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ARCHIVES

BRIEF STUDIES

PROGRESS IN DECIPHERING THE MINOAN SCRIPT

An archaeological fact many of us remember from our school days is that Sir Arthur Evans, an English scholar, in 1896, when he was excavating at Knossos on the Isle of Crete, found documents written on clay which represented a totally unknown system of writing and in all probability an equally unknown language. Our kind teachers perhaps used the occasion to point out that not all worlds as yet had been conquered and that there were still some problems to be solved by the rising generation. When Evans analyzed the documents, he saw that there were three kinds of writing: one was definitely hieroglyphic, the second somewhat cursive, and the third a modification of the second. The tablets were copied and photographed, but nobody could read them. Archaeologists and professional philologists occupied themselves more or less with this material, but no one, in spite of many guesses, could present a solution. Now, however, some progress is being made in the reading of this script.

What we ought to have at our disposal to make out the words in this strange script is a double document, one part containing the strange characters, the other a translation of the material in a language that is known to us. In that way, it will be recalled, the hieroglyphics of Egypt were deciphered. At Rosetta, near Alexandria, a stone was found in 1799 which is now always referred to as the Rosetta stone; it contained an inscription in three scripts: in hieroglyphics, in the script of the ordinary people (called demotic), and a translation in Greek, written in ordinary Greek characters. The Greek could be read without much difficulty; soon the demotic script could be made out too; and finally, owing especially to the brilliant work of Champollion, the key was furnished for hitherto undecipherable hieroglyphics.

Unfortunately no bilingual inscription or document has been found to aid scholars in the reading of the Minoan, that is, the Cretan script. (Minos, so the old writers say, was an eminent Cretan king who resided at Knossos). An important step forward was made when Professor Carl Blegen of Cincinnati, excavating at various times since 1939 in Pylos, the city of old Homeric Nestor on the west coast of the Peloponnesus, found a number of tablets in the Minoan script which promise to give us important help. The date of these tablets is roughly 1200 B. C. and earlier. Knossos on Crete was destroyed in 1400 B. C., but, as we learn now, the script which had been employed there was used on the continent of Greece for centuries later. An Eng-

lish architect by the name of Michael Ventris adopted Greek and Cretan archaeology as a hobby after he as a boy had heard Evans lecture on the undeciphered Minoan tablets. In his leisure hours he studied all he could about these inscriptions, and he has made a remarkable discovery. Examining the inscriptions of Pylos, where Greek was spoken, he found that the Minoan script was used to write *Greek* words. Other scholars did subsidiary work which he was able to use. As had been suspected, Minoan script is based on the system of writing which we call syllabic, that is, a sign represents a consonant and a vowel, in other words, a complete syllable. Ventris, through careful comparison, especially through the scrutiny of proper names that he and others had been able to identify, has discovered a number of Greek words in the Pylos inscriptions. We therefore know now the phonetic value of many of the signs occurring in this script.

From the little that has been said here it is clear that the Minoan script has not as yet been solved; that is, the Minoan language itself is still a mystery to us, but we have learned at least what the sound value of a number of signs is and by and by through further comparison and study probably the Minoan language itself will be brought before us and interpreted. The work done by Ventris and others is all the more astounding because, as mentioned above, whatever was accomplished was done without the aid of bilingual texts.

The information submitted most sketchily in these few paragraphs was dwelt on in a brilliant illustrated article written by R. D. Barnett, deputy keeper of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquity at the British Museum, and published in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* for October 15, 1953. Inasmuch as all progress along these lines will help us better to understand archaeological and linguistic matters connected with the Holy Scriptures, theologians will welcome what is here reported.

WILLIAM F. ARNDT

A NOTE ON THE HISTORY OF THE LITURGY IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN HUNGARY

(NOTE: The Rev. Prof. Dr. Lajos Jánosy, Sopron, Hungary, is one of the outstanding Lutheran liturgiologists in Central Europe. Recently the undersigned had occasion to request information from Professor Jánosy concerning the use of vestments in the Church of the Augsburg Confession in Hungary. Professor Jánosy replied with the paragraphs here reproduced. We share them in translated form with our readers in view of the extensive information which they furnish concerning a development in Lutheranism on which little information is available in English. — ARTHUR CARL PIEPKORN.)

The pure Gospel recovered by the Lutheran Reformation rapidly made a triumphant conquest throughout Hungary. In all three parts

of the Hungarian Empire — in the so-called Kingdom of Hungary; in the areas occupied by the Turks; as well as in Erdély-Transylvania in the Eastern part of the country, which was just gradually developing into an independent Hungarian principality — the Lutheran Reformation brought about a renovation of the Church in the Apostolic Gospel. In line with her conservative attitude and nature, the rich liturgical life of the Hungarian Church, thus renewed according to the standards of the Wittenberg Reformation, continued with new power, purity, and an ever more extensive use of the vernacular. On the basis of the sources one must emphasize as strongly as possible that an overwhelming proportion — approximately eighty per cent — of the Hungarian, that is, Magyar, population of the Hungarian empire had adopted the Lutheran Reformation as enthusiastically as had the minority groups that had settled among us: the Germans, the Slovaks, the Croatians, and so forth. In the cities and towns where the whole population became Lutheran the Church buildings were left for the most part unchanged. Even the retention of several altars was not infrequent. On Sundays and other holy days — a total of eighty-five were observed annually — the purified Evangelical Lutheran Mass was celebrated in the morning at the high altar. It was preceded in the early morning by matins or lauds, and vespers were sung in the late afternoon. Morning and evening services were likewise conducted on nonfestival weekdays. Candles, paraments, the colorful Mass vestments at the Holy Eucharist, the surplice, with stole [when appropriate], at non-Eucharistic offices, and sometimes even incense, continued in use. In the 60's and 70's of the sixteenth century 80 to 85 per cent of the entire population of the Hungarian Empire were Evangelical Lutheran!

Before the renovated Church in Hungary could achieve a constitutionally recognized status and an independent organization, the papal hierarchy, assisted and re-enforced by the new Hapsburg dynasty, began a programmatic persecution. Simultaneously the so-called "Helvetic orientation" forced its way into Hungary during the decades referred to and began to infect the Hungarian Church, on one hand as Zwinglianism, on the other as Melancthonianism, then as crypto-Calvinism, still later as a mild form of open Calvinism, and finally as Calvinistic Puritanism. Thus from the middle of the sixteenth century the Evangelical Lutheran Church had to defend herself on a number of fronts. Our forebears, who constituted a predominant majority in the Hungarian Diet as early as 1548, were still hoping that King Miksa I [Maximilian] would bring about a comprehensive

reformation without breaching the unity of the ecclesiastical organism. The result was that they neglected the splendid chance of securing the freedom and the independence of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on a constitutional basis under King Miksa. The regional synods of the sixteenth century occupied themselves with establishing for smaller or larger territories of the country the pure doctrine and with the ordering of congregational life. Under these circumstances it was possible for the papal archbishop of Esztergom in the single year 1559 to drive out more than 300 Evangelical Lutheran rectors of parishes in the western and northern parts of the empire, that is, the Kingdom of Hungary, and to deprive the Evangelical Lutheran Church of a like number of church buildings.

Nevertheless, in the more than 2,000 parishes in which we were able to keep possession of the parish churches, the liturgical life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church continued in full vigor. Even in the purely Magyar parishes our priests wore the full liturgical vesture at the Holy Eucharist—amice, [girdled] alb, maniple, stole, and chasuble—and at non-Eucharistic offices and services the surplice, with or without the stole [according to circumstances]. This is amply demonstrated by visitation records from the latter decades of the sixteenth century, as well as by the Articles of Murány of 1596, the Articles of the Synods of Rozsnyó of 1592 and 1604, the Articles of the Magyar Congregational Order of Sopron of 1669, and the Congregational Order of Sárovar of 1576.

Of particular interest in this connection is the letter of vocation which the council of the royal free city of Kassa in Upper Hungary issued in 1559 to the new Hungarian preacher and chaplain, the Reverend János Petho. Under the terms of this letter he was to celebrate High Mass every other Sunday in the parish church of St. Elizabeth in Hungarian in full Mass vestments "according to the colors of the season," that is, according to the church year, and on the intervening Sunday he was likewise to conduct High Mass in Hungarian, again in full liturgical vestments, in St. Michael's Chapel, since on these Sundays Mass was celebrated in German in the parish church.

In some parts of the country the population was divided between adherents of the Roman Catholic religion and adherents of the Lutheran religion. Where in such communities the parish church was not available for use by the Lutherans and our Evangelical Lutheran services had to be held in an emergency chapel or privately in the homes of individual members, or where we were robbed of our Evan-

gelical Lutheran churches, the Magyar Lutheran clergymen wore only albs or surplices, both of which could still be obtained quite easily.

In 1610 at the synod of Zsolna [Silein] three Evangelical Lutheran dioceses were erected in northwestern Hungary. Canon VI of this synod dispenses the *Magyar* priests "for certain and evident reasons" from wearing the alb. We must remember that at this period the "Helvetic orientation" was creeping in from the strictly Magyar territories into these ten counties of Upper Hungary, especially in the Danube district. The Calvinists were propagandizing energetically against liturgical vestments, particularly against Mass vestments, and our clergy in these congregations were often slandered as being Papists. Where the Magyar parishes were able to escape such dangers, for instance, in Western Hungary, in the counties of Sopron, Győr, Vas, and Zala, notably under the patronage of the Counts of the Nádasdy line, our Evangelical Lutheran Church retained and used at her services in hundreds of purely Magyar parishes the magnificent "festal vesture" of historic Christianity—amice, [girdled] alb, maniple, stole, and chasuble at Mass, and surplice, with stole [when appropriate], at other services. With reference to vestments, the Evangelical Lutheran episcopal visitation records from the years 1631 to 1642 show that there were still more than three hundred Hungarian Lutheran parishes in which our clergy were wearing Mass vestments according to the old prescription. With the apostasy of Count Thomas Nádasdy in 1643 we lost more than two hundred parishes and parish churches, and more than forty thousand Hungarian Lutheran rural families were coerced at sword's point into accepting the Roman Mass and the Papacy. Nor was that the only case. In that most tragic decade from 1671 to 1681, in the western part of the Empire (that is, in the so-called Kingdom of Hungary) alone, almost nine hundred Evangelical Lutheran church buildings were forcibly taken away from us. The liturgical life in these areas naturally broke down, and the clergy had to content themselves here and there, in some forest or mountain fastness or in some private home, with preaching a sermon and with administering the Blessed Sacrament as quickly and as simply as possible in the dead of night.

In the eighteenth century the persecution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church was continued, particularly in the areas that had been liberated from the Turks. As late as the period of King Karel III and Maria Theresa more than three hundred additional parish churches were stolen from us.

When at the end of the eighteenth century our Church gradually

recovered her constitutional liberty, she had unfortunately become an interiorly weak Church that suffered under Reformed, Rationalist, Puritan, and Pietist influences and had no positive relationship to authentic Evangelical Lutheran Church life. Thus it happened that there was no recovery of liturgical life; that is, no renewal took place. Here and there in a few parishes—chiefly Upper Hungarian urban congregations with mixed Magyar, Slavic, and German constituencies—the wearing of the surplice, at least at the Holy Eucharist, survived.

After the dismemberment of the Hungarian Empire in 1920 the use of the surplice within the present boundaries of Hungary was limited to a few places, such as the large Magyar-Slovak congregation in Nyiregyháza and in the large Slovak-Magyar parish in Békéscsaba, but in all these instances the use of the surplice was limited to celebrations of Holy Communion.

Naturally, no liturgical revival followed World War II.

Sopron, Hungary

LAJOS JANOSSY