

close female friend, the novelist Rachilde (Marguerite Aymery Vallette), was known for her own interest in sexual ambiguity. The only serious treatment of sex in Jarry's work appears in the short play *Haldernablou* (*Oeuvres complètes*, Paris: Pléiade, 1972, pp. 214–29), based on his relations with the bisexual poet Léon-Paul Fargue. Whether he and Jarry were lovers in the physical sense is uncertain, though the play suggests that they were. The hero, Haldern (Jarry), seeks a partner who is "neither man nor woman nor monster at all, a devoted slave and one who could speak without breaking the harmony of his sublime thoughts."

Unable to resolve his personal conflicts, Jarry transformed them into the paradoxes of his art. In the 1920s the Surrealists took him up, together with his predecessor Lautréamont; today he is regarded as a major (though perplexing) French writer.

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JESUS (D. CA. 29)

A Galilean Jewish teacher who lived during the reigns of the Roman emperors Augustus and Tiberius, Jesus was, if not the founder of Christianity—the point can be debated—certainly the inspiration for it. Hence any discussion of this faith, which has persecuted homosexuals, must begin with his pronouncements and examples, insofar as they can be ascertained. Franciscans, for instance, look to his ideal of poverty, while the Amish emphasize his style of simple living. Gay men and women have principally found his pronouncements on homosexuality curiously missing and taken this absence of condemnation as tantamount to tacit approval. Because no word from him favors it, critics of homosexuality have judged the silence to signify his endorsement of

other Scriptural condemnations, thereby attesting emphatic disapproval.

Problems of Source Evaluation. Both sides take as primary sources the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the first four books of the New Testament. The numerous apocryphal gospels, among other supplementary sources, becloud the issue, as does the meaning of the word "gospel" (*euangelion*) itself. With a long history, by the first century it meant simply "good news." Thus, the Good News According to Mark, the earliest surviving gospel, does not claim to be a life of Jesus but a proclamation or testimonial about him. Testimonials of faith are not biographies; it is misleading to use them as such. Above all, they are not history. The four endorsed by Christian orthodoxy as canonical were written between 40 and 80 years after the Crucifixion, and whatever sources, if any, they are based upon cannot be clearly identified. Besides, they not infrequently contradict one another as in the instance of how many witnessed the Resurrection and when and where they did so. Yet it can be argued that the gospels do convey the spirit of a person—relatively liberal, iconoclastic, somewhat political, certainly charismatic—who made a powerful impression on his followers.

How much of the record was changed to suit later circumstances? There is every reason to believe that if other facets of the tradition, different from those we now have, did exist at the time when James, the pious brother of Jesus, came to be head of the church, these facts would have been changed to suit the clean-cut image that James wanted to project. This "brother" (if indeed he was one in blood, for Roman Catholics deny that the perpetual Virgin Mary produced any other offspring), who had not even been a part of the movement during Jesus' lifetime, was beheaded about the year 44, which was approximately a quarter of a century before the first gospel, Mark, was composed. The non-canonical gospels, generally known as gnostic because they claim to

contain *gnosis* or special knowledge, come from an even later time than the "synoptic" account of Mark-Matthew-Luke (all with similar perspectives) and the more philosophic, somewhat later John. But again, how far back do the traditions of *gnosticism* go, or do they represent only special interest groups of the mid-second century and later?

Gleanings. The canonical gospels indicate that Jesus was single in his early thirties, contrary to the Jewish tradition that made marriage and fatherhood the norm even for the religious elite. Moreover, they show that he had attracted an entourage of men and women—mostly men—who followed him closely, and that they wandered throughout Galilee, Judea, and the surrounding countryside (areas impoverished and oppressed by Roman and upper-class Jewish and Greek exploiters), preaching repentance and the forgiveness of sins. John the Baptist, an ascetic whom Jesus encountered, preached a similar message, but Jesus was more successful, perhaps because he was also a miracle worker and healer. After his death a final element was added, the notion of an eternal life that believers could share, the poor having a much better chance of salvation than the rich.

The gnostic Secret Gospel of Mark (see Morton Smith, *The Secret Gospel*, pp. 113f.) suggests that Jesus may have had physical union with certain initiates who came to him at night for a secret baptism. They were naked except for a linen cloth around their waists. Mark 14:51–52 records that a young man was with Jesus but ran away on the night that he was arrested by the brook Kidron, a place and time that meet the requirements of such a baptism as described by Smith. This special treatment for members of Jesus' inner circle only accords with the gnostic idea of concentric circles—the inner circle, of course at the center, knowing all secrets; the members of the second circle having only a more general knowledge and baptism administered to them; and a third circle

consisting of potential candidates and all outsiders. Jesus told members of his inner circle that certain secrets were reserved only for them, that is, he preached an esoteric gospel for initiates, the *teleioi*. But other aspects of this "Secret Gospel," if there was one, may have been only what later factions wanted to believe.

Jesus appeared when the Qumran sect that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls was at its peak, yet the gospels never mention the sect nor do its writings contain so much as one reference to Jesus or his Nazarene followers. Nor does the New Testament name the enigmatic Essenes, known only from Philo, Pliny the Elder, and Flavius Josephus—a sect that is described as leading a monastic life that generally excluded women. Other sectarians lived in their own homes throughout Judaea and Galilee, but if married both partners abstained from sexual relations after their initiation into the order. Like the monasteries, these were enjoined to give hospitality to other Essenes who were traveling, and it has been suggested that this custom explains in part how Jesus and his group found accommodations while on the road. Often associated with this sect is John the Baptist, an ascetic whom Jesus visited and honored, who was quite close to this group—but Jesus was no conventional ascetic, and nothing in the canonical gospels and the Book of Acts suggests that the first Christians lived as hermits or in monastic communities, Christian monasticism commencing only in Egypt in the third century.

Jesus was also a younger contemporary of the revered Jewish leader Hillel (flourished ca. 30 B.C.–A.D. 10), who fostered a systematic and liberal interpretation of Hebrew Scripture, but again neither Jesus nor any New Testament author cites Hillel in any connection. The similarities with Jewish teaching that have been so extensively analyzed in this century in order to reconstitute a Judeo-Christian tradition probably stem from the use of common sources: sayings that far from

being original had already found their way into folk tradition.

What did Jesus think of homosexuals and bisexuals, given the lack of any specific pronouncements? He raised no issue about a Roman officer who loved a boy-slave so much that he came pleading with Jesus on the sick boy's behalf and was granted his request (Matthew 8:5–13 has *pais*, "boy," but Luke 7:1–10 uses *doulos*, "slave"). The symbolic meaning of this passage is instructive: the centurion represents the military power of Rome and at the same time the Roman pederastic tradition in which the servant was also the bed partner of his master. The story reflects Jesus' (or the early church's) acceptance of the Roman state as open to its preaching and conversion—an accommodation which culminated in Constantine the Great's adoption of Christianity in 313. Moreover, and contrary to Jewish tradition, Jesus held eunuchs in high regard. In directing his closest disciples about the place where his last supper should be kept, he told them to go into the city and follow a man who would be carrying a pitcher of water, which was women's work and most likely performed by an effeminate male. The instances of a **beloved disciple**, recorded only in John's gospel, can be explained both in ordinary (Near Eastern custom) and in allegorical terms; thus we should not make too much of this favoritism as evidence for a sexual preference, though the last supper incident shows a typical dinner with exclusively male company. In Jewish tradition the guests at the Passover meal are supposed to recline in the manner of the **symposia** where the ancients dined while stretched out on couches.

Finally, in the context of his time, Jesus' actions and teachings reveal a highly positive attitude toward women, a stance that is generally at odds with the Jewish (and Northwest Semitic) tradition of a totally androcentric religious culture, but more compatible with Roman customs in this sphere.

See also Racha.

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Tom Horner

JOHN, APOSTLE

See Beloved Disciple.

JONATHAN

See David and Jonathan.

JOSEPHUS, FLAVIUS (37–CA. 105)

Jewish priest of aristocratic descent, Pharisee, and historian. Though a zealous defender of the Jewish religion, he sympathized with the Romans and discounted the militant nationalism that plunged Judaea into war with Rome in the year 66. Appointed commander of the forces in Galilee by the Sanhedrin, he capitulated to the Romans when besieged in Jotapata, winning the favor of Vespasian by prophesying that he would become emperor. Upon the fulfillment of the prophecy, he was released from captivity but remained with Titus until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70.

As a protégé of Vespasian and Titus, he settled in Rome and composed not only the classic history of the Jewish War, but also the *Jewish Antiquities* in 20 books, published in 93/94. In this work (I, xi, 1, 3) he endorsed a homosexual inter-