

THE FIRST STONE

THE following essay compares two texts that revolve around the same unpleasant but highly significant subject, collective stoning. The first one, located in the Gospel of John, is the famous episode of an adulterous woman whose stoning is prevented by Jesus. The early manuscripts do not contain this text. Many observers find it is more Lucan than Johannine. Whatever the case may be, its content is so unquestionably Christian that its scriptural authenticity is never questioned:

The scribes and Pharisees led forward a woman who had been caught in adultery, and made her stand there in front of everybody. "Teacher," they said to him, "this woman has been caught in the very act of adultery. Now, in the Law Moses ordered such women to be stoned. But you—what do you say about it?" (They were posing this question to trap him so that they could have something to accuse him of.) But Jesus simply bent down and started drawing on the ground with his finger. When they persisted with their questioning, he straightened up and said to them, "The man among you who has no sin—let him be the first to cast a stone at her." And he bent down again and started to write on the ground. But the audience went away one by one, starting with the elders; and he was left alone with the woman still there before him. So Jesus, straightening up, said to her, "Woman, where are they all? Hasn't anyone condemned you?" "No one, sir," she answered. Jesus said, "Nor do I condemn you. You may go. But from now on, avoid this sin." (John 8.3-11)

The prescription that makes adultery a capital crime applied only to women. At the time of Jesus, it had become controversial and was not always observed. Jesus is in a difficult position therefore. He cannot condone the stoning without betraying his own principles but, if he opposes it, he will be accused of contempt for the Law. The sentence he finally utters when his questioners insist, is one of the most famous in all four Gospels:

If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him cast the first stone.

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In all languages of old Christendom, such expressions as “the first stone,” “to cast the first stone,” are very much alive. What can they mean in a world where the practice of stoning has been discontinued? Is the idea of the first stone really significant?

If we pose this question to the language obsessed critics of our time, they will come up with their usual answer. “The first stone,” they will say, is a “rhetorical,” a “purely rhetorical” device. We all thirst for significance and these critics’ greatest pleasure is to disappoint us and make it clear that we, too, must be deconstructed. To them, even though language is everything, it is also nothing at all; it only gives “to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.”

We cannot repeat “the first stone” nowadays, without remembering the innumerable repetitions behind us. Let us call this self-consciousness rhetorical, if we like the term but can we thus empty it of all significance? I do not think so. The first stone is still as powerful today, I believe, as when Jesus first used the expression.

How can we show this effectively? However great the Gospel text is, it will not suffice. The reason is simple. Because the sentence we want to explore was too influential, the first stone was never cast. The stoning did not occur.

In order to understand the role of the first stone, we need a second text, preferably independent from the Gospels and from Christianity itself, a text in which the first stone is actually cast and the consequences become visible. Such a text will teach us perhaps, why Jesus emphasized *the first stone*.

The second text I want to discuss is exactly what we need. It is thoroughly pagan. It portrays the actual stoning of an old beggar in the city of Ephesus. This horrible deed is supposed to have been instigated by Apollonius of Tyana, a famous spiritual leader of the second century A.D., a kind of guru we might say. Pagan circles found his “miracles” superior to those of Jesus.

The most spectacular of these, undoubtedly, is the Ephesus stoning. Whereas Jesus cured only one individual at a time, Apollonius is supposed to have cured the entire city with one single trick which turns out to be the stoning of that poor beggar. The account of this collective murder takes up a whole chapter in *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, a book authored by Philostratus, a third century Greek writer of some merit:

When the plague began to rage in Ephesus, and no remedy sufficed to check it, they sent a deputation to Apollonius, asking him to become physician of their infirmity; and he thought that he ought not to postpone his journey, but said: “Let us go.” And forthwith he was in Ephesus, He . . . called together the

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Ephesians, and said: "Take courage, for I will today put a stop to the course of the disease." And with these words he led the population entire to the theatre, where the images of the Averting god had been set up. And there he saw what seemed an old mendicant artfully blinking his eyes as if blind, and he carried a wallet and a crust of bread in it; and he was clad in rags and was very squalid of countenance. Apollonius therefore ranged the Ephesians around him and said: "Pick up as many stones as you can and hurl them at this enemy of the gods." Now the Ephesians wondered what he meant, and were shocked at the idea of murdering a stranger so manifestly miserable; for he was begging and praying them to take mercy upon him. Nevertheless Apollonius insisted and egged on the Ephesians to launch themselves on him and not let him go. And as soon as some of them began to take shots and hit him with their stones, the beggar who had seemed to blink and be blind, gave them all a sudden glance and showed that his eyes were full of fire. Then the Ephesians recognized that he was a demon, and they stoned him so thoroughly that their stones were heaped into a great cairn around him. After a little pause Apollonius bade them remove the stones and acquaint themselves with the wild animal which they had slain. When therefore they had exposed the object which they thought they had thrown their missiles at, they found that he had disappeared and instead of him there was a hound who resembled in form and look a Molossian dog, but was in size the equal of the largest lion; there he lay before their eyes, pounded to a pulp by their stones and vomiting foam as mad dogs do. Accordingly the statue of the Averting god, namely Hercules, has been set up over the spot where the ghost was slain. (363-67)¹

A more dismal miracle is hard to imagine! If the author were Christian, scholars would disdainfully dismiss his account as a fabrication, a piece of anti-pagan propaganda. Philostratus was a propagandist all right, but against Christianity. He wanted to show his fellow pagans, demoralized by the progress of the new religion, that there was still life in the old one. His book was quite successful. Which explains why, in the following century, Julian the Apostate revived it. He used it as a weapon in his last ditch battle to save paganism.

Even though the expression "the first stone" appears nowhere in the text we just read, it is relevant, obviously, to the understanding of the whole "miracle." The only moment when the undertaking of Apollonius is in doubt is at the very beginning, before the first stone is cast. Initially, the hopeful Ephesians are quite docile. When Apollonius asks them to form a circle around the beggar, they do. When he asks them to pick up stones, they pick them. But when he orders them to cast their stones at the poor

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wretch, they simply refuse. However obedient they were before, now they dare rebel against their guru. They even criticize explicitly the idea that the beggar should be stoned.

Although Philostratus is unconditionally committed to Apollonius, he is candid enough to acknowledge this rebellion and even to tell us how the Ephesians justify it. They are “shocked at the idea of murdering a stranger so manifestly miserable.” However ugly, useless and disgusting the beggar is, the Ephesians regard him as a fellow human being and they cannot murder him in cold blood. This reasoning makes more sense to the modern reader, of course, than the senseless violence of Apollonius.

This first reaction of the Ephesians is the only ray of light in an otherwise uniformly somber story. The sinister guru quickly extinguishes it. He exhorts his flock vehemently and he finally manages to get the stoning started against the poor beggar whom, with ridiculous grandiloquence, he calls: “this enemy of the gods.”

The Ephesians end up stoning the beggar with such zeal that we are not merely saddened but astonished by their sudden metamorphosis. Is it really possible that people who behaved decently an instant before, could become so inhuman in so short a time? How can we account for this amazing transformation?

The answer to this question lies in the expression we are investigating. Before the first stone, everything was in doubt. If the hesitation of the Ephesians had persisted, Apollonius’ plan would have failed. As soon as he persuades one of the Ephesians finally to cast the first stone, everything changes.

Even though none of us, I suppose, has ever witnessed a stoning, we all find it easy, curiously, to reconstitute the scene that Philostratus does not describe. After the first stone, a short silence followed, and then a second stone reached the beggar, almost immediately followed by a third, a fourth, a fifth, etc. The stones kept coming faster and faster until the instant when, suddenly, all remaining stones were cast simultaneously. And this was not the end: feverishly now, all the Ephesians picked up more stones and they all tried to outdo each other in stoning efficiency. They did not stop until “their stones were heaped into a great cairn around [their victim].”

Why is the first stone so difficult to cast and why are the following ones so easy? The answer is evident. The first stone is the most difficult because there is no model to imitate. Is a model really necessary for such a simple task as throwing a stone? When the target is a human being it obviously helps. And several models help even more. The more numerous the models, the more the rhythm and intensity of the stoning increases. But the first stone alone is decisive. Once it is cast, the tidal wave begins.

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All reason and compassion swiftly disappear. Violence and deception triumph. The worries of Apollonius are over.

The whole process is *mimetic*, or *imitative* but, in Philostratus, there are no direct and explicit indications of that fundamental fact. We need Jesus and his idea of the first stone to understand how the initial humanity of the Ephesians could turn so quickly to unspeakable ferocity.

In order to explain the mechanics, or rather the “mimetics” of collective stoning, Jesus does not resort to such abstract words as imitation, mimesis, and the like. He mentions the first stone and that is enough.

If the expression is still alive in our world, even though the practice of stoning has disappeared, the reason is not primarily rhetorical. This expression is not even metaphoric, it is a concrete example of the strange power of violent imitation. In a world where violence is primarily non-physical, “psycholo-gical,” this power remains very much the same as in the ancient practice of stoning.

Our two scenes begin with two entirely different situations equally unfavorable to the two opposite goals of the protagonists. Apollonius wants to trigger a stoning for which his crowd is obviously not quite ready. Jesus wants to prevent a stoning for which his crowd, or at least part of it, is only too ready. One reason for this readiness, of course, is that the adulterous woman, unlike the beggar, is a real culprit, legally punishable by stoning.

Apollonius desperately wants the first stone to be cast, and Jesus desperately wants it not to be cast. These two opposite goals explain the opposite tactics of the two men. Apollonius refrains from mentioning the first stone by name. If he did, he might increase the resistance to the purely mimetic and mechanical impulse which he wants to trigger. His language is duplicitous. He does not want to focus his listeners' attention on the firstness of the first stone, on the responsibility incurred by the individual who casts it.

Most of our actions are mimetic in a mechanical sense. They consist in doing more or less automatically and unconsciously, what everybody around us is already doing. It is easy, therefore, to join a violent process already started; to start this process oneself is an entirely different proposition.

IN my opinion, not only violence but desire itself is essentially imitative or mimetic. If it were not, desire would be more or less instinctual and unchanging. There would be no such things as freedom, language, culture and religion itself.

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If mimetic desire is responsible for many specific features of humanity, it is fundamentally good but, when we imitate the desires of those we admire, we are bound to desire the objects they themselves desire. The normal consequence is fierce rivalry for the possession of these objects. The mimetic nature of our desire accounts for our conflictual propensities more effectively than any of the supposedly “scientific” explanations, such as the belief in a purely “biological aggressiveness” that would be greater in the human race than in the other primates.

Philostratus is not an insignificant writer. There are indications in his book that he understands the true nature of the crisis his favorite guru was asked to resolve. Just before the stoning, he inserted a little text that I interpret as an introduction to this “miracle.”

This text is a speech by Apollonius. Just before leaving for Ephesus, the great man was sojourning in a harbor. A large ship was about to sail and the guru observed with interest the final preparations for its departure. Each sailor devoted all his care exclusively to the specific task assigned to him. As a result, the whole job was performed most efficiently:

Now if any single member of this community abandoned any one of his particular tasks or went about his naval duties in an inexperienced manner, they would have a bad voyage and would themselves impersonate the storm; but if they vie with one another and are rivals only with the object of one showing himself as good a man as the other, then their ship will make the best of all havens, and all their voyage will be one of fair weather and fair sailing, and the precaution they exercise about themselves will prove to be as valuable as if Poseidon, our lord of safety, were watching over them. (3)

Human communities are doing well, Apollonius claims, as long as their citizens *vie with each other and are rivals only . . . in their particular tasks*. Rivalries are good, in other words, provided they do not spread indiscriminately across professional and social boundaries. The people who transgress these boundaries impersonate the storm. Apollonius is warning us against rampant mimetic rivalries. Immediately after this text, I repeat, with almost no transition, the miraculous stoning occurs. This composition suggests, I feel, that Philostratus, without explicitly contradicting the Ephesians, wants to inform us that the epidemic cured by Apollonius was no bacterial plague after all but a social crisis of the type described by Apollonius, a crisis in which all citizens *impersonate the storm*.

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The rivalries born of mimetic desire are really what Hobbes calls “the war of all against all.” According to the mimetic theory, these crises really “plague” archaic societies and, from the beginning, they would have destroyed all of them or rather prevented them from ever coming into being if some natural counterforce had not been at work to suppress or at least to alleviate them.

Mimetic conflict must spontaneously generate its own antidote. The “miracle” of Apollonius suggests that this antidote could be some form of collective violence against a substitute victim. It is this antidote that Apollonius tries to reactivate against the old beggar and he finally succeeds.

As soon as a victim can be found upon whom everybody will agree, not for rational reasons but because of a mimetic tidal wave against him/her, the populace feels better. Apollonius is “successful” because, thanks to his stoning, the dynamics of scapegoating which are re-unitive, re-constructive, replace the dynamics of rivalry which are divisive and destructive.

Ever since J. G. Frazer, it has become customary to name all expulsion rituals such as the *pharmakos* ritual, after the best known among them, the scapegoat ritual of Leviticus 16. Because the victim is an animal instead of a man, the scapegoat of the Jews is less shocking than the *pharmakos* of the Greeks, quite legitimately so, but the active principle is the same: the hostilities that ferment inside the community are dissipated against an expendable victim, one whose violent elimination will not inflame the spirit of vengeance within the community. This violence *purges* the community of its “impurities.” This is the original meaning of the Aristotelian *catharsis*.

Far from being an illegitimate extrapolation, our modern use of the word scapegoat embodies, I believe, a uniquely modern and Christian understanding of the process which underlies not only the original scapegoat ritual of Leviticus 16, not only all expulsion rituals in archaic societies (as J. G. Frazer came close to discovering in *The Golden Bough*) but also the non-ritualized expulsion phenomena which, to a large degree, continue to structure our world.

The modern meaning of scapegoating demystifies the illusion embodied in the mimetic process, the illusion of a genuinely impure or guilty victim, the illusion that makes the violence effective. Before the first stone was cast, the Ephesians rejected this illusion. They refused to believe that the beggar was the “demon of the plague.” As soon as the stoning started, however, they became convinced that Apollonius was right. The violent contagion of scapegoating is an intellectual and spiritual contamination which is easy to observe in the text of Philostratus.

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In archaic societies, scapegoating was so intense, I believe, that the victim was spontaneously lynched, (and stoning, of course, is a form of lynching.) Every lyncher felt as if he had destroyed his own personal enemy and, after this paroxysmic violence, peace automatically descended upon the whole community.

This is what a careful examination of myths and rituals reveals. After a great deal of violence, the return of peace was such a blessed relief that the beneficiaries felt infinite gratitude to the bringer of that peace who was identified as the victim himself, or herself, the original scapegoat.

From then on, therefore, this original scapegoat was regarded not merely as a malevolent demon, a genuine culprit, but also as an all-powerful benefactor. This is the genesis of archaic religion. The "miracle" of Apollonius is an incomplete but highly suggestive adumbration of the mythico-ritual process.

The benefits of the original scapegoating were so great that all human communities did their best to reproduce the whole phenomenon with substitute victims, for the purpose of protecting themselves from a return of internal strife. They did this in the name of the original scapegoat, regarded as a divinity. This is what we call ritual sacrifice.

The most ancient rituals must have been fairly similar on the whole to the scene portrayed by Philostratus. They must have consisted in the violent destruction of a substitute victim analogous to the unfortunate beggar selected by Apollonius for that same role.

When we look at our miracle closely, we see that it greatly resembles the famous or infamous Greek ritual of the *pharmakos* always performed during the Thargelia festival, perhaps on other occasions as well. Not only was the purpose of the ritual the same as in our case but the victim, (or the two victims) were of the same type as the beggar and they, too, were stoned.

The *pharmakoi* were all derelicts, vagabonds and other socially insignificant people, often afflicted besides, with physical ailments and infirmities, people whose death would not be mourned by anyone and would not further inflame the spirit of revenge. To make sure that suitable victims would be available when needed, many Greek cities kept future victims at public expense. To the ancient Greeks, it seems, the killing of these human victims did not matter much more than the killing of the farm animals used in most sacrifices.

In *La pharmacie de Platon*, however, Jacques Derrida observes that, even though Plato freely uses its cognates, he never uses *pharmakos* itself, the word that designates the human victim. This silence is probably significant.

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The beggar selected by Apollonius has all the typical features of a *pharmakos*. Apollonius, obviously, had never laid eyes on him before he entered the theater. His choice was random, therefore, but only up to a point. The guru was too knowledgeable, of course, to select as his victim one of the solid citizens of Ephesus! He knew that his choice had to fall within the range of *pharmakos* acceptability.

How could he guess that he would find a suitable victim in the theater? The public buildings of ancient cities were full of beggars and this is the reason, I suppose, why our astute miracle worker took his crowd to the theater rather than to some lonely place outside the city.

Far from inventing something alien to Greek culture, Apollonius reverted to the specifically Greek modality of scapegoat rituals which had probably been discontinued at long last in the second century A.D., but, contrary to what our scholars enamored with the Greeks confidently assert, this ritual was not so outmoded as yet that, occasionally, it could not be revived.

I interpret the Apollonius miracle as an improvised *pharmakos* ritual which is threatened with failure at first but, when the Ephesians' initial reluctance to stoning is overcome, it becomes so successful that it seems miraculous.

It is interesting to note that Philostratus, whose perspicacity we just observed in regard to the cause of it all, mimetic rivalries, is completely blind to the mimetic trick of collective violence. His insight does not extend to the scapegoat mechanism.

Even though Philostratus shrewdly perceives the mimetic nature of the problem, he does not perceive the mimetic nature of the solution. Just like the Ephesians, he is the dupe of Apollonius. It may well be that Apollonius himself is the dupe of his own miracle!

In order to reach the truth, we must read the miracle of Apollonius as we just did, in the light of Jesus' emphasis on the first stone. If one wants to prevent the stoning, rather than trigger it, it makes sense to focus the attention of the potential lynchers on that last obstacle in the path of contagious lynching. Jesus magnifies the first stone as much as he can by mentioning it explicitly, at the very end of his very brief but very powerful statement. He wants his words to resonate as long as possible in the ears of his listeners. Instead of hiding the truth, he publishes it.

As long as the obstacle of the first stone remains standing, the mimetic tidal wave is held back. As long as the people hesitate, they can look inwards and reflect on how similar they are to their intended victim. When Jesus suggests that only a man without sin should feel entitled to cast the first stone, he knows full well that, if these people honestly examine themselves, they will discover how similar they are to the

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adulterous woman. They will be ashamed of killing a fellow human being for an action they themselves commit with total impunity.

The Gospel process is not a miracle but a victory for justice and humanity which human beings, unfortunately, have been unable to achieve by themselves. They need the Judeo-Christian revelation to give up stoning entirely.

There is a mimetic element, of course, in the dissolving of the crowd, just as in its gathering. Up to a point, the unanimity against stoning recalls the unanimity of stoning but it occurs without sudden acceleration, without the frantic stampede that stoning becomes when everybody joins in.

The would-be lynchers came all together, as a united crowd and “they went away one by one, beginning with the elders.” This last detail is fascinating. It shows that, even though the mimetic factor is still present, it is no longer paramount. There is an objective difference as well that makes certain listeners of Jesus more amenable to his teaching than others, the difference of age. The elders are more easily convinced to renounce violence, more aware that they too are sinners, just like the adulterous woman. Experience has diminished their self-righteousness and also perhaps the fierceness of their desires. Instead of the mindless unanimity of the mob, we watch genuine individuals emerging from the crowd. The Gospel text can be read almost allegorically, as the emergence of genuine personhood out of the primordial mob.

THE mimetic concept of the first stone is powerfully used by Jesus, but it is not original with him. It comes from the Law which says that, in all indictments which might result in someone being stoned, there should be at least two witnesses against the accused and however convincing their case may be, it is not enough. If the victim is supposed to be stoned, the two accusers are required to cast the first stones themselves. Only afterwards, are the people invited to cast their stones as well.

Legal stoning originates in mimetic scapegoating, no doubt. Like all cultural institutions, it is a by-product of primordial lynching, but it is not simply identical with it.

Even though the Mosaic Law must still rely on the mimetic unanimity of stoning for its official form of capital punishment, unavoidable in the absence of modern judicial institutions, it already emphasizes individual responsibility as much as it possibly can, given the circumstances. The obligation for the two accusers to cast the first two stones is intended to discourage irresponsible accusations.

Since Jesus is against stoning altogether, his teaching transcends the letter of the Law but it is faithful to its spirit in the sense that it is inspired

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by the Law. This is obviously the case for the sentence we are discussing: "The man among you who has no sin—let him cast the first stone." In order to renounce mimetic contagion entirely, Jesus radicalizes the prescription of the Law which seeks to ward off the most dangerous aspects of mimetic contagion.

The success of Jesus' intervention in favor of the adulterous woman must not lead us to believe that he is primarily a manipulator of crowds, the counterpart of Apollonius in our other text. As a rule Jesus is unsuccessful with crowds and his failures often result in attempts to stone him, which anticipate the crucifixion. His true counterpart in our pagan text is the murdered beggar.

In any society, if one intervenes in favor of unanimously condemned victims, one must expect, in the end, to become a scapegoat oneself, and this is what ultimately happens to Jesus in the crucifixion. He constantly identifies with all the scapegoats of his society and of all societies, especially the most wretched, the most persecuted, like the Ephesus beggar. The truth of that identification can be verified, among other ways, in a small but curious similarity between Jesus' behavior in the Gospel scene we just read, and the beggar's behavior in Philostratus.

When Jesus is questioned about the adulterous woman, instead of confronting the crowd directly, he bends down and starts drawing or writing on the sand. Jesus did not bend down in order to write, I believe, but he writes because he has bent down. Why has he bent down? In order not to look back at those people who look intently at him.

Jesus' goal is to save the woman threatened with death, and he does his best to avoid even the slightest hint of visual provocation. If Jesus returned their looks, these people would probably read in his own eyes, as in a mirror, the anger which is really theirs but which they would project against him. The stoning of the woman would become more difficult to avoid.

Jesus is as prudent as possible and the beggar exemplifies a cruder version of that same prudence. Seeing himself surrounded by men armed with stones, who all look at him searchingly, the beggar "artfully [blinked] his eyes as if blind." Like Jesus, he does not want to seem arrogant. The danger that Jesus senses, in exchanging glances with the crowd, the beggar senses as well. He, too, tries not to provide the people who surround him with pretexts for casting their stones at him.

When the first stones hit him, the beggar opens his eyes, of course; there is no point in keeping them shut any more. He hopes against all hope to find a route of escape. His strategy of avoiding eye contact has failed but its very failure confirms its overall soundness. The crowd automatically interprets the terror in his eyes as proof that the beggar really is the demon identified by Apollonius:

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As soon as some of them began to take shots and hit him with their stones, the beggar who had seemed to blink and be blind, gave them all a sudden glance and showed that his eyes were full of fire. Then the Ephesians recognized that he was a demon

Philostratus sounds like an intelligent and even a decent man, except when it comes to scapegoating. The stoning does not horrify him. The old pagan faith in guilty scapegoats still possesses him. He has not read the Gospels or, if he has, he has not yet assimilated them.

Neither has Eusebius, it seems. The great historian of the Church, the friend of Constantine, wrote a polemical essay against Apollonius, but the modern reader does not find in it what he expects from a Christian, a resounding indictment of Apollonius' contempt for human life, some awareness that the very idea of Jesus resorting to stoning in order to perform a miracle is ludicrous.

Instead of emphasizing the unbridgeable gulf between Apollonius and Jesus, Eusebius turns the comparison into a mimetic rivalry between miracle workers, just like the pagans. He makes it easier for us to understand why Jesus minimizes his miracles, discourages all references to them.

THE principal reason why we ourselves apprehend what neither Philostratus nor Eusebius really apprehend, the horror of scapegoating, is that, whether we are Christians or not, we have assimilated, at least in part, the teaching about the first stone, the teaching of Christ about victims and persecutions, which is present everywhere in the Gospels, of course, and which culminates in the four accounts of the Passion.

In order to show once and for all that human culture is rooted in misunderstood scapegoating, Jesus becomes the willing scapegoat of the crowd and he, too, is mistaken for a culprit by his persecutors.

The Passion and Crucifixion are very much the same mimetic process as the "miracle" of Apollonius, the same collective transference against an innocent victim, but instead of being written in the spirit of the persecutors, also called in the Gospels the spirit of *Satan*, a word which means the successful but deceptive *accuser* of innocent victims, they are inspired by another Spirit entirely, the Holy Spirit, also called the *Paraclete*, a word which means the *lawyer for the defense*, the defender of wrongly accused victims.

Unlike the miracle of Apollonius, the four accounts of the Passion reveal the whole truth of scapegoating, the same truth as in the rest of the Gospels but more complete and explicit than anywhere else. Ever since

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the Cross, human beings have been struggling with its truth. Even when they acknowledge it, they elude it in part, even when they reject it, part of it nevertheless reaches them. The truth of the Cross will ultimately prevail.

Notes

1) My thanks go to Professor Eduardo Gonzales who, many years ago, brought this text to my attention.

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A Scene from Roman History
(Ink Drawing)
(Dutch)

Leonaert Bramer
(1596-1675)

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