

S. Ronchey, *Indagine sul martirio di san Policarpo. Critica storica e fortuna agiografica di un caso giudiziario in Asia minore*, Istituto Storico Italiano per il medio evo, Roma 1990, pp. 241.

The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* has served to supply a date for second-century bishop of Smyrna who maintained apostolic tradition, was counseled by Ignatius, later offered advice to the churches of Philippi and Rome, denounced Marcion, and was venerated by Irenaeus. The *Martyrdom* may shed light on life and death in Smyrna, church life itself (from prayer to the commemoration of martyrs), and Roman procedures against the church. But at what period? In this admirable study Silvia Ronchey joins the growing minority of scholars who move all or part of the little book to the third century. Even those who continue to date it, or some original text supposedly free of interpolations, soon after Polycarp's death must admit that it is almost as «rhetorical» or even «theatrical» as its companion piece dealing with the Gallican martyrs.

1.1-2 (pp. 33-53). Ronchey first discusses «tendencies» and possible interpolations into the letter of the Smyrnaeans (the *Martyrdom*) and its anachronisms. Its author intended it to look like a rather matter-of-fact narrative, but had special points to make about Smyrna, Polycarp, the Roman government, the sanctity of the martyr, and the cult of martyrs. Here she is certainly right, though it is not quite so certain that Montanism gives the key to the author's purpose. Montanists did recommend voluntary martyrdom (oracle in Tertullian, *De fuga* 9.4), but it seems unlikely that Quintus was related to the Montanist prophetess «Quintilla» (alias Priscilla) or that all Phrygian enthusiasts were Montanists.

1.3 (pp. 55-65). Perhaps it should be made clearer that since the *Martyrdom* itself is in question we must use other materials to date Polycarp's death. He was bishop of Smyrna in Ignatius' time (perhaps 110), so perhaps he was born about 80. He visited Rome around 155, after Anicetus became bishop. His death came at least a decade before 180-185, when Irenaeus wrote *Against Heresies* and referred to his visit to Rome and his «splendid and glorious martyrdom» (3.3.4). A quarter of a century remains open, with 156/157, and 167 as possibilities (177 is much less likely). If we disregard the chronology of c. 21, the *Martyrdom* indicates (claims?) only that it was written within the year after his death (18.3).

1.4 (pp. 67-78). Admittedly it is odd that the author addressed the brethren of Philomelium in far eastern Phrygia, as Ronchey's map (p. 73), shows. But while they are called «fratelli», the context identifies them as «the church of God that sojourns in Philomelium» — in relation to «the holy catholic church in every place». Phrygian Montanism itself is a generation or so older. In any event, is *koinonos* (M 6.2) Montanist? Instead, Quintus was no *koinonos* but could become a *Christou koinonos* by «sharing in the sufferings of Christ» (1 Peter 4:13, quoted at p. 77 n. 47 but not discussed).

1.5, 2.1 (pp. 79-100). Two explicitly theoretical chapters on «Linguaggio della lotta e linguaggio dello stato» and «La dialettica delle forze e l'ipotesi del conflitto di competenze» do not, it seems to me, bear directly upon the basic hypothesis being proved.

2.2-5 (pp. 101-45). Ronchey now criticizes the picture of the persecuting authorities in the *Martyrdom*. There is an *einrenarch* (a hipparch in *Pionius*), or police magistrate, named Herod (M 6.2, 7.1), who sends out *diogmitai* and *hippeis*. Are they civic guards or proconsular police? In M 7.1 there is mention of «diogmitai... with their usual arms», sent out «as if against a robber» (Matt. 26:55). Lightfoot (*The Apostolic Fathers* 2.2.2 [1885], 956-57) refers to Ammianus Marcellinus (27.9.6) who states that they were halfarmed troops used against *praedones* or *latrones*, and to the Augustan History (*M. Ant.* 21.7) where Marcus Aurelius armed *latrones* as well as *diogmitae*. He also cites an Asian inscription (CIG 3831 [Ronchey p. 117 n. 40 wrongly cites as «3031»] = OGi 511 = IGR 4.580) referring to an official who «provided a *diogmites*

to fight for the Lord Caesar when Quintilius Maximus was proconsul» — of Asia about 165. *Hippeis* (M 7.1) can be simply «mounted police». She also deals with a commission in charge of sacrifices, which is related to other martyrdoms but not to Polycarp's. It might be well to discuss proconsul and Asiarch at this point. The proconsul is named only by title (as in *Gallicans*) except in the chronological notice of M 21, where he is called Statius Quadratus (consul in 142). He is titled «archon» in M 17.2 and 19.1 (cf. OGI 441,59). The Asiarch Philip (12.2) is more explicitly identified as Philip of Tralles, high-priest (21). Thus the Gaius Iulios Philippos Trallianos, Asiarch in 149-153 according to OGI 498, is the same as the Iulios Philippos, high-priest of Asia in OGI 499. An inscription from Cos (CIG 2511 = IGR 4.1075) connects Asiarch and archiereia with gladiators and hunts. All this looks matter-of-fact and historical. The proconsul is relatively favorable toward Polycarp while the «mob» is not. But parallels going back into the second century exist in Tertullian. The African proconsul Pudens refused to hear a case without an accuser, following the precedent set by Trajan, while Septimius Severus defended Christian men and women from the rabid mob (*Ad Scap.* 4.3-6; Ronchey refers — via Renan — only to a persecuting proconsul mentioned by Tertullian in that chapter, p. 130 n. 39). It is not clear that Roman policy was completely anti-Christian in Polycarp's time, in view of the petitions repeatedly presented to Marcus Aurelius.

2.6 (pp. 147-58). The terms *ochlos* and *demos* are certainly not descriptive but pejorative *Polycarp* like *Gallicans* uses three such terms, *plethos*, *demos*, and *ochlos* (both singular and plural). The terms may reflect Polycarp's own attitude toward matters of class and rank. He tells the proconsul that he would have been glad to discuss Christianity with him privately, but not with the *demos* or *ochlos* (10.2). Ignatius once urged Polycarp to speak to individuals by name and not look down on slaves (*Ad Polyc.* 1.3, 4.2-3). Ronchey agrees with this picture of him; see p. 121 n. 1 and 162 n. 15.

2.7-8 (pp. 159-83). The *Martyrdom* ascribes hostility to «the Jews» (12.2, 13.1, 17.2, 18.1; only the last two references perhaps from von Campenhausen's «Euangelion-Redaktion»), but it is highly uncertain that the eirenarch Herodes was Jewish or that most Christians at Smyrna in Polycarp's time were ex-Jews (p. 155 n. 23). Musurillo writes that «the author's undisguised anti-semitism strikes an unexpected note and parallels the clearly later *Martyrdom of Pionius*» (*Acts of the Christian Martyrs* [1972], xiv) — though not the *Gallican Martyrs*, we may note.

2.9-19 (pp. 185-221). The emperor Marcus Aurelius was personally responsible for the persecution of Christians, in spite of Christian attempts to exculpate him, for example in Tertullian, *Apol.* 5.6, and the forged letter in Eusebius, *H.E.* 4.13. Since this point is neglected in the *Martyrium Polycarpi* it may come not from the middle of the second century but after the Decian persecution, probably around 260-270; we add that this date coincides with the important sculptures once owned by a rich Christian family in Asia Minor and now in the Cleveland (Ohio) Museum. Finally, an Appendix (pp. 225-40) is concerned primarily with the place of Polycarp in the Roman Martyrology and early inadequate discussions of the *Martyrdom*.

In my opinion the most convincing evidence against an early date for the *Martyrdom* lies in the prayer of M 14, especially the doxology. «I glorify you through the eternal and heavenly high priest Jesus Christ [Polycarp's own epistle (12.2) calls him *sempiternus pontifex* Jesus Christ], your beloved servant, through whom to you with him and the Holy Spirit be glory both now and in the ages to come», and J. Quasten, *Patrology* 1 (1950), 78, refers to this as a «precise trinitarian doxology». A similar doxology later in the *martyrdom* (22.3), supposedly composed by Pionius, is ineptly addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ, «to whom be glory with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit». The *Life of Polycarp* ends in like fashion: «All glorifies God... to whom be glory and power... with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit». These doxologies belong together and all are late. Ronchey refers to this difficulty and the literature as well, but in my opinion does not lay enough emphasis on it (p. 38, n. 24).

Most of the liturgical parallels cited by W. R. Schoedel (*Polycarp, martyrdom of Polycarp, Papius* [1967], 69-71) come from the late *Apostolic Constitutions* and *Liturgy of St. Mark*; cf. also the good discussion by W. Reuning, *Zur Erklärung des Polycarpmartyriums* (1917), 31-43, though neither he nor H. Lietzmann, «Ein liturgisches Bruchstück des zweiten Jahrhunderts», *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 54 (1912), 56-61, appreciated the significance of the doxology, first studied by J. A. Robinson in 1899, then in «The Doxology in the Prayer of St. Polycarp», *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1922/23), 141-44. To him it seemed highly unlikely that a second-century author would have assigned a «conglorification» to Polycarp. We note that in his letter the bishop never mentions the Holy Spirit and refers to «spirit» only when substituting «spirit» for «soul» in an echo of 1 Peter 2:11 (5:3) or citing the Lord's saying, «The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak» (7:2). (A like reticence is evident in Ignatius' letters to the Smyrnaeans and Polycarp). While recalling the caution of R. P. C. Hanson («The Liberty of the Bishop to Improvise Prayer in the Eucharist», *Vigiliae Christianae* 15 [1961], 173-76), we know that Polycarp was no innovator and we hesitate to ascribe a novel liturgical formula to him, especially on his funeral pyre — or even to an early panegyrist. Indeed, Robinson thought that the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* might «go the way of other martyrological expansions». B. Botte, discussing a Latin and Ethiopic doxology found in Hippolytus: «through whom [Christ] to you, Father and Son with the Holy Spirit» (*La tradition apostolique de saint Hippolyte* [Liturgie-wissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 39, 1963], 11; *Trad.* 3), omits the words «Father and Son» as incoherent; but even if Hippolytus wrote them they come from the third century, not the second. The history of doctrine may not look like a solid base for chronology, but Polycarp's doxology makes an early date unlikely (along with the difficulties adduced by H. von Campenhausen in his *Bearbeitungen und Interpolationen des Polycarpmartyriums* [SB Heidelberg, Philos.-hist. Kl., 1957, no. 3]) — unless, as is always possible, the words «to whom with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit» were added later. But interpolation theories, though popular even today, do not solve problems convincingly, whereas on balance Ronchey's study, I believe, proves her point.

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