

Dwayne: Hello, welcome to episode 24 of the Metaphysics of Physics podcast.

I am Dwayne Davies, your occasional host. Today we are going to interview Warren Fahy, the co-author of the book "Creating Christ". We are going to discuss the archaeology of Creating Christ.

We have talked about this book before. We interviewed James Valliant, the other author of this book way back in episode ten. That was a great interview huh?

Well, we have one with the other author of the book!

Let's see if we can cover some ground not covered in the other interview or at least zoom in some details. Either way, this is going to be very interesting.

Let's dive in, shall we?

Alright, thank you for being here Warren. Let's start with something a little fun and then dive into the more serious questions.

Dwayne: Do you and/or James have any of the coins from the book? Or more likely, replicas.

Warren: It's amazing how readily available those coins are. I don't have one. But I got a Vespasian coin for James several years ago. And it was like 50 cents at a convention.

The Flavian minted millions and millions of coins and they're still quite available.

And so, I don't. Someday I would love to have a fish and anchor Titus coin. That is certainly something I will obtain at some point.

Dwayne: In the book, we see that the cross was not the first primary symbol used by early Christians. Tell us about some of the earliest symbols they used.

Warren: Well, if you go back to the very first catacombs, the very first evidence of archaeological evidence of Christianity, what you'll find is that the symbols they were using were not the Cross.

They were using the anchor, either flanked by fish or wrapped around by a fish. And so, these are the earliest symbols of Christianity that we know.

And it wasn't until about two or three centuries later, when Constantine instated Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, that he switched the symbol to the Cross.

He did so because he had seen a cross in the sky during a battle. And as he saw that vision, it turned the tide of the battle and he won the battle. And so, he decided to instate the cross as a symbol of Christianity.

And his mother travelled to the Holy Land. And as legend has it, brought back a piece of the original cross. And that was all part of the propaganda that instituted this new symbolism.

But before that, the fish and anchor that was the predominant symbol of Christianity. And it was also the symbol used by the Flavian Emperors Titus and very briefly his brother Domitian.

Dwayne: Tell us about the mosaic we see on the front cover of the newest editions of the book.

Warren: Yes. Well, that, of course, was buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in Herculaneum. Only two months after Emperor Titus seceded his father as emperor of Rome.

And it was an amazing find because it was almost like a legend for the symbolism used by the Christians.

Of course, there is no archaeological evidence from the first century of Christianity that has been recognized as evidence of Christianity.

So, this predated by decades, the first catacombs in which Titus' own niece was buried. And that symbol that was on his coins, of the dolphin wrapped around an anchor, is echoed throughout those earliest Christians catacombs.

So, this symbol, this particular mosaic, was on the bottom of a pool in a gymnasium in Herculaneum. One that had originally been built by Emperor Augustus.

It was an imperial gymnasium that would have been under the care of the Flavians for decades. Because before then, Vespasian, the father of Titus had also a Flavian Emperor for 19 years.

There were always earthquakes going on in Herculaneum, because it was right next to the active volcano, Vesuvius. And so, they were constantly having to repair the bottom of pools. Because they would crack and then the water would leak out.

And at the time of the eruption, there were two pools in this gymnasium. One of which had been drained in order to effect repairs on the cracked bottom of the pool.

The other one that had this mosaic was filled, indicating that had been recently refurbished. So that would have been refurbished by the Flavians certainly.

And here they are using this symbol, which is reflected also on Titus' coins. Where you see an anchor flanked by two dolphins. And two people swimming towards the anchor.

Exactly the sort of thing you would see in Christian catacombs for the next two or three centuries. And yet it predates Christian use of the symbol by decades.

That was astonishing. When I first found it, I called James. I think it was at 3:30 in the morning when I came across it. I was absolutely flabbergasted to see what that pool indicated.

At that point, probably nobody on earth knew exactly what an amazing find that mosaic was in terms of historical significance.

Dwayne: Which artefacts show us some of the religious syncretism going on with the figure of Christ?

I believe, for instance, that there is a depiction of Alexander the Great as Helios that seems to have inspired depictions of Jesus.

Warren: Yes, there are. There are plenty. Of course, the mystery cults of the pagan world, the Hellenistic world, are combined with the Christian concept of the Messiah. In a way that's undeniable.

From Dionysius to Apollo, to the Sun God. All these pagan elements are combined within the idea of the Messiah. But the Jewish people would never have incorporated these into the idea of the Messiah. They had to have come from the pagan world.

And we can see those. Hercules dies and is resurrected and Dionysius is. Osiris dies and is resurrected. That is a very common thing.

And Mithra was born on December 25, in a manger visited by three wise men, three Magi, from the East that followed a star.

That all predated Christianity, but hundreds of years. And yet here it is in Christianity.

So yes, there are lots and lots of different pagan influences in the syncretic conception of Jesus Christ.

Dwayne: Why was the Sun God shown on a coin of Titus?

Warren: Yeah, very good question.

Sol was a sun god and came from the East. And of course, the sun rises in the east. And he was associated with Apollo.

Apollo is a healer god. And Jesus is a healer god. He also rises from the East, in Judea. Just as Titus and Vespasian made their bones, so to speak, in their campaigns in Judea, to the east of Rome.

And so, they came from the East and rose to the throne of Rome, by their exploits in the East. So, the idea of a sun god, was convenient for Titus to use on his coins.

Also, the Flavians were seen as healers of Rome. Because they had just gone through a giant civil war. And the fire of Rome had devastated 70% of the city of Rome.

And then, of course, the Jewish war was a giant war of secession. A civil war between who is going to replace Nero after he died.

And so, this was a huge tumultuous time of history for Rome. And the Flavians saw themselves as healers who are going to now repair all the damage that had been done in the last couple of decades in Rome.

So that was a very convenient way for Titus to associate himself with Sol and with Apollo, these Eastern healer gods.

Dwayne: We see the anchor symbol used by early Christians on Flavian tombs. Now, isn't that interesting?

Warren: Oh, yes, I mean it well, it's absolutely astonishing. Because why would Christians be using symbols that were employed by the Flavius on their coins and on mosaics?

For instance, the one in Herculaneum. And on architectural details in, for instance, a temple of Venus that the Flavians built. And also, in the Coliseum, which the Flavians built. The Colosseum was originally called the Flavian Amphitheatre.

And so, all of these symbols are being employed by the Emperors of Rome. Even in the Coliseum where Christians were supposedly thrown to the lions.

According to commonly accepted history, this is clearly a very inexplicable, parallel between the two groups. How could Christians be using Imperial symbols used in the Coliseum itself only a few miles away from their catacombs?

It implies that there was certainly some kind of a relationship between the Flavian dynasty, the Flavian emperors and Christianity. And there's really no way around it.

There were so many different symbols that the Christians could have chosen. Certainly, ones that were not pagan, right?

Considering that it was supposed to have been a homegrown religion that came from Judea. One which would have already had great prescriptions from using pagan symbolism. Especially ones that that denoted a Roman pagan god like Apollo. Which is the symbol of dolphin, a symbol of Apollo.

The Jews would never have allowed that to be on their coins. In fact, they had elaborate money changing setup just so that people would never donate coins with that kind of symbolism to the temple in Jerusalem.

So yes, we have the fact that the Christians earliest symbols are the same symbols that Emperor Titus used. The fact that they used the same symbols used throughout their archaeology, coins and mosaics, and so forth, is a profound problem for the traditional view of a huge conflict between the Roman emperors and the Christians.

Dwayne: Say you had an elevator pitch and you could present like two or three bits of evidence. Which would you choose?

Warren: Well, I would certainly choose the coins of Titus. Because that symbol of the dolphin wrapped around the anchor is precisely the symbol that was used on Christian rings, insignias, seals and grave sites for 300 years.

So, the idea that they're using the identical symbol needs explanation. And it's not explainable by the traditional historical view.

And then, of course. the Herculaneum Mosaic, since it was captured in a time capsule in 71. AD. We know exactly how it was dated and who built it. The fact that that predates, Christian catacombs and symbols by decades, is astonishing, right by itself.

Also, there are certain cameos that were built for the upper class. They show the dolphin and anchor and were dated to the time of the Flavians. They are also identical to the plethora of rings and seals that Christians would use for the next three centuries.

All of that archaeological overlap is a smoking gun. It really is. That shows a hard link, a hard-evidential link between the Flavians and the earliest Christians.

Dwayne: Not that the book needs any further evidence. But has there been any other interesting archaeology found that is not in the book which you would point to anyway?

Warren: I guess there is. There are some other additional interesting points that we didn't explore in the book.

It's interesting that the entire Nativity of Julius Caesar, for instance, is missing from all three histories we have. For all three biographies that today exist of Julius Caesar, that one part of it is missing.

Now, Julius Caesar was one of the first to introduce Mithraism to Rome. One of the first to introduce Zoroastrianism to Rome in the form of Mithraism. Which is a kind of modification of Zoroastrianism. Which is where we get the Zodiac, for instance, from Persia.

He was one of the ones who imported that religion into Rome. And of course, that's where we get the whole mythos of being born in a manger and visited by three Magi. Who followed a star and brought gifts on December 25 and so on. All of that comes from Mithraism.

And so, Julius Caesar used that too for his Nativity story. And perhaps that was too inconvenient for the Church to preserve for 2000 years. And therefore, that was extracted out of all the biographies of Julius Caesar. That is quite possible.

We know that Titus was born on December 30, in a sort of a slum apartment. That already kind of overlaps the Jesus Nativity, in certain ways.

And so, that's something we didn't go into. But is it is a remarkable lacuna in what has been passed down to us about Julius Caesar.

Dwayne: Okay, is it possible to see any of the artefacts you two discuss in the book and where could one go to see them?

Warren: Well, there some people, a crew of film crews going through Italy right now. They are going to some of those sites for a future documentary on the book.

And those sites would, of course, include the Herculaneum. As well, various villas in Spain show the dolphin and anchor mosaics as architectural details.

As well as catacombs. In the earliest catacombs before the time of Constantine, you'll see a great number of examples of dolphin and fish symbolism. Examples of that symbolism being used by Christians.

And the Vatican. It's interesting that at the Vatican, you can see a lot of statues of Vespasian and Titus.

So, obviously, Italy is where you would go. Instead of Judaism, by the way.

And you would go to other Roman provinces to look at the Christian catacombs. And there, you'll see, like I say, just a great number of examples of, of the Flavian symbology being used by Christians.

Dwayne: Hmm. Okay, you and James were apparently the first to see the evidence for exactly what it is.

What do you think stops others from coming to the same conclusion? After all, they can look at the same evidence and come to the same conclusions.

Warren: Yes, well, it took us 30 years of really immersing ourselves in every aspect of this period of history to notice and recognize what we were looking at.

I had been convinced that we would find coins that showed some sort of link that could be tied into Christianity. From the very beginning, 35 years ago, I was sure we would find something. But it did take that long to finally find it.

My mother visited Rome some 15 to 20 years ago. And she had brought back a souvenir from the catacombs of Domitilla. Who was the cousin of Titus and the niece of Emperor Vespasian.

Her catacombs are the earliest archaeological site of Christianity. So that's pretty interesting by itself.

But my mother brought back a souvenir that showed the famous anchor flanked by two fish as the earliest symbol of Christianity.

And here I am looking through coin after coin after coin and I'm seeing Titus. And on the other side of Titus' coin is a dolphin wrapped around an anchor. And it just never clicked. It was just hiding in plain sight. And finally, one day I saw it. And I was like, that's it right there.

And I called up, James and he said, oh, well, you know, maybe that's like a common symbol, you've seen it. Even today, you can buy pendants like that at the Vatican in Rome. So, you know, he said, well, it is possible that other Roman emperors have used that symbol.

And I said, no, you can't find any other Emperor who has used it. Except for Titus and briefly his brother Domitian. And then later during the second Jewish war, Hadrian used a limited edition of that coin. And so, by that time, it was fully a Christian symbol.

So that was just a eureka moment. And it's astonishing that it has never been noticed before. Actually, I can't explain it, except that it took a long time for it to sink in for us.

Dwayne: Well, I guess many people do not want to see that. That is certainly not what they would expect to find anyway.

Warren: I can imagine that too. And in fact, in Herculaneum, the pool that has that mosaic is a sort of a cross-shaped pool.

Not that the Cross has anything to do with it at that time. It was just like sort of a plus shape. And in the middle was a fountain. And the other three parts of that plus sign are still buried, they've never been excavated. Maybe they didn't want to excavate any more of that particular pool.

The Flavian temple in Herculaneum has also never been excavated. So there probably is a lot of stuff in there that maybe people just didn't want to see. I don't know.

Dwayne: Now, a lot of scholars in your field have started to come around to the thesis. For instance, Robert Price. Which evidence, archaeological or otherwise, have they found the most convincing?

Warren: Well, just in terms of archaeological evidence, certainly it is just inexplicable that the earliest Christians would be using the Imperial symbols of Roman emperors.

That by itself is simply not understandable or explainable in any other way. Except that they were somehow related to each other.

Not only that, but the earliest Christians also used tridents wrapped around by dolphins. And that symbol is also used by the Christians.

So, the Flavians and the Christians use dolphins and tridents and the Flavians and Christians used dolphins and anchors. And those were the predominant symbols that the Christians used for three centuries. Right on the heels of the Roman emperors, who literally coined those symbols.

So yeah, that is the most convincing archaeological evidence. In fact, the first physical evidence of a link between the Flavians and the Christians.

Dwayne: Which piece of archaeological evidence did you find the most convincing?

Warren: Yeah, well, those were it. Those were the things that really sealed it.

I think that once the Herculaneum mosaic was found that really did tie down the use of the dolphin and anchors. Because it literally was telling you that the dolphins represent people.

Because there are two people swimming towards the anchor and there are two dolphins swimming towards the anchor. So, it's equating dolphins with people.

Now, of course, in the Christian gospels, we hear "go out and be fishers of men". It is a trope that goes through the Gospels. Fish are a common symbol throughout the Gospels.

And the idea that the missionary project was like fishing for men is perfectly demonstrated in this symbology.

So yeah that has to be the most fascinating overlap right there.

Dwayne: Which artefact has the most interesting backstory? Would you care to tell us this story?

Warren: Well, I think the Herculaneum. What's so fascinating about the Herculaneum mosaic is that it had to have been repaired very recently.

We know that because the earthquakes were happening so often right before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. We have archaeological evidence all throughout Herculaneum and Pompeii.

There is evidence of repairs that were being done when the volcano erupted. Because there had been so much damage in the months leading up to that eruption.

So, that's an interesting backstory.

We see one pool that has been drained and has been repaired. One that has already been repaired and is filled.

And that nails down the time when that was built. That must have been built during the time that Titus was almost co-Emperor with his father. It had to have because of these interesting geological facts. As well as the fact that the whole place was buried in 71.

It just completely seals it in chronologically. So, that's probably the most compelling historical background of that particular archaeological site.

Dwayne: How long has all this amazing evidence been available?

Why do you think some of it may be overlooked? Or misinterpreted?

I guess we kind of covered that last one.

Warren: Yeah, we kind of have. But you know, that's kind of one of those questions. I mean, we also don't know how much evidence has been destroyed, covered up or deleted.

Like I say, we don't know what the birth story of Julius Caesar is. Because it was completely eradicated from every mention.

And, of course, the keeper of all those records for thousands of years, was the Church. So, for 1000 years, at least, during the Dark Ages, they were the ones who either reproduced the ancient history or didn't. And therefore, we don't see what was lost.

So much of it may have been simply lost through time. A lot of it may have been deliberately covered up and lost. And as for the rest, well people looked at it and didn't see what was going on or denied it and deflected it.

We have to understand that until the last three centuries or so, it was heresy punishable by death to suggest what we're suggesting in this book. So that's a good incentive not to recognize any of this, isn't it? If you will end up literally burned at the stake.

So, only during the last three centuries have people been able to question it. And only then people started to take a hard look at some of this information. So that's part of it.

And we finally ended up looking hard at it for 35 years. And so finally we unearthed this particular archaeological evidence.

Dwayne: Alright, that is all we have for today. Warren, thanks again for your brilliant and interesting answers to my questions.

On the next episode, we will hear from Warren again! Yes, he generously agreed to record two interviews on two different topics.

What will we be discussing next time? His bestselling fiction works *Fragment* and *Pandemonium*. Those are thrillers with wonderfully fantastic plots and amazing biological theories.

Tune in during the next episode to find out all about that!

Alright, thanks for listening. Until next episode... stay rational.