military service and taxation, although they had been granted freedom by the Romans to live according to their own laws. King Herod, who was also paying his respects to the representative of Augustus at the same time, had provided his countrymen with the rhetorician Nikolaus of Damascus, a Hellenized Jew, as their lawyer. In his account of this negotiation, Josephus shares the lengthy speech of that defender, which convinced the victor of Actium to declare that the petitioners should be allowed to retain the freedoms previously granted to them. On the other hand, regarding the accused Greeks, he only states that they had nothing more to say than that the Jews who had found refuge among them damaged and disadvantaged

them in everything (Antiquities 16.2.5), but this was enough to characterize the attitude of the Greek citizens.

Nevertheless, it was precisely this people that helped to break up the old Roman world and pave the way for the liberating elements that were stirring in the Greek-Roman circles.

The spread of the Jews across the countries of the Mediterranean is too mechanistically derived from the command of the conquerors, and one trusts too credulously the statements of Jewish writers, for example, that the Macedonian hero knew no better means to promote his Alexandria than to invite hundreds of thousands of Jews there. Philo, the alleged author of "The Embassy to Gaius," is considered a reliable authority for this view when he reports that the Jews mostly came to Rome on the other side of the Tiber as prisoners of war and, as freedmen, received the enjoyment of citizenship.

The only one who could have sent these slaves to Rome was Pompey. According to the same Philo, Caesar is said to have left these new citizens their acquired rights, and the Pompeian import must have been colossal if Josephus can tell us that more than 8,000 Jews living in Rome joined the deputation that had obtained permission from the prefect Varus, after the death of Herod the Great, to seek the preservation of the country's autonomy from Augustus and lined up before Caesar's tribunal in the Temple of Apollo (Antiquities 17.11.1).

However, there is a telling testimony that the Jews felt themselves well established and powerful in Rome long before the appearance of Pompey. Barely two years had passed since Pompey's return from his Asian dictatorship and his visit to Jerusalem when Cicero (59 BC) had to defend Flaccus against the charge that, as praetor in Asia Minor, he had confiscated the gold that the local Jews wanted to send to the Temple of Jerusalem as an export prohibited by law. On this occasion, the orator spoke of the cohesion of the Jews in Rome and their influence in the assemblies, and then continued, "But speak of this only in a low voice, so that only the judges can hear me, for there will be no shortage of those who incite the Jews against me and every honorable man, and I will not lend support to their machinations" (translation by Harry M. Hubbell). If the great orator deemed it dangerous to touch on that subject and renounced the execution of the theme, the influence of the Jews must have been significant and long-established.

A proper understanding of the pre-Christian history of the Jewish people will be impossible as long as the agrarian legislation of the Books of Moses is not understood as a late legislative fiction and as a juridical-theological work of that time, which saw part of Palestine under the control of eastern conquerors and feared the subjugation of Judah by Babylon at any moment. Agriculture has never been sufficient to feed the inhabitants of Palestine, and the distribution of land as a fiduciary to families and tribes is nothing but a poetic attempt to prophesy eternity to precarious popular life on an indestructible foundation. It is one of those mechanical reactions that precede the eventual dissolution of peoples, only that it has not even been attempted.

197

In industry, the Jews have made neither inventions nor could they compete with the large industries of Babylon and the workshops of the trading cities on the coast that worked for refined taste. The wholesale trade of the Euphrates factories passed through Damascus to Tyre and Sidon; the goods of Arabia and India were brought by the caravan leaders of hostile tribes in southern Judah to the coast and to Egypt. The inhabitants of Palestine were left with only the yield of the commission trade between the intermediate stations of world trade and large industry. Not long after Babylon and Egypt began to challenge Judah's commission gain, and the industrialist of the Orient had toppled Jerusalem and won the sea, the Macedonian completed the Persians' work on Babylon and Egypt and created free trade between the Orient, the Nile region, and Greece. The latter had seen the power of its citizenship fade away; foreigners and freed slaves had already obtained citizenship, and gaps had emerged in the commercial and industrial cities where foreigners could find a place and livelihood, while during the Peloponnesian War the full-blooded defenders of the suburbs were wiped out.

197/198

This transformation, which the Macedonian rule brought about in the eastern half of the Mediterranean lands, rather than a command or the direction of the rulers, was what directed the stream of Jews to Egypt, Asia Minor, Pontus, and the commercial centers of Greece. Barely a century later, the Romans began connecting the western part of that region with the East, and again, it did not require the intervention of Pompey in the throne disputes of the Maccabean family to acquaint some groups of captive Jews with the advantages that the world city offered to their commercial spirit. Without invitation, they also joined the organizations of Rome in Spain and, initially, in southern Gaul, and then found their way to the fortresses and colonies on the Rhine and the Danube.

198

Their beginnings in Rome were small, as befitted their limited domestic trading operations and was only possible given the masses with which they found themselves there (as in their Macedonian branches).

Their beginnings in Rome were small, as befitted their limited domestic trading operations and, given the the massiveness with which they arrived there (as they did in their Macedonian settlements). They offered themselves for the satisfaction of the daily needs of the petty bourgeois life and gradually rose to a trade in the rarities of the East sought in the West. Growing commission business paved the way for larger commercial ventures or deliveries for the government, and from the humble beginnings grew bankers who, like the head of the Alexandrian Jewish community at the time of Tiberius, managed the financial affairs of members of the imperial family and from whom the remnants of the small kings of the East sought loans. While from one of those Alexandrian banking families came Tiberius Alexander, the later prefect of Egypt and friend of Vespasian, others rose from the sphere of Roman ballet and theater to direct these art institutes, in which they performed with their tribal kin and enjoyed the favor of the imperial house.

198/199

The national policies of the countries in which the Jews engaged in commerce did not gain their sympathy in Greece or Rome. The anxious movements of politically dying Greece in its last attempts at unity offered them no advantage and left them cold, accustomed to larger political changes in the East. In Rome, they saw the carriers and organs of the previous national policy, nobility and people, divided into warring factions. That was just fine with them. Without any interest in the historical past of the Romans, they viewed the civil wars, the tumult of the streets and the forum, and the religious formalities, with their now meaningless ceremonies with which the opposing factions still hastily adorned themselves, as a spectacle that must end in their favor. Caesar, who brought understanding and order to the madness of the civil wars, was their hero. They liked him for wearing down the privileges of the noble lords, weakening the authority of the Senate over the provinces, and replacing the popular regime with a world empire with a monarchical head. Hence the songs of lamentation and revenge, with which they flocked to the funeral pyre of the murdered dictator for several days and nights after the theatrical funeral of Antony.

199

Caesar had known how to appreciate the interest that the Jews displayed for his monarchical aspirations in the most critical moments, and he rewarded them. Although some of the decrees of the Roman authorities that Josephus collects as evidence of their sympathy for the Jews in his "Antiquities" (14, 10, 8) (like the similar documents in Philo's "Embassy to Gaius") may be later fabrications, the formulas are still based on the factual circumstances. For example, the edict of Caesar that Josephus reports as communicated to the authorities of Paros, over whose hostile regulations the Jews of Delos had complained, that his decree against associations should remain, but nevertheless the Jews should be free to maintain a common fund, celebrate banquets, and gather according to their ancient ordinances, most likely bears the type of actual expressions of favor Caesar showed to the most powerful Jewish associations of Mediterranean cities.

199/200

Although Josephus introduces only eight thousand Jews during the time of Augustus, they disappear amidst the million people filling Rome. At first glance, they seem like a weak wedge that inserted itself between the new unitary power and the former bearers of sovereignty, the people and the Senate. But all they needed was time, perseverance in penetrating the gap where republican life had fallen apart, and they could rise to unexpected power. The crowd that ran after free entertainment and bread remained inwardly alien to them; the chambers where the former masters brooded over their discontent and plotted against Caesar were closed to them. But the women of the nobility, who were not all like Arria and did not press to seal their husbands' faith in the Republic with a dagger, but rather felt oppressed by the monotony and dreariness of those entertainments and sought new nourishment for their souls, were attracted to the mystery of Jewish doctrine. Furthermore, the Jews and the Stoic ascetics, who proclaimed their strict view of life and monotheism on the streets as well as on their lecterns and in the palaces of the nobility, could not remain strangers to each other in the long run. Finally, since Augustus had taken in the children of Herod the Great into his palace after the Battle of Actium, an intimate relationship existed between the imperial family and the princes of Palestine. Herod Agrippa, the grandson of the great Edomite, was a protégé of Antonia, who made him a classmate of her son Claudius, the future emperor. Later, he became a friend of Tiberius' son Drusus but had to avoid the court when Drusus died in 23 AD, and the emperor did not want to see any of his son's friends due to the painful memory. Later, after a life of adventures, he found a friendly reception from Tiberius in his final year on Capri and became the confidant of Gaius Caligula, with whom he likely discussed how to best stride on the heights of the earth and over the heads of subordinates, particularly in the East.

200/201

Twice during the time of the early Roman emperors, the Jews were expelled. The first blow hit them simultaneously with the worshippers of Isis under Tiberius (Tacit. Annal. 2, 85. Sueton. Tiberius c, 36. Joseph, Antiquities 18, 3, 5). All three writers describe the action against the two cults as simultaneous. It is the blow that Tacitus, as shown above, correctly places in the year 19 AD, while Josephus falsely places it in the last year of Tiberius. The former lets four thousand young people from the circles of suppressed superstition be raised, the latter lets the same number of Jewish recruits be raised and, in agreement with Tacitus, sent to Sardinia, while the rest were expelled from Rome.

201

According to Josephus, the conversion of a noble matron to Judaism was the decisive factor; in any case, the Jewish settlement had been lured beyond the barrier that still surrounded their precarious situation by the distinction that Caesar had bestowed on them and by the intimate position in which the princes of their house stood at the imperial court.

The tumult of the Jews during the time of Claudius, which led to their renewed expulsion from Rome, and their agitator Chrestus (Sueton. Claud. c. 25) will later concern us under Hadrian.

201/202

The last two centuries until the fall of Jerusalem were spent by the Jews at home under the changing efforts of absolutism, with the help of which the cultured peoples in the last stages of their national life seek to maintain their genius, or what they call their sacredness and their destiny, against foreign and domestic enemies. The Maccabean house, which won the princely dignity in the struggle against Syrian rule and Greek education, cumulated the previously separate powers and united in its representatives the principality and the highest priesthood. The Roman intervention, which the Maccabees themselves had called for, paved the way for a foreign tribe, the Edomites, to the throne. In the dispute between Hyrkan and Aristobul, Pompey sided with the former and handed over the factual government to the Idumean Antipater. His son, Herod the Great, who brought the reign to his house, sharpened the absolutism that had been blunted in the hands of the Maccabees and sought in the Hellenistic tendencies, to which his predecessors had also had to turn again, the support for his authoritarian rule and the means for his assimilation with the new Caesaric world.

202

Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian prince, would not have thought of Hellenizing Judah if it had not already been in progress in the hearts of the people there. Similarly, Herod would not have dared to build a theater in Jerusalem and decorate it with images of Augustus' deeds, construct an amphitheater on the plain near the holy city, and introduce five-yearly games, including for musical competitors, in honor of his imperial patron, if he had not been certain of the support of a large part of the priestly, learned, and popular circles.

The Seleucid period had flooded Palestine with Greek elements. The influx had come from Greece and from the Syrian principalities; Damascus was the reservoir from which Hellenism poured forth for the north; for the interior, the influx came from the Phoenician coast. Herod made the mixed localities the bulwarks of his regime, and in his fortified city of Sebaste (Augusta), formerly Samaria, he erected a common temple for the mixed population. Here he could build on the tradition that the Samaritans had already dedicated their temple on Garizim to the Hellenic Zeus during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (Josephus, Antiquities 12, 5, 3).

202/203

The spread of the Greek language in Jewish circles is attested, for example, by the Second Book of Maccabees (in the collection of Apocrypha of the Old Testament), when the mother of the seven martyr children who resist Antiochus even in the face of death (c. 7, 21, 27) understands the language of the king and answers him in his own, secretly encouraging her children to persevere in their own native language. The work falsely attributed to Josephus, "de Maccabaeis," an elaboration of the martyr episode of that text belonging to the first century BC, has emphasized this double language of the mother and the children with particular emphasis (chapters 12 and 16).

203

We can see the dominance of the Greek language in Palestine, for example, from the decrees of Caesar cited by Josephus (Antiquities of the Jews 14.10.2-3) to the authorities of Tyre, Sidon, and Ashkelon, in which he ordered his charters for the last Maccabean ruler, Hyrcanus, whose steward, an Edomite, had come to the aid of the Roman general in his Alexandrian difficulties, to be hung on bronze tablets in the temples in Latin and Greek so that they could be read by everyone. His regulation that the edict should be conveyed from administration to administration by official messengers from city to city is equally instructive.

203/204

Tyre, Ashkelon, and Gadara were centers of Greek literature. Strabo (Book

16), for example, lists a whole series of Greek philosophers and rhetoricians who came from Gadara; but the numerous Jewish communities in all these cities had to be familiar with Greek because of their trade. At the outbreak of the Jewish War, 2,500 Jews alone were killed in Ashkelon by the popular hatred; in Tyre, although many also lost their lives, the majority of the old citizens were more sympathetic to them and were content to imprison most of them. Caesarea, the main seat of the Herods, where they indulged their Greek inclinations freely without the vigilance of their priestly opponents in Jerusalem, also contained so many Jews that 20,000 perished in that general Greek uprising. In Damascus, the Jews were so powerful that almost all the wives of the city lords were said to have turned to the Mosaic Law, but they paid for their previous successes with 10,000 corpses. Josephus, whose Bellum Judaicum (2.18.1-5; 2.20.1) provides us with this information, is admittedly too generous with numbers in the statistics of the Jewish diaspora, like Philo in his writings about the embassy to Gaius and against Flaccus, but even if we forgive him thousands and thousands of his sums, his information about the numerous representation of Judaism in the Greek cities remains highly valuable for understanding the multilingual traffic in Palestine.

204

The Hellenizing absolutism of the Idumean family did not yet create a universally recognized symbol, no supreme formula, no intellectual work in which Greek and Jewish culture could find their unity. The Greek fortresses and cultural cities only formed a belt around the holy city, which still had enough reputation and prestige to generate an increase in national absolutism and to put it into the field for its defense. Herod was still on his deathbed when the premature news of his death encouraged a group of conspirators to break off the golden eagle that the king had placed in honor of Rome over the great colonnade in front of the temple. Hardly had he actually died when insurgents rose up and declared the freedom of the country. Josephus calls them "robbers" but admits that their goal was a regular rule. They crowned themselves; whoever had a following made himself king. The country was seized by an illusion that contradicted the times. Adventurers, ignoble individuals who relied on the fervor of their zeal and the power of their arms (Joseph. Arch. 16, 10, 5-8), wanted to improvise that tyranny whose establishment had not succeeded even for the generals and statesmen of Greece during the flowering of their country and which could only be established by Alexander and the great democratic generals of Rome when the former used the Greek and the latter the Italian nationality for the amalgamation of peoples and the national illusions of their armies for the foundation of a world policy.

204/205

The weak attempts of those "robbers" of Josephus, in reality the aspirants to Jewish tyranny, to gather their people around the holy temple were immediately rejected by the Romans after Herod's death and the assessment of Judaea by Quirinius. But they embittered the imperial government in Rome, aroused their suspicion, and provoked them, like Caesar Caligula, to experiments and inquiries about how far they could go against the national party, which inquiries, in turn, had sharpened the attention and bitterness of the leaders of the people. The conclusion of these mutual frictions was finally the uprising in the last years of the Nero government, which brought the tyranny to maturity since the gathering of agitators to the holy city but also brought about its downfall.

205

It is in this catastrophe that Josephus played his role as a military commander and defected to Vespasian.

4. Josephus as military commander and messenger of God.

When the Jewish historian received command from the central government in Jerusalem to lead the uprising against the Romans in Galilee, he had recently returned from a trip to Rome. According to his account, he sought access to the imperial court in order to secure the release of some priests who had been sent to the capital by the procurator Felix "for a few insignificant reasons." He approached Aliturus, a Jew who was a mime poet and actor in favor with Nero, and through him was introduced to Poppaea, the emperor's wife, and obtained the release of the priests from their imprisonment (Vita c. 3).

Was that really his purpose? Did he not rather want to investigate the situation in Rome in the face of the turmoil of the Jewish national party, perhaps in the interest of the Jewish optimates, and bring and obtain certain assurances?

205/206

Poppaea had already shown favor to the Jewish sanctuary on another occasion and prevailed upon Nero to grant the embassy of the priests, who had obstructed King Agrippa's view of the Temple traffic and his surveillance of it that bordered on police work by raising the Temple wall, their rights (Antiquities 20, 8, 11). Josephus calls the imperial consort "God-fearing"; she was thus a kind of proselyte and adherent of Jewish customs, like her former husband, Otho, later emperor, who worshipped Isis. She may therefore have understood the situation in Judaea, as presented by Josephus, in such a way

that by showing some kindness to the Temple priesthood, the smoldering fire in the East could still be dampened.

206

Josephus precedes the account of his success in Rome with the story of a sea adventure that is so exaggeratedly romantic that it requires some doubt about his credibility. The ship on which he sailed to Rome sank in the middle of the Adriatic Sea with six hundred passengers. Only eighty people, including him, survived by swimming, and after keeping themselves afloat all night, they were picked up by a Cyrene sailor at dawn and taken to Puteoli. Anyone who can tell such tales is also capable of keeping things that he does not want to become public secret.

206/207

For more recent scholars of New Testament history, it may be a rewarding date, and for the Romans it may be impressive when Josephus tells that he comes from the "first of the twenty-four priestly classes". However, the chaos that prevailed in the priesthood in the last centuries before the fall of the temple, especially the secularization of the higher priesthood by the Maccabees, gives us some doubts about the alleged priestly order that was said to have existed even during the time of Nero. Josephus's further assertion that in his scholarly education he had already advanced so far at the age of fourteen that the "high priests and city leaders" constantly sought him out to get explanations about the mysteries of the law, shows us in the autobiographer a troubling tendency towards exaggeration and highlighting of his own person. His writings, the testimonies of his maturity, introduce us to one of the most educated and learned Jews of his time; we will now also get to know him as one of the most skilled. Before that, we note that he was twenty-six years old when he swam in the Adriatic Sea, having been born in the first year of the Emperor Gaius (37 AD).

207

Upon his return from Rome, he found the national party in Jerusalem ready to rebel. The agitators whom he had allowed to appear and gather their supporters as "robbers" in the northern provinces during the turbulent time after Herod's death had now been transformed into "assassins" and had established themselves in Jerusalem, taking armed possession of the temple from the friends of peace. They soon gained control of the upper city as well.

The Optimates and High Priests wished for peace and implored the procurator Florus to hurry to their aid and militarily occupy the city. The Roman troops also forced their way in, but succumbed in street fighting and

had to withdraw.

At the beginning of this crisis, Josephus had already tried to bring the insurgents to their senses. He reminded them (Vita chap. 4) of the military prowess of the Romans and their luck and urged them not to recklessly and foolishly expose their country and people to the utmost misfortune. After Florus's withdrawal, Agrippa, who was afraid for his future residence in the Herodian fortress, tried his luck with the agitated crowds and explained to them that in case of war there would be no alliance for them anywhere in the vast world, and that God Himself had made the fasces of the Romans almighty. However, the sham king saw that he would lose his principality and life in the maelstrom of the rebellion, and fled from the capital.

207/208

Josephus himself admits that with the same advice he would only make himself hated and risk his life. He puts himself on the side of the aristocrats, as if he supported the revolt, but he also urges moderation and calmness, reckoning that Cestius Gallus, the prefect of Syria who had called on Florus for help, would soon arrive with sufficient forces to put an end to the disaster. When the Roman commander stood before Jerusalem, the aristocrats wanted to open the gates to him, but he hesitated and remained undecided even when the insurgents lost their courage for a moment and the people wanted to reach out to the Romans to escape the terror of the Zealots. His hesitation, then his defeat before Jerusalem and his retreat, which he survived only a few more months, according to Josephus (Vita cap. 6), spelled the destruction of the Jewish people.

208

The Zealots (or Daggermen, as the historian calls them) now found no resistance in Jerusalem and in the country, which Galus had vacated in disorganized flight. But the aristocrats still sat in the central government, which took the leadership of the entire revolt into its own hands, and secretly gave Josephus, whose appointment as commander-in-chief in Galilee they had pushed through, the task of giving the moderates there a foothold and gaining the upper hand over the Zealots. However, in Galilee, the Action Party had a leader in John of Gischala who did not let the official commander rest during the mobilization of the militia and himself sought supreme command. This rival outlined the plan to the chosen one of the central government, not entirely inaccurately, to prepare for himself a distinctive and significant position vis-à-vis the Romans and the insurgents. In Galilee, John suspected him of being in collusion with the Romans; he wrote to the capital that the authorized representative of the high council was seeking to establish a power in Galilee with which he could become the arbiter over the parties in Jerusalem.

208/209

In Josephus's account, messengers fly back and forth between Galilee and the capital. His friends, including his father, warn him of the commission which the central government, pressed by his opponents, finally felt obliged to send against him to relieve him of command. Revolts break out in his own camp, but his resourcefulness in finding a way out is inexhaustible, and his cruelty is unshakable. In desperation, he resorts to cowardice and brutality, and he secures confirmation of his position and the recall of the commission through an embassy to Jerusalem.

209

Maybe, as he went to his province, he had really ambitious plans in his head, in which he shone as a military-diplomatic mediator between Rome and Jerusalem. But these bold combinations soon melted away before his belief in Roman power and his disbelief in a thorough reorganization of the Jewish people. Only his own person remained after cooler reflection, which could find a way through the approaching crisis, but he himself, along with his understanding of the world situation, his vision of the future, and as a witness of the divine plan that would also be fulfilled in the collapse of the national sanctuary.

Nero received news of the defeat of Cestius in the autumn of 66 during his artistic triumphs in Greece. Vespasian, the man who had fallen asleep during the emperor's musical performances, to the mockery and terror of the court, was the only one who was capable, unassuming, and seemingly harmless enough to be called to lead an army that had to win. The proven general immediately set out to invade Galilee, the rebellious land in the north, from Syria; Titus brought him the necessary legions from Egypt to reinforce him. In the spring of 67, the Roman columns, along with their auxiliaries, concentrated in Galilee.

209/210

"In this moment," writes Josephus (bell. jud. 3, 7, 2) about his mood and situation, "he saw where the affairs of the Jews would come to, and that they could only be saved if they abandoned their plan. He himself, although he expected forgiveness, would rather, as he often intended, die than betray his homeland, abandon the mission he was given, and live with those whose fight he was sent to combat."

210

The encounter with the advanced outposts of the Romans was unlucky. Josephus, who was himself present, "realized that the courage of the Jews

had fallen and that most of them, if they could rely on a friendly approach from the enemy, would enter into negotiations." Swept away by the refugees, he thought it best to "keep as far away from danger as possible, and he despaired of the outcome of the war" (ibid. 3, 6, 3).

And in this history of the war (ibid. 3, 5), he precedes a description of Roman discipline, army and camp order that is stylistically simple and correct, with a few exaggerated sentences that suggest the hand of a knowledgeable and skilled person, Titus, was involved. Josephus concludes this beautiful episode by saying that his painting was not intended to glorify the Romans, but to comfort the underdogs and warn the innovators.

210/211

According to Josephus, most of the work was done by the Roman commander in the siege of Jotapata, a fortified spot, probably an outcrop of the Galilean plateau towards Samaria, which remained aloof from the revolt and was controlled by the Romans through the Herodian fortifications. When Vespasian advanced to this fortress after suppressing the north, a defector told him that Josephus had returned there after his recent flight. The defector pressed for an immediate attack; with Jotapata, he would win all of Judaea if he captured Josephus. Vespasian, very pleased with this information, saw it as a divine intervention that the man who seemed to be the most capable of the enemies had shut himself up (ibid. 3, 7, 3). However, the following scenes suggest that the defector did not come to the Roman commander of his own accord.

211

During the course of the siege, Josephus realized that the fortress could not hold out much longer and that his life was in danger if he stayed. He therefore consults with the leaders of the city, but the people, anticipating the worst, gather against him and do not believe his pretense that he wants to bring help from outside and incite an uprising in Galilee to draw the Romans away from Jotapata (3.7.14-17). To avoid being imprisoned, he must decide to stay.

When the Romans storm and enter, he is gone. He is with a company of forty refugees in an underground well, on whose dry floor a side hiding place opens. Fortunately, a woman in the company reveals the whereabouts of the Jewish military leader and becomes the means to help him out of trouble. Vespasian wants to have him with him at all costs and sends several generals to the well in turn to negotiate with him from above. The last one tells him that the Romans, always benevolent towards defeated enemies,

admire him more than they hate him.

The situation was threatening. On the one hand, the Romans were pushing harder and harder; on the other hand, revenge shone in the eyes of the Jews in the well in the event of betrayal. "Then he remembered the dream of the night before, in which God had shown him the impending calamity of the Jews and the future of the Roman emperors. He understood, as he adds, how to interpret the divine signs and as a priest and priestly son he knew the prophecies of the holy scriptures. Thus he was filled with the spirit of God, embraced the signs of the dream once again, and offered a prayer to God in his heart: “since you have decided to crush the people of the Jews, and all luck has gone to the Romans, and since you have chosen me to be the herald of the future, I surrender myself to the hands of the Romans and I will live, but I bear witness that I am going there not as a traitor, but as your servant."

212

The question was how to get out of the well, since his Jewish companions down below wanted to stab him if he did not, like them, prefer voluntary death to slavery. However, as always quick with a solution, he gave them a philosophical lecture on the unnaturalness of suicide and concluded with the suggestion that they should kill each other in pairs, and that the lots should determine the order of the pairs. They agreed and stabbed each other in pairs until he was left with the last of the thirty-nine, with whom he arranged a friendly agreement to climb out of the well together unharmed.

Nicanor, the last of Vespasian's envoys, is said to have watched the long novel taking place on the floor of the well from above and from beginning to end. This adventure of the forty, which forms a worthy counterpart to the rescue of the eighty on the Adriatic Sea, justifies the doubt about the historical value of the preceding narrative and also casts a suspicious light on Josephus' account of his relations with the Emperor during the next two years.

First, we provide the chronological data.

212/213

Vespasian did not immediately believe the glowing image that the prisoner unrolled to him as God's messenger of his future after Nero and his successors; gradually, however, his eyes were opened as God indicated his elevation to him through other signs (bell. Jud. 3, 8, 9). The war continued until the summer of 68. The Roman commander completed the subjugation of the north, devastated the land beyond the Jordan, and drove the remnants

of the rebels to Jerusalem. Since then, military movements had been suspended. Nero fell, Spain, the Praetorium in Rome, and Gaul raised their candidates to the throne, and in July 69, Syria and Egypt spoke out in favor of Vespasian. In the meantime, while the Orient watched the development of events in the West with tension, Jerusalem was left to itself and the passions of the parties.

213

Now the action was to begin. In Berytus, Vespasian and the warlords devised the general plan: Mucian was sent to Italy with sufficient strength to fight Vitellius' legions and bring Gaul into order, the Emperor himself went to Egypt, and Titus was ordered to conquer Jerusalem. Josephus, who was allegedly only released from his fetters at this point, was given to him as a companion and adviser.

We are now on partially historical ground.

5. Josephus in front of Jerusalem.

The man from Jotapata was to assist the son of Vespasian with his knowledge of the Jewish factions, if possible mediate an agreement with the city's interior, and shorten the time and labor of the siege.

213/214

During the voluntary pause of the Roman arms, the Zealots imposed terrorism on the population of Jerusalem and the refugees driven towards the holy city from the north, which repeatedly resulted in slaughter among the supporters of Roman protection. When Titus executed the encirclement at the beginning of spring 70, one of the three leaders of the terror faction had fallen, and the remaining two, John of Gischala and Simon, the son of Giora, united and suspended their discord until the moment of victory. They had no idea of how to reconcile themselves after the Romans were defeated, nor what form the extreme absolutism would take. Even if they were certain of bloody competition, they were not allowed to envision it. The prospect ended in a domestic war of annihilation, behind which there always lurked an intensified effort of Roman power. Those who wanted peace with the Romans and unconditional submission at any cost also had no idea of the position that their national sanctuary could occupy in the midst of a permanent Roman occupation, which closely watched every movement of the nationalists.

214

Victory or submission were equally destructive to the national interest. This signaled the end of the nation-state.

The speeches that Josephus is said to have delivered to the rebels on behalf of Titus, with the bravery and vocal power of the Homeric heroes, are only elaborations of this theme of the inevitable downfall of the national theocracy. The submission he demands means anxious self-restraint on a husk that has become worthless and meaningless.

"To the Romans," he cries out to the rebels on the third wall after the fall of the two outer walls, "Happiness has come from all places where other nations flourished, and God, who transfers power from one people to another, is now in Italy. You are not only fighting against the Romans, but also against God, because He has fled from the sanctuary and is on the side you are fighting against" (Bell. 5, 9, 2-3).

After being sent again before the wall to persuade Johannes of Giskala to surrender after the fall of the Antonia fortress, he concludes his address with the sentence that he is actually incurring a debt by speaking against his fate and forcing him, one condemned by God, to be saved. He finds fate in the prophecy that threatens the city with conquest if any of the natives commit murder. The hour of fulfillment has come, with the city and temple stained with citizen blood, and God will bring the fire of purification over the sanctuary and destroy the polluted city (ibid. 6, 2, 1).

214/215

The irresistibility of fate is further illustrated by Josephus in a vivid description of Titus' concern for the preservation of the Temple. Initially, when he saw his soldiers struggling to climb the courtyards of the sanctuary, the commander decided to bring them down with fire. When the fire was already working, he ordered it to be extinguished and a passable path to be made to the courtyards. In the council of war of six chiefs, which he convened on the issue, some advocated for the unrestricted exercise of martial law, while others believed that the Temple should be preserved if the Jews did not make it a battleground. He himself stated that even if the Jews wanted to continue fighting in it, the Temple should be preserved, since its destruction would be a loss for the Romans themselves and its preservation would adorn the empire. Three of the chiefs agreed with him. However, the preservation that had thus obtained a majority was thwarted by the Jews, who set fire to the courtyards during the assault, after which a Roman soldier threw a burning torch through an open window. Titus, who had supposedly retired to his tent to rest shortly before, rushed to the scene upon hearing

the news of the disaster, waving and shouting from afar that the fire should be extinguished immediately, but his orders were not heard, and the warriors incited by their hatred of the Jews refused to listen; before his eyes, the Temple went up in flames (Bell. 6, 4, 1-7).

215

The fear and artificiality of this pragmatism carried out from hour to hour, even from moment to moment, could make us inclined to follow a more recent scholar in a source that is said to guarantee us the opposite course of events.

215/216

Sulpicius Severus, the student and biographer of Saint Martin, reports in his "Historia Sacra" that Titus intentionally brought about the destruction of the Temple in order to put an end to the Jewish and Christian religions at once, since Christianity had emerged from Judaism and after the eradication of the root the shoot would wither away on its own. Herr Bernays ("On the Chronicle of Sulpicius Severus", Berlin 1861) sees in this motif a literal agreement with the view expressed by Tacitus in the Annals (15, 44) that Judea was the birthplace of the Christian evil, and infers from this that the Gaulish priest drew from the lost conclusion of the fifth book of the "Histories" of Tacitus.

216

However, the "Annals", which often differ in important points from the "Histories" and bring a later modified view of the author on the same subject, cannot serve as witnesses to a pragmatism that Tacitus might have followed in his earlier work. Moreover, the Church Fathers of the fourth century are so firmly convinced of the hostile attitude of the emperors since Claudius towards the Christians that the student of St. Martin could discern the secret intentions of Titus even without inspiration from the "Histories" of Tacitus. And even assuming that the author of the "Histories" had actually given Sulpicius Severus the material for that sentence, his bitter playfulness would have no more historical value than the fatum pragmatism of Josephus. We will therefore have to be content with the assumption that the Temple suffered the fate of the war.

After a striking description of the fire and collapse of the Temple, Josephus lists the signs that indicated certain disaster shortly before the outbreak of the war. At the Passover festival, the Temple was bathed in light as if it were day and the heavy metal gate to the interior opened by itself. After the festival, at sunset, chariots and armed crowds were seen racing high in the

sky over the entire land, besieging the images of cities. At Pentecost, the priests heard a rustling sound, then a voice like that of a great multitude, saying, "Let us depart from here" (ibid. 6, 5, 3).

216/217

Thus, Tacitus summarizes in his account of the siege of Jerusalem (Hist. 5.13) the same features that Josephus had described earlier: armies clashing in the sky, weapons shining red, and the temple suddenly illuminated by fiery clouds. The gates of the sanctuary opened all at once, and a supernatural voice declared that the gods were departing, followed by a tremendous sound of their departure.

217

In the same context, the Roman historian, like Josephus, cites the prophecy of the world ruler who would come from Judaea, but he refers it to a majority of world rulers, as he wishes to associate it with Vespasian and Titus. Tacitus even repeats the wording of Josephus, stating that the multitude (of Jews) had applied this greatness of destiny to themselves.

There can be no more compelling evidence of one author's dependence on the other.

Certainly, Tacitus did not bear witness to anything like thorough source study in the introductory remarks to his section on the Jewish War. He did not think it worthwhile to consult Josephus's Antiquities of the Jews for his outline of Jewish history and religion. Instead, he relied on the notes of Alexandrian Jewish enemies and, in contradiction to the tendency of his picture, adopted from Strabo's respectful portrayal of Jewish worship free from all idolatry. However, whether he himself discovered those picturesque omens of calamity from Josephus's war story or was alerted to them by a knowledgeable friend in the relevant war literature or simply borrowed them from one of those "textbooks" of the Flavian epitomators of Josephus, it is certain that they are the property of the Jewish historian. Suetonius probably only had Tacitus's Histories on hand for the saying about the world ruler.

217/218

6. Josephus at the Triumph of Titus

Josephus was in the entourage of Titus as he returned to Rome via Alexandria. He bade farewell to the holy land forever. After the capture of Jerusalem, Titus allowed him to choose whatever he wanted as a memento. He asked for "the sacred books," which Titus gave him as a gift. In addition,

the Emperor granted him the pardon of his brother and fifty friends, permission to rescue 190 friends and acquaintances from the wrath of the soldiers in the Temple, and the removal of three acquaintances from the cross in Thekoa, where he went with Cerealis and a thousand riders to select a military encampment. He also received a country estate in the plain instead of his possession near Jerusalem, which was given to the permanent Roman garrison (Vita cap. 75, 76). He does not explicitly mention his father and mother, who were in Jerusalem during the siege.

In Rome, Vespasian, who took him into the Flavian clientage, gave him his former private house as a residence, Roman citizenship, and an annual pension. Titus and Domitian bestowed the same favor on him as regents; the latter made his estate in Judaea tax-free, and his wife Domitia proved to be constantly benevolent to him.

He had become a Roman, and with the eye of a Roman, he watched the triumphal procession of Vespasian and Titus over his people and his former homeland, and he describes it at the end of his history as a Roman (bell. jud. 7, 5, 4-7).

218/219

He has only words to express his admiration for the grandeur of the whole thing. The amount of captured gold, along with the jewels and ivory, captivates his eye; the pictorial representations of the battles and stormings of cities, rising up to three or four stories on stretchers, are astonishing to him, and he speaks as if they depict the defeat of a foreign people. The sanctuaries of the Temple, which are carried before the emperors, parade before his eyes like the spoils taken from a foreign deity. As the golden candelabrum passes by, he points out that its structure "differs from our use," that is, from the taste and manufacture of the Greeks and Romans. The scroll of the law, which concludes the spoils, he calls "the law of the Jews."

219/220

With the same coldness, he describes how Simon, son of Giora, is led to the Capitol among the prisoners in the triumphal procession, flogged, and beheaded, and after the cheers of the crowd, the victor's sacrifices are performed.

The end of his painting is the final fate of the holy temple treasures. Vespasian places the golden objects as witnesses of the Roman triumph in the peace temple that he built; he takes the scroll of the law and the temple curtains into the imperial palace.

7. Josephus's world religion.

And yet, this new Roman lived with the conviction that his God, who had left the sanctuary, would conquer the world and that the law that reminded the emperor of the Flavian victory in his palace would "subjugate the Roman Empire."

When Titus ordered prisoners with mutilated arms to be led before the walls of Jerusalem as a warning to the defenders, Josephus gave them the answer: "Curse Caesar and his father! We despise death, which is better than servitude. If we are to perish, as he says, our country does not matter to us. God still has the world, which is a better temple than this one."

219/220

Josephus has already laid down his interpretation of history so often in the speeches he inserts into his work that we may leave this artistically pointed saying of the besieged to his literary talent as a possession and consider it as a contribution to his religious philosophy of history. Besides his reverence for Romanism, whose victory over national sanctuaries is not in doubt for him, he has his own inner conviction in which he harbors the certainty that the catastrophe in Jerusalem has assigned and opened up the world as the scene of his greater victories for Judaism.

220

His writing against Apion is a testimony of this belief in the universality of the law and the divine rule governed by it (theocracy, as he calls it). The harbinger of victory for him is the fact that the law has broken through everywhere and there is no Greek or barbarian city or people where the custom of Sabbath rest, fasting, and the observance of dietary laws is not prevalent (Against Apion 2.39). The Jews are accused of not wanting to have any fellowship with members of a different way of life. On the contrary, when others, such as the Spartans, shut themselves off from foreigners and prohibit their own people from staying abroad, it is a testimony to the kindness and magnanimity of the Jews that they accept those who want to participate in their institutions. In a similar explanation in his "Antiquities" (16.6.8), he says that usage and custom differ among peoples, but the soul of his law is the idea of justice, which has in view the best interests of all people, Greeks and barbarians, and inspires his servants to participate for all. His law is the concern of the whole world.

He believes in an understanding between Jews and Greeks. Both, he says, are separated more by their spatial division than by their peculiar tendencies (Against Apion 2.10). He sees the unity between the two already realized in

the philosophy of the masters Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato, and the Stoics, and explains it by the assumption that arose already after the first intoxication of the Jews with Greek wisdom in the Maccabean period, from the acquaintance of the Hellenic dogmatists with the written law of Moses.

220/221

Now, however, the Roman world was like a field prepared for Oriental sowing. The Jewish propagandist could count on the cooperation of related forces everywhere, which longed for the final liberating word, and the mood of the people was ripe for a unifying melody.

221

We have come to know a self-examination and introspection during the time of Nero, in which the soul turned away from the state power, which did not provide satisfaction, and emancipated itself from the old regulations that no longer harmonized with the inner voice. Rebellion, yes, revolt, were only one aspect of this epoch-making event; in the background there was a need for something solid, positive, and unquestionable that could survive the collapse of the old. The emperors were not alone with their centralization of the world; the leaders and disciples of the stoic and ascetic opposition also sought a new master, more powerful than those expelled, more reliable than the rulers on the throne. In their restless struggle with the opposing factions, they sought a master whose authority extends to the innermost part of the soul and encompasses all aspects of life with his commandments. Now, the Jews, and Josephus in particular, could bring something to this desire. His theocratic order left nothing to the individual's discretion, no matter how insignificant. His law made faith in God the soul of the whole of life; while the Greek philosophers only made piety a part of virtue, the legislator of the Jews combined all aspects of it (justice, patience, prudence, and civic harmony) and connected all actions, efforts, and thoughts with piety towards God (contra Ap. 2, 16).

221/222

We will soon hear that a member of the house, whose fame and greatness began in the Galilean military camp and was completed in the burning of the Temple of Jerusalem, finds comfort and satisfaction in Judaism for the inner dissatisfaction of his soul. He fell victim to the reactionary direction of the emperor, who sought to preserve Roman religious and state statutes, and with whom the Flavian family ended. Many others also lost their lives because of their inclination towards Judaism. But did that Flavius Clemens, the cousin of Domitian, and his accomplices agree to take on the entire burden of Jewish law with their devotion to Jewish doctrine? Did they want to make the sacrifice by accepting the Jewish doctrine of the One Lord and

Creator and renouncing the Roman religion to enter the national community of the Jews? Did they exchange their Roman nationality for an Oriental one?

222

Hardly! We believe we can show below our right to the opposite assumption.

222/223

Josephus saw things differently. The victory of his Jehovah over the gods is at the same time the triumph of his people, the defeat of the gods and their servants a national matter of Israel. For example, Balaam's prophecy of the downfall of the enemies of the chosen people is fulfilled for him (Arch. 4, 6, 5) up to his time, and he concludes that the fulfillment will be completed in the future. He tries to avoid answering the question of who the stone is that brings down the statue, the symbol of the world empires, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream and then covers the earth but leads the reader to the point where he can search for it himself with his excuse. He says he has to record the past, not the future, but whoever wants to see through what is still in the dark should read the book of Daniel (ibid., 10, 10, 4). In a section of Daniel's vision (of the seven weeks that will bring desolation to the holy land and end with the restoration of the sanctuary), he believes he finds the hegemony of the Romans and their devastating intervention predicted (ibid., 10, 11, 7). The "coming hegemon" in Daniel 9:26 is the Roman to him, and "the abomination of desolation" (Daniel 9:27) is the destruction of the temple. He does not mention the restoration of the temple when looking at the Romans, but he does not want to prevent anyone from making this addition. "I have written so," he says at the end of that chapter, "as I understood and read it; if anyone else thinks differently about it, he shall not be contradicted in his opinion."

223

The authority that he transferred to Vespasian over the Jewish people as God's messenger was only interim, and through it the universal destiny of Israel could not be extinguished. According to the indications in his "Antiquities," it was rather certain to him that the world domination of the law would survive the change of rulers and empires.

Moreover, the greeting with which Josephus met the commander cannot even be maintained as a historical fact. Vespasian, like Corbulo, a man of strict and sincere service, was not of a nature that a defector and traitor could dare to flatter him with succession to the ruling emperor. Corbulo, who carried out a more difficult task than Pompey in arranging the relations between Syria, Parthia, and Armenia during his Asian dictatorship, was an unconditional servant of Nero's and only said, as he was recalled to Greece

by him and received the order of death, pressing the dagger into his heart: "rightly for me," that is, why was I not like others unfaithful! Vespasian, a man of the same loyalty, would have rejected any temptation to entertain a thought against his imperial superior with punishment. It was only when Nero and Galba had fallen and the war between Otho and Vitellius had disrupted the West that he could see the call to save the Empire in the reputation of the legions.

223/224

Moreover, Josephus was already known to him when he came to him from the alleged "well" near Jotapata. The Jewish warlord, who openly admitted his resigned mood at the beginning of his military office in the main work on the war and wanted to give the word of the riddle that he came to Galilee only as a pacifier in his "Life," had not yet lifted the last veil from the mystery of his position at that time. On the contrary, we have pointed out above indications that he had informed the Roman commander through intermediaries with what sentiments he had undertaken the mission in Galilee, and when he met with Vespasian personally, he could only inform him of what he already knew: his decisive disbelief in the political continuation of the theocracy and his belief in the superiority of the Romans.

224

His so-called "Vaticinium" about the world ruler who was supposed to come from Judaea slowly took shape during his conversations under the tents of the emperors. It was not finished until he had negotiated in vain with the defenders of the holy city on its walls, as they played an important role in the punchline of the saying that they had been drawn into the war by the same oracle about the coming prince that proclaimed the victory of the Romans. Josephus had only overlooked in this artful pragmatism that the insurgents could not possibly see the prince who would destroy their sanctuary as their savior and redeemer.

If anyone still wants to see an ancient oriental legend in the work of Josephus, then they must also assume, with Suetonius (Galba, chapter 9), that the imitation of that saying, "the Lord and prince of the world will come from Spain," by which Galba believed he was called to the imperial throne, had already been presented 200 years earlier by a virgin of that country.

224/225

The simultaneous development of Christianity and the Roman Empire is the subject of these lines; let us not shorten ourselves by examining some late passages inserted by Christians into the Antiquities of Josephus! The

Christian origin of the so-called Testimony of Christ (Antiquities 18, 15, 2), which Origen did not yet know and was first cited by Eusebius at the time of Constantine the Great, has long been decided. We content ourselves with referring to the "XXX Epistolae philologicae et historicae de Fl. Josephi Testimonio, quod Jesu Christo tribuit" (Nuremberg, 1661). This collection contains the correspondence of respected theologians and philologists from Germany, Holland, and England on this controversial issue, as well as notes on a series of scholars who recognized a late Christian work in the slow, sluggish, and uncertain passage. Among these men shine the names of Daniel Heinsius, Joh. Fr. Gronow, Tanaquil Faber, Grotius, David Blondel, and others. It is only in recent times that the mention of Jesus as the "so-called Christ" and brother of James, allegedly stoned at the time of Nero (Antiquities 20, 19, 1), has been doubted and abandoned as a later addition. Keim (1, 12) believes that it cannot be denied that this passage "is based on Christian improvements," thus indicating the intervention of Christian hands.

225

However, we cannot help but motivate the suspicion that the penultimate chapters of Josephus' work on the Jewish War (7, ch. 8 and 9) arouse in us, and draw attention to the precious treasure they contain.

225/226

8. A Heraclitian School.

Something completely new emerges. Josephus is a strict adherent of the maxim "that you may prosper on earth" and is familiar with nothing less than mysticism, which sees the body of this life as a prison and the earthly life of the soul as a theft of the divine. He is only friendly with the philosophy of the Greeks to the extent that it corresponds to his deistic view of creation and providence, which allows man to prosper in this world according to his conduct, or punishes him with misfortune and failure for his contrary undertakings. But now, all of a sudden, in the fortress of Masada, allegedly besieged by insurgent Jews for several years after the fall of Jerusalem, there is a school of Heraclitean wisdom. Eleasar, the commander of the garrison, gives a lecture on their common belief that life, not death, is a misfortune, after exhaustion of their defense forces. He explains that dying is gain, the bondage of the soul to the body an injustice committed against the divine, for which mixing with the mortal is not appropriate, and death the elevation of the soul to its home above. This is entirely Heraclitean and only at home in the Jewish context with Philo. This Alexandrian concludes his first book on the "Allegories of the Law" with the sentence: "Indeed, Heraclitus also said: 'We live the death of the gods, and we die the life of the gods';" for when we

live, the soul is dead and buried in the body like in a tomb, and when we die, the soul lives its own life and is freed from the evil and corpse of the body chained to it."

226

In this passage, as well as usually, Philo adds the remark that Heraclitus followed the teachings of Moses with his saying. This Eleasar also speaks at the beginning of his lecture as if his bold thought that life is the true misfortune is in agreement with the "patriotic teaching," but at the height and conclusion of his speech, he admits that his and his comrades' conviction is something new. "Even though we have been educated from time immemorial in the opposite doctrine that life is the highest happiness of man," he says (ibid. 7, 8, 7), "the present moment teaches us that we are born for death."

226/227

Furthermore, Josephus consistently portrays a harshness in his descriptions of the bloody scenes in besieged and captured Jerusalem. In contrast, the account of the section on the Masada garrison's response to their leader's call to enter death is marked by a soft sentimentality. The people do not even let their leader finish speaking and detailing his advice. They interrupt him, and in demonic ecstasy, they go about the work that corresponds to their own sense and belief. They embrace their wives, take their children in their arms, give their last kiss to the weeping, and then pierce their loved ones. While the provisions and treasures of the fortress go up in flames, ten men designated by lot carry out the slaughter of the rest who have peacefully laid themselves down with their wives and children. They then perform the sacrifice on themselves.

227

The structure of the main body of this section also contradicts the cumbersome and clumsy prolixity with which it is linked to the bulk of the historical narrative. Eleasar is made a descendant of Judas, who fell in the revolt against the Quirinius census, and then follows an extensive retrospective of the "robbers and murderers," from Judas to John of Giskala and Simon, son of Giora, and the Idumeans are not forgotten, who, to complete the misfortune of the times, came to the aid of the assassins in Jerusalem.

If Josephus himself inserted this cumbersome recapitulation of seventy years of history into his work, he, with his insensitivity to Heraklitic mysticism, could not have created the main content himself, and he must have

incorporated one of the sketches in which his Jewish contemporaries glorified the downfall of their nationality. His name will always be associated with the conviction with which he saw the means for the establishment of the universal rule of his law in the fall of the holy city. In contrast, the author of the Masada episode opens our eyes to the soul of other Jewish circles who, after the loss of their national sanctuary, welcomed renunciation of the world and the earthly and in view of the Heraklitic and Philonic above as a replacement and lasting satisfaction.

We now turn to a transformation that Judaism underwent in Rome.

228

9. Domitian and the Meek.

Our attention is drawn to a circle that has shed the Roman nature and turned to Judaism without appropriating its national interests. The state of mind of this circle is related to the world-renouncing and self-abasing attitude glorified by Philo, but at the same time, it is something new in that it rejects the national barrier into which the Alexandrian sage repeatedly embeds himself after his ecstatic raptures. Thus, at the exit from Judaism, a rupture with it is also stirred up and stoic renunciation of worldly power and convention is united with oriental devotion.

228/229

The highest echelons of Rome at that time were the stage where the Old was bid farewell and freedom from the world was welcomed as salvation; but the nobles who committed this assault against Rome's majesty were not without accomplices, and we are thus justified in assuming that the event above was connected with a related occurrence down in the civil society of the capital. The drama that played out in the last year of Domitian was at once a family tragedy within the Flavian house and ended with its downfall. Flavius Clemens, the emperor's cousin, was executed for his conversion to Judaism; among the murderers who killed Domitian a few months later was Stephanus, the steward of Domitilla, Clemens' wife. The latter's father, Flavius Sabinus, Vespasian's brother, provided the pretext for the burning of the Capitol, where he barricaded himself against the Germanic and Gallic troops of Vitellius; Clemens himself set fire to the ancient temples and sanctuaries of Rome. Vespasian's nephew submitted to the god whose holiest sanctum the legions of Titus had stormed; Domitian, on the other hand, attempted once again to enforce the old laws of the gods, and exhausted himself in a reaction that was forgotten by the martial and philosophical emperors who succeeded him and the Oriental cult innovations

of the Syrian emperors and empresses. The emperor's cousin gave a religious character to the political resignation that had gripped the greats of Rome for more than a century and cultivated this un-Roman sentiment on the steps of the throne; his imperial blood relative raised the noble's harshness to an extreme to which Tiberius' Claudian pride, in his decadence, could no longer rise.

229

This pressure that Domitian exerted on Rome was what brought the religious movement within his cousin's inner circle and part of Roman society to light and revealed to the historian a valuable guide on the path that the Roman world took on its journey towards Christianity.

229/230

The younger of the two sons of Vespasian showed, in his first appearance in public, a harsh temperament that picturesquely reflects the agitation and transience of the imperial era. During the height of the Republic, the children and grandchildren immersed themselves in the tradition of the family under strict discipline, and in turn continued the legacy of their ancestors through their achievements in the affairs of war and peace. Merit followed merit, achievement followed achievement. Now was the time of surprising foundations and strokes of luck, and the families chosen by fortune lost the thread of their tradition and the coherence of their development. The merit that had lifted the ascending family father in his slow ascent was overshadowed by the sun of success, and the achieved power transformed into something self-evident. The children were most affected by this turnaround. They were, even if the father had just grasped power with a bold hand, born princes and something different from him who had to work his way up the ladder of success step by step. They were legitimate rulers, and what the father had acquired belonged to them by right. Even Augustus had seen his house crumble and fall at this sudden turn.

230

An eighteen-year-old young man, Domitian behaved as the ruler of Rome when he was there while his father secured the East from Egypt and sent Mucianus with military forces to Italy. His uncle had taken him along in his flight to the Capitol, and he had himself escaped the invading Germans of Vitellius disguised as an Isis priest. But his mere participation in Sabinus' unfortunate adventure and his presence during the barricading of the Capitol was for him a reinforcement of the right to the throne that he possessed as the son of the newcomer who had been raised to it, and he was pleased to hear later that the poets celebrated the "Capitoline War" as the beginning of his reign. After the defeat of the Vitellians, he pushed himself on Mucianus

during the reappointment and distribution of offices and behaved during this business so much like an autocrat that his father wrote to him, "I thank you, my son, for allowing me to rule and not deposing me yet."

He envied his brother Titus for his birthright and triumphs in Palestine, so he pushed himself again on Mucianus when he marched with the legions to Gaul to assist Cerialis in quelling the anarchy there. The experienced statesman reluctantly took him along, as he did not think it wise to expose him and his rash hopes to the camp of a large army. So all the more welcome was the news received at the crossing of the Alps that the power of the uprising had been broken, and he told the ambitious prince that it was not suitable for him to intervene in a work almost completed by others and to collect the aftermath of the victory. Nevertheless, the widespread rumor persisted that from Lyon, where Mucianus had only let him come, Domitian had secretly negotiated with Cerialis for the surrender of the army and the imperium, and that he had only abandoned his aspirations when he saw that the supreme commander in Gaul was evasive with his answers, as he saw in the whole idea only the offspring of childish vanity.

231/232

Both brothers were not insensitive to the allure of the world which their father, a scion of a sober, respectable Sabine family, had acquired as an inheritance. Both were inclined towards sensual pleasures, but Titus' personality was so richly endowed with gifts and advantages that he was also sure to win the sympathy of the world. Born in the year of Caligula's death (41 AD) and educated as a playmate of Britannicus at the court of Claudius, he "was characterized, according to the characterization which Suetonius adopts in his biography dedicated to him, by the gifts of body and mind which developed happily with the passage of age. In his beautiful figure, dignity and grace were combined; although not tall and inclined to corpulence, he possessed excellent strength. His talents qualified him for every science of war and peace. Skilled in arms, experienced in riding, eloquent, a poet and improviser, he also delighted as a virtuoso in singing and on instruments. On the former battlefield of his father in Germania and Britannia, he distinguished himself as a military tribune, and inscriptions in both provinces spoke of his zeal and popularity." The idealistic sweep of his nature finally found the right field to satisfy it in Palestine. His susceptibility to pleasure here formed the bridge to intimacy with the playboy Mucian and facilitated his first connections with him for the transfer of the empire to his father. But here, the temptations of the East also concentrated for him, as earlier for Antony in the queen of Egypt, in Berenice, sister of King Agrippa, who behaved as his chosen one after the Jewish triumph on her visit to Rome and was sent back to her homeland due to the displeasure over the impending connection of the Caesar with a barbarian.

232

According to Suetonius, Domitian, ten years younger than Titus, was no less beautifully formed in his youth, and slightly taller, but his dull and lifeless eyes did not show any empathy for others. He never loved anyone sincerely, except for a few women, as Cassius Dio says. For him, his father's elevation to Augustus and his appointment as Caesar was a signal for unrestrained indulgence in his sensuality, and, according to Tacitus, he showed the behaviour of a prince in adultery and in shameful acts. He forcibly abducted his wife Domitia from the bed of Aelius Lamia, and he had an adulterous relationship with Julia, the daughter of Titus, who was to become his wife according to the Flavian family council, perhaps also with the intention of binding her to his side as an ally against his brother's interests.

232/233

Vespasian remained, while tempering the jubilation of the Neronian era with his thriftiness and good sense, the open and jovial freeman of the Sabine land; only this frankness and openness had taken on the imperial form of affability. The doors of his imperial residence, which no soldier guarded, were not closed to anyone. It was all over with the brilliant society of Nero, which was brought to life by men such as Lucan, Petronius, and Seneca, and electrified by their brilliant antitheses and judgments about the men of the civil wars and the early imperial period. Instead, a comfortable and familiar togetherness had emerged, and the emperor set an example with his mood and humour at his table, and did not take offence if someone paid him back in the same coin after harmless jokes about others. Titus wanted to see everyone happy and felt uncomfortable when someone left him with a sad face. The day was lost to him if he did not show kindness to someone. He loved a cheerful and entertaining table and teased himself, without harming his majesty, with the people through shouts during the combat games.

233

On the other hand, Domitian rarely left his seclusion. If he ever hosted a banquet, it was only out of formality and ceremony, which were agreed upon like in a hunt. He himself was taciturn and others could not please him with a single word. That saying of Juvenal's (4, 87): "if a confidant even spoke about the weather, his life was at stake," is just an exaggeration. It was actually more often like this. Brooding, closed, lurking, he sat there. No word found an echo; nothing could elicit a friendly expression or a sound of approval from him. The speaker groped for satisfying phrases and, in his embarrassment, could not find any that he believed would please. Cassius Dio called Domitian "quick-tempered and irritable, but also deceitful and treacherous." Both sides of his character had an inner connection. The treachery was the interweaving of envy and hatred, which concealed his

passive and lurking demeanor; but when the capricious, always dissatisfied nature in his chest had filled up with nourishment from the world that displeased him until it overflowed, then it broke out with thunder against the outside world, and the silent brooder stood there as a hot-tempered person.

The death of his older brother was a slow decline. Popular belief attributed his illness, which had often afflicted him since he reached manhood, to the fact that he had drunk from the poisoned cup that was supposed to have killed Britannicus at Nero's table. Others attributed his exhaustion to excessive indulgence in pleasure; probably a burning thirst for achievement was also consuming him. Such an association of rewarding excitements, as war, exercise of power, and love had offered him in the East, did not come again for Titus under the peaceful rule of his father; nevertheless, he yearned for something great and felt an emptiness within himself for which he searched for a filling.

234

Along with his yearning and longing for the unattainable greatness, there was also an oversaturation with possessions, and his generosity and liberalism were ultimately just expressions of his jadedness: "here, take everything!" He appeared publicly for the last time at the hundred-day festivities for the inauguration of his father's Colosseum and wept on the last day in front of the entire people. His life and yearning had exhausted him.

Certainly, the pressure from his brother contributed to the depletion of his strength. Suetonius is very credible this time when he writes, according to one of his sources: "Domitian did not stop pursuing him, almost incited the army against him publicly, and thought of fleeing. Titus could not bring himself to kill him or remove him or even honor him less, but persisted in publicly respecting him as his successor and co-ruler from the first day of his reign, and sometimes begged him earnestly and with tears to finally have the same feelings towards him." This pressure from the lurking one was too much for the one who wanted nothing from all of it and for himself in the long run.

So now Domitian stood alone and could say in the Senate (Sueton. Domit. cap. 13): "he had given his father and brother the reign, and they had only given it back to him," and the epigram by Martial quoted by the Scholiast to Juvenal (4, 38): "the third of the imperial Flavians had taken so much from the first two that it was almost as good as if they had never been there," expresses the true sentiment of the new emperor.

According to Lampridius in the Life of Alexander Severus (chap. 43), Trajan, who distinguished himself as a capable general in the Jewish War under Vespasian and commanded the army on the Rhine during the last years of Domitian's reign, said of the last Flavian emperor, "that he was indeed a very bad ruler, but had very good state officials." He ruled for fifteen years and kept the vast empire in order, that is, until the wild frenzy of his later acts of revenge against the great families, with the traditional policy of his earlier predecessors, to divert the city populace and keep the Senate in check, was barely maintained. He continued the foreign policy in the conservative direction initiated by Augustus and could not use the funds consumed by buildings, spectacles, and public entertainments for conquests. The recall of Agricola from the British theater of war, which incurred the wrath of Tacitus, was necessitated by lack of funds and dictated by the same recorded policy that no longer tolerated any civilian triumphator and feared conquerors of the empire's borders as candidates for the imperial throne. Domitian's weak campaigns on the Rhine and on the Lower Danube and his German and Dacian triumphs do not deserve the ridicule of Tacitus and the younger Pliny for the splendor distorted by "tame" and implanted prisoners. At that time, one could still believe in maintaining peace at the borders through a ceasefire. Trajan and Marcus Aurelius were already forced by the growing unrest among the border enemies to sustained campaigns, and when in the third century the succession of old enemies was broken and strengthened by pressing hinterland peoples, a group of great generals, throne aspirants, and emperors emerged, who once again helped the empire in its life-threatening situation and at the end of this military era neither cared about the masses in the capital nor the decadent Senate.

235/236

Trajan's statement about Domitian also emphasizes that, with the advice of his capable ministers, he "did not make himself as hated as the inherently good Claudius, who had left the state to his unworthy favorites, as it is easier to tolerate one than many villains." Domitian wanted to be an autocrat; his ministers were only servants to him, and he did not allow the rule of freedmen to emerge. He considered the rule of his father and brother unproductive (Suetonius and Dio's reports of his attacks on his predecessors are reduced to this), and he wanted to leave behind a Rome that bore the stamp of his mind. But inwardly poor and hollow, and without sympathy or empathy for the internal movements of society or even for the new life forces that it carried in its womb, he could not envision a higher ideal than that of order and external symmetry, and could not devise any rule other than that which was laid down in the ancient laws and state statutes.

236

He punished recent or previously overlooked offenses of some Vestal Virgins

against the purity of the hearth they guarded, tightened the supervision required by law over marital fidelity, renewed the Scantinian law against mixing with one's own sex, and with his law against the mutilation of the male sex, he aimed to preserve in Rome the sanctity of manhood against the encroachment of Asian customs. Furthermore, he wanted Rome to be visible in its uniqueness and dignity, amidst the influx of nationals from all over the world, by restoring the dress code on the streets and the old legal grouping of social classes in the amphitheaters. The ban on theater singing and ballet was also a reaction against foreigners, especially the Orient, which had sent skilled performers of sensual dance.

This architect, who carried the plan of renewed Rome in his mind and put it into action, also cut through the issue hovering between the emperors and the Senate with his sense of authority, an issue that cost Nero his life and that Vespasian and Titus dealt with gently and courteously towards the Senate. Just as he once lowered the majesty of the people with a word when the audience at the Capitoline games unanimously called for the reinstatement of a senator he had dismissed and commanded the herald to silence them, he also stripped the Senate of its sovereignty and alone appropriated the title of Lord, through which the imperial treasury became lord over all that "flees and creeps" and swims in the sea. Juvenal's story of the enormous sea bream (Satire 4), which a fisherman caught in the Adriatic Sea and brought to the emperor, the sole landlord, in his Alban villa, is again only a poetic specialty, and the whole affair, how the emperor summons the great men of Rome and consults with them whether the bream should be served whole on the table and whether a giant bowl must be made by the potter, is nothing but an invented farce.

237

And this lord, before whom the people and the Senate bowed, to whom the empire belonged and to whom the bordering peoples paid homage, was not only attributed the crown of divinity by his court poet, but also by the peoples who did not understand the mechanism that held the vast empire together, as long as his rule was felt, he was dedicated a form of religious veneration. To the Romans, he is closer as a god and leader than Jupiter (Statius, Sylv. V. 1, 37-38); he is "Rome's Jupiter" (Martial, 9, 28), the thunderer of the imperial palace (ibid., 9, 86), the father of the world, the first and only salvation of the world, the god that the Dacian Dagis is happy to see in Rome, while his brother Decebalus only worships him from afar (ibid., 9, 6, 8, 66, 5, 3). He himself believed in his divine glory and established the formula "our lord and god commands" for the decrees of his procurators in the provinces. Martial introduced the formula into his poetry (9, 66).

However, this glory, as Caligula and Nero had already experienced, wavered as the state treasury dwindled. The games for the people, the armies, and the campaigns had cost a lot, and perhaps Titus's generosity had also somewhat diminished Vespasian's full treasury. Domitian, who initially tried to do without the help of those power-hungry men and had expelled the informants of the Neroan era, was finally forced to use those tools for confiscations and to use the competition of the senators, each of whom feared being left behind by the zeal of their competitors, for his own enrichment. The real reign of terror began in the twelfth year of his reign (93 AD) when Lucius Maximus suppressed the rebellion of Antonius in Upper Germany but also burned the papers of the defeated and thereby left the emperor in the dark about the intricacies of the conspiracy. The following year targeted the teachers and followers of Stoic philosophy and cleared out among the senators who admired Nero's philosophically educated victims and were considered followers of the doctrine of the Hall.

238

The series of victims concluded in the first week of the year 96 with Flavius Clemens.

The emperor had adopted his two sons and designated them as his successors, entrusting the education of them to the learned Quintilian. Clemens had just completed his year as consul (95 AD) when his execution was ordered. Domitian, who sought to restore ancient Rome, saw his work threatened by his closest relative, whose crime consisted of nothing less than the surrender of imperial Rome to the invading East. Suetonius, who failed to appreciate the significance of the decline, says that the emperor killed his cousin "for the slightest suspicion." Cassius Dio, on the other hand, states that along with Clemens, who was executed, his wife Flavia Domitilla, a relative of the emperor, was also banished to Pandateria, citing contempt for the gods as the crime attributed to them and adding that many others who leaned towards Judaism were sentenced to death or forfeiture of their property for the same offense.

238/239

The simple fact as presented in this note was later confused by Christian theologians a hundred years later. They needed early predecessors of their faith, as well as models for their opposition to powerful pagan Rome, and finally prototypes of the endurance in the struggle to which they felt called. Flavius Clemens is the only one who is specifically listed as a martyr for oriental devotion by pagan historians, so it was inevitable that church writers would include him among the martyrs, whom the legend and poetry of the second century had created. In this sense, Irenaeus and Tertullian

transformed the events of the last year of Domitian's reign into a persecution of Christians. Melito, one of those alleged apologists who attributed their defenses to the philosopher on the throne, Marcus Aurelius, and never sent them, is cited by Eusebius as a witness to the Christian confession of Clemens and his wife, and Lactantius (De Mort. Persecut. cap. 3) makes Domitian, following the example of Nero, the second enemy of the Christians, who brought about his own downfall by rising up against the Lord of the Church.

239/240

The newer apologists, no less than their gray-haired predecessors, require a very early prehistory and chronicle of suffering for Christianity, and dare to use only the text of Cassius Dio to prove the Christian character of Clemens and his fellow sufferers, since the accusation of atheism (aðeótytos) made against them corresponds exactly to the charge for which Christians of the third century suffered. However, this reference to later language usage has no greater value than the appeal to the testimony of the early Church for the Christian confession of Clemens. Atheists in the sense of Roman state officials existed even before the proclamation of the Gospel could gain a foothold in Rome. Lucretius was such an opponent and denier of the gods in his poem on the nature of things, and the Romans who embraced Judaism could not have been unaware of the war and ridicule that the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament directed against the gods of the nations. Moreover, Tacitus' usage of language comes to our aid, according to which those who turn to the Jewish way of life are led to despise the gods and renounce everything patriotic (hist. 5, 5).

240

If we free the event of Domitian's last year from the disturbing reflexes that are imposed on it by a later time and diction, the only question that can occupy us is whether the executed Flavius submitted to all the national demands and consequences of the law to which he paid tribute in terms of its wisdom and spiritual discipline. Here Suetonius comes to our aid. He relates that in the frenzy of his last days, Domitian (cap. 12) had the Jewish tribute of a double drachma, which Vespasian had assigned to the Roman fiscus from the destroyed temple of the holy city, collected with the utmost severity and searched for both those who evaded the tax by concealing their origin and those who lived their lives according to Jewish customs without openly professing Judaism (improfessi).

There were therefore adherents of the Jewish teachings who did not submit to all the consequences of the law, above all to circumcision.

Now Suetonius gives us a note that shows that Domitian's cousin was by no means in the mood or state of mind to understand the full activity of the legal Jew. The chronicler of the first twelve emperors recounts that Clemens (Domit. cap. 15) showed the most contemptuous laziness (inertia). Because of this characteristic attributed to him, the man who had just completed his year as consul was not suspected of neglecting any of his official duties. But he was not fully committed to the formalities that were incumbent upon him. When he had finished his daily work, which was not significant for a consul at that time, he devoted himself to thoughtful reflection and contemplation.

241

He loved to be by himself; if he couldn't avoid the court circle, it was evident from his demeanor that he was preoccupied with himself and preferred the company of the quiet people of the countryside who had withdrawn from public life. He had detached himself from the commanding, haughty Roman lords who viewed the world as their prey.

Such silence in the land had existed in Rome since the beginning of the civil wars. Lucretius was their illustrious ancestor. Asinius Pollio's words to Octavian when he urged him to join the decisive struggle against Antony, "Let me stay out of your quarrel and be the spoils of the victor," are rightly called memorable by Velleius Paterculus (2, 86). Similarly, Titus Pomponius Atticus said to Sulla, on his return from Asia, who had been enchanted by the grace, amiability, and scholarly education of the young man and urged him to join the march to Italy: "Stop it, I beg you, don't insist on leading me against those with whom I have no desire to take up arms against you and from whom I only wanted to escape when I left Italy (and withdrew here, to Athens)." Consider in Cornelius Nepos' biography of this man the picture of his kindness, his impartial sympathy for the battling factions of the civil wars, his active demonstrations of love for the victims of party strife, his belief in a human destiny beyond the noise of the forum and the weapons, his consistent abstention from the courts, which he neither took up in his own affairs nor as a participant in an accusation, and you will find that the description of these un-Roman spirits who sought to rise above the historical task of the Roman as the gentle and quiet people in the land is not unjustified.

241/242

Those noble descendants of the old families whom Horace, not without some insistence, urged to rid themselves of the concern about what the Cantabrian or Scythian is plotting, and whom he invited to come out with him onto the grass under the pine and to the Falernian wine and girls, would have looked at him favorably if they did not feel for themselves quite well that the weapons of civil war have entrusted one with the concern for the state.

Among the last victims of Domitian's slaughters was such a political refugee, Herennius Senecio, who had not only described the life of Helvidius Priscus, Thrasea's son-in-law and Stoic opponent of Vespasian but was also suspected because he did not seek any further office after his quaestorship.

242

Clement's father, Flavius Sabinus, who was torn apart by the people on the street after the fire of the Capitol, was also considered sluggish (segnis, according to Tacitus hist. 3, 75) after a thirty-five-year service in civil and military positions; many believed him to be moderate and too sparing in terms of citizen blood, because he did not intervene energetically enough when the balance swung between Vitellius and Vespasian. Perhaps there was a certain inclination towards laissez-faire in the family, which Vespasian, until the gods and legions called him, ennobled in his loyalty and later cleverly used in his intimate and jovial dealings with the Senate and people, which then in the form of dissipation and worldliness undermined and consumed Titus, and which finally transformed into world disdain in Domitian out of dissipation, causing him to be carried away by the autocratic idea of reshaping Rome according to a plan he had designed.

242/243

Clement was world-weary and already lived in his thoughts in that upper world where, according to the final sentence of the first book of Philonic Allegories of the Law, the soul, removed from the body, leads its own life. If this renouncing Judaism, for which elegiac poetry had relocated a school to the fortress of Masada, had not penetrated to Rome itself, its emergence from the mixture of the law with ascetic stoicism was just as natural and inevitable here as its birth in Alexandria from the combination of revelation with the mysticism of Heraclitus. From this mixture, especially in the soul of the world-weary Roman, arose that contemptible laziness which drove his relative Domitian into a rage and which, as Tertullian reports (Apologet. 42), still in the year 200 provoked the ridicule of the world over the "uselessness" of Christians "for business."

243

By the way, Judaism had peace again after the fall of Domitian. One of the first decrees of his successor, Nerva, stipulated (Cassius Dio 68, 1) that "no one should be brought to court anymore for their Jewish way of life."

V.

Trajan and the Emergence of Christianity

1. The Happiest Epoch for Humanity in Roman History.

This is the title of an essay that has brought the admiration for Trajan, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius from the previous century to the present, and presents itself to us as an explanatory guide upon entering a memorable period of Roman history.

244/245

The turning point that came with the transition of power to Nerva and his immediate successors made a deep impression on contemporaries. Suetonius, who still oversaw the reigns of Nerva and Trajan and lived for a long time at the court of Hadrian, laid down his stylus at the end of his biography of Domitian, and since then his Twelve Caesars stand as a group of their own kind compared to all subsequent emperors. The gap between the Julians and Flavians is filled by the merit that Vespasian earned for himself, just like Julius the Dictator and Augustus did, by quelling the civil wars to preserve the commonwealth. And just as Julius sharpened his sword in Gaul to subdue his rivals and obtain the sinews of war, Vespasian stepped in with the laurels of his victory over the Jewish god and with the gold that the cities of Judaea and the treasury of the entire Jewish community of the Roman Empire provided him in the Temple of Zion, amidst the claimants to Nero's legacy. The Julian house established hereditary succession for its members against an envious Senate, and Vespasian frightened the assembled fathers with the threat that if his sons were not accepted, then the commonwealth might as well collapse.

245

The Julians and Flavians came onto the scene as allies of the divinity. Caesar had not yet had the time to thoroughly explore the story of his descent from Aeneas and his mother Venus in his military campaign; Augustus, however, had the leisure to weave the national legend, which Virgil had to spin into a world book with moaning and groaning, into the destiny of his house, in

conjunction with Livia. Vespasian obtained the magic of the Orient, which the unfortunate court poet had to derive for the Julian family from the marriage bed of Venus and Anchises on Mount Ida, with his own hand from Judaea, along with the prophet who vouched for his heavenly consecration. Augustus had written poetry in the ornate chambers of the Palatine, but Vespasian did so among the palm trees of the Jordan land and under the soldiers' tents, where the defector Josephus helped him to prove himself as the Chosen One of the oracle who was to assume world domination from Judaea by holding a trial against the rebels of Jerusalem.

Finally, both houses also have a prince in whom pride in the divine mission of the family and its familiarity with heaven rose to the belief in their own divinity. The Julians had Caligula, the Flavians had Domitian.

245/246

After the Flavian dynasty, there were five reigns of prose, work, and simple rectitude. Gibbon introduces the second chapter of his work on "The Internal Prosperity in the Age of the Antonines" with similar observations to those presented by the deceased Kiel professor Dietrich Herrmann Hegewisch in the aforementioned treatise of 1812. The English historian praises the solidity that the building of Roman power had maintained through the wisdom of the centuries, the bond of laws that kept the provinces together under Trajan and the Antonines, the peaceful enjoyment granted to them by wise governance concerning the religion of their forefathers, and the equality that they enjoyed in terms of civic honors and privileges, with reasonable differentiation in relation to the conquered.

246

The second century was undoubtedly a period of prosperity and comfortable living for the Roman world until the death of Marcus Aurelius. However, a party whose local associations had spread a network throughout the empire from the Euphrates to Spain during the century, establishing leading centers in Rome and Alexandria, Antioch, Carthage, and Lyon, remained untouched by this pleasure and was not moved to abandon the pessimism they inherited from Heraclitus and Plato, the Cynics, and the School of Stoics. Neither the mildness of Trajan nor the gentleness of the pious Antoninus could soothe their irritated mood toward the world state. During the time admired for the philosophical tranquility of Marcus Aurelius, they completed the picture of the downfall that the world was to experience in the blaze of a heavenly sulfur shower and a general bloodbath.

Thus, there were needs and sentiments for which the splendor and prosperity of the century had no appeal, and in describing this era, one must keep in mind the division of the empire into the growing group of dissatisfied

innovators and the mass of admirers and enjoyers.

246/247

At the center of the contented stood the Senate. Just under the last Flavian, it had experienced the precariousness of its position and had silently bowed under the despotism of a ruler who wanted to be a god. With Nerva began the long line of emperors who renounced divine worship, which continued until Marcus Aurelius. The Julian line, in whose veins flowed divine blood, had died out, and in Domitian, the family that brought the consecration of the heavens from the East was exterminated. The next emperors were only private individuals among their peers and had to earn the consecration, which lay in the hands of the Senate after their death, through achievements and accommodating behavior towards the corporation, which still considered itself the supreme carrier of imperial legislation.

247

In this sense, Pliny praises Trajan in his eulogy (Panegyr. cap. 2), that the Senate no longer needs to flatter him as they did Domitian, as a higher being who "is now already a god." He is not a tyrant but a citizen, not a master but a father, and stands even higher because he considers himself one of us and as a ruler, does not forget that he is also human.

It happened by chance that Nerva, who was acceptable to the Senate as a benevolent old man after the fall of Domitian, came from a family that had emigrated to Crete (Aurel. Victor, Casares, cap. 12: Cretensi) and was again represented in Rome. It was by chance that Trajan, whom Nerva called to his side as Caesar in his need, came from a Spanish colony. Hadrian, whom Trajan adopted, was also a Spaniard from his family, and it was not less coincidental that the Antonine house, which gained the paternity of Hadrian through the beauty and virtues of his character, came from the Gallic colony of Nimes. But this apparent coincidence - (coincidence especially in the first friendly greeting of a foreigner in the person of Nerva by the Senate) hit the mark and proved itself in the adoptions that determined the succession, starting with Trajan's.

247/248

The "Epitome" preserved under the name of Aurelius Victor (cap. 11) highlights the significance of Nerva's ascension to the throne over Domitian, stating "until then, the children of Rome or Italy had possessed the imperial rule, now foreigners - evidence that the growth of Rome was dependent on the bravery of foreigners." The thoroughness with which the emperors had

cleared out the old families would have made it impossible to always elevate children of Rome or Italy to the throne. Additionally, the arrival of a foreigner, especially one who was proud of their foreign heritage, had the advantage that all groups and individuals in the Senate willingly submitted to them, since they did not particularly offend any individual pretension. Despite the bloodletting the Senate had undergone after the civil wars, the corporate spirit of the assembly remained unchanged in the replacement members who had taken the place of the previous families, but the rivalry to which every individual believed themselves entitled as equal peers disappeared when they saw that all equals submitted to the newcomer.

248

As it happened by chance that a Cretan ascended to the throne in Nerva, it also happened by chance that the first foreigner called his successor to his side through adoption due to an unexpected emergency, and the custom followed since then, of securing the succession through adoption, contributed greatly to the preservation of internal peace in the empire. The imperial philosopher, who allowed the size of his inheritance to make his son Commodus a useful person, gave up the empire to confusion, in which it fell again to private individuals and foreigners whose own fate or chance paved the way to power. Septimius, the African, opened the procession, and his wife, the Syrian, was the means by which her compatriot and relative Heliogabalus subjected the empire to his eastern god.

248/249

Just as the Senate had initiated the peaceful pause of the following eight decades by voluntarily submitting to a prince before whom envy and personal claims were silent, the foreigners who had obtained the power of Augustus sought to make their rule a permanent balance with the representatives of Roman legislation through accommodation, affability, and pliable behavior. The memory of the previous war between the emperors and the Senate dictated, as the first principle of this balance, the concession of the emperor never to interfere in the judgment of the high corporation over its members. The oath by which Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian confirmed this concession (Dio Cass. 68, 2, 5. 69, 2) was the Magna Carta on which the constitutional government of an eighty-four-year period was based.

249/250

Beside the Senate, there was another lucky group - the people of the capital city. Since the days of Augustus, they had forgotten about politics and enjoyed the luxuries that flowed into the city, formerly a co-ruler with the Senate, from the concentration of the riches and interests of the empire. For the deposed sovereign, the provinces worked and provided him with bread

and support for his helpless or orphaned children. The taxes of the provinces provided the means for the magnificent buildings, baths, and halls of Rome. The people strolled and celebrated in the marble galleries of Trajan's Forum, before which even centuries later Constantius stood still, overwhelmed by the splendor and gigantic idea, during his entrance into Rome (Ammian. Marcell, 14, 10). Greek artists strained their genius to satisfy the artistic sense of the emperors and the curiosity of the city dwellers with sculptures. Rome's elites, in their numerous political leisure hours, were occupied with the poetic chisel and took care of entertaining the public with poems, epigrams, and even lascivious games. Trajan and Marcus Aurelius plunged into military adventures and brought some life and seriousness to the monotonous and fundamentally still insecure relationship with the Senate, while providing entertainment and excitement for the masses with triumphal processions. While the fleets, grain, industrial products of the provinces, and the treasures of India flowed into the Tiber, foreign faces and costumes appeared in the streets of the capital, and the embassies of friendly and subject nations bore witness to the power of the empire. The freedom enjoyed by foreign cults allowed adventurous cults to be presented to the city dwellers in parades and processions. The onlookers whom Ovid invited to visit the synagogues in the Jewish quarter and to see foreign beauties were probably not extinct during this imperial era. Finally, Greece sent the apostles of its philosophical schools more eagerly than ever to the world city, and the loiterers of these schools could enjoy themselves in the halls with their discussions or be entertained by their sermons on the streets.

Thus, during the time of Trajan and Antoninus, Rome was an encyclopedic picture book that depicted the entire world of that time and opened itself up to the idle citizen of the imperial city in dazzling haste.

Meanwhile, the provinces were at work. Britain was filling up with cities, traversed by highways, and came to life through trade and internal commerce. Gaul, which had only provided a weak force for Vindex, in Nero's final year, and was not enthusiastic about the idea of Batavian Civilis to create a Rhine alliance with the Germans, was determined to become Roman, to see its children in the Senate and consular positions, and to compete with Roman literati and rhetoricians. Carthage revived as a center of Greek-Roman rhetoric. Alexandria, emporium of Indian trade and a major industrial city, vied with Athens, which had remained in the tradition of its schools of thought, for the prize, continued the works of Philo, and became the workshop in the time of Hadrian where the combination of Greek wisdom with Judaism and Egyptian mysticism created Christian gnosis. Finally, Asia Minor, whose interior had not yet been successfully Hellenized by the Greeks, had been filled with Greek city-states by the successors of Alexander, but the Romans showed themselves to be masters of administration, providing trade and transportation with roads and security. Along with the flowering of industry, Greek science also found its nurturing in

the cultural cities of this province.

251

Spartianus mentions in his biography of Septimius Severus (chap. 3) one of the omens that prophesied his imperial rule, a vision in which he, serving as a praetor in Spain during the time of Marcus Aurelius, saw the Roman Empire with its capital from the summit of a high mountain and heard a concert of the provinces with singing and accompaniment of lutes and flutes.

This ambitious visionary was tempted by the splendor and vitality of the surface; but as he would later experience on the imperial throne himself, discord and deep discontent worked under that surface, undermining the entire structure.

The Senate could not let go of the memory of its former power and in many dark moments acknowledged that the kindness and condescension of the emperor was only a show in formalities. Trajan's willingness to participate in the Senate's customs could hardly conceal a certain coolness that, in the practice of tradition, only sought to accommodate itself to it as promptly as possible. The energetic rulers of this period also tried, as soon and as long as possible, to avoid the formalities of the capital. Trajan and Marcus Aurelius went to war; Hadrian traveled, studied, and cajoled the provinces. Antoninus, who did not leave Rome during his reign, is an exception, with his angelic calm and cheerfulness that never left him in the service of formality. The later Church called such spirits of devotion and blissful smiles the Seraphic.

251/252

The emperors of this period gained the acclaim of the Praetorian Guard upon their ascension to the throne without making themselves prisoners of their guard through flattering application, continuing the policy of the Flavians. Trajan even allowed himself, relying on an army he had raised himself, to lower the gift to the Praetorians to half the usual price and was able to come out victorious in a bloody conflict with the leaders and troops who had insulted his father's majesty. Dio Cassius relates of him (68, 16) that when he handed the new prefect his sword, he unsheathed it and held it out to him saying, "Take this sword and use it for me if I govern well, against me if poorly!" Pliny alludes to this event when he exclaims in his Panegyricus (chap. 67), "Does this not seem to be his thought day and night: if necessary for the common good, even the hand of the prefect (of the Praetorian Guard) can be turned against me?" However, even from the cold-bloodedness of this risk, one can deduce that blase attitude which dares to cope with a power so daringly authorized and provoked for any eventuality.

252

Neither the "humane" relationship with the Senate praised by Pliny nor the heroic confidence towards the Praetorian Guard could replace the lack of a universally recognized legal title for the emperor. The almighty stood in a void. Everyone felt his necessity, but there was no legal expression for it. His person was an accident, and whether he was good or bad was also accidental. To assert and establish himself, he had to live in a constant tension of his will and inventiveness and stretch his mind almost to infinity. A realm that encompassed the world had to testify to him, filled with his inspirations and creations. He touched the brink of divinity madness at every moment.

252/253

Let's pay attention to how the emperors were reminded of the limits of their power, when the most powerful among them sought to make the infinity of the empire a reality, and we will also see the worm that was active at the edge of the whole. Trajan, who wanted to push the eastern border to infinity, exhausted himself and his army in Parthia, and left his successor with the task of settling for the Euphrates as the border. Marcus Aurelius blunted his sword on the belt of peoples that gathered against the empire along the Danube, and his successor had no choice but to buy peace with these pushers.

253

However, more dangerous was the work of the worm that undermined the empire from within. There was a considerable number of layers that worked beneath the surface and wanted to break through the shiny surface and rise up.

The slaves, half a million in the capital alone, had nothing in the happiest period that had dawned with Nerva and Trajan for humanity. The "Seculum," the century that the emperors considered their glory and Pliny glorified, was not there for them. As for the freedmen, they were proud of their right to be human, and personal independence, not citizenship, was their ideal.

253/254

Tacitus still counted the clients of this "appendage of the great houses" as "good" and conservative elements in his overview of the social classes of Rome after Nero's fall (Hist. 1, 4). Through their connection to the high family corporations, they had a kind of civic support. However, they had long since

lost the frugality and loyalty of the earlier retinue of nobility, and Martial expressed the current attitude of this class in his farewell epigram as a tired client and congratulator who has to pay his respects to his patron early in the morning, when he expressed his only wish (Epig. 10, 74) to be able to sleep in again, that is, to belong to himself.

However, after Nero and Domitian had cleared out the great families, the former clients dispersed among the mass that lived without a connection to a public interest and relied on their own strength for their well-being. This class, which owed nothing to the existing order, provided the self-sufficient and autonomous individuals, the thinkers and innovators, who were brought together by the need for a new connection to each other. From this class emerged the proselytes of the immigrant religious customs. They, the unattached, were the right material for new religious experiments, as a religious message that promised freedom and human rights could also count on the slaves.

254

We have just learned at the end of the Flavian era the circle of people who were dissatisfied with the order and welfare of the Vespasianic era and only longed to feel blissful in communion with their own souls. Dio Chrysostom, who also felt threatened by Domitian's bloody intervention against Flavius Clemens but saved himself by fleeing, writes of him that he "was praised by many, almost by all, as blessed for what he died for". So, it was a matter of great spiritual importance to him for which he suffered.

A few years earlier, a noblewoman, Pomponia Graecina, wife of Plautus, the British triumphator, had died, who at Nero's time was also accused of confessing to an "external superstition" (Tacit. Annal. 12, 32), but was left to the house court of her husband and was acquitted by him. Friends with Julia, daughter of Drusus, granddaughter of Tiberius, she lived in a melancholic mood for forty years since her murder by Messalina, Claudius' wife, and did not take off her mourning clothes during this time. The interpreters have mostly wanted to see a Christian in this remarkable woman, albeit somewhat hastily; but since participation in the Isian service, which one could still think of, was nothing remarkable in society at that time, it is more than likely that Pomponia Graecina, like the Flavians, added a strict soul discipline to her initiation into Greek wisdom through the recognition of Jewish monotheism.

254/255

Thus, the slave quarters and problematic groups of freedmen provided, like the highest social classes, the elements for an orderly crowd, for whom the alleged happiness of this era was misery or a barren thing, which they gladly

gave up for participation in a new spiritual covenant. From them, an army formed that rose up in the heart of the Roman Empire to judge the world.

255

2. The Last Judgment.

Plato gave the slogan for this great anti-imperial and anti-Roman army. This philosopher, who had tried in vain on his political excursions to Syracuse to heal the degenerate democratic and aristocratic elements of his time through a self-invented tyranny, referred the despairing, those who still have eyes and "want to see," upward. The true state, for him, was in heaven.

In the golden age of the Antonines, this supernatural community was the subject of street preaching. Lucian could count on his audience to understand him when, in "Hermotimus," he discussed the possibility of reaching that better world. The philosopher of this essay calls the journey to the otherworldly state "the only matter that concerns everyone who cares about their own well-being, despite the difficulty of the journey. And if our old homeland on this earth tried to hold us back with both hands, he exclaims, if our parents or children even begged us so movingly, clung to us so desperately, and did not want to follow our example, we would have to tear ourselves away from them and embark on the journey to the glorious city. All its inhabitants are foreigners who came from other places, for no one is born a citizen. There one finds barbarians, slaves, beggars, whoever wants to be a citizen and who is not weakened and made feeble by the hardship of the journey."

255/256

The Cynic makes it a little easier for himself when he says goodbye to the world. According to the caricatured depiction that Lucian gives of his settlement with the existing order in "The Sale of Philosophical Sects," he throws his fortune, if he has any, into the sea, doesn't care about house and homeland, and considers everything that people do and value to be nothingness. Even if he still mixes with the crowds, he maintains the posture of one who is alone among them and, through this isolation, demonstrates his royal independence.

256

The Stoic wants to conquer and maintain the royal nature that the Cynic gains in a thorough and uninterrupted work. His soul is directed towards the law and order of the universe; he makes that his own rule of life, expresses it in feeling and attitude, and by making himself similar to the God working in

the universe, his inner being becomes the fortress against which the attacks of the opponents of the world order bounce off.

Lucian gives us a vivid picture in his essays of the busyness of the cynical beggar monks who roamed the streets of Latin and Greek cities and offered themselves to people as guides to a brief farewell from the world's hustle and bustle. The Stoics had their audience in the upper society and invited striving spirits to a melancholic gathering of the mind and to readiness for war against the evil course of the world. But Plato had hit the most popular note for the centuries of imperialism.

256/257

As the founder of the Academy gave the law, which coincided with the change in the appearance forms of the universe for earlier natural philosophers like Heraclitus, the secluded existence of the ideas, he satisfied the general religious need that had already taken offense at the natural explanation of the world's life during the time of those bold researchers and now, after the withering away of the former splendor of the gods, more fervently yearned for a comprehensible afterlife. Nothing could be more welcome to this longing than the separation of the cosmic whole into a realm of the upper ideas and the lower region of sensuality, which receives its shape and fleeting existence from its prototypes above. The satiated and the suffering alike heard the echo of their inner lament when they heard that this world was only a shadow cast by the upper invisible world. The desire for liberation from the anxieties of this life took the proposition that the body is the shackle and prison of the soul as a joyful message. Plato's formula that care for perpetual dying (odvýoxatv ueletav) leads to true life became the solution to the world's riddle, and the art of dying became the affair of this life.

257

Plato's admonitions to refrain from revenge and to strive for a virtuous (tanetvós) life, as well as his warnings against wealth, were never more understandingly received. The persecutions which the preachers of poverty and renunciation had still endured under Domitian confirmed the words of the same philosopher that one who has once glimpsed the city of God above in spirit appears as a fool and out of his senses upon his return to this life. The pessimism which crumbled with the reign of the Caesars is found in the Platonic picture of the position of the wise man, who appears in this world like one who has fallen among wild beasts and is content to keep himself free from the uncleanness of others in a corner. Finally, Plato promised the refugees from this world of shadows the satisfaction that before the judgment seat above, the way to the right and to heaven would be open to them, while those attached to earthly things would be sent to the left and

cast down to the lowest Tartarus.

Slaves and freedmen could hear such inspiring messages daily on the streets and in the halls. But even in the houses of the great, they were not kept hidden from them.

257/258

We can see from the letters of Pliny how friendly and fraternal the relationship of the great men influenced by Greek wisdom was with them. This man of delicate sensibilities, who during his military service in Syria became friends with some Greek philosophers and persuaded them to move near him in Rome, was, for example, completely devastated when illnesses and deaths occurred among his slaves, and said of those who saw only losses in such accidents that he could not call them human beings (Epist. 8.16). At another time, when he was at a stranger's table and a guest drew his attention to the relegation of the household's freedmen, he spoke of the friendly sympathy with which he interacted with his own (Epist. 2.6). However, the great seminar where Greek messages were processed in spiritual intercourse was the women's chamber.

258

The history of the late Republican period and the imperial era presents us with passionate and commanding women. Juvenal portrays how the fury nature of a Fulvia or the cold composure of a Livia had taken on the form of the emancipated woman. The women of the Stoic opposition were ascending heroines, like Arria, who handed her husband Patus the dagger with which she first stabbed herself, saying, "it does not hurt!" or like her granddaughter Fannia, daughter of Thrasea, who lost her husband Helvidius Arche and then her son Helvidius in the war of Domitian against the internal enemies, stood against the latter emperor in court, and, having returned from exile under Nerva, dedicated the last years of her life to avenging her son (Plin. Epist. 3, 16. 7, 19. 9, 13).

258/259

Noble women like Pomponia Graecina and the wife of Flavius Clemens were far from the bitter resentment of these Stoic heroines against the existing order and possessed a higher freedom in their inner lives than these passionate Furies of the Caesarism. Restricted to the interior of their homes, they must have exchanged thoughts with the women in the company of their freedwomen and with their maidservants in the secrecy of the women's quarters, just as Pliny kindly interacted with his freedmen. The intimate

relationship of such high-born women with their serving female surroundings, which would have had equally gifted and high-minded individuals as the imperial palace and, like it, also had people of Jewish origin, was of significant influence on the spread of Asian cults, particularly Jewish monotheism, among the higher Roman circles. While the penetration of foreign thought alienated families from the Roman genius, the servitude of such households was tantalized by the images of a general freedom that had nothing to do with the long-extinguished memories of the Forum. In addition, Roman society was occasionally terrified by outbreaks of rage that filled the slaves against their harsh masters, and bloody punishments like that over the slaves of Largius Macedo, who had murdered their cruel master in the bath, would only have aroused wild emotions in the slave dungeon of Rome.

259

These were the social classes, feelings, and thoughts that undermined the empire in secret. The social sentiment that flowed through the world during the Trajanic era alongside official business derived its sustenance from the need for brotherly connection. The Greek discovery of universal equality and brotherhood had ignited a feeling of love in the two central points of the then world, Rome and Alexandria, under the patronage of Seneca and Philo, encompassing all peoples and the remnants of the collapsed state order. Lucan too has added the idyll of this love bond to his great war song. However, love alone, which desires personal connection and would like to embrace the whole world with equal personal intimacy, does not possess the power to work on and transform the secular order. A powerful social drive, it is of floating nature to create a socialist formula for the organization of its environment. In addition, Plato prescribed the flight to the heavenly state above for souls who care for their well-being and seek community with their true fellow citizens for the next centuries - indeed, for millennia.

259/260

Too weak to build down here, this highly elevated love, whose wings only carry upwards, will give up the dark mass of this world to destruction with zeal and rejection as it feels strong enough in the midst of a crowd of confessors at the end of the Antonine era. Before Marcus Aurelius closes his eyes, it will unfold the image of how the whore Babylon is consumed in the fire of sulphur rain on the seven hills, and the peoples and powers she has seduced from the cup of fornication with words of friendship and alliance will sink into a sea of blood. The "Beast" of the Apocalypse, which we have already learned about as the figure of world power in the section on Nero, will come into the fiery sulphur pool.

260

Now let's see how this ancient pessimism developed under the Trajan and Antonine emperors.

3. The Trajanic Era.

The coincidence that opened the gates of the new era occurred in the following very natural way. Nerva belonged, under Domitian, to the silent circle of senators who were known to tolerate the Flavian tyranny only with reluctance. Dio Cassius claims that he was threatened by the emperor himself and that the conspirators, under the leadership of Domitian's powerful chamberlain, Parthenius, finally turned to him after their offer of the imperial power was rejected by others (67, 15). The fact that he was connected to the murderers is indicated by the fact that the same Parthenius restored him when he was distraught by the rumor that Domitian was still alive and about to take revenge.

260/261

The threatened senators had understood each other. For example, Pliny tells in a letter to Tacitus, in which he asks for a place in his "immortal histories," how Nerva "wished him and the century luck in an honorable letter." In partnership with Herennius Senecio, who soon became a victim of imperial hatred, he successfully carried out an action, and when the convicted man immediately retaliated with the accusation of impiety (against Domitian), he avenged his friend, after which Pliny complained about the half-heartedness of this accusation and the unlawful exemption of his person.

261

The party of the Senate, who groaned for their deliverance, had already agreed on the person of the successor when the blow against Domitian happened within the Palatium. Probably Pliny, who in his letters cites several proofs of his courage towards the Flavian terror regime (Epist. 1, 5. 1, 18. 3, 4), had not been a little active in this agreement. In addition to his age, which made his government only a provisional and a time for reflection on a definitive choice, Nerva's known liberal attitude and the novelty of his family, which had only made a name for itself in the civil service career, spoke for him. His ancestor was that Cocceius Nerva, Tiberius' friend and chancellor, who, in grief over the necessity and exhausting endlessness of the pressure on the old aristocracy, gave his life.

261/262

Pliny once again stood out when it came to clearing up the old ways. The Senate had shouted for joy when news of the murder in the Palatium came.

The images of Domitian in the Curia were immediately overturned, and the Fathers climbed jubilantly on ladders to tear down the reminders of the hated one from the walls. During the first days of this frenzy, the Curia echoed with cries of revenge; but Pliny was not satisfied that only people of minor importance were charged and convicted, and wanted to strike the main blow against Publilius Certus, who had caused the death of the younger Helvidius and had laid hands on him in the Senate itself. He attacked the Senate with his indictment speech and even forced applause, although some had pleaded with him to at least give them, the survivors, some peace, and the majority wished to save the accused. But Nerva did not pursue the matter and did not refer it back to the Senate. Pliny, Arria, and Fannia, along with Anteia, the widow of Helvidius, who had insisted on the right to sue, received as their only satisfaction that Certus lost his position as prefect of the aerarium and his prospect of the consulship, and in the soul-wrenching fear of his persecutor, whom he always believed to see behind him with a sword, tortured himself to death (Epist. 7, 33).

262

Nerva thought like Mucian and Domitian, who had put an end to the Senate's rebellion against Nero's magistrates on behalf of Vespasian. One of his first orders provided for the release of all those accused of insulting the majesty, the recall of the exiled, and the execution of slaves and freedmen who had become traitors to their masters. No one of such people should be accused of majesty offenses against their lords or denunciated by others (Dio Cass. 68, 1). However, he did not want anything to do with a terrorist cleansing of the Senate, and those who returned from exile were surprised when they met at his table one of the most violent prosecutors of the Domitianian era (Plin. Epist. 4, 22). He simply was not inclined to surrender unconditionally to an enraged Senate.

262/263

This weakness, which the transition to the constitutional era was still struggling with, could only be put to an end by the soldier whom Nerva called to his side as his successor in a moment of deep humiliation. In the Praetorium, there arose resentment over the neglect that it believed it was suffering in the friendly arrangement between the Senate and the new emperor. After a year, it finally used the freedom in which the murderers of Domitian were moving around as a pretext to play the avenger of offended justice. Casperius Aelianus, whom Nerva had left in charge at Domitian's downfall, attacked the emperor with his troops and demanded that he execute the murderers. Despite his weakness, Nerva bravely resisted and declared, baring his chest, that he would rather die than stain the Empire and deliver those who paved the way for him. However, according to Aurelius Victor (Epitome, cap. 12), when the Praetorians became even more

heated with freedom after the arbitrary slaughter of Parthenius and his companions, he let them force him to justify their act as an expression of their legal zeal in a speech before the people. But for this humiliation, he immediately called for the avenger. He announced to the people from the Capitol that he was adopting Marcus Ulpius Trajanus as his son; he repeated the same declaration, with the interpretation that his son was now standing beside him as Caesar, in the Senate, and accompanied the same message to Trajan, who was then serving as governor in Upper Germany, with the Homeric verse, "Let the Danaans pay for my tears with your missiles."

263

The soldier who had grown up in the camp since childhood was now able to lead the ship of the new era into the wide open. Four months after the death of his imperial father (January 23, 98), he avenged him on his detractors by summoning Casperius Aelianus and his unauthorized band to himself as if he needed their services, and had them cut down. After his entry into Rome (in 99), he was able to prepare the spectacle, not yet fully satisfied, of the Senate's revenge against the informers, which Pliny (Paneg. 34. 35) described with childlike delight, and to let the rest of them be at the mercy of the sea's whim after their presentation in the amphitheater. Confident in his well-disciplined army, he no longer needed majesty guards, and after he had repeated his father's edict against the acceptance of slave and freedmen denunciations (Paneg. 42), he was able to write to his Pliny, who once had scruples because of a Bithynian case (Epist. 10, 85, 86), "he should not have had any doubts, since he knew his principle very well, to gain respect for his name neither through fear nor terror nor through majesty trials."

263/264

If Nerva was already a subject of admiration for Tacitus (Agricola, 3), because he "mixed the otherwise incompatible essences, principate and freedom," Trajan delighted the senators after his entry into the curia with the "facility" with which he invited them (Paneg. 66. 67) to just reach out and consider the empire a common affair. But when we hear how the fathers secretly admit their powerlessness to each other, the matter takes on a completely different appearance. It already has something depressed about it when Pliny varies the theme before a full senate that the emperor "had commanded them to be free and they would be obedient to his decision" (Paneg. 66. 67). But in private, the language is different; for example, Pliny gives a friend who wants to have many and long letters from him, as Cicero wrote, the meek answer (Epist. 9, 2): "Yes, this fertile talent of the past had a sufficient supply of diversity and richness of themes. But you know the narrow limits in which I am confined, even if I don't say it."

264

Once the Senate had risen to the introduction of secret voting for official elections with the approval of the emperor, and Pliny found himself in a position to tell a friend (Epist. 3.20) that he "could write something about the republic and must do it immediately, as there is less occasion for it now than usual. Everything, to be sure, is under the control of one man, who has undertaken cares and toils for the general welfare; yet, along a salutary, well-regulated middle course, certain activities flow to us like streams from that most benevolent source." A few days later, however, his concern, already expressed in the first flush of enthusiasm, that the innovation would give rise to abuses, had been realized; the ballots were (Epist. 4.25) used by scoffers and jokers as material for pranks, and now he knows no other remedy than that "the remedy, which is too high for the Senate, must come from another." The emperor must help.

264/265

We referred above to the patience with which Trajan adapted himself to the formalities and constitutional etiquette of the assembly of the Fathers, a serious-looking behavior; but the Senate itself gave vent to its enthusiasm for the emperor's friendly devotion in a babble which can only be called childish.,,Happier, the chorus of fathers cried, believe us, believe in yourself! O, we are blessed." These were the acclamations (Paneg. 73-75), which were engraved in bronze and recited with a certain modulation like a litany. They are the "serious songs" (seria carmina. Ibid., Cap. 54), which Pliny opposed to the stage couplets in which, in addition to the Senate's shouts, the earlier emperors were praised. The Fathers now wanted to have the sole privilege of rendering the services to the emperor that, for example, Nero received from the applause of his Augustans.

265

The Senate was more than ever in the hands of the Emperor. The initiative for important or characteristic measures came from him. The inclusion of the youngest children in the lists of recipients of grain was his work (Paneg. 26-28). Trajan continued the foundations begun by Nerva for the upbringing of poor children in Rome and Italy, but on a larger scale. If these foundations of the imperial fiscus were only an increase in the previous system, whereby the provinces had to help with their taxes to combat the impoverishment of Rome and Italy and the decline of their population, Trajan's decree that candidates for public office must be resident in Italy (Epist. 6, 19) was a direct reaction against the trend that elevated "outsiders" to high military and administrative posts, and even to the height of the imperial throne.

265/266

Also reactionary against the sentiment that had particularly gained ground in favor of slaves and freedmen under Nero's and Seneca's influence was his decree that freedmen of a patron whose slaves had murdered him, even if he had given them their freedom during his lifetime, should be subjected to torture. Only a Martial (10, 34) could praise him for his restoration of the right of patrons, whose freedmen had left no will and only an adopted child, to inherit half.

266

Pliny had to sacrifice his own condemnation of gladiatorial games and animal fights (Epist. 6, 34) and his rejection of the spectacles of the imperial era (Epist. 9, 6, 4, 22) to please him, and he had to glorify Trajan's restoration of gladiatorial contests, which Nerva had abolished (Zonaras, 11,20), as a means to inspire the free citizen to the contempt of death and the pleasure in beautiful and glorious wounds (Paneg. 33).

Trajan was astute enough to read the inner discontent on the faces of his senators regarding their political nullity. In addition, there was a rich literature that gave expression to a certain storm in their souls.

However, this storm was directed only against the former tyrants. Pliny had even given it a kind of official consecration. As he expounded in his Panegyricus (cap. 53), the true love for good rulers is shown in the belittling of other rulers; one is indifferent to the good or suspects their sentiments when one is silent about the high criminals; in any case, the most significant merit of our emperor is that one can act with certainty against the bad ones.

Tacitus made abundant use of this freedom and increased the antipathy of his "Histories" towards the imperial system to the horror paintings of his "Annals". Juvenal used the tales from the court of Claudius and Domitian for pointed images, but he rose above the historian of the imperial era through his recognition of the decline of the aristocracy. Pliny himself published a vindictive text for his murdered Helvidius (Epist. 7, 30).

266/267

Titianus Capito dedicated a religious cult to the portraits of Cassius and Brutus in his house, celebrated these heroes of the Republic in poems, also wrote about the final moments (exitus) of the victims of the imperial regime, and obtained from Trajan permission to erect a statue of Lucius Syllanus (probably the last of the Junians killed by Nero) in the Forum (Epist. 1, 17. 8, 12). Cajus Fannius died when he had reached the end of the third book of his

"History of those murdered or banished by Nero." Shortly before his death, he dreamt that he was lying on his couch studying when Nero appeared, sat down on his mattress, took the first book of "his crimes" and read it through, then the second and third, and left. The author interpreted the dream to mean that he would not get beyond the third book (Epist. 5, 5).

267

The upper society of Rome was like this Fannius. The terrifying figures of Nero and Domitian were erected before everyone's eyes. Revenge and satisfaction (ultio, as the title of Pliny's book reads) was the general cry. This tense atmosphere was enough of a sign for Trajan that his attention to constitutional formalities did not fully satisfy people's emotions, and he sought a battlefield to conquer a more sustainable authority.

In his Senate speech (Paneg. 12), Pliny had shown the peoples along the Danube the emperor who would no longer (like Domitian) buy victory with gifts. And hardly had he looked around after his entry into Rome and started his era, than he hurried away from the senatorial atmosphere and began his war with the Dacians, which ended in 106 with the establishment of a precarious Latin colony in the north of the Danube between Transylvania and the Prut.

267/268

The last four years of his life were consumed by the Parthian War. He advanced to the Euphrates, took Babylon without encountering any resistance, handed over Ctesiphon, the winter residence of the Parthian kings; Seleucia fell, then Susa; Mesopotamia and Assyria became Roman provinces; the victorious general, who was celebrated as Parthicus, stood on the Persian Gulf and had a fleet built to sail to India as a second Alexander. Then he was awakened from his dream of victory by the news that the easily won cities in his rear had revolted. Tempted away from all support by the retreating Parthians, he had to make his way back like an incendiary over the ruins of the fallen cities and died exhausted and weary of life in the Cilician port town of Selinus (in August 117).

268

Let us leave the correction of this adventure to his successor and turn to the party that disturbs the peace of the empire more thoroughly than the dissatisfied constitutionalists of Rome. Pliny will acquaint us with the Christians.

4. Pliny and the Christians.

However, the secret that shrouds the first beginnings of the Christian community is so persistent that we cannot even use a testimony that seems to be equipped with all the seals of authenticity with confidence.

The earlier assumption that Pliny began his praetorship in Bithynia, from where he reported to Trajan about his difficulty with the Christian matter in 103, is untenable. In the first letter of the second book of his epistolary collection, he describes the funeral of Verginius Rufus, who, after the defeat of the Gallic Julius Vindex in the last year of Nero, refused the offered empire. Verginius died in 97. Later (Epist. 6, 10), Pliny complains that the monument on this man's grave has not been completed even after ten years. From the 19th letter of the 9th book, we also see that a friend had referred to this note. Therefore, the collection of letters that this friend had in his possession was published after 107, and the last books of the current collection were only later made available to the public.

268/269

Several passages in Book 10 support this view. In the 16th letter of that book, Pliny reports to the emperor (from Bithynia) that a man who had worked for a couple of bakers in Nicomedia and had been held against his will by them had revealed himself as a soldier who had been captured in the Dacian War and given as a gift by Decebalus to the Parthian king Pacorus, in whose service he had served for several years until he managed to escape. Furthermore, letters 13-15 of the same book, which concern the dispatch of an urgent message from King Sauromates of the Cimmerian Bosporus to Trajan in Rome, relate to the time when preparations for the Parthian War were underway. The emperor was concerned that the small rulers in the northeast of the Black Sea, while he was fighting for the maintenance of Armenia's vassalage and seeking out the Parthians beyond the Euphrates, would not cause trouble in his left flank.

269

Furthermore, considering that the man who, in the first nine books of his correspondence, barely achieved any success in court, knew how to gain immortality through his lectures and his poetry, up to his love poems, or in social circles, with no mention of his Bithynian struggles and achievements, we cannot include his praetorship in the period covered by those nine books. All the Bithynian letters finally assume the emperor's stay in Rome, none presupposes his absence in a field camp; therefore, the only time left for Pliny's foreign office work is the period from September 17 (Epist. 10, 28) 111 until the spring of 113. In the autumn of the latter year, Trajan set out

for the East.

There are three characteristic aspects of Pliny's writing that always cast doubt on its authenticity: the notoriety of Christianity and the tension between it and the imperial government, the complete ignorance of the praetor about the previous legal proceedings, and an immoderate glorification of Christianity alongside a blind rejection of it.

270

If Pliny attacks the emperor right at the beginning of his letter (Epist. 10, 97) with the words "I have never attended trials of the Christians," he assumes that the emperor in Rome is already informed about the matter with these few words. Trajan knows that there are Christians, knows what kind of people they are, and knows what to think when he hears the word "trials" about Christians.

Only Pliny, who otherwise boasts of his knowledge of business that "experience" has given him, who exclaims with a certain triumph, "I have often been an advocate, often a judge, often an assessor" (Epist. 1, 20), who also held the praetorship, does not know what the actual subject of the investigation and punishment is and to what extent the latter is usually measured.

To the emperor, as soon as his officer opens his mouth, the matter is clear; the experienced judge, however, is completely unclear as to whether age should be taken into account, whether childhood, being tender, should be treated differently from adults, and whether forgiveness should be granted for repentance. He does not even shy away from the nonsense of the question of whether the Christian name, if it does not include shameful acts, should be punished, or whether the shameful acts that go with the name should be punished.

Nevertheless, he went straight to court. Those who confessed were taken away after two threats of the death penalty (for execution). He did not care about the matter of guilt and simply adhered to the norm he had devised, that mere stubbornness, no matter what the people confessed, was punishable.

270/271

Suddenly the scene changes. He receives an anonymous list with the names of a whole series of Christians. Some claim to have been wrongly denounced, and he believes them, since they inevitably brought their homage to the imperial image, which he had brought in with the images of the gods, with

incense and wine and cursed Christ. Others, however, claimed to have abandoned their faith three, even more, some of them twenty years ago, and were induced to change their minds by his edict, which, as a result of the imperial order, had banned all associations (hetaireiai).

271

What a combination! Trajan had issued that declaration

against all kinds of associations when the citizens of Nikomedia wanted to unite their carpenters as a fire brigade (Epist. 10, 42. 43). But how could this edict have been in effect three, or even more, years ago, or long before Trajan's accession to the throne?

These same people who cursed Christ allegedly began their testimony about their previous "guilt or error" with the words that it consisted of nothing more than that they met early in the morning to celebrate Christ as a god and pledged to abstain from theft, robbery, adultery, and breach of trust in regard to entrusted property. Nothing more, that was all (hanc fuisse summam), which sounds like the triumphant testimony of someone who proudly and with a smiling sidelong glance at the accusation of his faith boasts, "nothing more, that was nothing bad, on the contrary."

Just as this praise for the cause of Christianity is put into the mouths of those who curse Christ, so Pliny himself adds a brilliant picture of the power of Christianity to his most dismissive verdict on the same matter. After that testimony of the apostates (as if something were missing in their clarity and completeness), he considered it all the more necessary to extract more details by torture from a couple of maids who had the name of servants of the community, and found nothing but a bad and boundless superstition, on which he illustrated the danger of the situation with a picture of the triumph of Christianity over the temple service. "Not only the cities, but also the villages and rural settlements were infected by superstition, the temples were deserted, the sacrificial rituals were neglected, and the sellers of sacrificial animals only rarely found a buyer."

272

And had no one in Rome known any of this? Had the current governor no inkling until a few denunciations conjured up Christians before his eyes like ex machina, and does he not say a word about it in his other letters from Bithynia?

Tertullian, at the end of the second century (in Apologet. cap. 1), does make the pagans complain that the city is besieged by Christians, and that the

countryside, fortresses, and islands are taken by them, and that every sex and age, every dignity, and every office falls away from the pagans; but one knows the African declamation and rhetoric of this Church writer. The sober and later Origen, who knew the Orient from experience, expressly says that the number of Christians there is only small.

Johann Salomo Semler, the deserving researcher in whom the critical direction of German pietism, stimulated by English Quakerism, reached its most significant development, declared Pliny's letter, together with Trajan's reply, to be the work of a later Christian who had invented the negotiations between emperor and governor for the glorification of the rising Christianity. (See this scholar's "New Attempts to Clarify the Church History of the First Centuries More," Leipzig 1788.) This work, despite its many stimulating and partly correct points, cannot explain how a Christian could have gone so far as to list whole cohorts of former brothers who, at the first threat of danger, resolved to apostatize from their faith and curse their Master. The incoherence of Pliny's writing can be explained only by the gradual penetration of Christian interpolations. Even Tertullian, who possessed it in its current form, could not refrain from adding to his own summary statement of it (apologet. cap. 2) the note that Pliny also dismissed Christian officials from their posts.

273

We have a great witness for the existence of a Plinian writing on the Christian matter in the time of Tacitus. This witness is the historian himself. When he composed his "Histories" and came to his characterization of the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem, that writing was not yet in existence. However, it was in front of him when he composed his "Annals." He took from it the features for his description of the alleged Christians during the Neronian persecution and the vocabulary "fateri" and "confiteri," which have their proper place with Pliny, but are tossed around in his work between the acknowledgment of arson and the confession of faith. The "detestable and immoderate superstition" (superstitionem pravam et immodicam) that Pliny found among his Christians has been turned by Tacitus into a pernicious (exitiabilis) one, while Suetonius (Nero, chap. 16) referred to it as "new and harmful" (superstitionem novam et maleficam). Finally, the "shameful deeds" (flagitia), which Pliny associated with the name of the Christians, led Tacitus to derive the people's hatred towards them from these deeds (per flagitia invisos). We can consider the brutal certainty with which the Annalist speaks of the Christians' reprehensible superstition as evidence that he found nothing in his deceased friend's Bithynian letter that could have caused him to waver in his stubborn hatred.

273/274

The notoriously late fabrication of the tolerant letters of the emperors Hadrian and Antoninus Pius favorable to Christians justifies our doubt as to whether Trajan's short response letter to Pliny (Epist. 10, 98) has been transmitted safely through the hands of Christians until Tertullian's time. The way in which the emperor approves his childishly inexperienced propraetor's actions and yet later prescribes new measures of mildness and caution is not without suspicion, while the phrase that the consideration of anonymous denunciations is not fitting for the "new era" is consistent with the language usage of the Nerva-Trajanic period. We must, therefore, content ourselves for now with the observation that Trajan's prohibition of visiting Christians and accepting anonymous reports had early earned him the reputation of a guardian angel of the Christians. Tertullian himself says (Apolog. chap. 5) that through the former prohibition, he had partly broken the edge of the laws invoked against the Christians (frustratus est). However, later, a Pope freed him from hell by the power of his participation.

274

Gregory the Great (around the year 600) wept as he thought about the noble deed of the emperor for the honor and redemption of the son of a widow who had been unjustly executed, as he made his way over the Forum Trajan's to the Church of the Apostle Peter. He was so grieved before the altar of his church for the soul of the good monarch that he received a revelation in the night that he would be freed from the torments of Hell because of the power of his prayer, but he must not pray for any other heathen.

On the other hand, it is thanks to his laudable testimony for the Christians that Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus was made a Christian in the apocryphal poetry of the following centuries. According to this, on his return from Bithynia, he met Titus, the alleged student of Paul, on Crete, and after being lost in his belief following the collapse of a temple of Jupiter that he had built, he was baptized along with his son, who did not exist in history, in a church that he had built in honor of Christ. A later Roman martyrology, which lists a Secundus who was beheaded along with five companions on August 6 for his Christian confession, gave him the reputation that he had suffered martyrdom in Novocomum, his hometown.

274/275

As uncertain and contradictory as the individual features are that Pliny uses to create the picture of the first Christians, we owe it to his inquiry of the emperor that we are on solid ground and see the new community before us in the flesh. Tacitus confirms in his "Annals" (in the second half of Trajan's reign) the information of his friend and teaches us with his hateful lines about the feelings with which the old republican society of Rome received

the appearance of a new association. We see from the excitement of the annalist that the new layer, which baffled the friends of the old order, kept itself apart from the ruling and contented classes and did not allow itself to be unsettled by collisions with existing powers. It did not aim at harmony with the course of the world and the regulations of the world rulers, and thus it could not be shaken by the counterstrike of the sacred privileges. Seneca's prize of renunciation and isolation, the struggle that the rhetorical schools of Athens and Rome had waged in the name of the soul and love against the horrors of regulations, and the jubilation of the Cynics at their farewell to the world had penetrated the masses.

275

Let us now wander with Hadrian to Alexandria and try to penetrate the secret there that envelops the birth hour of the new association. Here we will also learn how Judaism, which served as a means for the fusion of Greek wisdom and Roman inwardness, was subjected to a drastic critique by the new birth.

VI.

Hadrian and Christian Gnosis.

1. The Empowered Nero.

Among the five emperors who, after the fall of the last Flavian, allowed the Senate free hand in legislation, Hadrian occupies the same position as Nero in the line of Julio-Claudian princes. Those five had risen above the embittered mood with which the first emperors observed the movements of the aristocracy with the opening of the constitutional era and had acquired a mental tranquility that allowed them to conceive comprehensive thoughts and plans. The first designated the few months of his reign with the establishment of large charitable and orphanages, the second introduced humanity and serenity into the turmoil of domestic politics, the first Antoninus realized the dream of the Stoics of the wise man on the throne, and Marcus, as a human and ruler, had the law of nature before his eyes.

The middle one in this line, Hadrian, was an encyclopedic mind who wanted to gather everything that the empire contained and moved into his inner self. He wanted to merge nationalities, religions, and the wisdom of philosophical schools in his mind and make himself a mirror image in which the noblest impulses of his time merged into a whole.

Nero's imagination was occupied with a similar ideal when he wanted to unite the two halves of the empire, which were still opposed despite the political annihilation of Greece and all the conqueror's eagerness to learn, into a single realm of education and to represent their reconciliation in his own virtuosity. His idea of a humanity above the ancient republic had already shone through the dust of his battlefields to the dictator Julius; the Julians and Claudians after him fought for a future human community in their struggle against the aristocracy, but they still felt and had to show themselves as Romans. And when Nero believed that he could erase the bloody coloring of the previous reigns and merge the East and West of the empire if he appeared as a singer and actor in Greek attire, he brought upon himself the stigma of the un-Roman.

Hadrian was more favorably disposed towards cosmopolitanism. Aside from his talent and training in all aspects of war and peace that set him above Nero, and also aside from a greater maturity of the times for a fusion of nationalities, religions, and schools, he enjoyed the advantage that at the beginning of his reign Romanism was already just a myth that was refreshed in the present only by individual allusions. This was already the case under Trajan. Pliny's letters and his praise of this prince are full of confessions that Romanism was already an antiquity at that time. In Trajan, for example, appears (Paneg. Cap. 11-12) again one of those "ancients" who gained respect among the peoples outside and won the imperial name among the corpses of the battlefields. His victory (in Dacia) is (Epist. 10,9) most ancient, his attitude in the Senate (Paneg. Cap. 61-76) truly consular and ancient. Nothing can be more ancient and sacred than (ibid. 83) his marital relationship with his wife Plotina.

Nerva also praised Pliny's appearance in court as an image of antiquity (antiquis simile) in the previously mentioned letter to Pliny (Epist. 7,33), and Pliny himself honored Verginius Rufus upon his death with the obituary (Epist. 2,1) that he was a type of the olden days.

277/278

While, in the feeling of the time, old Romanism was left behind and left a gap that awaited filling, Hadrian eagerly took up military service from his fifteenth year. Born in Rome in 76, he descended on his father's side, Aelius Hadrianus Afer, from a family that had risen to senatorial rank through his grandfather Marullinus and settled in the Spanish colony town of Italicum, named after the nearby Adriatic Sea, at the time of the Scipios. In his tenth year, he lost his father; Trajan, his relative, who took over the guardianship together with the knight Caelius Tatian, kept a close eye on him during his military service and gave him Julia Sabina, granddaughter of his widowed sister Marciana, whom Pliny (Paneg. 84) cannot praise enough for her pure friendship with her sister-in-law Plotina in the Palatium, as his wife. Under the emperor's protection, he administered the quaestorship, distinguished himself in the Dacian War, became a praetor; as commander-in-chief in Pannonia, he made a name for himself through strict discipline, became consul, then a general under Trajan in the Parthian War, and was a praetor of Syria in Antioch when his imperial relative and patron died in Selinus.

278

Hadrian combined the bravery and demeanor of a soldier with the gift of eloquence. When he gave a speech before the Senate in Trajan's name during his quaestorship, he was mocked for his dialect that had been corrupted by his one-sided study of Greek. However, a thorough study of the

Latin language brought him to the highest level of perfection and eloquence in it as well.

The foundation of his education was Greek culture, and so he was given the nickname "Graeculus" when he entered society, having been nourished and inspired by Greek literature until the age of fifteen. As Aurelius Victor expressed it, he "absorbed the culture and spirit of Athens and not only made their language his own but also their skills in art."

279

He was a master of singing, instrumental music, medicine, geometry, painting, and sculpture.

After his accession to the throne, the court and palace, in addition to the seriousness that the centralization of an active administration spread, took on the appearance of an Athenian school. Philosophers and philologists, rhetoricians and sophists formed a circle of men of thought and language around him, competing with each other to shine before him, and with whom he gladly engaged in a scholarly competition.

On his travels, he had a keen eye for the condition of the provinces and their income. He inspected the military camps from Britain to the Euphrates with the eyes of a military commander and a lower-ranking officer. He, who often marched on foot in full armor or in the garb of an ordinary soldier and contented himself with ordinary soldier's rations, was a teacher of military discipline by his own example. His skill in the use of weapons gave special emphasis to the exercises he conducted in the camps, as if the enemy were nearby.

Aurelius Victor says of him (in the Epitome) that he brought the civil service, palace administration, and military into the form that, with some changes made by Constantine, lasted until the time of Constantius and Julian. In addition to inspecting and organizing the army, he found time on his travels to argue with philosophers and rhetoricians in Athens and Alexandria and compete for the glory of eloquence, accompanied by an army of architects and builders.

His memory served him well in his dealings with army veterans and in his interaction with capital cities, as well as for the overview of the state finances. He had such a precise knowledge of the empire's income that he was compared to the most careful housekeeper (Spartian, Hadrian 19).

His mental capacity was equally powerful. He dictated, listened, and chatted with confidants all at the same time.

280

Hadrian showed the official honor to the Senate by seeking its advice on all important matters, sitting as a judge with them, and participating as an assessor in the proceedings of the consuls. In the city and in the countryside, he always had the first men of the empire around him, dined with them, went out with them, visited sick friends, and attended their festivals (Dio Cassius 69, 7). In conversation, even with the lowest people, he was extremely gracious and did not let those who felt it was beneath the dignity of the throne take away this pleasure of humanity. He was full of playful ideas, rich in witty remarks, one of those princes of whom anecdotes and witty impromptus are told. Inclined to provoke and stir up others, he was also prepared for serious answers, jokes, and pointed remarks. He had his own song ready for a song, his own word ready for a word, everything so prepared in the moment as if he had been ready for such unexpected events (Aurelius Victor, Epitome).

It should also be mentioned that if he incurred just criticism by being too punctual, busy, or moody, he knew how to attract those he had plagued or offended again to himself through evidence of care, sympathy, and nobility (Dio Cassius 69, 5).

One testimony to his humanity is also his legislation in favor of slaves. Thus, he took away the power of masters to kill their slaves and ordered the guilty to be convicted by the public courts (Spartian, Hadrian 16). He abolished the slave prisons (the private prisons of individuals), which sometimes also held free people. The question that had been hovering since Nero's time and that this prince, despite his good will, had not solved, namely how far the slaves were to be punished for the murder of the head of the household, he answered by saying that only those slaves who had been close enough to the scene of the crime in the house to hear the cries of the attacked master were to be subjected to torture.

281

He is celebrated as a master of the lyre, as a singer, or as a judge at the competitions on coins because of his participation in the Greek games, and he is depicted wearing Greek clothing. Another time, his mastery of geometry is celebrated, and the coin that bears his likeness on the front bears his ancestor in science, Euclid, on the back. Greek and Anatolian coins proclaim him as the Olympian, Savior of the World and Savior Zeus. The repeated world travels, in which he exceeded Nero's horizon, earned him the status of that Hercules who traveled the world and bestowed benefits. He appears on coins as Hercules Gaditanus and as the Roman Hercules.

281/282

Nero also entertained the idea of traveling to the far east of his empire. His secret fantasies, as Tacitus calls them (Annal. 15, 36), were focused on the provinces of the Orient, especially Egypt. The Annalist does not tell us what attracted the emperor to that distant land of the East; some modern theologians, who believe that the oracle formed in Vespasian's camp was an ancient legend already spreading in the Orient at Nero's time, suggest that he may have wanted to explore the mystery of the wonderland from where the ruler of the world was to come. From a secular point of view (especially from Friedrich Buchholz in his previously mentioned studies on Roman history), it is suggested that when the emperor's generosity towards his "good" people had exhausted the treasury, he had the idea of investigating the Temple treasury in Jerusalem, where (according to Josephus, *Antiquities* 14, 7, 2, and Tacitus, Hist. 5, 5) the contributions of the Jews and proselytes of Asia and Europe had been pouring in for centuries, for an imminent seizure. The humorous poem, the embellishment of the last months and days of Nero, preserved by Sueton and Dio Cassius, brought into the story the prophecy of his deposition by the soothsayers, but then his domination of the Orient, particularly the royal crown of Jerusalem (Sueton, Nero, cap. 40), or showed him, when he felt abandoned by everyone, finding solace in the maxim, "There's good money in a skilled trade," and resolving to earn his daily bread as a zither player in Alexandria (Sueton, loc. cit. and Dio Cassius 63, 27).

282

However, Nero's anxiety about the East can be adequately explained by the dominant position that Corbulo held as a military commander and diplomat in the eastern half of the empire. The land of the Nile interested him not only because of its importance to the imperial power but also because of its miraculous river, and he had sent out a military expedition to discover its sources, which, supported by the Ethiopian king and through his recommendation to neighboring princes, had penetrated as far south as the point where the origin of the Nile could be divined from an immense lake (Seneca, Quest. Natur. 6, 8).

In this context, Seneca calls his student a friend of research (veritatis amantissimus). Hadrian earned the nickname of the most curious (curiosissimus). He wanted to know and see everything and get to the bottom of everything. It was not enough for him to associate with the masters of the schools in Athens, who had received a centuries-old tradition there; he was just as attracted to that young scholarly city at the mouth of the Nile, where the science of Greece was intertwined with Jewish monotheism and was now also concerned with the interpretation of a new

mystery, the message of the incarnate Logos of Heraclitus and the Stoics.

282/283

As he followed the trend of his time towards mystical wisdom by being initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries and introducing their rites to Rome immediately upon his return (Aurel. Victor. Caesares), he was also interested in a movement of spirits that aimed to merge the divine into a universal unity. This simplification of the heavenly nomenclature, favored by the Stoic system, corresponded to the centralization of earthly power in the emperor. In Athens, for centuries, a series of tyrants and absolute rulers had worked on a temple for the Olympian, as the central deity of Hellenism. Pisistratus started the work, Antiochus Epiphanes continued it, Augustus, in conjunction with friendly kings and allied princes, resumed construction; Hadrian completed it. In the same place, he built the temple of Juno and Zeus Panhellenios, under whose images he had himself and his Sabina represented, according to the explanation of the connoisseurs. In Egypt, he worshipped Serapis, a kind of universal deity that had absorbed Egyptian individual gods and Greek light and salvation deities and assimilated them, and his presence in Egypt is celebrated on coins on which he and Sabina extend their hands in greeting to Serapis and Isis. Coins that attest to the establishment of the Serapis cult in his Thracian foundation, in Adrianople, are evidence that he was propagating the Egyptian idol.

283

He represented the unification of the intellectual main elements of his time in his mausoleum, the Moles Hadriani; Egyptian gloom, Roman seriousness, and Greek elegance are combined in it. His villa in Tibur was also supposed to reflect the universality of his spirit and give a picture of the world as it lived in his inner being in its collection of buildings. The symbols of science, art, and religion, as they were cultivated in Greece and Egypt, were seen here, as he returned from his world travels, to be united. Next to Plato's, Aristotle's, and the Stoa's school halls were the Prytaneum dedicated to Athens' merits, the Serapis temple of Canopus, and even the terrors of the underworld were represented, and researchers believe they have discovered the remains of an Eleusinian mystery stage.

283/284

Recent research among the ruins of Samothrace has led to documents that make it likely that the emperor underwent the initiations there. Accordingly, he would have also included the sanctuary that was worshiped by Philip, the conqueror of Greece, and his Olympias, and which, having been won over by the interest of the Ptolemies, gained the significance for the Hellenic Orient

that the initiations of Eleusis possessed for the western Greek world, in his religious combinations. In addition, he associated with magicians and sought their advice; what kind of religious imagery was thus present in his mind!

284

We now come to the darkest point in the history of the emperor, the gift he made to the world with his new god, Antinous. He himself claimed to have heard from the magicians that an undertaking he was considering would only succeed if someone else sacrificed themselves for him. The historians then tell us that when nobody in his entourage was willing to make this sacrifice, his favorite page, Antinous, who came from Bithynia, offered to do so and jumped into the river on a pleasure trip with the emperor (Spartian. Hadrian 13. Aurel. Victor. Caesares 14).

284/285

The population of Alexandria laughed at the emperor and his grief over the loss of his favorite; his claim of the noble motive that led him to his sacrifice was certainly also fabricated. But where did he get the glory with which he adorned the head of the deified youth? In the conclusion of Apuleius's novel, "The Golden Ass," the high priestess of Isis promises the hero the initiation into the mysteries of the all-goddess, in which "dedication to voluntary death and the gift of a new life are represented and celebrated." But where did the poet of the Antonine era get these formulas, which literally recall the threefold initiations of that hero to the secrets of Christian faith and life? They come from Platonic philosophy and Greek mysteries, which also provided the dress for Christian mysteries. But the cult image of Apuleius is a new, unique religion in which Greek, Egyptian, and Christian elements are mixed together. The most powerful formulas in the initiations that the poet's hero receives are taken from Christian language and testify to the reception that Christianity had among the pagans, who wanted to combine their new and monotheistic monasticism with polytheistic imagery. Thus, Hadrian also wove into the most significant final apotheosis accomplished by imperial Rome through him the motif of self-sacrifice, of which the wisdom schools of Alexandria spoke in its Christian glorification.

285

The monuments that he dedicated to the memory of his deified favorite's sacrificial death in a new column city of Egypt, Antinoopolis, in Mantinea, the mother city of the Bithynians, and in Rome itself, were in line with the mystical direction of the world at that time, and the artists exerted themselves once again to achieve the utmost, as they united the soft forms of the boy, Apollonian nobility, and a dreamy, thoughtful expression of the

countenance in the statues of the youthful sacrifice.

The renunciation and abnegation demanded by Plato and the Stoics stood in youthful beauty and in Greek-moderated Egyptian seriousness at the main centers of the world when, at the same time, the message of the one who had brought renunciation in the form of humility and under the torments of a slave's death spread. It was a question of who would triumph.

285/286

Perhaps we can get to the real motive that led Antinous to his death by taking another look at the mysteries that, according to the descriptions of the ancient historians, prevailed in the interior of Hadrian, despite all his humanitarianism, and were said to have made him and his surroundings unhappy. According to Dio Cassius (69, 3), "his vanity, which desired to understand every art of peace and war, of the prince and the private citizen, would not have harmed anyone if it had not been for his envy, which persecuted every merit, and cost many people their office and some their lives." He is said to have killed Trajan's architect Apollodorus because the latter had once teased him with his paintings in that prince's room. Spartian (cap. 13) calls him "luxurious and abstemious, miserly and generous, sometimes cruel, sometimes kind." And Aurelius Victor (Epitome 14) attributes to him a Proteus-like nature in picturesque expressions that changed with its manifold shape, showing itself in vices and virtues according to its own whim and covering a jealous, melancholic, and lustful disposition with the brilliant appearance of abstinence, affability, and kindness with the skill of an artist.

286

We can probably attribute a whole series of faults attributed to the emperor to malicious exaggeration or gossip. These include the bloody removal of the master of Trajanic buildings, his behavior towards his wife Sabina, who (according to Aurel. Victor, Epitome 14) is said to have recognized his inhumane nature and avoided becoming pregnant to him for the benefit of humanity, as well as his relationship with his aunt Plotina, who, according to Dio Cassius, became interested in him because of their sexual relations and invented the fable of his adoption by this prince.

286/287

The contradictions in his character, which are attributed to him by unanimous tradition, are rather explained by his thirst for knowledge and research and by the gap that the most comprehensive satisfaction, which his position and his own powers of perception allowed him, left in him and could

not fill. He saw everything, could scrutinize everything to the bottom by virtue of his imperial key, knew everything that the contemporary world could offer, but he was not satisfied. Like his Tivoli villa, he brought together all the beauty, functionality, and mystery of his time in his mind, but all his power was not enough to create a unity from it.

287

Both the wealth of his knowledge and experience and the skepticism he held toward accumulated knowledge may have made it difficult for his surroundings to interact with him at times. The wise men, philologists, and sophists of the court may not always have had the prudence of the learned friend Favorinus, who wisely gave in to him in a philological dispute and, when others subsequently criticized him for it, replied (Spart. Hadrian, cap. 14) whether he should consider himself more learned than the person who commanded thirty legions.

Perhaps it was also the unpredictable mood swings of a witty and restless knowledge-seeker that sometimes clouded the relationship between him and his wife. He is said to have said himself that, if he were a private individual, he would have divorced her because of her stubborn and sulky character (Spartian, cap. 10). But she still accompanied him on his travels, was with him in Egypt, where her poetic travel remark was found inscribed on a fragment of the Memnon column. She is depicted with him on the coin that shows their mutual greeting of Serapis and Isis. He dismissed (Spart. ibid.) the prefect of the Praetorium Clarus, his secretary Suetonius Tranquillus, and others from their service because they had lost sight of the respect due to her as empress without his giving them a reason for it. It may also be that the prickly moods of the raving fantasist led his darling Antinous to free himself from the burden of sometimes painful interaction by jumping into the Nile.

287/288

The darkness that shrouds his adoption is also explained by the impression his nature made on Trajan. Despite all the promptness he showed in every official duty and despite his adaptability to the emperor's way of life, which enabled him to prove himself as a drinker even in the emperor's tent, the adoption, which his friends certainly expected at the time of his consulate, did not come. The dutiful, rising man had something carefree in his demeanor and eyes that expressed his certainty of the future and a sense of self that, without being irritating, may not have pleased the emperor. Probably the unassuming carelessness that Hadrian maintained in the Parthian War and in his high position at the time did not make the emperor eager to rush with the adoption. Finally, there was Trajan's emotional decline and his illness, so that it is likely that Plotina, in the last moments of her

husband's life, elicited from him the acceptance of Hadrian as his son or, since it was important to her not to be left alone in a potential succession war, reported the adoption as having taken place on her own initiative.

288

Four generals posed a danger to him, some of them hostile: Nigrin, Palma, the so-called conqueror of Arabia, Celsus, and the enterprising Mauritanian Lusius Quietus. The Senate had them killed in Italy. Spartian (ch. 8) names his former guardians Tatian and Similis, the Praetorian prefects at the time, as those who promoted his elevation to the throne. Therefore, suspicion had arisen that these two worthy and noble men had not only urged the Senate to take action out of concern for him but had also exchanged letters with him about the imminent danger. He was at this moment on a military demonstration on the Danube, where he had immediately gone after returning from Asia. He quickly returned to dispel the impression of the bloody execution, swore his innocence to the Senate on oath, swore that he would only punish a senator with the approval of his corporation in the future, and had all the documents concerning tax arrears that the Aerarium and the Fiscus had to collect for the past sixteen years burned on the Forum of Trajan (Spart. Hadrian, 8. Dio Cassius, 69, 8). He also gave the public the satisfaction that Tatian and Similis were persuaded to make room for others for the prefecture of the Praetorian Guard.

In the Senate, such a fierce hatred had gradually accumulated against him that they wanted to deny him the honor of consecration at his death in 138.

289

His bloody intervention against his sister's ninety-year-old man, Servian, whom he suspected of aiming for the throne during his long illness, may have contributed to the final escalation of that hatred. But the transformation of the legions into a national militia to guard the borders, the abandonment of Trajan's enterprises beyond the Euphrates, and the securing of the Dacian colony through border posts and friendly pacification of neighboring chiefs must have displeased the senatorial class from the beginning of his reign. His orders for the reform of administration and justice in the provinces also contradicted the interests of the families who still loved to see provincials as servants who worked for them and accumulated treasures.

2. Hadrian's letter on religious syncretism in Alexandria.

We would have one of the most interesting testimonies about the

philosophical and religious ferment from which biblical Christianity emerged if the letter Hadrian is said to have written about his observations in Alexandria proves to be genuine. We owe the document to Flavius Vopiscus, who includes it in the biography of Saturninus as evidence of the fickleness and unreliability of the Egyptians.

289/290

"Hadrian writes to the consul Servian, husband of his sister, whom you praise so highly, that I have studied Egypt thoroughly. Its inhabitants are frivolous, fickle, and inclined to innovations at the slightest rumor. Those who worship Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves bishops of Christ are in fact worshipers of Serapis. There is not a Jewish synagogue leader, a Samaritan, or a Christian presbyter who is not an astrologer or quack. Even the patriarch, when he comes to Egypt, must show his respect for Serapis to please one party and for Christ to please the other." After mentioning the astonishing activity of the Alexandrians in industry and manufacture, the author of the letter continues: "They have only one God, whom the Christians, Jews, and all the peoples of Egypt worship."

290

The latter remark presents no difficulty. Pliny speaks at the beginning of his Natural History (2.5) of the changing and diverse nomenclature of the divine world, in which humanity apotheosizes the benefits and achievements of its own benefactors and promoters. In the midst of this conjectural world, the encyclopedic scholar continues, mortal humanity "has discovered a middle divinity that is in everyone's mouth all over the world, at all times and in all places: that is, Fortune. She alone is called upon, she alone is accused, held accountable, praised, blamed, and worshiped with insults." What the philosophical doubter of the Vespasian era calls the deity who lives in everyone's thoughts all over the world, in the letter of the disgruntled skeptic is a little cruder: the material gain, the money, and in addition to the exchange of worship among the religious parties, a separate matter.

290/291

The patriarch who occasionally came to Egypt had to reside in the vicinity, that is, in Judaea? Was it the head of the Sanhedrin, which had been re-established in the province after the Flavian destruction of Jerusalem? But was there in Egypt a direction with which he could fight and yet amalgamate? Let us leave the worship of Serapis aside for the moment and look instead into the seething cauldron in which Mosaism united with the wisdom of Greece, and the enthusiasm of Philonic visions of the salvific Logos was kindled! Anticipating the result of our later discussions, according

to which these visions of the mediator were embodied in the belief in the God-man and the Jewish-Talmudic formulas of the Messiah owe their origin only to the contact and conflict between the synagogue and the Christian community, there was an important matter in which the synagogue of that time could and did learn from the spiritual ferment at Alexandria.

291

Something closely related to the exchange of salvation gods mentioned in Hadrian's letter, we will soon encounter in Christian Gnosticism. It is the recognition of a common element that has manifested itself in different forms and names in paganism, Judaism, and Christianity. What the seventeenth-century Christian Enlightenment called indifference towards churches and creeds, in the second century manifested as indifference towards religions.

The imperial traveler certainly heard from the scholars with whom he conversed in the lecture halls of Alexandria, men and sects who grouped all religions as elements of a historically connected development in their systems. The masters of the schools of learning probably did not refrain from sarcasm against the half-pagan, half-Jewish, and half-Christian innovators at the pinnacle of their historical constructions, and the emperor, who had been irritated by the activity and intellectual fever of the commercial and learned city, would have taken pleasure in portraying the religious confusion of the schoolmasters there even more crudely. After all, the Alexandrians had even allowed themselves, as Servian had probably assumed based on his assumption, profane mockery of his new god Antinous. Hadrian, who devoted special veneration to Serapis as the god of immortality and eternal judgment, could not think otherwise than that the religious reconcilers had that god in mind as well in their combination of all the godly circles.

291/292

Thus, properly understood, the letter corresponds completely to the time and local color of Alexandria at that time. Vopiscus took it from the writings of Hadrian's freedman, Phlegon, who had written a universal history from the beginning of the Olympiads to the fourth year of Antoninus Pius. Only one circumstance still complicates the decision. The letter was written soon after leaving Egypt, so at the latest in early 133; in the same letter, however, the emperor complains that the Alexandrians, despite their expressions of gratitude for the privileges granted to them, allowed themselves all sorts of mockery of his son Verus after his departure, while this man was not adopted by him until at the earliest in the year 135. Does this addition come from the compiler Phlegon or from a later copyist? That is the question, the answer to which, however, regardless of how it turns out, cannot disturb the harmony of the document with Hadrian's time and state of mind.

292

3. Jewish Uprisings and the Age of the Messiah Image.

We know very little about the Jewish uprisings that troubled the last years of Trajan's reign, or the war that broke out in Palestine after Hadrian's Egyptian trip and visit to Syria.

The rebellion under Trajan spread across Cyprus, Egypt, and Cyrene. The local Jews rose up against everything Greek or Roman. Dio Cassius (68, 32) is very generous with numbers and estimates the victims of Jewish hatred at half a million. Lusius Quietus is named as the conqueror of the insurgents.

292/293

Remembering that Josephus wrote the first edition of his History of the Jewish War in his native language to inform his compatriots beyond the Euphrates who followed the fight for Jerusalem with interest, we can hardly doubt the scope and violence of the uprising. As it had seemed to happen in the last months of Nero and during the internal and external unrest of the following two years around Rome, it seemed again now that the uprising of cities and peoples behind Trajan, as he planned adventures in the Persian Gulf, signaled the end of Rome. The hope of revenge against the armies of the Capitoline God ran through the Jews from their colonies beyond the Euphrates to the settlements on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean. In any case, the Jewish communities of Mesopotamia participated in the uprising of the local cities, and their actions and connections with the West gave their local brethren the signal for their participation.

293

Hadrian, who, as his care for the pan-Hellenic Zeus and Serapis cults shows, was interested in the monotheistic echoes in foreign religions, must have had serious reasons when he struck a blow against the remains of Jerusalem before his last Syrian excursion. He turned the holy site into a Roman military colony; on the Temple Mount, he erected a sanctuary of Jupiter Capitolinus, next to whose statue he had his own image erected. The name of this city was changed to Aelia Capitolina, and the Jews were forbidden to enter it. According to Dio Cassius (69, 12-14), this arrangement was the cause of the war that broke out after Hadrian's departure from Syria. Spartian (Hadrian. cap, 13) claims that the ban on circumcision also caused the tumult, a note that cannot be confirmed by citing Digesta, lib. 48, Tit. 8, 11, as the provision of Antoninus Pius, which allowed Jews to circumcise only

their sons but considered circumcision of adherents of another religion as castration, does not invalidate a supposed prior ban by Hadrian, but only sets limits on the admission of proselytes.

293/294

Dio Cassius is again very generous with his numbers, counting hundreds of thousands and even more as victims of the Jewish attacks and battles, hunger, and disease. He describes fifty fortresses and over a thousand significant settlements being set on fire in the long-desolate land. The Talmudic books turn the city of Bether, where the war that erupted around the end of 133 ended due to starvation, into a wonder city that housed an infinite number of people. However, this was only a guerrilla war, which surprised the governor Tinius Rufus in his scattered quarters, and which Julius Severus, summoned from Britain, put an end to by holding his forces together and destroying the individual enemy bands.

294

The only thing that interests us about this war is an act described in the Talmudic writings. It is the naming that Rabbi Akiba gave to the leader of the uprising. Originally, he was called Bar-Cosiba, but when the rabbi saw him, he immediately recognized him as the "messianic king" who would liberate his people from slavery, and gave him the name Bar-Chochba, "son of the star," based on Balaam's saying (Numbers, chapter 24) about the star (Cochab) that would rise in Judah. The Talmudic legend speaks as if there was already a long-standing image of the Messiah in the synagogue, with his features and attributes so firmly established that a hero could be immediately recognized by a connoisseur as the true son of the star and acknowledged by the people as such.

The question of whether the synagogue had long possessed such an image includes the other question of whether the authors of the Gospels worked according to a similar model.

First, I answer that Rabbi Akiba, with his miraculous vision, was himself modeled on the evangelical John the Baptist, who, at their first meeting with Jesus, recognized and admitted that he was the higher and promised one, to whom he was not worthy to loosen the sandals.

How? The son of the star after the son of man, the introducer of the former after the precursor who cleared the way for the latter?

But where did that apostate king of the Talmudic books, that Niktin come from, whose daughter Jochanan ben Saccai saw gathering grains of barley

for food after the fall of her house under the hooves of horses, and whom Graetz (in his History of the Jews, 4, 25) lists outright under the name Nikodemus as a person in Talmudic history?

294/295

From the fourth Gospel of our canon, he became known to the Jews, and they punished him for his association with Jesus by destroying his wealth and leaving his daughter in such a state of degradation that she had to pick up food from the dirt of the streets. However, this Gospel and its Nikodemus only appeared in the world during the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

295

And where did the life story of the aforementioned Johanan ben Saccai come from? According to Grätz (in his history of the Jews, vol. 4, ch. 11), as recounted faithfully in the Talmudic writings, during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, he belonged to the peace party and tried to persuade the Zealots to surrender the city. The besiegers learned from spies that he was a friend of the Romans, and when he, out of fear of the fanatics, had himself taken out of the city in a coffin, Vespasian kindly received him and was fully won over when he prophesied, based on a saying of Ezekiel concerning the temple, that he would ascend to the imperial throne.

If, as Grätz takes from the Talmudic sources, this Johanan only worked for one to three years in Jamnia, where Vespasian is said to have allowed him to open a school, and then disappeared, the source of his biography only came to light long after, since those details are literally contained in Josephus's accounts of the Jewish War and his own life. The "bad turncoat" had to come forth with notes about his relationship to the Romans as far as the time of Domitian before the biographical image of the true turncoat could be formed.

295/296

At the outset of my investigation of the Gospels (see the essay on "The Messianic Expectations of the Jews in the Time of Jesus," Supplement to "Critique of the Evangelical History of the Synoptics," Vol. 1, Leipzig 1841), I freed criticism from conformity with theological apologetics, which had turned its fight with the former into an unproductive squabble. According to Hengstenberg and the earlier advocates of the theory of revelation, the content of Old Testament prophecy and the Gospels is the same, and the life and work of Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecy. On the other hand, the secular metamorphosis that this belief underwent in the Enlightenment at the end of the previous century invented a dogmatic Messianic image that united the scattered drafts of a favorable turn in the fate of the Jewish people

in the Old Testament and under whose influence Jesus himself and the later tradition of his life stood. Strauss, the secular Hengstenberg, popularized this view when he made that Messianic image into a mask that Jesus himself had to wear, upon which the legend completely covered his historical face.

296

The Enlightenment thinkers who invented this Messianic dogma around the year 1800, partly borrowed from the Talmud, and presented it as the original of Christianity and the evangelical history, appealed to a Chaldean paraphrase of the prophets, which was said to have come from Jonathan, the son of Uzziel, according to the Talmud, a disciple of the elder Hillel. Even scholars of the modern synagogue who, like Zunz in his book "The Liturgical Readings of the Jews," would like to secure the venerable appearance of antiquity for the public interpretation of the prophetic writings, refer to that paraphrase as evidence that "even before Jonathan, the content of the prophetic books was explained to the public."

Indeed, in this translation, the "Messiah" appears as a finished image, and in places where it understands them as allusions to the promised one, it expressly notes, "Here the Messiah is spoken of." But when passages that belong to it are quoted in the Talmud, it is always done with the note "as Rab Joseph translated"; twice this citation formula even receives the reinforcement, "if we did not have his translation of this passage, we would not know its meaning."

296/297

The figure of Jonathan, son of Usiel, fades away before the power of the Talmudic citation formula "as Rab Joseph translated it", and if Zunz (see above, p. 63) wants to revive the shadow of the last pre-Christian century against the reality of the year 300 AD, when Rab Joseph is said to have flourished, through interpretation, those passages of the Chaldean paraphrase were cited in the Talmud "from Jonathan to Rab Joseph", we would be faced with a wonder unique in scholarly history. A leading and epoch-making work, which is said to have dominated the circles of the synagogue for four centuries, would only have come before the public under the name of another person who happened to cite it after this period. In addition to this enormous miracle, we would also have to accept the equally adventurous one which the well-known passage of the Talmud wants to persuade us of, namely that the fabulous Jonathan pre-existed centuries before his birth and before the times of the elder Hillel and received his translation from the mouths of the prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

297

I will not counter the result of my two-time revision of Gospel criticism with the Jonathan fable of the Talmud and the even more adventurous fictions with which Protestant Enlightenment and Zunz want to make it acceptable to the rationalism of the modern era, according to which the authors of the Gospels, in the spirit of the new community and with the power of their view of the incarnate Logos, conquered the Old Testament, which they used to decorate their image. Rather, the statement that the correspondence between the Old Testament and the fulfillment is a work of the Christian community and its speakers should emerge as the overall result of this work.

297/298

Also, the statement that the new community, far from looking at Strauss's holy tablet and its image of the Messiah, rather revitalized the sayings of their old books for the Jewish circles and made them familiar in dispute and argument with the summary image of a Messiah and created the nickname "son of the stars" for the leader of the uprising at the time of Hadrian according to this image, may only receive its confirmation through that overall result.

298

For now, I will only remind you of the power and certainty with which the author of the proto-Gospel of Mark, reconstructed from the Gospel of Mark, proceeded in the plastic processing of Old Testament types, so powerfully that he did not need to refer to later writers, notably Matthew, about the correspondence between prophecy and fulfillment. I will now proceed to describe the mental process by which the new community gained the strength to concentrate the Old Testament for the image of their founder.

4. The path to the gospel.

At the time of Hadrian's death, we come across a milestone that shows that we have been moving in the right direction towards the Gospels from Seneca and his Greek predecessors. This milestone is a gospel document that the Gnostic Marcion had in his possession and cited when he set up his "Antitheses" of the Law and the Gospel. Born in Sinope and coming to Rome, he was won over by Cerdon for the doctrine that the law and redemption come from two gods, whose opposition and struggle were decided by the God of grace in the mission of Jesus against the God of justice.

298/299

Tertullian, who published his treatise against Marcion sixty to seventy years

later, had a copy of his gospel document in front of him but was so convinced of the apostolic origin of the recently completed canonical collection of Gospels that he could only explain the brevity of that document, which forms part of the present Gospel of Luke, as a deliberate mutilation of the latter. His view became dominant, defended in detail two centuries later by the church father Epiphanius, whose polemical arguments provided us with a series of new insights into the shape of the supposedly heretical gospel document, and persisted until the end of the last century.

299

It was only Johann Salomo Semler, whose insightful vision had unraveled many important parts of the history of early Christianity, who discovered (see his German edition of Thomas Townson's treatise on the Gospels, part one, his epoch-making preface "On Marcion's Gospel," Leipzig 1783) that Tertullian's polemic against the crime of Gnostic forgery was just passionate declamation, and that Marcion had used a shorter version of the Gospel of Luke because he had no other available to him. The fiery African achieved nothing with his invective except that we can now form a fairly complete picture of a Gospel that emerged in the last days of Hadrian from his accusations.

Gnostic antipathy had not led Marcion to mutilate the present Gospel of Luke, for his alleged extract consistently testified to the connection between redemption and economy and the God of the Old Testament. Nor had any resonance of the short original Gospel with his Gnostic visions led him to prefer them, for they offered him no confirmation for any of his formulas about the war of the gods between the author of the law and grace.

The Tübingen School of Theology, which took up Semler's discovery around 1848, abandoned the attempt to secure the old Halle researcher's find after a few years, not only because doubt about the age of the present Gospel of Luke could eventually have had dangerous consequences for the Church, but also because they could not find their way in the definition of the difference between the original version of the Gospel of Luke and its current revised form with their criteria of the Jewish-Christian and Pauline, which had led them to get lost in their current labyrinth.

300

However, let us leave aside the formulaic nature of theological criticism for the moment and rather orient ourselves towards the milestone that marks an important stage in evangelical historiography. The statements of Platonic-Stoic renunciation of the world and Seneca's elevation and completion of the law, which the original Luke of Marcion fused with the Urevangelium, found further development by later evangelical authors, which is preserved in the

Sermon on the Mount of the Gospel of Matthew, but not in its original form, already distorted by misunderstandings for which the compiler of the current Gospel of Matthew is responsible. In addition, the Gospel of Luke, as well as that of Matthew, has a childhood story that roots the Gospel in the past and allows the child, to whom the world's rule belongs, to withstand the machinations of earthly world power. The conclusion is formed by the fourth Gospel with its daring incorporation of Platonic-Philonian formulas into Christian historiography and with its continuation of the world of miracles of the earlier Gospels to the ultimate extreme.

If we do not need more than 20 to 25 years for the development of this later historiography, which is established after the discovery of the Marcionite milestone, then the same period must have been necessary for the attempts to shape the Urevangelium and to develop it up to the original core of the Gospel of Luke. Therefore, 50 years for evangelical historiography in general - a period that is given and necessary and possible only in the history of all nations for the classical period of works of language and the visual arts. At the end of the series, the fourth Gospel forms the transition into the apocryphal, the artificial, and the exaggerated, into which the development of art in all areas tends to degenerate.

300/301

The interested reader who has journeyed with me through the Neronian and Flavian ages and observed the works of this time for a new world of faith will also find it historically justified that I completely deviate from the previous derivation of Christianity from an exclusively Jewish development. Until now, the prevailing assumption in the Gospels of the Jewish origin of Christianity has been so firmly established that even secular scholars still adhere to it, at least in the form it had around the year 1800 before the Christian Enlightenment and now received by newer Jewish scholars, according to which the core of Christianity is developed from the wisdom of the national schools of Palestine in the last century before Christ.

301

However, neither the alleged Hillel, who was said to have been born around 112 BC in Babylon, descended from the line of David, and had become the head of a school in Jerusalem, nor his dispute with his opponent Shammai, who knew nothing of any development of the Law, could offer any satisfaction to the Greco-Roman world, based on the samples which the Talmud claims to be able to provide of the Babylonian's sayings.

What value could the few worldly rules of prudence, which Talmudic Hillel and his successors put forward, have had for Greeks and Romans who

possessed a treasure of wisdom in the insights of their philosophers, in the maxims of Greek tragedy and Attic comedy, in the teachings of Cicero, and in the sayings of Seneca, which engaged the depths of the soul? It is much more certain to assume that the weak approach to a morality beyond external legalism, which can be found in some Talmudic sayings, stems from the contact and conflict with the new Roman and Alexandrian tendencies. However, the decisive fact is that there is nothing in the sayings of Hillel and other supposed fathers of the Talmud about what the Greco-Roman mind sought and demanded from Plato to Seneca, namely, the salvation of world-renouncing, and fleeing from this world.

302

The new, whose birth and formation can be traced from the beginning of the first century to the end of the second, emerged from the union of Judaism and Greco-Roman wisdom, but the former was given, as it were, the skeleton, while the soul of the new creation came from the West.

The two main workshops where the fusion of the Orient and the Occident took place were Alexandria and Rome. In the former, Judaism was enriched by a combination of the Platonic world of ideas and the Heraclitean logos, and the fleeting theophanies of the Old Testament were given a personal and lasting bearer in the rising and falling logos of the Ephesians, which embodies the unity of the Most High and humanity in itself and enters the human soul. It suffices to recall the attributes of the logos in my work "Philo and Primitive Christianity" (Berlin 1874), where it is described as the bread of life given to the soul to eat, the butler and steward of the divinity, and the one who offers himself to souls as refreshing wine in his unadulterated power.

302/303

In Rome, Judaism provided an absolute support to the monotheism which philosophy had known since its transformation from natural philosophy to the mythological world explanation of Anaxagoras and Plato, and through the idea of divine law, it provided a solid rallying point for Greek wisdom, which subjected the fullness of moral rules and principles to an unchanging norm. Here it had a crystallising effect and the rich life elements arranged themselves in the soul, into which it entered as a ferment, under a commanding unity. Doubt, which had long since accomplished its work on the divine world since the intervention of the Stoic and Epicurean schools, received a strict confirmation, and the Christian apologists of the second century no longer needed to invent a new turn against the old gods. The ego, which had been pulled out of the state religion and out of all politics, and above it, the commanding legislator, now formed the only content of the world, and they had to see how to reconcile with each other.

303

We learn from Horace how many Jews Rome had from the educated world even in Augustus's time when he (Serm. 1, 9, 69-72) tells of a friend who rushes past him and will not stop to talk, shouting as he runs that today is a special Sabbath and whether Horace also wants to give up ridicule of the circumcised. "I have no religious qualms," answers the poet, and he: "But I, I'm a bit weaker, one of the many."

Horace also refers to the success of Jewish proselytizing when he (Serm. 1, 4, 142-143) ends a dispute about rules of life with a reference to the majority, which is on his side, and with which he hopes to draw his friend into his swarm, like the Jews.

And the same Horace became a convert. He, "the careless worshipper of the gods, the doctor of a ridiculous wisdom," was struck by thunder out of the blue (Carm. 1, 34) and decided to "convert and start his life anew from the beginning." As evidence of his change of heart, he paraphrases the saying that God humbles the high and exalts the low, that saying of Aesop in response to the question of what Zeus does (Diogenes Laertius 1, chap. 3). But the penitential song of the poet sounds as if he had heard the chariot of Jehovah's cherubim rolling.

303/304:

Suetonius tells us of a Christian-tinged riot of the Jews in Rome that led the Emperor Claudius to expel them from the capital. The Chrestus through whom they (Suet. Claud. cap. 25) were incited to unrest, according to the meaning of the imperial chronicler, can be none other than the Lord of the Christian community, since Chrestus (the Kind, the Good) not only occasionally takes the "i" sound as a Roman name (compare Chrestus, Chrestillus, Christilla, Christina, according to Martial's well-known epigrams), but conversely, according to the testimonies of Tertullian and Lactantius, the names Christ and Christian often received the "e" sound. However, the entire banishment edict of Claudius is struck from the realm of history by Dio Cassius' sensible report (60, 6), according to which the emperor, after the expulsion measure of Tiberius carried out a quarter of a century earlier, saw the Jews in Rome increase again to such a great number that they could not be driven out of the city without causing unrest, which is why he did not expel them outright and only prohibited the assemblies commanded by their law. Suetonius had only learned of the existence of the Christians in Nero's Rome through Tacitus' annals and believed he was justified in assuming that the blow that struck the Jews under Claudius was brought about by the agitation of the new sect founder and ended with the expulsion of the foreign people, by the bloody Christian execution after the fire of Rome. Faced with Dio Cassius' report and Suetonius' dependence on the late Neronian saga

cycle, we cannot attach any weight to the note in the biblical Acts of the Apostles (18:2).

304/305:

Indeed, Romans and Roman women who resembled that friend of Horace brought a new life into the Jewish circles of the world city, but the turmoil they ignited took place only internally and only took on its later Christian form after the internal conflagration broke out into flames at the court of Domitian. The Romans, who had learned from Seneca to turn inward, examine its faults, and raise their rules of life to an ideal extreme, sacrificed their national gods to the newer wisdom and took from Judaism its monotheism and ideas of the law in order to join the experiences and rich emanations of their souls at this point of unity. But they also brought into this crystallized world Seneca's image of the One Fulfiller, who offers himself as a sacrifice in the suffering of the world and lightens the burdened and invites them to himself. And those Romans who, in the rhetoric schools, allowed their national law, the twelve tablets, to be mastered by the higher power of need, soul, love, and nature and took from the monotheistic law the focal point for their new divinations, would they have been ashamed to measure the statutes and customs of their Jewish teachers by the inwardness they brought from the schools of their native and Greek masters?

305

Thus, the world of commandments of the Old Testament found its criticism among those who clung to its monotheistic fundamental idea.

Meanwhile, in Alexandria, a similar liberation from the law had taken place. As we can see from a warning from Philo, there was already a party in the Jewish circles there that, after grasping the inner meaning revealed to them by the allegorical interpretation of the law, considered itself emancipated from the literal wording of the commandments. For example, Philo speaks of those who, like himself, saw the commemoration of the power of the Uncreated and the divine guarantee for the continuity of the Created in the observance of the seventh day, but saw nothing wrong with doing weekday work on the Sabbath, satisfied with this interpretation. And there were those who, like him, interpreted the commandment of circumcision as liberation from desire and all passions, but declared the observance of the letter of the law unnecessary. Although Philo disapproved of this one-sided adherence to the inner meaning and believed that one must preserve the letter of the commandment together with it, as both together form a whole like body and soul (Migration of Abraham, p. 402 of the Höschel's edition), there were still many free thinkers who took his spiritualism seriously, threw away circumcision and Sabbath rest as outdated things, and were unlikely to be moved by his careful admonitions to turn back.

306

With his image of the One who must rise and fulfill the entire destiny of humanity, Seneca had given to the Roman circles who were friendly with Judaism during the time of Domitian a view that they could not derive from the Old Testament scriptures or revitalize them with new features. The paintings of the prophets of an eventual triumph of the chosen people were too nationalistic to free a Roman from his "anxiety," and the pronouncements of a seer to a distressed ruler or the glorious images of a psalm about the splendor of a royal Jehovah worshipper referred too clearly to a distant past for anyone to see in them a picture of the future.

Instead, in Alexandria, on the other side, which worked for the idealization of the past, the rigid elements of the Old Testament were transformed into visions in which the present and all the future were announced. Here, the material was prepared with which the Senecan image of the One who would fulfill humanity could be filled, individually shaped, and brought down to earth. Here, Philo, through his allegorical interpretation in the letter of the law and in the experiences of the forefathers as well as the lawgiver, demonstrated the Heraclitean and Stoic Logos as the ever-present Revealer, Comforter, and High Priestly Mediator between Being and the soul.

306/307

Here, finally, there was a circle of hermits near the commercial and learned city, who also engaged in the allegorical interpretation of the law in their gatherings and were inspired by the wisdom of their teachers. Their devotion, about which I reported in my treatise on Philo after his essay on "the contemplative life", is described as a state of intense mysticism. Surely the allegorical interpreters, who portrayed to the assembled members, both men and women, the appearance of the Logos in law and history, would not have failed to present him to the congregation as near and present. The round dance and choir singing of the women and men on the main festival after seven Sabbaths, and at the end of the festival the intertwining of both choirs in a common jubilant dance, was to depict the exodus of the ancestors from the house of bondage and the misery of Egypt; will this liberation not also symbolize their departure from the misery of the world, will not the helpful Logos also have been hovering before their eyes at this celebration?

307

The church historian Eusebius, a contemporary of Constantine the Great, saw in the Therapeutae, as the members are called in the Philonic essay, members of that Christian church which, according to the legend that was formed towards the end of the second century about the authors of the Gospels, was founded by Marcus in Alexandria. Jerome allowed Philo to

benefit from the merit he had earned for "praising" the first community in Alexandria, and included him in his catalog of ecclesiastical authors. When the founder of historical criticism, Joseph Scaliger, had demonstrated the mistakenness of Eusebius's view, scholars in the 17th century divided in their opinions, and some, like Isaac Vossius and Bernard Montfaucon, remained loyal to the father of church history's view. In more recent times, among others, Grätz (in his History of the Jews, 3, 519) has decided that he regards the essay on the Therapeutae as the work of a later Christian who wanted to glorify ascetic monasticism and secure its higher age through Philo's authority.

307/308

The treatment of this literary question has so far been influenced by practical interests. The ancient Church authors welcomed an alleged testimony to the age of an apostolic Church in the city of the Nile. Scaliger, with his correct resolution of Eusebius' view, had the side benefit that evidence for the high age of monasticism was taken away from the Catholics. Grätz wants to free the Jew Philo from the reputation of glorifying a Christian-like monasticism.

308

They have all missed the mark; the essay is old, it depicts not perfect Christians, but Christian beginnings.

There is no formula in the essay "On the Contemplative Life" that cannot be found in Philo's recognized writings. For example, the "Corybantic" enthusiasm with which the Therapeutae raise themselves up from possessions, homeland, and sensuality to the enjoyment of a blessed life is celebrated with the same formula of "Corybantic" in the treatise "On the Divine Cult", p. 490. The isolation (μόνωτος) also receives the prize before worldly life in the essay "On Abraham", p. 352, 362, and the true "service", Jspansía, which says goodbye to worldly pursuits, and the true "Therapeutae", who extricate themselves from the bonds of kinship and soar up to the Holy of Holies in a storm, where they forget the world and themselves, are described with the same formula that dominates the much-discussed essay, for example, Decalog, p. 760. De Somniis, p. 1140. Indeed, in the enigmatic assertion of this essay that the Therapeutae were represented in many places around the world, that Greece and the barbarian territory participated in the highest good, and that Alexandria was the gathering place for the best Therapeutae from all over the world, the treatise "On Offerings Made by Those Who Have Suffered" gives us the key, since the proselytes who "have emigrated from their homeland filled with false images" are called Therapeutae outright in it, p. 854.

The literary question about the much-discussed essay could at most be limited to whether it might have been authored by a disciple of Philo. In any case, its testimony to the connection of the Alexandrian center with the rest of the Roman world is of historical importance, and it also opens up a perspective on the connection of the religious school and cradle of the Nile city with the related circles of Rome.

308/309

Let us now recall the brotherhoods that had formed in Rome, Italy, and in the provinces for the burial of their members. These associations, which also included slaves, were the right place to spread the wisdom of Seneca in the widest circles. Petronius could not have written a line of his Banquet of Trimalchio if this wisdom did not exist within the small bourgeoisie. The master of natural truth drew the substance of his humor and the memories of death and transience, which accompanied the rejoicing and exuberance of the freedmen from the beginning of the banquet to the end, from the reality and the heart of the bourgeoisie. We can conclude from his life story that the death reflections of Seneca were seasoned with the brotherly meals of these associations, and that the images of the Stoic sage of eternal peace after death, which all passed into the Christian funeral service, owe their preservation and transmission in the new community to these memorial services.

309

These are the associations, circles, and centers that awaited the new way of life and at the same time worked together to shape it. However, to complete this overview, we still need to consider a distinct circle that sought to establish an independent position alongside the Jewish influences of Rome and Alexandria, and deeply influenced the work of both halves of the second century.

309/310

5. Christian Gnosticism.

Gnosticism, the elevated faith in knowledge, announces itself at its first appearance with a novel that contains the fundamental principles of its later development. It encompasses heaven and earth, explains the origin of the world, and is at the same time a history of gods and religions. Its protagonist, the Samaritan Simon, according to the accounts of Irenaeus and Tertullian, claims to be the "power of the Most High" and asserts that he has revealed himself among the Samaritans as Father, among the Jews as Son, and among the Gentiles as Holy Spirit. In his company, he had a woman named Helena,

whom he had purchased in a brothel in Tyre and whom he carried with him as a witness to his power. In the bosom of eternity, he had conceived her as a representation of his intentions and power; she is his thought and the source of the entire series of the world of appearances, the angels, archangels, and rulers of the world subject to them. However, when she descended into the creation of these powers, who remained ignorant of the supreme source, the divine power was detained, fettered in disgrace, and bound in the flesh. Over the centuries, she appeared in various female forms, including as Helen of Troy, in the most abject degradation as an even lower woman, the same one whom Simon had redeemed from the brothel in Tyre. He himself, the power of the Most High, had taken pity on the world, poorly guided by angels and rulers, bound by their commands, had come to dissolve and disperse the entire earthly existence, and brought grace instead of statutes to those receptive to it, ending all tyranny.

310

Obviously, this novel suffers from the intermingling of two tendencies that do not want to fit together into a whole. The universal idea of the world and the lost woman of Tyre, Simon's revelation under the guise of the Son and the redemption of that woman - the shattering of the old commandments and the opening of the Tyrian women's pen, the general ideas and the personal relationships of Simon clash and resist a durable combination.

310/311

Christian Ferdinand Baur (in his work "Die christliche Gnosis," 1835) believed he could reveal the mystery of this poem by assuming something similar to the Selene, the wife of the Phoenician sun god, in Helena of Simon, and by assuming that the Magus Simon himself was a personification of Schem-Heracles, venerated by the Samaritans, under whose name an opposition to Christianity had arisen on Samaritan soil. Apart from the fact that nothing is known about the veneration of the Phoenician sun god among the Samaritans, nor of a chimerical Oriental wisdom, from whose influence Baur believes Christian Gnosticism arose, the Simonian novel is, in general, a glorification of Christianity.

311

Already the worthy and learned preacher of the French community in Berlin, Isaac de Beausobre, hit the right point in his Histoire du Manichéisme (2 vols. Amsterd. 1834. 39) when he recognized in the story of Helena a Platonic allegory of the fate of the soul. "La! belle Hélène," says the famous preacher, "est l'âme," which Simon, as a Platonist, brought forth from the thought of God. This interpretation, already established in all gnostic systems, is further

confirmed by a lost word in that Athos codex, which Emanuel Miller published as the conclusion of the Philosophumena falsely attributed to Origen in 1851 at Oxford, and in which Bunsen believed he could demonstrate a work by Hippolytus. This script, belonging to the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian, repeats the Simonian romance of the two church fathers and drops the word that, according to Simon's doctrine, it was Jesus who appeared in Judea as a son and (in the gnostic view, apparently) suffered death. (Compare Bunsen, "Hippolyt und seine Zeit." Leipzig 1852. Volume I, 39). Therefore, it was Jesus who redeemed the captivity of the fallen soul, the thought-birth of the Highest, who fell into the power of the earthly, and it was also Jesus who accepted a Canaanite woman, the Lost of Tyre, as a symbol of man's idea captured in the material world and turned into his whore, as evidence of his comprehensive redemption in the Simon system.

311/312

The later transformation of Simon's doctrine into the personal novel of his life also passed into the Acts of the Apostles, and the "father of all heresy," who boasts among the Samaritans as the power of God, is severely warned there when he wanted to buy the power to impart the Holy Spirit for money after receiving baptism from Peter. Tertullian then knows that he had bought the whore of Tyre with the rejected money, and in the extensive novel of Clementine literature, the heretic is then pursued by Peter throughout the world until he meets a miserable end in a miracle contest with the Apostle in Rome.

312

Scholars have not yet thoroughly addressed the question of how much the filling work of the disciples can be distinguished from the simple work of the masters in the gnostic systems that have come down to us. The Platonic image of the subordinate gods who serve the Father in the work of creating the world and forming humans, and the numerous modifications in which Philo allows his Logos to appear depending on office and task, have provided the material for a category table of the supernatural world and for the image of that fall of the soul down to the lowest world spheres. In the individual schools, wit and imagination have striven to enrich that category table of heavenly ontology and to increase the distance between the primal ground and the worst possible world through the number of intermediary spheres. This is not the place to delve into the inner growth of the systems, and we must content ourselves with describing their fundamental character.

The world, according to Simon, the brothel of the soul that has sunk into matter, made Valentin, the contemporary of Marcion, into a miscarriage, with Wisdom (Sophia), which forms the outermost link in the spiritual realm of the primal ground, giving birth when she presumes to grasp the infinity of that

primal ground. This fruit of arrogance, this clumsy being filled with ignorance, sorrow, fear, and anxiety, then becomes the mother of the Demiurge and world creator. According to Saturninus, who is said to have come from Antioch, humanity along with its world, which the powers, the lower creations of the Son who emanated from the unknown Father, brought forth by the fleeting reflection of an upper light image, is a helpless monster.

313

Valentin provided the most picturesque image of the root of the world and its misery when he set in motion the feeling of lack and insufficiency and the allure of will and desire already in the dramatic unfolding of the highest god. It was a mistake that Sophia wanted to disturb the peace of the heavenly circle with her intention to grasp the infinite, but the will had once been revealed and the intellectual world could not help but throw it out into the void and let its destiny be fulfilled in a world of insufficiency, fear, and despair.

For the Gnostics, paganism and Judaism were on an equal footing with Christianity, and in view of the message of grace, the relative difference between the two lost its significance. Although these bold spirits of the Hadrian and Antonine period acknowledged that pagans had some contact and agreement with the principles of Christianity and praised their books for containing much that is also written in the church, the fragments of the chosen ones' property, for example, are also found in Socrates, according to Isidore, Basilides' son and commentator. Carpocrates and his followers placed the image of Jesus among the images of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, according to Irenaeus, because these sages had grasped the Monad and risen above the powers that rule the world and the servants of matter. But these flashes of insight of the wise are for the Gnostics rebellion and protest of inspiration or the heart against paganism and against the chains in which the rulers of the lowest world have forged the soul.

313/314

At this point, that indifference could arise, which finds fragments of truth in all forms of religion, and which Simon has given the most striking expression. If one can trust the statements of the church fathers that his disciples had an image of Zeus and Athena in their assembly halls, they would also have seen in these two deities of Greek mythology premonitions and images of their supreme God and the idea that emanated from him.

314

Hadrian sought unity in the world of gods and in the teachings of

philosophical schools, but he was still too much of a dilettante to grasp it. The seriousness of the Gnostics accomplished the great work, and their progenitor Simon, who opened the series of these thinkers at the beginning of the reign of this emperor, made an epochal leap, grouping together the religions and philosophies of his time as local shaped revelations of the One. An unreliable note from Lampridius (in the Life of Alexander Severus, chapter 42) refers to a tradition that Hadrian wanted to build a temple to Christ and include him among the gods. This emperor had not yet reached the level of indifference to religions, and only Heliogabal, raised from a Syrian sun temple to the imperial throne, could conceive of seeing in all religions and their changing symbols the worship of one and the same primal being and uniting the gods of the Jews, Samaritans, and Christians with the sanctuaries of Rome in a common temple as helpers of his supreme deity (Lampridius, Heliogabal, chapters 3 and 7). And the also Syrian emperor Alexander Severus, whom the Alexandrians derisively called the Syrian synagogue chief because of his religious experiments, could then set up in his house chapel alongside the deified emperors the statues of Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus (Lampridius, Alexander Severus, 27-28).

314/315

However, the Gnostics of the Hadrianic and Antonine period were by no means inclined to exercise the later tolerance of a Heliogabal towards the Jewish God. They were still in a state of war with him, and their position towards Judaism was oppositional. For Simon, the land of the Jews is only the stage where Jesus was to put an end to the local law and prophetic sayings and free the captive soul from the prison of statutes. According to Karpokrates, Judaism, like paganism, was inspired by the world-ruling spirits and had only the status of a national and regional religion. The angel who ruled the Jews in Saturnin's system wanted, like the pagan powers, to bind his subordinates to himself and not let them know the unknown father until the Son came, destroyed his work, and freed those who carry the spark of life in themselves. The Jewish God of Basilides had wanted his people to subjugate all other nations and forced the spiritual angelic princes of these nations to resist and wage a general world war, until the unknown God sent his firstborn, the "Nus," with the message of salvation to prevent the downfall of humanity. Valentin's Demiurge also acted only for himself. Without being aware of his connection to the upper Sophia, whose miscarriage led to the existence of this world, he proudly proclaimed, "I am God and there is no other but me," and had his uniqueness proclaimed by his prophets.

315/316

The most sharply defined contrast between the two gods was developed by Marcion; for him, the Creator of the intelligible world, the good God, stands

opposite the Jewish God and Demiurge as the just God. The Demiurge is harsh, rough, not far-sighted and provident, he only knows this world, is limited by its horizon, and boasts of being the highest and the only one. He has also promised his people a messiah, a violent warrior who would crush the enemies with an iron scepter and transfer world domination to his own people. Therefore, when the Messiah of the Good came and, free from passions, quiet and gentle, entirely love and grace, opened the way for his people to a kingdom that is above this world, the Demiurge was terrified by this revelation of a God unknown to him, and drove his people into battle against the messenger. But in the death of the true Messiah, he served the Good against his will and helped to make the highest, as this world should perish, a model for implementation. Even after the death of the true Messiah, the struggle between the two sides continues; the messenger of the Good draws the rejected, condemned, sinners, and heathens into his kingdom and descends himself into the hell of the just to redeem its damned from their bonds.

316

The contrast between both gods was most sharply developed by Marcion, who posited the good God, the creator of the intelligible world, as opposed to the Jewish God and Demiurge, who was just. The latter is harsh, rough, short-sighted, and not provident; he knows only this world, is limited to its horizon, and boasts of being the highest and only one. He also promised his people a Messiah, a violent warrior who would strike down the enemies with an iron scepter and transfer world domination to his followers. Therefore, when the Messiah of the Good came and opened the way to a kingdom above this world, free from passions, quiet and gentle, entirely love and grace, the Demiurge was frightened by this revelation of a God unknown to him and drove his people into battle against the messenger. But in the death of the true Messiah, he unwittingly served the Good and contributed to the fact that the Highest, how this world should die, came to fruition in a model. Even after the death of the true Messiah, the battle between the two sides continues; the messenger of the Good draws the rejected, condemned, sinners, and pagans into his realm and descends himself into the hell of the just to free their damned souls from their bonds.

In this, the Gnostics saw a danger and a darkening of the new message. Convinced of its grandeur and originality, they contradicted the derivation of the message of grace from the author of the old law; hence, the war of gods in their systems and the distance of the Jewish national god from the origin of the divine.

When the Gnostics borrowed their doctrines of the immersion of the soul in the death of this world and its reintegration with the supreme starting point from Plato's world of images, they did not lead Christianity into a foreign

world. Rather, they reinforced their anti-Jewish opposition from the same source from which the new doctrine had drawn its principles of renunciation.

317

Those church fathers who, in communion with Irenaeus (around the year 200), elevated the exclusively Jewish origin of Christianity to the general dogma, and also the earlier contemporaries who accused the Gnostics of abusing their intellectual freedom for excesses and nocturnal horrors, forgot that the servants of the old gods attributed the same degenerations to them. However, amidst these accusations and confusions of the moment, the asceticism and highly elevated interiority of Gnosis made its way into the contemporary development of the new doctrine during the time of Antoninus Pius. Both in the expansion of the Gospel writings and in the most significant documents of the so-called Pauline literature, the Gnostic asceticism found acceptance, and in the Pauline epistles, that which could be utilized for the community from the mysteries of the Gnostic war of the gods was also made available. In addition, the authors of apologetic defenses of the new doctrine attempted to demonstrate the harmony between the Old Testament preparation of the same and the wisdom of the Greek masters from Heraclitus to Zeno, preparing for the ecclesiastical coup by which the leaders of the community, around the year 200, imposed on their doctrinal treasury the character of Catholic, Universal, All-encompassing, and exclusively valid.

VII.

The Time of Marcus Aurelius.

We come to a conclusion and say farewell to the Caesars who ruled the world alongside the gradual rise of Christianity. They all contributed to the formation of the new faith and, in their individuality, depicted with expressive force a feature of the image in which the dissatisfied united the ideals of their hearts. Therefore, they stand out so prominently from the emperors of the following one and a half centuries.

318/319

Augustus was the prince of peace who healed the wounds of civil war and called on shattered spirits to work together. Tiberius announced himself as a servant of the community and recoiled in horror when someone wanted to kneel before him as lord. Caligula appeared in public as a god-man and world judge. Nero dedicated himself as a philanthropist to the service of humanity. Vespasian had his legions carry the oracle of the Jewish God, which had called him to be the world ruler, ahead of them when they conquered Jerusalem and took Rome. Nerva and his successors conquered the roughness of Romanism within themselves and set an example of gentleness and calmness. The last of these gentle ones, Marcus Aurelius, left to posterity, as it were, his "Meditations" (τα εις εαυτον), in which he conversed with himself about the salvation of his soul and his relationship to his fellow human beings and to divinity.

319

We begin the conclusion of our work with a sketch of this imperial testament, in which we will trace the refractions of the same sunlight that spreads throughout the Gospels and the New Testament letters. After describing once again, as we have done since the beginning of our work, the flashing of the same ideas and soul moods in both circles, the so-called pagan and the Christian, and the back-and-forth movements of these flashes from one circle to the other, we will explain the victory of the Christian spirit in the comprehensive achievement of the Gospels, which surpasses the fragmented attempts of the pagan side. This victory coincides with the national and political disappointments of the philosophical emperor and the announcement of the approaching death of Romanism.

1. Marcus Aurelius's Meditations.

The peculiarity of the imperial monologues lies in the disposition that makes stoic submission to the law of nature and obedience to the workings of fate a source of enjoyment of one's own inner self. In this disposition, the contemplation of the harmony that divine reason reveals in the union of the physical elements into a world system and in the linking of individual causes to the primary cause of fate becomes a theoretical delight, and surrender to the beneficent ordinances of the highest (e.g., 5, 8) becomes a strengthening and enlargement of the self, which feels itself and its experiences as part of the world order.

319/320

The imperial teacher reminds us: do not consider any chance occurrence that befalls you as something new and surprising (7, 68); welcome it with the cry, "I was looking for you!" Assimilate it to yourself, make it familiar to you, and let it be material for social virtue. This is how God also does it.

320

The insightful person (3, 2) who can grasp everything that happens in the context of the whole will recognize its particular attractiveness in everything. He will take no less pleasure in the sight of the throats of wild animals than in their images in paintings and stone, and will find that elderly matrons and elders also have their gracefulness, just as the beauty of a boy does, and will look at everything with equally chaste eyes.

"Oh, you great world system," cries the thoughtful philosopher (4, 24), who (4, 4) had called the world, in which we have a common law, citizens of one another and participate in a civic entity, our city. "Oh, world, everything that is good for you also serves me. What is convenient for you is neither too early nor too late for me. Oh, nature, everything your seasons bring is a timely fruit for me." He writes in a drama, "Oh, dear city of Cecrops!" Should I not say to you instead: Oh, dear city of God? (Thus he lived in the City of God, which Plato placed in heaven and Augustine saw growing throughout history.)

"When will you, my soul," he asks at another time (10, 1), "when will you be good, simple, unadulterated, and without makeup? When will you be more visible and easier to recognize than your body that envelops you? When will you taste the sweetness of human love? When will you be full of yourself and satisfied with your fullness? When will you be convinced that everything serves your good and comes from God? When - when - yes, my soul, when will you finally be so disposed that you lead such a community with gods and

men that you live in peace with both?"

Let your regal nature within you, he answers elsewhere (4, 1), transform all chance events within itself, just as a strong fire seizes everything that falls within its range, transforms it within itself, and thereby becomes greater.

321

How poor and childish, however, is the politics and practice of people who want to philosophize about everything in this whirlwind of the world's course. Man, do not hope to see Plato's perfect republic. If there is only a beginning of good, be content with it and do not consider it insignificant. Who can change everyone's opinions? And yet, without such a general change, nothing else can be expected but forced servitude with sighs and tears.

Live in peace with the world order (10, 22). The earth loves the rain; the chaste winds also love it; the world loves to bring about what is to happen. Therefore, I say to the world, "I love what you love." Is it not also said (in the Greek phrase instead of "it tends to happen") that it loves to happen that way?

Have patience with people (7, 70). The immortal gods do not mind that they have had to endure so many evils for so long, and what is more, they take care of them in every way. And you, who will soon no longer exist, tire of bearing the wicked, even though you yourself are one of their number?

In our presentation of Seneca's teaching, in his elevation of the commandments to an ideal height, we have shown the basic type for the evangelical antithesis of the old commandments and the new legislation. The imperial philosopher expresses the same antithesis (3, 14) in the words, "People do not know what stealing, buying, resting, seeing, and the commandment in general mean. It is not the eye that matters, but another aspect." He means that these things, the forbidden and the commanded, must be understood in the context of the entire world. Stealing is not only the act of the thief who can be brought before the court, but also of the one who denies participation with the whole and wants to withdraw something from its harmony.

321/322

He is a priest and servant of the Highest who (3, 4, 6) rightly associates with the divine residing in him like a temple and allows it to fight with desires. He himself is the temple of the divine, -- the same view as that of Philo's and the processing of this Alexandrian image in the first letter to the Corinthians (3, 16) and in the first letter of Peter (2, 5).

322

Furthermore, we have established the origin of the Pauline comparison of community members with the limbs of a body and the interpretation of the community as a harmoniously tuned organism from the Stoic doctrine of the purposeful organization of the world. Seneca was the intermediary through which this image entered the Church. While the same theme was varied in the so-called Pauline letters (e.g., 1 Corinthians 12:6, 22), Marcus Aurelius returned to the original source. The Spirit of the All, he writes, likes to share with others. Therefore, he has ordered the imperfect things to serve the perfect and united the perfect in harmony among themselves. Look how he has subjected one thing to another according to its value and brought the virtuous into harmony with one another. We are (2, 1) created to work together like feet, hands, and eyelids: I am a member of one body (7, 13) consisting of spiritual (namely, Logos-inspired) beings. The Apostle, who sees the Lord of the Church in the Logos, expressed it this way: you are the body of Christ and members, each in its place.

322/323

Like Seneca, Marcus Aurelius has accompanied this view of the community of the spiritual realm with admonitions taken from his own kind-hearted nature and the treasure of Greek proverbial wisdom. If a person has done good, he writes, for example, he does not proclaim it to the people, but proceeds to another good work, like a vine that, having borne its fruit, prepares anew to produce such again. Of the many sayings in which he forbids hatred and anger towards those who want to persecute and harm someone as a denial of their common divine origin (e.g., 2, 1), we also include his reflections on the theme (10, 37), according to which "No one in this world is so happy that many should stand by his corpse rejoicing over what has befallen him."

323

In the face of this trial, where one is given a eulogy: "Now we will finally have peace from this teacher; he may not have troubled any of us, but one could see that he internally condemned us," he wants composure and kindness maintained: "Therefore, leave with no less goodwill towards them than you had before, as their friend, patron, with sympathy and gentle courage."

He believes that he who strives for the one thing necessary and "prefers the holy work of the God dwelling within him to everything else, makes no tragic figure, does not sigh, and needs neither solitude nor society." People seek solitude in the countryside, by the sea, in the mountains (4, 3). You also wish for such a retreat, an unintelligent desire. Is it not allowed for you to turn inward at every moment? No solitude is more peaceful and charming than

that of one's own soul. But I call peace the good order and harmony of the soul. Therefore, enter into this charming hermitage (avagápnō). Renew yourself there.

323/333

Platonic asceticism, Stoic doctrine, Heraclitus' ascent of logos births to the upper blissful calm, and the Cynic's contempt for the earthly offer him comfort in death. One day, even the earth will be transformed (9, 23); who then will not despise everything earthly and mortal? Death is (6, 28) the end of the war our senses wage against each other, it is the holiday of all troubles and the end of bodily service. In death, you will cease (3, 3) to serve this earthly vessel of your body, which had submitted your noblest part, the divine, residing within you. When I, having completed the course of nature, lay down to rest, I will surrender my spirit into the hands of the one from whom I received it (5, 4). Amid the darkness of this world and in the stream of matter and time and its motion, I see nothing deserving of my respect, but I console myself with the thought (5, 10) that my dissolution is approaching, though without impatience.

324

Similarly, starting from the same basic view, the Paul of the Letter to the Philippians (1:23-24) says: "I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body."

The worldly apostle on the imperial throne lives by the conviction (3, 3) that fate does not strike anyone before their life has reached its ordained end, so that one could call him an actor who leaves the stage before playing out his role. This belief and the series of other convictions led him to resolve to depart with the same gentleness and contentment as the ripe olive, which, when it falls, praises the earth that bore it and thanks the tree that gave it birth.

The imperial models and types of the Christian perfecters all led lives full of torments and misfortunes. An eloquent exposition by the elder Pliny (Hist. Nat. 7, 46) gives a picture of the anxieties and oppressions with which the Divus Augustus acquired the role of peacemaker and the torments that overtook him at the peak of his power. The misery and pain that subsequent rulers had to struggle with have been attempted to be presented in the preceding sections. Marc Aurel was also unhappy; however, before we consider his behavior in these trials, we will add some remarks on the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity. They will complete our earlier discussions on this issue.

325

2. Christianity as the Enhancement of Hellenism.

The defenders of Christianity take pleasure in portraying the alleged gulf between the new Christian community and the old pagan society in their descriptions of the first two centuries of our era, and they paint it quite dark, deep, and wide. The theological horror pictures have also passed into the history books of secular scholars, and on both sides they agree that in that period antiquity had reached the limit of its horizon and would have had to succumb to stagnation if Christianity had not broadened the field of vision.

However, my previous explanations have shown that the principles of Christianity, the gain of dying, the wisdom of fleeing from the world, and the perfection in death (in addition to the image of the Logos as the Revealer of the Divine) were established by the philosophy of Greece and were brought to the perception of the followers as a single fact by Christianity. Instead of remaining in front of an allegedly old and new time gap with artificial amazement, one must rather acknowledge that Christianity, with its emergence from Greek philosophy, bears witness to the development potential of antiquity.

If, despite all this, the fact were to remain or even be further confirmed that antiquity itself had reached the limit of its horizon with Christianity, this would rather confirm the core of our entire work, that Christianity was only a modification and enhancement of the old.

325/326

By far better than the fearful modern apologists, Bossuet in his discourse on universal history has understood the position of Revelation in relation to pagan antiquity. He cannot praise enough "the thoroughness with which God laid the foundation for their conversion from the beginning among the Greeks." The bishop of Meaux explains that a docile people, the Greeks were enthusiastic from the beginning of their history for the common good and for the idea that they, with their families, formed part of the greatest body, the state. First it was the kings who elevated the law to reign. As the cities felt capable of self-government, legislators arose everywhere who prevented freedom from turning into arbitrariness. The bishop of Louis XIV's time calls the idea of freedom that brought about such discipline truly admirable because this freedom was subject to the law and recognized by the people as reason. The law brought the authorities to their official seats, surrounded them with fear during their public duties, and allowed the changing

individuals to return to their private status at a specified time; the general rule always remained.

326

And then, Bossuet continues, it is hardly possible to grasp what philosophy did to maintain this state of affairs. Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, all except Plato and Aristotle, filled Greece with the injunction to sacrifice personal purposes, even life, for the common interests. Even the poets taught the people more than they amused them, and their works breathed dedication to the homeland and civic loyalty.

But here the French historian and preacher stumbles. He also reaches an abyss into which the dispute between Athens and Sparta plunged this strict regime, and could not yet grasp the thought that it was precisely philosophy that bridged the gap.

Plato himself, faced with the dissolution that both mutual dismemberment and the rise of an emancipated conviction brought dangerously close to the states, designed the image of an ideal state in which public education of minors and the priestly elevation of the ruling class bound individuals more than ever to the purpose of the whole. In the event of extreme need, the pontiff, that is, the philosophical bridge-builder, had referred faith upwards to the heavenly state.

327

An implementation of the Platonic ideal was not immediately possible; an attempt would have resulted in a limited and forced reaction of Hellenism. The need of the self for a gripping and captivating order could only become urgent when the political circles of antiquity were shattered and Rome led the scepter over the ruins.

While any purely national movement could only lead to a lifeless existence of the Greek essence, the propaganda of Alexander and his successors, and later the Roman conquest, carried the Platonic bridge to all parts of the world at that time. At the same time, the continuers of the Platonic and Socratic work looked on with indifferent calmness as their individual states fell apart and taught their students to turn away from politics and turn inward.

As the circles that cultivated this inner, world-averse life felt the need for a more solid union for their self-preservation and strengthening at the end of the first century of our era, there was only one viable and powerful point of crystallization in the vast Roman Empire to which they could attach

themselves. That was the community that had preserved its independence with its own self-elected representation under the political ruins that Rome had welded together into its world empire. In these communities, those who had gathered at the feet of a teacher or in associations, such as in the ascetic union in Alexandria, in death benefit societies, or in the friendly cohesion of the freedmen, as described to us by Petronius, took root and organized themselves according to the model of the sanctuaries that had gained significance and vitality after the downfall of the individual states. They created their own community association within the old community, with representation through the election of elders, a leadership through presbyters, daily stimulation through communal meals, and growing support for the poor.

328

Just as the ancient Greek, during the peak of his strength, possessed the liveliest sense of freedom in opposition to a hostile world and his self-esteem was most stimulated in the struggle against the great king outside or in the defense of his civic autonomy against his kindred neighboring states, so the new community circles indulged in the enjoyment of their freedom from the entire old world. Their daily prayer that the kingdom of peace may come was the desire for the end of the world empire. They were free from the power that had swallowed up the nationalities and their states, free from the gods to whom the emperors sacrificed, and from the altar service which was dedicated to them throughout the empire. In their midst, humanity, as revealed by Greek wisdom and Seneca, was given prominence, and the self was released from the bonds of nature and all considerations under which rulers and servants sighed. The spirit of equality of the new movement gained special strength from the Jewish community members who, from their homes, did not know political dedication and were brought up in a kind of democratic equality.

However, just as the ancient Greeks, when they returned to their civic duty from their opposition to foreign or kin-related adversaries, submitted to the laws, gods, and rights of their city, the flip side of the freedom that inflamed the members of the new community circles was an even deeper submission to the law, the leaders, and to the ideal Lord of the same, who would one day judge and dissolve the world empire. The Platonic poem about the heavenly kingdom of God had been given a body by the Stoic conception of the world as a body permeated and animated by the divine, in whose compelling organism the individual is enclosed as a member and must submit.

328/329

Seneca had already celebrated this victory of Greek thought and given it a

guarantor in its ideal form as a fulfiller of humanity. Marcus Aurelius processed the triumph of Plato and the Stoics in his own way and transformed it into the gentle bliss with which he fulfills his assigned place in the world order. Finally, the contemporaries of the authors of the most significant Pauline letters transformed the Stoic world body, in which one member is lined up after the other and each performs its predetermined work, into the body of the Lord, in which the believers do their community work as members. Here, the discipline is raised to the highest degree, and the severity of the Greek popular court and the Athenian Areopagus is surpassed by the vigilance of the community officials and by the expulsion and handing over of the disobedient member to eternal judgment.

3. The morality of Roman society.

The generations from which the founders and members of these new communities emerged cannot have been as lost as they appear in the teachings, satires, and histories of the imperial era and are described by modern historians using this framework. For example, a court where Arrian enjoyed the friendship of Hadrian as consul, military commander, and provincial governor and, alongside the history of Alexander the Great's wars and the description of his Black Sea voyage, published the lectures of Epictetus as a handbook for spiritual guidance, was certainly not an abyss of evil and depravity. The stern attitudes of Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius presuppose an environment that was able to appreciate and practice such seriousness of attitude directed toward moral superiority. However, we still have very detailed evidence of a widespread and generally respected decency in the character sketches that Pliny provides in his letters from the time of Trajan. Let us consider some of this evidence!

329/330

Brixia, from where Pliny (Epist. 1, 14) recommends a son-in-law for his friend Junius Mauricus, he calls a city of that part of Italy which still upholds and preserves old-fashioned propriety, moderation, and even rural simplicity. The recommended man's father, elevated to the praetorian rank by Vespasian, preferred an honorable obscurity to the ambitious activities of Rome. The grandmother is from Padua, "one knows," Pliny notes, "the strictness of this city." "You know the spirit and morality of this province," he writes (Epist. 2, 13) about Spain, from where the mother of another recommended person hailed.

330

There were still many people living in the countryside who devoted themselves to farming, raising their families, and their own education. Invited by Terentius Junior, who had served as a knight in the military, also administered the Narbonne province and then retired to his estate, Pliny (Epist. 7, 25) found in him a good household manager and careful farmer and then discovered in him, soon after he had treated him as such at the beginning of the conversation, a thorough connoisseur of Greek wisdom. Ummidius Quadratus, Pliny's pupil in jurisprudence, was so rigorously educated by his grandmother that when he left the theater where there had been a competition of various pantomimes, he said to his teacher and friend, "Do you know that today I saw my grandmother's pantomime (who belonged to her household troupe) dance for the first time?" (Epist. 7, 24).

330/331

The sentence in the mythical history of the primitive community in Jerusalem that they (Acts 2:44-45) "had all things in common," and the awkward and lagging explanation that they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them among all, as anyone had need," has been turned into a magnificent painting of a new and foreign to antiquity communicativeness. If, however, we listen to the testimony of real history, we shall find that so-called paganism had set a magnificent example which only later benefited the Church to such an extent. For example, when Pliny (Epist. 4, 13) noticed on a visit to his hometown of Como that inadequate provision had been made for education and that adult children had to go to Milan, he urged their fathers to employ capable teachers; he himself was willing to contribute one-third of what they brought together and immediately wrote to his friend Tacitus to look for teachers who could be recommended to the citizens. On another occasion, he established a library in his hometown and, on this occasion (Epist. 1, 8), emphasized that annual contributions to the education of good minds corresponded more to his genius than promises of circus performances and fencing games. And again, even though he was by no means excessively rich, he endowed an estate worth 500,000 sesterces (about 48,000 guilders) from his property near Como for the maintenance of orphans.

331

In addition to other public endowments, dedications to friends also testify to his participation and benevolence. For example, he wrote to Fabius Quintilianus (Epist. 6, 32): "I know you are richer in satisfaction than in wealth, so allow me, as a second father to our daughter, to take on a portion of your burden at the appropriate representation and service for her wedding, with a contribution of 50,000 sesterces." When the poet Martial had dedicated a couple of beautiful verses to him, Pliny gave him a gift for his journey on his return to his Spanish homeland (Epist. 3, 21). To a fellow

countryman and school friend, he transferred 300,000 sesterces (required for elevation to the rank of knight) to supplement his wealth (Epist. 1, 19).

331/332

Another aspect of the picture that Pliny unrolls for us of his time seems to contradict the joy of the Trajanic statesman in austere living and the generally serious mood of the era: a certain aesthetic versatility. He himself writes poetry, his friends make verses, in social gatherings people read aloud the products of leisure, and it is considered a duty to encourage one another in new productions. This year, for example, Pliny writes in Epistle 1.13, has been very productive in terms of poets. Not a day went by in April when someone did not give a reading. Although he complains about the laxity of the listeners, he praises all the more the eagerness in production and reading that is not deterred by such frivolity. He himself is a model of punctuality and attention and even enjoys a diligent audience during his readings. Thus, among other things, guests flocked to him when he gave his Senate speech on Trajan in an expanded version, although he had not explicitly indicated the reading in his invitations, as he proudly emphasizes in Epistle 3.18. Despite the worst weather, guests showed up two days in a row and asked him, when he was about to finish, to also give them the conclusion on the third day.

332

When he gave something in his house, his Calpurnia sat very close by behind a curtain and was delighted by the applause of the audience (Epistle 4.19). In the same letter, he elaborates on this domestic idyll, revealing that his wife also sang and accompanied his verses on the lyre, without any other teacher than the love she had for him.

He was, in fact, also a popular poet, particularly in a somewhat amorous genre. One of those numerous poets whom he complimented in his letters had cited the strict Consul as an example of his practice in the same genre, who also indulged in the same poetic game (Epistle 4.27). "In small verses," this poet had recited in an evening gathering and in the presence of the distinguished statesman, "I sing songs like my Catullus and Calvus and the Ancients. But what do these matter to me? For me, there is only one Pliny who loves small verses, when he is away from the forum, seeks love, and hopes for love."

332/333

Pliny even published a collection of such humorous poems and love dalliances (called hendecasyllables, following the eleven-syllable verse).

They were read, transcribed, and even sung to the lyre and zither. Despite this success, however, he still felt somewhat insecure and had to justify himself against objections and even more severe accusations. Once he wrote that Cicero's epigrams about his secretary Tiro (7,4) inspired him to create such things. Great and venerable men of the past, "who did not shy away from the luxuriance of the subject and the naked word," are cited by him (Epist. 4, 14) when he passes his time composing poems about pleasure, love, humor, grief, and anger while riding in his carriage, taking a bath, or at table. "The most learned, worthy, and purest people," he writes on another occasion, when he was feeling restless and the accusations were more serious (5,3), "have composed such things: Cicero, Marcus Brutus, Annäus Seneca, the divine Julius, Augustus, Titus, Nerva. Whether they also read their works aloud, I do not know. Well! They could satisfy themselves with their judgment. I trust myself too little to consider what pleases me alone as perfect. I jest, laugh, play. I am a human being."

333

But this still meant taking the matter quite lightly, and it is remarkable that a large part of the upper society, while a whole chorus of revengeful writers around Tacitus sits in judgment over the preceding period of the Empire, took pleasure in Anacreontic, perhaps even "Sotadic" (see the last-mentioned letter) and similar trifles.

This same society had the feeling of living in a new era and simply called their century the century, their century. Nerva already understood the dawn of this Seculum as a private person and still under the pressure of the Domitian era, when he wished Pliny (Epist. 7, 33) good luck before a court for a noble deed and for the century. Trajan also pointed to the demands of the same century for noble and just actions in his correspondence with Pliny (10, 63. 98), and Pliny himself called in his Panegyric (chap. 34) what seemed to him just and uplifting, worthy of the Seculum.

333/334

Nevertheless, based on a significant historical analogy, we can consider the games of Roman society at that time as signs of a new era and list them among the harbingers of a revolution in the second century. Eighteenth-century France was already trembling with the anticipation of the revolution, as the upper class enjoyed themselves in literary and aesthetic circles with the creations of their beauty. The nobility was prouder of inventing a quatrain than of its coat of arms and made it a point of honor to compete with a bourgeois brother for the prize of poetic laurels in Apollo. The later men of terror of the Revolution glorified the game of love and the glory of the rose and myrtle in anacreontic verse. Barrère, the Anacreon of the

guillotine, Carnot, the commander of battles, and Robespierre, the dogmatist of the Revolution, began as frivolous singers of love sorrow and shepherd's happiness. The echo of this French century in Germany as a shepherd's song was the prelude to the uprising of philosophical criticism. This side and beyond the Rhine, as in the time of Rome's first humane emperors, was the childlike, often childish variation of the serious theme: Homo sum,--the same theme that the Greeks had established in high style since Socrates. And if the dictators of Rome, the restless spirits and tyrants from Sulla onwards, who Pliny refers to, enjoyed the easy play of imagination, they expressed with it the same return to a fictional state of nature and the same disbelief in their old state system as the French of the previous century gave up their belief in the foundation of their public and inner life with their frivolities.

4. The Fate of Marcus Aurelius.

The Seculum, on whose onset Nerva and his circle of friends were proud, ended in a gloomy fashion for Rome under Marcus Aurelius. Christianity had launched from Rome and Alexandria a bold and grand criticism and combination of the religious systems of the contemporary world. Pliny discovered it in Bithynia as something new; now, the biography of the divine founder had undergone a considerable number of adaptations and extensions, and the letters of the community leaders were circulating from one province to another, as we learn from Lucian.

335

In the face of this upswing, Roman literature and imperial affairs were in an accelerated decline, and Marcus Aurelius was besieged by a series of personal trials in the midst of the signs of great danger to the empire. His adoptive brother and co-regent was a glutton, his wife was rumored to be unfaithful, his son was an incapable and unruly character, his most capable general, the Prefect of Syria, rose against him, declaring that he wanted to free the empire from a weak schoolmaster. Added to this were the troubles along the entire course of the Danube, where the peoples with whom Domitian and Trajan had dealt were pushed forward by their hinterland, partly pushed aside by a wedge of immigrants, and rolled forward in a new and strengthened battle formation against the empire. The emperor died in the field camp, where he was struggling against this growing migration of peoples.

335/336

His co-regent was the son of Cejonius Commodus Verus, whom Hadrian had adopted as Aelius Verus in 135. The decision of this emperor, who sought a

helper for his days of rest after his travels, for this scion of a respected Etruscan family, was widely disapproved at the time. The grace, joviality, and resolution of the young man had attracted the life-weary emperor, and the chivalry that he believed to see in his character had also been demonstrated by him as a resolute commander on a short mission to Pannonia. A certain momentum of his spirit, which longed for something special and deceived his adoptive father, also led him to ponder bizarre refinements in his pleasures and the embellishment of his surroundings. When he lay on his rose bed, delighting in Ovid's love poems and Martial's epigrams, which he, in his foppish humor, called his Virgil, and his youthful runners bedecked as winged cupids flew at his command, he presented the image of a sensualist who saw in the world only a servant for his amusing ideas. When the death of the enervated young man (on the first day of the year 138) freed the state from this danger, Hadrian held so firmly to his belief in the happy nature of the latter that he conditioned the adoption of Titus Aurelius Fulvius Antoninus Pius, which occurred shortly before his death, on the stipulation that he adopt him along with Marcus Annius Verus, so that the state would retain something from him.

336

This child, Lucius Cejonius Verus, who grew up to be a man during the twenty-two-year reign of Antoninus, showed so few abilities and inclinations for his future profession that Antoninus could not draw him out of private life. Although the prince developed the winning physique of his deceased father, and he also inherited his joviality and tendency for humor and caprice, and Antoninus also loved the openness and grace of his demeanor. But the young man remained outside of public life, while Annius Verus, Hadrian's nephew and already highly favored by him, eighteen years old at the time of his adoption by Antoninus, was elevated to the highest honors and involved in all state affairs since the latter's accession to the throne.

336/337

Both men were descended from their great-grandparents from the provinces, Antoninus from Gaul and Marcus from Spain, and their grandparents had risen to the consular dignity on both paternal and maternal sides. Antoninus received this name, which his reign was to give an epoch-making significance, from his maternal family and probably also the spirit of philosophical equanimity that established the kinship with his adoptive son. That consular Arrius Antoninus, who embraced the new emperor at the Senate's greeting of Nerva and said he wished happiness to the Senate, people, and provinces, but not to the new ruler, who should have been content to avoid bad rulers instead of taking on such a burden (Capitolin. Antonin c. 1. Aurel. Vict. Epitome 12), was his maternal grandfather. Pliny not only praises him as a poet but also as a man who, in his later leisure,

tempered his serious dignity with kindness, gentleness, and grace of speech (Epist. 4, 3. 18. 27. 5, 10).

337

After the death of Antoninus in 160, Marcus brought his adoptive brother out of obscurity, gave him his daughter Lucilla as his wife, and shared with him the title of Augustus, so that for the first time two rulers carried this glory of the highest dignity. He and his brother both took the name Aurelius, which they had received from their adoptive father, and the honorary name Antoninus, which has since been highly valued and worn by ten emperors or pretenders as a divine attribute.

337/338

It was not only his strong sense of duty that motivated Marcus to comply with Hadrian's order to share the rule with Lucius Aurelius Verus, but he also believed it would be dangerous to keep a brother, who was entitled to the same succession as him, away from the throne. Perhaps he even hoped to raise the youthful co-ruler to his own level of seriousness. The first opportunity he gave him to perform a great activity was by giving him command of the troops that were ready in Syria against the Parthian intrusions into Armenia. However, the pleasure-loving prince did not know how to take advantage of it. He left the successful battle against the Parthians to the old and experienced army leader, Avidius Cassius, and indulged himself in Antioch and Daphne, bringing back Oriental virtuosos, actors, and jugglers as his favorite spoils of victory. Marcus silently endured the extravagant life of his imperial brother, sighed inwardly, and tried to cover up the annoyance as much as possible. Twice he summoned Verus to quell renewed unrest on the Danube; both times the sluggish companion dragged him back home over the Alps, and on the second return (in 168), Verus, ruined by his excesses, died of a stroke at the age of 42.

338

The example of the two Veruses shows that the adoption system did not benefit the state when it called young people to the throne. Their early deaths spared the world the spectacle of the atrocities that could not be avoided when they, having reached sole rule, gathered the means to satisfy their sensual desires at the expense of the Senate. Commodus, the son and successor of Marcus Aurelius, and later Caracalla, the heir of Septimius Severus, proved that both an early youth and the inheritance right to the Roman imperial throne were not suitable, and that the appeal to the legitimacy of possession immediately provoked bloody strife with the Senate. Commodus, the heir of the cautious Antonines, as he shook the head of a

freshly killed ostrich back and forth in front of the seats of the senators in the Circus with a grinning and significant smile (Dio Cassius 72, 21), is the right image of the position of a legitimate heir among the gathered fathers. The generals who were called to the throne by the necessity at the borders and the call of the armies put an end to the struggle with the shadow of the Senate and had neither the inclination nor the time for the excesses of youthful Augusti.

338/339

If we can trust the historians, the imperial women of the Antonine period would have been worthy successors to Augustus's unfortunate daughter Julia, who, as the daughter of a prince elevated to the throne, felt herself beyond the discipline of her father. Faustina, the wife of Antoninus and sister of the elder Verus who was called to the throne before him, is said to have indulged in debauchery and an extravagant lifestyle, which her husband endured with silent sorrow (according to Julius Capitolinus, Antoninus cap. 3). Even Marc Aurel's Faustina, Antoninus's daughter and thus also the daughter of an established prince, abused her husband's indulgence and one of the emperor's sinful companions was brought to the theater in Rome with a clear allusion to his name (according to Capitol. Marc Aurel cap. 19. 29 Dio Cassius 71, 34).

339

Marius Maximus even claimed in his lost and far-reaching history of the emperors, which extended to Alexander Severus, that Faustina had persuaded the prefect of Syria, who was victorious in the Parthian War, to revolt against her husband. Even Dio Cassius, a contemporary of the emperor and an eyewitness in the senators' benches when Faustina grinned at Commodus with the ostrich head in one hand and the bloody sword in the other, tells at length how Faustina, who expected her husband's death at any moment due to his frailty and feared that with the youth and imbecility of Commodus the empire would fall into the hands of another, indicated to Cassius that he should be ready to take possession of her and the reign if something happened to Aurelius.

339/340

The thirty-one years that had passed since Faustina's union with Marc Aurel (138) until the rebellion of the military commander in Syria will have gnawed at her beauty to such an extent that the offer of her person to the future victor hardly deserves belief. Besides, Cassius lived with his wife in a happy marriage blessed with sons and daughters, and since he had the choice among them and a son-in-law, he hardly lacked his own heirs, and it is

unlikely that he was asked to risk himself in the dangerous rebellion for the sake of Marc Aurel's incapable son. We must therefore agree with the "Other," whose testimony Capitolinus (Marc Aurel. cap. 24) and Vulcatius (Cassius cap. 7) oppose to the legend of Faustina's treachery, that the rebel was led astray by the rumor of the emperor's death or, to deceive the army and the provinces, spread that rumor in Asia itself. The unfavorable reputation in which the two Faustinas stood in society and among the people of the capital may be sufficiently explained by the position they claimed as princes' daughters and by their dealings with a court of their own, in the midst of which they rested from the seriousness that weighed on them from their husbands' court.

338/339

After the death of Antoninus in 160, Marcus brought his adopted brother out of obscurity, gave him his daughter Lucilla as a wife, and shared the title of Augustus with him, so that for the first time two rulers bore this glorious highest dignity. He and his brother also added the honorific name Antoninus that they had received from their adoptive father to their original name Aurelius, which was highly valued and worn by ten emperors or pretenders as a divine attribute.

340

The contrast between the strict and energetic warrior Avidius Cassius and the thoughtful Marcus Aurelius provided the belletristic rhetoricians around the year 200 with a welcome topic for declamations, which they could not have failed to use for a kind of psychological exposition. For such work, we consider the correspondence of Marcus Aurelius, from which Vulcatius provides fragments in his biography of Cassius. So Lucius Verus is said to have written to Marcus during the Parthian War from Syria that Cassius seemed to him, as was also noticed during the time of Pius, to be striving for the throne: "Everything we do displeases him; he laughs at our letters: he calls you a philosophical mother, me a foolish voluptuary." Marcus Aurelius replied: "If the throne is destined for Cassius, then, although we might want to, we would not be able to kill him, because as your grandfather (Hadrian) said, no one has ever been able to kill his successor. But if it is the will of the gods, then he will run to his own ruin without us having to stain our hands with blood. So let us let him live according to his nature, especially since he is a good and strict general and an indispensable man for the state."

340/341

The emperor, who went to the scene of the uprising, did not find his opponent alive. He had been killed by his own soldiers and had only worn the

purple for a quarter of a year. The capable and energetic warrior was born in the Syrian city of Kyrrhus, a son of the rhetorician Heliodor, who rose to become governor of Egypt. Through his mother, he traced his descent from a republican associate of Brutus, and his own republican and absolutist tendencies flattered him with this supposed lineage from an ancient greatness. According to Vulcatius (Cassius cap. 1), he hated the name of an emperor and cursed the misfortune of the times that this name could only be driven away by an opposing emperor. Marcus Aurelius not only showed great mercy towards the family of his fallen opponent but also relieved the Senate of a burden when he urged them in a letter that no senator's blood should be shed and that the exiled should have their property returned to them. The conspiracy had also had ramifications in Rome.

341

Just returned to Rome from the East in 176, Marcus Aurelius had to resume his military duties on the Danube. The ongoing conflict, which occupied him until his death, could no longer be brought to an end by individual battles or the destruction of the enemy. The success of the weapons could already be considered fortunate if the enemy was made receptive to negotiations by the art of war and the disciplined endurance of the army, and the belt of peoples that had set in motion along the Danube from Carinthia and Carniola to the Black Sea was only brought to a standstill to some extent.

"Bread and land!" was the pleading cry with which these peoples approached the Roman settlements on the Danube; their numbers and weapons gave the request weight, which always had to be weakened before the emperor engaged in negotiations and attempted to organize that large region. The impetuous petitioners were given land in Dacia, Pannonia, Moesia, Germany, even in Italy: only when a part of these colonists began to cause unrest in Ravenna and seized control of the city was the latter spared from such dangerous settlers. Some were granted Roman citizenship, others the promise of perpetual bread donations.

342

If the Jazyges only agreed to provide allied troops after the emperor promised to continue the war against the Quadi, that gives us an idea of the confusion in that belt of peoples, in which each member tried to push aside and back another. The Astingi, who had invaded Dacia with the cry of "money and land" and received both, became hired troops against restless subjects; other tribes that raised the same cry in Dacia used the money to buy off the retreat of a neighboring prince.

Dio Cassius suggests in his account of this organization (71, 11-19) that

Cassius's rebellion forced the emperor to make greater concessions than were actually in his plan. But even in the last three years of his life, which he had to devote to the Danube War, he did not make much more progress in organizing those lands than he had in his earlier campaigns. The life that had entered the throng of peoples north of the Danube could no longer be subdued by individual battles or even campaigns. The war, resumed by Marcus Aurelius as sole ruler in 169 after the death of Lucius Verus, had exhausted the public treasury to such an extent that the emperor had to offer the treasures of the palace and the jewels of Hadrian's secret treasure for auction, and supplement the army by enlisting slaves and gladiators. In addition, the plague brought by the army from the Parthian War to the Western world had caused lasting devastation and, through the misery it created, had spread a depression in the general mood that continued to sap the strength of the empire.

342/343

Marcus Aurelius himself succumbed to the burdens of his government in Vindobona (Vienna) on March 17, 180, at the age of 59. His body weakened by early studies could no longer offer a sustainable resistance to an exhausting war of peoples, about whose hopelessness he harbored no illusions. The future of the empire under his son, whom he had allowed to come alone to his bedside the evening before his death, could not comfort him in his last moments. He died alone and probably wanted to die that way. As soon as Commodus had left him, he covered his head as if to sleep and died later that same night.

343

The affairs of his soul occupied him until his last moments, and the books of his Meditations seem to have received their final redaction during the war that consumed his sickly body. The second book is written with the inscription at the camp in Carnuntum (present-day Deutsch-Altenburg in Hungary).

He viewed his reign as a fulfillment of duty and a service to the place that fate had assigned him. The Empire was to him humanity, for which he had to exercise the general duties of man, only on a larger scale and with greater responsibility than others. At this level of position, he did not want to be a Caesar. "Beware," he writes, for example, 6.30, "of going to extremes and becoming a Caesar. Do not be carried away, as it can easily happen. Stay simple and right, pious, honest, serious, without pride, a friend of justice, God-fearing, gentle, kind, constant in fulfilling your duty."

343/344

The man who appeared as a world-wise and civic figure in the gatherings of scholars upon his return from Syria to Alexandria, and who endowed new chairs of learning with state salaries for all fields of knowledge in Athens, devoted himself in Rome, whenever he had leisure from wars, to the most thorough and conscientious administration of justice, in addition to state affairs. He was the first to appoint a permanent praetor for guardianships, charging him with the task of appointing and closely monitoring the guardians, who had previously been appointed by the consuls. He also founded the civil status control throughout the empire (Capitolin. Marc Aurel, cap. 10). And if his aversion to public games and animal fights and his prescription of blunt weapons for gladiator combat testify to the progressive moderation of the Roman spirit, it is worth mentioning that a ruler who embraced his worries about the empire and investigated the laws of the world order as a private citizen did not consider it too trivial when he saw a boy fall from a tightrope during a performance and ordered that cushions be placed under tightrope walkers in the future (Capitol. ibid. cap. 12).

344

His principle that one cannot make people as one wishes them to be (see also his Meditations and Dio Cassius 71, 34) prevented him from becoming a religious founder and turning the world into a realm of peaceful hermits, but his co-emperors, the Christians, were there for this undertaking. The victory of the latter will be depicted in the following pages.

VIII.

The Completion of the New Testament Literature.

1. A Great History and a Late Poem.

In a series of images, we have seen the fate of the Empire, the nationalities, and the social classes of the first two centuries of our era unfold before us. As diverse as the figures were that moved before our eyes, they were only shells of one and the same fact. If on the one hand, even at that time, the friends of the old saw in the detachment of citizens from their political and national works only an act of violence by the new world ruler, on the other hand, we recognized in the Empire the consequence and the image of an emancipation of the spirits from their earlier limited daily activities and a political form that corresponded to the ideal of a world community at that time. Personal freedom within the opened world context was the heartfelt desire of that time of decline and decadence, which had been infamous in the history books since the days of Tacitus. The immaterial goods that Greece had produced in a similar time of political decline filled the political void. In Rome and Alexandria, they gathered around the center of Jewish law, and Seneca gave the new associations the image of the completer of humanity, which could ultimately take up the fight with the ruler of Rome.

346

What do the miracles mean, which, after the creation of the Ur-Gospel, follow each other laboriously in the Acts of the Apostles (chapters 10 and 11), so that Peter and the Jerusalem community find the fact that even the Gentiles can partake in salvation? After the Roman friends of Horace had long since entered the synagogue and their successors had in turn raised the Orientals to their higher spiritual moods, was it necessary to have the wonderful vision in which Peter in Joppa was shown all kinds of creeping and crawling creatures and the purity of all of God's creatures was interpreted? Did the Roman centurion Cornelius in Caesarea have to be prompted to call for Peter through a vision from God, and did Peter, upon the arrival of the Gentile messengers, have to be reminded of obedience again by a heavenly voice? And when the Apostle, pulled helplessly into the course of events and surprised by the miraculous conclusion in Caesarea, could not refuse baptism

to the Gentiles, did he have to calm the displeasure of the Jerusalem community only by giving a full account of the miracles that had befallen him in Joppa and in the centurion's house?

346/347

From Greece, the spirits of Heraclitus, Plato, Antisthenes, and Zeno brought to the Western world the call to renounce the world, self-denial, and death, through which man attains divinity and eternal rest. Seneca and his Roman predecessors introduced the wisdom of those Greeks into the masses and into their hearts, and from them come the most powerful sayings that move the soul in the Gospels and apostolic letters. So, did it require a vision, in which a Macedonian man called to the Apostle Paul on the other side of the sea (Acts 16:9), while he was in Troas, to help the West?

347

The Acts of the Apostles mentions a Jew named Apollos (18:24-26), who was born in Alexandria, "well-versed in the scriptures," and, fully taught "in the way of the Lord" in Ephesus and recommended to Achaia, where he demonstrated to the Jews from the scriptures that Christ was the promised one. In the first letter to the Corinthians (1:12), he is introduced as a partisan leader alongside Paul and Peter, and after being mentioned again in 3:5, there immediately appears a flutter of colorful combinations of the keyword "wisdom" ("worldly wisdom, cleverness of the world, wisdom of this world, wisdom of the Greeks"), without any of these connections being explained or reasonably related to that man. His person even disappears before all the contrasts for which the types of wisdom are used in a fleeting hurry.

But what does this suddenly rising and quickly disappearing shadow image of a wise man from the Nile city mean against the powerful figure of that school in Alexandria, which, with its science and scriptural research, supported the liberation of the equally powerful circle of Roman allies of the synagogue from the shackles of the law? What little value does that flicker of wisdom in the Corinthian letter have compared to the substantial appearances of the Stoic and Heraclitean logos in the Alexandrian interpretations of the law? And, what is worth noting because the point of the Corinthians' agitation is also directed towards the valiant champions of Christian freedom and knowledge, against the Gnostics of Alexandria, the fleeting meteor of Apollo?

347/348

All these later attempts of the Antoninian period to explain the spread of Christianity among the peoples and to add the foundation for a Christian

science to the glory of the Jewish apostles cannot mislead us in our derivation of the original communities from the circles of Rome and Alexandria. And now, in conclusion, we will attempt to present the development of the original gospel at the emerging characteristic points.

348

2. The Beatitudes and the Elevations of the Law in the Source Texts of Luke and Matthew.

The original Gospel only contains one teaching of Jesus to the people, the parables of the kingdom of heaven, which have been heavily disrupted by later revisers. The sayings that wound the pride of Jewish privilege, which his Jesus employs, are brought about by the attacks that opponents of Jesus have directed against him since his first appearance, and which escalate until the fatal end of the struggle. On the other hand, "Luke the compiler of the original Luke Gospel," which Marcion had in his hands around 140 AD, and later Matthew, found in the expansions of the original Gospel a series of longer speeches that addressed the people directly, and incorporated them into their collections.

The Beatitudes stand at the top, which Luke still partially shares with us in their original form. They are (Luke 6, 20-23) the reward of the poor, to whom the kingdom of God belongs, of the hungry, who will be filled, of the weeping, who shall laugh, and of those who are hated, rejected and reviled for the sake of the Son of Man, for they shall rejoice and leap on that day.

348/349

The joy of these sayings is the same as that with which the Cynics boasted of their nakedness and isolation, and the same elevation above the fullness and pleasure of the world that Seneca described vividly in his Demetrius. The structure of the sentences is patterned after Moses' blessings on the faithful (Deut. chap. 28), but Luke went too far when he allowed himself, based on the original text that frightens the disobedient with curses, to also follow up his Beatitudes with corresponding woes. The swelling tone of the last "blessed" proves that it was meant to be the conclusion of the whole speech. Moreover, the symmetry of both series is too stiff, and the threat feels cold and destroys the original power of "blessed," which holds that the pressure of the world is precisely the source of comfort, and the disharmony that is inherent in the current world order is the guarantee of blessedness. Also, the Cynic who felt exalted by the prevailing disharmony and the rule of wandering had no thought of indulging in the humiliation and punishment of the rich and powerful.

349

Matthew used a version of the original Gospel that had increased the Beatitudes and made it harder to follow. In Luke's last Beatitude, the fourth, the reader can still keep everything in mind and take in the whole series. The theme of the four sayings is the same, and their impression is infallible. However, the source text used by Matthew added spiritual virtues such as mercy, meekness, purity of heart, and peacemaking to the blessedness of suffering and deprivation. This addition, combined with the changing direction of the material, distracted the reader's attention. Matthew and his source text no longer felt that the author's poor, who created the "Blessed" sayings, were already the chosen ones of the world and had the prerequisite that they were not tainted by the pleasures and passions of the world. He himself lets the hungry and destitute "thirst for righteousness." He adds a cumbersome, unnecessary supplement to the Beatitude for those who are reviled, persecuted, and slandered: "if it is done falsely." Moreover, he turns the poor into spiritual poor, the poor in spirit, and stimulates many echoes and mental games through this connection, none of which can be brought to a satisfactory harmony.

The discovery of this dependence of Luke's and Matthew's on previous expansions of the original Gospel will be tested immediately in the section on the contrast between the old and new laws.

350

We found the original form of this contrast in Seneca, and a thoughtful adaptation of it in Marcus Aurelius's self-reflections. Nero's teacher, the prince of humanity, opposed the wording of the law to its highest elevation in its spiritual meaning and called only the fulfillment of it the right satisfaction owed to oneself and the law. Similarly, after a few sayings about the position of believers as the salt and light of the world, the Son of Man in Matthew opposes the commands given to the fathers with his ideal demands and promises them eternity as the right stabilization of the law (Matthew 5:17-48). "I tell you," it says at the beginning of this section, "until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law."

Luke fragmented and only preserved individual pieces of the section, of which we can still get a clear idea of the beautiful original structure in Matthew's collection. He even connects his redaction of the core saying that is supposed to ensure the eternity of the law with the sentence that announces the end of the law ("the law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed") (Luke 16:15-17). Before that, in his compilation of the Sermon on the Mount, he followed his Beatitudes and Woes (Luke 6:27-35) with sayings about selflessness and love for enemies that belong to the magnificent parallel of the old and new,

while he added only the new contrast to the legal regulation of the marital relationship to the high affirmation of the eternity of the law.

350/351

However, whoever had the power of combination to assert the eternal validity of the law down to the smallest dot and to elevate the legal provision that the man must give a divorce certificate to tame his willful wife to such a height that "whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced by her husband commits adultery," immediately created the entire series of antitheses that we find in Matthew.

351

Luke also completely misunderstood the beautiful work of this parallel of the old and new. I am speaking of Marcion's original Luke, who took offense at the eternity that the original introduction of this lesson promised to the law. To him, who brought together numerous variations on the thundering sayings of the original Gospel against statute and law in his work, the eternity of the law seemed to contradict the New, and therefore, as Epiphanius still read in Marcion's Gospel book, he wrote, "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of my word to become void." However, only the law has dots and strokes, not the word, and only the compiler of the current Luke manuscript restored the law according to his sources.

Matthew has preserved the great structure of the section for us, but, as usual, could not resist inserting sayings into it, such as those about oaths, which treat the theme of oaths in a completely different direction. He also spoiled the pure line of ascension by adding to the previous commandment of neighborly love the extreme demand to hate the enemy in the intensification of the neighborly love commanded by the old law towards kindness to the enemy. He could no longer find the inner seriousness of exaggeration, which, in contrast to the old handover of the murderer to the court, also only assigns a harsh word against the brother to the court, the high council, and the fires of hell and thereby wants to bring the high significance of the moral relationship into view. At the beginning of the saying (with the hovering formula "But I say to you"), he allows unprovoked anger to fall to the court, as if the anger caused by the brother were allowed!

351/352

In the saying about divorce (Matthew 5:32), he overlooked that the structure of the new commandment is determined by the direction of the old law and, just as the old law only recognized the man as entitled, the new legislator

also only had him in mind. Therefore, in his redaction of the saying, "whoever divorces his wife causes her to commit adultery," he gave the woman a position that contradicts the starting point of the first author. Finally, by conceding his clause that the man "may divorce his wife in case of adultery," he cut the lifeblood of the saying, which, in contrast to the previous unrestricted entitlement of the man, wanted to bind him by the holiness of the marital relationship.

352

Later, when he comes to that section of the evangelical type where the original Gospel leads Jesus' declaration on the indissolubility of the covenant created by God historically through a testing question of the Pharisees, he brings the saying of the Sermon on the Mount again, this time in the correct form preserved by Luke and once again with the concession of that clause (Matthew 19:9). The saying was very unnecessary here, as in the Gospel of Mark, where a later reviser forced it onto the original Gospel in a very distorted form (Mark 10:12-13), since the matter was already fully resolved in Jesus' dispute with the Pharisees.

352/353

The so-called second Apology of Justin, preserved under his name, which belongs to the age of Antoninus Pius, knew the great antithesis of the old and new law, but did not borrow it from either Matthew or Luke. Instead, the apostolic memoirs, i.e., the Gospel book that the author of that apology used, offered him this masterpiece in the purity of its origin, which, for example, was completely lost in the shared sayings of selfless love in Luke and Matthew. "If you love those who love you," the latter says (Matthew 5:46-47), "what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" The man whose work has been preserved for us in Justin's memoirs knew how to characterize the contemptibility of limited and self-interested love differently and knew where the tax collectors belonged. He had written: "If you love only those who love you, what new thing are you doing? Do not even prostitutes do that? If you only lend to those from whom you hope to receive payment, what new thing are you doing? Do not even tax collectors do that?" In his redaction of both sayings, Luke also spoiled their beautiful symmetry by repeating three times that self-interested love and favor are "common to sinners" (Luke 6:32-34).

353

The misfortune that the artful and profound antithesis of the Old and New suffered already at the hands of the compilers of the present gospel writings reached its climax when this masterpiece fell into the hands of more recent

theologians. They took it upon themselves to assert that a new commandment was to replace the law of Moses. Let us not give too much credit to Calvin, who, in the spirit of his church, could not admit a distinction between Moses and Christ, for his opposition to the most powerful turns of these sayings and his tenderness towards the old covenant, since his language and theological bravery still have a kind of naivety. But the anxiety with which more recent theologians, from De Wette, Lücke, and Tholuck to pure believers, seek to pull Jesus of that section out of the fight against Moses' law and limit it to the quarrel with the Pharisees of his time, as well as the conflict with these inventors of an alleged new legal code, is a sign of a deep decline in Christian spirit and at the same time a great immersion of the German language. I have described both in detail in the Leipzig edition of my Gospel Criticism, as well as in the fourth volume of the Berlin edition, "The Theological Interpretation of the Gospels" (1852).

353/354

And the entire cowardice of these men and the limitation of Jesus to the grumbling with a Pharisaic sophistry invented by them was also included by Strauss in his "Life of Jesus." The "unbiased church interpreters" made it certain for him with their "extended theological horizon" that "Jesus did not think of a revolution of the old religious constitution of his people"; "if he heals on the Sabbath or lets his disciples pluck ears, if he does not introduce fasting and washing at table in his society, that was not against the Mosaic law" but only against the "later pettiness" of the rabbinic legal teachers. And when the thunder of the original gospel and its developer at least impresses the disciple of the "unbiased church interpreters" enough to ascribe to Jesus a direction that goes to "spiritual worship of God and morality," Neander appears to him as a helper in his embarrassment and comforts him that "it can still be imagined that Jesus only held to this side and did not engage in a detailed examination of the ceremonial side."

354/355

The situation was very serious when the saying was created: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." (Matthew 5:17) Of the two works produced during the first half of Hadrian's reign, the Ur-evangelium and the first drafts of the gnostic systems, the latter threatened to surpass the image of the evangelical Jesus who, in his struggle with the people and their leaders, carved his way to victory over the ruins of the law, while at the same time adhering to the unity of divine rule in the old and new covenant. The gnostic revolt against the Jewish God and the break with the past, according to which it, along with its subordinate world spirits, was left to complete dissolution, gained enthusiastic followers in Rome and Alexandria. A reaction arose against this revolutionary current, which did not completely abandon the

connection with the past and wanted to organize and shape the revolution, which was also active in the Ur-evangelium. The Stoics had paved the way for this reaction with their ideal interpretation of the law, which did not sever the bond between its letter and its lofty spiritual meaning, and Seneca had already formed the form for ascending from the old wording of the commandment to the ideal meaning. "Not to abolish, but to fulfill!" was the cry of the man who created the antitheses of Matthew. To call him a Jewish Christian, as the followers of the Tübingen School of Theology do, is very meager and hasty; it is more likely that he was a Roman nourished by Seneca's spirit. The artist who powerfully summed up the idea of dissolution and fulfillment could boldly speak of fulfillment because he was equally confident that he had dissolved the law down to the jot.

355

3. Variations on the Battle Cries of the Ur-Evangelium.

In addition to this direction, which aimed at the organization of the agitated force of life, there was also the self-feeling of the New in images and representations of its freedom from the old precepts. However, in this field, it no longer produced original creations and was only dependent on variations of the patterns of the Ur-evangelium.

Luke has preserved these imitations for us and included them in that travel report of Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, which expands so enormously that the author himself had to remind us of the time and place of the scene a couple of times (13:22 and 17:11). Perhaps he also inserted some of his own material.

355/356

Included among these are the two Sabbath healings (13:10-17 and 14:1-6) - the same battles that had already been won in the Urevangelium long before the journey to Jerusalem, repetitions of battles won. Also, the numerous parables in the same travel account about the preference for the "lost", finally, the repeatedly demanded indifference towards the world, official duties, and reputation, with which Levi left his tax booth at the call of Jesus and gained the salvation of sinners. Thus, the one who wanted to bury his father first before following the new Master is admonished: "let the dead bury their own dead" (Luke 9:59-60). The other, who wanted permission first to arrange his household affairs before joining the Lord, must hear the word, "no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." A third, who also offered himself for discipleship, is warned against the narrowness of the pen (the regulation) in which one feels warm and secure and must hear the word that the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his

head (9:57-58).

356

In addition to the saying about the thorough abolition and eternal preservation of every iota of the law, Matthew has also included the word about coming out of the realm of the dead and renouncing the protective four poles of the regulation from his source texts (Matthew 8:19-22), and to the account of the Urevangelium about the victory of faith of the heathen, Canaanite woman, he also incorporates the variation on this demolition of the wall between the Gentiles and the community, namely the same act of faith of the captain of Capernaum, with which Luke (7:1-10) was satisfied for his work.

As soon as the account of the Urevangelium about these battles against the barrier of the Old was presented, one was most likely prompted to consider defending the desecration of the Sabbath. In the real world, Jesus would have only touched the law, but not brought it down, when he justifies the disciples for plucking ears of grain on the Sabbath, and at another time heals a sick man despite the Sabbath. If he appeals to the authority of David, who grabbed the showbread in times of hunger, he only gains as much that in case of need, the law must give way to necessity or yield to a life-threatening situation. The exception proves the rule.

356/357:

My detailed criticism has shown that later editors of the Ur-Evangelium enriched Jesus' responses with additions and gave direction to his justification through comprehensive principles in a general sense (e.g. Mark 2:27-28, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, so the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath). Unsatisfied with this, new Sabbath stories were created to create the impression of a rule through these repetitions. But in vain! Many individual cases cannot bring the general law, which was the intended expression, into view. The repetition not only splits the attention, but also has a retroactively harmful effect and gives the impression that the first victory was not decisive and the thunder of Jesus' statement did not strike down the opponents.

357

The concerns of a later time were not accessible to the creator of the original report and the faith for which he wrote. What had happened once had power for eternity. Just as the community for which the Ur-evangelist created his image of the power of faith of the Canaanite woman was certain of its universalism, so too was the brotherhood of the Hellenes and Jews, to whom

the great artist dedicated his work, already beyond the law, including that of the Sabbath. Their faith recognized in the creations of the historical former their own flesh and blood, and what in a single image seemed only occasional and random, expanded in their view to general significance and bore the stamp of necessity. The repetitions that Luke has preserved for us could also never gain respect or even attention, and only those few calls for ruthless rejection of the law and its realm of the dead, which Matthew also borrowed from his sources, have been etched into the community's memory through their ingenious power.

However, the creator of the original account and the faith for which he wrote were not accessible to the concerns of later times. What had happened once had the power for eternity. Just as the community for whom the Ur-Gospel writer created his image of the faith power of the Canaanite woman was sure of its universalism, so the brotherhood of Greeks and Jews to whom the great artist dedicated his work had already outgrown the law, even that of the Sabbath. Their faith recognized their own flesh and blood in the creations of the historical author, and what seemed to be brought about only occasionally and coincidentally in one picture expanded in their view to general significance and bore the stamp of necessity. The repetitions that Luke has preserved for us could never have gained much attention, let alone respect, and only those few calls for ruthless rejection of the law and its realm of the dead, which Matthew also borrowed from his sources, have impressed themselves on the community through their witty power.

357/358

4. History of the Childhood of Jesus.

The Tübingen school and the modern theologians inspired by it have not made any progress in understanding the first two centuries of Christianity beyond the church fathers of the beginning of the third century. Their belief in the Jewish origin of Christianity can match that of Tertullian and Irenaeus. The only unique aspect that distinguishes them is the appearance of a historical construction, according to which the national limitation of their Jewish-Christian community is supposedly broken by a supposedly Pauline impulse that came from somewhere unknown. The miracle that those ancient writers made the constant craftsman of the community, the moderns conceal in a single turning point.

358

Meanwhile, they have developed great activity to make the limited field of work they have chosen at the supposedly Jewish-Christian primitive community rich and interesting. They have sunk into that ground of early Jewish-Christian direction products of a later time that emerged at the outermost fringe of the victorious church at the end of the second century, such as adventurous compositions like the Clementine literature, which around the year 200 wanted to transform Gnosticism into Jewish monotheism, and works that never gained importance for the church, even the fabulous groups that Epiphanius tells about around the year 400 that tend towards Judaism. But despite all their diligence, they have not been able to raise living trees from these cuttings and create the miraculous garden in which the remedy for heathenism grew. None of these active men has been able to convince their collaborators. The confusion and lifelessness of the garden, to which each of them devoted his effort to make his meager brushwood green, corresponds to the literary dispute that divides them among themselves, and only in a few points do they agree with their basic views. Above all, this includes their assumption that the Gospel of Mark, the Beatitudes and the sayings of the Gospel of Matthew about the old and new laws, and finally the childhood stories of the first and third Gospel are products of their invented Jewish-Christianity.

358/359

In the two editions of my critique, I earned the right to counter the claim by the founder of the Tübingen School (see Ferd. Chr. Baur's critical investigation of the canonical Gospels", 1847), that these infancy stories of Luke and Matthew are "thoroughly Jewish" and represent the greatest concession to the Judaizers and the prevailing views of birth and childhood in those images, with the tautology that they are thoroughly Christian. I also call them thoroughly Roman.

359/360

What did the swarm of educated and noble Romans who ran into the synagogue of the eternal city do? What did the friend of Horace, whom the poet could not stop with a fleeting word during his haste, do in the Jewish sanctuary? The inner anxieties that drove the Romans to the Orientals were certainly not relieved by watching foreign gestures and ceremonies, or memorizing Asian formulas. Just consider (in the Controversies exercises of that time collected by Seneca's father) the power with which the striving spirits of Rome at that time transformed the Greek treatment of legal collisions into a world of bold moral maxims. Consider how the poets of the new imperial court, Virgil and Horace, and even Ovid, raised their lack of great national traditions and their own raw material with the poetic treasures of Athens and Alexandria. Would the standing guests of the synagogue, who were primarily concerned with the salvation of their own souls, not have

attempted to familiarize themselves with the secret there in native formulas? Should they have only marveled at the foreignness in which they sought relief from their oppressions and not cast a glance into its history? And when the younger Seneca came and took his rhetorical exercise into the service of Greek wisdom and created the image of a divine savior, when Vespasian then interwove the oracle of the Jewish God with the history of the imperial power and under his son, Domitian, a prince of the Flavian house, preferred dedication to Judaism over the glory of the imperial power, did the Judaizers of modern theology still need to rise up the victorious counter-image of the empire in Judea and triumph over the world and the law?

360

For the quiet circle that had formed in Rome since the time of Augustus and had grown under the influence of Alexandria into a potentially dangerous power until the reign of Domitian, a savior and liberator had to come from Judaea. To these expectants, the history in which they saw the preparation for their salvation became more familiar, more intimate, and more manageable than to the born Jews, and in Rome, since the time of Tiberius until Trajan, the form of history had developed that was suitable for the biography of a victor, such as was expected at the two centers of intellectual life at the time.

Valerius Maximus had provided the model for a concise scene in which the statement of a significant man is brought about and stands out strikingly in his collection "Memorable Deeds and Sayings." In his Caesar biographies, Suetonius linked together the sayings and decisions of his heroes in the different situations of their lives and arranged them according to the unity of the theme, so that the individual groups could be provided with summary inscriptions, as later became customary in our Bible translations.

In this way, the creator of the Ur-Gospel designed his work, and from all of Jewish literature, nothing similar or even comparable can be put alongside it. There is nothing to support the assertion of Eusebius that Mark dedicated his Gospel to his foundation, the community in Alexandria, or that Gregory of Nazianzus wrote it for the service of Italy, or that the Syrian church tradition has it that he wrote it in Latin. Even without relying on these late conjectures, I assert that the author, a born Italian who was at home in Rome and Alexandria, composed the work in the world language of the time, Greek.

360/361

In his biographies of the Caesars, Suetonius also showed in the second century how the Son of God, who gave completion to David's kingdom, had

to come into the world, announced and surrounded by signs and wonders, as evidence of his glory. There was no need for Jewish Christians for the evangelical story of the childhood of Jesus to come into existence; nor was it necessary, as Baur believed, for the poet to copy a Jewish messianic image. A genuine Roman, who was not unknown to the allegorist school of Alexandria, was the man to create this work, which in the name of the Master simultaneously took possession of the past for him and presented him as the chosen master of the times before him.

361

He was indeed also an interpreter of the past. To the child still in the mother's womb, he lets the one who should prepare the way for him offer his greeting, even while that person was still in his mother's womb. The future one inspired the forerunner in advance. John was a gift from heaven to an elderly couple, the late-born child of a priest. For the sake of the one who was to bring the light of heaven into the world, a time that had lost its generative power and become incapable of reconciling with heaven was blessed with new life. The child in the manger is the punishing contrast to the self-might of the world, and at the same time, glorifies the helplessness of the earthly as the source of rebirth.

361/362

So far, Luke. In Matthew, the understanding that the wise men from the East have of the promised star shines through, something that points to the recognition of the wisdom of heathenism that leads to the community of the future. And when the foreigners come to lay their treasures at the feet of the newborn with homage, it looks as though they are placing the child, to whom the world belongs, into the inheritance of antiquity. However, the Jewish homeland is headed for its destruction. At the cradle of the child, piles of bloody sacrifices fall victim to their hostility. It must be hidden in a foreign land, and even when the persecutor died, it had to say goodbye to its cradle and go to the foreign "circle of nations" (Galilee). Herod, the persecutor, over whose grave the spirit of enmity still lives on, is depicted so dark, terrifying, and powerful that he represents the image of the world power as a whole, which brings suspicion and fear of death to the new.

362

One should read Ovid's Fasti and Metamorphoses and the brilliant passages in Virgil's Aeneid to see how they transformed the early history of Rome into signs of its future and Caesarean completion, and one should not find it impossible that Roman Christians skilled in allegorical art had a hand in the elaboration of these stories of Jesus' childhood.

5. Gnosticism in the Fourth Gospel.

The success of the Ur-gospel and the dissemination of the initial formulations of gnostic systems belong to the beginning of the reign of Hadrian. In the former, the conqueror of the law moves with the people on common ground, and only the hostility of his superiors forces him, step by step, to a victorious rejection of their invocation of legal and national privilege until, after the most brilliant triumphs and before succumbing to the hatred of his enemies, he proclaims the downfall of the national theocracy and of the entire national polity. The Jesus of the Gnostics, on the other hand, regards the Jewish God as only a subordinate and hostile spirit and immediately launches an attack against him to divest him of his armor, the ordinance, and to disarm him from the outset.

352/363

To the author of the original version of the Gospel of Luke, Jesus' approach in the Urevangelium was still too gentle and cautious. Therefore, he welcomed the repetitions of collisions with the law that he found in the expanding works of his predecessors and incorporated them into his collection to enliven the scene with fiery calls for breaking with the old. In the spirit of Gnostic harshness, he has his Jesus immediately thunder the verdict of rejection over Jewish people and cult at his first appearance, and declare the break that gradually emerges in the struggle with the parties in the Urevangelium in a deadly way. As we learn from Tertullian's complaints against Marcion's gospel, he placed that late incident in Nazareth, which confirms the Urevangelium's statement that a prophet is not honored in his hometown, at the beginning of his work and gave the rebellion of the people against Jesus' preaching a bloody character, which only comes in the last moment before the crucifixion in the Urevangelium. Even more, Luke uses the distinctive expressions of the Urevangelist in his description (Luke 4:29) of how the citizens of Nazareth, in their fury, led Jesus out of the city and onto the hilltop (to throw him down to the depths), when depicting how they took Jesus out of the city to Golgotha.

363

The author of the gospel that occupies the fourth place in the biblical collection, whom we will call the Fourth for brevity, attempted to systematically carry out the Gnostic opposition to Judaism in his writing. But lacking the original spirit of those creators of the first religious history, he turned the certain and measured approach that the Urevangelist takes in the struggle against the law into a monotonous, screaming quarrel that does not move from its place and reaches its highest peak at the beginning. His Jews are a "carnal" people - murderers who prefer to throw stones in barren

dispute, finally a group of children of the devil.

Thus, he makes his Lord's public ministry begin with the final act of war in the Urevangelium. He must hurry to Jerusalem, provoke the fury of the Jews and their authorities with the temple cleansing, and prophesy his death and resurrection with the incomprehensible reference to his body that would conquer death after three days ("Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up").

364

He later makes no mention of the institution of the Lord's Supper, nothing of the offering of his blood and body in the cup and bread of the Passover evening of the Urevangelium. Instead, his Jesus, having barely "found" the first disciples, must reveal himself as the true wine dispenser at the wedding in Cana and in the dispute with his mother, who asked him to intervene in the wine shortage, he points to the connection of the wine offering, which he eventually grants, with his suffering with a confused and incomprehensible reference to his death ("my time has not yet come").

An equally confused tangle of analogies and antitheses occurs when his Jesus, in the dispute with the people after the miraculous feeding, relates the true bread, which he will give with his flesh for the life of the world, to the bread of the same, and after piling up offense upon offense, he sets up the new antithesis that the spirit gives life but the flesh is of no use.

The Gnostics speak understandably when they make the God of the Jews a jealous being who fights the son and envoy of the Most High to the death. In contrast, for the Fourth, who remains faithful to the type of the evangelical story to such an extent that he (ch. 4, 22) makes salvation come from the Jews, it is a confused echo of the Gnostic view and at the same time an excessive exaggeration of it when he calls Satan (ch. 8, 44) the father of the Jews and opposes his father to him.

The Christ of the Gnostics, with his spiritual (pneumatic) wisdom, throws down the psychical, merely soulful structure of the Jewish legislator, but he nevertheless gains from a circle of spiritually minded individuals the germ of his community. In the Fourth, the spiritual teacher cannot escape from the contrast with the fleshly sense of his listeners, the people, and his own disciples and only speaks powerfully when no one understands him. He becomes great through the misunderstandings he causes; his self-esteem is raised when his words are in vain, and on the pedestal of exaggerated contrasts and increasing offenses, his height comes into view.

365

The author of the original gospel of Luke truly depicts Jesus as the center of the kingdom of heaven. He turns the world order upside down, disrupts the legalistic relationships of life, populates his kingdom with sinners, and sends the righteous to where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. He is a center from which the rays of life emanate and to which they return. In contrast, the Fourth Gospel's depiction of Jesus is a center without a circle or rays, an atom standing in a lifeless void and seeing only malicious, wicked, and devilish children of Satan. The last of our biblical evangelists created the illusion of a sea of light by repeatedly presenting his point of light.

345/366

It is a delight for this evangelist to revel in contrasts, letting his Lord be in opposition to his own spiritual power and to the miracles of the fathers in history and those he had just performed (chapter 6, 26, 30). And yet, this same evangelist performs miracle upon miracle, which are meant to surpass the depictions of the previous gospel literature and form a transition to the exaggerations of the apocryphal literature of the third century. For example, the daughter of Jairus, who in the original gospel had just passed away when Jesus revived her, was surpassed by the raising of the young man from Nain by Luke, who had already been carried out of the city when Jesus revived him. In the Fourth Gospel, this was surpassed by the raising of Lazarus, who had been dead and buried for four days, spreading the stench of death when his reviver arrived. The Fourth Evangelist even brought this long-deceased person back from the bosom of Abraham, where the sight of his happiness prompted the rich man (Luke 16, 27-30), who was suffering in hell, to ask Abraham to send the blessed Lazarus to his five brothers to testify to them and convince them to repent. Despite Abraham's wise response that if they did not listen to Moses and the prophets, they would not believe even if someone were to rise from the dead, the Fourth Gospel presented the return of Lazarus from the world of the dead as evidence. I have also discovered a similar ghostly doubling of a figure in Luke in the Fourth Gospel's Nathanael, whom Jesus recognized as the true Israelite when he was alone under the fig tree, unbeknownst to him. The true Israelite appears in Luke as Zacchaeus, who had earned the greeting with which Jesus called him as a true son of Abraham by climbing a fig tree to see him.

366

The Fourth Gospel, which was written around the middle of Marcus Aurelius' reign, not only had the works of the Alexandrian Philo in mind, as I have shown in my writing on Philo, but also studied the Gnostics who had preceded him in applying Philo's doctrine of the Logos to the heavenly world of Christian spirituality. In particular, he found the main determinations that govern his introduction to the Gospel and the words of Jesus in the system of

Valentinus. Valentinus was the original creator in this field. He first brought together the spirits that idealistically prefigure the unfoldings of Christian life in the upper heavenly world and guide them in history down here, and ordered them into his witnessing pairs. Grace, which had been a companion to the original ground from eternity, gave birth to the Begotten and Truth; from the Begotten springs the Logos and Life; these two beget humanity and the Church; the fruit of the latter is the Paraclete and Faith. In the spirit of Philo, the Fourth Gospel made the Logos the center of this heavenly category table, and added to it the spirits of life, truth, and grace as its attributes in its historical activity, and made the Paraclete the preserver and completer of his creation.

366/367

Without causing offense, he could introduce the basic formulas of Philo and the Gnostics and insert them as lights into his Gospel, as the apologists who defended the new faith in the Antonine period had elevated the Logos of the Stoics and Heraclitus from the ancient Greek sources of Philo and the Gnostics and introduced it into the evangelical view. They had also prepared the way for him by attributing to the Logos revealed in the Gospel a great historical activity already in antiquity and deriving from his inspirations the discoveries of Socrates, Heraclitus, and their like, which contained "a part" of Christianity. This established the bridge to the Fourth Gospel.

367

I conclude my work with the proof that Gnosticism and, with it, the fusion of Heracleitus' and Stoic wisdom with Philo, also dominate the so-called Pauline letters. This will lead us to the answer to the question of who Paul really was and whether he was the miracle-worker who allegedly shook the early Jewish-Christian community by calling the "uncircumcised." First, let us consider the image of the Gentile apostle as presented to us in the biblical Acts of the Apostles.

6. The Paul of the Acts of the Apostles.

However, as I have argued in my "Critique of the Acts of the Apostles" (Berlin 1850) against the Tübingen defender of the church tradition (Baur: "Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ," Stuttgart 1845), this Paul was created at the same time as the Peter of the same New Testament history book, as a copy of the original, which advances in the sublime figure of the apostle prince.

367/368

Both apostles open the gates of the early church to the Gentiles, both are great miracle workers, and both are under divine protection in danger and peril. However, in all these matters, Peter has the upper hand; Paul follows in his footsteps. The former paves the way for the acceptance of the Gentiles; the latter is justified in his similar venture by the authority of Peter. Paul is only allowed to perform a miracle when the head of the apostles proves himself to be the first fruit of the calling and convinces friend and foe of his authority through such a miracle. The reports of both their miracles agree in sentence structure and testify (incidentally) in the harmony of the slightest stylistic turns to their imitation based on the descriptions of the great deeds of Jesus in the original gospel. Even in prison, Peter must first be distinguished by divine assistance before Paul can see the doors of the prison open in the same distress through divine power.

368

The first outward act of Peter is his unmasking of the magician Simon, who confused the Samaritans (Acts 8:9), and the first outward success of Paul is his miraculous punishment of the magician Elymas, who wanted to stifle the seeds of faith in Paphos, Cyprus (Acts 13:8-11). Just as Peter completed the baptismal work of Philip among the Samaritans, a mixed race that took an undecided position between Jews and Gentiles, by giving them the gift of the Holy Spirit through laying on of hands (Acts 8:14-17), Paul gives completion to the disciples of John, an unknown group that shimmered between Christians and Jews, by giving them the Holy Spirit through laying on of hands for the baptism of Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18:24, 19:6).

368/369

The mechanism of this historical structure requires that Paul enters the field of work among the Gentiles only after Peter, enlightened by a vision, has received into the church the Roman centurion Cornelius and his household as the firstfruits of the Gentiles. Despite this heavenly justification, however, Paul loses himself in the difficulties of his office and is unable to control a dispute that disrupts his work in Antioch over the question of the necessity of circumcision. He is sent to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles and elders and seek their decision on the dispute. And even before the court of the early church, it is not he who brings about the solution. Rather, after the dispute has swayed back and forth at first, Peter prepares the decision by recalling the signs of Joppa and Caesarea, and then James gives the casting vote and creates, with reference to Peter's report, the real decision which absolves the Gentiles from the necessity of circumcision. In his conclusions, the original apostle takes no account of Paul's experiences and reports.

369

Paul stands before the bar of the apostolic council, must wait for the decision, and even hears that the foundation of the universal community is nothing more than the restoration of the fallen hut of David, that is, nothing more than an expanded Judaism. The humiliated one must bow even deeper. The court of the early church does not reject his procedure, but it does not approve it unreservedly either, believing that the disputed question can only be settled by establishing four "necessary" provisions that Paul had not yet discovered and whose observance would prove that the Gentiles were serious about conducting themselves properly. And he must accept regulations that he would classify as weak and meager foundations of humanity according to his letters. Indeed, he must witness that Gentile Christians are equated with the strangers of the old covenant through the obligation to observe these four provisions, who, though they did not participate in everything legal, were still obliged to show some respect for the holiness of the chosen people.

369/370

For his own part, the apostle to the Gentiles proves to be a strict follower of the law. He takes on vows that require him to visit the temple in Jerusalem for their fulfillment. In his speeches, he defends himself against the accusation of being opposed to the law, which he has not given cause for in the course of the Acts of the Apostles. Before the Jews who rose up against him in Jerusalem, whose changing form ranged from Christian-believing Israelites to a mob and finally to foreign agitators, he appeals (22:3-21) to the mission he received to preach to the Gentiles, which was imposed on him against his will by a higher, superior power, and the last decisive call of the Lord came to him while he was in the temple praying.

370

In his interrogations before Felix, governor of Judea, and then before Festus, his successor, and even before the council of the high priests, interrogations modeled after Jesus' interrogations before Pilate, Herod, and the high priests, he stoops to appealing to the sectarian spirit of the Pharisees, whom he had otherwise belonged to. He protests against the accusation that he teaches something new and asserts that he is only persecuted for his teaching on the resurrection by the Sadducee members of the council.

Throughout all the twists and turns of these speeches, the assurance shines through that he is not a violent man, not the destroyer who wanted to break the yoke of the law and destroy the worldly elements of the covenant. He is not a innovator, apostate, or deceiver. He does not teach anything except

what is written in the law and the prophets. His hope for the promise given to the fathers is common to him with the twelve tribes of his people.

And just as the Pilate of Luke (23:15) declares to the high priests and leaders of the people, after Herod sent Jesus back to him, "I find no fault in this man concerning those things of which you accuse him, nor does Herod," so Festus and Agrippa say to each other after the latter had his conversation with Paul (Acts 26:31), "This man has done nothing deserving of death."

370/371

He is also innocent of the fact that his message reached the Gentiles. Although his calling to be a tool for the Gentiles has priority over his mission to the children of Israel in the Acts of the Apostles (9:15) before he is sent, he follows Peter's principle (Acts 3:25-26), according to which the message of the Resurrected One first belongs to the Jews. On his missionary journeys, he always turns first to the Jews and, in their reluctance, drives them with force to the Gentiles. Only the hatred of the Jews and their obstinacy make the Gospel the property of the nations. It is a coincidence to which they owe the new message; only when the Jews have dispossessed themselves of salvation and made it ownerless can it be transferred to the Gentiles. Even in Rome, he follows this law of his office, turning first to the Jews and threatening them, when he saw the hearts of his fellow tribesmen hardened, that he would find a hearing among the Gentiles.

371

7. Gnosticism in the Pauline Letters.

So, would the apostle who speaks and zealously writes in the letters attributed to him be the real, historical Paul? That would be a very hasty conclusion.

Dr. Baur may want to give the written letter and his colleagues every opportunity, and, after giving "conviction" room to maneuver, that "the historical truth can only be on one side or the other" given the great gap between the two portrayals of the apostle's personality and work in his letters and in the Acts of the Apostles, he makes the concession that "no too harmful conclusion should be drawn from their special design for their credibility in general" (see his aforementioned writing, p. 5, 13).

However, when it comes to seriousness and the fact that the pragmatism of the Acts of the Apostles has produced its own separate history that excludes any other image of the apostle, the new question arises as to whether the opposing image that appears in the letters may also be the product of a

deliberately planned scheme.

371/372

Yes, as my "Critique of the Pauline Epistles" (3 volumes, Berlin 1850-52) has shown, it was developed in opposition to the view whose completion was preserved for us in the Acts of the Apostles. The decades from the last years of Hadrian to the first half of the reign of Marcus Aurelius were occupied by both the progressive redaction of the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline epistolary literature, and both circles had sharply focused on each other in their work. At the height of this conflict, the Galatians letter sketched a portrait of the apostle that was directed against a redaction of the Acts of the Apostles, which was very close to the one we now have.

372

I would like to briefly recall my earlier remarks on how intentionally Paul of that letter extols his gospel as personal property, and his vocation as an individual one. He emphasizes how, as a result of his calling at Damascus, he did not go to Jerusalem, but to Arabia, and only after spending three years in Damascus did he go to Jerusalem, where he did not, as one would have expected, associate with the circle of the apostles, but only spoke with Peter and stayed with him for only fourteen days. He solemnly assures that he saw no other apostles than James, the Lord's brother.

With the same emphasis, he designates his trip to Jerusalem after fourteen years as his second one, so that one does not think of frequent contact with the original community and any influence of the same on his preaching in Cilicia and Syria, and on this occasion, he was only granted the apostleship among the Gentiles alongside Peter's among the circumcised in a sort of contract, as one had to acknowledge his successes and his vocation.

Consider seriously the conscientiousness of this chronological emancipation of the apostle to the Gentiles from the original community and its leaders, and one will come to appreciate the value of the novel that the Tübingen School and, with them, Renan construct on the basis of the old theological harmonization of the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles over time.

372/373

I must now answer the question of when the Paul of the Acts of the Apostles and the letters came into being. The handle for the solution to this chronological puzzle is provided by the contacts of the Pauline letters with the formulas of the Gnostic systems, and by setting out my argument at one point of the Letter to the Philippians (2:6-8), I hope that the reader who has

followed me so kindly through my interpretations of Greek and Roman authors will also hold this decisive philological investigation in good stead.

373

In that passage of the aforementioned letter, the humiliation of Christ is contrasted with the spurned plunder that could have granted him equality with God. However, the author of the letter assumes at the same moment that Christ already existed in the form of God before his debasement to earthly appearance and was equal to God, so that the choice that was presented to him as temptation in his heavenly home before his descent to human form is impossible.

In the system of Valentinus, as I have described it in my account of the Hadrianic age, this temptation is real and properly grounded. Here, Sophia, a member of the divine ideal world, could actually feel the urge to grasp the supreme Father and seize his divine greatness. She is a member of the heavenly world, but only one and, moreover, the last of the developments in which the fullness of the divine has been unfolded. For her, the self-awareness of lack was understandable, and she could succumb to the desire for satisfaction with the primordial ground from which she had emerged. She could attempt the plunder; but the Christ of the Letter to the Philippians, who already sits at the side of the Father in the divine form of the Son, does not and need not grasp the idea of such a violent act.

373/374

The debasement/renunciation (χένωσις), to which the Jesus of the supposedly Pauline letter submitted instead of committing the robbery against the divinity, is a floating expression that strives in various directions without finding any aim or rest. Its home is in the system of Valentinus, where the unfortunate desire of Sophia to grasp the Absolute as a miscarriage outside the heavenly ideal world falls into nothingness/void (χένωμα) and there develops as a luminous atom into the world and the future scene of that which reconnects the miscarriage with the heavenly world.

374

Ferd. Chr. Baur, who does not want to separate the Philippians from the authentic works of Paul too much, holds the matter in an undecided suspension, which gives some relief to the horror of a too late composition time, when he believes he finds "the stamp of Gnosis" in it. The letter presupposes rather the complete systematic elaboration of Gnosis; Gnostic formulas are not taken up in it, as Dr. Baur puts it, "in a still unbiased

manner", but are processed with an explicit correction. With a polemical reference to Valentinus' system, the author of the letter allows his Christ to do voluntarily what the Gnostic Sophia experiences as a result of her sinful self-exaltation. The self-emptying into the form of lowliness, which appears in the system as a metaphysical necessity, has become in the letter a free historical act.

Dr. Baur would also like to keep the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians with their Gnostic echoes as far back as possible from the depths of the second century.

The Pleroma, which in Colossians 1:19-20 decided to dwell in Christ and to reconcile everything to itself, is Valentinus' united Pleroma, in which the fullness of the births of the original ground unfolds. The "manifold" character of Wisdom, which reveals to the Church the heavenly dominions and powers (Eph. 3:10), is only at home in the system, where the painful passage of the birth of Sophia through a series of manifestations and her return with the pneumatic content of the Church to the heavenly ideal world also has this meaning. In the letter to the Ephesians, however, where Wisdom is the absolute and in its own way unique revelation of the divine, it is a phrase that fades away into nothingness.

375

Likewise, the image in the Ephesians letter (1:8-10), where Christ descends to the lowest regions of the earth to fill everything and leads the captives of the earth to the heights as the reward for his victory, is only found in the system of Marcion, where the descent into hell to liberate the spirits of freedom held captive by the envious God of the law has a meaning.

According to the analogy of all similar turbulent times in which a philosophical system of theology was employed, metaphysics were exploited for faith in a free divine plan, logical categories received meaning for the defense of revelation, and the rigid necessity of speculative construction learned the pliability of a support for a system of moral freedom. Therefore, we cannot agree with Baur's assumption that the two letters to the Ephesians and Colossians were written at a time when "the recently circulating Gnostic ideas still appeared as harmless Christian speculations." The fundamental ideas and formulas of a metaphysical system always become part of the conception and language of a shaken community only after the first hostile clash is over. Only then can we witness the spectacle of metaphysical buzzwords that have been incorporated into theological language, which, with their innate stubbornness, resist their unfamiliar surroundings and disrupt the coherence.

375/376

Since the days of Irenaeus, for one and a half millennia, the connection between the Pauline letters and the Gnostics has been explained by the use and distortion of their sayings by the heretics. We owe to the founder of the Tübingen School the proof that the Gnostic implications in several of those letters are rather to be explained by the influence of an already ongoing Gnostic movement. However, he still stopped short with a certain hesitation about the beginnings of this movement and stopped doubting before the two letters to the Corinthians and the writings to the Romans and Galatians. Yet, their authors were also under the influence of Gnosis, namely the developed Gnosis of the second century.

376

A true tangle of Gnostic images is the contrast between the divine wisdom hidden in mystery and the wisdom of the lords of this world in the First Corinthians (2:6-8). The latter are the world-creating spirits who rule the peoples, their creatures, as property. These "angels, rulers, and powers" are referred to in the Letter to the Romans (8:38) as powerless enemies of the believers and their Lord; in the First Corinthians (15:38), Jesus will one day lay them at the feet of the Father, and only the echo of the enmity that the Jewish god of the Gnostics showed to the vanquisher of the law can explain why the law is reduced to the elements of this world in the Letter to the Galatians (4:3) and in the Letter to the Colossians (2:8, 20). The author of the First Corinthians has in mind this delusion and rage of the Jewish god when he speaks of the lords of this world in the first passage mentioned, saying they did not know the wisdom that appeared in the Lord, or they would not have crucified him.

376/377

The emphasis with which the author of the same letter (1:23) opposes his preaching of the crucified Christ to the wisdom of this world can only be explained by his opposition to Gnostic Docetism. Like his contemporaries, he saw in that admonition of the Gnostic masters to their disciples to raise the course of the gospel story and its climax, the crucifixion, to an inner history, to spiritual knowledge and an experience of faith, a lowering of the crucifixion to a mere illusion and wanted to make the fact all the more the center of his preaching. (By the way, Ovid teaches us, when he made the murderers of Caesar strike only a mere image (simulacra nuda), while the man himself (vir, ibid.) wrested himself from the daggers of his enemies and was carried up by the divine mother's spirit, how close antiquity was to reducing the bloody catastrophe of a divine founder to a mere illusion in contrast to the spirit's soaring from the fetters of finitude.)

377

The fruits that the authors of the First Corinthians and the two Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians gained from their study of Philo's works have already been compiled in my treatise on this master of allegorical scriptural interpretation. Here, I only present the passing remark in which the apostle calls the Galatians (chapter 4, verse 9) "people who know God, or rather are known by God" (γνόντες τὸν θεόν, μᾶλλον δέ γνωσθέντες ὑπὸ θεοῦ), in contrast to Philo's original text in his treatise on the "Cherubim" (page 127). The Alexandrian philosopher develops the idea that humans do not own what they possess in terms of spirit, reason, and sensation, but rather receive them as gifts from the Creator and are thus under His control. In the context of this explanation, he says: "we are known more than we know" (γνωριζόμεθα μᾶλλον ἢ γνωρίζομεν). This is the origin and motivation of the saying.

An exclamation of triumph with which the author of the Epistle to the Romans refers to his discussion on law and grace in his text, specifically in the section which the arguments from the ninth chapter onwards were added at different times, takes us to the era in which this letter literature was written.

His question (Romans 3:31), "Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith?" and the answer, "Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law" (stabilize it) belong to the same period as that masterwork of thought preserved in Matthew's Gospel, which in the most thorough transformation of the law does not allow even the slightest jot of it to be lost. The question in the Epistle to the Romans has the same meaning as the admonition in the Gospel of Matthew: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law." And the confidence of one who is sure of the stability of the law in the victory over it corresponds to the boldness that gains the completion and preservation of the old commandments in their dissolution.

377/378

The Gnostics' attack on the law prompted the question in the Epistle to the Romans and the admonition in the Gospel of Matthew, and the stabilization of the law in the Epistle to the Romans and its completion in the Gospel of Matthew are the result of the rebellion against the innovators who seemed to go too far in fulfilling the community's and its leaders' desire for a calm organization.

378

Critical times have always experienced a similar shift in mood. In the initial force of the Reformation, Luther wrote, "we do not want to hear or see Moses," and Melanchthon in his draft of the doctrine of faith: "it must be acknowledged that the Decalogue is also antiquated," and a few years later, Luther "established" the commandments in his catechism. Zinzendorf, who called Moses' law a "horse cure" of past times, had to experience that his community, in the confusion that the revelry in the grace that had become their own nature brought upon them, quietly returned to the commandments. Kant was alarmed by his own heroic act of expelling the Creator and Lawgiver from the real world and sought to defuse the charge of irreligiosity and lawlessness by driving the iron rod of the categorical imperative into the emancipated souls.

The "do not think" of the Gospel of Matthew and the "we stabilize the law" of the Letter to the Romans are meant to remedy a similar eerie feeling, which has disturbed critical ages so far, and to ward off the accusation that the striving spirits are complicit in the excesses of a new freedom movement. The repeated questions of the Letter to the Romans (6, 1. 15), "shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" and the answer, "God forbid!" are meant to absolve the congregation of participation in the degeneration that was said to have been noticed among the followers of the new freedom and to give the accusers more justification than the ascetic members of the Gnostic associations deserved.

378/379

Despite all this, the author of the Letter to the Galatians in his clumsy and often misguided treatment of the theme of the Letter to the Romans, could not completely escape the domination of Gnostic formulas. For example, he counts the law among the elements of this world, i.e., the order and time of those middle spirits who kept the nations in discipline until the arrival of Christ. And the authors of the two twin letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, despite all the Catholicization of Philonic and Gnostic formulas, lived even more in the imagery of Alexandria, and the power of the painting, as Christ (Col. 2:14) nails the ordinance that testified as a handwriting against the faithful to the cross, recalls the audacity of the original Gnostic rebellion.

379

The wisdom of the man whose still condensed mass of light and world interpretation later broke forth in Plato's theory of creation and in the morality of the Stoics - I speak of Heraclitus - is most purely processed in the statements from the foundation of the Letter to the Romans. Therefore, the originality of these statements has always had a stimulating effect in the

previous course of church history, provoked criticism, and also brought forth a brilliant episode of renewal in Luther's equally original spirit.

Both sides that I am now juxtaposing move in the language of imagery. The author of the first chapters of the Letter to the Romans saw the solution to the world puzzle in the historical fact of the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ, while the wisdom of the Ephesians interprets the fate, the suffering, and the ultimate satisfaction of humanity as a part of the life of the world nature. Mythology is the form in which the explanation of the world order appears on both sides; the Apostle offers the miracle of an event and divine counsel to faith; the ancient sage places the guilt of the soul and its solution in the conflict of nature and its striving for the restoration of its own nature.

379/380

But on this common ground of the language of imagery, the philosophical work of the philosopher has the significance of the original soul, which has received an individual embodiment in the evangelical form of salvation. Therefore, even though the philosophical creation appears in the garb of poetry, it has the advantage of an apparent comprehensibility and universality for itself, according to which it provides us with useful services in explaining the biblical mystery.

380

Thus we understand the Apostle's saying about the divine act that has locked all creatures under sin when we remember its general presupposition, Heraclitus' statement about the guilt of finiteness that has drawn the immortal and infinite into its confines on its way down and wants to hold it there. The historical mythology of the Apostle, that sin and through it, death came into the world through one man, corresponds to the natural mythology of Heraclitus, according to which life is a fate debt that our ancestors have passed on to us, and which we must repay in death. On the way and the flight upwards and in the dying off, which according to Heraclitus leads to the rest of the infinite and forms the eternal law of life, Christ has gone ahead of the Apostle, and when the Christian, baptized into the death of the Savior, descends into the grave with him and reaches life, he experiences the truth of Heraclitus' statement that only in death does man attain completion.

380/381

8. Peace agreement between Peter and Paul.

The fact that since the Hadrianic period up to the first years of Marcus

Aurelius, it was possible to link a literary tradition of letters to the name of Paul, which occupied a series of active and intellectual men for about forty years, was only possible if the figure of this fighter was already given for a universal community and for freedom from the law in faith. The effort made by the author of the Acts of the Apostles to highlight the preeminent greatness of the Apostle Peter in relation to him is also evidence of this image. However, this does not exclude the fact that in the letters the image of the hero received more significant features, just as the Acts of the Apostles received several adaptations to the glory of the original apostle.

381

In this competition between both circles, Paul (1 Corinthians 15:9-10) won the prize, that he "labored more abundantly than they all" (in which the author of the letter speaks of the Apostle's own work and that of his envious predecessors as a closed chapter belonging to the past). In the letter to the Ephesians (chapter 3, verse 5), the group "of the holy apostles" also appears as a group standing in the distance of history and he himself (verse 8) as the "least of all the saints". He, the smallest and least of the circle of apostles, is the historical confirmation of the saying that the last shall be first and calls himself (1 Corinthians 15:8) an "untimely birth" (ektroma), meaning a miscarriage of fear and distress, an expression that can only be explained from Valentinianism, where Sophia, the last link in the development of divine fullness, gives birth to a miscarriage (ektroma) when trying to grasp the primordial being, which falls into emptiness and becomes the universe and the place of reconciliation. His descent from the tribe of Benjamin, which the author of the first appendix to the foundation of the letter to the Romans (chapters 9-11) attributes to him in the first verse of the last chapter, gives him the same position in relation to the original apostles as that son of Jacob held among his siblings in the order of birth. He is the last, the unexpected, the conclusion, the beloved youngest child. His Latin name, Paulus, also expresses the smallness that the above passages of the letters put in contrast to the greatness to which grace raised him.

381/382

This latecomer and late riser, from the moment he entered the life of history, had as his companion the apostolic prince of the original community, the pioneer of the Acts of the Apostles, Peter. The group of both was created in Rome and only gained a significance in the West that was never granted to it in the East, where the philosophical world of the Fourth Gospel reigned alongside the neutral content of the original Gospel.

382

During the fertile period of the emperors, which we have described in the preceding sections, two powerful spirits worked in the eternal city, acting against each other and at the same time converging in a striving for universality that eventually led to their unification. One of these forces aimed at centralization, making itself the center of the world, demanding general obedience and submission, preserving the traditions of holy Rome amid the ruins of peoples and their idols, and also building on the positive and given aspects in its reforms, such as the progressive development of law.

However, without the other force, which freed the spirits from their national and religious barriers, that centralizing power would not have been able to accomplish its work, and an impenetrable barrier would have stood in its way at every point in the world. This liberating force made the intellectual material of the world fluid and set it in motion, causing the hard atoms to come together and become malleable and useful for a new order.

382/383

As soon as Greek wisdom and Jewish law had formed their alliance in the Flavian era, the forces that were at work in the imperial world began to work in the new community as well. The Caesaric principate found its reflection in Peter, the prince of the apostles. This Kephas, meaning the rock, is ranked first among the three whom Jesus takes with him into the room of Jairus' daughter and onto the mountain of transfiguration in the original gospel, and answers Jesus' question to his disciples about what they think he is with the response, "You are the Christ." Gradually, he became the bearer of the positive, tradition, and proper community order. Finally, in one of those expansions that Matthew used in compiling his gospel material, around the middle of Antoninus's reign, he became the rock on which the Master wants to build his church, and it will be impregnable even to the gates of hell.

383

In opposition to the need for tradition and conformity, which became too restrictive for some, a rival emerged in the form of Paul, who discarded adherence to tradition, boldly broke with the law, and conquered the West for the crucified one. Paul became the vessel into which the community collected all useful things from the treasures of Philonic allegory and bold Gnostic innovations. The conflict between the two figures culminated in the Acts of the Apostles, which Luke appended to his Gospel, and in the Galatians, which summarized Paul's polemic against the law and mounted the most heated attack on the belittling of the heathen apostle's reputation and person in Acts.

The question of where the balance of historical truth lies is entirely irrelevant

to us, and regarding the traditional view, which sees the elevation of the apostle-prince to the rock of the church and the reverence with which he guarded the bond between the new community and the God-state of the Old Testament in the Acts of the Apostles as the work of Jewish Christians, I only reiterate my previous statement that these allegedly authentic Jewish traits are genuinely Roman.

383/384

The Roman was no less committed to the positive and the statutory than the Jew. In the person of the world ruler, he had the connection between the supreme pontificate and princely power in mind; his art of legislation consisted of merging the old with the inevitable new; he could, therefore, also relate quite well to the image of a worldly apostle prince and satisfy humanity's innate desire, the creature's sigh for connection with tradition. For him, Judea had become what Ilium was for the world's history of a Virgil and Ovid. Moreover, it is crucial that, according to the holy primeval history of the New Testament, no Israelites or Jewish names emerge in the community. The names of the extensive circle of followers who send and receive greetings in the allegedly Pauline letters are Roman or Greek; the Gnostics and apologetic writers of the second century, such as Justin and Athenagoras, are Greek or Roman; the martyr narrative knows (after the supposedly apostolic martyrs) no Jews, and from the time of Tertullian to the conversion of St. Augustine, we hear of no significant Jewish men who dedicated themselves to the service of the new church. From the days of Horace and Augustus to the highest point of fermentation under Hadrian, the Jews were an important ferment, but the productive force came from the Roman-Greek circle.

384

The changing forms that the small and later arrived figure had to take on as the defender of freedom alongside the rock of the original circle of disciples testify to the struggle of the statutory and legal with the impulses of originality and freedom that shook the community since the days of the Ur-gospel and the Gnostics. The Paul of the Acts of the Apostles fulfills his career in the shackles of the statutory and is the living testimony to the victory of the legalistic. In him Catholicism is announced, which became the master of the community in the last quarter of the second century. However, my earlier criticism of the Pauline letters makes it possible for me to make visible in them the impulses of the hierarchy, the breaking off of previous struggles, and the coincidence of the great questions from which the victor of the century emerged. In this respect, the two Corinthian letters are particularly important.

384/385

The hierarch of the first of these letters uses a fictitious and superficially described case of dispute to assert himself as the sole arbitrator of church life. He pours out his ridicule from the fourth chapter onwards over those who want to be something and mean something without him. Yes, I would like, he mocks them, if you were already kings, then I could hope to climb to the summit of power with you. But he himself wants to come soon, measure himself against the power of the inflated ones, and carry war and peace in both hands in front of him; no! now already, in spirit and absent, he appears as an all-powerful ruler and, in the midst of the supposedly openly rebellious community, he hands over the fabricated criminal to Satan. In conclusion, he recommends the rebels to submit to their deacons and describes them as the men who represent in their person the perfection that the community lacks, and, as he adds the greeting "with his own hand" in other letters, he writes the crushing curse over anyone who does not love the Lord.

385

The author of the letter already knows a general norm of doctrine and belief, which, according to the assumption that the apostle is writing, consists of the teachings and ordinances that he has laid down in all churches (1 Corinthians 4:17, 7:17). The contrast between the norm and false doctrine is so firm that the author can explain it from the general statement that there must be heresies so that the true believers can become visible.

385/386

The Gnostics had given glory to the victory of their Christ over the God of the law and the pagan spirits of the world and without hesitation or conscience, had participated in the sacrificial meals of their pagan neighbors, and even bought meat from these offerings at the market. The author of the First Corinthians proves with his anxious and eccentric phrasings that this freedom had long been acquired in his time. Yet he does not hesitate to recommend self-denial that corresponds to this freedom in practice. He pretends that this indulgence towards the weak is the pure work of love and in the lethargy and weakness of his exhortations, he comes to phrases that even require condescension to the idolatrous fear of the weak. He would prefer to state that the exercise of freedom is of no use, and the abstinence from it does not harm, and yet he loses himself in a series of sentences in which he makes the weak the authority for the free.

386

In the midst of this back and forth of the champions of freedom and

opponents of the law, if they are subject to the commandment of the Petrine Acts of the Apostles (15:29), according to which the pagan increase of the community should avoid idolatrous meals, then in the same letter, the entire structure of the innovator is thrown into the rubble of all other building attempts, and the Catholicism that is free from opposition rises above the divisions of individual masters. The author was unable to describe the divisions of the communities and the differences between a Peter, Paul, and Apollos, any more than the unity of spirit and opinion to which he exhorts the faithful. His power, like that of the entire second century, was not sufficient to grasp the oppositions in which the rich educational development of the time had unfolded in their peculiarity, let alone shape the common goal towards which they were striving. But he was one of those who prepared the ground for the third century, on which the same, based on a few shared convictions, could engage in the dispute over the person of Christ and ignite the conflict of the following two centuries.

The ground on which the author of the First Corinthians worked was like a heap of rubble on which the reminiscences and formulas of the first sixty decades of the second century were scattered around. He himself added the catchwords of the Philonic writings and the Alexandrian Gnosis, with the memories of the earlier struggle for freedom from the law, along with the admonitions to obedience to the hierarchical leaders who had emerged within the communities.

386/387

People were exhausted from the struggle that had preoccupied their minds since the days of the original gospel, in support of or against the Law, and they left the decision to future judgment while they gathered in hierarchical order, which came to the rescue of humanity's eternal fear of the efforts and dangers of freedom. In this exhaustion of mood, which in similar later periods is called indifference and syncretism by church historians, Peter and Paul, who at the time of Hadrian and Gnosis entered history as a pair of fighters, found themselves on the flattened plain, and hand in hand they strode towards the third century as reconciled comrades.

387

On their further path through the centuries and millennia, they combined the proclamation of the incarnate Logos with the preaching of Plato's Judaized monotheism. Just as the founder of the Academy came to the aid of the horror of antiquity before Democritus' atomic theory, so they, too, carefully guarded Athens' Judaized legacy to soothe humanity's eternal dread of an explanation of the world from within itself. They inherited the sword of faith, with which the apostolic princes paved the way for their community through the Roman imperial period and stood against the medieval attempts at

military dictatorship, as the present pages demonstrate, from the Stoics, who opposed the military triumphs of the Macedonians and Romans with the strength of conscience and conviction. The same sword will flash in the hands of the successors of the Stoics as long and as often as a political power sees only the charter of its privilege and not the work of universal liberation in the collapse of an outdated world order.

BERSERKER

BOOKS