PART IV

EPILOGUE
According to the Authorized Version, the apostle Paul around 64 C.E. wrote to his fellow worker Timothy in Ephesus from his prison cell in Rome:

Bring the cloak which I left in Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments, when you come. (2 Timothy 4:13)

These words characterise the man: Paul loved books.

Jesus was a child of the lovely Galilee. He was fond of flowers: “Consider the lilies of the field”, do mark those little red anemones, which blossom myriadlike all over Israel against Easter.

Paul was a city dweller and loved books. We know him well from his letters: like so many professors and journalists, he had a marked talent for writing, but he was a poor public speaker. The members of his congregation remarked about him: “the letters are weighty and strong, but the bodily presence is weak, his sermons are abominable” (2 Corinthians 10:10). Paul was a shy man. And who is oblivious enough to forget his raincoat when visiting ancient Troy, where once Helen revelled in adultery with Paris? He was absent-minded, too. But what does he mean, when he asks for his books and especially the parchments?

With these are probably meant the scrolls of the First Testament. And parchments may mean codices: wooden notebooks, containing words of Jesus. The codex had just then been invented in Rome. Codex means in Latin: woodblock, and by extension a waxed board, used for writing. These could be bound together and so the book was born.

Nowadays we take it for granted, but in fact it was an invention as momentous as the invention of the art of printing in the fifteenth century and that of the Internet in our own days.

It was at that time, during the first centuries of the Christian era, that it was decided which Greek and Latin works were to be transmitted.