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a few of which are mentioned above. The organization was good and several persons expressed the desire for more such communication between those engaged in Baha'i studies and the Baha'i community at large.

Stephen Lambden

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORTHCOMING BAHAI STUDIES SEMINAR

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

DEPT. OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES.*

SAT. 17th AND SUN. 18th SEPT.
1983.

It is hoped that at this forthcoming Baha'i Studies Seminar papers will be read which fall into one of the following four (obviously loosely defined) categories:-

- 1) The study of Babi-Baha'i texts;
- 2) The study of Babi-Baha'i history;
- 3) The study of Babi-Baha'i doctrine;
- 4) The study of the Babi-Baha'i movements.

Offers of papers and enquiries should be addressed to either Dr. Denis MacEoin, Dept. of Religious Studies, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, NEL 7RU, England, U.K., or Stephen Lambden (same address).

* Venue and sponsorship subject to confirmation.

Letter to the Editor: A Note by Christopher Buck on Jesus' Cry From the Cross.

Exemplary for Baha'i scholarship is Lambden's treatment of Mark 15:34. In making full use of critical apparatus available to him, Lambden has been able to test a scriptural "emendation" such as Backwell (and possibly the Master) has hazarded. Though I do not have Lambden's linguistic command, perhaps I might try to evolve the methodology he has trailblazed, by introducing iconographic as well as a few further textual and extra-biblical considerations.

E.R. Coodenough has stated that "religious symbols remain as the greatest unexplored body of historical data." 1. The late Cardinal Danielou in his Primitive Christian Symbols reviews the important archaeological data surrounding the symbolism of the Cross, which I shall not reduplicate here. If trust may be placed in Danielou's digestion of the unearthed symbols, his conclusion could prove crucial to Lambden's discussion: "The conclusion reached by our inquiry is this. The sign of the cross is seen to have its origin, not in an allusion to Christ's passion, but as a signification of his divine glory." 2.

I submit that one's Christological persuasion in primitive times did, to a remarkable extent, condition tradition. Jesus says not only what vibrated the air but also what oral and written tradition redactionally filtered. Let us ponder the fact that the tradition of Mark 15:34 has only Matthew 27:46 as a parallel, which means that in the New Testament alone, these words were accepted by only 50% of the fourfold evangelists who transmitted traditions of Christ's life. The other Christian traditions, as evidenced by archaeological data, wished to convey the consciousness of the glory of martyrdom, how can we be so certain that Jesus was not audibly elated during the final moments of his unthinkably painful exaltation, as were so many of our Baha'i martyrs, who afford us a "phenomenological" parallel?

John the Evangelist is a case in point: he presents no close parallel for Mark 15:34, yet obliquely (to hire Lambden's word) "rewrites" the verse or at least its purport, to conform to the idea that Jesus was conscious of the glory of martyrdom. Since the Johannine Jesus is so laconic upon the Cross, one might wonder if John has not in fact dislocated the saying, transferred it to chapter 12 and conflated it with the Voice from heaven in verse 28! After all, patristic exegesis is not unanimous in ascribing the utterance of Mark 15:34 to Jesus: Origen, among if not the first of Christian scholars, is anxious to avoid this idea of utter angst in loss of faith on Jesus' part, and insists that when Matthew and Mark report a "loud" or "great" voice, they are referring to the "divine voice" by which the cry was augmented. 3.

But if the Cry of Dereliction was indeed evocative of Psalm 22, the Cry need not have been one of abandonment at all, but rather a Cry of Victory. This is quite probably what was reflected in the Ebionite Christian tradition, for the Ebionite scholar Symmachus entitles the Psalm, "A Song of Victory"; while Theodotion (whom Jerome identifies also as an Ebionite) offers the heading, "To the Victory," with Jerome closely following with "To the Victor". 4.

Refer S. Lambden, "My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" or "My God, my God, how thou hast glorified me!"? in Baha'i Studies Bulletin Vol. 1, No. 1. (June 1982), pp. 27-42. cf. also Baha'i Studies Bulletin Vol. 1, No. 3. (Dec. 1982), pp. 81-2.

Thus we can see indications that even if Backwell's/'Abdu'l-Baha's emendation is without textual foundation, it is certainly not without iconographic or exegetically-textual foundation. We see of course St. Peter in Acts 3:13 proclaiming the crucifixion in terms of glorification. The two events of crucifixion and glorification may even be unified as simultaneous in an extra-biblical verb, Palestinian Aramaic *izd'qéf*, which could signify "to be glorified" as well as "to be crucified".

Apart from Matthew 28:19, no other evangelical saying of Jesus may be so capable of variation. Not statistically in terms of manuscript witnesses necessarily, but in terms of the entire tradition itself. For variants to Mark 15:34 were first introduced by the very eyewitnesses of the Crucifixion, who could not all agree on just what Jesus has said!

In addition to the textual variants which Lambden lists, several more come to the fore:

k (Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae) = maledixisti ("taunted")
 c (Codex Colbertinus) = maledixisti ("taunted")
 i (Codex Vindobonensis) = maledixisti ("taunted")
 Porphyry (Macarius Magnes, Apocriticus) = "reproached"
 Peshitta New Testament = ("spared")
 Other witnesses (not specified by NEB) = ("shamed").

These variants are significant to the discussion only in that, though they do not confirm "glorified" as a reading, neither do they confirm "forsaken". Thus the whole thing is still a relatively open question.

Among the theological debates I have cursorily followed, Schreiber stands out as the foremost exponent of the view that the so-called Cry of Dereliction was in fact a cry of Triumph. Schreiber argues that the Cry was one of exaltation or glorification and that this is demonstrated by the response in verse 39 of the centurion, who ironically is the symbol of earthly might and power. That the centurion interprets the cry in terms of glorification is more intriguing since the Marcan text states that the centurion saw the Cry of Jesus. Some manuscripts of Mark omit *heard his cry*, and I wonder if Schreiber's arguments should be seen and heard by Mr. Lambden.

I have so far offered no textual ground for arguing the possibility that Jesus might have uttered something other than what the majority of the Greek manuscripts transmit. This has been a weakness in my argument, just as the lack of any real redaction criticism has posed its own "Christological difficulty" in Mr. Lambden's argument. But recently with perfect timeliness, I have come across a textual argument for the reading of *Sabbatānī* ("praised") in Rabbi Cohn-Sherbok's "Jesus' Cry on the Cross: an Alternative View", (in *Expository Times* 93/7 (1982), pp. 215-217).

The Rabbi at University of Kent at Canterbury states that, assuming Jesus spoke Aramaic, it is possible to construe the words of Jesus, not as an Aramaic translation of Ps 22:1 (*S'baqtānī*), but rather as the rhetorical question, "My God, My God why have you praised me?" (*Sabbatānī*) which is transliterated into Greek in exactly the identical way as the rendering of Ps 22:1. This linguistic possibility has sparked in me a further memory of 'Abdu'l-Baha's reported textual emendation which I myself had read several years ago, but at the time did not write down: The Master was reported to have said that through the change of one single letter, the text was altered to read "forsaken" instead of "glorified". I distinctly remember this sequence of textual basis for the Master's reported emendation, which Mr. Lambden does not transmit in his paper.

Cohn-Sherbok concludes: "Given this interpretation, Jesus' words should not be understood as a cry of... desolation... but rather as a prayer for the dawning of the reign of God. Hanging on the cross, Jesus would have seen his life as a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Isa 52-53)... Thus in the cry 'elāhī 'elāhī lamah Sabbatānī Jesus would have invoked the image of the glorified servant of the Lord who, despite his suffering, is 'full of God's spirit', 'honoured in the eyes of God', 'exalted', and 'lifted up high' (Isa 42, 49, 52)."

Naturally the manuscripts to which Mr. Lambden refers cannot be summoned as impartial witnesses against the reading of "praised" or "glorified", since the manuscripts themselves come into existence and attest to a primarily canonical tradition! The destruction of rival gospel traditions is a sad fact of Christian history, so the real variants are simply not extant. And how can appeal to patristic writings, which Mr. Lambden makes, hope to give us any independent textual witness?

I wish to state that, has 'Abdu'l-Bahā actually proposed such an emendation of Mark 15:34, I would hope that Bahā'i scholars would seriously entertain the idea that he may well have been right, as a working hypothesis to test out, rather than the opposite, no matter how many manuscripts may at first be invoked as cards stacked against him. Although the evidence presented here is slender and tentative, the theology, if not the text, is not lacking in order to support the conjecture that Mark 15:34 may indeed have yielded a sense of glorification alongside a very real Promethean passion.

Christopher Buck
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 20th March 1983.

Notes

1. E. R. Goodenough, "Symbols as Historical Evidence" in *Diogenes* 44 (1963), pp. 19-32.
2. J. Danielou, *Primitive Christian Symbols* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964), "The Tau Sign", p. 145.
3. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, 135, cited Robert M. Grant *The Earliest Lives of Jesus* (N.Y.: Harper, 1961), p. 97.
4. cited by L. Paul Trudinger, "Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani: A Cry of Dereliction? or Victory?" in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17 (1974), pp. 235-38.
5. X. Leon-Dufour, *Dictionary of the New Testament* (Harper and Row, 1980), p. 152.
6. J. Schreiber, *Theologie des Vertrauens* (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag H. Rennebach K.G., 1967), pp. 24-49, 66-82; cited T. J. Weeden, *Mark—Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 146, 166-7.

A Brief response to Christopher Buck's Note.

I am grateful to Chris Buck for taking the trouble to respond to my article on Jesus' cry from the cross and for drawing attention to some further interesting articles on this theme. When I wrote my original article I was fully aware of the post-Markan understanding of crucifixion as exaltation and glorification which tradition it was not my intention to minimize or deny. It is debatable however, whether this understanding of Jesus' crucifixion or the proposed reading *Sabbatānī* can be made to overrule the Marcan note of forsakenness. Though Buck seems to think that the Bahā'i theological position must deny Jesus' uttering a cry of dereliction — which is difficult text critically to maintain — passages within the Bahā'i writings by no means demand this. He indirectly accuses me of taking a position opposite to that of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's supposed interpretation (his last paragraph above) which was not in fact my intention at all. In my original article I quote 'Abdu'l-Bahā (and a pilgrim note recording Shoghi Effendi's words) to the effect that Jesus did utter a cry of forsakenness during his last moments on the cross.

S. Lambden.