

St. Christopher

1490. Toledo. | This is a most important case, the circumstances of which have been clarified for us by W. T. Walsh in his interesting book on Isabella of Spain, 1931 (Sheed & Ward), in which he devotes pp. 441 to 468 to his researches on this Ritual Murder charge. Had it not been for Mr. Walsh, I might have been influenced by the Jewish Encyclopedia's statement (1903, Vol. II1, p. 262) that "Modern historians even deny that a child had disappeared at all" in this case! Strenuous efforts were made by Loeb and H. C. Lea to clear the Jews from guilt of this murder; as also by Abbe Vacandard. Walsh shows that on 17th October, 1490, a Jew named Yuce confessed to having been present at the crucifixion of a boy called Christopher at La Guardian near Toledo. He made this confession without the "aid" of any torture; he was not even threatened with that for one year after his confession. On 19th July, 1491, Yuce was promised immunity from punishment for himself and described the whole crucifixion and gave the names of his accomplices. On 25th October, 1491, a jury of seven noted Renaissance scholars who occupied the Chairs at Salamanca University examined the case and were unanimous in finding Yuce guilty. Not until after this did Yuce undergo torture. This torture was applied to make him say for what reason the boy Christopher had been crucified instead of being killed in any other way; but no "leading" questions were employed in the examination. After this, the case went before a second jury of five learned men of Avila, who considered the evidence concerning Yuce's accomplices, who had been arrested and under examination; they unanimously declared them guilty. Eight Jews (some of them Marranos. or pretended converts to Christianity) were executed.

Writing of the efforts made to discredit the trials in this case, Walsh says (p. 464): "Must we assume that they (the two learned juries) were all murderous fanatics, willing to sacrifice innocent men, and that Dr. Leob, Dr. Lea, and on the Catholic side the somewhat too credulous Abbe Vacandard were better qualified to weigh the evidence after the lapse of four centuries?"

Walsh is not an "anti-semite." He is a historian, and has not suggested that ritual murder is part or any official Jewish ceremony. But he says: "The historian, far from being obliged to make wholesale vindication of all Jews accused of murder, is free, in fact, bound to consider each individual case upon its merits."

Walsh states (p. 441) that this case of Ritual Murder was "one of the chief factors, if not the decisive one, in the decision of Fernando and Isabel" (for the expulsion of the Jews from Spain). He shows that the complete record of testimony in the trial of one of the accused has been available since it was published in 1887 in the Bulletin of the Royal Academy at Madrid (Vol. XI, pp. 7-160), from the original manuscript. (This was, of course, before the Red revolution!)

Crucifican al S.^o Niño, le sacan el Corazón, da vista a su madre, y cortan los Venos.



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Walsh charges Lea, the pro-Jewish author, of intellectual dishonesty (p. 628) in writing in his *Inquisition in Spain* decrying the influential men who were jurors in this case.

“If the Inquisitors sent eight men to a shameful death without being convinced beyond a reasonable doubt of their guilt, the honest verdict of history cannot shrink from finding not only Torquemada and his judges, but King Fernando and Queen Isabel, Cardinal Mendoza and several of the most illustrious professors of Salamanca University guilty of complicity in one of the most brutal judicial murders on record?” (Walsh, p. 442.)

Those who shrink from charging the Jews with the practice of Ritual Murder thereby condemn some of the finest characters on the stage of European history.

Finally, we must record that the murdered boy was canonized as St. Christopher on the authority of Pope Pius VII.