

*EXPANSION OF ORIENTAL CHRISTIANITY*

The discovery at Dura-Europos on the Middle Euphrates of the oldest known Christian church (dated A.D. 232) with paintings of Gospel scenes in its sacramental chamber, has posed a series of problems for students of Christian origins and of Church architecture and art. The fundamental problem, however, is to reconstruct the history of the eastward expansion of Christianity, of which there is no account in Biblical record, and its transformation to meet the demands of the religious syncretism of northern Mesopotamia in the early centuries of our era.

Having devoted the past winter to the study of the literary evidence for the knowledge of this development, my work has concentrated on the ancient Syriac chroniclers, the reports of the travelers and archeologists who have studied and excavated monuments and remains of the early Roman period in the region between the Middle Euphrates and the Upper Tigris, and the sources showing the cults and religious ideologies that competed there at that time. This fall I propose to travel afield in southeastern Turkey and in the adjacent parts of the Syrian Jezireh to acquaint myself with the ancient routes of communication which the eastward expansion of Christianity followed and to visit the sites of old cities associated with early eastern Christianity.

CARL H. KRAELING

*Professor of Oriental Hellenistic Archeology*