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An Abstract of

Poetry and Sacrament: A Commentary on *The Kensington Mass* by David Jones

“The Kensington Mass” was the last poem of the Anglo-Welsh poet – painter David Jones (1895-1974). It at first describes the faithful, correct and unthreatened celebration of the introductory rite of the mass. The poem then changes direction and tone when the celebrant kisses the altar, so as to introduce an Emperor troubled by a dream. This alerts the reader that there is a collateral text, a dream poem, where the significance of the transformation is to be found. The Emperor decides to hunt on the morrow to ease his disquiet, and the resources of hunting are exploited as an analogy of the Eucharist. The hunt takes place at dawn – the dawn of the day and the dawn of an era – and the poet wakes up to a scene of loss, unlike the happy promise celebrated by Milton in his *Hymn on the Morning of Christ’s Nativity*. There is a sharp break before the poem’s last section, when Peter’s denial of Christ reverberates through history, amplified by the treachery of Roncesvalles. This dolorous sound reveals the true and exact character of human existence. The clue to the significance of the last section of the poem and its bearing on what goes before also lies outside the text: the proposal is that it is Jones’s distress, obliquely expressed, at the disintegration of the traditional Roman liturgy (a denial and a betrayal) that unifies the composition.

The commentary traces what might be called the narrative line of the poem, as above. It also notes some of its influences, salient concepts, underlying shapes, the history of its characters, the sacramental theology that informed his thinking, and the modality of the gloomy assertion at the close.



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27 JAN 2003

POETRY & SACRAMENT

**Being a commentary on *The Kensington Mass*
by David Jones**

A.C. Everatt

Thesis

2002/
EVE

ABBREVIATIONS

Ana	Anathemata (London: Faber & Faber 1972)
IP	In Parenthesis (London: Faber & Faber 1937)
RQ	The Roman Quarry ed Harman Grisewood & René Hague (London: Agenda Editions 1981)
SL	The Sleeping Lord and other fragments (London: Faber & Faber 1995)
DG	The Dying Gaul ed Harman Grisewood (London: Faber & Faber 1978)
DGC	Dai Greatcoat ed René Hague (London: Faber & Faber 1980)
E.&A.	Epoch & Artist ed Harman Grisewood (London: Faber & Faber 1959)

Scriptural quotations are from the Authorized Version.

The psalms quoted are according to Roman Catholic numbering.

The unpublished letters quoted in comments on the last verse are in the David Jones Archive, the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, Box 1:1,3,6.



(a) THE KENSINGTON MASS

(b) in affectionate recalling of
J. O'C.
(c) sacerdos



(d) that han cure vnder criste
and crounyng in tokne
(e) of the Antistitium of
Loidis regio in
Lower Britain.

1 clara voce dicit: OREMVS
et ascendens ad altare

and in lowly accents dicit secreto: AVFER A NOBIS ...

5 should you be elbow-close him
soft-breathed-out you may catch his

10 PER CHRISTVM DOMINVM NOSTRVM.

Light as air the Goidelic vowels of
Maedb's own Munster

15 intermingle with
that vocalic pulchritude
he first had heard

long since
in Alban hill-ways
in Latium

loved at first hearing
and now

20 as though innate in him
indelibly marking him
an unconscious part of him

in the years long fled.
He for whom the vestal fire
on the Hill Capitoline
was one with the points of flame
tended with care
within the lime-whited bangor, where
the vestals of Brigit

had trimmed the februal lights
of a long, long since

35 asperged and crux-signed
Brigantia of the Fires
sacred to half Celtica.
as here in green Kildare.

40 His hands conjoined
super altare
his full chin crumpled

to the pectoral folds of
his newly washed focale
he begins the suffrage:

45 ORAMVS TE, DOMINE
pleading that the merits of
the Blessed departed
the veterani in their celestial castrum
& colonia 'in hevyn on hicht'
might assist him at the work
he is about to make

50 but in especial he asks the advance of
these athletes of God
tokens of whom are cisted
immediately beneath
& central to

the Stone of Oblation
at which he now stands.

He inclines lower yet

lightly & swiftly his lips
press, in medio, the uppermost of the
three-fold, fine abbed fair cloths
of Eblana flax
that must pall

the mensa Domini
these are indeed 'his own raiment.'

As he says the words: sanctorum tuorum, quorum reliquiae
HIC SVNT his apparelled amice hunches a little with the thrust
forward & more downward head of him. He has no need of
the rubric's nudge: *osculatur altare in medio*.
for what bodily act other

would serve here?
Creaturely of necessity
for we are creatures
Our own salutation

were it possible
could be no other than the rubrics *osculatur*
were it Argive Helen's chiton hem
or the hem of the garment
of gilt interthreaded green
wide laticlaved of murex
the long tunica of

our own Elen of the Army-paths
whose outward splendour of form
was informed by an instress
of great noblesse.

She for whom the Emperor
could not eat nor sleep
nor ride out with his comites & duces
in their coats of grey

in the forest rides
to track the green paths
where the gentle-eyed quarry
desiderate of the water-brooks
is like to be, nor could he

100
which formerly
had been some respite from
the tedium of affairs of state.

105
Yet, was it on one such day of tedium, plea & counterplea —
had the Agrimensores demarked the *limes* in question in accord
with our late rescript or did the disputed boundary rest on no
more than the word of bumpkin georges who'd had from their
baldhead forebears that such was the boundary from before the
She-Wolf on the faunine slope sustained the Twins . . .

110
With scarce a third of that day's affairs yet dealt with, he
signified the session was terminated and stepping down from his
curial chair the marbled walls of the aula echoed the imperial
mandatum:

'Tomorrow it is our desire to follow the chase and take what-
ever fortune the numina of the groves may grant us.'

115
Three of the four vigiliae slipped away
his pridie had put on today.

The meet was within the pomoerium
of the City
that sacred unseen defence

120
the augurs plot
clockwise, the sure-binding wall
without which the mortared walls of
squared, dressed stone
crenellate and turreted
125
were contrived in vain.

As they moved off toward & through
the high-arched wide gateway
the hallooing of brass-throated cornus
slung from gay-worked baldrics
130
lifted to the lips of virile

as a dawn salute
to the Supreme Vénatrix on High
her gleam-white crescent moon
all but faded-out and wan.

135

Brazen-faced Phoebus

had not as yet
in his quadriga
climbed to the horizon rim
his gleaming axle-tree
still unseen.

140

But to harbinger his sure approach

the brumous half-light
infiltrated here, now there
rather as assault-groups
probe in column
to coalesce in line

145

so did the green dawn
slowly gain the field.

150

But the red cock and the grey
had crowed but twice
the Fisherman with the Keys
had yet a brief respite, but
brief indeed.

155

His unwiped gladius

well hid within the ample folds
of his closely weft, stout-fabric'd
wide paenula, stained of
wave-fret and wind-borne cloud drench.

160

His hands wide-fisted
hands and whole frame built to
haul & reef & steer

could manage

Why had he still one mauler
at the weapon's hilt-grip
(Well, after all there might be
a further chance
and who should say what turn the pattern
next might take?)

170

He's scarce got within the warmth the brazier's fire of coals
built by escort details pending further orders, nor had he found
any armament but cursing and denials against the barbed &
knowing questioning of door-keeping sluts
when, on the instant
the Gallic rooster

175

his scraggy neck stretched high
let give, without restraint
his third high determinate-cry
crowed out in harsh cacophony.

180

Down the meander and crooked labyrinth of time and maze of
history, or historia intermeddled with potent and light-giving,
life-giving, cult-making mythos
we hear as yet that third crow
dawn crow of dolour
as clear as we hear

185

the echoing blast
from Roncesvalles

190

and with it, of necessity
the straight, exact, rational and true
'Sirs, you are set for sorrow'.

192

INTRODUCTION

David Jones was born in 1895 at Brockley, Kent, now South East London. His father was Welsh-speaking, a printer's overseer from Holywell, North Wales, and his mother, a former governess, from Rotherhithe. He was one of three children: his brother Harold who died in 1910, Alice, and himself Walter David Jones. Precociously gifted as a child, he attended Camberwell School of Art from 1909 to 1914.

He enlisted in the Royal Welch Fusiliers in 1915, after being rejected for the Artists Rifles and the Cavalry. Following training at Llandudno and Winchester, he embarked for France with the 15th battalion (the London Welsh) in December. He was wounded at Mametz Wood the following July, in one of the early engagements of the battle of the Somme. He returned to the front, after convalescence at Stourbridge, in October, to the Ypres sector. Service as a map draftsman at battalion intelligence followed, with an interlude of three months secondment to the Field Survey Company, Royal Engineers. At the beginning of the Passchendaele campaign, he was back with his battalion, but soon withdrawn from the line to make up a nuclear reserve battalion. He returned to England in 1918 with trench fever, and was garrisoned at Limerick in 1919 until his discharge.

A government grant enabled him to continue his art-school training for two years at the Westminster School of Art. Monsignor O'Connor introduced him to the Ditchling Community in West Sussex, a Roman Catholic craftsmen's community, and received him into the Catholic Church in September 1921. The following year he became a Dominican tertiary in the Guild of St. Joseph & St. Dominic. When that community split up he followed the group to Wales, to Capel-y-ffin. His betrothal to Petra Gill in 1924 was broken off in 1927. He returned from Wales to live again in the parental home in Brockley, with frequent visits to the family seaside villa in Portslade, Brighton. He was a member of a circle of Catholic intellectuals who met in the house of Charles & Tom Burns in Chelsea. Other members included Martin D'Arcy, Alick Dru, Christopher Dawson and T.S. Eliot.

The Goupil gallery exhibited his work from 1921-1928. The Society of Wood Engravers elected him to membership in 1927. In 1928 he was voted into the Seven & Five Society (an avant-garde group limited to seven painters and five sculptors, dominated by Ben Nicholson), exhibited with it each year from 1930 to 1933, and was voted out in 1936. He was undertaking commissioned and uncommissioned work in woodcuts, copper engraving, oils and watercolours until October 1932, when, after a very productive year, he had a major nervous breakdown.

Somewhat under protest, he made a recuperative journey to Egypt and Palestine, which proved to be a major stimulus to future writing. From 1929 to 1939 he made regular visits to Rock Hall in Northumberland, usually in August. This was the home of Miss Helen Sutherland, who became Jones's best patron. He lived in the Fort Hotel, Sidmouth, from 1935 to the outbreak of the Second World War. *In Parenthesis* was published in 1937, after almost ten years of writing. He had been encouraged with his writing by Harman Grisewood, and when war broke out, he lived for a while with the Grisewoods in Chelsea, but spent most of the war years at 11 Sheffield Terrace, off Kensington Church Street. He seemed to find the blitz rather congenial. Another serious nervous breakdown followed in 1946, followed by six months of treatment and convalescence at Bowden House, Harrow. He resided at Northwick Park Lodge, Harrow-on-the-Hill from 1947-1964, a place to which he was very attached. During this period the *Anthemata* was published (1952), there was a major exhibition at the Tate Gallery (1954) and a collection of essays, *Epoch & Artist*, appeared in 1959. He was forced to move to Monksdene, Harrow, in 1964; thence to the Calvary Nursing Home, also in Harrow, where he was looked after by Blue Nuns, after a fall and a stroke in 1970. He died on October 28th, 1974.

The Sleeping Lord was published in the year of his death; he had also released the first section of *The Kensington Mass* for publication in *Agenda* in April of that year. René Hague's magnificent commentary on the *Anthemata* was published in 1977. *The Dying Gaul*, a posthumous edition of more essays, edited by Harman Grisewood, came out in 1978. A selection of his letters (four other small volumes of letters have been published), to four close friends, entitled *Dai Greatcoat*, also collected by Hague, came out in 1980. Another collection of pieces he had set to one side, *The Roman Quarry*, appeared in 1981; edited by Harman Grisewood and René Hague,

who gave the volume its title. A retrospective exhibition of paintings was presented by the Tate Gallery in 1981.

There is a considerable body of secondary literature on Jones – the bibliography up to 1989 lists 218 items. Two recent works deserve a special mention. *David Jones The Maker Unmade* by Jonathan Miles & Derek Shiel (1995) is a detailed and careful study of his visual art, with an invaluable catalogue of his work, and developing a strong thesis about his creativity and its contingencies. The other is Thomas Dilworth's *The Shape of Meaning in the Poetry of David Jones*. My debt to this work is greater than my mention of it in the commentary suggests. Its thoroughness in research, insight into the structures in his verse and confidence in attribution of meaning make it a necessary companion for all readers of Jones. His biography of the poet-painter is forthcoming. The Jones archive is kept at the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth. A David Jones Society, which publishes an annual journal, was formed in 1996, whose secretary is Dr. Anne Price-Owen. There is no study of *The Kensington Mass*; my hope is that this commentary will fill the gap and stimulate reflection on it.

The poem, so it seems to me, falls easily into three sections. I have assumed throughout the commentary that this is an acceptable and uncontentious division. The first and longest section is of a priest saying mass; the second section is devoted to a Roman emperor; the third and shortest section tells of St. Peter's denial of Christ and its aftermath.

A set of terms from *The Kensington Mass* itself sums up the priest's work at the altar. This work, once so settled and familiar, belonged to the faith the poet shared – it was *true*. As the sign-making of a sacrifice, it was comprehensible; above all, it was *rational*. As a meticulously faithful commemoration, whose value was *ex opere operato*, neither more nor less than a transformation into the body and blood of the Son of God, whose soul and divinity was present by concomitance, it was *exact*. And there is to be a moment of making by the authority of Christ Himself –mystery though it was, it was *straight*.

The emperor's presence is moody, turbulent and opaque. He introduces hunting into the poem. I have, for convenience, called hunting a model of the eucharist, though the energies released by this figure are not straightforwardly directed – perhaps eventually they are even turned against itself.

As the priest is displaced by the emperor, so the emperor is superseded by St. Peter. Peter dominates the third section. It has a direct falling trajectory, clear and definite like the words of the priest at mass, but opposite in tone and import. It is a kind of mirror-image of the first section.

One aspect of Jones's work that Corcoran has alluded to is his use of characters. He has called them, in a very good phrase, 'the personnel of our corporate mythologies.' Potted histories of these characters are provided. Most are actual people like Monsignor O'Connor, Père de la Taille, John Peel; others are part-historical, part mythical like Elen and her emperor, and St. Brigit; yet others, wholly legendary, like Archbishop Turpin. They are either implicated in the production of the poem or have a presence in it. As Corcoran writes of the *Anathemata*, though it applies also to *The Kensington Mass* in a more limited way, '... a vast number of other characters enters the poem more obliquely, sometimes to glance out at us for only a line or two, and these figures share that metamorphic quality of "shape-shifting", which Jones finds in the figures of Celtic mythology.' ¹

Other poems of Jones are more difficult than *The Kensington Mass*, but even after long reflection, there are still a handful of lines whose meaning is indecipherable. More challenging still than those lines whose surface meaning is elusive are those puzzles that are integral to Jones's poetic practice. *The Kensington Mass*, at its first reading, seemed very still and distant, like a tableau of archaic figures. Perhaps it was something of the stillness of that first impression that prompted Miles & Shiel to write: 'Indeed, it would have been most interesting if Jones had conceived the relatively short "Kensington Mass" as a lettered series, thereby breaking into a new form of sequential inscriptions.' ² Two peculiarities stood out, I recall. The first was the air of security and permanence about the priest at the altar. The second was the invasion of the text by an emperor whose *raison d'être* was unclear and whose interest in hunting disturbed the narrative. The second set of problems, which emerged on

closer acquaintance, was the mystifying location of the poem – it travelled from Heckmondwyke (Yorkshire) or Ditchling (Sussex) or Pigott's (Buckinghamshire), to Rome in the Late Empire, and thence to the Courtyard of the Chief Priest in Jerusalem. Together with this was a feeling that the poem, as part of a sequence, was unintelligible on its own. The next puzzle was to do with the connection between sections one and two (*their* connection was even uncertain) and section three. There was nothing in the text to warrant the transition to the third section. Perhaps these sections were dislocated, the third section belonged elsewhere... there was no rhyme or reason to it. The next puzzles centred on the emperor and his decision to hunt on the morrow. He seemed to be acting *in persona Christi*, or even He was Christ Himself, which cast doubts on the time-frame of the poem. A poem whose where and when were unfixed was very slippery indeed. The final set of puzzles concerned Elen and the other women. Their role was unclear till late in the composition of the commentary when a good *gestalt* revealed what it was.

Readers new to Jones may find his way with meaning puzzling. The meanings of words, phrases and images are almost always multiple. But the attribution of meaning is not a quodlibetal licence. As a rule of thumb, meaning-clusters are to be preferred to open meaning. An example should illustrate this. Jones lived in Harrow for the last twenty-eight years of his life, and the place-name came to have many associations for him. It was a place where he felt very secure, and he commonly called his dwelling there his 'dugout.' It was also the name of a place, more at the bottom of the hill than the top, that exemplified the tacky commercialism that lay at the heart of the British Empire. So it symbolized for him, both safety and dinginess. A harrow, so he leads us to believe, was the conventional name for a rack on which to fix candles in front of statues. Certainly it is a rather suitable name, for, straightened out and turned upside-down, it does resemble an agricultural harrow with the candle-holders as its tines. So the name combines both an apparatus to aid prayer, and an implement to prepare the ground for sowing. There was in the park below Northwick Lodge the ruin of an eighteenth century water trough, originally fed from a (now) dried-up spring; and also in Harrow, the Ty burn rose which flowed, mostly underground, to Marble Arch, with its association of martyrdom. Furthermore, Sir Winston Churchill had a special place in his thinking; at first, a strongly-felt dislike of the unreliable adventurer who sent men to their death, but later a sympathetic regard for a

magnanimous and Arthurian leader. After the Second World War, it was Churchill's custom to visit his old school in Harrow every year; people of that generation will recall photographs of him, with his stick holding up his hat and the familiar victory sign, and the boys would have a holiday because of the old man's visit. Jones also cherished the image and belief, derived from a favourite medieval text and part of the Apostles Creed, of Christ harrowing hell to release captives and open the gates of Paradise. Safety, tackiness, fertility, prayer, Enlightenment aridity, martyrdom, the hero and the saviour were all part of the meaning-cluster that Harrow indicated and evoked. In *In Parenthesis* he used 'out-harrowing' to describe the action of rats in the trenches. That, of course, was metaphor – using a word in a new way to extend its meaning. The characteristic Jones use was more passive – to recognize the associations of a word and hoard them, even if they made an ill-assorted heap. This may be thought a loaded example, for Harrow was both the name of a district and a word in the language, but it was typical of the way an association of varied and sometimes discrepant meanings formed in his mind. He was very aware of the poetic strength of this practice: anathemata, for example, denoted both things treasured, laid up and offered, as well as forbidden things. The traditional distinction between the denotation of a term and its connotations tends to disappear in Jones's usage.

These feature of allusiveness, puzzle-making and lexical polyvalence may seem so to baffle the reader as to obstruct the mind's journey towards the meaning. Indeed, labyrinth was a favourite image and term. It was sometimes a charmed and happy enclosure, sometimes a place of foreboding and entrapment, sometimes even a general-duty phrase for the current situation, or the complexities of the past. In the manuscripts I will quote from later in commentary, he writes of 'guerrilla warfare in the labyrinth' for the kind of fighting one must engage in here and now to save what is good in a tricky and confusing environment. And, above all, his poetry is labyrinthine, *The Kensington Mass* no less than the better known works.

René Hague has some exceptionally useful remarks in an essay, "The Clarity of David Jones."³ He asks 'If David, then, is so preoccupied with the exact and clear, how does it come about (for of this there can be little doubt) that he is regarded as an obscure writer?' He then refers to '...David's views on the almost untenable position of man-the-maker in a super-technological age... on the artist's sad estate as an Ishmael in the

modern pandemonium: and he will understand that the poet is therefore forced, in his use of words, to look outside the general utility-pattern. It becomes impossible for him to speak out in plain language, *en clair*; he [will] sap and undermine, to look within himself for the logic [by] which he is driven to construct his own code, to approach obliquely, to determine “the shape in words” he is struggling to make. And this is bound to impose a certain obscurity or difficulty. It is here that the use of symbol operates and provides a key.’ He goes on to say that Jones preferred *sign* to *symbol*, partly because it was commonly used by scholastic writers, and because symbolism has a misleading specific reference to a school of painting and of poetry. Hague then proposed, as more useful and appropriate, *symbolon*, a putting together of two halves of a token or tally, that is, a recognition-ticket. He writes ‘for bringing out the clarity of David’s work and for obtaining the consequent delight [in recognition, that is], it is essential that the reader have his half of the token.’ This seems to me a thoroughly constructive use of an ancient concept, an indispensable key in construing *The Kensington Mass*.

An aid to understanding the poem is to compare it with a painting, *A Latere Dextro*, reproduced as frontispiece, done by Jones between 1943 and 1949, while he was living in Kensington and Harrow. He had originally given it the title *The Kensington Mass*, but later changed it. The new title is taken from a text in St. John’s gospel (19, 33-34). ‘When the soldiers came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs; but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and at once there came out blood and water, from his right side.’ Nicolette Gray says of the picture. ‘I am fascinated by the excitement of the serving boys in their white surplices, by the movement everywhere, the blowing curtains, the flaring candles, the twisted columns of the altar, the swirling vestments, compensated for by the stable vertical of the pillar on the left and the candlestick. For all its excessive detail and overelaboration, a sense of the tremendous drama of the miracle of transubstantiation which is taking place, remains.’⁴ Jones thought he had spoilt the picture by overpainting: it is both compositionally and theologically congested. For all that and perhaps because of that, it has lessons to teach the onlooker about Jones’s sacramental theology, and goes some way to provide the reader of *The Kensington Mass* with his half of the token.

The picture has three main elements. There is a priest at the altar celebrating mass; there is the deposed Christ in Mary's arms; and there is the breath of the Holy Spirit. The priest is in the centre of the picture, showing the chalice. It is the Easter season, to go by the Paschal candle, 'the fair garnished percher,' and the decorated candles of the acolytes. From the number of the candles on the altar, the celebrant would appear to be more than an ordinary parish priest, but not a bishop; he is probably a monsignor. There are four carried torches for the consecration, congruent with the Tridentine rite. In fact, the thurifer, vestments, altar cloths and the priest with his back to the people, all belong to a *missa normativa* of the old rite as it was celebrated at the time Jones painted the picture. The riddle curtains with the candle at the extremity belong to the Sarum rite. The mass could well be a *melange* of Tridentine, Sarum and Dominican uses. The flowers speak of the Resurrection and Ascension. It would be an error to say that Jones's sacramentality was wholly of the Last Supper and Crucifixion. It was fully trinitarian and transcendent.

The second element is the deposed Christ at the top left of the picture, with an answering feature in the bottom right corner of the picture, where there is a lamb from whose side water is pouring into a chalice and thence overflowing on to the ground. It is, in miniature, like the great prefiguring river from the Temple. Mary is pointing to Christ's wound; it is from the pierced side of Christ that all graces flow. Christ's wounds are replicated in the celebrant; his wounded foot, pierced side and stigmatic hands give off rays of light. Christ is holding the standard of the XXth legion, Valeria Victrix, subversive elements of which Jones believed carried Christianity into Wales. It served in the North West of England and North Wales. The standard was a precursor of the colours of a regiment, the rallying point in the confusion of battle and the soul of the regiment. It was also the sign of the enforcement of Roman law which guaranteed *romanitas*.

The third element is the wind, the breath of the Holy Spirit. It blows perceptibly from where Christ is lying. There are doves in the capital of the column, a live dove is feeding a stone one. The wind rustles the riddle curtains, blows Mary's tresses, the servers' hair, disturbs the tabernacle cloths and Christ's loin cloth, and the candle flames – it creates a lozenge-shaped vortex round the celebrant. The priest has asked the Holy Spirit to bless, ratify and approve the offering he is making, and this

invocation of the Spirit is repeated after the Consecration. The altar boys are caught up in the excitement of what is afoot – the two on the left of the row are awe-struck. Memories of the Great War are rarely absent from Jones's work: the altar boy on the right of the row is wearing hob-nailed boots, the thurifer has one foot bare. They recall an episode in the trenches when he was caught unshod, contrary to military discipline.

a) **THE KENSINGTON MASS** David Jones was working on *The Kensington Mass* when he died. When he lived in Kensington in the 1940s, at 11 Sheffield Terrace, off Kensington Church Street, he wrote a poem about the mass which he subsequently mislaid. It is impossible to know for certain the relationship between the early poem and the one we know as *The Kensington Mass*. The later one was written in Harrow, where he lived in his final years. Nor do we know why he retained the title. Jones had broadcast for the BBC a poem called, simply, *The Mass*, in 1958, but that recording has also unaccountably disappeared. René Hague has tentatively recounted the textual history of *The Kensington Mass* in *The Roman Quarry*, a posthumous selection of mostly previously unpublished manuscripts Jones left at his death. It appears that *The Kensington Mass*, as we have it, was the first section of a longer poem, the next section of which he retrieved from the manuscripts. That begins 'But what then/of the Fisherman/what of him?' Jones released *The Kensington Mass* (§1) for publication in *Agenda* (1974), reserving the right to improve what he said was only a draft, but refused to release §2. *The Kensington Mass* (§2), as René Hague has presented it, offers few hints about the direction the poem might have taken, it is repetitious and unpolished and deliberately held back from publication at a time when §1 saw the light of day, so it seems better to disregard it in the interpretation of §1, the subject of this commentary.

René Hague collected together in *The Roman Quarry* three poems, as mass pieces: *The Kensington Mass*, *The Grail Mass* and *Caillech*. *The Grail Mass* seems to me a rather fine poem, complete as it is, and I cannot figure out why Jones should have withheld it from publication. There is a narrative of a priest saying mass, until the communion; the poet/witness is interestingly positioned to observe the congregation, and offer wry comments on them in a social comedy sort of way; until, that is, Lancelot attempts to force his way into the Church, and there the poem ends. The

other poem, *Caillech*, is quite different. It is the most feminine of all Jones's poems. A Dublin washerwoman is at mass, her thoughts are 'overheard' in a stream of consciousness soliloquy more or less disconnected from the mass being celebrated, and again Lancelot forcefully intrudes. It is a rambling poem in need of revision, of a length difficult to hold the attention of listeners or readers, and certainly without the narrative focus of *The Grail Mass*, but it grows on one with re-reading.

All those who find in Jones a unique sensibility and curious vision of the world must be grateful to René Hague for the inspired way he collected together these scribbled manuscripts and for Agenda to have published them.⁵ However, only *The Kensington Mass* comes with Jones's blessing, and we can only guess why it has the title it has.

b) in affectionate recalling of

J. O'C.

All Jones's poems that René Hague calls his mass-pieces were dedicated to Monsignor O'Connor's memory. Jones even referred to himself as 'Fr. O'Connor's boy'. He instructed and received David Jones into the Catholic Church on September 7th 1921 at St. Cuthbert's, Wilmer Road, Bradford. Serving Fr. O'Connor's mass was affectionately recalled, and the model for the priest in the first part of *The Kensington Mass* is undoubtedly Fr. O'Connor. He was also the model for G.K. Chesterton's Fr. Brown, though he was neither nondescript in appearance nor mild in character. Chesterton's *Autobiography* has four pages of great charm and not a little insight about the transformation he made for fictive purposes of the dapper and very bright Fr. O'Connor into the cleric of 'pudding-faced fatuity' Fr. Brown.⁶

c) sacerdos René Hague makes the point that Jones seemed to be inhibited from using the term 'priest', and always sought alternatives.⁷ It is true Jones used many synonyms for 'priest', but the varying usage discloses something of his theology of the priesthood: *sacerdos* (the exact and simple word for a Roman cleric), the man in the *planeta*, known also as *lacerna*, *paenula*, *casula*, chasuble (borrowing from the secular culture of late Roman antiquity), the cult man at the stone (an anachronistic and diminished survivor), the men in skirts (seemingly, sexually anomalous), presbyter (the dignified elder and minister from the earliest times), celebrant (the principal function of the priest is to celebrate mass), *offerand or*

offeriad (which expresses in Welsh the intimate bond of the priest and the mass), *pontifex* (bridging the divine and the human, and the chief priest from whom he derives his office), *urddol* (the consecrated one), the vested man at the board (overseeing the Lord's Supper), the mum and praying clerk (too rich in suggestions to single out in a summary phrase!). But he referred to the Chaplain of the Welsh Chieftain in *The Sleeping Lord* as the priest of the Household and to the army chaplain in *In Parenthesis* in the conventional way as Fr. Larkin.

d) *that han cure vnder criste*

and crounyng in tokne Lines borrowed from William Langland's *Piers Plowman*. John Heath Stubbs and Colin Wilcockson, eminent critics both of Jones, attest the importance of *Piers Plowman* 8 to him, especially for its prosody. The lines 'Bischopes and bachelers, Bothe maisters and doctours/that han cure under criste and crounyng in tokne' are close in the text to a rebuke to those parish priests who left their parishes for extended visits to London; and the juxtaposition is teasing. The lines themselves accord the very highest value to the cure of souls. Monsignor O'Connor was a loyal diocesan priest, zealous for souls in the place to which he was called.

e) *of the Antistitium of*

Loidis regio in

Lower Britain. John O'Connor was ordained in the Lateran Basilica, Rome, on 30th March 1895. He was a priest of the Leeds diocese in Northern England, as Jones here has it. Northern England was always Lower Britain for Jones; *Loidis regio* = Leeds district; *Antistitium* = bishopric, hence diocese. He was a curate at St. Joseph's, Bradford; St. Mary's, Halifax; and St. Anne's, Keighley. From 1905-1919 he was parish priest at Heckmondwyke, during which he built the Church of The Holy Spirit. In 1919 he was appointed parish priest of St. Cuthbert's, Wilmer Road, Bradford. To serve the developing housing estates in his parish at Chellow Grange, Heaton, he initiated and oversaw the building of the Church of Our Lady and First Martyrs. This was the first round church to be built in England since the Reformation. Influenced by the liturgical movement during his time on the continent - he had been a pupil at Douai, then studied philosophy and theology in Rome - and following the principles advocated by Fr. Josef Braun's *The Christian Altar* (1924),

he had the altar placed in the centre of the church. He wrote: 'In complete sympathy with the universal return to the liturgy, the altar is conspicuous and accessible. It is to be set in the middle of the church, symbolizing that which cannot be overset. You will not revive the liturgy before you dis-inter it'. The church was opened by Bishop Pearson OSB of Lancaster in 1935, and became independent the following year. He was appointed a Privy Chamberlain to His Holiness the Pope in 1937, and died in 1952. 9

L1 *clara voce dicit: OREMVS* The call to prayer OREMVS is said, in the traditional rite, three times in the early part of the mass: after the absolution following the *confiteor*, after the *gloria*, and after the profession of faith in the creed. Strictly speaking, the priest is preparing to say mass, rather than actually celebrating. The call to prayer belongs to the beginning of the Mass of the Catechumens, as it used to be called, before the Mass of the Faithful, when the catechumens were dismissed.

L2 *et ascendens ad altare* When the priest enters the sanctuary and stands at the foot of the altar steps, he recites the first four verses, alternating with the server, of psalm 42. The fourth verse, *Introibo ad altare Dei* (I will go up to the altar of God) with the response *Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam* (to God who gives joy to my youth) is twice repeated. Psalms 41 and 42 (Roman Catholic numbering) or 42 and 43 (Protestant numbering) should be read together or even understood as one psalm: they have a common refrain three times uttered, and the second psalm overcomes the sadness of the first in anticipation of the sacrifice to be offered, by responding to the separation from God with the prayer to be reconciled. Those who served mass in the old days before Vatican II will recall this beautiful psalm and may remember how important it was to remove the kneeler to allow the celebrant to ascend the steps to the altar. Jones recalls Msgr. O'Connor testily kicking the kneeler to one side on one occasion when he served his mass. Dr. P.J. Fitzpatrick cites Buck Mulligan's parodic mimicry of psalm 42 at the beginning of James Joyce's *Ulysses* and thinks (probably with some justice) that this is as much of the old mass that is now available to a modern generation. 10

Lest it be thought, however, that we are here concerned merely with the topography of

church buildings, the theology of the altar of Maurice de la Taille must be called into play. ¹¹ De la Taille was a French Jesuit theologian and a strong influence on Jones. Martin D'Arcy S.J. was an enthusiast for de la Taille's work and a close friend also of Jones. More will be heard of de la Taille in this commentary. 'The closest correlation exists between sacrifice and altar. The existence of one implies the existence of the other. Hence if we prove that Christ is the eternal altar of this sacrifice, we prove thereby that the sacrifice of that altar, the sacrifice of Christ, is eternal. We have seen already that Christ is at the same time priest and victim, we now state that He is also altar - the eternal altar. But does it not look absurd to pile all these offices and all these titles on the one Christ? Absurd to place a man and that man God, on a level with the stone or bronze appointed to receive the victim's blood!' He proceeds with his proof by answering three questions. Is Christ the altar of His sacrifice? Is the risen Christ the altar of His sacrifice? What is the relation between our material altars and the heavenly altar?

'The victim is not holier than the altar... "You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?"' We easily equate the altar and the Temple, and have no difficulty with Jesus's references to himself as Temple. Nor should we resist his self-description as altar. The altar is one with victim and priest. His next stage is to show that the risen Christ is the altar of his sacrifice. Assuming altar and Temple to be convertible terms, he reminds us that Christ's body will rise again as Temple, that Christ as the new altar shows the divine, that sacrifice to God must go through Christ, that His risen body annuls and fulfills the sanctity of figurative altars, that the new altar is such that 'We have an altar whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle'. He cites many patristic writers to support his thesis (perhaps it is more than a thesis - he writes that the risen Christ as the altar of His sacrifice is the ancient and constant teaching of the Church). From the eternity of the altar, then, follows the eternity of the priesthood and the eternity of the sacrifice; hence the belief, by no means accepted by all catholic theologians, of Christ as Eternal Victim. Finally, the heavenly altar is not to be thought an extension or analogy from our material altars, but *our* altars are so called because of Him. The Church, the Upper Room, the Cross and the altars of our sanctuaries all resemble the heavenly altar, but of these the wood of the Cross most of all.

A contemporary liturgist has also considered this moment in the mass. ¹² Her phrase

‘liturgical stammer’ captures exactly the repeated expressions of sacred intention in the use of psalm 42. The celebrant has alluded to his presence in the sanctuary with the prayer *‘In nomine patris, et filii, et spiritu sancti’*, and Pickstock shows how unfixed is the time and location of the worshipping subject, both inside and outside the name of the Holy Trinity, both before and during the liturgy proper. She asks ‘What is the nature of the journey’s destination, the *altare Dei*? Unlike ordinary geographical destinations the altar of God is an infinitely receding place, always vertically beyond in the sense of *altaria*, a raised place where offerings were upwardly burnt... This raised place of sacrificial burning is the site where offerings are altered and transubstantiated.’

‘... Our journey towards God’ she continues ‘cannot begin before its ending, before God Himself has journeyed towards us. Hence, the reason why the altar perpetually recedes is that to arrive at the place of worship, of divine presence, we must already be in that place. Yet it is as if this more precise expression of impossibility constitutes its partial surmounting, for the journey then begins again but with all the difference of a repetition: *“Et introibo ad altare Dei : ad Dei qui laetificat iuventutem meam.”* Thus it becomes difficult to accord priority either to our journey towards God or His movement towards us, an ambiguity which precipitates a reappraisal of the nature of “arrival”, both insofar as we must now comprehend “arrival” as that which is perpetually repeated, and the beginning of a journey as in some sense contemporaneous with arrival at its destination. For “*introibo*” is an announcement of intention, an arrival at, and an entering into.’

L3 *secreto: AVFER A NOBIS* The priest now inaudibly asks for purification in order to enter the Holy of holies on behalf of the people. In full, the petition is *Aufer a nobis, quaesumus, Domine, iniquitates nostras: ut ad Sancta sanctorum puris mereamur mentibus introire. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.* (Take away from us our iniquities, we entreat thee, Lord, so that, with souls made clean, we may be counted worthy to enter the Holy of holies: through Christ our Lord. Amen.) The concluding phrase asks for the grace of the happy sorrow of repentance through the merits of the sacrifice of Christ, which the mass commemorates, represents, re-enacts and renews. All graces flow from the pierced side of Christ. We see that

emblematically in the painting *A Latere Dextro*, as the water overflows like a river from the side of the lamb of God.

The rubrics prescribe three voices for the celebrant: in the poem, these are *clara voce*, soft-breathed-out, and *secreto*. First, there is *vox clara conveniens et intelligibilis*; a loud voice to be heard by those attending mass, for their instruction and edification. Second, *vox mediocri*, or *vox submissa vel aliquantulum elevata*; a moderate or subdued middle voice, which can be heard by those close by. Third, *vox secreta*, in which the words must be mouthed but only heard by the priest himself. The daily office used to be said in this last way. In earlier times these preparatory prayers would be said in the vestry before entering the sanctuary. The antiphons and psalms up to the Introit, the *confessio* and what follows are all said in a loud voice, but not the *Aufer a nobis* and the *Oramus te Domine*. Jones is following the rubrics to the letter.

L11 *the Goidelic vowels* The vowels of the Irish (Goidelic) Celts, not the Welsh (Brythonic) Celts. *The Kensington Mass* at first appears, rather deceptively, to be one of the least Welsh of Jones's poems.

L12 *Maedb's own Munster* 'Great indeed was the strength of that Maedb over the men of Ireland, for it was she who would not allow a king in Tara unless he had her as a wife!' Great indeed was Maedb, a goddess of sovereignty and war-Goddess: feisty, without mercy, jealous and promiscuous, instigating with sorcery the Cattle Raid of Cooley that ended in the death of Cú Chulainn. ¹³ Quite why the legend of Maedb is evoked here and why she is described as of Munster is difficult to understand. Maedb was Queen of Connacht, or of Tara. It may be (this is a somewhat desperate conjecture) a surreptitious way of introducing Cú Chulainn into the poem. As a self-sacrificing hero, he was a kind of Christ-figure: he tied himself by his belt to a boulder so as to prevent himself from fleeing when his enemies surrounded him. Otherwise it seems to be a forced association with John O'Connor from Clonmel, but to achieve what effect is unclear. In an early and rejected draft of *The Grail Mass*, Jones has these strong and fine lines to describe (it would seem) the distribution of Holy Communion, from which it is clear that he understood well Maedb's (sic) provenance.

Did the sacristan
fetch out the jackal's head
As Finnegan's shawl wrapt Caillech swore
she saw he did from behind the dust-hung,
neglected half-broken side-altar of
Honoratus of Lerins
but that was away back,
in Medb's own green Connacht -

In glossing these lines, René Hague invites Time or a friend to illuminate the references and the invitation is reiterated here. Likewise, with Maedb's own Munster.

L14 *that vocalic pulchritude.* It is worth recalling Jones's pleasure in the saying of Pseudo-Dionysius '*Pulchritudine Dei omnia derivantur*' (From the beauty of God are all things that are). Jones had such a high regard for Pseudo-Dionysius he called him 'the cat's whiskers'. Maritain held the view, following Pseudo-Dionysius, that Beauty was the primary transcendental and '[it] is in fact the splendour of all the transcendentals together'. Monsignor O'Connor's translation of Maritain's *Art et Scholastique* as *the Philosophy of Art* was vigorously discussed by Jones and his friends in the 1920's. ¹⁴ There is an illuminating remark (DGC 175) about Jones's feeling for the spoken word (in this instance in rather special circumstances, but never the less generally true). '*Voices are extraordinary, I think. They have almost limitless power to deject, repell (sic), bore or elevate, enchant, console, attract and all the rest...*'

L17 *in Alban hill-ways*

in Latium The ancient kingdom south and east of Rome. At first a rival, then defeated by Rome. There was a tradition it was of Trojan origin. It is always evoked by Jones with warmth and affection.

L19 *loved at first hearing*

and now
as though innate in him
indelibly marking him
an unconscious part of him

but far from unconscious

the deliberate cultivation

in the years long fled. The sacraments of baptism, confirmation and holy orders impose on the recipient a character so deep down it seems innate and unconscious. ¹⁵ The character has an enduring mark, like the branding of an animal to manifest ownership, like the tattoo of a Roman soldier to reveal his allegiance, like the seal on a document to guarantee authenticity, like the inscription of a coin, like circumcision, like marking the doorposts of the Israelites with the blood of the lamb to save them from the avenging angel, like sealing up something to make it secure. By this character a person is deputed to a task and a way of life. It is not, like grace, erased by sin: it cannot be erased, and so cannot be repeated. Such is the awesome 'indelibly marking' of those ordained to the work of the altar. Jones here insinuates fluency in Latin as part of the priestly character.

L27 *the vestal fire* Vesta was the goddess of the hearth, kin to the deities of the household. There was a tradition that Aeneas brought the fire of Vesta from Troy. Jones also cherished the thought that his city of birth and upbringing, home and household, London, was founded as Troy Novaunt. Every household was a miniature temple of Vesta, the common meals therein enjoyed her guardianship. The fire was attended by six virgin priestesses, who offered sacrifices to Bona Dea (sister, wife or daughter to Faunus). They never allowed the fire to be extinguished. Boys and men were excluded from the sanctuary.

L28 *the Hill Capitoline* This was the centre of worship in the Roman Empire. One of the earliest of the seven hills to be incorporated into the City of Rome, it has twin summits on one of which was a temple to the Father of the Gods. The Sybilline books were kept there; beneath it were rock chambers, and at the edge the Tarpeian Rock. Sacrifices to Jupiter and thanksgivings for victories in war were offered in the temple. On part of the Hill Capitoline is now the church of Ara Coeli (the heavenly altar).

L32 *the vestals of Brigit* These were the nuns of St. Brigit's convent at Kildare,

the mother house of the many convents she founded. The significance of this reference to her nuns is well conveyed by Gerald of Wales writing six centuries after her time: "In Kildare of Leinster, which the glorious Brigid made illustrious, there are many wonders worthy of mention. Foremost among which is the fire of Brigid which they call inextinguishable; not that it cannot be extinguished, but because the nuns and holy women so anxiously and punctually cherish and nurse the fire with a supply of fuel, that during many centuries from the virgin's own day it has ever remained alight and the ashes have never accumulated, although in so long a time so vast a pile of wood hath here been consumed. Whereas in the time of Brigid, twenty nuns here served the Lord, she herself being the twentieth, there have been only nineteen from the time of her glorious departure and they have not added to that number. But as each nun in her turn tends the fire for one night, when the twentieth night comes, the last virgin having placed the wood ready, saith, 'Brigid, tend that fire of thine, for this is thy night.' And the fire being so left, in the morning they find it still alight and the fuel consumed in the usual way. That fire is surrounded by a circular hedge of bushes, within which no male enters, and if one should presume to enter as some rash men have attempted, he does not escape divine vengeance."

Brigit was born in 451 or 452, at Faughart, Co. Louth, of the Fotharta sept. ¹⁶ She is said to have had princely ancestors, though she may have had a slave woman as mother and chieftain as father. She is also said to have had a druidic mentor in her youth, who was so impressed by her goodness and humility he became a Christian. She was courted by suitors, but took the veil, from St. Macaille at Croghan. She lived the religious life with seven other virgins at Magh Life, where she erected her convent at Cill Dara, the modern Kildare (the Church of the Oak tree). She was professed in 468, by St. Mel - though this is not uncontested. Brigit was then granted abbatial powers: as abbess she was superior of a double monastery, as was common at the time. The small oratory grew into a great cathedral. The Round Tower of Kildare probably dates from the next century. The Kildare community was noted for its great learning and its skills in art and illumination. The Book of Kildare, which has not survived, was so beautiful it was thought to have been inscribed and painted by angels. No copy of the Rule has survived. The Kildare community had the unusual prestige of proposing clergy for the Bishopric of Kildare, over which scholarly dispute has arisen on the matter of ecclesiastical precedence. The Book of Armagh (eighth

century) attests Brigit's friendship with St. Patrick. "Between St. Patrick & St. Brigit, the columns of the Irish, there was so great a friendship of charity that they had but one heart and one mind. Through him and through her Christ performed many miracles." Without diminishing St. Patrick's pre-eminence in Armagh, she affirmed the autonomy of the see of Kildare. It is fair to say that, between them, Patrick and Brigit exercised saintly patronage over all Ireland: Brigit in the East and South, in half Celtica (L37), and Patrick in the North and West. Brigit is patroness of consecrated virgins and secondary patron of Ireland. She is Queen of the Gael, Mary of the Irish. She died in 524 or 525, on February 1st. She was interred in Kildare Cathedral and the remains were later (878) removed to Downpatrick to be interred in a shrine with St. Patrick and St. Columba. They were subsequently transferred to the Cathedral there (1186).¹⁶

There are six Lives, or chronicles, of her from the sixth century to medieval times, in Latin verse or Gaelic, and more modern hagiographies from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The *Vita Brigitae* of Cogitosus (variously dated) may have played a part in strengthening the Royal House of Leinster, whose sovereignty was seized by the Fotharta sept in 633. The chronicles, or old histories, are full of discrepancies, and with their wonder-working competitiveness contain a plethora of marvellous incidents. Their value as history proper is slight.

Many of the miraculous narratives recall her namesake, the Celtic goddess.¹⁷ Among the British, the earlier Brighid appears as Brigantia, whose chief association was with fire, hence Brigantia of the Fires (L36). Her name means the 'exalted one', and by extension, simply, 'goddess', though other derivations bear the meaning 'might' or 'valour', or even 'bright light' and 'fiery arrow'. She was a daughter of the Daghdha, whose protection was of the highest value. She was a muse to poets, and herself a poetess. Caesar (an important source for Celtic gods and heroes) recognized her as Minerva, goddess of crafts. She owned two bullocks and a pig, so the legend went, who called out to her for protection when the land was ravaged. As guardian of domestic livestock, Brighid presided over new birth in the Spring. Her third characteristic role, after muse and guardian, was mourner. She was the supreme keening woman. Also known as the mother of three gods, 'the three gods of Danu', her role may also have been mother-goddess as well as protectress of the animals of

pasture. There is a minor tradition that she had two sisters, also called Brighid, an example of the phenomenon of triplication among the Celts.

Brigit was an important figure for Jones, manifesting continuities of sacred practice and cultural vitality. She is recalled in *The Sleeping Lord*, for instance, and though the tone and form are questioning, never the less the very same ‘...one with...’ (L29) is affirmed of the vestal virgins of classical antiquity and of Christian Ireland.

does the vestal flame of virid-hilled Kildare
renew from secret embers
the undying fire
that sinks on the Hill Capitoline...

L33 *the februal lights* Brigit’s nuns, through her well of pure water and the cross of Christ (L35), had transformed the fire festival of Brighid (Brigantia) called Imbolc, celebrated close to the Spring equinox when the earth’s face was washed, into that of Candlemas in the Church’s calendar on February 2nd.

L39 *His hands conjoined*

super altare The full phrase from the rubrics is *manibus junctis super altare positis*. Detailed rules for the position of the celebrant’s hands were given: at certain times, palms laid down on the altar; or on the cloth upon which the chalice was placed; or on the Missal. There were in fact seven occasions when the celebrant joined his hands, placing his forefingers on the altar, to recite the following prayers. 1. *Oramus te Domine* ... see next entry. 2. *In spiritu humilitatis*... humbled in spirit the celebrant pleads, unworthy though he is, that the sacrifice he is offering that day may be accepted. De la Taille emphasizes that the sacrifice is in vain if the sacrifice is refused and that there must be a token of acceptance. The prayer is immediately said before the invocation of the Holy Spirit, as part of the dispersed *epiklesis* in the Roman rite. 18 3. After the *Gloria*, the *Suscipe, sancta Trinitas*... is said. Not only the Passion but the Resurrection and Ascension are recalled. The saints, for their honour and for their prayers for the salvation of the living, are at one with the congregation in this memorial. 4. *Te igitur* introduces the Canon of the mass, unchanged since the time (late 6th century) of Gregory the Great. The priest yet again beseeches that the

offerings will be blessed and accepted. 5. *Supplices te rogamus...* The priest asks that those at this altar may be blessed by what the angels bear up to the heavenly altar (*in sublime altare*). 6. Before the kiss of peace is exchanged, the priest prays for the peace and unity of the Church in the prayer beginning *Domine Jesu Christe....* 7. *Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas...* is the last of these prayers said silently before the final blessing and the reading of the preamble to St. John's Gospel (1, 1-14) – or, as it used to be called, the Last Gospel. The mass ends, as it were, as a new beginning.

L45 *Oramus te Domine per merita sanctorum tuorum, quorum reliquiae hic sunt et omnium sanctorum: ut indulgere digneris omnia peccata mea. Amen.* (We pray thee, Lord, by the merits of thy saints whose relics are here and of all thy saints, that thou wilt deign to pardon all my sins. Amen). The priest pleads that the old soldiers of Christ in their heavenly garrison might add strength to his work by contagion of merit. These *veterani* are conflated with retired soldiers of the Roman army who had taken their oath of loyalty (*sacramentum*), served their time, been generously treated on demobilization by being granted farms and small holdings; sometimes, it must be said, ousting families long settled on their land.

L50 *might assist him at the work*

he is about to make Simple words with subtle sense, as the saying goes. The slight awkwardness in the phrasing (work as direct object of make) is sufficient to call attention to the complexity of meaning. Jones advises his readers elsewhere of the importance he attaches to the distinction between making and doing. The sacramental act, however, comprises both. The act at the altar is both a making and a doing: there is a work done and a thing made. What Christ commanded at the Last Supper (as we have it in Greek and Latin, that is) was both operations in one word “Do-and-make this in memory of me”. Jones alludes in *The Old Quarry, Part One (RQ115)* to the identity of making and doing at the consecration, the moment of transubstantiation.

‘So he crouches kindly and with attention, careful of the saving formulas, precise in the work of his hands. The gold tissue crumples, the transfigured man contracts over his work.

It’s a lover’s work here.

Here a maker turns a hard corner.

He’s at the frontier and place of situations. There’s struggle here...’

The dichotomous polarities that Jones perceived between sign and substance, and the gratuitous and the utile, were also reconciled in the eucharist.

L52 *but in especial he asks the adjuvance of
 these athletes of God
tokens of whom are cisted
 immediately beneath*

& central to The prayer *Oramus te Domine* (L45), already noted, when the priest invokes the company of saints, also calls on the specific help of those saints whose relics are here in the altar. Relics of saints were required by canon law to be buried in the central part of the altar, over which mass was celebrated.

It is part of Jones’s poetic strategy to relate in correct detail the prescriptions of the sacramentaries for the celebration of mass. He is not only offering a theology in miniature of the priesthood in this first section of *The Kensington Mass* but also a narrative of formal propriety and faithful obedience in ritual observance. The importance of this becomes clear as the poem moves into its second section. So it is worth noting here something about the significance of relics.

In pagan antiquity the practice of venerating relics was common. The supposed remains of gods, and the bones and ashes of heroes, became cult objects. The Old Testament also tells of the remains of Eliseus the prophet that reanimated the dead body lowered into his tomb. Inevitably, power was sometimes thought to reside in these objects themselves: the Acts of the Apostles appear to record the healing properties of clothes, kerchiefs, bones and ashes. The Council of Trent distinguished the veneration of the remains of holy martyrs which had been temples of the Holy

Ghost and signs of holiness because of that association, from the superstitious regard for such objects in themselves. The veneration of relics had positive value in the Christian tradition. The practice corrected Old Testament ceremonial laws forbidding touching the dead, to avoid defilement. It also corrected tendencies common to many dualistic heresies in the early centuries of Christianity that encouraged a morbid view of matter.

Provided the faithful were clear about the practice *cultu duliae relativae*; provided the objects were iconic (in the old sense of pointing away from themselves to the holiness of the saints); and provided they were not supposed to perform miracles through physical causality; then relics were a wholesome part of the ordinary worship of the Church and the *mens catholica*.

Given this disposition, it was natural that relics became part of eucharistic celebration. More strongly so, because it was customary in the early centuries to celebrate mass on tombs in caves; the association of altar and tomb is intimate and longstanding. One tablet of the dyptichs used as early as the 2nd century contained the names of the dead to be prayed for.

Jones's view of relics in *The Kensington Mass* conforms in every respect to that of the Church. The tumulus recurs frequently in his verse, tenderly and evocatively. It is impossible to overstate his sensitivity towards the commemoration of the dead. Relics are woven into this, and in worship are occasions of God showing His power.

L57 *the Stone of Oblation* The work of Père de la Taille has been, and will be, cited from time to time in this commentary to shed light on Jones's poetry. Jones described him as 'his' theologian in the preface to the *Anathemata* and privately to friends; in the divided reception of de la Taille's work, Jones took his side; late in life he inquired of friends to know if De la Taille's work was still read and appreciated, and he recommended him to others. His loyalty never wavered. Reference must be made again to him here, and indeed later in the commentary. Because of this a biographical note on the man might be helpful. 19

Maurice de la Taille was born on 30th September 1872 to Comte and Comtesse (née de Neuilly) de la Taille at the Chateau de Semblancy (Indres-et-Loire). He received his schooling from the French Jesuits exiled to St. Mary's, Canterbury, and the Benedictines at Ramsgate. He entered the Society of Jesus as a novice in 1890, taking simple vows in 1892. Two of his ten brothers also became Jesuits: Arthur, who died at 18; and Timoleon, who laboured for many years as a missionary in China. He studied philosophy in Jersey for three years and then in Paris at the Catholic Institute and Sorbonne; and in 1898 began his studies for a Licentiate in theology. Ordained at Tours in 1901, he undertook at his own request parish work in St. Helen's, Lancashire, for two years. Completing his Tertianship in North Wales (1905) he was appointed Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Angers. In the Great War, he served as a medical orderly, then interpreter; in 1916, he was chaplain, as an honorary captain, to the 3rd Infantry Brigade, 1st Canadian Division. He had completed his best known work, *Mysterium Fidei*, in 1915, which was to be published in 1919. In this year he became Professor of Theology at the Gregorian University, Rome, where he remained till his death in 1933.

His early scholarly interest was the Epistle to Hebrews, which was the foundation for his future work. There were publications on *Revelation & Dogma* (1904) and the *Nature of Belief* (1905). He wrote strongly against Modernism and defended the encyclical *Pascendi*. He proposed in 1907 the formation of a Catholic party for political action in favour of religious education, later published in 1925 as *En face de la Pouvoir*. *Mysterium Fidei* established his reputation as a major theologian. Book One is on the Sacrifice of Our Lord, with an English translation in 1941; Book Two is on the Sacrifice of the Church, English translation in 1950. His papers to the Cambridge Summer School of 1923 defended his main theses, to which Vincent McNabb and others took exception. A sequel to the great work 'The Mystery of Faith and Human Opinion Contrasted & Defined' appeared in France (1925), with an English translation in 1930; it gives a vivid picture of the vigorous debate *Mysterium Fidei* aroused. The Anglican theologian, Dr. Mascall, wrote in '*Christ, the Christian and the Church*' that it 'excited so violent a controversy in his own communion and so much admiration in ours'.²⁰ At his death he was working on a major study of grace, and also on prayer, of which no traces remain.

His lectures attracted numerous students and listeners and his writings are a pleasure to read. He remarks in the Preface to *Mysterium Fidei*, 'For I have written, not to dispute but to illuminate, not to sharpen my wits or to obtain praise for learning, but to build up the faith, that the knowledge of the faith may be enriched, to enable us to appreciate the full benefit of the gift of God.... theology is a speculative science of revealed truth, but revealed in such a manner as to aim at fostering piety.... in theology there is no place for anything which does not foster piety.' 21

The priest lives by the altar, his work is to offer a sacrifice. De la Taille's presentation of this work aroused controversy; much turned on the meaning and strength he attributed to the Stone of Oblation. What he meant was this: at Mass, instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, the priest imitated what Christ did and did what He commanded his disciples to do. This was a mystical, symbolic, sacramental offering, or Oblation – a visible ritual act. It differed from the Last Supper in respect of time and authority. The offering in the Upper Room anticipated the crucifixion, the mass commemorated it. At mass the offering was made by the priest, that is, by his agency; the power to do so was delegated by Christ's mandate. But at the Last Supper, power and agency belonged to Christ himself. The Last Supper and the mass are oblations, the Crucifixion an immolation. De la Taille's theology rests both on the separation as functions of Oblation and Immolation, and their assimilation as one action. Sometimes de la Taille refers to the Last Supper as a mystic Immolation, but this must always be understood as Oblation. Another distinction importantly bears on this matter and that is between passive and active sacrifice. As passive sacrifice Christ Himself is offered on the cross, and his Passion and Death at mass; as active sacrifice in the mass, at the Stone of Oblation, the work is that of the celebrant in his subordinate ministry, participating in the sovereign priesthood of the High Priest.

The relationship of the Last Supper to Calvary was imprinted on the mass. It was an act of justice: once Christ had pledged himself to die on the morrow, he could not in justice withdraw. He placed himself first in the order of signs so that the offering in the Upper Room gave significance to the sacrifice on Calvary. It was this emphasis which caused misgivings in many Catholics: sign appeared to be validating substance, as form makes matter what it is. The ritual act at the Stone of Oblation gave the character to the actual sacrifice, amounting in some eyes to an *evacuatio*

crucis. It appeared to de la Taille's critics that the emphasis on the promise of self-giving in the Cenacle took too much away from keeping the promise on Calvary. We will return to this matter in discussing lines 113 and 114.

L59 *He inclines lower yet* The Church displays careful discrimination in the degrees of deference towards sacred persons and things: towards the paraphernalia of worship, respect for the saints, the privileges of Mary, the Blessed Sacrament. The *inclinatus* is a case in point. Bowing accompanied the call to prayer, *Oremus*, whenever it occurred; it served to direct the prayer by external attitude and showed earnestness in supplication. Thus, the gesture of petition, etiquette of prayer and token of sincerity were expressed in bowing, four categories of which can be distinguished: the deep or moderate bow of the body, and the deep or slight bow of the head. Two ways of making the distinctions are as follows:

- 1(a) to God, Our Lord, Our Lady and the saints – profoundly
 - (b) to the images of the first group, altars and relics – moderately.
 - (c) to bishops, including the bishop of Rome – slightly.
-
- 2(a) *latría* (adoration due only to God) – profoundly.
 - (b) *hyperdulia* (Mary's privilege) – moderately.
 - (c) *dulia* (at the name of a saint) – slightly.

Jones intimates the most profound inclination of head and body.

L64 *the uppermost of the
three-fold, fine abbed fair cloths
of Eblana flax*

The altar has been covered since the fourth century. The cloths were of linen or hemp and here in *The Kensington Mass* they were finely woven (fine abbed) cloths of Dublin (Eblana) flax. The lowest (cere) cloth completely covered the altar, waxed on the underside against dampness and the chrismatic oils used at the altar's consecration. It was not blessed and is only removed once during the liturgical year, viz, on Maundy Thursday. The upper two were blessed. Of these, the lower one can be folded end to end, and the top cloth had to be separate, covering all the altar and extending to the predella. This can be seen for example, in *A Latere Dextro*. The liturgical vestments and accoutrements were

adopted for practical purposes, and only acquired symbolic value over the years by sacred association. The altar cloths came to suggest God's faithful people, especially their purity and devotion ("for the fine linens are the justification of the Saints") and the linens that wrapped Christ's body in the sepulchre.

Jones elsewhere dwells on the altar cloths, or board cloths, when he connected the transactions in the lighted Upper Room with the sacrifice of the darkened afternoon.

Where the board is
to spread the board cloth
under where the central staple is
for the ritual light (Ana, 52)

Also, recording Gwenhyfar's reverent gesture, he writes

No wonder
the proud column
leaned
to such a board
even before the Magian handling and the Apollinian word
that shall make of the waiting creatures, in the vessels on
the board cloths over the Stone, his body.....(Ana 205)

L66 *that must pall* The status of the 'must' here may now appear puzzling, but the prescriptive strength of it when Jones wrote *The Kensington Mass* was definite and unmistakable. A recently published reminder, quoting O'Connell, puts the matter neatly. ²² 'The Sacred Liturgy is the worship of God by the Church. By divine worship is meant the recognition and acceptance of the excellence and sovereign lordship of God and the manifestation of this recognition and acceptance. In other words it is the exercise of the virtue of religion, by acts of adoration and praise, of thanksgiving, of propitiation and of praise.' The standing of the rubrics is then made clear. 'The rubrics are the rules (laws, directives, suggestions) which are contained in the liturgical books for the right ordering of liturgical functions. For the most part, if not entirely, the rubrics are positive ecclesiastical laws and so

- a) they bind under pain of mortal or venial sin, according to the gravity of the matter with which they are concerned;

- b) apart from such considerations as the giving of scandal, contempt for the law, and the like, a sufficient and proportionately grave cause excuses from the observance of an (accidental) rubric’.

O’Connell then goes on to say, with regard to directive rules, ‘the accidental rubrics, no less than the substantial ones, are laws, and hence are preceptive, except when they themselves state clearly that they are not.’ The 1917 revision of the Code of Canon Law operative at the time of the composition of *The Kensington Mass*, makes no distinction: it ‘refers to rubrics as liturgical laws, without drawing any distinction between preceptive and directive rubrics, and orders that the rites and ceremonies which are prescribed by the Church in the approved liturgical books are to be accurately observed.’ Canon Law imposed penalties for the non-observance of the rubrics: for example, the failure to observe some minor rubric might compromise the validity of the mass being celebrated. The thought underwriting such rigour was a concern that the mass should be celebrated with the utmost solemnity, formal correctness, and uniformity. It is the sacred doctrine of the Catholic Church that the mass is the sacramental offering of the Son of God on the altar, one with the sacrifice of Calvary. It is clear from this that the necessity of the phrase was preceptive and serious; that the cloths must pall the *mensa domini* means what it says and may not be taken lightly.

L68 *these are indeed ‘his own raiment’* The phrase is taken from St. Matthew’s Gospel. (27,31) ‘And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.’ The idea of de la Taille’s and, of course, others (see L2) of Christ as altar comes into its own here where the altar cloths are also Christ’s own raiment. The corporal – the cloth that is spread out on top of the three altar cloths – is a cloth or shroud to enclose a body.

L70 *apparelled amice* Till the time of Constantine the Great secular dress was the norm for priests saying Mass. From the time of the Peace of the Church at the end of the persecution by Diocletian and the Edict of Milan in AD313, changes took place and matured very slowly over the centuries. Distinctive clerical dress and vestments worn for the work at the altar were borrowed from secular life and owed nothing to

the predecessor priesthoods of the Old Testament. The priestly vestments were the amice, alb, maniple, cincture, stole and chasuble. In *A Latere Dextro* Jones managed very ingeniously to reveal all the vestments the celebrant wore. It is not known if custom or church authority determined the practice. The vestments for the sanctuary remained the same while secular clothing changed: for instance, the Roman paenula, that is cloak or mantle, (see L159), and long tunic were retained by the Church as chasuble and alb, when they were abandoned in secular life. In Jones's day the vestments symbolized the instruments of Christ's passion. (In earlier, more warlike days, the priest's vestments were thought of as his weapons). They were typical of the Saviour. So, the amice was the cloth that covered Christ's head. Though worn round the priest's shoulders, he touched his head with it when he put it on. The alb was the robe put on Christ to mock him. The maniple was worn over the fore-arm – according to Fortescue, it was the essential Eucharistic vestment. The cincture, or cord round the waist, was a symbol of purity: together with the maniple, they were symbols of Christ's fetters. The chasuble was a fashionable Roman garment from the third century and official senatorial wear. There is an excellent footnote on the chasuble (Ana 202) in which Jones describes it as 'the specific sign of those who represent man and who offer a rational sacrifice under the forms of bread and wine'.

The amice was undoubtedly an indispensable part of liturgical dress, though its origins are very mundane. It seems it may have been adopted to catch sweat from dripping on to the more precious vestments like the chasuble, or alternatively as a kind of muffler in 'cold West chancels'. It served also to cover the bare neck, so was very seemly. Because it was worn going to and from the altar, covering the head like a cowl, it was taken to be a defence against the wiles of the enemy.

I cannot but think that amice is a key word in *The Kensington Mass*. To make good this contention I will have to anticipate later movements in the poem. Three rather slight clues led to this speculation. There is the inverted and rather peculiar phrase 'apparelled amice'. Amice, one might think, ought to be apparelling rather than apparelled. The amice here is itself covered up, concealed. What is really being concealed? It must also be said here that an apparelled amice may also refer to certain amices with an ornamented hem. Then there is that altogether recondite word 'focale' (L43): not known to any liturgist of my acquaintance, nor in the complete Oxford

English Dictionary. From the text, it appears to be a kind of cravat, as an amice is. Words are never idle in Jones's poems. In this connection, a comment of Bernard Bergonzi is worth repeating. ²³ '...Jones's principle of thought was associative, where one thing continually recalls or invokes another, however remote in time or place. He did not believe the connections to be random, as everything fitted together somehow in the mystic shapes that directed his thinking, even though their relations might seem unlikely and arcane to the uninstructed reader'. He comments on this feature of Jones's mind. 'Much as I admire Jones as a writer and thinker, there are times when I find an atmosphere where everything corresponds with something else rather stifling'. What then is *focale* connected to, or corresponding with? Finally, the word *apparelled*, with its prefix displaced, gives one *pareil á*, similar to. What is *amice* hiding, linked with and, turned round, similar to? These are all the merest of sly hints but, for all that, suggest we are confronting a cryptogram here. Anthony Thwaite, poet and critic, has described reading a Jones poem as 'exalted code-cracking'. ²⁴

There is a passage in *In Parenthesis* where John Ball is with his fellow fusiliers, friends together in a trench (IP p70).

'Each one sat silent, all in a row, some smoked, all were mirrored in the leaden water.

Behind each, his rifle leant at an ordered inclination against the parapet. Each bayonet brightness with sacking veiled, each newly cleaned bolt and breech part, similarly, empty sand bag shielded; and round their legs, and about their necks, like tied amices, were hessian coverings. So quickly had they learned the mode of this locality, what habit best suited this way of life, what most functioned, was to the purpose, and easily obtained'.

The poet's mind runs on in an end-note (IP p205, fn23) about the multiple uses of hessian, which was about their necks like amices. It was the universal covering, food wrapping, cover for bayonets and the working parts of 303s; it broke up the outline of a helmet, covered their legs, it was a kind of table-cloth, towel or dishcloth; a bandage or a shroud. Finally, there remained the official use: 'they [the hessian

coverings] constituted, filled with earth, the walls, ceiling and even floor space of half our world'. The sound is a favourite homonym of Jones and his mind is off and away in *From the Book of Balaam's Ass*, unfolding layers of meaning. Corporal Amiss and Lance-Corporal Amile are equal in the face of enemy fire, a miss being as good as a mile. This is a screening for something much deeper and more personal. *Amis et Amyloun* were characters in an old romance of friendship. The fusiliers in the trench are his friends: from Billy Crower to 'Watcyn and Wastebottom, and the rest, his friends', and later 'Here they sat, his friends, serving their harsh novitiate'.

Strings of puns and cognate terms are all in a day's work for Jones, as his readers will know. The sound in his mind is already prepared for associative possibilities: the word for a friend (amis) or a misdirected bullet (a miss) or what constitutes half his world (amice/hessian) or something gone wrong like the diversion before the mill on Pilckem Ridge (amiss)... Another trick was to turn round words and phrases to show their shadows and secret affinities. *The Lady of the Pool* does that tellingly in her section of the *Anathémata*, spelling ROMA backwards as AMOR. It is apt, warm, sensuous and happy, and comes off perfectly. In a naive and easy way, it displays the opposition of power and love. Dilworth suggests a similar kind of play with God and dog in the John Peel passages in the *Anathemeta* (see 92). The playfulness here conceals the major theme of co-redemption. Jones seems to me to be using amice, evasively for his own good reasons, to unlock his concern for the Mass.

Something appears to miscarry in *The Kensington Mass*. It is off target (a miss). Whether the failure is to do with a young lady (a miss) I am not sure. The disquiet that Elen introduces into the text is not merely a poetic device, but I confess I cannot put my finger on the substance of her rôle. The mass is turned the wrong way, we can be sure. That is the first impression everyone has in reading *The Kensington Mass*. It is a puzzle why and how a narrative of a priest saying mass veers off to tell of a troubled Emperor leading his retinue on a hunt. (The puzzle is compounded in the third section where all of history is discoloured by treachery and denial). The mass, anyway, is turned the wrong way (amiss). We do in fact get the same effect in Latin, turning the word round by transposing the prefix. The Latin for mass (missa), if it is turned round, is what has gone wrong (amiss). We are reading in this first section of the poem from a mass book (missal). It is essential to our understanding that this is

what we are doing, proceeding with the utmost faithfulness to the rubrics. The end of the poem (dismissal), 'Sirs, you are set for sorrow', is the opposite of what should complete the mass at the dismissal, 'Ite missa est', with the response 'Deo gratias'. The poem's dismissal is utterly dismal: it was not sought, one cannot give thanks and there is no mission to go forth to love and serve the Lord.

We don't know for sure the ins and outs (how could we? how should we?) but the above procedure will not seem outlandish to readers familiar with Jones's ways. We will return to some of these thoughts in the concluding comments, but it is worth recalling here lines in a dream poem of Chaucer, when the Dreamer is gently questioning the Knight in Black, who is riven with the loss of his lady.²⁵ The convention and mood of the lines are *ad rem* to *The Kensington Mass*, as we shall see.

Or have ye oght doon amys,
That she hath left yow? ys hyt this?

L71 *He has no need of
the rubric's nudge: osculatur altare in medio.*

*for what bodily act other
would serve here?*

*Creaturely of necessity
for we are creatures*

*Our own salutation
were it possible*

could be no other than the rubrics osculatur

The poem turns with the kiss. It is its first boundary crossing, deft and insistent, from a register of prescriptive meanings in the symbolic order, through a cluster of hints and suggestions, to a narrative where the sacramental action of the priest co-exists with a non-sacramental reality, the logic of which presents the main problematic of the poem and most of its inner vitality. The poem calls attention to the turn by both following the rubrics (L60-71) and reflecting on them (L72-88). We must first consider the kiss as it is installed in Eucharistic celebration (love), then how it conveys due regard for the altar (reverence) and its deference towards the royal person (veneration) – all within the rubrical frame; then, outwith the frame, its erotic suggestion (desire), its ominous intimations (treachery), and finally to the transition which establishes the primary structure of the poem (reverie).

Love. The kiss of peace was a holy kiss. It was given at baptism, at betrothals, in absolution, at ordinations, at the consecration of a bishop, at the coronation of a king, and to the dying. Given in public, it was a token of friendship. The kiss enters the mass then from this general practice of Church life. It banished the remembrance of injury before offering sacrifice (*Matt.V, 23-24*) and was an assent to the mysteries being celebrated. In the East, it was exchanged at the Offertory; in the Roman rite in the West, at the Communion. In *The Sleeping Lord (SL84)* Jones compares the four gospels to the branches of *The Mabinogion* (punning *eveingl* with *evangel*, that is, kiss with gospel), ‘.....they proclaim the true mabinogi of the Maban the Pantocrator and of the veritable mother of anxiety, the Rhiannon who is indeed the ever glorious Theotokos yet Queen of Sorrows and *gladius* pierced – what better, he thinks, than that this four-fold marvel-tale should be called The Tale of the Kiss of the Son of Mair?’

Reverence. The priest shows reverence for the sacredness of the altar by greeting it with a kiss. It is the encounter of Christ with His Church. When he pronounces the words of consecration, the priest acts *in persona Christi*; at other times, he represents the Mystical Body. He kisses the altar nine times during mass; for instance, in greeting it when he ascends the altar steps, and courteously before he turns his back on it to address the congregation. In kissing the altar *in medio* he honours also the relics cisted beneath in what was known as the sepulchre, set into the middle of the *mensa domini*.

Veneration. The apparent oddity – that only kissing the hem of the garment of Helen and Elen (**L80 & 81**) will do – is explained by the sacramental borrowing from pagan usages at court, the king-worship, and then the transference back in proper respect towards these beautiful queens. In ancient times obeisance would be made by kissing the ring or the foot or the hem of the garment of the king.

Desire. As a gesture, a kiss is radically polysemous; nevertheless, it is wedded to desire. Jones had a singular gift, at its finest in the description of Gwenhyfar in *Mabinog’s Liturgy*, of conveying physical presence by clothing. Here all we know of the woman who enthralled the Emperor are her long tunic and her inspiration of the

Roman road-builders. Sexual innuendoes and sexuality are virtually absent from *The Kensington Mass*: Artemis is saluted, as a huntress (the Virgin Mary, with her emblem of the moon, may be, by one of Jones's tricks of association, more before the mind than Artemis); the rape of Helen is a muted echo. The memory of Elen in the Emperor's dream (to which we will turn) haunts him, and desire to win her is a spur; but even these strong feelings are subordinate to Jones's religious purpose.

Treachery. It is by the kiss that you will know the man; it is by a kiss you will know the Son of God, in *The Old Quarry* (RQ p125). Judas, for Jones, was

the kiss-bringer, the smiler with the knife under his coat
for his silver gain

A butty's snout will smell him out.

The Captain of the Guard, in *The Agent* (RQ p151) ordered to arrest Jesus, is impatient with Judas, whose significance has dwindled to his kiss-bringing office.

What's now – the rendezvous is fixed,

What more, get forward.

The first vigilia's all but through;

there's work to do – and

little asked of you

for ample pay.

You bring your butty's kiss.

Reverie. A sub-text underwrites this strange shift from the priest's loving reverence and veneration and his desire for Christ in communion expressed by the distanced gesture of kissing the cloths that cover His body ... to the Emperor disconsolate for Elen, who is splendid in mind and body, and taken from him. Only a kiss will negotiate this peculiar transition. The story, in summary, runs like this. ²⁶

Macsen Wledig, the legendary counterpart of Magnus Maximus in the Welsh folk collection *The Mabinogion*, is troubled by a dream of superlative visions; of the highest mountain, longest river, biggest fleet, and a ship more splendid than all others. The fairest castle he has ever seen is in the estuary, it is full of gold ornaments, and mystic persons - a hoary-headed old man, youths playing a board game of the hunt; and, above all, seated in a chair of gold is a maiden, more difficult to look at because

of her excelling beauty than it is to look at the bright sun. As he kisses her, he awakes. Wakefulness and absence from her make him the saddest of men. He summons his retinue to tell them the cause of his sadness and commands them to search for three years to find the woman of the dream. After a year of fruitless search, the emperor travels to the place where he had the dream, and from there despatches thirteen men to search again. They trace the itinerary of his dream, making their way to the castle where the dream-maiden is sitting in a golden chair and tell her of the Emperor's passion. They return to Rome to tell the Emperor the outcome of their search. He successfully invades Britain with his host, and as he meets Elen, the dream-maiden, he greets her 'Empress of Rome, all hail!' As her maiden's fee, she demands three strongholds, and the Island of Britain and three adjacent islands for her father, to be held under the Empire. As Empress she was notable for having roads built between military garrisons. Because the Emperor remained in Britain for seven years, his imperial status had lapsed. He then marched towards Rome, with Elen's brothers, conquering France and Burgundy, and finally the capital of the Empire, where he regained his throne 'and all the Romans did him homage'.

The Kensington Mass is a dream poem. We have visited in §1 a rule-governed enclosure of ordered gesture and univocal utterance. We have witnessed the beginning of a sacramental rite, ancient and hierarchic; a sacrifice carried 'by angels to a heavenly altar. Unlike the rite in *Rite & Foretime*, there was no threat, not even in the possibilities of betrayal; no hint of disintegration; no suggestion of symbolic death, aridity, infiltration by the enemy; nothing to warn us that the priest was precarious, lonely and curiously surviving; no intimation of an end-game, where failing numina mutually recognized their dead selves. It was secure and beautiful in its rationality. It belonged to a dream of the past which ended with a kiss; the rest of *The Kensington Mass* is wakeful reality.

L80 *were it Argive Helen's chiton hem*

or the hem of the garment

of gilt interthreaded green

wide laticlaved of murex

the long tunica of

our own Elen of the Army-paths Helen's chiton was a garment

common in Ancient Greece. Chiton originally referred to a type of linen, then to a tunic of that cloth, then to a tunic in any cloth. It was worn as an undergarment, leaving the right shoulder bare and secured by a *tibula* (a brooch or pin). The ornamented hem was a mark of high social rank. Elen had a hem with two broad purple stripes (*latus*-broad, *clavus* = purple stripe) on the edge of her tunic. It was worn by senators and certain classes of high rank. The murex was a kind of shell fish, growing only one third of a whirl annually, the animal of which yields a purple dye. A work of the eighteenth century has it: 'he beheld the wounded murex strike a purple stain'. The purple striped hem was adopted by the Church for the dalmatics of deacons.

L89 *She for whom the Emperor*

could not eat nor sleep The woman whose disclosure in a dream upset the Emperor's mode of life was Elen of the Army-paths; sometimes conflated with Helen or West Helen, other embodiments of the beauty that commands action...Helen it was who drew all the West to Troy, whose fall sent Aeneas to Rome and Brutus to Britain. Elen (or West Helen) of the Hosts, the *virgo potens* who disquieted the Emperor and later inspired the building of roads across Wales and England means even more to those of these Islands. Jones has some lines on Elen/Helen in the great boast in *In Parenthesis* (IP80/81) and also in an endnote (IP208). If the story in *The Mabinogion* has any historical basis with regard to Elen, she lived and flourished in the last quarter of the 4th century. She appears also in the list of golden-torqued *puellae*, the queens and wives of lords, remembered by the hall-priest in *The Sleeping Lord* (SL84): she was daughter of Coil, Lord of Stratha Clauda, between Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall. Her mythic presence is even more germane to his purpose, and in this respect she personifies the good that all intentional acts have as their goal. (DG149)

First, then, to *In Parenthesis*:

Helen Camulodunum is ours:
she's the toast of the Rig'ment,
she is in an especial way our Mediatrix.

She's clement and loving, she's Friday's child, she's

loving and giving;
O dulcis
imperatrix.

Her ample bosom holds:
Pontifex maximus,
Comes Litoris Saxonici,
Comes Britanniarum,
Gwledig,
Bretwalda, as these square-heads say.

She's the girl with the sparkling eyes,
she's the Bracelet Giver,
she's a regular draw with the labour companies,
whereby
the paved army-paths are hers that grid the island which is
her dower.
Elen Llyuyddawc she is – more she is than
Helen Argive.

Second, to the end-note:

‘... she is the focus of much obscure legend. At all events she is associated in some way with wearers of the Imperial Purple; is supposed to be the daughter of Coil Hên, the legendary founder of Colchester [strongly contested]; patroness of the “army paths”: “and the men of the Island would not have made these great roads save for her.” The leader of armies abroad – a director of men; quasi-historical – so she seems to be discerned, a majestic figure out of the shadows of the last ages in Roman Britain.’

Last, to *The Dying Gaul*:

‘It was said of Helen of the Hosts, in the Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig, that “the men of the Island would not have builded these roads save for her.” The “roads” in hard historic fact were the “army paths”, slaves’ work, and dedicated to ruthless material ends, worse, to conquerors’ ends, but in the myth it was for Helen (read Beauty) that they were builded. And who shall deny the myth its validity?’

It will be found that it is with reference to this Helen, Beauty, that men speak when they are describing their activities. All use the language of the artists, the aesthete. (DG149)'

We have learnt of the Emperor's determination to win Elen, and his need to recover the Imperial throne because of her. The old tale has some basis in historical fact, for Macsen Wledig was Magnus Maximus, the Great Usurper, whose political career from AD383-388 is in the public record. The late Roman Empire and early Dark Ages were historic phases for which Jones had a special sympathy—in a way, they were 'his' period. Historical accuracy, as well as *mythos*, was important to him as a 'rememberer'. He had to tell it as it was, 'or the poet lied, which is not allowed' (Ana 74). His dating passage (Ana 185-189) where he adduces evidence from seasons and religious calendars, political appointments, great events, chronicles and memoirs, and personal biographies to fix the date of Christ's birth – nineteen different time-schemes, no less – was characteristic. And there are many others. Secular history was enacted in sacred time. Where the *mythos* and the historical narrative diverged, however, as with Magnus Maximus, they must both be acknowledged: each is a deposit to be hoarded.

Magnus Maximus was a Spaniard who had served with Theodosius, a fellow Spaniard and possibly a relative, in the army in Britain when Gratian was Emperor of the West. He rose to high command. Theodosius succeeded Valens as Emperor of the East after the battle of Adrianople (378) and ruled as Emperor from 379-395. It was while Theodosius was distracted by rebellious Visigoths, Antiochenes, and Persians that Magnus Maximus established himself, through an army revolt (383) in Britain. He became, very probably, either *dux Britanniarum* or *Comes litoris saxonici*. He re-established the Mint in Britain at Colchester; we have coins from his reign displaying his head jointly as Augustus with Theodosius. He also, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, adopted as his emblem and standard the dragon flag. The term dragon, according to Jones, had two quite separate histories in England and Wales. In England it was always a mythological monster; in Wales it was 'a euphemism for leader, distinguished warrior, or hero.' *Draco* was a Latin word borrowed by the Brythonic Celts via the Romano-British, becoming *draig* or dragon

in modern Welsh or English. Pendragon means supreme leader. He soon assembled his host, including a contingent of *palatini*, known as *Seguntienses* from Caernarvon, and, according to Jones, scraping the bottom of the barrel for likely troops, he crossed the Strait of Dover. The Emperor Gratian had fled to Gaul, where he was killed. Jones writes, 'The historic and factual passing from Britain of the Expeditionary Force led by Maximus passed into a Welsh triad as "One of the Three Levied Hosts which left this island never to return".' 'There have been many such since then'. Maximus held court at Trier as Master of Gaul, Britain and Spain, and was there baptized as a Catholic. He was reluctantly recognised by Theodosius as Augustus, and he awkwardly co-existed with Gratian's younger brother Valentinian as Master of Italy.

He appears not to have levied excessive taxes nor to have made burdensome confiscations to finance his continental adventure. The garrison in Britain was not recklessly depleted, though it is possible a minor Pictish war broke out in Britain before his death and continued till 390. Maximus enrolled barbarians and co-opted barbarian units into the army, a practice which was becoming usual in the East.

In 387 Maximus crossed the Alps, and occupied Milan, the Imperial city. Valentinian, with his household, fled to the East. The usurpation was by now beyond toleration. Theodosius quickly moved against him, his troops won two victories against Maximus in Illyricum, at Siscia and Poetino, in what was until recently Yugoslavia, and finally killed him at Aquileia. After his death, his son was marked out for assassination. Theodosius had again to intervene in the West (394) to defeat another usurper Eugenius, at the Frigidus river, and then assumed sole control of the Empire.

To celebrate his defeat of the Great Usurper, Theodosius erected the Golden Gate in the city wall of Constantinople. Emperors were to enter that gate to be enthroned. Jones writes that if we are to be reminded that 'the dragon or serpent is used in scripture to symbolize malignant influences', this exception must be recalled: 'the brazen serpent lifted up by Moses in the Wilderness prefigured the lifting up, on Bryn Calfaria, of Him who is the Pendragon of the militia of the heavenly armies'.

Gratian, Maximus and Theodosius, for all their political enmities, were at one in their promotion of Christianity and severity towards pagans. Theodosius proscribed the veneration of the *lars* and *penates* of the household, closed temples and priestly colleges, confiscated pagan shrines and outlawed sacrifices. Maximus has the melancholy distinction of being the first ruler in the history of the Church to put heretics to death for their heresy. The story can be briefly told. A gifted and ascetic religious leader in Spain, Priscillian, began attracting converts to his gnostic-dualist sect. The senior bishops of Spain and Aquitaine held a synod in 380, which excommunicated the leaders of the sect. The excommunication order was clumsily enforced and served to strengthen the heretics' resolve. The Emperor Gratian ordered their exile, but the position of the heretics remained unresolved until 384 when Gratian was killed and replaced by Maximus. Maximus ordered a new synod which convened in Bordeaux. As a result the heretics were to be removed from their positions – Priscillian himself was by then Bishop of Avila. Neither responding to the opposition of St. Martin of Tours to the shedding of blood for misbeliefs, nor heeding Archbishop Ambrose of Milan, Maximus ordered the heretics to be put to the sword. The pope severely censured Maximus for his action.

L91 *Comites and duces.* The *comitatus* was the body of administrative officials of the Emperor, following him throughout the Empire, or resident with him in Trier in Gaul or Milan in Italy. Together with lower officials in different departments of administration - household staff, eunuchs, domestics, interpreters, ushers, guards, and other civil servants, they numbered at least 6,000. They carried documents and files, the treasury, fodder and victuals. *Comites* were the senior civil servants and sometimes also senior military commanders, *duces* were the senior military commanders usually assigned to the frontier. Our terms 'counts' and 'dukes' are derived therefrom. The highest command in Britain was *dux et comes litori saxonici*. The seniority of these positions relative to each other sometimes changed. Jones is referring to the highest civil and military officers of the Emperor's household.

L92 *in their coats of grey* This line marks the point of entry in *The Kensington Mass* of Jones's play with the theme of hunting as a model of the eucharist. It

develops and dominates this section of the poem with its fulfilment in the actions of Magnus Maximus, the hunter-Emperor, and requires an extended note. The line is borrowed from the well-known song 'D'ye ken John Peel?' The version of the John Peel song that Jones probably knew (but not now considered the most acceptable form) went like this.

D'ye ken John Peel, with his coat so grey?
D'ye ken John Peel at the break of day?
D'ye ken John Peel when he's far, far away,
 With his hounds and his horn in the morning?
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds which he ofttimes led,
Peel's "View halloo" would awaken the dead
 Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

Yes, I ken John Peel, and Ruby too,
Ranter and Ringwood, Bellman and True,
From a find to a check, from a check to a view,
 From a view to a death in the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds which he ofttimes led,
Peel's "View halloo" would awaken the dead
 Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

Then here's to John Peel from my heart and soul,
Let's drink to his health, let's finish the bowl,
We'll follow John Peel thro' fair and thro' foul
 If we want a good hunt in the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds which he ofttimes led,
Peel's "View halloo" would awaken the dead
 Or a fox from his lair in the morning.

D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so grey?
He lived at Troutbeck once on a day,

Now he has gone far, far, far away,
We shall ne'er hear his voice in the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds which he oft-times led,
Peel's "View halloo" would awaken the dead
Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

The first line of the song was a small field of scholarship in itself. ²⁷ Hugh Machell recalled the debate with a typical flourish when he writes of the coat in this way. 'It was not only one of his best-known characteristics, but has provided for years a perennial crop of literary combatants in that evergreen arena where the "grey" and "gay" combatants couch the lance, defending what they think to be the right to the no small entertainment of the men who know the truth. The champions of the "gay" coat may well emblazon on their gonfalons the famous formula: *Te morituri salutant*, as they enter the amphitheatre for this argument, for they are certain to bite the dust beneath the swords of sense and the truth-bound panoply that arm the legions of the "grey".'

A painting of Peel in a pink coat roused a correspondent to *John O'London's Weekly* to reject the picture as inauthentic, which in turn occasioned the rejoinder that 'Poor Peel would probably have preferred death to turning up in the field in a grey coat.' The pink phantom was further confirmed by versions of the song alluding to the coat so gay. The songbook, *Gaudeamus*, with twenty reprintings from 1890-1924, contains the song with the first line as 'D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay?' The truth however is now established. The composer of the words of the song approved the version with the grey coat; this should have closed the debate. Sir Wilfred Lawson hunted from time to time with Peel, and wrote 'Peel's coat is no more a myth than himself, for I well remember the long, rough, grey garment which almost came down to his knees.' Lady Mabel Howard, writing in 1905, said this. 'I have talked with several people who knew this famous sportsman, although I believe it to be true that many still think John Peel had almost a prehistoric existence. As a matter of fact, he died as lately as 1854, having hunted in some form or another for over forty years. There are now several men in Cumberland who followed him and his hounds. They have narrated to me their recollections of the familiar figure: the blue-grey coat with

its brass buttons, the white beaver hat and choker tie, the knee breeches, which were joined by a pair of long stockings, and then, most curious of all, the fact that he always wore shoes, to one only of which a spur was attached.' 28

John Peel was undoubtedly neither mythical nor prehistoric. He was born near Caldbeck in East Cumberland in 1776 (never moving far from his birthplace) one of thirteen children of William Peel and Lettice Scott, at Park End Cottage, being moved to Greenrigg within a month. Park End was owned and tenanted by his maternal grandparents, the Scotts. His father was a horse dealer from the Scottish Borders who had settled in Mid-Cumberland. John Peel was baptized on 24th September 1777. He eloped with Mary White, of Uldale (1797) to be married in Gretna Green; later that year on 18th December, his parents-in-law having accepted the marriage, John and Mary had a church wedding in St. Kentigern's, Caldbeck. They are described as living at Park End in 1800, they moved to a house at Upton in 1803; in 1823 they became occupants of a medium-sized farm at Ruthwaite, near Ireby, where they remained till they died.

He first gathered his hounds when he was twenty-two, and as huntsman and master, hunted till he died - a remarkable period surpassed only by the great John Crozier. The Caldbeck hounds hunted what roughly became the Blencathra country. His hounds when they were dispersed by sale in 1856, being divided into three lots, went to Sir Wilfred Lawson, the Melbreak and the Blencathra. He was a fanatical hunter. Several of his epic hunts are recorded - thirty-five miles was not unusual, even one of eighty miles, over very difficult ground. Horses and hounds would sometimes have to be changed. He often hunted for a day and a half. His drinking bouts would also sometimes last two days. His income was said to be £400 p.a. and his hunting costs £40 p.a., but they were almost certainly greater. He normally kennelled twelve couples on his own farm, and most of his time was devoted to hunting activities. Towards the end of his life his loyal friends had to rally round to help him financially. Because of his length of service as huntsman and master, the number of foxes killed and the quality of the hounds he bred, several of whose blood lines continue to this day, he was undoubtedly one of the most notable fox-hunters of his time. His passion and single-mindedness, however, made him more than this; he was cast in an heroic mould. The present writer had the pleasure of taking tea with

John Peel's closest lineal descendant in the early summer of 1997, who made light of his forbear's sporting prestige; but it is the fashion on those hard fells to play down such things.

His relations with his neighbours were not always sweet, he being excessively noisy on hunt mornings, equally noisy returning home from his local the Rising Sun, and drawing menfolk from their farmwork on hunt days. His passion could sometimes offend them more deeply. This was so on one occasion, when, although one of his sons who was 'dwarfish and imperfect' lay dead at home, he still went hunting, saying that his son would have wished to be buried with the fox's brush. Indeed, at the anniversary service in 1954, the Vicar of Caldbeck expressed his distaste at having to commemorate a man who sacrificed everything, including his family, to his passion for hunting.

He had a fall from his horse in his seventy-eighth year, cracking two ribs, and died a fortnight later. Like his parents he had thirteen children; eleven of them and his wife are buried with him in Caldbeck Churchyard. As the funeral cortege went by, his hounds were said to have set up a great wailing.

A few words on John Woodcock Graves, the composer of the words of the song, will complete this biographical note on the background to the hunting song. The baptismal register at Wigton Church has this entry: '1795, March, John Woodcock, son of Joseph Graves, Glazier, Wigton, and his wife Ann (late Matthews) born February 9th, Wilfred Clarke, vicar'. He had little schooling, but acquired skills in mathematics, mechanics and draughtsmanship. He earned his living as a woollen factor. He became a widower shortly after marrying in 1816. Four or five years later he married Abigail Porthouse and they settled in Caldbeck. He came to know John Peel well, as fellow hunter and drinking companion at The Rising Sun, now The Oddfellows Arms, in Caldbeck. During the winter of 1828/29, he composed impromptu the John Peel words to the popular rant, *Bonnie Annie*, at Midtown House, Caldbeck. As he later recalled 'Immediately after, I sung it to poor Peel, who smiled through a stream of tears which fell down his manly cheeks, and I well remember saying to him, in a joking style, "By Jove, Peel, you'll be sung when we're both run to

earth.” ’ He also painted a fine portrait of Peel in his grey hodden coat and top hat with his horn and stock. JWG may well have woven the coat so grey himself.

Encouraged to sink his earnings and savings in a speculative coalmine in Dumfriesshire, he fell out with his employer; the angry words and blows that ensued were followed by a case at law (1833). Disillusioned, he left the country for Tasmania, with Abigail and their four children. With only £10 capital, he tried his luck in Hobart, making varnish from gum trees; and also, to his cost, as newspaper correspondent. JWG defended the convicts settled there against the injustice of the authorities; the threats that accompanied his accusations were so intemperate, he was committed to a lunatic asylum. Canon Rawnsley takes up the story. ²⁹ ‘It was, thanks to his love of the chase and swiftness of foot which he had learned when he followed John Peel “with his hounds and his horn in the morning”, that he escaped from this asylum. For he got into conversation with one of the visiting justices, and found him as keen a hunter as he was himself and begged to be allowed to have some paint and brushes that he might decorate the asylum yard with pictures of a kangaroo hunt - with the justice mounted and well-up, and the hounds in full cry. The picture progressed till the time came for putting in the sky, when a ladder was required and was gladly put at the painter’s disposal. It was a grand Australian sky, blue as a sapphire, that had been daubed in, when in a twinkle the painter hopped the wall and left asylum, prisonhood and hunting picture behind for ever.’

He was not heard of for three years, having travelled to New Zealand and Australia without sending a letter to his family. Later with his wife dead and his family scattered he lived on - lonely, restless, and cantankerous, making endless plans and quixotic inventions. A poem he wrote at this time has these lines:

O give me back my native hills -
If bleak and bleary, grim and gray,
For still to those my bosom swells
In golden lands and far away.

He died in 1886, aged 91. There is a monument to Graves, as composer of the John Peel song, in a public park in Hobart.

With JWG abroad and the song not printed for three decades, variations of it circulated. Exegetes have argued as to the canonical version. It was included in the volume *Songs & Ballads of Cumberland* (1865). The compiler had sent a copy to JWG in Tasmania, suggesting revisions which were adopted. Mr. William Metcalfe, a lay clerk at Carlisle Cathedral and accomplished singer and organist, 'took.....in hand the tune' and sang the finished product at the annual dinner of The Cumberland Benevolent Institution in London (1869) guaranteeing its popularity as dance and march as well as hunting song. It is the regimental march of The Border Regiment; it was sung at the relief of Lucknow (1858), at the battle of Loos (1916), and as the regiment marched across Hohenzollern Bridge, in Cologne (1919).

John Peel had a strong hold on the poet's imagination. He appears in the *Anathemata*, in the preface and main text; in *The Sleeping Lord*; and in *The Roman Quarry*. This interest dates from Jones's visits to Helen Sutherland's house at Cockley Moor, near Ullswater in Cumberland, to which she moved since relinquishing the tenancy of Rock Hall, near Alnwick in Northumberland. His first visit was in 1946. The landscape in the North West was geologically older but less rich in historical associations than in Northumberland and his preferences inclined strongly towards the landscape with man's imprint. One historical association, however, which did make a mark on Jones's mind was the hunting song. He put to various and effective uses the resources of image and association that the John Peel song yielded. John Peel was a modern reminder of something deep in human nature. He writes in the *Anathemata* (p.60)

And see how they run, the juxtaposed forms,
brighting the vaults at Lascaux; how the linear is wedded
to volume, how they do, within, in an unbloody manner,
under the forms of brown haematite and black manganese on
the graved lime-face, what is done, without,
far on the windy tundra
at the kill
that the kindred may have life.

What are deep in human nature and the conditions of human life are not merely the need that some fauna must be killed for other fauna to survive - though Jones gives expression to that datum of existence also (Ana 240) - but that the signa and res of that killing are *each* requisite 'that the kindred may have life'. Moreover, the act and its representation are part of each other. Hunting is here introduced without coercion or contrivance into the sacramental.

Jones went further and appeared to accord a sacramental status to Peel himself, to present him as a Christ-figure, implausible as that may seem. A few of the correspondences may be noted, some rather slight but others of more substance.

(a) John Peel is known by his coat, it was 'his own raiment.' The smoke-grey coarse hodden garment, woven from the fleeces of the Herdwick sheep that grazed the very fells he hunted amidst the villages among which he lived, was, Jones believed, as much a mark of the man as Christ's own seamless garment.

(b) He was a hero to follow 'through fair and through foul'; likewise for Jones, Christ was a hero, the discomfort of following whom over rough country was attested by scripture and experience.

(c) John Peel, for all his heavy drinking, was an early riser, a person of the dawn. The time of day as much as anything holds the poem together. The defining acts of the three protagonists of *The Kensington Mass* take place at dawn; the historical sequence at the end of the second section is contained within the frame of the dawn; Peter's denial is at dawn; the poem in its entirety is a hymn on the morning of Christ's crucifixion, a kind of companion piece to Milton's Nativity poem. The mass itself belongs to the dawn. M.C. D'Arcy makes the point that though The Last Supper is of the evening and the Crucifixion of the afternoon, the proper time to celebrate that single act of which they were parts is the dawn, 'the break of day'.³⁰

(d) John Peel's sorties that 'awakened the dead' evoked that strange other-worldly journey 'far, far, far away' that Christ made between His death

and resurrection to awaken those asleep in the bosom of Abraham. Jones had a vivid Holy Saturday temperament, aware of being redeemed but not yet saved. Christ's harrowing of Hell which followed his Good Friday 'spoiling the spoiler of his prey' (as we read of it in the hymn he cherished, *Vexilla Regis*, by that other lucky hunter, Venantius Fortunatus) installed the hunting of the souls of the just as the legitimate chase. There are lines in the remembered conversations John Montague enjoyed with Jones in his last years which capture that sense of the hero visiting captives. ³¹

Can suffering redeem,
and did our dying Lord
bring radiant light
into the place of shame?
There are signs everywhere
if you can read them:
The place we are in
is called Harrow-on-the-Hill:
Dixit David, Spring 1970.

(e) The matter of the hunt supper bears closely on what was to the fore in Jones's mind about the relation of the Last Supper and Calvary. Jones's understanding of this relationship borrows freely and accurately from de la Taille's thought. What is offered within the Upper Room in an unbloody manner is done next day, without, on the hill of Calvary. The mass repeats the offering that the Supper anticipates. This intimate participation was effected by de la Taille's construal of the Last Supper and Calvary as one action, the two phases of one action. The hunt supper was the celebration the night before, 'let's drink to his health, let's finish the bowl..... if we want a good hunt in the morning', with affirmations of sporting fellowship and pledges of good hunting in the morning.

A further refinement of this motif is provided by variant lines of the song. A peculiarity of hunting in the Peel country was to drag a scent over the ground to be hunted on the morrow, thus making the eve and the day of the hunt two phases of one action. Alastair Jackson, in a summary of hunting practice in the United Kingdom, succinctly describes the practice thus. 'He [John Peel] hunted the fox by the old-fashioned method of meeting at daybreak and hunting the overnight drag until they put him up - "from the drag to the chase, from the chase to the view"'.³²

(f) Viscount Ullswater made the point, in his preface to Hugh Machell's book on Peel, that without the song we would not know about him.³³ The same has been said about Christ: that is, without the gospels, we would not know about Him. There is no other source of information. Ullswater's contention must be qualified, for there are personal reminiscences and family stories about Peel to hand. That he would not be famous would be easier to justify. But the correspondence is of interest nevertheless. The late publication and reception of the John Peel song and story even fostered arguments about the mythical or historical reality of the man, like the early heresies.

(g) The story of many successful hunts, as the song records, reads like the Passion narrative.

From a find.....all the evangelists tell us of the finding of Christ

in the garden. (Matthew 26, 47-56; Mark 14, 43-50;

Luke 21, 47-53; John 18, 1-11)

....to a check....We are so familiar with the story of the capture and trial of Jesus that it is easy to forget that the issue hung in the balance for a while. Pilate was inclined, having found no wrong in Jesus, to free Him; he allowed the mob to make the final decision, offering a choice between a notorious criminal and Jesus.

(Matthew 27, 15-24; Mark 15, 14;

Luke 23, especially vv 16 & 22; John 18, 28-40;

19, 1-16.)

....to a view....thence to the display of Jesus to the crowd: *Ecce Homo*.

(John 19, 15).

....to a death....finally, to the public execution.

(h) The two lines telling of the course of the hunt - the find, check, view, death - Jones uses elsewhere for different purposes. There is the beautiful passage (Ana 198) about a one-eyed hermit. The hermit's immediate insight (it is unchecked) into the spiritual condition of Gwenhyfar outstrips the hunters' keen senses for the wild animals.

.... yet, as limber to turn
as the poised neck at the forest fence
between find and view
too quick, even for the eyes of the gillies of Arthur, but seen
of the forest-ancraman (he had but one eye)
between decade and *Gloria*.

Another passage is from the preface to the *Anathemata* (Ana20) where Jones is writing of the art of poetry, what it is that the poet seeks to express and where he might find it. The forward movement of the poet's mind is given in hunter's terms. He first quotes from Thomas Gilby's book on medieval logic, *Barbara Celarent*, viz 'The formal cause is the specific factor that we seek to capture, the mind is a hunter of forms, *venator formarum*'. Jones then goes on to write:-

'This, I suppose, applies to the "specific factor" that the art of plumbing [as also with the arts of the strategist, philosopher and physicist he is contrasting with the art of poetry] has as its formal cause, no less than to that which the art of poetry has. But the particular quarry that the mind of the poet seeks to capture is a very elusive beast indeed. Perhaps we can say that the country to be hunted, the habitat of that quarry, where the "forms" lurk that he's after, will be found to be part of vast, densely wooded, inherited and entailed domains. It is in that "sacred wood" that the spoor of those forms is to be tracked. The "specific factor" to be captured will be pungent with the smell of, asperged with the dew of, those thickets. The *venator poeta* cannot escape

that tangled brake. It is within such a topography that he will feel forward, from a find to a check, from a check to a view, from a view to a possible kill: in the morning certainly, but also in the lengthening shadows.’

There are lines from *The Sleeping Lord* (SL91) in equal parts bleak and glorious but ultimately unexchangeable for prose equivalents, where the poet asks the whereabouts of who it is he is seeking or awaiting. It might be

....even in the lost cantreves
of spell-held Demetia
where was Gorsedd Arbeth, where the palas was
where the prince who hunted
met the Prince of Hunters
in his woof of grey
and gleam-pale dogs
not kennelled on earth-floor
lit the dim chase.)

Such are the posited encounters where the hunter crosses the margin from his known world to meet a fellow-hunter with his familiar and strange coat and his spectral hounds, as like and as unlike as he could be. This is the journey Christ takes, and the journey the priest also takes when he remembers it by re-enactment. Culhwch and Olwen, the tale from *The Mabinogion* which lights up (or as Jones would say, brights) this journey also signifies the exchange of identities in the engagement with transubstantiated being.

Another excerpt, an earlier version of the lines just quoted but with the poet’s comments, from the poem *The Roman Quarry* in the volume of that name (RQ13/14), where he has been writing of the rivers of South Wales, runs as follows;

For all the gay eroders that lush the draining valley -
troughs to Narberth, where the *palas* is
and by the dark boundary-stream:
Where the prince who hunted, met
the Jack of Hunters
in the woof of grey

and the pale dogs deep under earth-floor lit the dim chase.

(John elides nicely with Jack, and Jack with the Prince). Jones adds two footnotes to these lines. The second of these is a reminder that ‘Readers of *The Mabinogion* will recall how Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed, met Arawn, Lord of the Underworld, hunting at the boundary-stream called the Cuch (the river Cych at the modern Camarthenshire-Cardiganshire border) and how the mortal prince and the King of Hades exchanged dominions and identities for one year, and how such transpositions and metamorphoses are typical of those tales. The immortal hunter was, like John Peel, in “a coat of grey”.’

John Peel and his hounds introduce a further ramification of the hunting theme which it is appropriate to consider here. The bond between Peel and his hounds is stronger and mutually more dependent than with his horse. It happened, of course, that footpicks were not uncommon in Cumberland, and Peel sometimes hunted on foot. He did have a well-loved pony called Dunny, which had been in the shafts before Peel got him, and they seemed to understand each other’s ways and were well suited for their type of hunting, and general getting about. But it is Peel as a master of hounds that is of real interest. There are a couple of pages in Thomas Dilworth’s *The Shape of Meaning in the Poetry of David Jones* where he reflects on the role of man and dog, as Jones saw it, in literature. He too wants to see Peel as a Jesus-figure and refers his readers also to his exposition of *The Hunt* where he says that in their quest for the Hog - a figure of destructive power - the hounds of Arthur are co-redeemers. An even more ambitious evaluation of the role and status of dogs is made when he writes of the list of dogs (Ana 79/80) that ‘it involves, then, a remarkable conflation of God, man and dog’.³⁴ The lines containing the list are as follows

How the *calix*

without which

how *the* recalling?

And there

where, among the exactly faceted microliths

lie the bones

of the guardian and friend.

How else Argos
the friend of Odysseus?

Or who should tend
the sores of lazars?

(For anthropos is not always kind.)

How Ranter or True, Ringwood
or the pseudo-Gelert?

How Spot, how Cerberus?

(For men can but proceed from what they know, nor is it for
the mind of this flesh to practise poiesis, *ex nihilo*.)

How the hound-bitches

of the stone kennels of Arthur

that quested the hog and the brood of the hog

from Pebidiog to Aber Gwy?

How the dog Toby? How the flew'd sweet thunder for
dewy Ida?

The full section of which these lines are a part (*Rite and Fore-time*, in *The Anathemata* (Ana 49-82) and the passage that René Hague called the 'How Else? Argument', (Ana 78-82) tell of the developing human capacity for signification, from the earliest times to the time of Christ. The poet is asking, how is the Mass possible? Or, more exactly, what are the conditions of possibility for the celebration of Mass? The answer is two-fold: the human mind is prepared by pre-history and history for signification, and the earth is prepared to grow what is necessary for the eucharistic offerings. The elements of this relation stand to each other as form to matter.

The first of these, the form of the disposing conditions for eucharistic celebration, is shown by a narrative of the acquisition of skills: the making of weapons in the bronze age and ornamental figures, cave paintings, the invention of fire, pottery and its decoration, limestone sculpture and working in ivory, courtship and sexual rituals, liturgy and academies of learning, needlework, shepherding and the domestication of the dog, human-animal bonding, hunting, waging war, agriculture and the cultivation of cereals, the foundation of cities and the celebration of the foundation of cities, books, geometry and, perhaps most important of all, the commemoration of the dead.

The second element, the matter of the disposing conditions for eucharistic celebration, is recalled in the upthrusting of hills, eruptions, folding of the rocks, sedimentation and glaciation, the gouging out of moraines and valleys, the isolation of the headwaters of rivers, river marriage and re-routing and going underground, the weathering of top-soil and the blessed presence of earth-worms.

This hunting-to-find, according to Corcoran, ³⁵ is ‘to discern those other makers in the course of human pre-history who have prepared, in their artistry, for the possibilities of this priest’s [any priest’s] eucharistic action. This is, then, a poetry of discernment, enquiring into formative influence, asking significant questions, discovering, “among the elk-bones and breccia” the essential signals of the human...’. These signs are ‘instances of the human animal differentiating himself, and herself, from other animals by making signs of otherness. For Jones...it is in this act of sign-making that man releases his essential humanity’. Jonathan Miles ³⁶ is alerted by these pages to the intention in Jones’s mind to exhibit the presence of Christ throughout history: that he presses this geological knowledge, the mutability of creatures and the diverse causation of cultural phenomena into disclosing the presence of God. René Hague ³⁷ adverts to the human record in the ‘How Else? Argument’ illuminated by the supreme sign. Without this illumination, the continuity of successive events and self being itself could not be possible. According to Louis Bonnerot, ³⁸ ‘the underlying shaping force, of which archaeology is the outward visible manifestation, is the “eucharist,” as enshrined from the remote beginnings in the anathemata, the sacred and artistic sites.’ For Thomas Dilworth, ³⁹ the ‘New Light beams’ from before time and shines ‘through every category and classification of being, penetrating each geological and biological layer including the stages of human evolution whereby we are and with us, eventually, the light incarnate.’

In telling the story of world and mind preparing for the act of redemption and its representation, Jones challenges the reader (‘Answer me!’) to deny the necessary truth of the narrative. To adopt René Hague’s categorization, the How Else? Argument implicates all the dogs and hounds Jones calls to mind in their proper roles of watchkeepers, servants, helpmeets, guardians and friends who are abandoned or betrayed. To commemorate the hero is to commemorate his companions: in *The*

Sleeping Lord we recall the officers of the Chief's household, and in *The Hunt* those riding with the Leader. To remember John Peel is to remember his hounds: Ruby, Ranter, Royal, Bellman (four great favourites), Shifty, Towler, Ruler, Rattler, Glory, Jingler, Champion, Briton (another favourite), Cruel (likewise well-loved), Rockwood (is this the Ringwood misnamed in the song?), Mopsy, Dancer, Farmer, Dusty, Bugle, Lofty, Sweeper and Noble. As the name of a hound, 'True' is an unfortunate mistake carried into the song and thence into Jones's verse. Conventionally, hounds have two-syllable names; it is sheepdogs, who have one-syllable names, like Moss, Fly, Meg, etc. Also the sense is seriously impaired; the trustworthiness and goodness of the hounds conveyed by 'true' is lost. The line in the song should read 'Ranter and Royal, Bellman so true ..'

John Woodcock Graves had this to say of the hounds. ⁴⁰ 'I never knew dogs so sensible as Peel's, or so fearful of offending him. A mutual feeling seemed to exist between them. If he threatened or ever spoke sharply, I have known them to wander and hide for two or three days together, unless he previously expressed sorrow for the cause at issue. Whenever they came to a deadlock, he was sure to be found talking to some favourite hound as if it had been a human being, and I cannot help thinking that these dogs knew all he said relative to hunting, as well as the best sportsman in the field.'

The hounds were big-framed, light-boned with good fronts; with hare feet and dew-claws, useful on rocky screes; independent enough to hunt alone and mark the ground for hours; white in colour. ⁴¹ Many hounds were kennelled with villagers or on local farms. One was kennelled and walked by a calico dyer, who liked to follow the hounds from afar. He dyed his hound blue for ease of recognition at a distance!

However, even the sturdiest of hounds cannot expect a long working life; Peel, like all owners of working animals, had to end their careers. This he did by hanging. He would put a rope round their necks, and throw them down a mine shaft.

Corcoran in the *The Song of Deeds* writes of the 'How Else? Argument' in this way. ⁴² 'Jones's essential manner of showing the transformations of geology as a preparation for human 'making' is, thus, deliberately to "con-fuse", to draw imaginatively

together, the different languages of rite and fore-time, of religious ritual and geological process, in order to create a highly charged linguistic fusion which compacts a complexity of meaning.’ This is an apt summary of one aspect of Jones’s writing. However, to take up Jones’s challenge, ‘Answer me!’ (Ana 76) one must first try to understand, in plodding fashion, the question (or plea, or challenge) which requires analysis, that is, deliberately to ‘de-con-fuse’, and to this we must now turn.

This procedure of clarification will identify the subject matter of the incomplete sentence, supply what is missing, and rephrase it so as to enable a judgement to be made about the outcome.

Of the fifty questions in the whole of the ‘How Else? Argument’ only fourteen have main verbs: seven are to do with light or the New Light (beams, infulsit, brights, have shown, brights, [ray] searches, shines) and seven are a mixed bag (shuffled, answer, numbered, notched, pray, say, grow). We are left therefore with thirty-six questions bereft of verbs and predicates, many of them about hounds. Jones is a grammarian’s funeral. A few questions, it must be conceded, are complete, with verb and modal auxiliary and predicate; for example, ‘Or who should tend/the sores of lazars?’ One might get others into shape without too much difficulty; for example, ‘How else Argos/the friend of Odysseus?’ But for most the exact meaning is obscure. What must be done then with these recalcitrant incomplete questions, like ‘How Ranter...?’, is to take the following seven steps.

- 1 Supply ‘else’.
- 2 Supply the main verb and predicate. The predicate might be inferred from prior knowledge, the context, or authoritative critical opinion. It might be undecidable, either through lack of textual evidence, or a profusion of candidates.
3. Supply the auxiliary ‘should’.
4. Distinguish the senses of ‘should’. It would be superfluous to itemize every use or meaning of ‘should’. Zandvoort, ⁴³ lists sixteen, and other grammarians may have even longer lists. Nor is there rigid regularity in the usage. However, I would propose, following Zandvoort, that there is a general character of ‘should’ usages, and a few examples will make this clear.

‘Should’ as a modal preterite expressing moral obligation is a softening of ‘ought’. ‘Should’ may be used where ‘must’ is too peremptory, or a command too insistent. ‘Should’ expressing probability suggests revisability or imprecision. ‘Should’ moderates ‘shall’. ‘Should’ + conditionals + the infinitive expresses the hypothetical. ‘Should’ + the infinitive is polite and modest.

In other words ‘should’ commonly or usually has a softening or masking function, and one has to seek behind the particular use for the hard and hard-edged, the certain and necessary. Five uses appear in Jones’s *How Else? Argument*.

- (a) the softening of the logical must: there is a hidden affirmation that how it is, is inescapable or inevitable.
- (b) expressing the normative: how it is, is definitive and proper.
- (c) stating the factual within the expression of a contrary opinion: how it is, is unlikely and cannot be refuted.
- (d) expressing possibility or expectation, challenging a counterfactual.
- (e) the rhetorical: how it is, brooks no alternatives.
(Without anticipating the conclusion of the argument, I think it will emerge that a characteristic feature of Jones’s mind and sensibility is a hidden determinism.)

5 & 6 Transform questions into affirmations. If Jones is appealing to the reader to validate or verify his *cursor mundi*, this transformation is essential. It will probably take two steps.

7. Judge the worth or truth of the affirmation. The affirmation will elicit ‘yes’ or ‘correct’, or some fuller endorsement, or even a commitment or an action.

To complete and vary, then, the phrase ‘How Ranter....?’ the following steps may be taken.

1. How else [] Ranter []?
2. How else [] Ranter be the hunting hound of John Peel except through the New Light of Creation.

3. How else should Ranter be the hunting hound of John Peel except through the New Light of Creation?
4. How else could Ranter not be the hunting hound of John Peel except through the New Light of Creation?
5. Ranter could not but be the hunting hound of John Peel, through the New Light of Creation.
6. Ranter was, of necessity, the hunting hound of John Peel through the New Light of Creation.
7. That is straight, exact, rational and true.

To return to the context in which the modes of being of hounds and their masters have their place, three considerations spring to mind. The first is that Jones's creation theology with its tenderness towards all living creatures, impossible to mistake in his animal drawings and paintings, is at odds with a sacramental theology comfortable with hunting; and that this may be a blemish. The second consideration is that a co-redeemer status for dogs takes too much away, for example, from Mary (see the fine lines in *Mabinog's Liturgy* (Ana 214), that it was her *fiat* that gave Mary a share in the redemption; and Luke (1,38). To allow dogs a co-redeemer faculty is to open the door to involuntary agency and other bêtises. The third consideration is that there is some deep division in human experience that allows the simultaneous adoption and rejection of the idea of hunting to carry our intellects into the mystery of the redemption and its renewal.

L95 *where the gentle-eyed quarry*

desiderate of the water-brooks

The source of the English word

'quarry' is the *curée* the reward for the hounds. They were rewarded, for instance, after a deer hunt with the head and skin of the hart. Pieces of bread were soaked in the blood of the beast, and sometimes offal was included. The huntsmen also received their reward with joints from the neck and shoulders. The Master of Game would supervise the ritual. The scene is set. 'All the unmounted berners, the grooms of hounds and the lymersers waited with their hounds in the green shade of the trees. Then the lord and Master of Game took up the head by the antler, one on each side, and the berners brought up the coupled hounds and stood with them facing the head. The Sergeant of Hounds cried "Dedow!", and all the hunters blew the death together,

and those without horns hallooed, as the hounds bayed before the hart until the lord let go his side of the antler, the Master of Game pulled away the head, another man drew away the hide from the rear, and the hounds rushed in to take their reward; the blowing of the death continued until they had consumed it.’⁴⁴

Jones gives expression to the figure of Christ as a hart longing for running streams (everlasting and never-failing), most intensely perhaps towards the end of the watery pages in *Sherthursdaye & Venus Day* (Ana 235-238), crying out for the creature of water He Himself created.

As the bleat of the spent stag
Towards the river course
He the *fons* head
Pleading *ad fontes*
His desiderate cry:
SITIO

In *From the Book of Balaam's Ass*, he recalls an action on the Western Front, quite possibly the battle of Pilckem Ridge (1917) to which five battalions of The Royal Welch Fusiliers were committed. His own battalion, the 15th (the London-Welsh battalion) was one, but Jones had been with drawn from the line not many days after the action began, to make up a Nuclear Reserve Battalion. By nightfall on July 31st, the battalion was commanded by R.S.M. Jones (no relation), as all the officers were dead or wounded. He describes the wounded men, dehydrated by loss of blood, crying out for water, notwithstanding the continuous heavy rain.

‘When it was quite dark and there was no sound at all except of a difficult breathing coming up from the earth, and intermittently the half-cries of those who would call strongly from their several and lonely places, on that Creature of Water, or on some creature of their own kind by name...’

Jones recalls the verses from psalm 42 that the priest recites as he approaches the altar, expressing grief at his separation from God, which he hopes will be consoled and corrected by the sacrifice he is about to offer.

As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.

The figure of the gentle-eyed quarry desiderate of the waterbrooks serves the distraught psalmist seeking God, the soldier calling for water, the unworthy priest offering sacrifice and Christ appealing to the Uncreate God and His own creature - all, in their different ways, abandoned. The subjects of the troubled Emperor reproach him for failure in leadership. Why is he cast down, and why is he disquieted within?

L98 *his most loved falcon* Because Jones's lines are invariably packed with meaning, coming across a line such as this without known connotations or referend is thoroughly unsatisfactory. Nothing is known of falconry in the late fourth century. Falconer's tackle is bio-degradable, so leaves no traces; and documents and illuminations are lacking. The Middle Ages, on the other hand, are incredibly rich in classics, like *De arte venandi cum avibus*, the *Livre de Chasse*, and the *Boke of St. Albans*; then, an Emperor's bird would have been an eagle or gyrfalcon. It would be part of his Imperial status. The falcon here, needless to say, is to be flown at other birds; so, in a different case altogether from the gentle-eyed quarry: hunter, not hunted. It may also be worth mentioning that the most loved falcon would not have returned the affection, as they never bond with those who fly them, being only interested in food and their own safety.

L99 *nor from any venery* The Middle Ages were a copious source of texts on venery, of imaginative literature and compendia of practices. Hounds, huntsmen, thickets and waterbrooks, hunted animals of waste, woodland and park supported the richest vocabulary of allegory and moral significance. Hunting was the favourite activity of kings and lords: privileged in law, the preparation for the warfare of real life, settings for romance and aids to devotion. The deer and the boar were figures of virtue and vice. The characters and events of the hunt supplied details for the narrative of the Fall of Man. The longevity of the hart was a sign of the renewal of life, and a token of immortality. The vision of St. Eustace in the tradition of Southern

Europe and of St Hubert in that of Northern Europe of the crucifix in the hart's antlers is well-known. The harrying of the stag stood for Christ's' Passion.

'For the medieval writer of narrative literature, the principal appeal of the hunt, and especially the hunting of the hart, is that it detaches a man... from his normal environment and, frequently, from his companions, and takes him into unfamiliar territory. In medieval fiction this new territory is not merely topographical, but emotional and sometimes moral. In the Arthurian romance, particularly, detachment from one's environment is synonymous with immersion in that misty landscape in which sudden and unexplained demands are made on the resilience and prowess of a hero who is weary and disorientated, and who, in many cases, has been stripped of those accoutrements which marked his position in a secure social framework – his hawk and his hounds.'⁴⁵

Jones exploited one feature especially of hunting here – the pun on venery for the two projects of the sporting chase and what pertained to Venus, both enrolled in the worship of the divine: the chase itself converts to failed or successful seduction, a pack of hounds made up the seducer's characteristics, the curre/quarry/reward registered the consummation of a love affair. We have noted some of the images and attendant thoughts Jones has already used to open up perspectives on a singular figure, recognized by his coat, bound to a territory and of a known time, permitting a mythical presence, meeting at boundaries with loyal companions, traversing other worlds, journeying long distances with a death in mind, heroic. Jones also made a list of hounds, and knew from his reading of Malory, the interplay of men and hounds in knights' adventures. His poem *The Hunt* describes a company of huntsmen, their allegiance and status, their wounds, as they go forth for the healing of the woods to hunt the hog life for life. The *Anathemata* ends with the section entitled *Sherthursdaye & Venus Day*, those two days whose conjunction has occasioned comment here. Friday was dedicated in pagan times to Venus, *dies Veneris*, and it was also the Good Friday of the Christian Church.

What is it for the Emperor to find no solace from any venery? To lose the savour for any venery is to lose the reason for action. It is a breakdown in rationality,

an emptying-out of knowing. Not to aim at the beautiful is to aim at nothing at all. It is a loss of meaning; to have nothing to care for, to be hollowed-out and without direction.

L104 *Agrimensores.* Imperial officials empowered by the Theodosian land laws to survey, position land marks and settle land disputes.

Limes. It first denoted a military road; then a frontier, such as between barbarian and citizen.

L105 *Rescript.* Roman law had elaborate appellate procedures, including personal appeals to the Emperor. The appellant would set out his appeal at the head of the page (the script) leaving a blank space for the Emperor's decision (the rescript); the law was then promulgated by being posted in a public place. Petitions for the clarification of law were also addressed to magistrates, who replied with rescripts.

L106 *Bumpkin georges.* The origin of the phrase was the impression Jones formed of the pitman painters he met at Rock Hall, Alnwick, patronized by Helen Sutherland. They tilled the earth at great depth, had a pre-history as countrymen, and he encountered them in a very rural setting. Redescribing geordies as georges secured the allusion to Vergil's husbandmen in the Georgics, a manual in verse on agriculture and beekeeping. A bumpkin george who benefited from Miss Sutherland's generosity at this time, Harry Wilson, has this little memoir of Jones.⁴⁶ '[He] was a very quiet retiring person, yet when you got him talking, talking about the things he was interested in, which was what he liked to talk about, he was quite interesting. He was very interested in mental pictures he had of the first World War and men working in saps and trenches and the effect of war and the atmosphere round them. We had many a talk about that in the garden there, walking round, but you never knew when you had him: his mind was off on another angle altogether in a second or two.' The phrase also combines the sense of someone who is both distant and close to us in time. It has a bridging function. He plays on this word in his essay on George Borrow. '[George Borrow] was born into the truly georgic and leafy England of Constable and Crome when Farmer George was King, and he lived on through the England of the

Great Exhibition and survived into the England of The Diary of a Nobody, the bowler hat, the paintings of Whistler, and the breech loader.’

L107 *baldhead forebears.* The exact origin of this phrase escapes me. The author’s intention is presumably to convey the idea of recession in time.

L108 *The She-Wolf on the faunine slope sustained the Twins.* There are two (incompatible) foundation myths of the City of Rome, of Aeneas and the Twins Romulus and Remus. The Twins are remembered in song ‘Two, two the lilywhite boys, dressed all in green-o!’ They were born of the rape of Ilia by Mars. The Twins were thrown into the Tiber but were marvellously saved, suckled by a wolf (the Mother of the West) and nurtured by the Shepherd Faustulus. They later quarrelled, Romulus killing Remus. Romulus then ruled Rome as King for thirty-seven years. During this time, because there were only men in Rome, the Romans raided their Sabine neighbours, carrying off and raping their women. Relations subsequently improved between Romans and Sabines and the cities were amalgamated. The faunine slope was named from Faunus, a fertility god and one of the first kings of Latium. He was later identified with Pan. His temple was on the Palatine hill (hence slope); it was there that the Lupercalia – pagan purificatory rites – took place. The Lupercalia were suppressed by Pope Gelasius (AD 494) and the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin replaced them.

L111 *Curial Chair.* A combination phrase referring to the curule chair, the judicial seat of the Emperor that carried suggestions of divine authority. Jones sometimes refers to the English parliament as a curia, a term usually reserved for the College of Cardinals of the Catholic Church. The term curia also referred to the body delegated by the legal assembly of the Roman people to confer the imperium and inaugurate priests.

Aula. A palace or large room. It is still used to denote a lecture hall in some religious houses of study.

L112 *Mandatium.* A command constituting Roman law, as in rescripts and decrees.

The term also has Christian echoes, being the source of Maundy. Likewise, rescripts were continued by the Holy See to answer appeals and make laws.

L113 *‘Tomorrow it is our desire to follow the chase and take whatever fortune the numina of the groves may grant us.’* The Emperor is (a) pledging himself on the morrow (b) to hunt (c) in the groves and (d) to take whatever fortune their numina will grant. He appears to be pledging himself to an unspecified venture the next day. He is, in truth, acting in *persona Christi* and pledging himself to his fate. Jones was much taken by Christ’s vow in the Upper room. ‘What was done at the Supper on Thursday evening placed the offerant himself in the state of a victim and *bound* (Jones’s italics) him to Friday’s events. So to say, “the first movement” of the passion was already played before Judas left Caiaphas to go to the arrest.’ He also adds a footnote to some lines in *The Fatigue* (SL36-37), first to state more fully and forcefully the relationship of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday (mentioned above), and second to acknowledge his debt to de la Taille.

‘...I ought perhaps to say that the term *immolatio oblata* is used to describe the actual bodily immolation on the unlit Altar of the Cross of what had already been oblata at the lighted and festal board in the supper-Room, which oblativ act committed the Offerand to his actual immolation on the morrow and by his command “Do this” committed his *ecclesia* to the offering at her lighted altars of what had been immolated once and for all on the dark Hill.’

‘This note is beginning to read like a theological treatise, whereas all I wish to make plain is that in writing the text I did so as a layman entirely indebted to ideas and terms borrowed from a theologian who forty-four years ago (1921) provided what seemed to me to be an aesthetic wholeness, a comprehensible, almost tangible unity to various propositions of our religion touching the relationship between the Mass, Calvary and the Supper. As might be expected of a Gaul, he, Maurice de la Taille, gave an unific wholeness of form to what before one had accepted, but (how shall I put it?) had not apprehended in what exact sense the sequence of acts while being other were yet one and one yet other I feel I ought also to mention an old friend, Fr. Martin D’Arcy S.J., who in 1926, in *The Mass and the Redemption*, used de la Taille’s thesis as the groundwork for what he had to say, which book justified what I had felt

on first hearing the bare outline of that thesis some years previously when it was under very bitter assault from some quarters.’

(a) What is at stake here is the substance of the poem, the link to the axis on which the world turns. The bearing of the mass on the Redemption is fixed by the inner relationship of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion. One purchase on this is de la Taille’s response to ‘a very bitter assault’ from his most hostile critic, Vincent McNabb O.P on this very topic. ⁴⁷ McNabb objects to de la Taille’s “New Theory of the Eucharist”, as he slightly calls it, on six counts. De la Taille regarded his eucharistic teaching as the ancient and constant doctrine of the Church, well-grounded in the Fathers and the early scholastics. He was out of sympathy however, with much post-Tridentine sacramental theology. But he rejected vigorously the imputation that his ‘theory’ was new. ⁴⁸

First objection. De la Taille denies that the Last Supper and Calvary are one. The Church’s solemn teaching however is that they are. Therefore de la Taille’s argument is false. McNabb holds that there are two discrete sacrifices, each complete, one bloody and the other bloodless, and that these two sacrifices are one and the same. There must be two entities to satisfy the proposition that they are one and the same, that is, $x = y$, or else the proposition is tautologous, that is, $x = x$. McNabb further holds that each event must have form and matter, the ultimate categories of any real unity, and that one form/matter distinction cannot be used for two events. De la Taille replies that he is not using the form/matter distinction on the model of a physical object, but in an extended sense – as a comparison, not an absolute identity. (The presentation of the disposing conditions of possibility for the celebration of mass (see L92) was a similar extended use). It is clear, so he avers, that he is using these categories in this way; this being understood, then his presentation should be acceptable.

Second objection. McNabb questions whether de la Taille can accommodate the mass in his scheme without incoherence. If the Last Supper is to the Crucifixion as form is to matter; and, supposedly, the mass is likewise to

Calvary as form to matter, then we have two forms for one matter. Which is impossible. De la Taille replies that the Last Supper and the Crucifixion are numerically one, a real unity, whereas the mass and the sacrifice of Calvary have a unity of subordination. The mass also shares in the offering at the Last Supper subordinately, just as the ministerial priesthood shares subordinately in the full priesthood of Christ.

Third objection. The sacrifice of the mass is effected by the words of consecration alone. Therefore the Last Supper must be the same. If the consecration makes for a true and complete sacrifice, then it also follows that every mass must be a sacrifice and the Last Supper must also have been a sacrifice. McNabb is at least correct in attributing to De la Taille the proposition that the consecration makes for a true and complete sacrifice. De la Taille's XXXIV thesis affirms 'the sacrifice is accomplished by the consecration alone. The epiclesis does not effect the consecration, nor is it necessary for it, though it has been wisely instituted and is appropriately placed in the liturgy.' De la Taille considers and rejects three alternative candidates to his belief that the words of consecration alone, by imitation of Christ's action and command at the Last Supper, carry out the sacrifice. These are: that by the invocation of the Holy Spirit He is made present sacramentally (as mentioned above); or that it is at the communion at the Lord's Supper that this is done; or at the eucharist understood as the Breaking of Bread, then it is at that very breaking of bread that Christ is truly present. It is the completeness of each mass and the Last Supper, as effected by the words of consecration, that makes of them a sacrifice.

Fourth objection. McNabb contends that if the Last Supper as a ritual oblation is an unbloody immolation, then the bloody immolation of Calvary is a ritual oblation. What is both oblation and immolation must be greater, more perfected, than what is solely immolation. De la Taille replies (and never tires of saying) that the oblation at the Last Supper was not a real immolation (there was no killing in the Upper Room, nor on the altar in the sanctuary). He offers three answers to this objection, (a) if it were, that is, if the Oblation at the Last Supper was a real immolation, then the real immolation of Calvary would

equally be a ritual oblation; and Calvary is not. (b) The crucifixion was not the work of a priest, as all ritual oblations must be, but the work of Christ's enemies; (c) oblation is repeatable, but immolation cannot be – it is logically and physically impossible for the immolation of Christ to be repeated ritually. The Levites in their repeated prefiguring sacrifices in the Temple combined oblation and immolation: however, the death of Christ is unrepeatable, once and for all, sufficient and superabundant; the character of the gift is sealed. De la Taille reaffirms there is only one sacrifice, no real immolation except on Calvary, though the oblation of the Supper in a sense extends to the whole of the Passion, as it unfolds. But the Cross is greater.

Fifth objection. McNabb holds that the Last Supper and the mass are the same in substance. If therefore the Last Supper lacks unity of sacrifice with the cross, so does the mass. De la Taille replies that the Last Supper and the Cross are not the same in substance, but numerically: so the real sacrifice of Calvary is not in the mass. McNabb is here eliding the concepts of sacrifice and immolation, which de la Taille is very careful to distinguish. If McNabb believes that this is heretical, then too many theologians in the orthodox tradition must be condemned. De la Taille is thus appealing to a kind of consensual authority to defeat this objection.

Sixth objection. McNabb's last objection he believes to be the strongest. The sacrificial character of the Redemption derives its formal element – what gives it its character and unity – from the offering of Christ at the Last Supper, or so de la Taille is claiming. But John's gospel does not even mention the institution of the sacrament, and hence there is no record of the sacrifice being accomplished. Rather than posing the most formidable threat to de la Taille's argument, this assertion is easily set aside. Elsewhere John (in Chapter VI of his Gospel) uses the strongest eucharistic language which fittingly complements the synoptic narratives of institution.

We have so far considered, rather narrowly and in isolation, only McNabb's critical probing of the coherence of de la Taille's exposition of the inner logic of the redemptive acts and their bearing on the mass. He deplored de la Taille's teaching,

regarding it as gravely disordered and even heretical, and warned Jones against it. 49 A few words on McNabb's positive teaching are in order to show how the doctrine that he believed was threatened by this 'New Theory of the Eucharist'. Fundamental to his sacramental theology was the thought that a sacrifice is divisible into its internal and external features. Internally it is cause and 'per se', externally it is effect and by virtue of the internal offering. Love is the essence of a sacrifice. The act of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was his acceptance of the Incarnation and Crucifixion, an internal offering never withdrawn; and the actual dying was the external action, in which McNabb included offering, oblation, gift and immolation. This basic understanding of sacrifice as the love of the human will of Christ internally present expressing itself in an external offering can thus be seen to be present at the Last Supper, Calvary and in the mass. Hence each is one and the same sacrifice of self-giving, as perfect as the other. The identity which holds between these three elements of redemption is substantial, the difference is modal.

To sum up: de la Taille's teaching on the relation between Christ's offering in the Upper Room and our celebration of the mass (which we have already noted in the comment on L57) differs in virtue of time and authority, and it can be set out as follows.

<u>His offering</u>	<u>Our celebration</u>
	<u>Time</u>
His passion and death are in the future.	His passion and death are in the past.
He offered what was in store.	We offer the relic.
He anticipated His immolation.	We commemorate His immolation.
His sacrifice was not complete till he had died at the hands of His enemies.	Our sacrifice ends with the eucharistic Celebration, laid before God the victim it yields.
His offering was bloodstained.	Our offering is bloodless.
	<u>Authority</u>
His oblation gone by	is ever operative through ours.
His offering was alone (even without Mary),	we now tread the wine-press.
His offering	hovers over our altars.
His own utterance (and its	

virtue and efficiency)
His is the power to offer,
He offers, through His mandate,
Christ needs

are the words we utter.
ours is the act of offering.
but through our agency & participation.
to use the appropriate organs of
sacrificing activity.

(b) When the Emperor's mandatum (his Thursday order) echoed from the marbled walls of the aula, it announced what is at the heart of the poem. It is a paraphrase of the consecration, within the convention of the art work, taken from the canon of the mass which points to the morrow, of that 'which will be given up for you'. It is one among many paraphrases of the sacred words that we find in Jones: direct, like 'Do this for an anamnesis of me', or 'I am your Bread'; or a third-person description of the moment of transubstantiation (already noted), as in 'Here a maker turns a hard corner.' We are confident that the words beginning 'Tomorrow it is our desire to follow the chase...' are such a paraphrase. Never the less, because of the pagan association of the words and their non-specific target, and because of the interruption of a dispute in law whose significance is out of reach, we lose our bearings.

The Emperor is adjudicating a land dispute, ill at ease and impatient. What is this land dispute? It seems that one side claims the property by virtue of a written title, the other side claims a prescriptive oral right from time immemorial. Who are these litigants? Is this a society bound by law, like ancient Israel? Are they a people no longer rooted in their land? A people confused where their home is? Who is to be dispossessed? Or are the disputants contesting the merits and priority of orality and the text? Half of the following section of *The Kensington Mass*, retrieved by René Hague from the manuscript remains, bears upon the divided provenance of the tale of the pierced and hanging son of the Lord of Salem – divided between the unlettered lore of the marvels handed on to the folk and the texts taught by elders of competence. The disjunction of orality and text is one of the five main dichotomies which mark the withdrawal from the sacred *polis* that Catherine Pickstock has narrated in *After Writing*.⁵⁰ The exodus from the sacred city in the poem begins directly. Or is it the *Imperium* displacing the *Sacerdotium*? The State invading and occupying the space of the Church? The priest at the altar in the sanctuary has disappeared and indeed, *in*

proprie personae, never re-appears. The Emperor in his curial chair, moping over the lost vision in his dream, or calling his retinue to follow the chase, is in possession. We must seek the cause of the sorrowful outcome at the conclusion of the poem in some failure, wrongdoing, error or folly here at its heart.

Or is it something in the mass itself, - not located in the dispute at law, nor the word as present or absent, nor the political overthrow of the sacred? Has hunting unsettled something in the eucharist that only hunting can put right? The paradox is that the very activity that can no longer requite the Emperor's needs is the one he adopts to overcome his tedium and disquiet.

There is an ancient and still well-received three-fold distinction in the eucharist; of *sacramentum*, *sacramentum et res*, and *res*. Jones puzzled over this, on his own admission, for many years. The difficulty was this: how what the *sacramentum* signified, namely the Crucifixion or *res*, could itself be the sign of something else, namely grace or union in charity. The Crucifixion was so much the ultimate reference, the point round which the world revolved, the sum of divine love, that to regard it as pointing to something else was illogical or *lesé-majesté*. That difficulty, in his religious belief, was eventually resolved but the issue in *The Kensington Mass* still awaits satisfactory resolution. Matching the poem with the old paradigm shows the first section to be unambiguously and aptly sign; the second section to be a mixture of sign and thing, though we feel unease over how they stand to each other, so confusingly do they criss-cross; in the third section however the outcome that should result from the sacrament and sacrifice appears to be unfulfilled. In commenting on the kiss that effects the transition from priest to Emperor, I proposed that the first underlying shape in the poem was that of dream-into-wakefulness. The second underlying shape is the misalignment of sign and thing. The best way to describe this falling-short and how it comes about must wait till the emperor's party has ridden out of the city and the poem has entered its third phase.

(c) Continuing the reflection on parts of the Emperor's declaration, *To-morrow it is our desire to follow the chase and take whatever fortune the numina of the groves may grant us*, we come to his reference to *groves*, and recall some fine lines from *In*

Parenthesis. John Ball is posted as a day sentry at Christmastide. Through his cunning periscope he scans the woods and copses across no man's land, his race memory stirred. He muses on the significance of groves: the genius of their place is that they are sites of particular destiny.

(IP, Pt4,p66)

To groves always men come both to their joys and their undoing. Come lightfoot in heart's ease and school-free; walk on a leafy holiday with kindred and kind; come perplexedly with first loves – to tread the tangle frustrated, Striking – bruising the green.

Come on night's fall for ambushade

Find harbour with a remnant.

Share with the prescribed their unleavened cake.

Come for sweet princes by malignant interests deprived.

Wait, wait long for –

With the broken men, nest with badger and the martin-cat

Till such time as he come again, crying the waste for his chosen.

Or come in gathering nuts and may;

or run want-wit in a shirt for a queen's unreason.

Beat boys-bush for Robin and Bobin.

Come with Merlin in his madness, for the pity of it; for the young men reaped like green barley, for the folly of it.

Seek a way more separate and more strait.

Keep date with the genius of the place-come with a weapon or effectual branch – and here this winter copse might well be special for Diana's Jack, for none might attempt it, but by perilous bough-plucking.

In *the Kensington Mass* the groves are the Garden of Gethsemane. The thicket from which Abraham's ram was taken (Genesis 22) is here associated with the Kedron Valley and the ram with Our Lord. (RQ, *The Agent*, fn.23, pl43). It was and is now

'the known copse, the ascertained place' (RQ, *The Agent*, p140), the disclosed site of universal destiny.

(d) The numina in trees and groves in the ancient world were spirits of local deities and tutelars, of ancestors, and gods of specific power and guardianship. Jones's imaginative response to trees was tremendous; it can be found everywhere in his verse, not least in *The Dream of Private Clitus*, *The Fatigue*, and *The Hunt*. Likewise in his sketches and paintings. None of this is disowned, but he is here alluding, I think, rather more exactly to *Fortuna*, to the Spirit, as unpredictable as grace, which becomes present to those open to it in *aventures*.⁵¹ Full woodland convivium is given, paradoxically, by an axed tree, the central figure of the sacramental life.

L115 *Vigiliae*. Watchkeepers. The three disciples who were to watch with Christ in the garden, but could not stay awake. The simple pun, they slipped (slept) away = they fell (asleep) is combined with, they slipped away = they uncoupled hounds.

L116 *Pridie*. The day before, that is, Maundy Thursday that had become Good Friday.

L117 *The meet was within the pomoerium*

of the City

that sacred unseen defence

the augurs plot

clockwise, the sure-binding wall

without which the mortared walls of

squared, dressed stone

crenellate and turreted

were contrived in vain.

Pomoerium was a word dear to Jones; in fact earthworks, mazes, aggers, wattles and all manner of boundaries, thresholds and enclosures had bulky and extensive significance for him. A city in antiquity was sacred, being dedicated to a god or goddess. At its foundation a priest supervised the ploughing of a furrow in a clock-wise direction, along the line just within what was to be the foundation of the city wall. This was the pomoerium. The plough was pulled

by a bull and a white heifer. The space between the furrow and the wall was not to be crossed with arms. By extension, the pomoerium referred more generally to the sacred space of the city. One of the duties of the pagan priesthood was prophecy, including the inauguration of a city by divining the flight of birds or reading the runes. Paganism was still widespread in the time of Magnus Maximus.

We can make inferences from the text about the city Jones had in mind, indeed a city of mind. There were many cities of Jones's imagination: Jerusalem, Troy and Troy Novaunt, Rome. He was inclined to present them in their particularity, even if sometimes changing shape. Here it was a city, it is clear, of the ancient world and it was sacred. It was sacred from its foundation, dedicated by a priest, and whose walls enclosed a sacred space. It was safe: its defence, though invisible, was guaranteed. It had also something of the Middle Ages about it: a licence, acquired and exercised, to crenellate, and further fortified by turrets. It was also a city the psalmist could celebrate and have a heavenly double. The hunters rode out from it in high spirits.

All this we know for certain from the text. We can make further inferences that, as a sacred place, it was where worship was deemed valid, faithful to its own rubrics and without anxiety. It contained the deposits of its own culture. Though the city was of the mind, it was not a *product* of mind, it preceded the self. It was a city given and accepted, which energized its citizens and honoured its gods. It may not be for us to delineate its streets and intersections nor put a name to it, but we know it for sure as a sacred *polis*, of which we are no longer citizens. Its significance in *The Kensington Mass* is that it is the beginning of an historical sequence which continues in the following three verses, till the dawn has slowly gained the field. The peculiarities and complexities of this sequence must wait for their elucidation till the sequence is completed.

A recent reconstruction of a sacred *polis* which Jones would have recognized and acknowledged as his own is given by Catherine Pickstock in *After Writing*.⁵² She tells the story of the demolition of this city, as it goes through its degenerate stages characterised by delusions of foundationalism (the cartesian city) and of the hegemony of facts (the early scientific community), of baroque excess and absolutism (the city of *virtuosi*) to the modern necropolis. Jones's sequence in these four verses –

worship, misadventure and hubris, and dereliction – is his own, but close and congruous to her narrative. How then does she describe this city, that Jones’s riders will leave with such a hullabulloo and tarantara?

The liturgical city had its apotheosis in the Middle Ages, and it was of that city that the mass was the centre. It was the mass that made that city liturgical and yet the mass, as Jones understood it, also presupposed a society like Pickstock’s liturgical city. Contrasting medieval society with the later societies of absolute monarchs, she writes ‘According to a model in which there is only one centre of sovereignty ..., there can only be a connection with the transcendent at that central point, so that everything beneath that point is effectively secularized. However, according to the decentred and organic structure of medieval society, every social group was ... formed by worship. Whilst one might suppose that a sacred society would have only one invested sacred centre or “site”, it is to the contrary clear that a Christian society has many centres because, as manifest in the theology of the Roman Rite, the true sacred centre is unplaceable and lies beyond place itself, in God.’ Sympathetic though Jones was to leaders, nevertheless they were always of their own households and peoples and territories, the transcendent was never connected only to them. Furthermore, her liturgical city ‘is *avowedly* semiotic. Its lineaments, temporal duration, and spatial extension are entirely and constitutively articulated through the signs of speech, gesture, art, music, figures, vestment, colour, fire, water, smoke, bread, wine, and relationality. These “signs” are both things (res) and figures or signs – of one another and of that which exceeds appearance. Such a language of signs is received openly, willingly, and repeatedly, in and through its being passed on to others, and itself constitutes the offering and consummation of the citizens’ subjectivity as a “living sacrifice”.’ Such a city was ritual in character. A further aspect of this city (making a fine distinction) was what she calls doxological dispossession, which qualifies and constrains the autonomy of the liturgical subject, yet falls short of complete control. The rite defamiliarized the language of worship, denying full possession and distancing God and man. The offering is made from the everyday and the mundane to the holy.⁵³ These five features of her sacred *polis* – decentred, semiotic through and through, open to the transcendent, placing and displacing the worshipping subject, and ritualistic – sum up most aptly Jones’s city.

*L126 As they moved off toward & through
the high-arched wide gateway
the hallooing of brass-throated cornus
slung from gay-worked baldrics
lifted to the lips of virile
proudly saddled
gay vênators
as a dawn salute
to the Supreme Vênatrix on High
her gleam-white crescent moon
all but faded-out and wan.*

The hunting party rides

out in pride of life. There is an upbeat epithet in almost every line.

High-arched: proud, gothic and lordly.

Wide: triumphant, spacious enough for several columns abreast.

Brass-throated: confident, harsh and full of spirit.

Gay-worked: rich, precious and bright. Horns and baldrics were often ornamented.

Virile: manly, of course, and belonging to the sap years, the young time.

Proudly-saddled: well mounted. Jones in *The Roland Epic & Ourselves*, quoted also by David Annwn, remarks of Roland (see L189 also) ‘We feel clearly the war-saddle. The supporting stirrups, the stiff paraphernalia of the medieval *miles*, binding rider and horse into a rigid unity (in a manner not known to the stirrupless ancients) and here buttressing and holding erect a man, faint because of his friend dead’.

Gay; merry, debonair, gallant, the fighter pilots of their day.

The dawn salute; as buoyant and spirited as the dawn crows of dolour (L186) is wretched.

Supreme: the riders are vassals and comrades together, loyal to their lord and sovereign lady.

Who are these hunters & what do they signify? First, we must locate them in the historical sequence these four verses form (L117-150); secondly, take note of David

Annwn's reflections on *The Hunt*,⁵⁴ the poem which has the fullest expression of Jones's play with hunting in all his verse; and finally recognise the different perspective revealed in *The Kensington Mass*.

The hunters are seen leaving the ancient city, toward & through one of its gateways, venturing into the dark gothic night, saluting the woman who is both the sister of Apollo and Mary of the Apocalypse, co-redemptrix and mother of God, as her crescent moon fades. The moment is the early part of the middle time between antiquity & modernity. One can imagine Charlemagne's proudly saddled feudal host setting off for Spain imbued with this spirit, barbarous and Christian, hopeful and vigorous, seven years before the weary return to Gaul & the North through the narrow pass at Roncesvalles.

David Annwn presents the boar hunt as elemental *materia*, a great cosmic battle and cosmic nuptial, a sacrificial struggle of nature. It is continuous through time & emerges in every culture. It is, above all, primordial. Among the great pig-sticking horse lords of world history who ride, life for life, against the hog, as the embodiment of destructive potency, are Arthur and, so it seems, Macsen Wledig.

Because *The Hunt* is the subject of his study, Arthur -needless to say- is his principal figure & interest. Jones's Arthur in *The Hunt* is the perfect embodiment of the great horse-lord and the swiftest route to understanding this datum of existence. Arthur takes us away from the sanctuary, court and city: his stamping ground is the ancient woodlands riven by the tusks of the great boar. In the hunting down of his enemy, he is like the cock-thrush bloodied by thorns, and in his wounds he becomes assimilated to the trees, the trees of life and the trees of the cross, so that horse and tree and cock-thrush and companions are all as one, all maimed and all part of the riding for a redemption of creation. These are the lines in which Jones likens Arthur to the cock-thrush.

Like the breast of the cock-thrush that is torn in
the hedge-war when bright on the native mottle
the deeper mottling is and brightening the diversity
of the textures and crystal bright on the delicate
fret the clear dew-drops gleam: so was his dappling
and dreadful variety
the speckled lord of Prydain
in his twice embroidered coat
the bleeding man in the green
and if through the trellis of green
and between the rents of the needlework
the whiteness of his body shone
so did his dark wounds glisten.

Annwn sums up this picture of Arthur and the cock-thrush in this way.

‘In the poem [*The Hunt*], the simile for the lord’s “dappling and variety” both links and separates a reminder of Arthur’s mission: “because of the hog” and the final great apotheosis of “the speckled lord of Prydain”, where focus widens to include the whole land and the leader’s embodiment of it. As such, the thrush image aids our visualisation of the lord’s speckling, (and its delicate intricacy) from a familiar source and also builds an awareness of Arthur’s spirit investing the whole landscape intimately & vice versa. The urgency of his quest is thus subtly reinforced: he rides for the restitution of the rightful orders of nature and the woods themselves!’

The depiction of the maimed horse-lord from generation to generation, riding to his dutiful encounter with the powers of darkness is further coloured by an earth-mysticism which binds all created things in one endeavour: the entire picture perfectly satisfies Annwn’s moral and aesthetic requirements of *The Hunt*, and Jones’s vision realized there. The richness of his many references serves Jones well.

When we come to consider his understanding of Macsen in the light of his portrait of Arthur, we must retain all we can of the vitality of Annwn’s imagination, but angle our vision differently. Arthur and his company of hunters riding against the hog are

engaged in the self-sacrificing primal moral project. In so far as this description fits Macsen Wledig's chase, we can surmise it only by indirect inference. The non-specificity of the hunt is inescapable. They are riding on an *aventure* open to what the woodland spirits will yield. There is certainly no mention of a boar spear, nor even a boar: the hunters are ceremonially well-equipped, but markedly free of hunting gear. No quarry, no weapons – it is the Emperor's pledge to hunt on the morrow that alone gives the character to the enterprise, and in the event the Emperor disappears from view, as the hunters ride out from the city. The hunters are unmarked by experience; it is the Emperor alone who is the damaged man of sorrows. And what prompts the Emperor is his yearning for the lost dream woman – it is her beauty that commands his action.

We can be sure the chase has cosmic depth and totality, and in some way aims at the restitution of rightful order, but its elementality originates in the estrangement of the Emperor, the recovery of a dream of love and rationality, its openness to the spirit and the disappearance of the Emperor, by displacement or conversion or transference, from or into the company of hunters. None of these is present in *The Hunt*. What is happening in *The Kensington Mass* cannot be co-opted into the great drama of that poem.

L137 Brazen-faced Phoebus

had not as yet

in his quadriga

climbed to the horizon rim

his gleaming axle-tree

still unseen. The image here is of Phoebus – that is, the

god of the sun and hence in poetic convention the sun itself, or himself – carried in his quadriga (his four – horse chariot) still below the horizon, before his day journey across the heavens. So, though the darkness is receding a little, it is still not dawn. Phoebus was the Roman equivalent of the Greek god, Apollo, brother to Artemis. He was the god of reason, of enlightenment, of the day, standing in opposition to forces of magic, disorder and frenzy, which flourish in the night. Jones elsewhere evoked Apollo as bright healer, but that seems not to be his purpose here.

The historical period is early modernity, the Enlightenment; 'brazen-faced' because it rejected faith and spawned the men of fact Jones so heartily abominated. What Jones is doing is telling the story of Christ and His Church as a counterpoint to Milton's beautiful Hymn On The Morning of Christ's Nativity, which addresses his muse to welcome the Infant God.

Now while the heaven, by the Sun's team untrod,
Hath took no print of the approaching light,
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadron's bright?

Nature is to receive its maker, in the winter wild, and to introduce him

Peace:

.....came softly sliding

Down through the turning sphere,

His ready harbinger,

The stars are steadfast, the winds and ocean still.

Here Jones's verse is a perfect echo, as his dawn also hovers on the brink of appearing.

The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new-enlightened world no more should need;
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne or burning axle-tree could bear.

Nature imagined her fulfillment was complete.

She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in Happier union.

It seemed Time could be turned back, Vanity and Sin would disappear,
Truth and Justice and Mercy return,

And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

But this cannot be. The babe smiling in its infancy

... on the bitter cross

Must redeem our loss.

The pagan powers, nymphs, priests and gods of the ancient world are scattered and disempowered, and unable to face the Godhead true. The moment of the sun coming up is almost upon us.

So, when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,

And the yellow-skirted fays

Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved Maze.

Jones loved the cosmic scope of Milton's verse, and loved also to make it serve his own purpose. He never disowned his pagan forerunners, as Milton did, but carried them with him into the Christian dispensation, and he does the same with Milton himself. The impact of what he sees when the sun comes up has to be set against this vision of Milton. The unfinished poem *The Passion*, though to a lesser extent, is also at hand. The mood is sombre, he must tune his song to sorrow.

Most perfect Hero, tried in heaviest plight

Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight!

He confines his gaze to the sorrowful scene of the entombment of Christ. Here Christ appears, a little confusingly, as Phoebus, as he does as Apollo in the wall-paintings beneath St. Peter's in Rome.

To his horizon is my Phoebus bound.

His god-like acts, and his temptations fierce,

And former sufferings, otherwise are found.

L143 But to harbinger his sure approach

the brumous half-light

infiltrated here, now there

rather as assault-groups

probe in column

to coalesce in line

so did the green dawn

slowly gain the field.

The preceding three verses with the image of the sacred city, the archaic hunting party and the figures of poesy, here delicately conclude the historical sequence with the misty half-lights coalescing to dispel the last of the darkness. The presence of the dawn is given by five military metaphors of infiltration, assault groups, column and line, and gaining the field, which supply the clue to its historical period – the time of the Great War. *Brumous*, rather and *slowly* moderate the mood; the break of day is itself diffident. The tone is relaxed, tactful, without bitterness or terror, soft, almost lovingly evocative of a place of enchantment, as Jones called it. Yet we know the Western Front was a fearful site of fratricidal killing, and we know also from *From the Book of Balaam's Ass* Jones thought of it in some way as the outcome of two Christian millenia.

The dawn for any Great War veteran had special memories, though rarely so carefully observed or so vividly recollected as in *In Parenthesis* [IP,p202]. As Jones wrote in an endnote, '*stand-to and stand-down*. Shortly before daybreak all troops in the line stood in their appointed places, their rifles in their hands, or immediately convenient, with bayonets fixed, ready for any dawn action on the part of the enemy. When it was fully day and the dangerous half-light past, the order would come to "stand-down and clean rifles". This procedure was strict and binding anywhere in the forward zone, under any circumstances whatever (the same routine obtained at dusk)... that hour of stand-to was one of peculiar significance and there was attaching to it a degree of solemnity, in that one was conscious that from the sea dunes to the mountains, everywhere, on the whole front the two opposing lines stood alertly waiting any eventuality.'

It is difficult to make selections from the 'dawn' pages of '*King Pellam's Launde*' but two descriptions of the men in the trenches, the first thinking of themselves and the second watching the fogs contesting with stars and the sun, give something of those moments.

First, 'As grievous invalids watch the returning light pale-bright the
 ruckled counterpane, see their uneased bodies only newly clear;

fearful to know afresh their ill condition; yet made glad for that rising, yet strain ears to the earliest note – should some prevenient bird make his kindly cry’. [IP,P61]

Second, ‘Behind them, beyond the brumous piling the last stars paled and twinkled fitfully, then faded altogether; knowing the mastery and their visitation; this beautiful one, his cloud garments dyed, ruddy-flecked, fleecy-stoled; the bright healer, climbing certainly the exact degrees to his meridian. Yet the brume holds, defiantly, and with winter confident, to shroud the low places’. [IP,p62]

‘When the day came, so came the order “Stand-down and clean rifles”’.

There is a curious passage in *Paradise Regained* (BkIV, 426)⁵⁵ where Milton describes a night of ruinous storm, which one might also experience in a forward trench during an artillery bombardment, followed by birds greeting the dawn. It is curious because of the coincidence of theme and image in common with *The Kensington Mass.*

Thus passed the night so foul, till Morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps, in amice grey,
Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds,
And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had raised
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
And now the sun with more effectual beams
Had cheered the face of earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant, or drooping tree; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storm so ruinous,
Cleared up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
To gratulate the sweet return of morn.

Jones expects, but very weakly, the note of one prevenient bird. The order to stand down and clean rifles was followed by the search for boiling water, and then oiling through (though that, at least, eased chapped fingers) and kicking sand bags till it hurt to get their feet warm, fatigues and working parties, the ashen faces eastward...

Dilworth writes of Jones's use of brume in *In Parenthesis*: 'the image of waking from sleep merges with that of death.⁵⁶ Morning's uncovering is an "unshrouding", with "brume" continuing to "shroud" the earth's low places. (The word "brume" for mist evokes the Saturnalia because it derives from the Latin *Bruma*, meaning the year's shortest day at the winter solstice). Here morning evokes its homonym.'

'The earth's proper consort is the sun...' that is, Apollo the bright healer; but at night she has been raped by the necrophiliac Mars, in repeated artillery bombardments. It is because of this that the morning evokes its homonym, mourning.

Dawn is the time of the poem – it encloses every significant, particular act: the priest at mass, the Emperor hunting, Peter in denial. But the dawn also reveals, hidden in the moments of the sun coming up and as the hunting party rides out, a narrative which begins in the Sacred City of Antiquity and ends on the Western Front. It is a narrative of the western *res* since Christ. As such, the emergent narrative becomes the time-frame of the poem; the dawn which has been the reference point of significant time becomes instead a fugitive instant of disclosure, as the unfolding narrative becomes circumscribing history. This thought is not easy to express and may seem tendentious, but this way with time was a pervasive feature of Jones's mind and those who know his mind will recognize it. The shape-shifting was endemic: common to chunks of history, landscape features and multiple meanings. Dawn was both moment and sequence, act and narrative. One might put the matter like this : the point which locates the poem in significant time becomes a line, the line becomes a circle; the centre of the poem moves to its circumference. Here also is the poem's third significant structure or underlying shape – the unstable transposition of centre and circumference.

The end of the sequence reveals by regressive elucidation what the sequence was. Likewise, the end of the poem reveals in the same way the substance of *The Kensington Mass*.

This reading of the break of day as the foregoing historical narrative demands some backing, as the narrative is patient of alternative readings. It may be understood as Christ going outside the city to His death; as hunters of forms seeking enlightenment; as a war band on a foray; as a personal biography of the poet.

What tells against the first reading is that the Emperor, who was transparently acting *in persona Christi* in his promise to follow the chase, disappears from the scene altogether; there is no mention of this among his fellow-hunters, where we might have expected to see him. Not that any sense of an encounter with destiny is to be disregarded, but that what was promised was misdelivered, and to this the narrative I have proposed does justice.

The hunters of forms likewise are unquestionably part of the story, but not the whole of it. Sir William Davenant's lines

Since knowledge is but sorrow's spy

It is not safe to know

come to mind, as an old man's summary of his failures, and there is something of Jones's proneness to depression showing through at the end of the poem. This motif finds its rightful place in the full narrative I have proposed.

What might support the military interpretation is the completion of the story in the fourth verse and then to re-read the preceding verses in the light of the last. The hunters moving off in the second verse are awkwardly enrolled for this purpose. Again, there is no need to exclude this dimension. Dilworth says somewhere that fundamental to Jones's sensibility is an underlying conflict between power and love, and the wars of the early twentieth century were assuredly tributes to violence and reminders of the failure of love. But this also has its place in the fuller narrative.

That the verses expressive of safety, adventure, expectancy and wretchedness might in some way convey his life-stages is perfectly plausible: certainly if this was his

intention he would do it in this oblique and evasive way. But self-reference was out of character, and it adds little of significance or thrust to the poem.

What is in favour of the reading I have proposed is that the structure emerges very naturally on continuing acquaintance with the poem. There is also a precedent in the *Tutelar of the Place* for much the same device, of an historical sequence rather slyly introduced – without any crude one-to-one historical correspondences, but a narrative over time nonetheless. Insertions into his poems, often as he proceeds, is a hallmark of Jones’s versification. The end-references, that is, to the City and to the trenches, seem very secure, so that attribution of historical matching arises only for verses two and three. The disappearance of the Emperor, while not annulling the Good Friday reference, invites a new way of looking at Good Friday – its historical import, its displacement. To re-read, as it were, the exodus to Calvary as its history prepares us for the sorrow at the conclusion, however much we might regard the gloomy twist to this story as unwarranted.

Though other construals are not to be discarded, only this one of the story of the Christian *res* satisfies all four verses. It is a case, I think, of presenting the torn recognition-ticket, referred to in the introduction, that matches exactly the David Jones fragment to make a whole.

*L151 But the red cock and the grey
had crowed but twice
the Fisherman with the Keys
had yet a brief respite, but*

brief indeed. St. Peter, without warning or preparation, makes his appearance. He is present under the title of the best known of the petrine texts. ‘And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ (Mat.16:19) He is also a fisher by occupation, and a fisher of men by vocation. (Mat.4:19) We are to hear no more of the emperor and his hunting party; nor of the priest at the altar. It is Peter and his successive manifestations who

are now the centre of attention. The red and grey colouring of the cock eludes me unless they are the colours of the Gallica (see L172). There is a full note on the crowing of the cock. (L172)

L156 *His unwiped gladius*

well hid within the ample folds

of his closely weft, stout-fabric'd

wide paenula, stained of

wave-fret and wind-borne cloud drench. Peter is also the apostle with the sword. He conceals the sword with the blood of the high priest's servant still on it under his strong outer garment, the paenula or chasuble.

L161 *His hands wide-fisted*

hands and whole frame built to

haul and reef and steer

His steer-tree more than most

could manage. Peter is traditionally understood to have been very strong physically. More importantly, his strength and seamanship were equal to steering the barque of the Church.

L166 *Why had he still one mauler*

at the weapon's hilt-grip

(Well, after all there might be

a further chance

and who would say what turn the pattern

next might take?)

The two questions remind the reader how far the questioning mode has disappeared from Jones's work. In *In Parenthesis*, the question has to be asked: failure to do so threatened the kingdom.

You ought to ask:

Why what is this,
What's the meaning of this.
Because you don't ask,
although the spear-shaft
drips,
There's neither stading – not a roof-tree.

The *Anathemata* in large measure is a questioning epic. *The Sleeping Lord* begins and ends with question piled on question, seventy-nine no less. Questions suddenly overwhelm *The Wall*, and continue almost to the end, beginning

Do the celestial forechoosings
and the hard journeyings
come to this?

The poem itself is turned into a question, is it not? The unanswered question in Jones resists finality and obviates closure; it makes for indefinite recession. The very absence of repeated, suspended questions is a feature of *The Kensington Mass*. With very little exaggeration, one can say that *The Kensington Mass* is a poem in which questions are no longer asked. There are, as it happens, four sites in the poem with lines of interrogative form.

- 1 for what bodily act other
 would serve here? (73)
- 2 Yet, was it on one such day of tedium,
 plea & counterplea ... (103)
- 3 Why had he still one mauler
 at the weapon's hilt grip? (166)
- 4 (Well, after all there might be
 further chance

and who should say what turn the pattern
next might take?) (168)

The first of these questions is otiose, the answer so obvious it scarcely needs phrasing. The second question leaves its answer in the air, in the familiar Jones way; it is a musing, not-really-demanding-an –answer-sort-of-question, even with the embedded queries about the disputed boundary. The third question is answered by another question, and this fourth question is answered with finality: the turn the pattern next will take is the denial of Christ by the Fisherman with the Keys.

Different also from his earlier work, and impossible to ignore, is the absence of notes. Corcoran has called Jones's work a new genre, the poem-with-notes.⁵⁷ Not that poets have not from time to time added footnotes or end-notes to their poems, but Jones made them intergral to his verse. He supplied end-notes for *In Parenthesis* but found that only partly satisfactory: he wanted the reader's eye to move easily from text to notes and back again throughout the poem, as with the *Anathemata*. Reading these poems is to overhear a dialogue of two voices, but unmistakably of one person. The notes (in the manner of a work of scholarship) provide references, suggest further readings, give chapter and verse for some of his borrowings, contain miniature essays in explanation and elucidation, and occasionally recall his own presence in family, social or military settings. They are partly antiphonal in character, answering or reinforcing the verse. They also relieve the text of any need for self-reference, enabling Jones to achieve that level of objectivity and impersonality he valued so highly. In *The Sleeping Lord* volume he tried to restrict his attendant comments to suggestions about pronunciation, though he could not forbear to offer the occasional explanation. The poem-with-notes is, as Corcoran says, Jones's own genre. What we find with *The Kensington Mass* is a poem-with-notes without its notes. This makes a commentary on the poem an intimate and privileged affair, as close to the act of composition of a genius as one can get. That the poem needs a commentary of some sort is indisputable.

It is normal usage to describe a commentary such as this as *on* a poem, and I have no quarrel with normal usage. Nevertheless, in commenting on the poem, one is producing a text, in a kind of progressive prepositional narrowing, *about* a poem *on* the ceremony *of* a deed. The four-fold conceptual set, therefore, that this prepositional narrowing operates on is text-poem-ceremony-deed. Inevitably, one wonders how deeply the poem penetrates its subject-matter, and also how close and inside the poem the commentary is. These questions arise in a particularly sharp way because Jones believed, as any orthodox catholic would be expected to believe, that the mass and the crucifixion, the ceremony and the deed, are one and the same sacrifice. That the mass and the crucifixion are one and the same sacrifice is the ancient teaching of the Catholic Church, to whom Christ gave Himself in the Eucharist; the dispute between Jones's man, de la Taille, and Vincent McNabb turned on the nature of this unity.

The connection between ceremony and deed is suitably expressed by *of*; the protocols and habit of reflection on this unity belong to the venerable science of theology and are recognized and well-understood. Likewise the relationship between critical text and poem is in the more or less familiar territory of literary criticism. Because of Jones's odd practice of writing poems-with-notes and in this particular case omitting the notes, there is an added but minor complication. Be that as it may, the principles and conventions of critical theory and practice circumscribe it and prevail. And this is well-understood. The more distancing proposition *about* seems the *mot juste* here.

It is the gap between poem and ceremony, the poem *on* the ceremony, that is problematic. It is as contestable as the territory equally claimed by those entitled by a late rescript and those entitled by immemorial occupation. Not only is its boundary in dispute, but the shape-shifting space itself is opaque and undefined. The poem appears to be eucharistic, attempting a celebratory commemoration; sacramental, in that it is a sign of what is unseen; and liturgical, in that it could pass for worship of a kind. The poet had affinities with the priest. They both made 'this thing other', their significant acts were gracious and tokens of paradise, and showed forth the divine; Jones can be heard echoing Baudelaire in thinking that poetry diminished the traces of

original sin. And, of course, they were both isolated – ‘the cult-man stands alone.’ So the poem enforces kinship with ceremony. On the other hand, it is a human composition, it follows no rubrics, and it subverts its signs.

*L172 He's scarce got within the warmth the brazier's fire of coals
built by escort details pending further orders, nor had he found
any armament but cursing and denials against the barbed &
knowing questioning of door-keeping sluts
when, on the instant
the Gallic rooster
his scraggy neck stretched high
let give, without restraint
his third high determinate-cry
crowed out in harsh cacophony.*

The only mystifying reference here is to the Gallic rooster. The Third legion of the Roman Army was on duty in Palestine at the time of the crucifixion; because it recruited mainly in Gaul, it was known as the *Gallica*. Jones is imagining the legion having its own poultry, hence the Gallic rooster. He further plays with this idea, in the continuing part of *The Kensington Mass* which he withheld from publication. He also followed the tradition that it was the Xth Regiment (the Dandy Tenth) which supplied the escort detail to apprehend Jesus.

The text continues to pile up phrases of non-completion and unfulfilment – from ‘a brief respite’ and ‘unwiped gladius’ and ‘there might be a further chance and who should say what turn pattern next might take?’ to ‘He's scarce got within’ and ‘the escort pending further orders’ and ‘nor had he found’. The mood of fluidity and irresolution is maintained by participles, adjectives and verbs of the continuous present – ‘pending, cursing, knowing, questioning, doorkeeping’. Then, the Gallic rooster gives its determinate cry. On the instant, in an instant, fluidity surrenders to fixity: Peter's denial of Christ is made determinate, set for ever, harsh, unyielding, non-negotiable, loud, discordant, unmistakable, ominous. The significance and import of this episode are clear and made so with emphasis in the final verse. But two aspects are anomalous. The first is the inaccuracy of the retelling of the denial; the other is the curious bias in the presentation of Peter.

The insistence on the cock three times crowing cannot be overlooked. It is also asserted three times: the cock had as yet crowed but twice (L152), the third determinate cry(L180) and the third crow(L185). All the evangelists mention this dolorous event, but only Mark mentions how often the cock crows, namely, twice. One of the early bugle-calls of the Roman Army was known as the cock-crow call, but that cannot be meant here. The cock in question was a red and grey bird, with a scraggy neck which it stretched in order to let give its cry. There is a kind of poetic propriety about the three-fold crowing and three-fold denial, as there is of the three-fold telling of it (poetry prescribes its own etiquette) – but it is an error nevertheless. Is it important? What Jones is doing here is re-living the events of the Passion as many mystics have done during the Christian centuries, filling in the Gospel text. Jones invites comparison with the holy woman and seer, Ann Catherine Emmerich, whose book *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ* was on Jones's shelves, who re-lived those events and recounts them movingly, though in her case the correct number of crows is indicated.⁵⁸

The first puzzling feature is the retelling of the denial.

She tells of Peter and John separating when Jesus was mocked and abused; John hurried off to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who was staying 'at Martha's not far from the corner gate where Lazarus owned a beautiful house in Jerusalem.' Peter, out of love for Jesus, stayed in the judgement hall, weeping and confused. For fear of attracting attention he retired to the atrium and sat near the fire, where an ill-assorted group of people had gathered. However, though he tried to keep himself to himself, his grief drew upon him the attention of the portress, a bold and saucy woman, who accused him of being one of the Galilean's disciples. He denied it, and left the company. She writes, 'At the moment a cock somewhere outside the city crowed. I do not remember having *heard* it, but I *felt* that it was crowing outside the city.' Continuing, she describes another maidservant repeating the accusation and again Peter denied it – not arguing or explaining, but cursing and denying. He was by this time so troubled and perplexed he could not settle anywhere. 'He was weeping and so full of grief and anxiety on Jesus's account that he hardly gave his denial a thought.' Some of Jesus's disciples from the Caves of Hinnom had climbed a wall of the exterior court so as to keep abreast of what was going on. Peter warned them off

because of the danger. A.C. Emmerich writes ‘I recognized about sixteen of the first disciples among them.’ She mentions eight of them by name. Peter again returned to the inner court, and she was able to follow his movements to the entrance of the circular hall back of the tribunal. She then writes that Peter saw Jesus being dragged and abused by the vile rabble. He could not bear to watch, and being also fearful for his own safety, he returned to the atrium and sat by the fire again. Again he was confronted by his accusers, and backing away from them, was then accused by the brother of the man whose ear he had wounded. ‘Peter became like one beside himself with terror. While trying to free himself, he began in his impetuous way to curse and swear that he knew not the man, and ended by running out of the atrium into the court that surrounded the house. The cock again crowed. Just at that moment, Jesus was being led from the circular hall and across the court down into a prison under it. He turned toward Peter and cast upon him a glance of mingled pity and sadness. Forcibly and with a terrifying power, the word of Jesus fell upon his heart: “Before the cock crows twice, thou wilt deny Me thrice!” Worn out with grief and anxiety, Peter had entirely forgotten his presumptuous protestation on the Mount of Olives, rather to die with his Master than to deny Him...’ He covered his face with his mantle and ran off weeping bitterly. She concludes this part of her narrative with these compassionate words. ‘Who would presume to say that in such danger, affliction, anxiety, and perplexity, in such a struggle between love and fear, worn out with fatigue, consumed by watching, pursued by dread, half-crazed from pain of mind caused by the overwhelming sorrows of this most pitiful night, with a temperament at once so childlike and so ardent, he would have been stronger than Peter?’

The second puzzling feature of this verse is that it is Peter’s denial alone that is to hold our attention; not only is it presented without Ann Catherine Emmerich’s kindly reference to the extenuating circumstances, but with complete disregard for Peter’s deep and constructive remorse, his subsequent ministry and his own crucifixion. That it was a betrayal is not in doubt: placed along a scale of treacherous wrongdoing, at one end of which is passing information to the enemy, or even going over to the enemy, and at the other, biting the hand that feeds one or disparaging one’s own leader, then Peter’s refusal to be linked with Jesus was not perhaps an ultimate or extreme act of betrayal (like that of Judas). But it *was* a betrayal, part of the redemptive story, and part now of the celebration of that story, and moreover, it still

stings the conscience of believers, who know their own guilt in this regard as well as Peter's. It may be that Peter more than the other disciples was committed to Christ's revolutionary nationalism and most set back by His capture and humiliation. Before considering the ethos of treachery that invades the final verses of *The Kensington Mass*, it will be useful to show the contrast between Emmerich's Peter and Jones's Peter in a table of differences, and keep in mind the received idea of Peter in the Catholic tradition.

Peter in denial

Emmerich's Peter

Jones's Peter

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. He was so distraught and perplexed he did not know what he was doing.</p> | <p>He was belligerent and uncomprehending.</p> |
| <p>2. The bold and saucy portress opens the attack.</p> | <p>In <i>The Kensington Mass</i>, it is doorkeeping sluts with their barbed and knowing questioning. In <i>The Book of Balaam's Ass</i>, Jones invokes 'the key-man, the sword-bearer, because he lied to a nosey girl and warmed his hands at a corporal's brazier'.</p> |
| <p>3. There are two cock-crows.</p> | <p>There are three cock-crows.</p> |
| <p>4. The first cock-crow appeared to be outside the city, and Peter was then unaware of Christ's words.</p> | <p>It is unclear from the text if Peter heard the first two cock-crows.</p> |
| <p>5. The second and final cock-crow coincided with Christ being led away to the underground prison and he glances with sadness at Peter, who then recalls His words.</p> | <p>If Peter is supposed to recognize the 'third' cock-crow for what it was (having heard the first two and hence be reminded of Christ's words), then the disavowal of his affiliation to Christ was deliberate and obdurate.</p> |
| <p>6. Peter's grief and distress is continuous throughout this episode.</p> | <p>There is no indication in the text of Peter's grief, nor any mention of Peter's response to the cock-crow.</p> |
| <p>7. There is no suggestion of Peter being armed.</p> | <p>Peter is still carrying a sword ('his unwiped gladius') under his mantle, with his hand on the hilt, against emergencies. In <i>The Agent</i>, which leaves off before Gethsemane, he has two swords hidden under his mantle.</p> |
| <p>8. The mood is affecting and compassionate.</p> | <p>It is combative and unforgiving.</p> |

These fractious and ill-tempered lines about sluts and the harsh scraggy cock bird introduce what cannot be altered. What cannot, in fact, be altered is betrayal. Jones was attached to a painting he had done in the early 1920s and kept it in his room till he died. Shiel & Miles reproduce a sketch for it accompanied by some pertinent comments.⁵⁹ It was a painting of Christ betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, entitled *The Betrayal*. It depicts Peter with his unwiped gladius, the wounded Malchus cowering, Judas fingering Christ and a section of soldiers on the point of arresting Him. The betrayal of Christ by Judas and denial by Peter were long-standing preoccupations of Jones.

On the whole, there is little of psychological interest in Jones's work. Two characters who *do* show some depth and complexity are Judas in *The Agent* and the tribune in *The Tribune's Visitation*, both letting their side down. The title, *The Agent*, has such a very universal ring to it. The tribune's disloyalty to the Empire is compounded with his ugly parody of the mass. In the preface to *In Parenthesis*, Jones writes 'We are shy when pious men write AMDG on their notepaper – however, in the Welsh Codes of Court Procedure the Bard of the Household is instructed to sing to the Queen when she goes to her Chamber to rest. He is instructed to sing first to her a song in honour of God. He must then sing the song of the Battle of Camlann – the song of treachery and the undoing of all things; and afterward he must sing any song she may choose to hear. I have tried, to so make this writing for anyone who would care to play Welsh Queen.' (IP, XIII) The bard's second song must be about treachery, as close to the place of honour as possible.

Do we not also read in *From the Book of Balaam's Ass* of Lucifer 'the most beautifullest of men laughing like anything'? (SL, 105)

Lancelot is the character from the Arthurian tales who seemed to capture Jones's imagination more than any other.⁶⁰ What defines Lancelot among his companion knights is his adultery. His desire is to participate in the sacred mysteries, intensely conveyed in *Caillech*, pleading only for one microscopic fraction of this world's time, to aid the venerable man, not asking for any amelioration of what is due to him [for

the betrayal of his king], asking indeed only for a stay of sentence, and in that wretched state unable to extend his charity to the bastard Mordred; burdened by his own and other men's treacheries...

What is indubitably a constant in Jones's mind is the betrayal which inaugurated the passion; it was a betrayal which initiated, like a second *felix culpa*, the Redemption. Martin D'Arcy expresses this well, acknowledging his debt to Père de la Taille, when he writes of the cry of Christ in the Garden, ' "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" – a cry as of a Victim dedicated, no longer free to choose, but bound by an oblation self-made to death. It is as though the Passion had begun, and the choice inevitably made, and the execution about to begin. And this change all four Gospels attest, for they fix on one incident – that of the betrayal, the departure of Judas – as the beginning of the Passion which they are about to narrate. And with unerring instinct, it is the same incident which the Church has fastened on in her liturgy, for, as we know, in the drama of Holy Week the prologue of the tragedy is the treachery of Judas.'⁶¹

The Old Contemptibles groused and grumbled, avoided heroics, made do as best they could, and Jones was no exception. But there is in his verse, here and there, the sound of betrayed men. Corcoran has written of this 'spilled bitterness'.⁶² It was directed towards the staff, and headquarters. Furthermore, in *From The Book of Balaam's Ass* the deeply wounded cry can be heard, reproaching God for abandoning His creatures.

And what of

His sure mercies that He swore in the ancient days – where is
His tempering for our bare back and sides – where is provided
the escape on that open plain? (SL,104)

With Peter's denial, betrayal and the determinate are introduced together. The tone is irredeemably harsh. It is more than the truism that what is done is done and cannot be undone; rather, here is an event that is to give, indelibly, a dolorous configuration to history.

In the introduction to his translation of the *Song of Roland*, Frederick Goldin has this to say about Ganelon. 'Ganelon is ... the arch-traitor, for through him the system betrays itself. Ganelon plays an essential role in this system: he is its traitor. He brings to pass the unsuspected consequences of its fundamental laws, endows it with a shadow. For his presence is as necessary as the shadow cast by a body: if a body exists, its shadow necessarily exists; without the shadow there can be no body. Without the traitor ... there can be no system... Ganelon is the destructive element of every secular structure, the indwelling of its instability. In him we recognize the traitorous possibility of every institution. Custom can betray, because it can preserve and reinforce an evil. The law can betray because it can show the criminal how to commit a crime and be acquitted. Even loyalty can betray, because the object of one's loyalty may obscure higher values. Ganelon keeps faith with his family and his ethical code and just for that reason cannot see the supreme good of the Emperor's mission or the rights of the community sworn to fulfilling it. Praise of one's comrades, the longing for peace, piety itself can betray.... For a new state is brought into being by the treason of Ganelon, which appears as a shadow-act of the great treason that inaugurated the salvation of the human race, and by the trial in which he is condemned.'

Goldin is here presenting a systematic theory of treachery in human affairs, and there is nothing similar in Jones. However, for his part, he had a serious and careful theory of aesthetics. Human beings were essentially sign-making animals, makers of things by nature. The virtue of making, *Ars*, guided this activity, and 'Ars is inalienable from Man and Man from Ars.' *Ars* has its own domain distinct from *Prudentia*, which guides the person in faith and morals. In the preface to the *Anathemata* he restricts the poets' task 'to lift up valid signs'; will, intention and *Prudentia* are the matter in hand for the moral agent and the moralist. He even adopted a periodization of history governed by the distinction, aesthetic in character, between what was made for its own sake and what was made for a use. From time to time Jones seems to extend the responsibilities of the tutelary goddess of making, Helen, to doing. One aspect of the unhappiness of the final verses of *The Kensington Mass* is the failure of the beautiful to command action. Betrayal colonizes this ethical and aesthetic void. But not at all in the way Goldin proposes.

For Goldin: betrayal + necessity = progress.

For Jones: betrayal + necessity = sorrow.

L182 *Down the meander and crooked labyrinth of time and maze of
history, or historia intermeddled with potent and light-giving,
life-giving, cult-making mythos
we hear as yet that third crow
dawn crow of dolour
as clear as we hear*

the echoing blast

The sound that comes to us from the past, from history and myth, is the sound of betrayal: from the treacherous doings of people or from narratives and worship like the bible and liturgy, we hear the third cockcrow and its echoes. It is a fact of history. The *mythos* here probably has quite a wide connotation; it certainly refers to the mass, the subject of the poem. Jones saw no conflict between *logos* and *mythos*; quite the opposite. The sadness, betrayal, and necessity intermeddled with life-giving cultic practice assemble those elements which occasion the dismal outcome of the loss of an ancient and sacred liturgy. To understand Jones's grief we must turn to what appears to be his principal preoccupation at the time of his composition of *The Kensington Mass*.

From the time of the Second Vatican Council, certainly from the time of the introduction of the New Rite in 1970, Jones was distressed by the destruction of the traditional liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. We will attend to his arguments against the innovations of that time, but first make sure of his attitude of mind. It is clear from recorded conversations and letters to friends and journals how grievously the changes affected him. John Montague has reconstructed conversations that he had with Jones from 1969 to 1974, and done them into verse. One of these poems "Lord of the Animals" has these lines, with Jones, of course, speaking. 64

Look what they've done
to the Latin Mass.
Those damned clerics
don't care for the liturgy,
and when I complain
they shrug black shoulders.
'You're just a Cockney,
not a real Roman!

(David echoes Paul.)

They thought I was barmy,
but what did I con-
vert for, except the Mass?
We need solemnity,
dignity for the sacrifice.
Christ offered himself,
then dies on the tree:
the sign and the victim,
visceral and mystical
*(the lamb of God
caught in the barbed wire
in front-line trenches).*
It's all about suffering!

Meeting Siegfried Sassoon by chance at a garden party in July 1964, Jones was altogether baffled by Sassoon's lack of interest in the changes already being mooted or introduced. René Hague felt the loss deeply and temporarily turned his back on the Church.

Two good friends of Jones, Peter Orr and William Blissett, both Anglicans, have written memoirs of Jones's anger. They tell of his barrack-room language directed at the Roman Catholic hierarchy. "They've bugged up the liturgy" and "those sods in the curia ought to be hurled from the Tarpeian Rock!" He was easily and predictably distressed when the conversation turned to the state of the liturgy.

Excerpts from two letters of 1964 to Stuart Pigott express his position more temperately.⁶⁵ "Talking about classical dons, heritages etc., overleaf, I am uneasy in my mind over the pressure for vernacularization of the liturgy in the Roman Church. In a sense those who are most anxious for this are using the same argument (in reverse) as the Classical chaps did for the retention of Latin, that is to say they argue from a utile and practical point of view that English is now a necessity – they argue this for most sincere and pastoral and evangelistic reasons, - but it can be seen as a kind of religious utilitarianism, - with a piety going hand in hand with a lack of pietas

toward a heritage saturated with sacral evocations. I know virtually no Latin, but the Latin tongue is so intricately woven with the origins of the Western Xtian religion-culture that being cut off from it fills me with a sense of deprivation. Even though, in my own personal case, I am not far removed from the boy in Chaucer who could not expound properly the antiphon *Alma Redemptoris Mater quae per via coeli* etc. but said “I lerne song, I can but smal grammere”.

The following excerpt was from a letter a month later, in November. ‘Yes, the liturgical changes in the Roman Communion as applied to this country have an analogy to what you say in your letter of the Anglican Communion, but they involve something worse, if they proceed further, that is the erosion and eventual loss of the priceless heritage of the Western Latin rite – with all that means. It will have effects outside the Roman Communion, and sacral cultural effects for those of no communion. There is indeed much that requires “reform” on various grounds in the Roman Church and I am not attacking the Council for many of its admirable proposals or decrees, but to jettison or gravely endanger the Western Latin Liturgy appears to me a terrible loss, with no comparable compensating gain – certainly not in this island. The intention, having the situation in the whole world in view, is no doubt genuinely apostolic and indicative of pastoral care, but the means chosen is another matter, the permissive employment of the vernacular when necessary is quite a different thing from an imposed loss of the Western liturgical heritage.’

The concerns that preoccupied Jones in the years surrounding the composition of *The Kensington Mass* were not private. They were occasioned by the ecclesial revisions and innovations of that time. He responded to many of them with regretful letters to the press and outraged outbursts to his friends. He was remarkably prescient about the harmful paths down which the Western Church was leading the faithful. *The Kensington Mass* is an oblique narrative of the spoiling of a tradition. Some of the milestones on this public journey may be set out as follows.

1947 *Mediator Dei*. Preceded by the encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*(1943) which is to be read together with *Mediator Dei*, Christ is affirmed as the centre of the liturgy – the *mediator dei*. ‘He wills the worship which He has inaugurated and which He has offered throughout His life on earth to be

continued without ceasing.’ The Church has the same office as the Incarnate Word. The promise that ‘When two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them’ is fulfilled in a eucharistic context. The relation between *lex orandi, lex credendi* is interestingly reversed: ‘Indeed if we wanted to state quite clearly and absolutely the relation existing between the faith and the sacred liturgy we could rightly say that “the law of our faith must establish the law of our prayer”.’ The term *sacra synaxis* is restricted to the reception of Holy Communion and not extended to the sacrifice of the mass.

- 1955** The decree *Maxima Redemptionis* authorized reforms to the Holy Week Ceremonies.
- 1956** Eclipse of a Hymn. Writing two years later to *The Tablet* (E.&A. 260-1) Jones laments the loss of *Vexilla Regis* from the Good Friday liturgy. He writes: ‘His [that is, Venantius Fortunatus] concept of the advancing *vexilla*, which provides not only a concrete poetic image but the poem’s initial thrust, is even more poignant when we recall that actual *vexilla* Fortunatus saw with his physical eyes were standards, imitative of a past imperium, but in fact now carried before petty Merovingian dynasts at fratricidal wars of loot. Such was the sordid violence from which the poet gave the Liturgy this enduring image of banners. It is the sort of thing that poets are for; to redeem is part of their job.’ And further, ‘the chant [of the hymn] seems, somehow, to trumpet the equal tread of a bright war-band moving in column, carrying the “Spoil of spoils”...’
- 1960** Rubrics relating to the Calendar are revised, and minor changes to mass propers are made. The *confiteor* before the communion is dropped.
- 1963** The Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy promulgated, followed by the interpretation of the *Consilium* in 1964. The papal master of ceremonies, Pietro Marini, compared the changes put into effect by the *Consilium*, with the changes of John Burckard in 1570 in these words: ‘Certainly the rite of 1965 reproduced the letter of the text of John Burckard, which had been the base

upon which the liturgical commission established by Pius V had elaborated the *Ritus servandus*. But in spirit, the *Ritus servandus* of 1570 could no longer be found in that of 1965.’ Participation of the laity in the liturgy was a feature of the encyclical. True participation is to come from a profound interior identification of the worshipper with Christ in his dual role as priest and victim. A narrower concept of participation, more external in character, became the guiding principle for wholesale vernacularization and the disappearance of traditional practices.

1968 Jones had a copy among his books of the report at the AGM of the Latin Mass Society (founded in 1965) which included an address by the Right Reverend Gerard Tickle, who concluded it with these words: ‘I am convinced that, in time, Latin will regain its important place in the liturgy, especially if you continue with your efforts. If you give up these efforts, then I think there may be a real danger of people taking the line of least resistance and being content with the existing situation. That is why, too, I say to you that you should not be discouraged if the results of your work are not immediate. We are still in a state of flux over the liturgy, but time will bring a greater balance, and then you will come into your own. You have my prayers and my blessing on your work, and I am confident of your success.’

The Latin Mass Society has no record of Jones’s membership.

1970 The new missal of Pope Paul VI published.

1971 Appeal to the Pope. In 1971 Professor Alfred Marnau and friends in The Latin Mass Society prepared an appeal to the Pope to allow the celebration of mass in the old rite on special occasions. Fifty-nine eminent people signed the appeal, principally on the grounds of cultural loss if the old rite were to disappear. David Jones was a signatory. The names were arranged alphabetically, from Harold Acton to R.C. Zaehner. Next to Jones were Rupert Hart-Davis, Barbara Hepworth, Auberon Herbert, John Jolliffe and Osbert Lancaster, F.R. Leavis, Cecil Day Lewis and Compton Mackenzie. The appeal was successful, and exemption from the prohibition of the traditional celebration was granted. The privilege was known as the Agatha



Christie Indult, as Pope Paul was supposed to have recognized only her name on the list of signatories.

1984 Limited permission granted by the Holy See for the use of traditional forms of worship.

1988 The Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Dei*, given *motu proprio*, by John Paul II. Section 5, second paragraph reads: ‘To all those Catholic faithful who feel attached to some previous liturgical and disciplinary forms of the Latin tradition I wish to manifest my will to facilitate their ecclesial communion by means of the necessary measures to guarantee respect for their rightful aspirations. In this matter I ask for the support of the bishops and of all those engaged in the pastoral ministry in the Church.’ The commission *Ecclesia Dei* was set up (section 6, C) to ensure that ‘respect must everywhere be shown for the feelings of all those who are attached to the Latin liturgical tradition by a wide and generous application of the directives already issued some time ago by the Apostolic See, for the use of the Roman Missal according to the typical edition of 1962.’

1994 *Centre International des Etudes Liturgiques* was founded by lay French Catholics to foster the understanding of the traditional liturgy of the Roman Church, that is, the liturgical forms used in the Roman Church until 1969.⁶⁶ This is in conformity with the decree *Ecclesia Dei* of 1988

I have chosen as the source for Jones’s position on the changes in the liturgy letters he wrote in numerous drafts in the 1960s, which can be found in manuscripts deposited in the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth. They are contributions to on-going correspondence in the columns of the Tablet. For his own reasons he refrained from submitting them to the Editor. One letter rewritten with revisions and additions fourteen times was intended to reach The Tablet on the 11th December 1964, the feast of St. Damasus and anniversary of the death of Llewellyn ap Griffith. The themes that emerge touching the matter of liturgical change were (a) the consequences of vernacularization; (b) the ways religious belief and sentiment were

represented in the liturgy; (c) its cultural matrix and continuities; (d) its beauty; (e) the distance between clerical and lay, and also the affinities; (f) the capital question of *pietas*; (g) the canonical status of the changes; and (h) their cultural and historical correspondences. Concerning other essays, René Hague wisely reminds the reader in a footnote to *Dai Greatcoat*, 'The mention of Epoch and Artist is a confirmation, incidentally, of the view that David's essays are more artefact than argument.' The summary of Jones's thoughts on the liturgical revolution will be taken from these unpublished and sometimes incomplete drafts, unless stated to the contrary. So they are not only artefacts, but, it must be remembered, discarded artefacts.

(a) The latinity of the Christian tradition in these islands was of the first importance. Whereas in Mediterranean lands, Greek was the language of the Christian Church, until the 5th or 6th century, Christianity was carried into Wales by the XXth legion; thence across the Irish sea to Kildare, to Armagh, Iona and returned to the Mainland of Britain by Aidan and Oswald. Roman Christianity was established in Britain among the Celts before the departure of the legions and before Augustine landed in Jutish Kent. Greek may have been employed for the central *mysterium* and the *Kyrie* was a very old feature of the traditional rite, but Latin was the uniform language of the cult-mysteries. 'So that whether our affinities are with the race of Illtud or with that of Cuthbert or with the wolves of the sea who heard the monks chanting in Ely Fen our Christian origins are equally intricately with the tongue of the Latin West. That is an historical accident, yes. Were we of the Aegean Islands, it would not be so, but we chance to be of the Britannic Islands. It is but natural that we should have a special sentiment concerning the things of our origin.' The vernacular is not a simple notion. It is both mother-tongue, the language of birth and upbringing, and what pertains to one's native land. The crudeness of its imposition distressed him, viz, that English rather than Welsh was taken to be the vernacular alternative to Latin in Wales. 'One fully appreciates the difficulties inherent in the situation but the mother-tongue of the Cymry is Cymraeg, just as the sacral mother of Holy Church in the West is Latin. It has been evident for a very long time that the Welsh language is struggling for survival, it is now, with great suddenness, quite evident that the language of

the Western liturgy (and all which that entails) is in a like case. It chanced that in this island these two were nurtured together and it may be that History will record that “in death they were not divided”. We have not come to those “mountains of Gilboa” but it is clear there are some who feel no compunction, who have no inclination to join in the recorded lament for that which “is vilely cast away... as though not anointed with oil.” (Other drafts have ‘mother-tongue’ rather than ‘mother’: there will be a comment about that at the end of this note.)

- (b) Jones made much of the vestments of the celebrant. There is a religious truth seeking expression in the history of vestments and what they bring to the mind of the worshipper. The effectual visual recalling that matters is of the lighted room and to a lesser extent of the early centuries of eucharistic celebration. The central mystery of the eucharist is that what was present once is present again, and this representing is a real presence. To the educated eye and mind the priest’s clothing, in itself of no consequence and little interest, reinforces that mystery. ‘Today we call them “Mass Vestments” and with very reason for they have become the specific visual signs of the sacrificing priests of the order of Melchisedec (which is why these were regarded with such detestation by those who did not believe the Eucharist to be a propitiatory sacrifice.) Yet what are they but the ordinary clothes of citizens of either sex in Mediterranean Antiquity?’

‘A senatorial decree of the second half of the 4th Century insisted that all senators should wear the tunica (dalmatic) and the paenula (chasuble) in the senate house. It was owing purely to their retention by the Church that these secular garments of civilized man were conserved and only very, very gradually assumed a special significance and an ecclesial character. Indeed, during the early Papacy, if I remember aright, instances can be cited indicative of disapproval of the wearing by the celebrating priest of a *paenula* other than the one he ordinarily wore along with other citizens on formal occasions. But as the world slipped more and more into chaos these garments of *romanitas* were retained as the marks of Christ’s ministers, so that Padraig, the Briton who became the Apostle of Ireland could say that to be of the *plebs Christi*

was to be of the *plebs Romanus*. Hence for us today the celebrant's chasuble and the laticlaved tunics of deacon and sub-deacon and the alb of all three are an effectual visual recalling of the world of our Christian origins, garments saturated for us now with centuries and centuries of sacred association, affording unbroken liaison back beyond the recent centuries across the rise and fall of the medieval culture, beyond the chaotic but immensely fertile preceding ages, back to the late Empire and back yet again to the lighted and garnished supper-room where was first obliterated that which is offered at our lighted altars, that which was immolated on that other altar, *sine luminaribus*, without the city wall.'

(c) The latinity of the ethos of the old rite preserves and acknowledges the cultural matrix of the early Church, its emergence from pagan society. 'The cultus of the Son of Mary among the Celts of the Atlantic seaboard had come to them direct from the Church in Roman Britain and Gaul. It had been bequeathed them by the baptized empire in Greek and Latin forms; forms already weighty with the sacral, and now, by that februation and lustration the specific and chosen vehicle, indelibly marked with the sign, Tau.

'The Argo was now the Galilian Barque and made just like Odysseus to the yarded mast was the Incarnate Word, and the "crib-born" Dionysius was now the Babe, the Pantocrator, *per quem omnia*, crib-born in Aramean Ephrate, "least among thousands in Juda."'

'The line in the *Dies Irae* that reads "*Teste David cum Sibylla*" is not to be dismissed any more than is that medieval institution (that sometimes is more true than accurate scholarship), which related Vergil's Fourth Eclogue to the birth in time of he who was begotten *ante omnia saecula*.'

There are countless history-paths to traverse that can take us back to the lighted room. It is 'the unbroken liaison' that is threatened and upset when these forms and 'depths of attachment' are disturbed.

The richness of association and constancy of practice, the certainty of its liaison with the lighted upper room, fore-ordained to a home in time, its presence at the crossing of every history path, made all initiatives of reform and renewal, by either vandals of enlightenment or missionary pastors, fraught with risk. And there was, besides, its beauty.

(d) ‘While no sound in this world, known to my limited experience, can approach the serene, tender but numinous splendour of the Roman Chant which makes even Bach seem vulgar, yet there is a feeling of numinous religion in some of this native Welsh hymnology (as there is in some Negro Spirituals) exceeding anything England has to offer for all the artistry of the Post-Reformation liturgy. One would have to go back to the Anglo-Saxon *Dream of the Rood* to get the thing I mean. Or Wyclif’s “and sudeynli there was made with the aungel a multitude of hevenli knighthood” which makes even the Authorized Version pretty smoothed out and donnish.’” He writes in another draft of the same letter, ‘the serene, tender, flexible, gay-grave, numinous splendour of the Roman Chant,’ but there is a ‘northern vernacular expression worthy of the Mediterranean event of which it makes *anamnesis* in its own heroic form.’ And then goes on to cite Wyclif’s exact translation of Luke 2, 3, quoted above. By comparison with this chant, he writes in another draft ‘the music of the greatest masters seems earthbound’. ‘The Latin and Greek and the Chant are *aural signa* equally surcharged with centuries upon centuries of numinous religion.’

It is beauty as aesthetic significance as well as – indeed more than – qualities of sound and image. There is a unity of all made things on a scale of degrees or Jacob’s ladder from Earth to Heaven, on the highest rung of which is the mass. The beauty of this high thing was in jeopardy from a break in tradition: for pastoral reasons, he reluctantly conceded; wantonly, so it seemed, in his darker moods. The integrity of the mass and liturgy is impaired, if the priestly work is compromised; its harmony and order, if the courtesy of the exchange of gifts is dishonoured; and the radiance of the mass is dimmed if the memory of its origin, its numinous splendour of form, and its transcendence are carelessly diminished. The feminine was intricately with these things. For

Jones, the most beautiful made thing in the world was the mass of the old rite; the most beautiful created thing in the world – more so even than Welsh hills and ponies and rivers – was woman. Creature and artefact, woman and the mass were, in the keenest sense, dying like Welshness, and in death they were not divided.

(e) The liturgical changes altered distance in harmful ways: between priest and people, in language and in metaphysical scope. They fostered a tendency opposite to the ‘defamiliarizing’ character that Catherine Pickstock recognizes and approves in the old rite.⁶⁷ Antipathy towards the sacerdotal character was to be softened by the realignment of priest and flock towards low church minister and his congregation. What was not shared between clergy and laity was to be eliminated. The cult-man in ‘the railed tumulus’ of the sanctuary was no more. The lutheran presbyteral chair was introduced, the mystique of the altar faded. The laicization of the priesthood gained ground.

The language apt for the heavenly bread was demystified, stripped down to essentials, a kind of utilitarianism was accepted as a norm, the *poiesis* of a *praxis* discounted. There is a general principle. ‘Touch the *nomen* and destroy the *gens*, for names have power to activate or make impotent, collectively, as privately – we all know that – we understand the matter when we suffer it..... all his derivative nomenclature must know the blight and shadow of alteration..... strike at the word and suffer the metamorphosis *in carne*.’ (RQ170)

The fallen world and the mass are polar opposites. Without the apperception of The Fall and damaged human nature, inimical to the liberal mind, the perfected form of the mass goes unnoticed, its salvific scope curtailed. A dimension of being is lopped off.

Jones’s opinion of the elevated status of the artist requires no more emphasis, save only to remind the reader that this calling was noble in virtue of its participation in the divine life: in this way it enjoyed fellowship with the vocation of the priest. They were both makers. They recalled, in ritual or in

artefacts, the significant past. They both cultivated the light-giving, life-giving, cult-making mythos. They equally guarded the collective memory, keeping the channels of communication open, equally neglected or disparaged in the modern age. No mutual encroachment of function followed. 'To-day we live in a world where the symbolic life is eliminated – the technician is master – whether we like it or not and whatever our nostalgia. That we are powerless to alter. The priest and the "artist" are already in the catacombs – but separate catacombs; for the technician divides to rule.' The poet was keenly sensitive to the wilful act of self-inflicted impoverishment, that it was kin to his own condition. They both practised their redemptive *disciplina*, erasing traces of original sin, redeeming the sordid violence – part of the job of each.

(f) *Pietas* is essential to his sensibility, and to his argument. He writes 'As a very peripheral sort of Christian, whose certainties are few and at best fragmentary I find it unexpected, unnatural and deeply dispiriting that men whether cleric or laic of evident conviction, whose whole lives are dedicated to the service of the Church in this island, men of apostolic zeal and piety should appear so strangely wanting in *pietas* towards a heritage which is ours by natural inheritance and is saturated with the sacral.' This strange deficiency of natural feeling is stated again in different words: '...it would appear that some "bothe maistres and doctours that han cure under christe and crounyng in tokne", men of great zeal and apostolic intention and of supernatural piety, are, owing to what seems to be a kind of religious utilitarianism, curiously indifferent to what might perhaps be described as ordinary natural *pietas* toward an inheritance.' He continues 'I don't know, because my acquaintance with other lands of the West is extremely limited, but I have a suspicion that we of this island may have a special feeling touching the tongue of [the] West, for our origins as Xtians are intricated in a special way with that tongue, and it is a poor sort of person who has no *pietas* toward the things of his origin the things that are his by inheritance – by adoption and grace if you like – but without which he would be quite other than he is.' He situates himself in the public argument as a conservative. 'Since the first exchanges many months ago indicated differences of opinion

involving the liturgy of the Latin West there has been a tendency to speak of “progressives” and “conservatives” and in those first range-finding rounds developed into a general duel on [a] wide front and batteries of every conceivable calibre opened up from the most unexpected and hitherto well-camouflaged gunpits, and although it became more and more difficult to know whether a particular shell-burst was “ours” or “theirs”, the fiction of “progressives” and “conservatives” occupying two clearly defined trench lines has become accepted as a fact, and is now used a matter of course.

‘Any expression of regret for the passing into oblivion of inherited forms, any reservations as to the necessity of this or that change, any suggestion that it might be as well to recognise the casualties for what they are and still more for what they are likely to be, is automicially (sic) regarded as indicating a want of perception of and an indifference to the needs of the epoch of crisis in which we live.’

‘All such expressed feelings, whether they concern the discontinuance of some minor but moving, gracious and evocative act (e.g. the saying of the “Last Gospel” at the termination of mass) or some drastic change of unforeseeable consequence (e.g. the intention of abandoning, by stages, the use of the liturgical mother tongue of the Western Church), are, without regard for distinctions of motive or reason, labelled “conservative”. In itself a most honourable label, but used in this context to denote all that is obscurantist and impeding.... Who have yet to be convinced of the arguments put forward regarding the need of the vernacularization of the mass in this island, and who (apart from the alleged need), not only doubt the long term wisdom of such a decision, but see it an altogether [illegible word] lack of natural *pietas* toward an inheritance that is not only of indescribable worth, but which is intricated with our Christian origins at every point.’ He defends this position from obvious objections, and explicates the notion of *pietas* on which his argument leans so heavily. ‘By want of *pietas* I do not here mean lack of pious intention, of religious, spiritual and evangelical zeal. On the contrary, it is evident that those virtues are shown forth by many who, to all appearances, seem to lack the particular *pietas* of which I am thinking.. Indeed,

paradoxically enough, those very virtues seem in some strange way to be congruent with that lack and in some cases to occasion it. And, to add to one's disease one can see how this might well be. Implicitly and sometimes very explicitly one is given to understand that this *pietas* of which I speak is no more than a hankering for a past that serves no purpose but is a hindrance rather to the Church's essential work in the "century of the common man".

The argument runs from the perceptible fact of a want of natural feeling for the things of one's past, especially one's mother tongue; that those who lack this natural feeling are poor sorts of person; that to take the opposing view is conservative, but not in a pejorative way; and then, more interestingly, though the reformers have pastoral enthusiasm and a zeal for souls, they so often lack *pietas* – indeed the two conditions sometimes seem in direct inverse relation. The justification for the changes, that they will save more souls, is likely to be unfounded.

The kiss on which so much of *The Kensington Mass* turns is one of unmistakable *gravitas* and *pietas*, a farewell kiss of familial and patriotic feeling.

(g) The authoritative status and force of the directives to alter the liturgy and to exchange one vernacular (the mother tongue of the Church) for another (a current language of everyday life) were a puzzle and needless distress for Jones and others. The crucial distinction between something permissive and something commanded had not been made plain, and they could have been spared a very great deal of painful argument, and could also have been spared the hasty action to implement the permissive thing as though it were an imperative command. He clutches at what now seems a straw. "The present Bishop of Rome... visited the Abbey, newly risen from her destruction in World War II, at Monte Cassino. From his words on that occasion it is evident that he, the Patriarch of the West, intended there to be no jettisoning of the liturgical heritage of that Patriarchate. His gesture in naming Benedict as the tutelary of the European lands should underline his intentions not merely to

members of one order of religious, but for all of us of those lands and that Patriarchate.'

At a less exalted level he rebukes the Benedictines of Oxford for their blasé dismissal of traditional misgivings. He writes 'A few weeks back a group of Oxford Benedictine monastics stated that they had read with amusement a report that a number of persons described as "European intellectuals" had sent a message direct to the Patriarch of the West expressing their hope that whatever might issue from the many changes now being implemented at least one part of the unique heritage of the West, that is the Western liturgy would be conserved and safeguarded. The Oxford Benedictine signatories of a letter objecting to this action said that it was surely for them and others of their Rule who lived daily the life of that liturgy to best judge its merits and make any suggestions to the Supreme Pontiff with regard to it. No one of sense and sensibility (and these twain are one), is likely to be other than hesitant in reminding the cobbler that there's nothing like leather. The advice, said to have been given by the Greek painter Apelles, to the shoe-maker to stick to his last, is, in general, sound advice. Most certainly one would have expected the Monks of the West to show a special sensitivity touching this particular heritage of the West, seeing that it was largely on monastic lasts that this sacral thing was fashioned and from the *splendor formarum* of which there shines out a beauty beyond compare and for which there is no surrogate. Even when done without much accomplishment indeed even when done very badly something of the numinous quality comes through, for it is indestructible. There is inherent in the *cantus planus*, something which is so congruent with the words and manual acts of the Mass and offices that we have a seamless garment where form and content are 'so wove from the top throughout', so indivisible that we do not ask which is which. That oneness of content and form is, of course, the mark of all the multifarious works of man in so far as they are works which are other than purely utile, and as the entire edifice of our liturgy, indeed of our whole Xtian cult, stands or falls on the presupposition that man is inescapably a creature of extra-utile acts a creature of effectual *signa*, or sacraments, it follows that the liturgy is an art-work. As I said elsewhere: "No artefacture no Christian religion", that was made certain

for all time, at the lighted board in the Upper Room. As a French theologian earlier in this century put it: "He placed Himself in the order of signs." The matter has never been better stated, but it is clear from much that is being said to-day, that the implications of that statement are not understood."

- (h) Finally, to turn to two correspondences that make clear the depth of Jones's feelings for the liturgical changes and help explain why they should have issued in a poem whose obliquity would conceal his passionate distress.

He felt the liturgical changes with all the grievous passion of an oppressed people, of his father's patria. The story of this change mirrored that of the obliteration of Welsh culture and its language from Tudor times, from the so-called Act of Union of 1536. The memory of that catastrophe was revived by the loss of his loved religious practice.

Furthermore the separation of child from mother was painfully re-enacted. The slip of describing Latin as the Mother of the Church merely calls attention to something abundantly clear and disturbing. The loss of the liturgy was painful and intimate, a taking away of something of which he was made. It is difficult to state too strongly the bereavement the loss of the liturgy caused him. It was like the unmaking of a hunted creature.

L189 *from Roncesvalles* The tale of *The Song of Roland* celebrates the heroic death of a vassal of the Emperor implicated in his defence of Christendom in Spain.⁶⁸ The army of Charlemagne had fought and plundered there for seven years, having initially been called to defend the Christian enclave of Pamplona. Having taken every town they had attacked except Saragossa, they were now returning to Aquitania across the Pyrenees. The rearguard was ambushed in the pass at Roncesvalles, on August 15th 778. The tale also records the subsequent defeat of the Saracens, and the trial and execution of the traitor whose treachery had led the rearguard of the army to be massacred. The battle was recorded in the revised Annals of the Kings of the Franks twenty years later, in which account three of the leaders killed there were named, including Roland, Lord of the Breton Marches. A fuller account of the battle was given by Einhard in his *Life of Charlemagne*, written sometime before 836, Charlemagne having died in 815. After 840 a third and fuller reference is made to the

battle by a writer known as the Limousin Astronomer. In the eleventh century the *chanson de geste* was composed, possibly by Taillefer. There is a tradition that he recited it at Mont-St-Michel in 1057 before Duke William of Normandy and Harold the English king.

Hilaire Belloc tells the story of the ambush in a vivid miniature.⁶⁹ He ends it this way. ‘They say that not one man escaped from the slaughter of Roncesvalles to the main army, and to Charlemagne and to the Larger Land. But this cannot be so, for from that dreadful place there went forth at least such men as could tell the story and make it greater, until there rose from it, like incense from a little pot, an immortal legend which is the noblest of our Christian songs. Therein you may read the golden story of Roland – how he blew the horn that was heard from Saragossa to Toulouse, and how he challenged God, holding up his glove when he died, and how the angel took him to the hill of God and the city of Paradise, dead. And as the angel so bore him Roland’s head lay back upon the angel’s arm, like the head of a man in sleep.’

René Hague translated and printed the story which Jones reviewed in *The Tablet* of the twenty-fourth of December 1938 under the title “*The Roland Epic and Ourselves*.” He calls it a noble work, convincingly rendered into English. He writes ‘here it is [in *The Song of Roland*] “the good vassal” together with the Amis and Amiloun association, that we are asked to consider. If we do not feel the power of that spell we shall not make much of the *Song of Roland*. To quote from the book already referred to [*The Allegory of Love*, by C.S. Lewis]: “... the mutual love of warriors who die together fighting against odds, and the affection between vassal and Lord” – this is the grand passion of that time’.

He is very frank about his backward-looking loyalties and how immune they are to rational appraisal. ‘To bend inward all devotion towards a sacred consanguinity and a common soil, to perfect the mystical body of a tribal *ecclesia*, this to be seen as a last end – this, compared with those ends towards which the Christian tradition has for centuries directed the love of the Christian vassal, may well seem a crude retrogression, yet there can be seen in this reorientation an aboriginal validity, and this canalized devotion seems acquainted with a kind of urgency that lovers know about, which can only be tutored, like the wild unicorn, by a mistress with vision. It derives

too much from the bowels to be amenable to ethical or legal arguments, especially should those arguments be used as wrappings for stones thrown from our own cracked house of glass'. (DG 99)

Dilworth has said that *The Song of Roland* probably lies close to the imaginative source of *In Parenthesis*.⁷⁰ It was a story, I think, which mattered to Jones all his life. The review of his friend's work reveals many of his values, it moved him greatly, and even held out hope for the future. There is a sense in which the mass is a kind of *chanson de geste*. It is a celebration of an heroic deed (a defeat concealing a victory) by those who belong in some way (as vassals) to the hero, and whose celebration unites them.

In Jones's time the battle of Roncesvalles was a rallying cry for Catholics of the right. While conceding that tactless socialist propaganda, as much as anything, accounted for the bad variety of conservatism found among fascists, Orwell also acknowledges that 'it is very easy to see Fascism as the last line of defence of all that is good in European civilization. Even the Fascist bully at his symbolic worst, with rubber truncheon in one hand and castor oil bottle in the other, does not necessarily feel himself a bully; more probably he feels like Roland in the pass at Roncevaux, defending Christendom against the barbarian'.⁷¹ *The Song of Roland* tells us that the Christian feudal host was defeated by treachery from within. In this way it reinforces the dreadful repercussions of Peter's denial of Christ.

We are introduced to the situation as the Saracens of Saragossa are making overtures to the French. Archbishop Turpin steps forward to offer himself as intermediary, asking for the glove and the staff. The Emperor very roughly puts him down. Fatefully, it is the treacherous Ganelon who is chosen to deal with them. When the line of march is decided, and Roland is to command the rearguard, many of the doughtiest warriors come forward, the Archbishop among them. We will follow his rôle in the narrative, as it is his voice we hear, or so it seems, in *The Kensington Mass*. Later, when they are outnumbered by the enemy, and Roland out of pride refuses to blow the horn to alert the main body of French troops, trusting his sword Durendal, the Archbishop takes his place on high ground and preaches a stirring sermon to the French rearguard. They are to defend the Christian faith, die like good men for their

king, their sins are absolved, their penance is to strike at the enemy, their reward entry to paradise. His ferocity though, is soon evident, when he overhears a Berber King slightly refer to the puny French unit. He nails the pagan, the nobody, to the ground with his lance, pledging to do the same with the Berber's companions, 'and shouts Munjoie! Monjoie! to hold the field.' This will be second death to the enemy. Turpin strikes dead an enchanter, Siglorel, to the warm approval of Roland. He fights side by side with Roland and Oliver and the Twelve Peers, causing fearful slaughter. He says 'No king could have better [fighters]! It is written in the *Gesta Francorum*: "Our Emperor's vassals were all good men.'" He pleads with the Lords and Barons not to give way or think shameful thoughts: 'to die here fighting is not second death to us, but will lead us to our place among the Innocents'. We see him, a tonsured singer of masses and mighty warrior, avenging a comrade; and then astride his matchless war-horse fiercely killing in single combat a Saracen whose shield is embellished with fine jewels, gifts from a devil. Here is an archbishop, the French say, who is a fighter, saving souls with a crozier that cuts through the coward's body. If we are to believe charters, documents and the Geste, Roland, Oliver and the Archbishop killed more than four thousand men.

When Oliver and Roland fall out over blowing the Oliphant, Turpin upbraids them and calls on Roland to do it. Though they will not be saved, at least the French will arrive in time to save their corpses from wolves or pigs or dogs. Seeing Roland cutting the enemy to pieces, Turpin calls him the very type of the knight, strong and savage; if he were not, he might as well be some monk in a minster praying all day for our sins. Oliver is killed - Roland, weakened, faints on his horse. Turpin is pierced with four spears in his body, his great war-horse killed under him. Unhorsed and pierced nevertheless, he draws Almace his sword and continues the slaughter. Roland is also unhorsed, his horse Veillantif is struck dead by arrows. Together Roland and the Archbishop fight on, dismounted but encouraged by the trumpets of the French troops as they come to relieve their beleaguered comrades. There is a respite granted them and Roland and Turpin succour each other. Turpin calls on Roland to gather together the French dead, including Oliver, who are then set down alongside the Archbishop. In some simple and beautiful lines Turpin is shown seeking water from a stream for Roland.

In less time than it takes to cross a little field
that great heart fails, he falls forward, falls down;
and Turpin's death comes crushing down on him.

It falls then to Roland to lament the Archbishop.

My noble Lord, you great and well-born warrior
I commend you today to the God of Glory,
whom none will ever serve with a sweeter will.
Since the Apostles no prophet the like of you
arose to keep the faith and draw men to it.
May your soul know no suffering or want,
and behold the gate open to Paradise.

When the Emperor rides into Roncesvalles, he calls out to his soldiers, not one of whom is still alive. The Archbishop is among that noble company. The secret of the cry 'Munjoie' which no nation can withstand is revealed. The tip of the lance that pierced Christ's side is mounted on the pommel of the Emperor's sword, Joiuse. Moreover, Charlemagne's Oriflamme, St. Peter's standard, is renamed Munjoie, as the battle is rejoined with the Saracens. The action in the pass of Roncesvalles is a holy war. 'Precuisse' is the battle cry of the Pagans; 'Munjoie! that great and famous word' the battle cry of the Franks. When Roland, Oliver and Turpin are to be buried, the Emperor commands their bodies to be opened, their hearts wrapped in silk brocade, and their corpses washed and prepared in fragrant wine; and later

... bids these lords be laid in white stone coffins:
at Saint-Romain the brave men lie there still;
the Franks leave them to the Lord and His Names.

L190 *and with it, of necessity* Peter's denial is echoed at Roncesvalles. What necessarily follows from this fact of history is revealed, modally and substantially, in the last two lines. The "should" that appears elsewhere in Jones's work to show the benevolent outworking of the New Light of creation is disclosed as a "must" – the most fixed, peremptory, ultimate iron law of history. The dawn crow

of dolour is a determinate cry, its echoes are a dolorous necessity. The only recorded comment of Jones on *The Kensington Mass* is that it is a *gesceapenne*.⁷² It is an apt word to describe the movement of the poem. It means something that is shaped; shaped and fore-ordained of necessity to come to be. The rather long digression in the note to Line 92 into the grammar of 'should' so as to convey the modality of divine purpose in the work of his maturity may be excused, I hope, if it shows by contrast the modality 'of necessity', here at the close of the poem and of his life. It is as if God's will is unfolded in the tragic outcome. It cannot be that God's will is foiled? These are deep waters. In his odd way, Jones does not exclude alternative and discrepant possibilities in his meaning-clusters. For all the direct trajectory of the poem in its closing lines, for all the final exertion to disclose what is as it is, in all its sorrow, the will of God is present, but not His approval.

L191 *the straight, exact, rational and true* The entailment of sorrow is complete. Betrayal is a fact of history, sorrow a truth in logic. The modality of treachery's imprint of sadness is of transparent and uninterrupted linearity of implication (straight); of one-to-one correspondence in all particulars (exact); of the human, and open to the mind (rational); tested and shared, and adequate to the real (true).

192 *'Sirs, you are set for sorrow'*. This dismal judgement is supposed to be a remark of Archbishop Turpin in the *Song of Roland*. It cannot, in fact, be found there. It is besides, in the context of that epic, incongruous. The French rearguard, in the Archbishop's view, is in a no-lose situation: if they prevail in battle against their enemy, they are victors; if they are killed, they are welcomed in Paradise. The infidel, on the other hand, when they are killed, undergo a second death in the deprivation of eternal life. I do not mean to trivialize the plight of the Franks in the pass at Roncesvalles – I wish merely to show how uncharacteristic is this remark of the gung-ho warrior-archbishop. Out of its literary context, the remark was a favourite of Jones, a general-purpose lament, like 'Oh! What a pass have we come to.' He uses it, for instance, of the state-of-affairs at the outbreak of the Second World War.⁷³ Robert Renton shows how it reveals something of the friendship of Jones and René Hague.⁷⁴ The remark, mis-quoted or not, indicates a sorrow quite different from the sorrow, *felix.dolor*, the happy sorrow of repentance, that the priest prays for at the beginning

of *The Kensington Mass*. The priest prays for purity so as to be welcomed at the altar, in the words of the exiled levite hankering after the Temple in Jerusalem. The sorrow that concludes the poem cannot be understood as the answer to the prayer at the foot of the altar. Many sorrows cast their shadows in *The Kensington Mass* – the closure of a reverie, pain of revelation, the abasement of Christ, no-man's land, what is brought forth from the womb of the morning, defeat. The ending of the old rite gave on to these sorrows, to which Jones further brought the loss of woman and his country's humiliation as companion griefs. I suppose that sorrow, a recoiling from the bad, cannot be metaphysically terminal; God's kind purpose is that we should repose in the beloved. But this sorrow of separation and loss is wretched, a *privatio amoris* that breeds gloomy thoughts of the misadventure of faith. It is a dark saying, no matter what.

The concluding sorrow might seem to have brought the poem full circle. But the sorrow is of a different colour from the subject of the petition at the foot of the altar - in its way, like a misdelivered promise. It inscribes a broken circle. This is the fourth and final underlying shape of the poem.

AFTERWORD

Allusion was made in the Introduction to problematic first impressions on reading the poem; it is time now to consider if these problems remain. The poem appeared, firstly, to be a sequence of archaic figures, without connection, whose distance in time and mode of life made them very still and composed, but rudely interrupted by a hunt. Nor, secondly, was the poem held together by place. The transition from the Emperor's section to Peter's, thirdly, was underwritten by nothing in the text. Fourthly, the appearance of the Emperor standing in for Christ was suitable enough in a mass poem, but the hunting analogy and the history of the Christian West which came with it, introduced a confusing excess of significance. Finally, the feminine seemed to have no role in the poem notwithstanding the mention of Maedb, Brigit, Elen and the Supreme Venatrix. These difficulties marred the self-presentation of the poem.

The easy and relaxed writing, the imaginative distance between the characters, the propriety of the worship in the foremass create a mood of composure, safety and untroubled comprehensibility. This gives way to disquiet and incoherence with a kiss. The actions of the Emperor and Christ Himself are overlaid; hunting carries forward the action of the Redemption and its celebration, suggesting that the priest stands to victim as hunter to hunted. All the imaginative resources of the chase are suggested: they invade the rational sacrifice of the mass with multiple references, with narratives from scripture, parallel stories from collateral texts, from myth and historical analogy, leaving *signum* and *res* out of kilter. But we do come to understand that the poet-mediator wakes up from this dream of the past, and present reality dawns on him.

We next turn to the jumble of place references. This is a common practice with Jones, and the early puzzled perception soon ceases to be disconcerting. Most of the actions in the poem occur at dawn, *there* is its significance; so it is that the time of day and the dawn of an era enclose the poem. The way in which a moment of time expands into, and is displaced by, an historical sequence can be conveyed by spatial metaphors of point and circumference, and this was proposed as the third shape underlying the poem. This initial puzzle raised by the place-hopping started fears that the key to the poem might lie outside the text. The proposal that a torn recognition-ticket might be submitted for matching with the text, while not excluding alternative readings nor avoiding mildly unrespectable critical practice, enables the parts of the poem to cohere. Its criterion of acceptability is its plausibility. The unintelligibility and disjunction of the poem were dispelled for at least one reader.

Then came the break between the first two sections and the final one. The abruptness of this break (between Emperor and Peter) is in sharp contrast with the smooth transition between sections one and two (between Priest and Emperor). The *symbolon* served to unify the convention of the dream poem and the significance of the kiss, the play on amice, and the mystic shapes that were the stuff of his mind. Most of all, the puzzles of the poem dissolve, not to give way to an answer, but to re-install the frame of a mystery.

Puzzle, however, returns with the fourth difficulty. The Emperor presiding in court is difficult to understand. Jones takes pains to place this segment of the poem out of reach with its archaisms, recondite latinisms and absence of context. The differing time sequences push the action of the mass out of time altogether, reinforcing mystery. But, for all that, there is a puzzle still to answer.

Griefs were compounded at the close: the loss of Welshness and the feminine and the old rite acting on each other. The absence of the feminine *is* its significance. The loss of the last of his loves masks with a rebuke the capitulation of beauty.

Or have ye oght doon amys,
That she hath left you? Ys hyt this?

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68. For the sources of *The Song of Roland*, see Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* tr Lewis Thorpe (Penguin Classics, 1969) pp181-3
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73. 'Old Bishop Turpin in *The Song of Roland* keeps on saying to chaps, "Sirs, you are set for sorrow." He would have a job to improve on that statement if he were with us, I fear.' From a letter from David Jones to Harman Grisewood 24th September 1938.
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