PART TWELVE

THE ICONOGRAPHY AND IDEOLOGY
OF MITHRAIC SALVATION

Several dedications, particularly in Germany, were made to Mithra or the Torchbearers "In honor of the Divine House (domus divinae)". Some of these were in the Mithraea (cf 1165 1347-9 et al.) where elaborate pictorial monuments were found. This emphasis upon the Mithraeum as a Domus divina is of interest because it gives point to the elaboration of the tauroctone reliefs and paintings as well as of the decoration of the Mithraeum itself. Just as the Roman domus was something other than a building, so the Mithraeum was something other than a meeting place for worshippers. It was an imitation of the cosmos, as pointed out in the first part of this work.

A considerable number of tauroctones of types III, IV, V, VII and VIII tried to present to the initiate as complete an imagery of Mithraic cosmology and theology as possible (cf 5 f 6). It must now be reasonably clear that Mithraism was essentially a religion of Gnosis and Telete. The Pater, under the nurture (tutela) of Saturnus, was supposed to be endowed with true knowledge of the cosmos and of man's proper function in it. In the Mithraic conception religion was both gnostic and redemptive, its wisdom, like that of Zoroastrianism, being both wise and creative, or recreative (5 e 2; 5 f 5). Mithraic iconography and ideology have been presented hitherto in connection with the reliefs of Dieburg (5 h 7; 6 c 2) and Rückingen (7 c-g) as also with the elaborate reliefs of Southeast Europe. It remains to survey as a whole the iconography of the Osterburken relief (1292*), supplementing this with reference to other parallel symbols especially on tauroctones of types VII and VIII.

a. Mênôk dahišn (self-moving creativity). In a previous section (11 d) we observed that the Dei mundi on the right hand of the enthroned god have to do in general with beginnings or Genesis,
whereas those on his left have to do with completions (cf 4 g 5) or Apogenesis. It is possible therefore that the left side of the taurctone that is under the protection of Sol may generally have to do with beginnings and the right side under Luna with completions. Although strictly speaking Genesis and Apogenesis have to do with the soul and body, in a broad sense the cosmos itself was considered to be a living organism with soul and body. To the initiate, however, most important of all was the generation or regeneration of man. By the second and third centuries of our era the symbols of such things had become prolific and often far-fetched. For example, according to Macrobius (Sat., 1.19)

The Egyptians put forward the argument of the caduceus for the generation of man also, which is called Genesis, making note that four gods preside over man's birth: the Daimon, Tychê, Erôs, and Anankê. They wish the first two to be known as Sol and Luna because Sol is the author of warm breath (spiritus caloris) and is the Genitor and Guardian of the light of human life, and is therefore considered to be a daimôn, that is, a Deus, of birth (nascentis). Luna is Tychê because she is the Dancer of bodies, they being hurled about by a variety of chances. Erôs is denoted by the kiss (of the snakes on the caduceus) and Necessity by the knot (at the middle of the snakes' bodies on the caduceus).

Erôs, the power of attraction, and the daimôn as the Spiritus caloris of the Sun are the forces of Genesis, whereas Luna and Anankê are the fortune and fate of living bodies. Warm breath and love are primary forces of Genesis which we observed in Phoenician cosmology (5 j 2ss). The spiritus caloris is in fact not only the equivalent of Pneuma (in the Deus aeternus) but also, when traced to the sun, of the Avestan Hvarenô (Xvarr, 6 g 3). In the pneumatic Hvarenô were both heat and moisture. "The capacity for generating from moisture has in fact been attributed to Venus for the propagation of animals", says Macrobius (Sat., 1.8). We have found Venus on the Osterburken relief among the gods of Genesis (11 d 2), and Erôs is represented in the arrows of the Deus Sagittarius and in the Pothos motives (10 c 1; 10 b 2). Eros-Aphrodite (cf 784) combined with the Daimôn of Hermes was the essence of Tychô (4 g 3.1), and the bond of all physical life was Necessity. Before the Genesis of men and animals, however, came