

## AQUILEJA.

BY THE EDITOR.

**B**Y a lucky accident some antique mosaics and reliefs, probably dating back to the early time of imperial Rome, have been discovered in Aquileja, and we reproduce one of them which shows an Eros angling for fishes.

Aquileja is a town in the northeastern corner of the Adriatic belonging to Austrian Illyria. Philologists doubt whether the name Aquileja is to be derived from *aquila* or from *aqua*. In the former case it would have to be considered as an eyrie, and this is possible as on the rocky coast of Illyria there are many sea eagles. In the other case it might be translated by "Watertown." A third possibility, however, must be admitted, viz., that it may be a Romanized form of an ancient and now forgotten Illyrian name. The Slavs call it Voglej and during the Middle Ages it bore the name Aglar.

Aquileja was a city of no mean importance during the days of imperial Rome. Founded in the year 181 B. C. as a Roman military colony and a fortified harbor for the sake of suppressing piracy, it developed rapidly as the capital of Venetia and the residence of many Roman officers and magistrates. It naturally became the center of an extended commerce, for not only did the Via Aemilia pass through it leading from Rome to the Danube provinces, but the surrounding country itself abounded with valuable products, especially gold and wine. During the unsettled period of the invasion of the Huns when in 452 A. D. Attila came with his hordes, it was besieged and after a long resistance was finally taken and destroyed; but its inhabitants retired to the lagoons in the Adria where they built up a new city called Venice. Accordingly Venice may truly be considered the daughter of Aquileja.

Aquileja was rebuilt by Narses but never regained its former prosperity. We may say that at present Triest has to some extent

taken the place of the ancient Aquileja and of the Venice of the Middle Ages.

The bishop of Aquileja held a unique position in the Church.



MOSAIC FROM AQUILEJA.\*

\* This illustration as well as the data concerning the discovery of this and other archeological treasures we owe to the *Illustrirte Zeitung* of October 7, 1909.

Since 557 he had called himself "Patriarch" and his diocese extended beyond the provinces of Venetia and Illyria. He did not recognize the authority of Rome, even when its bishop had assumed the title of pope and was recognized by the Latin Church as the head of Christianity. The patriarchate of Aquileja formed a church by itself.

The patriarch of Aquileja maintained his independence until 698 when an agreement was reached with Pope Sergius who recognized his title and granted him certain prerogatives on the promise of joining the Church of Rome.

In the tenth century the patriarch was favored by the Ghibelline emperors and became very powerful. He extended his dominion over Friuli, and for a time even the king of Bohemia owed him allegiance.

The power of the patriarchate waned when Venice gained ascendancy. The Venetians deprived the patriarch of most of his Italian possessions in 1420, and the patriarchate was finally abolished in 1758. In 1809 Aquileja was annexed to Austria.

The city of Aquileja gradually lost its significance on account of the formation of swamps which spoiled the inner harbor and rendered the condition of the city so unwholesome as to drive out its inhabitants.

Aquileja possesses a large basilica built under the patriarch Poppo (1019-1042) and when recently the entrance to the chapel began to sag, an investigation of its foundations revealed some Roman mosaics underneath. They had lain covered with two feet of dust and broken stones, which proves that walls fell down upon them, presumably during the Hunnish invasion, and later generations did not take the trouble to remove the debris.

The combination of Eros and the fish is not accidental. In olden times the fish was the symbol of immortality, and here we find Eros as a fisher, the meaning of which will be better understood if we consider that in Christianity Christ calls the apostles "fishers of men."