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DON BOSCO'S MISSIONARY DREAMS— IMAGES OF A WORLDWIDE SALESIAN APOSTOLATE [II]

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Prefatory Note

This is the second installment of a study of Don Bosco's five missionary dreams.¹ The earlier installment, after a general introduction (Part One), dealt with the context and text of the First Missionary Dream (Part Two) and of the two "South American" dreams that followed (Part Three). In Part One of the present installment (Part Four overall),

¹ For the first installment of this essay (—cited as *Installment I*), cf. "Don Bosco's Missionary Dreams—Images of a Worldwide Salesian Apostolate," *Journal of Salesian Studies* 3:2 (1992) 23-92—cited as *JSS III/2*.

Further:

The *Archivio Salesiano Centrale* (Via della Pisana 1111, Roma) — cited as *ASC*.

The Don Bosco files (*Fondo Don Bosco*) of the *ASC* are available in microfiches — cited as *FDBM*.

The Italian *Memorie Biografiche* — cited as *IBM*.

The English *Biographical Memoirs* — cited as *EBM*.

Lemoyne's *Documenti per scrivere la storia di D. Giovanni Bosco* [...] — cited as *Documenti*.

E. Ceria, *Annali della Società Salesiana*, [Vol. I:] *Dalle origini alla morte di S. Giovanni Bosco (1841-1888)*. Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1841, pp. 245-247, 423-434, 505-510, 551-559 — cited as *Annali I*.

E. Ceria, *Epistolario di San Giovanni Bosco*, 4 vol. Torino: SEI, 1858 (Vol. 3), 1859 (Vol. 4) — cited as *Ceria, Ep.*

F. Desramaut, "Études préalables à une biographie de saint Jean Bosco, VIII: La vieillesse (1884-1888)," in *Cahiers Salesiens* [...], No. 18-19, Avril-Octobre 1988, p. 98-113 — cited as *Desramaut, Études VIII (Cahiers)*.

we shall discuss the last two dreams in a similar manner. Part Two (Five) will deal with the significance of the missionary dreams, with interpretative comments.

Introduction

As indicated in the earlier essay, Don Bosco's missionary dreams as a whole are projections of his hopes and plans for a worldwide expansion of the Salesian Society's work, of which the missions *in partibus infidelium* are an integral part. Whereas the First Missionary Dream (1871/72) was of a general nature, and the two that followed much later (1883 and 1885) related almost exclusively to South America, the last two (1885 and 1886) had a truly worldwide orientation. In the Second Missionary Dream a passing reference was made to Boston (U.S.A.); in the Third Missionary Dream, Mesopotamia and southern Africa received a passing mention. Likewise, in earlier dreams the global expansion of the Society had already been foreseen in general terms.² However, the hope for far-flung missions in continents other than South America was first expressly symbolized in the last two missionary dreams.

Part One: Don Bosco's Fourth and Fifth Missionary Dreams

I. Context of the Fourth and Fifth Missionary Dreams

Don Bosco regarded the establishment of a Vicariate and a Prefecture and the ordination of Fr. Cagliero as bishop (1883-1885) as the seal by which the Holy See officially recognized the missionary vocation of the Salesian Society. The resounding success of the Patagonian mission project served as a springboard for higher hopes and bolder plans.³ In addition, the continuous, insistent requests

² In the Dream of the Wheel of Fortune, heard by Fr. Rua around 1856, the increasing sound of the five spins of the wheel are interpreted to represent the progressive expansion of the Society in Turin, to Piedmont, to Italy, to Europe, and to the world [cf. *EBM* V, p. 297]. In the third part of the Dream of the Bull of 1876, Don Bosco, atop a boulder in the middle of a limitless plain, sees the expansion of the Congregation: "People of every race, color and nation were gathered there" [*EBM* XII, p. 337f.].

³ The beginnings of the mission of Patagonia have been described in *Installment I*. For the beginnings of the mission in the Prefecture of Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, with Prefect Fr. Joseph Fagnano and such missionaries as Fr. Angelo Savio (1835-1893) and Fr. Joseph Beauvoir (1885-1887), cf. *IBM* XVIII, 386-409; *Annali* I, p. 539-41, 590-599.

coming to Don Bosco from all parts of the globe must have served as a powerful stimulus.

As far back as 1876, in an address to a large mixed group from various communities at the Oratory on the theme, "The harvest is plentiful, the laborers are few," Don Bosco said:

An extraordinary number of requests for new schools, houses and missions reach us from different parts of Italy, France, and foreign countries, such as Gibraltar, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Arabia, India, China, Japan, Australia, Argentina, Paraguay, and practically all of South America.⁴

In the decade that followed, the decade of the Patagonian missions, requests kept pouring in from all parts of the world. Fr. Ceria writes:

On December 28, 1883, at a meeting of the Superior Chapter over which Don Bosco presided, the suggestion was made that a statistical table outlining requests for new foundations, some 150 since the preceding January alone, be published in the *Salesian Bulletin*. That was not done; but in his 1884 yearly letter, Don Bosco, taking into account also earlier instances, spoke of over 200 requests for new foundations. These had come not only from Italy, France and various parts of Europe, but also from India, China, Japan, and from the most distant islands of Oceania.⁵

These proposals for foundations and missions in various continents should be regarded as the immediate context for Don Bosco's missionary dreams. Furthermore, his intense interest in the geography and history of such places, gathered from available sources, supplied both the structure of the dreams (fantastic journeys) and many of the images those dreams contained.

In the Fourth Missionary Dream (as reconstructed by Lemoyne), Don Bosco is taken on a fantastic, globe-circling journey, during which he is presented with impressive angel scenes symbolizing Asia, Africa and Australia-Oceania.

In the Fifth Missionary Dream, Don Bosco, from a hill in the vicinity of his birthplace (the scene of his first dream), sees a throng of children and is addressed by a maiden leading a flock. She shows him numerous Salesian

⁴ *EBM* XII, 461.

⁵ *IBM* XVI, 399. *ASC* 0592 Verbal, Dec 28, 1883 (Lemoyne's minutes), *FDBM* 1,880 B3. The 1884 letter referred to by Ceria could not be located.

foundations and mission stations situated along a line stretching from Santiago, through central Africa, to Peking—a journey of the mind.

II. Textual Tradition and Text of the Fourth Missionary Dream (the *Dream of the Angels of the Missions*, narrated July 2, 1885)

The Fourth Missionary Dream, was related by Don Bosco on July 2, and took place, according to a letter by Fr. Lemoyne to Bishop Cagliero (to be discussed below) at Mathi on some unreported occasion.⁶ Hence, it is not known precisely when the dream occurred. The *Biographical Memoirs* relate it "out of place" when describing the development of the Missions.⁷ Furthermore, while they record a stay of Don Bosco at Mathi from July 15 to August 20,⁸ they do not speak of one prior to July 2, the date of the narration. If it took place at Mathi, the dream must have occurred on some unrecorded visit—perhaps in 1883-4, when the Salesian paper mill was being repaired after being damaged in an explosion. Or it may have occurred when the residence was being readied for the Sons of Mary.⁹ It could have taken place in the summer of 1884, when Don Bosco, still convalescing from his illness, was the guest of the Bishop of Pinerolo (a town located some 25 miles south-west of Turin) from July 19 to August 22.¹⁰ It could also have taken place during one of his relatively frequent visits to Lanzo, Mathi being then just a couple of miles away. Viglietti's chronicle has but few entries for this whole period, and makes no reference to this dream, nor for that matter to Mathi until we get to July 15, 1885.

As will be seen below, Don Bosco concluded his narration of the dream with a reference to the Sons of Mary, who had a missionary orientation from the start. If the Sons of Mary were in any way connected with Don Bosco's dream at Mathi, then it is reasonable to suppose that the dream occurred while they were still housed there. But by the autumn of 1884 the Sons of Mary were already

⁶ Mathi, a little town located in the hills near Lanzo, and some 20 miles northwest of Turin, was a salubrious spot; and Don Bosco, whose health had been declining steeply since 1884, occasionally stayed at the Salesian house there.

⁷ Cf. *IBM* XVII, p. 643-647.

⁸ Cf. *IBM* XVII, 484-497.

Prior to this date, after the near-fatal illness of February 1884, the following trips of Don Bosco are recorded: France (March 1-April 5); Rome (April 16-May 14); Turin; San Benigno (May 20-22); Turin; Pinerolo (July 19-August 20); Valsalice (August 23-September 1); San Benigno (September 2-3); Turin. In 1885 we find Don Bosco in France (March 24-May 6); Turin; then Mathi (July 15-August 20).

⁹ Cf. *EBM* XV, 539f.; *IBM* XVII, 221.

¹⁰ Cf. *IBM* XVII, 208-210, 226-228.

relocated at the Oratory of St. Aloysius, in Turin, in the new building which had been erected with the church of St. John the Evangelist.¹¹

1. Textual Tradition of the Fourth Missionary Dream

Don Bosco related the Mathi missionary dream to the members of the General Council on the evening of July 2, 1885, in their dining room after supper. Although the fact of the dream is substantiated by Don Bosco in letters to Count Colle,¹² the text of the dream, has come down to us solely on Lemoyne's authority. As general secretary, Fr. Lemoyne would have been with Don Bosco and his Council at supper in the "superiors' dining room" and heard the narration. If he did not take notes, given the circumstances, he must have authored his report, as Ceria states, immediately thereafter.¹³

Four archival documents relating to this dream are arranged in a file within Lemoyne's dream collection. They will now be described in that sequence.

[1. *Lemoyne Report*]

A draft entitled "1885, July 2" (here designated as *Lemoyne Report*) is demonstrably the earliest entry in the file. In it the dream is articulated in three scenes, each presided over by an angel—the Angel of Arpachshad on the lofty mountain, the Angel of Ham, and the unnamed Angel of Australia. Some comments by Don Bosco conclude the account of the dream.¹⁴

This report consists of four pages of neat script in Lemoyne's hand, practically a good copy, but with two large marginal notes in the same hand.

The first of these (here designated as *Note I*) is connected with the first Angel scene, and attempts to describe the people present ("dear Louis Colle"

¹¹ Cf. *IBM* XVII, 345 & 545, and note 28 below.

¹² Don Bosco spoke of Louis Colle's appearing to him in the missionary dreams and in other contexts [cf. *EBM* XV, 59-70]. Specifically, with reference to the Second Missionary Dream, in a letter to Count Colle dated February 11, 1884, he speaks of Louis as his guide: "The trip I took in our dear Louis' company is becoming clearer day by day" [Ceria, *Ep* IV, p. 501]. He does the same with reference to the Fourth Missionary Dream, in letters to Count and Countess Colle dated August 10, 1885 and January 15, 1886 [Ceria, *Ep* IV, 516 and 521], where he mentions a "stroll" he took with Louis to Central Africa and China (a reference to the present dream certainly). It should be noted, however, that, as our documents stand, in the Fourth Mission Dream Louis Colle merely appears in the Angel of Arpachshad's entourage and among those who urge Don Bosco on, not as an interpreter-guide. For Count Louis Antoine Fleury Colle and family, cf. *EBM* XV, 56-102.

¹³ Cf. *IBM* XVII, p. 643.

¹⁴ The *Lemoyne Report* is in ASC 111: Sogni, Lemoyne, "1885", "Il 2 Luglio," *FDBM* 1,120 E9-12.

among them) and their activities. But the description is obscure and uncertain. Hence, Lemoyne put a slash through from top to bottom, thus signifying his intention of rewriting it.

The second, larger marginal addition, toward the end, completes the description of the Australian scene, which is begun, then inexplicably left suspended in the main text.

The *Lemoyne Report* is the earliest account of the dream in our possession; but is it the original one? In this regard, one should take note of the fact that the report clearly identifies Arpachshad with China. Now, Lemoyne (in other drafts) assures us that Don Bosco did not know (at the time of the dream) who Arpachshad was or what he represented and, therefore, he had ordered "research" done (to be discussed below), which "established" that Arpachshad stood for China. Hence, *Lemoyne A* originated after the research on Arpachshad and China was completed. However, as proposed above, the dream may have taken place considerably before the narration of July 2, and the research could have been completed before July 2. Indeed, Don Bosco may have decided to tell the dream precisely because of that fact. Hence, the *Lemoyne Report* could well be the first narrative account.

[2. Appendix]

Later, as he himself states in the *Letter to Cagliero* (to be discussed below), Fr. Lemoyne sought further explanations from Don Bosco. He obtained what he regarded as the true structure of the dream. It was in the form of a fantastic journey around the globe, during which (in a rapid sequence of irretrievable images) the three Angel scenes stood out as high points.

Lemoyne embodied this new information in a draft entitled "Appendices to the Dream of July 2, 1885" (here designated as *Appendix*). In it Lemoyne, (1) described the round-the-globe structure of the dream by way of introduction and setting; (2) gave an itinerary consisting of eighteen geographical locations; and (3) transcribed and reworked the Arpachshad scene from the *Lemoyne Report*. With regard to this last point, it appears that Lemoyne was chiefly concerned with producing a better description of the Arpachshad scene; and to achieve this aim he revised and incorporated *Note I* (mentioned above) and clarified the role of Louis Colle. Thus he divided the material of *Note I* so that Louis Colle appears first among those who encourage Don Bosco (and the Salesians) on their journey, and then reappears a little later on the mountain, standing among the blessed in the Angel's entourage, and leading other young people.¹⁵

The *Appendix* concludes with the editor's note that Don Bosco at first did not know who Arpachshad was and that, therefore, had his identity researched.

¹⁵ The *Appendix* is in ASC 111: Sogni, Lemoyne, "Alcune appendici al sogno del 2 Luglio 1885," *FDBM* 1321 A1-4.

The result of this inquiry is given in a document which follows immediately in the file.

[3. *Research*]

The research on Arpachshad (chronologically antedating all reports and, as conjectured above, even Don Bosco's narration) is a four-page rough draft, heavy with interlinear corrections and marginal notes. It is designated here as *Research*. The handwriting is not Lemoyne's, but most likely the researcher's own. Beginning with the Bible, and quoting various histories and authorities, the researcher concluded that the Chinese people were the descendants of Arpachshad.¹⁶

[4. *Letter to Cagliero*]

In the above-mentioned letter to Bishop Cagliero, dated July 8, 1885 (here designated as *Letter to Cagliero*), Lemoyne states that, after further inquiries, he has been able to piece together the dream, in spite of Don Bosco's faulty recollection. Thus, starting with the material of the *Appendix*, he sets down the round-the-globe journey structure, including an itinerary of fifteen geographical locations;¹⁷ then he describes the three angel scenes, but this time in "geographical order," west to east (Africa, Asia, Australia); finally he transcribes Don Bosco's concluding comments from the *Lemoyne Report*. The letter also refers to the research leading to the identification of Arpachshad with China.¹⁸

¹⁶ The *Research* is in ASC 111: Sogni, Lemoyne, [untitled], *FDBM* 1,321 A5-8.

Arpachshad is first mentioned in the "Table of Nations" in Gen 10:22: "The sons of Shem were Elam, Assyria, Arpachshad, Lud, and Aram." The name recurs in Gen 10:4, 11:10-13; in 1Chr 1:17f,24; and in Lk 3:36 in Jesus' genealogy. Yet, Don Bosco did not know who Arpachshad was, and needed to enlist help to discover his identity. However, the very fact that the name appeared in the dream shows that it was in Don Bosco's "Biblical subconscious." His failing health, especially his mental strain and lapses of memory [cf. *Letter to Cagliero*, below], prevented him from making the connection.

¹⁷ In spite of the fact that the itinerary here has three entries less than the itinerary in the earlier *Appendix*, the chronological sequence of the documents must stand on the basis of progressive elaboration. Furthermore, the three extra "stations" in the earlier itinerary appear geographically anomalous, and that may be the reason why Lemoyne omitted them in the *Letter to Cagliero* [cf. notes 29 and 37 and related text, below].

¹⁸ The *Letter to Cagliero* is in ASC 111: Sogni, Lemoyne, "Torino 8 Luglio," *FDBM* 1,321 A9-12.

This document, in Lemoyne's hand, appears to be either a good rough copy or a copy of the actual letter sent to bishop. There are no folds or creases.

[5. *Documenti and Biographical Memoirs*]

In the file, Lemoyne arranged the four documents in the order that would best serve him in the compilation of the final text of the dream. However, when it came to its actual compilation in *Documenti*, Lemoyne refrained from using the fairly coherent reconstruction of the dream he had achieved in the *Letter*. Instead, he preferred to structure the narrative on the basis of the *Lemoyne Report* followed by the *Appendix*, with the usual editing. Then, using the material of the *Research*, he gives a detailed account of Arpachshad and his connection with China, stating that the Salesian seminarian, Festa, had been responsible for the research project.¹⁹

In the *Biographical Memoirs*, Fr. Ceria reproduces the text of *Documenti* with superficial editing; but mercifully abridges the "erudite" research relating to Arpachshad and the Chinese people.²⁰

The *Lemoyne Report*, then, is our best witness of Don Bosco's original narration. It is given here in translation with the two notes integrated into the main text, but *italicized*. The *Lemoyne Appendix* and the *Letter to Cagliero* are also given in immediate succession. We have a feeling that our readers will not be interested in the research on the origins of the Chinese people and their descent from Arpachshad.

2. Text of the Fourth Missionary Dream

[i] Text According to the *Lemoyne Report* [Reporter's Introduction]

1885. On the evening of July 2, after supper, Don Bosco related [a dream] to his General Council.

[Scene I: The Mountain and the Angel of Arpachshad]

I dreamt that I was standing before a very high mountain, on top of which stood a most resplendent Angel, whose light illumined the country round about to its most remote reaches. The country around the mountain was a vast kingdom inhabited by a people unknown [to me]. The Angel held aloft in his right hand a sword which shone like a very bright flame; with his left hand he pointed to the region round about. He said to me: "Angelus Arfaxad (China)

¹⁹ *Documenti* XXX [c. 51], p. 381-385, in ASC 110: Cronachette, Lemoyne-Doc, FDBM 1,112 B12-C4. The chapter is entitled, "Sogno: gli Angeli della Cina, dell'Africa e dell'Australia."

Angelo Festa (1867-1905) was apparently highly regarded by Don Bosco who chose him as a "second secretary," in association with C. M. Viglietti. He was one of the first two Salesian theological students who enrolled in the Gregorian University in 1888 [cf. IBM XVIII, p. 182, 471, 480].

²⁰ IBM XVII, p. 643-647.

vocat vos ad proelianda bella Domini et ad congregandos populos in horrea Domini."²¹ His words, however, were not, as they had been at other times, a command, but rather a proposal.²²

In the surrounding country, right up to the mountain, and on its very slopes, dwelt a great number of people. They were conversing, but in a language which I did not understand. I understood only what the Angel said. I cannot begin to describe what I saw, for such things are seen and grasped, but are indescribable. Different objects appeared before me in rapid succession, and the view which confronted me changed all the time. At one time it appeared to be the plain of Mesopotamia; at another, a very high mountain. The very mountain on which the Angel stood was continuously transforming itself, and the people that dwelt on it seemed to be flitting about like shadows.

[Note I]

*While involved in such varied scenes, I found myself in the company of many [people] who were encouraging me and my Salesians not to falter along the way. Among those who were leading me by the hand, so to speak, and helping me forward, was dear Louis Colle. With many others [added above the line] he stood around the Angel of Arpachshad and other angels whose name I either never learned or did not retain. They were leading the many youngsters that surrounded him in the singing of hymns.*²³

[Scene 2: The Angel of Ham-Africa]

Next, I seemed to be standing in the middle of a vast desert in central Africa. Written on the ground in large, translucent letters, was the word "Blacks." In the middle stood the Angel of Ham, who was saying: "Cessabit maledictum,"²⁴ and the Creator's blessing will be upon his rejected children; honey and balm will heal the serpents' bites. After that the shame of the children of Ham will be covered over." Those people were all naked.²⁵

²¹ "The Angel of Arpachshad (China) calls you to fight the battles of the Lord and to gather the peoples into the Lord's storehouses."

Note the identification of Arpachshad with China.

For Arpachshad, cf. note 16 above.

²² At what other times did the Angel of Arpachshad speak to Don Bosco? The reference here must be simply to other dreams understood as conveying God's commands.

²³ Note I of the *Lemoyne Report*, is unclear at a couple of points. The present translation renders its meaning as faithfully as the text allows. In any case, as has already been noted above, in the successive drafts Lemoyne re-wrote this paragraph expanding it and relocating the material.

²⁴ "The curse will cease."

²⁵ The words attributed to the Angel of Ham reflect a "traditional" interpretation of *Gen* 9:20-27, and the belief that Blacks were the object of a curse

[Scene 3: The Nameless Angel of Australia]

Finally, I seemed to be in Australia. An Angel was present there too, but he had no name. He was walking with the people, urging them and guiding them in a southerly direction. *Australia did not appear as a continent, but as an archipelago of many islands, inhabited by people of different characteristics and features.*²⁶ A great number of children lived in those islands. They were trying to cross over to us, but were prevented from reaching us by the great distances and the [stretches of] water that lay between us. Yet they were holding their hands out toward us and crying: "Come and help us! Why do you not finish the work which your fathers began?" Many of the children gave up. But some of them, making their way with great effort through the midst of ferocious wild beasts, joined the Salesians (none of whom I recognized) and began to sing: "*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.*"²⁷

Large clusters of islands could be seen at some distance, but I could not pick out any details. However, it seems to me that, globally speaking, this indicated God's intention of entrusting in the coming future a portion of that evangelical mission field to the Salesians. Their labors will bear fruit because the Lord will stand by them always—provided they will not prove unworthy.

[Narrator's Conclusion and Comments]

Don Bosco added:

"If I could embalm and preserve about fifty of our present Salesians, they would see, 500 years hence, the stupendous future which Divine Providence has in store for us—if we are faithful. Within 150 or 200 years the Salesians would be masters of the whole world.

"We shall always find favor even in the eyes of evil people, because our special apostolate is such that it calls forth everyone's good will, of good and bad people alike. There may be fanatics who will want to destroy us; but these will be isolated attempts which will not win support from others.

"The important thing is that the Salesians do not yield to love of ease and shrink from work. Even only by maintaining the present works, if they do not surrender to the vice of gluttony, the Salesians will have a long future assured.

(even though in *Genesis* the curse is against Canaan!). The "serpents' bites" may be an allusion to Africa as the land of poisonous snakes, or perhaps to the serpents that attacked the Israelites in the desert in *Num* 21:6-9. Likewise, "the shame covered over" may be an allusion to the dressing custom of certain African tribes, or again to the Noah story in *Gen* 9:18-29.

²⁶ This description indicates either Australasia or Polynesia, rather than Australia proper.

²⁷ "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

"The Salesian Society will prosper materially if the Salesians endeavor to support and spread the Salesian Bulletin; it will prosper morally if they continue and extend the Work of the Sons of Mary Help of Christians [*sic*]. There are so many good men among these dear sons! This institution of theirs will produce for us able confreres, committed to their vocation."²⁸

[ii] The Dream According to the Appendix (New Introduction and a Rewritten Arpachshad Scene)

Appendices to the Dream of July 2, 1885.

[Introduction, Dream Setting and Itinerary]

He saw all the countries in which the Salesians are called [to work] in times to come. This was in the form of a very swift journey starting from, and returning to the same point. It was a lightning-quick journey. And while traveling those immense distances, he could make out at a glance regions and cities with their inhabitants and customs; seas, rivers, mountains, and islands. At the same time, events and scenes by the thousands came together simultaneously and combined in a manner that defie description. All Don Bosco can do is to give a general idea.

[People Giving Encouragement—Part of Note I]

At various stages of the journey numerous people accompanied Don Bosco, and encouraged him and his Salesians not to falter along the way. Among them, our dear Louis Colle was most ardent in urging Don Bosco on. You might say that he led him along by the hand.

[Itinerary]

The journey ranged over many degrees [of latitude]. Don Bosco spoke of [traveling from] Santiago, Chile to Buenos Aires; then on to São Paulo, Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, the Cape of Good Hope, Madagascar, the Persian Gulf, the shores of the Caspian Sea, *Shinar*, *Mt. Ararat*, *Senegal*, Ceylon, Hong Kong,

²⁸ The *Work of Mary Help of Christians* was established by Don Bosco in 1875 to foster the priestly vocation of young adults and adults who would otherwise have had no opportunity to pursue their vocation. The men who entered this accelerated program of studies and formation were called *Sons of Mary*. They were first housed at Sampierdarena, under Fr. Philip Rinaldi's care, and at the Oratory. In Autumn 1883 they were transferred to Mathi, and the following year to their permanent home at the Salesian house and church St. John the Evangelist in Turin. It is understandable that, having had the dream at Mathi, Don Bosco should comment on this institution, which had a missionary purpose from its inception [cf. *EBM* XV, p. 31f.], even if the dream occurred after their relocation [cf. note 11 and related text, above].

Macao (lying at the entrance of a limitless sea), China, Australia; then, by way of the Diego Islands, back to Santiago, Chile.²⁹

The globe-circling tour had included islands and countries scattered over many degrees [of latitude], many of them sparsely inhabited and even unknown.

[The Arpachshad Scene]

[At one point of the dream journey] Don Bosco found himself in the vicinity of Macao, before a very lofty mountain. Throughout the journey he seemed to be traveling at an enormous altitude, floating above the clouds in limitless space, in an ocean of most vivid light. Who could describe such heights, such space, such light, such brightness, such panoramas. One can experience them, but not describe them.

Standing on top of that lofty mountain was an Angel, so resplendent that his light illumined the remotest regions. The country round about the mountain was a vast kingdom inhabited by a people unknown [to Don Bosco]. The Angel held aloft in his right hand a sword which shone like a very bright flame. Pointing with his left hand he drew Don Bosco's attention to the surrounding region. He said to him: "*Angelus Arphaxad vocat vos ad proelianda bella Domini et ad congregandos populos in horrea Domini.*" "The Angel of Arpachshad is calling you to fight the Lord's battles and to gather the peoples into the Lord's storehouses." His words, however, were not, as they had been at other times, a command, but rather a proposal.

[Part of Note I]

A wonderful throng of blessed spirits, whose names Don Bosco either did not learn or was unable to retain, surrounded that Angel. Among them was Louis Colle, in the company of a large group of youngsters. They were singing along with him, as he sung God's praises.

[Reporter-Editor's Comment on the Research]

Up to the time of the dream Don Bosco did not know who Arpachshad was. After the dream he talked of nothing else. He had someone search through biblical dictionaries, histories of nations, works on geography, periodicals; and he finally learned that the Chinese are really the descendants of Arpachshad.

²⁹ As mentioned above [cf. note 17], the three *italicized* entries of this itinerary no longer appear in the itinerary of the later *Letter to Cagliero*. *Shinar* [cf. Gen 10:10; 11:2; 14:1,9, etc.], is a Biblical name for Babylonia (modern central and southern Iraq). *Mt. Ararat* is a mountain in southeastern Armenia (where, according to Gen 8:4, Noah's ark made landfall after the flood). *Senegal* is a country on the north-western coast of Africa.

In all probability, as Ceria also believes [cf. *IBM XVII*, 646], by the "Diego Islands" Don Bosco meant the Diego *Ramírez* Islands (small Chilean islands south of Tierra del Fuego, near the 57° of lat. S.)—not the Diego Garcia Islands in the Indian Ocean, nor the Diego de Almagro Island off the coast of southern Chile.

[iii] **Reconstruction of the Fourth Missionary Dream According to the *Letter to Cagliero***

Turin, July 8, 1885

Dear Bishop,

[Copies of] the earlier dreams concerning [South] America have already been forwarded to Fr. Costamagna. The account of the one [Don Bosco] had at Mathi is enclosed herewith. It was a confused dream; and only yesterday was I able to obtain final explanations from Don Bosco. Plainly, this is what caused the delay: Don Bosco could no longer recall the details, because his mind tires quickly and lacks the strength to remember things.

[Introduction—Setting, Structure and Itinerary of the Dream]

Now then—the night of July 2, he had a dream.³⁰ All the countries to which the Salesians are called [to work] in times to come filed before him, for the dream was in the form of a journey—a lightning-quick journey starting from, and returning to the same point. And while traveling over immense distances, he could make out at a glance regions and cities with their inhabitants and customs; seas, rivers and islands. At the same time, events and scenes by the thousand came together simultaneously, and combined in a manner which defies description. All Don Bosco can do is to give a general idea.

[People Giving Encouragement]

At various stages of the journey, numerous people accompanied Don Bosco, and encouraged him and his Salesians not to falter along the way. Among them, our dear Louis Colle was most ardent in urging Don Bosco on. You could almost say that he led along by the hand.

[Itinerary]

The journey ranged over many degrees [of latitude], and it followed this itinerary: From Santiago, Chile, to Buenos Aires; then on to São Paulo, Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, the Cape of Good Hope, Madagascar, the Persian Gulf, the shores of the Caspian Sea, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Macao (a city lying at the entrance of a limitless sea), China, Australia; then, by way of the Diego [Ramírez] Islands, back to Santiago, Chile.

The globe-circling tour had included islands and countries scattered over many degrees [of latitude], many of them sparsely inhabited and even unknown.

For Macao, cf. interpretative comments, p. 44 below.

³⁰ On July 2 (1885) Don Bosco *related* the dream to his council in their dining room at the Oratory. The dream itself had occurred at Mathi on a earlier date [cf. note 6 and related text, above].

Out of all this, Don Bosco has a clear recollection of three scenes in particular.

[Scene 1: the Angel of Ham]

1. He seemed to be in the middle of a vast desert in central Africa. Written on the ground in large, translucent letters was the word, *Blacks*. In the middle stood the Angel of Ham, who proclaimed: "*Cessabit maledictum*,"³¹ and the Creator's blessing will be upon his rejected children; honey and balm will heal the wounds inflicted by the serpents' bites. After that the shame of the children of Ham will be covered over."

[Scene 2: The Angel of Arpachshad]

2. Beyond Macao rose a very lofty mountain from which all of China could be viewed. When Don Bosco came up to it, he saw, standing atop the mountain, a most resplendent angel whose light illumined the remotest regions. The country round about the mountain was a vast kingdom inhabited by a people unknown [to him]. The Angel held aloft in his right hand a sword which shone like a very bright flame; with his left hand he pointed to the surrounding region. He said to Don Bosco: "*Angelus Arphaxad vocat vos ad proelianda bella Domini et ad congregandos populos in horrea Domini.*"³² His words, however, were not, as they had been at other times, a command, but rather a proposal.

A wonderful throng of angels, whose names Don Bosco did not learn or was unable to retain, stood around him. Among them was Louis Colle, in the company of a large group of youngsters. They were singing along with him, as he sung God's praises.

All around the mountain, up to its foot and on its slopes, lived a great number of people. They were conversing among themselves in a language Don Bosco could not understand. He understood only what the angel was telling him. Don Bosco said to [the members of] his Council: "I cannot begin to describe what I saw. Such things may be seen and grasped, but they defy explanation. I saw different spectacles at once, and these continuously transformed the view which confronted me. At one time it looked like the plain of Mesopotamia; at another, a very high mountain. The very mountain on which the angel stood took on continuously changing forms, and the people that dwelt on it seemed to be flitting about like shadows."

[Lemoyne's Comment on Arpachshad and China]

(Note that up to the time of the dream Don Bosco did not know who Arpachshad was. After the dream he talked of nothing else. He had someone search through biblical dictionaries, histories of nations, works on geography,

³¹ "The curse will cease." Cf. also note 25 above.

³² "The Angel of Arpachshad calls you to fight the Lord's battles and to gather peoples into the Lord's storehouses."

and periodicals, and finally discovered that the Chinese are really descendants of Arpachshad. Now he talks of nothing else. He even seems to think that soon we shall be invited to China. In this belief, he is now wholly occupied with learning all he can about the origin of those peoples.)

[Scene 3: The Nameless Angel of Australia]

3. Finally Don Bosco seemed to find himself in Australia. An Angel was present there too, but he had no name. He was walking with the people, urging them and guiding them in a southerly direction. Australia did not appear as a continent, but as an archipelago of many islands, inhabited by people of different characteristics and features. A great number of children lived in those islands. They were trying to cross over to Don Bosco and to the Salesians with him, but were prevented by the great distances and the [stretches of] water that lay between us. Yet they were holding their hands out toward us and crying: "Come and help us! Why do you not finish the work which your fathers began?" Many of the youngsters after walking some distance gave up. But some of them, making their way with great effort through the midst of ferocious wild beasts, joined the Salesians. (Don Bosco did not recognize any of those sons of his.) Then the youngsters began to sing: "*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.*"³³

Large clusters of islands could be seen at various distances, but Don Bosco could not pick out any details. He felt, however, that globally speaking, this indicated God's intention of entrusting a portion of that evangelical [mission] field to the Salesians, though in future times. Their labors will bear fruit, because the Lord will stand by them always—provided they will not prove unworthy.

[Narrator's Closing Comments]

Don Bosco exclaimed: "If I could embalm and preserve about fifty of the Salesians that are now active among you, they would see, 500 years hence, what a stupendous future Divine Providence has in store for us—if we are faithful. Within 150 or 200 years the Salesians would be masters of the whole world.

"We shall always find favor in the eyes even of evil people, because our special apostolate is such that it calls forth everyone's good will, of good and bad people alike. There may be fanatics who will want to destroy us, but these will be isolated attempts which will not win support from others.

"The important thing is that the Salesians do not yield to love of ease and do not shrink from work. Even if only the present works be maintained, [the Salesians] will have a long future assured, provided they do not give in to the vice of gluttony.

³³ "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

"The Salesian Society will prosper materially, if we endeavor to support and spread the [*Salesian*] *Bulletin*; it will prosper morally, if we continue and extend the Work of the Sons of Mary Help of Christians. This institution will produce for us able confreres, committed to their vocation."

My dear Bishop, this is all I have been able to learn from Don Bosco in several painful attempts. The latest explanations, gotten from him only a few days ago, are those with which I began this letter; they are the most important. Don Bosco believes this dream to be a confirmation of those that went before. He never stops thinking and talking about it. [...]

[iv] Comments on the Arpachshad Scene and on the Itinerary.

The Arpachshad scene figures as the most important of the three related in the dream. It is the one that captured the limelight in the original narration. It is the most extended, and it underwent the greatest development in the tradition of the text, while the other two shorter scenes remained practically identical throughout. Further, after the research and the identification of Arpachshad with China, that country (not Africa, nor Australia) became the focus of Don Bosco's missionary interest, practically an obsession. As shown above, in the *Letter to Cagliero* Lemoyne writes: "He talks of nothing else. He even seems to think that we shall soon be called to [undertake a mission in] China. In this belief, he is now wholly occupied in learning all he can about the origin of those peoples." In *Documenti* Lemoyne adds: "[Don Bosco] expressed his conviction that, if he had 20 missionaries to send [to China], they would be triumphantly received, in spite of the persecution."³⁴

The identification of Arpachshad with China affected the development and shaping of the whole scene, especially with regard to the location of the mountain. In the *Lemoyne Report*, which presumably represents the original narration, there is no attempt to locate the mountain, though Arpachshad is already identified with China.³⁵ In the light of this identification, with the introduction of the journey structure and its itinerary (which included the stations of Hong Kong, Macao and China) it must have seemed appropriate that the mountain of Arpachshad should be located in that area. Hence, the scene now opens with the words: "Don Bosco found himself in the vicinity of Macao, before a very lofty mountain" (*Appendix*); "Beyond Macao rose a very lofty mountain from which all of China could be descried" (*Letter to Cagliero*). It would seem, then, that the geographical location of the mountain on which the

³⁴ *Documenti* XXX, p. 383; *FDBM* 1,112 C2. Cf. note 19 above.

³⁵ Cf. note 21 above.

angel stood, and the geographical details given with it, are consequent upon the identification of Arpachshad with China.³⁶

The *itinerary* associated with the dream's journey structure is first given in the *Appendix*, where, as has been pointed out, it comprises eighteen geographical locations or "stations." It appears next in the *Letter to Cagliero*, where three of these locations (Shinar, Mt. Ararat, and Senegal) are omitted.³⁷ Their omission might be explained from the fact that Shinar and Mt. Ararat, having a purely Biblical significance, would have seemed anomalous; and Senegal would have had Don Bosco backtracking from the Caspian Sea to the west coast of Africa. However, these three stations reappear both in *Documenti* and in the *Biographical Memoirs*, since these versions are not based on the reconstruction of the *Letter to Cagliero* but on the earlier *Lemoyne Report* supplemented by the material of the *Appendix*.³⁸

The itinerary contains other anomalies. For example, it is hard to see a reason why the Diego Ramírez Islands (barren, ice-bound little pieces of real estate, situated near the Antarctic circle, and hence quite a bit off course) should figure in the itinerary. Further, and this is even more remarkable, central Africa is not mentioned among the "stations" of the itinerary; and yet one of the main scenes (the Angel of Ham) is set "in the middle of Africa".

The fantastic journey, although apparently "a blur in Don Bosco's mind," may well have been the authentic structure of the dream. But the spelled-out itinerary might be mere geographical lore recalled, perhaps under Lemoyne's prodding. In any case, the names should not be understood as locating prophetically future Salesian works.

F. Desramaut has rightly remarked that the dream (that is, its reconstruction) as it has come down to us, entirely on Lemoyne's authority, is problematic.³⁹ The foregoing discussion would tend to bear this out.

III. Textual Tradition and Text of the Fifth Missionary Dream (the *Barcelona* Dream of April 9-10, 1886)

This is the last of the great missionary dreams, in fact, the last important dream, according to Ceria.⁴⁰ In it Don Bosco, standing on a hill near Becchi, is addressed by a maiden leading a flock and a throng of children. She reminds him

³⁶ Cf. also interpretative comments, p. 43-45 below.

³⁷ Cf. note 29 and related text, above.

³⁸ Cf. notes 19 and 20 and related text, above.

³⁹ "An important dream, but also a 'problematic' one, at least in the shape in which we now know it" [Desramaut, *Études* VIII (*Cahiers*), p. 120, note 68].

⁴⁰ cf. *IBM* XVIII, p. 16.

of his first vocation dream, and shows him the Salesian works of the future along the Santiago-Central Africa-Peking axis.

The dream took place on the night of April 9 - 10 at Sarriá (hence the designation, "*Barcelona Dream*") at the start of Don Bosco's month-long visit to Spain (April 7-May 7, 1886). On this, his last long trip, Don Bosco was accompanied by Fr. Rua and by his secretary, Carlo Maria Viglietti. The party was met at the frontier by Fr. Giovanni Branda, who then acted as their companion and guide throughout most of their stay. Viglietti kept a careful record of Don Bosco's acts and words. This portion of Viglietti's Chronicle is often referred to as the "*Barcelona Diary*."⁴¹

1. Textual Tradition of the Fifth Missionary Dream

[1. *Viglietti Report*]

It was to these three Salesians that Don Bosco related the dream the following day. The faithful Viglietti recorded it in his original chronicle under the date of April 11, 1886. This account (here designated as *Viglietti Report*) is our chief source for the dream narrative. It consists of four pages of small script (in Viglietti's hand) in a note book, with occasional interlinear additions.⁴²

[2. *Viglietti Letter*]

Immediately Viglietti by letter (here designated as *Viglietti Letter*) sent an account of the dream to Fr. Lemoyne—a letter which Fr. Desramaut finds

⁴¹ Seminarian Carlo Maria Viglietti entered Don Bosco's "service" as his secretary in 1884, and remained almost constantly at his side to the end. His chronicle, begun on May 20, 1884 and continued until Don Bosco's death is an important biographical source for the Saint's last years. His *Barcelona Diary* chronicles Don Bosco's visit to Spain (April 7-May 7, 1886), and Ceria makes abundant use of it in *IBM XVIII*, p. 66-117. It was studied critically by Ramón Alberdi, *Una ciudad para un Santo*. Barcelona: Tibidabo, 1966. Although love of, and enthusiasm for his subject led Viglietti into some exaggeration in presenting events surrounding Don Bosco's visit, Viglietti's fidelity in reporting Don Bosco's words (dreams in particular) is beyond doubt [cf. Desramaut, *Études VIII (Cahiers)*, p. 99f.].

Fr. Giovanni Battista Branda (1842-1927) served as director of the school at Sarriá (Barcelona) from its founding in 1883 until 1889. Two months prior to Don Bosco's visit, he had been the protagonist in a famous episode which is usually referred to as the "*Barcelona Bilocation*" [cf. *IBM XVIII*, 34-39].

⁴² The *Viglietti Report* is in ASC 110: Cronachette, Viglietti: [*Original Chronicle*], 11 Aprile 1886, Note Book 3, p. 84-87; *FDBM* 1,224 D6f. (each frame contains 2 pages of the note book).

As Desramaut explains, the first draft chronicle is contained in eight small note books, reproduced in *FDBM* 1,222 D2 to 1,227 D8 (*Original Chronicle*). This chronicle was later edited in five or six (larger) composition books (*Transcribed Chronicle*); etc. [cf. Desramaut, *Études VIII (Cahiers)*, p. 80].

"problematic."⁴³ The original of this letter is not to be found in the Lemoyne files of the *Fondo Don Bosco*. There we have only two undated calligraphic copies, differing in format, but identical in text.⁴⁴ These copies appear to have been made for the purpose of public reading, in compliance with Don Bosco's request.⁴⁵

[3 *Documenti*]

Lemoyne would obviously have had the original of the *Letter* in his possession. And it is the *Letter* (in its letter format), not the *Report* from Viglietti's chronicle, that became the source of the dream narrative edited in *Documenti*.⁴⁶

The calligraphic copies and the *Documenti* copy of the *Letter* differ in some respects: (1) In *Documenti* the letter is dated and its introduction has one additional paragraph describing the emotion of both the narrator and the hearers. In this respect, it would seem that the *Documenti* form is to be preferred, for it is likely that the date and the additional paragraph were removed in the calligraphic copies for public reading. (2) The *Letter* text of the dream itself has been subjected to some editing in *Documenti*, as was to be expected. This consists of stylistic variations and some changes. The text of the dream of the calligraphic copies, on the contrary, is much closer to that of the *Viglietti Report* and probably represents the dream text of the original letter. (3) The conclusion of the letter in the two versions is very close. (4) In *Documenti* Lemoyne adds further interesting comments.

[4. *Biographical memoirs*]

In the *Biographical Memoirs* Ceria, dispensing with the letter format, used the *Documenti* text both for the dream narrative itself (again with stylistic variations and some changes) and for the additional information that surrounds the dream narrative.⁴⁷

⁴³ Cf. *Études* VIII (*Cahiers*), p. 122f., note 79.

⁴⁴ ASC 111: Sogni, Lemoyne, *FDBM* 1,321 E6f. and 8-10.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Letter's* introduction, p. 24, below.

⁴⁶ The *Letter* is edited in *Documenti* XXXI [c. 31], p. 213-215, ASC 110, Cronachette, Lemoyne-Doc, "Sogno: Il Bricco del Pino," *FDBM* 1,120 D4-6, with the date of April 11, 1886. It appears that Viglietti wrote to Lemoyne the very same day on which Don Bosco related the dream, and on which he made the entry in his chronicle.

⁴⁷ Ceria writes that the text of the *Biographical Memoirs* [IBM XVIII, p. 71-74] is "that of [the] Viglietti [Letter], slightly edited by Lemoyne [in *Documenti*] as to style" [*Ibid.*, p. 72]. There is, however, additional editing.

Lemoyne sent an account of the dream (that is, a copy of the *Viglietti Letter*) to Bishop Cagliero, with a cover letter of his own [cf. IBM XVIII, p. 74], in which he makes some interesting comments to be noted below [cf. note 62].

2. The Text of the Fifth Missionary Dream

Our text will that of the *Viglietti Report*, which is to be regarded as the primary and best representative of the dream narration. (The few interlinear additions and corrections are underscored; and the chief changes or variants introduced in versions subsequent to the original *Viglietti Report* are given in notes.)

Further, for a better understanding of the thinking of the people involved, also the introduction and the conclusion of the *Viglietti Letter* will be given in a table showing the calligraphic copy and *Documenti* in parallel. This will be followed by Lemoyne's comments.

[i] Text According to the *Viglietti Report*

April 11, 1886

[Reporter's Introduction]

This morning Don Bosco summoned me, Fr. Rua, and Fr. Branda. With great emotion and copious tears he described for us the future of our Society. He saw it in a dream which he had last night, that is [rather], the night of April 9-10.⁴⁸ He wept [as he spoke]; all of us wept with him. He would exclaim, "Mary! Mary!" Emotion and tears forced him to discontinue the narration several times.

The dream then is as follows:

[Dream Setting: the Becchi Hills]

Don Bosco [dreamt that he] was near Castelnuovo, [and was standing] on the *Bricco del Pino* [Pine Knoll], near the *Sharnau Valley*. He looked round in every direction, but could see nothing except a thickly wooded forest, and a great number of little mushrooms.

[Preliminary Scene: Brother Joseph Rossi and Fr. Rua]

"This," Don Bosco was thinking, "is Joseph Rossi's feudal estate; therefore he should be in the area somewhere!"⁴⁹ Sure enough, a little later he spotted [Brother] Rossi on a faraway knoll. He was gazing down on the valleys below, and appeared to be wrapped in serious thought. Don Bosco called out to him, but Rossi merely nodded back with what seemed a very worried look on his

⁴⁸ This chronicle is dated April 11. Viglietti states that on the morning of April 11 Don Bosco related the dream he had "last night (*la notte scorsa*)" which would be the night of April 10-11. But the dream occurred the night of April 9-10, as Viglietti assures us. I suggest, therefore, that when he adds, "*that is*, the night of April 9-10 (*cioè dal 9 al 10 Aprile*)," he meant: "*rather*, the night of April 9-10."

⁴⁹ Don Bosco had facetiously bestowed titles of nobility and fictitious feudal domains on Joseph Rossi and other Salesian brothers [cf. *EBM* VIII, 101f.].

face. Turning in the opposite direction Don Bosco caught sight of Fr. Rua in the distance. Like [Brother] Rossi, he was seated quietly [on a knoll] absorbed in serious thought. Don Bosco kept calling out to them, but got no reply.

[Act I: The Children, the Maiden and the Flock]

Then Don Bosco walked down the hillock he was on and climbed up another. As before, from the top he could see a forest, but this one was under cultivation and lined with streets and roads. From that observation point he scanned the far horizon.

[Scene 1: The Children]

But before anything came into view, he heard the noisy cries of a great throng of children. He tried to discover the source of the din, but was unable to do so, as he didn't see anybody. Of a sudden, the noisy voices were drowned out by alarming shouts, as though some serious mishap had befallen them. He finally caught sight of a large group of youngsters. They ran up to him and gathered around him. They kept saying: "We waited such a long time for you. Finally you are with us, and we will not let you go away."

[Scene 2: The Maiden⁵⁰ and the Flock]

Don Bosco... [sic] As he was standing with the children, a very large flock of lambs led by a maiden appeared.⁵¹ She separated the youngsters from the sheep, placing them on opposite sides. Then, standing by Don Bosco, she asked: "Do you see what lies before you?"

"I do indeed," he replied.

"Well then," [she continued.] "Do you remember the dream you had at the age of 10?"

"Not really," answered Don Bosco; "my mind is pretty tired, and I can't remember much at the moment."

"Well," rejoined the maiden young shepherdess, "Think about it, and it will come back to you."

⁵⁰ The female apparition in the dream is referred to by the following names: *donzella* (maiden); *pastorella* (young shepherdess); *maestra* (teacher). Toward the end she is identified as *Maria* (Mary) (though awkwardly only in a third-person reference by the maiden herself), and *Vergine SS.* (Most Holy Virgin). These terms are not carried forward with consistency in subsequent editions of the text.

⁵¹ The *Viglietti Letter* has instead: "Don Bosco understood nothing of this; but as he stood there in utter amazement looking at the children, a very large flock of lambs led by a young shepherdess appeared."

Documenti and the *Biographical Memoirs* have instead: "Don Bosco understood nothing of this, and was wondering what those children wanted from him; but as he stood there in utter amazement looking at the children, a very large flock of lambs led by a young shepherdess appeared."

[Act II: Salesian Works on the Line Santiago-Central Africa-Peking]

[Scene 1: Plotting the Line]

She called the children over, and then said to Don Bosco: "Look in this direction, as far as you can;" [and to the children:] "You, too, all of you, look and read what's written;" [Again to Don Bosco:] "So, what do you see?"

"I see mountains," Don Bosco replied; "and further on, the sea; then beyond [I see] hills, more mountains and seas."

"And I," cried one of the children, "can read, 'Valparaiso'."

Another child said: "I can read, 'Santiago'."

"And I can read both," said a third.

"Very well, then," the maiden⁵² added [turning to Don Bosco], "Take that as a starting point, and you will have a measure of what the Salesians are called to do in the future. Now turn in this other direction. Plot a second line, and look closely."

"I see [more] mountains, hills and seas."

"And at the very end," a group of children (the youngsters were straining to see) shouted together, "We can read, 'Peking'."⁵³

"Fine," the teacher⁵⁴ said [to Don Bosco], "now trace one line from one end to the other, from Peking to Santiago; fix a mid-point in the center of Africa, and you will have a good idea of what the Salesians are called to do."

[Scene 2: The Salesian Works]

"But *how*?" Don Bosco wanted to know, "how are we to do all this? Distances are enormous; places, difficult; the Salesians, few."

"Do not fret. This is for your sons to accomplish, for your sons' sons, and for their sons after them. Only, hold the line firmly."⁵⁵

"But," Don Bosco objected, "where will all the personnel we need come from?"

⁵² The *Viglietti Letter*, *Documenti*, and the *Biographical Memoirs* have instead: "young shepherdess."

⁵³ *Documenti* and the *Biographical Memoirs* add: "At that moment Don Bosco caught sight of a great city. A wide river spanned by a number of large bridges flowed through it."

⁵⁴ *Documenti* and the *Biographical Memoirs* have instead: "the maiden, who seemed to be their teacher."

⁵⁵ The *Biographical Memoirs* add: "in the observance of the rules and of the spirit of the Society."

"Come up here and look. Do you see those 300 missionaries at the ready?⁵⁶ There are others behind them, and yet others. Draw a line from Santiago to the center of Africa. What do you see?"

"I see 10 mission centers (*centri di stazioni*)," replied Don Bosco.

"Right," [she explained]. "The centers you see will include novitiates and seminaries, and will produce missionaries in abundance, so that those regions will be properly cared for. Now turn to that other side [and look]. What you see are 10 more mission centers (*centri di stazioni*) [on a line] from the center of Africa to Peking. These centers will provide missionaries for all those areas. There is Hong Kong; there is Calcutta; as far as (*sino al*) Madagascar. These and many other centers will have houses, seminaries, novitiates."

[Dialogue: Preparation for the Mission]

Don Bosco, who had been listening [to these words] and was carefully weighing [their significance], finally said: "Where will I get so many missionaries from? And how can I send them into those areas? Savages live in those areas, and they feed on our flesh [*sic*]!"⁵⁷ Heretics live there too, as well as persecutors!⁵⁸ How are we to deal with this?"

"Listen then," replied the maiden.⁵⁹ "Start working at it with a will. One thing above all must be observed and recommended—that my children practice Mary's [characteristic] virtue always."

"Yes, I think I understand, and I agree! I will explain, inculcate, and preach your words for all [Salesians to hear]."

"And be on your guard," continued the Most Holy Virgin,⁶⁰ "against the error that is so common today—the free mingling by those who cultivate human knowledge with those who pursue divine knowledge. Heavenly wisdom must avoid contact (*vuol essere separata*) with earthly wisdom."

Don Bosco wanted to respond; but everything⁶¹ vanished from view. The dream was over.

⁵⁶ *Documenti* have instead: "500 missionaries." The *Biographical Memoirs*: "50 missionaries."

⁵⁷ The *Viglietti Letter*, *Documenti* and the *Biographical Memoirs* have instead: "human flesh."

⁵⁸ *Documenti* have instead: "Heathen persecutors."

⁵⁹ The *Viglietti Letter*, *Documenti* and the *Biographical Memoirs* have instead: "young shepherdess."

⁶⁰ *Documenti* have: "continued the Most Holy Virgin, for that is what the young shepherdess really was." The *Biographical Memoirs* inexplicably omit the whole phrase.

⁶¹ *Documenti* have: "the whole vision before him." The *Biographical Memoirs* have: "the vision."

[Chronicler's Concluding Comment]

The above is a mere sketch of the dream. Don Bosco, moreover, will have to clear up many points—the mushrooms, the woods, the cities, etc. These are all things that demand much more development.

[ii] *Viglietti Letter*—Introduction and Conclusion According to both Calligraphic Copy and *Documenti*

The dream text of the *Viglietti Letter*, at all points where it differs from the *Viglietti Report*, has already been given above, in footnotes to the latter. But the introduction and conclusion of the *Letter* deserve separate attention and will be given here according both the calligraphic copy and *Documenti*, in parallel for the purpose of comparison.

Letter in Calligraphic Copy [no date] [Introduction] Dear Fr. Lemoyne,	Letter in <i>Documenti</i> Barcelona, April 11, 1886 [Introduction] Reverend and Dear Fr.
I am keeping my promise, and I am sending you a copy of the dream that Papa had on the night of April 9-10. This, however, is only a sketch of a magnificent and protracted vision depicting the history and splendid future which God has in store for the Salesians. Don Bosco wishes that [the dream] be read to [a gathering of] all the Oratory superiors. He hopes it will be an encouragement [to all concerned] to make a good start in the great work [that lies ahead].	Lemoyne, I am keeping my promise, and I am sending you a copy of the dream which Don Bosco has had just recently. This, however, is only a sketch of a magnificent and protracted vision depicting the history and splendid future which God has in store for the Salesians. Don Bosco wishes that [the dream] be read to [a gathering of] all the Oratory superiors. He hopes it will be an encouragement [to all concerned] to make a good start in the great work [that lies ahead].
	This morning Don Bosco summoned me, Fr. Rua, and Fr. Branda and, with great emotion and copious tears, told us a beautiful dream he had last night, that is [rather] the night of April 9-10. The narration was punctuated with frequent sobs, his and ours. The dream is a description of the future of our Society. It follows:

[Text of the Dream follows]

So—Don Bosco [dreamt that he] was near Castelnuovo [...]

[Conclusion of Letter]

Sobs and tears forced Papa to break off his narration several times. At the end he exclaimed: "Oh! How Mary loves us!"

I cannot think of a better way to bring my writing to a close. Therefore I go no further. Best regards from Don Bosco and Fr. Rua; and please accept my respectful good wishes. Now and always,

Your affectionate son, C. V.

[Text of the dream follows]

Don Bosco [dreamt that he] was near Castelnuovo [...].

[Conclusion of Letter]

While Don Bosco was speaking, those who were listening to his narration of the dream, were at several points moved to exclaim, "Mary! Mary!"

Fr. Viglietti closed his letter with the words: "Sobs and tears forced Papa to break off his narration several times. At the end he exclaimed: "Oh! How Mary loves us!"

I can't think of a better way of bringing my writing to a close. Therefore I go no further. Best regards from Don Bosco, and Fr. Rua; and please accept my respectful good wishes. Now and always,

Affectionately yours, Carlo M. Viglietti.

[iii] Lemoyne's Additional Comments in *Documenti*

In *Documenti* Lemoyne adds:

NB: What has been set down here is a mere sketch of the dream. Don Bosco (so he himself avers) would want to clarify many points in it: Rossi (material concerns?); Rua (spiritual concerns?); the untilled forest and the mushrooms (a non-evangelized situation?); the forest crisscrossed by streets, the cities (an evangelized situation?); the lambs (those called to the priesthood?). All these matters call for an explanation. Fr. Lemoyne.⁶²

⁶² In the *Report* (and possibly also in a postscript of the original *Letter*) Viglietti had already asked similar questions: "The above is a mere sketch of the dream. Don Bosco, moreover, will have to clear up many points—the mushrooms, the woods, the cities, etc. These are all things that demand much more development."

Back in Turin [from Spain], in discussing this dream with Fr. Lemoyne, Don Bosco exclaimed in calm but earnest tones: "Oh, the time will come when the Salesians will be established in China, and will assemble on the banks of the river that flows by Peking! From various regions of the Great [Celestial] Empire they will gather together on the left bank; and likewise on the right bank, from various parts of Tataria. How glorious a day that will be for our Congregation when [Salesians] from one side and [Salesians] from the other will meet and shake hands! But time is in God's power!"

[iv] Concluding Comment

The foregoing presentation indicates that the text of the dream itself can be none other than that of the *Viglietti Report* as recorded in the original draft chronicle. The subsequent documents add but little to it that is of any value. Lemoyne's additional material ascribed to Don Bosco (namely, the vision of the city and of the river in the dream,⁶³ and the comment on the Salesians in China⁶⁴) is of special interest and will be discussed below.

Part Two: Significance of Don Bosco's Missionary Dreams

In the first installment of our study and in the foregoing pages we have sought to place Don Bosco's five missionary dreams in an historical context, that is, within the framework of Don Bosco's option for the missions and of his evolving missionary goals for the Salesian Society. We have also sought to clarify the textual tradition on the basis of archival documents, and to establish a reliable text for each of the five dream narratives.

Such work already points up the general significance of these dreams for Don Bosco's and the Salesian Society's apostolate.

Here Lemoyne expands the inquiry. Such questions reveal the belief and the expectation that everything in Don Bosco's dreams should be revelatory or prophetic—that is, that each element in the dream's manifest content should be the symbol or allegory of a present or future reality or event.

In the above mentioned letter to Bishop Cagliero, Lemoyne wrote: "As an [authorized?] interpreter I would say that Fr. Rua represents the worrisome spiritual condition [of the Society], and Joseph Rossi, the no less entangled material situation. The [envisioned] future offers encouragement to both" [*IBM XVIII*, p. 74; cf. note 46 above]. But he went no further.

⁶³ Cf. note 53 above.

⁶⁴ Cf. text immediately above.

At the same time, by identifying at least generally the situations that may have provided the external and internal stimuli for the dreams in question, we have also in some respects indicated their psychological and religious significance.

It is now time to address more specifically the question of the meaning and significance of these dreams. To this end, it would be helpful to recall what has been outlined in Part One of the first installment of this essay, especially the comments on Don Bosco's dreams as real dreams, and on their revelatory character.⁶⁵ The distinction made between the dream experience itself and the dream narrative, which may already have developed into a narrative interpretation, is especially important. At the same time we have also stressed the great value of these narratives in as much as they illuminate Don Bosco's projects (or hopes) for a worldwide expansion of the Salesian work and articulate the possibilities which he foresaw for this mission.

I. Initial Questions

Much has been made of the revelatory character of Don Bosco's missionary dreams. Specifically, it has been claimed that, beyond the general hope or projection of a worldwide expansion of the Salesian work, in them Don Bosco was gifted with "knowledge of hidden things" and with foreknowledge of the establishment of Salesian works in particular regions or cities. Hence, Salesians everywhere have taken great pride in the claim that a certain foundation or work fulfilled Don Bosco's prediction. Let us first comment on these two claims.

1. Knowledge of Hidden Things

It is claimed that Don Bosco in these dreams evinces knowledge that he could not have obtained by human means. The claim refers especially to the geographical and physical characteristics of the regions seen and the populations observed.

[i] Dream images of South America

In *Dream I* Don Bosco found himself in an immense plain which "at its farthest boundary [...] was wholly encircled by jagged mountains [...]"⁶⁶ This plain was later identified as Patagonia. The image of the plain occurs also in *Dream III*, where Don Bosco finds himself "on a vast plain situated between Chile and the Argentine Republic," which a little later is described as "the plain

⁶⁵ *Installment I* in *JSS* III/2, p. 28-35.

⁶⁶ *Barberis Report* [*Installment I*, p. 48].

of Chile, Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina.”⁶⁷ In *Dream II* Don Bosco speaks of various features of the Andean Cordilleras, of virgin forests, of rivers, of the narrowness of lower Patagonia, etc. This is geographical lore, whether accurate or inaccurate, derived from maps and books, surfacing in the dream as fantastic images. It would be a mistake to take these images as describing real places from revealed knowledge. In any case, the editor of the first dream narrative in the *Biographical Memoirs* saw the need of revising the description of Patagonia: “At its farthest boundary one could distinguish the outline of jagged mountains.”⁶⁸

The same should be said of the idea repeatedly expressed by Don Bosco in the first three dreams as well as in writings of the same period—that Patagonia was a completely unknown land, a no man’s land (that is, a land of “savages”), and not subject to the Argentine Republic. This was a view derived from current European literature.⁶⁹

Don Bosco’s “knowledge of hidden things” communicated through dreams is claimed especially in connection with *Dream II*. On this subject, and with particular reference to what this dream says about Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, Ceria writes: “Don Bosco presents us with a body of positive data which he could have learnt neither from explorers nor from geographers. There had in fact been no exploration of any sort in those southernmost latitudes, whether for tourist or for scientific purposes.”⁷⁰

Then, referring to explorations of the Salesian Fr. Albert De Agostini in Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, Ceria lists four areas in which Don Bosco’s shows such mysterious knowledge. (1) The structure of the Andean Cordilleras: Don Bosco states that these mountains do not rise as a single, sheer mountain range (as commonly believed), but as a complex system of ranges intersected and divided by great “inlets” or valleys. As an example of this latter feature, Ceria cites the “Baker Inlet,” in southern Chile, “the most extensive of the Patagonian fjords, which winds for over 400 km. through the mountains, between the 46° and 52° of latitude south.” (2) The system of railway lines: Don Bosco speaks of railways where none were in existence at the time—railways

⁶⁷ Lemoyne A [*Installment I*, p. 85 and 86].

⁶⁸ *EBM* X, 46.

⁶⁹ It was in this conviction that Don Bosco had proposed to the Italian Government the establishment of a “colony” of Italian immigrants in the region. Ceria states that Don Bosco “had been led into this error by several badly informed Italian authors and unreliable encyclopedias and maps” [*EBM* XII, 87f.; Ceria, *Ep* III, 44f.].

For a more detailed discussion, cf. Jesús Borrego, “Primer proyecto patagónico de Don Bosco,” *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 5 (1986) 21-72, esp. p. 28-33. [Cited as Borrego, *Proyecto*]

⁷⁰ *IBM* XVI, 395.

which at the time of Ceria's writing were either already in operation or in planning. (This would be an instance of foreknowledge and prophetic fulfillment). (3) The mineral riches yet to be discovered, such as petroleum and coal: Don Bosco speaks of the great mineral resources [in the Cordilleras]; and Ceria cites petroleum strikes at Comodoro Rivadavia⁷¹ and in other parts of South America. (4) The geophysical character of the Fuegin archipelago and the distribution of the native population on those islands: Don Bosco accurately describes those islands and their populations.⁷²

[ii] Geophysical Features and Mineral Resources

Here is what Don Bosco says about these matters. With reference to the Cordilleras as a whole (not to the Patagonian or Darwin range, *pace* Ceria and De Agostini), in the long autograph note reporting the conversation heard in the hall at the equator, Don Bosco writes:

People think (and geographers make the same mistake) that the [South] American Cordilleras are like a wall that divides that part of the world in two. But it is not so. Those long and high mountain ranges form numerous "inlets" (*fanno molti seni*, are crossed by numerous valleys?) that are more than one thousand kilometers long. Within them are forests as yet unexplored [...]. Coal, petroleum, lead, copper, iron, silver, and gold lie buried in those mountains, where the Creator's almighty hand placed them for people's benefit. Oh cordillera, Cordilleras [*sic*], how rich are your eastern slopes!"⁷³

Further, according to a marginal note in Lemoyne's hand, "between the 15th and 20th degree [of lat. south] there lay a very long and wide 'inlet' (*seno*) that began at a point forming a lake." The region is not otherwise pinpointed, but is apparently connected with that northern segment of the Cordilleras. As reported, Don Bosco has this to say about the region:

I saw numerous mines of precious metals, inexhaustible coal pits, petroleum deposits more abundant than any discovered anywhere. And this is not all. To my amazement I saw that at many points the Cordilleras opened up and formed valleys, the existence of which is totally unknown to our geographers. They [mistakenly] imagine that in

⁷¹ A city on the Argentine coast (not in the Andean range) at about 46° lat. south.

⁷² *IBM* XVI, 395-398.

⁷³ *Lemoyne B* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 69].

those regions mountain ranges form a kind of sheer wall. In those "inlets" (*seni*), in those valleys, which may be as long as one thousand kilometers, live dense populations which have had as yet no contact with Europeans—whole nations which are as yet completely unknown [to the civilized world].⁷⁴

Thus far in the dream nothing is said about Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego specifically. When he finally got to the Straits of Magellan, Don Bosco did indeed see that "the ground for miles around was strewn with stores of coal, as well as planks, beams and other kinds of lumber." And a marginal note in Lemoyne's hand adds that there were also "huge heaps of metal partly in ore form and partly refined."⁷⁵ But, to begin with, there is no mention of petroleum (so much for Ceria's petroleum strikes). And secondly, with regard to lumber, although forest abounds in those southern regions, it is mostly to be found on the Pacific slopes and islands. Stony steppe and desert shrub are the main features of the Santa Cruz Province on the Argentine side. Coal, on the other hand, is noted.⁷⁶

For an assessment, we should bear in mind that, for historical reasons, a fair amount of reliable information was available to Don Bosco regarding the old Spanish colonies in the upper Andean regions.

Now we also know that by 1876 Don Bosco had gathered quite a bit of information on Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. In 1876, over his signature (though authored by Fr. Barberis) he had sent to Rome a very substantial study entitled, *Patagonia and the Southernmost Regions of the American Continent*.⁷⁷ In his chronicle Fr. Barberis documents the feverish research, on his and Don Bosco's part, that led to the production of this essay of 164 large pages. At one point he quotes Don Bosco as saying: "I have reached the age of 60 and more

⁷⁴ Lemoyne B [cf. *Installment I*, p. 75].

We shall return to this passage under a different heading, below.

⁷⁵ Lemoyne B [cf. *Installment I*, p. 76].

⁷⁶ Cf. *Hammond Citation World Atlas*. Maplewood, NJ: Hammond Inc., 1977, p. 141.

⁷⁷ First discovered and studied by the Salesian Fr. Ernesto Zsanto in 1984, then published in 1986, this work has now been critically edited, with extensive introduction, notes and appendices: Giovanni (s.) Bosco, *La Patagonia e le Terre Australi del Continente Americano*. Introduzione y texto crítico por Jesús Borrego (Piccola Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Salesiano, 11). Roma: LAS, 1988. [Cited as Borrego, *Patagonia*]

Borrego points out that Ceria knew that Barberis had prepared some kind of report [cf. *EBM* XII, 220]; but was not acquainted with the report itself [Borrego *Patagonia*, pp. 3f.].

[1876] without practically even having heard of Patagonia. Who would have thought that the day would come when I should have to research it in its every aspect and in all its detail." (In the essay on Patagonia, by way of introduction, the author lists his sources—ten titles.) Then Barberis continues: "I had provided two maps, one of Patagonia and the other of So[uth] America. We began to study the geography [of Patagonia] in detail [...]. We spent much time in studying such features as gulfs, the straits of Magellan, and the islands roundabout."⁷⁸ Don Bosco continued to research what had quickly become *his* mission field with unrelenting determination; so that by the time of *Dream II* in 1883, beyond his general geographical, historical and cultural background, he must have built up quite a store of specific information, complete or defective, correct or incorrect.⁷⁹

A point made by Ceria concerns the description of the islands in the Tierra del Fuego archipelago. The essay on Patagonia, in the section dealing with the physical geography of the area, describes the islands in the archipelago pretty much as they are described in the dream narrative.⁸⁰

And if it is nonetheless true that the essay on Patagonia gives no information on the mineral resources of the region,⁸¹ one should bear in mind, as noted above, that such information was available for the area of the old Spanish colonies. After all the Spaniards had been exploiting the mineral and human resources of those Andean regions since the sixteenth century. On that basis, Don Bosco could easily extrapolate and make deductions applicable, or inapplicable, to other areas. But, even so, *Dream II* shows that, while he can confidently describe the tremendous resources of the northern Andean regions, he is not quite as explicit when speaking of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. As mentioned above, the only mineral mentioned for this area is coal. And it is mentioned in connection with the cultural and economic development of the area. On the other hand he mentions petroleum among the resources of the Cordilleras, where none is found.

⁷⁸ ASC 110 Cronachette.-Barberis, in Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 8.

We also know that before 1876, that is, from the time of the Argentine offer in 1874 to the writing of the essay on Patagonia in 1876, Don Bosco had already accumulated considerable information about the southern regions of Argentina and Chile, whether correct or incorrect [cf. Borrego, *Proyecto*, p. 42-50].

⁷⁹ Cf. Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 40-42.

⁸⁰ Cf. Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 46f. For the description of the islands in the dream, cf. *Installment I*, p. 72.

⁸¹ In a six-line paragraph on "Mineral Resources," the author merely writes: "The high mountains of the Andean Cordillera [in Patagonia] consist wholly of hard rock. The plain, on the other hand, is a patchwork of limestone, with large portions covered with sand and saline deposits [...]" [Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 51].

For the Andean countries of Peru, Ecuador and Colombia some petroleum is noted on Pacific coastal areas and on a couple of lower inland valleys. But all such considerations should not blind us to the fact that it is far more likely that all such ideas about mineral resources stemmed from Don Bosco's own cultural experience.⁸²

[iii] The Natives

With regard to the demographic situation, that is, the number and distribution of the native populations, in both the second and the third dream Don Bosco speaks of very large numbers. In *Dream II*, in his own autograph note dealing with the conversation heard in the hall, he writes: "A great number of savages in Australia, in India, in China, in Africa, and *particularly* in [South] America are still shrouded in the shadow of death. [...] Few [European missionaries] have the courage to brave long voyages [...] to save those *millions* of souls."⁸³ Again in the passage already quoted above (though not referring directly to Patagonia) he speaks of "dense populations" inhabiting the great Andean valleys.⁸⁴ And concluding the allegory of the rope in the same *Dream II*, the Interpreter tells Don Bosco: "These mountains [the Cordilleras] constitute a bank, a boundary. From these mountains to the ocean lies the harvest entrusted to the Salesians. These *thousands and millions* of people are waiting for your help, waiting for the faith."⁸⁵ Again in the second dream, with reference to the southern islands, Don Bosco says: "Some of these [islands] were inhabited by natives in *fairly large numbers*; other islands appeared sterile, stark, rocky and uninhabited; yet others were entirely capped with ice. To the west [were] numerous clusters of islands inhabited by savages in *large numbers*."⁸⁶ In

⁸² Mining, of coal in particular, was part of Don Bosco's cultural experience. Coal, in its various forms, had been used for power before Don Bosco's times. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the need for increased production of coke and gas for heating and illumination gave new impetus to the coal industry. Likewise, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the introduction of dynamite (replacing gun powder in blasting) and of various rotary drills greatly expanded the production of hard coal.

The same may be said for petroleum. The first well was drilled at Titusville, Pennsylvania (USA) in 1859. Within a few decades, oil drilling was widespread not only in the United States, but also in Europe, the Middle East and in East Asia [cf. *Encyclopedia Britannica, Micropedia* (15th ed., 1987), 3, p. 408; 8, p. 158; 9, p. 344]. For petroleum in the Andean countries, cf. *Hammond Citation World Atlas*, p. 127 & 130.

⁸³ Lemoyne B [cf. *Installment I*, p. 68].

⁸⁴ Cf. note 74 and related text above.

⁸⁵ Lemoyne B [cf. *Installment I*, p. 72f.].

⁸⁶ Lemoyne B [cf. *Installment I*, p. 72].

Dream III, speaking (somewhat anomalously) of the native peoples of the archipelago, he says: "I also observed a *great number* of savages scattered throughout the Pacific [region] down to the Gulf of Ancud, on the Straits of Magellan, at Cape Horn, in the Diego [Ramírez] and the Falkland Islands."⁸⁷

The author of the essay on Patagonia (hence, Don Bosco) supports such high estimate. In fact, after various calculations, he fixes the minimum number of the native population of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego at a cool four million.⁸⁸ This he does in spite of information to the contrary received from the missionaries in South America.⁸⁹

Don Bosco's ideas and descriptions of the natives seen in his dreams also require a comment. The "savages" seen in *Dream I* are described as "nearly naked, of extraordinary height and built [...], bronzed and dark-complexioned," a description which is more suited to natives of Romantic literature and of nineteenth-century encyclopedias than to any real Patagonian type.⁹⁰

This passage is cited by Ceria (on Fr. De Agostini's testimony) as proof of the accuracy of Don Bosco's mysterious knowledge [cf. *IBM XVI*, 397f.; cf. note 80 and related text, above].

⁸⁷ Lemoyne A [*Installment I*, p. 86].

⁸⁸ Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 22 and 159.

⁸⁹ Borrego cites various estimates of the number of natives, available to Don Bosco in 1876: (1) Fr. Cagliero: 30,000 in the Pampa, and in Patagonia 40,000 in all. [Cagliero to Fr. Chiala, April 4, 1876, *ASC* 273.3.1, in Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 22, note 80] (2) A. D'Orbigny: Araucanoans, 30,000; Fuegians, 4,000; Patagonians, Puelches, etc., 32,500. (3) F. Lacroix and N. Dally: from the Río Negro to Cape Horn, 8,000-10,000. (4) G. Moroni: From the Pampas to Cape Horn: 319,600, the highest estimate of any source. [Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 22, note 81] (5) R. Napp, V. Martin de Moussy and S. Kurzmanich, about 30,000 in all [Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 159, note to line 38].

The Salesian L. Carbajal gives the following estimates of the natives (in the "savage" state, that is, not yet "civilized"): At the beginning of the 19th century, from the Río Colorado to Cape Horn: 50,000. In 1880, Patagonia, 23,000; Tierra del Fuego, 8,000. In 1900 (time of writing): Patagonia, 5,500; Tierra del Fuego: 4,200 [cf. Lino Carbajal, *La Patagonia. Studi Generali*, 4 vol. San Benigno Canavese: Scuola Tipografica Salesiana, 1899-1900. (I: History, Physical Geography, Ethnography; II: Climate, Natural History; III: Economy; IV: Politics, Education.), I, p. 204-205].

Don Bosco's ideas about the number of natives, especially about his fixation that there were large populations yet to be discovered, were ridiculed in Rome [cf. *Installment I*, p. 55, note 70].

In this respect, Ceria quotes rather modest figures [cf. *IBM XVIII*, p. 388; *Annali I*, p. 587f.].

⁹⁰ *Barberis Report*; and cf. J. Belza's comment in Borrego, *Proyecto*, p. 47, note 157 [cf. *Installment I*, p. 55, note 70].

Other anthropological and ethnographic data referring to the native populations (such as their character, culture, etc.) are largely inaccurate and are derived from Don Bosco's general and special cultural matrix. For example, in *Dream I* the "savages" are characterized as "brutal people" who "slaughtered and hacked [the missionaries] to pieces."⁹¹ In *Dream V*, Don Bosco speaks of the native populations of the places shown (with specific mention of Hong Kong, Calcutta and Madagascar) as "savages who feed on human flesh."⁹²

Apart from the dreams, Don Bosco writes of the Patagonian natives:

This large population still lies in darkness and in the shadow of death, and lives in a completely savage state. [...] Up till now the voice of the missionary could not be heard in that whole immense region, in spite of the many attempts at evangelization over the centuries. This failure is due to the ferocity with which the natives have frustrated every effort on their behalf. For they savagely slaughtered all the missionaries who tried to approach them, and they even ate their flesh.⁹³

Such ideas were part of Don Bosco's culture.⁹⁴

[iv] Railways

The same should be said of the question which Ceria raises concerning the railways in Don Bosco's dream. In the first place, Don Bosco's immediate cultural experience amply accounts for fact that the means of conveyance chosen for the journey in *Dream II* was the train. Then, if the journey had to cover the length of the continent, from north to south, the route that would logically have been suggested to a person standing before a map of South America, had to run along the Andean Cordilleras, on the lower slopes. Likewise, if the train (as would be expected) was to stop to let passengers off, the well known centers of La Paz (Bolivia) and of Mendoza (Argentina) would be logical stopover stations. Looking at a map, one can easily see how from these two locations access may be had to important Pacific cities in Peru and Chile respectively⁹⁵—that is, if one does not consider too closely those mighty mountain peaks and other redoubtable natural barriers.

⁹¹ Barberis Report, [cf. *Installment I*, p. 48].

⁹² Viglietti Report, p.23, above.

⁹³ Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 159. Cf. also note 166, below.

⁹⁴ Cf. Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 20f.

⁹⁵ These are Don Bosco's suggestions in *Lemoyne B*, according to comments by the reporter [cf. *Installment I*, p. 75 and 76].

It appears therefore that recourse to a theory of infused knowledge through dreams is not necessary to account for all such elements of the manifest content of Don Bosco's dreams. These elements are derived from the dreamer's cultural experience. Some may be right and applicable, others may be quite inaccurate, as we have noted above.

What J. Belza has written on this very subject may serve as a general conclusion:

From a psychological point of view, it is certain that dream images, always blurred, may only be interpreted from contents in the dreamer's inner world. [...] And furthermore, it can be shown that Don Bosco's geographical [missionary] dreams, like so many of his dreams, even as to their origin, are rooted in daily life-experiences, heightened by the missionary fervor that possessed him."⁹⁶

2. Foreknowledge, Premonition, Prediction

As will be noted below, Don Bosco's missionary dreams are revelatory or prophetic in the sense that they are an expression of his hopes and projects for the worldwide expansion of the Salesian work. At this point, however, we wish to address the question of the precognitive or predictive character of these dreams in particular instances, much as above we discussed the question of Don Bosco's mysterious knowledge.

We have already noted an instance of foreknowledge, as claimed, with respect to the location of a future railway system in South America. It has further been claimed that Don Bosco prophetically foresaw the establishment of the Salesian work in particular places, when such places are either named or in some way indicated in these dreams. Thus one often hears Salesians claim, with understandable pride, that this or that other foundation constitutes the fulfillment of one Don Bosco's predictions. As a matter of fact most of the geographical locations mentioned in these dreams have had, or could conceivably have in the future, a Salesian foundation, and are therefore eligible for such an interpretation.

In footnotes to the dream texts given in our first installment and here above, the reader has already been alerted to some of these claimed instances of prophetic foreknowledge. We shall now review these claims, briefly or in some detail, as the case may be.

⁹⁶ Juan Belza, *Sueños Patagónicos*. Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigación Histórica Tierra del Fuego, 1982, p. 24-26, in Borrego, *Proyecto*, p. 47, note 157.

[i] A Salesian Center in Patagonia at the 47° of Latitude South

In the allegory of the rope in *Dream II* the numbers 47, 50 and 55 (degrees of latitude south) have been taken to refer to Salesian foundations at those locations. At point 47, the rope divided into many strands connecting places to the south. No city is mentioned at this point; but a marginal note in Lemoyne's hand expressly interprets the number 47 as representing "the Salesian center from which to reach out to the Falkland Islands, to the Tierra del Fuego and to other islands, [to the] farthest lands of [South] America."⁹⁷

No Salesian center historically fulfilling those requirements, in fact no Salesian center of any kind, is located at the 47° in Patagonia. Santa Cruz, on the other hand, situated at about the 50°, though never an important Salesian center, historically served as a point of approach to the missions in Tierra del Fuego. Ushuaia, located at about the 55° on the southern shore of Isla Grande, is the southernmost Salesian foundation, as well as the southernmost city in the world.

[ii] At 10° Latitude North: San José (Costa Rica)?

In the same allegory of the rope in *Dream II*, the number 10 represents the 10° of latitude north; but again no city is mentioned. In a footnote Lemoyne writes: "The Bishop of San José, the capital of Costa Rica, by letter dated September 15, 1883 asked Don Bosco for a few Salesian missionaries. This city is located at the 10°, as indicated in Don Bosco's dream."⁹⁸

But so, for instance, are Valencia (Venezuela) located at the 10°, and Caracas (Venezuela) somewhat to the north. These cities have Salesian foundations, and fulfill the requirement of being on "the sea of the Antilles" (the Caribbean). Cartagena (Colombia), expressly mentioned in the same dream, is at the same position farther west, but it has not Salesian (S.D.B.) foundation.⁹⁹

[iii] Boston, MA (USA)

A little later in *Dream II*, as Don Bosco was about to begin the train journey southward, he inquired of his Guide: "And when shall we go to Boston? They are awaiting us there." The reply which was also a dismissal was: "In its own good time."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Lemoyne B [cf. *Installment I*, p. 71f.].

⁹⁸ Lemoyne B (cf. *Installment I*, p. 72 and 78].

⁹⁹ Lemoyne B (cf. *Installment I*, p. 72].

This request was made two weeks after the dream. Salesian foundations were first established in San José (Costa Rica) in 1907; in Valencia (Venezuela), in 1895; in Caracas (Venezuela), in 1894.

¹⁰⁰ Lemoyne B [cf. *Installment I*, p. 74].

The stimulus for this dream image must be sought in the fact that, as archival documents show, in 1882/1883 a proposal to open a "school for missionary priests" under the title of "*Confrérie de Notre-Dame des victoires et de St. Pierre*" (attached to the French church of the same name, in Boston) had been made to Don Bosco through an intermediary, the Abbé J. Moigno, S.S., a canon of St. Denis (Paris). After having received several letters from Canon Moigno, Don Bosco directed Fr. Bonetti (through his French secretary, Fr. Camille de Barruel) to decline the offer: "the pressing and numberless commitments [...] in Europe and America make it impossible for me at the moment to accept the work in Boston which you have been so good to propose to us." According to Fr. Bonetti's note carrying Don Bosco's instructions, Don Bosco was also asking for a time of grace—three or four years. All this was in reply to a letter from Canon Moigno dated July 13, 1883. But the correspondence continued into August. Thus practically up to the time of the dream (August 31, 1883) Don Bosco had been busy with the Boston offer, and he had not ruled out the possibility of a future commitment.¹⁰¹

This would explain why the matter surfaced in the dream. As it turned out, the Salesian work was established in Boston only in 1945, with the opening of the Don Bosco Technical High School.

[iv] Between the 15° and 20° Latitude South: Brasilia?

Considerable attention has been given to the passage in *Dream II* where Don Bosco in his fantastic train journey southward along the Cordilleras, with his heightened seeing power, peers into the mountains and over the farthest plains and descends the hidden mineral resources of the region. Now, in the *Lemoyne B* text, within brackets, the plains are conjectured to be "Brazil?." And in a marginal note in Lemoyne's hand, the place is described as an "inlet" (valley?) beginning at a lake and located between 15° and 20° latitude south. Although there is again no mention of a city, and no longitudinal position is

¹⁰¹ The curé of the French church of *Notre Dame des Victoires* in Boston, Fr. A. Bouland, had proposed to Archbishop I. J. Williams, the establishment of a school/junior seminary at that church [cf. Letters Bouland to Williams, Boston, Nov. 23 and Dec. 1, 1882, in ASC 381 Fondazioni-Richieste, *FDBM* 135 B 10-C 3 and C4f.]. The proposal was submitted to Don Bosco through Canon Moigno. A number of letters from Abbé Moigno, presumably to Fr. Barruel (together with the Bouland-Williams letters) are held in ASC 381 Fondazioni-Richieste. They are as follows: undated, but written late in 1882 [*FDBM* 135 D 4-9]; undated, but marked Jan. 28, 1883 [*FDBM* 135 D 12-E 3]; April 25, 1883 [*FDBM* 135 D 10f.]; July 13, 1883 [*FDBM* 135 E5f.]. It is for a reply to this letter, and to decline the offer that Don Bosco gave Fr. Bonetti (and Fr. Barruel) his instructions [*FDBM* 135 D 1f.]. Further letters are: July 29, 1883 [*FDBM* 135 D 11f.]; undated, but marked Aug. 5, 1883 [*FDBM* 135 D 7-10]. For the story of this proposal, cf. *IBM XVI*, 408-410.

given, the text has been interpreted as referring to Brasilia, the modern capital of Brazil, which is located on a large artificial lake at about the 16° of latitude.

(1) Text according to *Lemoyne B*

Following are Don Bosco's words as reported in *Lemoyne B*.

We traveled along the edge of a virgin forest, as yet unexplored, for over a thousand miles. My power to see was intensified in such a marvelous manner, that my sight seemed able to penetrate those regions at will. It could not only peer into the Cordilleras, but it could also discern the isolated mountain ranges rising above those interminable plains (Brazil?).

[Marginal Note]

Between the 15th and the 20th degree there lay a very long "inlet" (*seno*, valley?) which began at a point forming a lake. Then a voice spoke and said repeatedly: "When mines will be dug in the depths of these mountains (of that valley), then the promised land flowing with milk and honey will be revealed here, and inconceivable wealth will be found.

The incomparable [mineral] riches of the soil still awaiting discovery were revealed to my gaze. I saw numerous mines of precious metals, inexhaustible coal pits, petroleum deposits more abundant than any discovered anywhere. And this is not all. To my amazement I saw that at many points the Cordilleras opened up and formed valleys, the existence of which is totally unknown to our geographers. They [mistakenly] imagine that in those regions mountain ranges form a kind of sheer wall. In those "inlets" (*seni*), in those valleys, which may be as long as one thousand kilometers, live dense populations which have had as yet no contact with Europeans—whole nations which are as yet completely unknown [to the civilized world].¹⁰²

This is the passage that has been construed as predicting the future location of the Brazilian capital.¹⁰³ In spite of the fact that the Salesians have

¹⁰² *Lemoyne B* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 74f.].

¹⁰³ In the 1988 edition of *Don Bosco nel Mondo* we read: "Don Bosco came to Brazil long before any of his Salesians; and he did so in the amazing manner of the prophets. If today he is invoked as the holy Patron of Brazil's capital, Brasilia, it is because he 'dreamed' it and prophesied it a century before it became a reality. [...] He

encouraged such an interpretation by every means in their power, and that Brasilia and the authorities in that capital have taken Don Bosco to their heart, this interpretation is highly speculative.

Before any comment, we should look at how Lemoyne, presumably reflecting Don Bosco's view, recast this passage in subsequent revisions. This may be seen in *Lemoyne C* and (identically) in *Documenti*—which represents Lemoyne's final re-elaboration of the text, and which is also, with secondary editing by Ceria, the text of the *Biographical Memoirs*.

[Lemoyne's Re-Elaboration of the Text in *Documenti*—all editing given in *italics*, with added titles]

In editing the new text, besides inserting the marginal note, Lemoyne made two sizable additions. He also rearranged the material somewhat—as follows:

We traveled along the edge of a virgin forest, as yet unexplored, for over a thousand miles. My power to see was intensified in such a marvelous manner, that my sight seemed able to penetrate those regions at will.

[Editorial Addition I] *Words cannot describe or explain such amazing visual experience. It was as though I were standing on top of a hill with an unimpeded view of an immense region stretching out below. Imagine that from that vantage point one placed a strip of paper,*

had seen the very spot as far back as 1883; and when it became a reality, the builders were greatly surprised to find that they had fulfilled a saint's prophecy. In 1883 Don Bosco related to his close associates how in his dream he had seen himself hovering high over the forests of the Amazon. He told of seeing there the natives' villages, and of witnessing the killing of two Salesian missionaries. (This actually took place in 1934, when Fr. P. Sacilotti and Fr. G. Fuchs were murdered by the Chavantes.) Moreover, between the 15° and the 20° degree of latitude he detected rich mines of [precious] metals and petroleum deposits more abundant than any discovered anywhere. And at a place which was located at about the 50° of longitude and where there was lake, he saw a promised land of incomparable beauty, to be revealed two generations hence (60 and 60 years... Cf. *IBM XVI*, 385-398)" [Marco Bongioanni [ed.], *Don Bosco nel Mondo*, 2 vol. Roma: Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, 1988, vol. II, p. 244f.].

This is an obviously garbled journalistic version of Don Bosco's Second Missionary Dream. Don Bosco never said that he had dreamed of flying over the forests of the Amazon, and of seeing villages and witnessing the killing of two Salesian missionaries; nor did he indicate any longitude for the place and the lake lying between the 15° and the 20° lat. south. And he spoke of generations (two 60-year generations, not counting the present one) not in connection with the promised land to be revealed, but in connection with the conversion of the natives (in the allegory of the figs, in the hall) [cf. *Dream II, Installment I*, p. 74f. and 73, and here].

But the "Brasilia interpretation" is still popular.

no matter how thin, in front of one's eyes: one would then see very little, if anything at all. Imagine next that one removed, or raised or lowered even only slightly, that strip of paper: one would then be able to look even to the farthest horizon. Such was my experience, due to my newly acquired extraordinary seeing power. But there was a difference: as I focused my eyes on any point, that scene would zoom into view and then pass on. It was as though stage curtains were being raised one after another, and I could see an endless succession of scenes to the farthest limits.

I could not only look into the Cordilleras *even when still at a distance*, but I could also see *in all detail* the isolated mountain ranges rising above those interminable plains [Editorial expansion of the conjecture "Brazil?"] (*the mountains of New Granada*,¹⁰⁴ *of Venezuela, of the three Guyanas; those of Brazil, of Bolivia—to the remotest boundaries*).

[Editorial Addition II] *I was thus able to verify the truth of the words which I had heard at the beginning of my dream in the great hall at the equator. For I could now peer into the very bowels of mountains and into the deepest recesses of plains.*

The incomparable [mineral] riches of the soil still awaiting discovery were revealed to my gaze. I saw numerous mines of precious metals, inexhaustible coal pits, petroleum deposits more abundant than any discovered anywhere. And this was not all.

[Editorial insertion of the Marginal Note of Lemoyne B] *Between the 15th and the 20th degree there lay a very long inlet (seno, valley?) that began at a point forming a lake. Then a voice spoke and said repeatedly: "When mines will be dug in the depths of these mountains (of that valley), then the promised land flowing with milk and honey will be revealed here, and there will be inconceivable wealth."*

And that was not all. What surprised me most was to see that at many points the Cordilleras opened up on regions the existence of which is totally unknown to our geographers. They [mistakenly] imagine that in those regions mountain ranges form a kind of sheer

¹⁰⁴ The old Spanish territory of Colombia, a republic since 1819, was divided, in 1830, into three republics: New Granada (now Colombia in the narrower sense), Venezuela and Ecuador. Colombia retained the name of New Granada until 1858. It was then called Confederación Granadina (1858-1963); Estados Unidos de Colombia (1863-1886); finally simply Colombia [cf. *New Catholic Encyclopedia* III, p. 1020].

wall. In those inlets, in those valleys, which may be as long as one thousand kilometers, live dense populations which have had as yet no contact with Europeans, nations which are as yet completely unknown.¹⁰⁵

(2) Comments on the Texts of *Lemoyne B* and of *Documenti*

[On the Reworking of the *Documenti* Text] In the dream Don Bosco is traveling south along the Cordilleras, and is able to see not only the mountains to his right, but also those rising "over those interminable plains (Brazil?)." Does this mean that he is actually looking across the great rain forest and focusing on the spot in the Brazilian Plateau where Brasilia is located? The expansion of the conjecture "Brazil?" to include all the nations of the northern half of South America shows that in the editor's (and perhaps also in Don Bosco's) view the focus is not on Brazil, nor on any particular region.

Moreover, as we read on in the *Documenti* version, we perceive that the focus is actually on the Cordilleras. For he says that he was thus able to verify the truth of the words he had heard in the great hall about their great mineral resources: "Oh Cordilleras, Cordilleras, how rich are your eastern slopes!"¹⁰⁶

The focus is still on the Cordilleras in the paragraph that follows, where the marginal note of *Lemoyne B* is inserted after the remark on the incomparable riches of the Andes, and between the repeated phrase, "And this was not all." Don Bosco was amazed not only at the riches of the Cordilleras, but also at their immense "inlets" (*seni*) or valleys, and at the large, as yet undiscovered populations that lived there.¹⁰⁷

[On the Content of the Marginal Note] The (inserted) marginal note deals with the astronomical-geographical position of the place, and with its great mineral riches.

This feature is an "inlet" (*seno*, valley?) beginning at a point forming a "lake" and lying "between the 15° and 20°. No longitude is given, nor is there mention of any city.

Now, it is true that Brasilia is located at that latitude, some 1,500 miles to the east of the Cordilleras, on Lake Brasilia. And it is also true that Brazil is

¹⁰⁵ *Documenti* XXVI [ch. 37], p. 529s., FDBM 1090 A3s.

¹⁰⁶ *Lemoyne B* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 69].

¹⁰⁷ In Italian the word for "inlet," *seno*, as a geographical term, usually means a body of ocean wending deeply inland [cf. Rigutini and Fanfani, *Vocabolario della Lingua Italiana*. Firenze, G. Barbèra, 1893, p. 1114]. Don Bosco uses the word several times in connection with the mountains, perhaps (as here) not in the sense of "ocean inlet" or "fjord," but in the sense of "valley."

very rich in mineral resources. But, first of all, there is no feature in the area that could be described as "a very wide 'inlet' (*seno*).¹⁰⁸ And secondly, such resources are prevalently found outside the Federal District, and outside the State of Goyás itself, in which the capital is located.¹⁰⁸

Moreover, in the light of what has been said above, it is far more probable that Don Bosco was referring to some place situated at that latitude in the Andean Cordilleras. Thus there was no need to specify its longitude. The great Lake Titicaca, lying among the mighty Cordilleras astride the 16° latitude south, and between Peru and Bolivia (with the city of La Paz immediately to the southeast), is a feature which readily comes to mind. This lake is also situated at the northernmost end of that immense valley (*Altiplano*) which extends some 500 miles between high mountain ranges, southward as far as Argentina.¹⁰⁹ The region is quite rich in mineral resources, though coal and petroleum are not to be found.¹¹⁰

Such considerations, however, are not intended to set up a rival claim (since *any* claim would be inappropriate), but only to suggest that such geographical dream images may have a quite natural explanation. What has been said earlier should still be borne in mind—namely that information available to Don Bosco about this area of the ancient Spanish domains explains the dream images satisfactorily enough. The mention of coal and petroleum (where actually there may be none) is also satisfactorily explained from the dreamer's culture.¹¹¹ There is no need to resort to prophetic prediction and fulfillment.

[v] The Road out of Chile and Other Fantastic Highways

In *Dream III*, standing "on a vast plain situated between Chile and the Argentine Republic," Don Bosco saw numerous fantastic highways, each connecting with a Salesian foundation. One of these highways began in Chile

¹⁰⁸ Brasília is located at 15.47° latitude south and 47.55° longitude west.

As to the location of significant mineral resources in Brazil—petroleum and natural gas, for example, are principally to be found in Recôncavo (Bahia) and Ologoas-Sergipe; coal deposits (generally low-grade) are found in Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina; iron is mined primarily in Minas Gerais and to a lesser degree in Mato Grosso do Sul; manganese is abundant in Mato Grosso and less so in Amapá and Minas Gerais. Precious metals, diamonds and other precious stones abound in Brazil, but not significantly in the region of Brasília [cf. *Encyclopedia Britannica-Macropedia* (15. ed., 1987), XV, p. 192 and 197f.].

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Britannica Atlas* (1986), p. 242f.

¹¹⁰ *Hammond Citation World Atlas* (1977), p. 137. The minerals indicated for this region are: tin, tungsten, silver, gold, copper, lead, sulfur, antimony and zinc, but not coal. And again petroleum is not found at this altitude.

¹¹¹ Cf. note 82 and related text, above.

and ended at "a house in which many Salesians confreres were engaged in study and prayer, and in various trades and agriculture."¹¹² It was inevitable that this statement should be taken to refer to a house of formation; and that a specific house should be regarded as fulfilling Don Bosco's "prophecy." Several formation houses (such as those in Buenos Aires, Bahía Blanca, Fortín Mercedes) would fulfill such requirements, especially that of being located at the end of a dreamland road out of Chile. However, Fortín Mercedes is preferred because of its position, for Don Bosco adds that "to the south lay Patagonia."

But one should note that Don Bosco saw *all* the Salesian houses and missions, present and future, connected by the extraordinary network of roads. He continues: "To the south lay Patagonia. In the opposite direction, I could see all our houses in the Argentine Republic; and further in Uruguay, [...] in Brazil [...]. With the eye I traveled those endless roads and had the clearest view of our mission centers present and future. [...] I saw each one of our schools."¹¹³

Among all these houses there would surely be found also a house of formation!

In the same *Dream III*, "another very long road ran westward, crossed rivers, seas and lakes, and ended in an unknown country," where only a couple of Salesians could be seen. The Interpreter identifies this land as Mesopotamia, and assures Don Bosco that there would be a future for the Salesian work even there.¹¹⁴ The northeastern Argentine province of Entre Ríos y Corrientes, in spite of the name, lacks the prerequisites. The image is surely a vagary of the dreamer's subconscious. Mesopotamia is mentioned also in *Dream IV*, in which the mountain of the Angel of Arpachshad "at one time appeared to be the plain of Mesopotamia, at another a very high mountain."¹¹⁵

In any case, there is no Salesian presence in "Mesopotamia" (Iraq).

[vi] Macao, the Lofty Mountain, and China

In discussing the text of *Dream IV* we noted Don Bosco's great interest with regard to China. Lemoyne writes:

Note that up to the time of the dream, Don Bosco did not know who Arpachshad was. After the dream he talked of nothing else. He had someone search through biblical dictionaries, histories of nations, works on geography, and periodicals, and finally discovered that the Chinese are really the descendants of Arpachshad. Now he talks of

¹¹² Lemoyne A [cf. *Installment I*, p. 85].

¹¹³ Lemoyne A [cf. *Installment I*, p. 85f.].

¹¹⁴ Lemoyne A [cf. *Installment I*, p. 86].

¹¹⁵ Lemoyne Report [cf. p. 9, above].

nothing else. He even seems to think that soon we shall be invited to China. In this belief, he is now wholly occupied with learning all he can about the origin of those peoples.¹¹⁶

Indeed China and a couple of its cities form the chief interest of *Dream IV*. The itinerary as itinerary may be overlooked, for, as mentioned above, these eighteen (or fifteen) locations, which Lemoyne elicited from Don Bosco through inquiry,¹¹⁷ are most likely impromptu suggestions derived from the dreamer's geographical lore. But China and Macao are named independently of the itinerary, and are important for their association (after the fact) with the location of the mountain of Arpachshad.

The geographical description of Macao and of the lofty mountain is puzzling, to say the least. Macao is described as "lying at the entrance of a limitless sea" (*Appendix, Letter to Cagliero* and *Documenti*, in the itinerary). The lofty mountain is described as being "in the vicinity of" or "beyond Macao" (*Appendix* and *Letter to Cagliero*), and "from which all of China could be descried." (*Letter to Cagliero*).

Further, regarding Macao, Lemoyne also writes in *Documenti* (but not in any of the earlier versions): "Don Bosco had heard in the dream the names of the various regions; but could not recall them exactly. He referred to 'Macao' as 'Meaco'." Ceria repeats the comment in the *Biographical Memoirs*.¹¹⁸ It is unlikely that Don Bosco, even in his debilitated state, would mispronounce the name of a well-known city. What city then did Don Bosco have in mind, if he really said "Meaco"?

In this regard, Ceria refers to an interpretation suggested by Mgr. Vincent Cimatti. According to the late venerable and renowned missionary to Japan, Meaco, or more accurately Myako, in Japanese designates "the imperial city". In ancient times this was Kyoto, which, however, does not suit the geographical description. In modern times (1869) the residence of the mikado was transferred from Kyoto to Jedo (Tokyo), which, even though located at the innermost end of a long bay, might be said to lie at the entrance of a limitless sea (the Pacific Ocean). Mt. Fuji rises some 60 miles to the southwest and may be thought of as the lofty mountain on which the angel stood, and from which (with the mind's, if not with bodily eyes) one could espy China.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ *Letter to Cagliero* [cf. p. 14, above]. Cf. also note 16 and related text, above.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Letter to Cagliero*, p. 13, above.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *IBM XVII*, 646., from *Documenti* [vol.] XXX [ch. 51], p. 385, in *ASC 110, FDBM 1,112 C4*.

¹¹⁹ Ceria, *Annali I*, p. 554.

This is all very speculative. One should perhaps refrain from all such interpretations, evidently sought for the purpose of showing prophetic fulfillment. And one should bear in mind also that in real dreams images seen, as well as words heard, can take on shifting, even absurd aspects. For instance, Lemoyne reports Don Bosco as saying: "I saw different spectacles all at once, and these continuously transformed the view which confronted me. At one time it appeared to be the plain of Mesopotamia, at another a very high mountain. The very mountain on which the angel stood took on continuously changing forms."¹²⁰

[vii] Peking and China

Don Bosco's interest in China surfaces again in *Dream V*—understandable, for China had been very much on Don Bosco's mind since *Dream IV*. Peking (Beijing) appears as the last station of the mission line that extends from Santiago, through central Africa, to the Chinese capital. Now, at the point where the children in the dream discern the word "Peking" written at the far horizon, the *Documenti* text adds: "At that moment Don Bosco caught sight of a great city. A wide river, spanned by a number of large bridges, flowed through it."¹²¹

Don Bosco was serious about the China missions, and about Peking in particular. In the last paragraph of his *Spiritual Testament* (dating from about the same time as the dream) he writes:

In God's good time, our missions will be established in China, in Peking to be exact. Let us not forget then that our purpose for going there is [to care] for poor and abandoned children. There, among a

¹²⁰ *Lemoyne Report* and *Letter to Cagliero* [cf. p. 9 and 14, above].

¹²¹ Cf. note 53, above. The *Biographical Memoirs* follow *Documenti* [cf. *IBM* XVIII, 73].

This detail, lacking in the original *Viglietti Report*, as well as in the *Viglietti Letter* as we know it, and lacking also in succeeding transcriptions of the *Viglietti* chronicle, appears to be of doubtful inspiration. Desramaut remarks that this was the way Beijing was described in the literature since Marco Polo [cf. Desramaut, *Études* VIII (*Cahiers*), 122, note 81]. And one may also add that Beijing "is not placed on any navigable river" [*Encyclopedia Britannica* (1953), XVII, p. 445]. The Yong ding He which flows through Beijing, and on which the Marco Polo Bridge is built, is a minor river [cf. *Encyclopedia Britannica* (15th ed., 1987) XVI, p. 42; XXV, p. 461].

people as yet unknown and ignorant of the true God, God will work marvels beyond belief for all the world to see.¹²²

According to a comment by Lemoyne in *Documenti*, Don Bosco in *Dream V* predicted a great triumph for the Congregation in China. The scene is set in the Chinese capital:

Oh, the time will come when the Salesians will be established in China, and will assemble on the banks of the river that flows by Peking! From various regions of the Great [Celestial] Empire they will gather together on the left bank; and likewise on the right bank, from various parts of Tataria. How glorious a day that will be for our Congregation, when [Salesians] from one side and [Salesians] from the other will meet and shake hands! But time is in God's power!¹²³

One cannot say whether Don Bosco's dream vision of Salesians meeting at the Yong ding He, which flows by Beijing, from various parts of the Celestial Empire (south) and of Tataria (north) will ever be fulfilled. In his "Letter from Peking," the Salesian Rector Major, Fr. E. Viganò, in the small Salesian presence in mainland China today sees a token that Don Bosco's dream shall be fulfilled.¹²⁴ Certainly the kind of Salesian presence envisioned in these texts was not realized in the establishment of the Salesian work in Macao (1906), or in Shanghai (1924 and again 1933), or in Hong Kong (1927), or in Taiwan (1936); nor was it realized with the missions of Heung Shan (1911) and Shan (1917). As is well known, the Salesian work in mainland China was totally obliterated in 1951, when the Communists gained full control of the country.

¹²² Francesco Motto, *Memorie dal 1841 al 1884-5-6 pel Sac. Gio. Bosco a' suoi figlioli salesiani (Testamento spirituale)* (Piccola Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Salesiano, 4). Roma: LAS, 1985, p. 59 (paragraph "L'avvenire"). [Cited as **Motto**, *Testamento*]

¹²³ *Documenti* [cf. p. 26, above].

¹²⁴ E. Viganò, "From Peking towards 88," in *Acts of the General Council* 1987: #323, p. 3-23, especially p. 8-10.

Fr. Viganò quotes the passage in question from the *Biographical Memoirs* with his accustomed critical accuracy. One wonders why the English translation is not equally accurate: "When the Salesians get to China, they will find themselves on both banks of the Peking River. One group will come to the left bank through the heart of the country. The other group will come to the right bank from the coastlands [...]" [*Ibid.*, p. 9]. But Don Bosco said (according to Lemoyne): "the river that flows by Peking;" "from parts of the Great Empire;" "from parts of Tataria." Why make him say something different?

But words such as these are evidence of Don Bosco's indomitable missionary heart and will.¹²⁵

II. Central Significance of Don Bosco's Missionary Dreams

1. "The Harvest Entrusted to the Salesians:" Hopes and Possibilities for the Mission

As noted above, the missionary dreams may truly be said to be precognitive or revelatory, in the sense that they project Don Bosco missionary hopes and desires. They open up vistas of possibilities and opportunities for the Salesian work in the near or distant future. Don Bosco understood them to be revelatory in this sense; and his narrative interpretations as well as his reported comments on the various dreams are proof of this understanding. Certain added remarks on the part of the Salesians to whom the narration was addressed also bear this out.

Although all these interpretative elements have already been given with the text of the dream narratives, they deserve to be recalled; and we will do so without comment.

[Don Bosco on *Dream I*] The impression the dream had made on me, and the intimations it had left with me, were such that it could not be disregarded; especially since, as past experience had taught me, what I had seen might well come to pass. Meanwhile, we began to talk about the Argentine Republic. [...] I gathered data, made inquiries, sought information, and soon reached the certain conclusion that the people I had seen were the Patagonian natives dwelling in the southern regions of that republic. From then on I entertained no further doubt as to where my concern and my efforts should be directed.¹²⁶

[Lemoyne of Don Bosco, *Dream I*] In the wake of this dream, Don Bosco felt the old yearning of his heart stirring back to life. The missions have now become a priority in his thinking.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ In the same *Dream V*, on the mission line from central Africa to Peking, specific mention is made also of Hong Kong, Calcutta and Madagascar. Again "prophetic fulfillment" was claimed when Salesian foundations were established in Hong Kong in 1927 (as already noted), Calcutta in 1933 and Madagascar in 1981. This, in spite of the fact that (as Don Bosco objected) these places were inhabited by "savages who feed on human flesh, [...] heretics, [...] persecutors" [cf. p. 23, above].

¹²⁶ *Barberis Report* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 49].

¹²⁷ *Lemoyne Report* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 51].

[Don Bosco on *Dream I*] True, [the dream's] specific meaning eluded me, but I understood that it had to do with the foreign missions, a project which all along had been my fondest wish.¹²⁸

[Interpreter to Don Bosco, *Dream II*] From the mountains to the ocean lies the harvest entrusted to the Salesians. These thousands and millions of people are waiting for your help, waiting for the faith.¹²⁹

[Interpreter to Don Bosco, *Dream II*] All this will be accomplished before the end of the second generation. [...] Not counting the present generation—two generations [of 60 years each] from now.¹³⁰

[Interpreter to Don Bosco, *Dream II*] We are going to travel along the Cordilleras. But the road to the east also is open to you, as far as the [Atlantic] ocean. It is another gift from the Lord.¹³¹

[Don Bosco, *Dream II*] I was amazed at the progress made by the Catholic Church, by our Congregation, and by civilization in those [southernmost] regions. I thanked divine Providence for deigning to make use of me as an instrument for God's greater glory and for the salvation of souls.¹³²

[Interpreter to Don Bosco, *Dream II*] At intervals large tribes of savages appeared on the river banks; and at each appearance the young man would point out: "There's the harvest, there's the harvest entrusted to the Salesians." Then we came to a region which was full of wild beasts and poisonous reptiles. Here also my guide turned to me and, pointing to those beasts, explained: "The Salesians will tame them."¹³³

[Don Bosco on *Dream III*] All this was destined to be the harvest reserved for the Salesians. I realized that the Salesians are now just sowing the seed. Those who will come after us will gather in the harvest. Men and women will join our ranks and will become preachers themselves[...].¹³⁴

[Priest-Interpreter to Don Bosco, *Dream III*] All those people were now assembled on that vast plain which lay between Chile and

¹²⁸ *Documenti* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 54].

¹²⁹ *Lemoyne B* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 72f.].

¹³⁰ *Lemoyne B* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 73].

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Lemoyne B-Appendix X* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 78].

¹³³ *Lemoyne B-Appendix X* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 79 and 80].

¹³⁴ *Lemoyne A* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 86f.].

Argentina. [...] He approached me, and with an amiable and courteous gesture said: "These are the souls and these are the lands assigned to the sons of St. Francis de Sales."¹³⁵

[Hall of Glory, *Dream III*] The number and variety of the people assembled in the hall project the future possibilities and the success of the Salesian mission.¹³⁶

[Don Bosco's comment on the islands of "Australia," *Dream IV*] It seems to me that, globally speaking, this indicated God's intention of entrusting a portion of the evangelical mission field to the Salesians, some time in the future.¹³⁷

[Don Bosco's comment on *Dream IV*] If I could embalm and preserve about fifty of our present Salesians, they would see, 500 years hence, the stupendous future which divine Providence has in store for us—if we are faithful. Within 150 or 200 years the Salesians could become the masters of the whole world.¹³⁸

[Lemoyne of Don Bosco, *Dream IV*] [Don Bosco] saw all the countries in which the Salesians are called [to work] in times to come. This was in the form of a lightning-quick journey [...].¹³⁹

[Viglietti of Don Bosco, *Dream V*] This morning Don Bosco summoned me, Fr. Rua, and Fr. Branda, and with great emotion and copious tears described for us the future of the Society. He saw it in a dream [...].¹⁴⁰

[Maiden to Don Bosco, on the mission line, *Dream V*] "Trace one line [...] from Peking to Santiago; fix a midpoint in the center of Africa, and you will have a good idea of what the Salesians are called to do."¹⁴¹

[The two mission lines, *Dream V*] The lines, Santiago-Central Africa and Central Africa-Peking, of ten mission centers each, reinforce the projection of a worldwide expansion of the Salesian work.¹⁴²

¹³⁵ Lemoyne A [cf. *Installment I*, p. 87].

¹³⁶ Cf. Lemoyne A [cf. *Installment I*, p. 89f.].

¹³⁷ Lemoyne Report and Letter to Cagliero [cf. p. 10 & p. 15, above].

¹³⁸ Lemoyne Report and Letter to Cagliero [cf. p. 10 & p. 15, above].

¹³⁹ Appendix and Letter to Cagliero [cf. p. 11 & p. 13 above].

¹⁴⁰ Viglietti Report [cf. p. 20, above].

¹⁴¹ Viglietti Report [cf. p. 22, above].

¹⁴² Viglietti Report [cf. p. 23, above].

[Viglietti, comment on *Dream V*] This, however is only a sketch of a magnificent and protracted vision depicting the history and splendid future which God has in store for the Salesians.¹⁴³

The persistent refrain sounded in these passages on the theme of the Salesian mission clearly underscores the basic meaning of the missionary dreams.

2. Symbolizing the Vocation-Mission of the Salesian Society on a Global Scale

It appears, therefore, that the true significance of Don Bosco's missionary dreams is to be found in the fact that, through a marvelous array of special images, they symbolize the vocation-mission of the Salesian Society, which is a continuation on a global scale of Don Bosco's own vocation-mission. By expressing the hopes and *possibilities* of this mission, these dreams delineate a "project" taking shape in Don Bosco's deepest self, aimed at developing and evangelizing all peoples, potentially, through the *specific* apostolate of the Salesian Society.

What was this project like? P. Braido, in describing Don Bosco's "project" for the building of a Christian society, discusses its essential coordinates: the primacy of the "spiritual" and of a religion-based salvation; the option for the young at risk and for the poor which inspires the mission and dictates its strategies; a work of collaboration involving many and diverse forces. These approaches to the mission operate within even larger frameworks: evangelization and civilization working in concert; valuation and role of young people—all aiming at the total development of society.¹⁴⁴

Perhaps even more germane to our point is J. Borrego's study of the Keepsakes (*Ricordi*) given by Don Bosco to the first missionaries. The author notes of how the same themes reappear in Don Bosco's missionary correspondence. As to basic motivation or inspiration of the mission, the main themes are: seeking souls; inter-relation of religion and civilization; heaven, the ultimate reward. With respect to ascetic practice and the spiritual life, the stress is on: disregarding personal interests; fraternal charity; work and temperance, religious observance. Elements of a special pastoral methodology are also

¹⁴³ Viglietti Letter [cf. p. 24, above].

¹⁴⁴ Pietro Braido, *Il progetto operativo di Don Bosco e l'utopia della società cristiana*. (Quaderni di Salesianum, 6). Roma: LAS, 1982, esp. p. 7-12, 18-28. [Cited as Braido, *Progetto*]

found—in particular: preferential option for the young and the needy; a “Salesian” attitude towards authorities; points of missionary strategy.¹⁴⁵

F. Desramaut, in an essay on Don Bosco's missionary thought as expressed in his writings and discourses, finds a number of important components—in particular: a theology of the Reign of God; an ecclesiology; a soteriology; a conception of the complementary relationship between religion and civilization; a pastoral methodology for the mission. With particular reference to Don Bosco's missionary dreams he writes: “One may find in them not only predictions of the future (as is usually done), but also some of the saint's most deeply rooted convictions.”¹⁴⁶

True, the ideas and convictions do not appear in the missionary dreams in a systematic fashion, for after all, in spite of their more or less developed narrative interpretation and of the many interpretative comments connected with it, we are dealing with dreams. Yet we have here a very special expression, through image and word, of Don Bosco's deepest apostolic concerns and of his missionary vocation—which is also the vocation-mission of the Salesian Society. I believe that therein lies the true significance of these dreams.

Four themes in particular appear to be worthy of attention: (1) “Give me souls”—the absolute priority of the mission; (2) preferential option for the young and the poor and the missionary strategy arising therefrom; (3) total human development through complementary union of religion and civilization—the aim of the mission; (4) points for a Salesian missionary spirituality.

[i] Salvation of Souls through Evangelization: Absolute Priority of the Mission¹⁴⁷

The salvation of souls, signified in the motto, “*Da mihi animas, coetera tolle*,” was the prime mover of Don Bosco's whole life and action. It was also the great charge given to the Salesian Society for its mission, as well as the stated absolute priority for its missionary activity. It was also the first of the twenty keepsakes given to the first departing missionaries: “Seek souls—not money, honors or preferment.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Jesús Borrego, *Recuerdos de San Juan Bosco a los primeros misioneros* (Piccola Biblioteca dell'Istituto Storico Salesiano, 2). Roma: LAS, 1984, esp. p. 16-40. [Cited as Borrego, *Recuerdos*]

¹⁴⁶ Francis Desramaut, “Il Pensiero missionario di Don Bosco (Dagli scritti e discorsi del 1870-1885),” in *Missioni Salesiane 1875-1975*, a cura di Pietro Scotti. Roma: LAS, 1977, p. 49-61; quote, p. 51. [Cited as Desramaut, *Pensiero*]

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Braido, *Progetto*, p. 7f., 25f.; Borrego, *Recuerdos*, p. 17f., 32f., 35ff.

¹⁴⁸ J. Borrego, *Recuerdos*, p. 43; cf. EBM XI, 364.

In the great reception hall at the equator, in *Dream II*, Don Bosco (as he wrote in his own hand) heard the shocking account of the spiritual abandonment of so many souls, and of the apathy of Christian Europe—a conversation that obviously verbalized his own deepest feelings:

A great number of savages in Australia, in India, in Africa, and particularly in America, still lie buried in the shadows of death. [...] Christian Europe, the great teacher of civilized living and of the Catholic faith, seems to have grown apathetic with regard to the foreign missions. Few have the courage to brave long voyages to unknown [lands] to save the souls of those millions of souls [*sic*] that were nonetheless redeemed by the Son of God, Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁹

The allegory of the figs, played out in the same hall in *Dream II*, symbolized the purpose and the priorities of the mission: “You should know that for these figs to ripen you have to reattach them to the tree. [...] By sweat and by blood will the savages be returned to the tree and be made pleasing to the Lord of life.”¹⁵⁰

The evangelizing activity of the Salesian missionaries will bring in a great harvest for God. The great gathering of the saved in the hall of glory of *Dream III* stands as a unique and impressive image of the Salesian missionary harvest. That numberless throng, people of every race and tongue, are gathered for the celebration of a grand heavenly liturgy. Shouting and hymning as one, they voice Don Bosco’s own deepest conviction: that the Christian salvation of people through evangelization, the hastening of the blessed reign of God, and heaven as the ultimate reward, are the true reason and the first aim of all missionary activity.

First choir: “The Kingdom of God is upon us: let heaven be glad and let the earth rejoice, for the Lord has reigned over us, alleluia!” Second choir: “They conquered, and the Lord himself shall give them to eat of the tree of life, and they shall never again be hungry, alleluia!” Third choir: “Praise the Lord, all you nations! Extol him, all peoples!” etc.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Lemoyne B [cf. *Installment I*, p. 69].

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁵¹ Lemoyne A [cf. *Installment I*, p. 90].

Commenting on this passage (and on *Dream III*) Desramaut writes: “This is Fr. Lemoyne’s reconstruction of the narration he had heard from Don Bosco [...]. Fr. Lemoyne was not above descanting on Don Bosco’s words, but never would he create a scene such as this on his own authority. One may therefore be confident that Don

[ii] Don Bosco's Option for the Young and the Mission

Don Bosco's vocational option was from the start for "poor and abandoned" young people, and for the poor generally. The "savages" (Don Bosco's usual term for natives to be evangelized), and their children in particular, certainly belong to that category. This option "finds its most perfect realization in the missions, since, in Don Bosco's thinking, the indigence of the 'savages' is infinitely greater than that of young people who are poor and at risk."¹⁵²

In his *Spiritual Testament*, Don Bosco wrote: "People of the world will be happy to welcome us as long as our concern and care are for the savages, for the children who are poorest and most at risk in society."¹⁵³

For Don Bosco, then, the missions are first and foremost his heart's response to the cry of young people in need and at risk. And that is what they ought to be for his Salesians. This is given touching expression in *Dream IV*:

A great number of children lived on those islands. They were trying to cross over to us, but were prevented from reaching us by the great distances and by the [stretches of] water that lay between. Yet they were holding their hands out toward us and crying: "Come and help us! Why do you not finish the work which your fathers began?" Many of the children gave up. But some of them, making their way with great effort through the midst of ferocious wild beasts, joined the Salesians (none of whom I recognized) and began to sing: "*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.*"¹⁵⁴

Similarly, reporting Don Bosco's narration of *Dream V*, Viglietti writes:

He heard the noisy uproar of a great throng of children. [...] Of a sudden, the noisy voices were drowned out by alarming shouts, as though some serious mishap had befallen them. He finally caught sight of a large group of youngsters. They ran up and gathered around him. They kept saying: "We waited such a long time for you. Finally you are with us, and we will not let you go away."¹⁵⁵

Bosco did indeed speak those lines, even if, in all likelihood, in a Latin less correct. [Desramaut, *Pensiero*, p. 51f., note 9]

¹⁵² Braidò, *Progetto*, p. 25.

¹⁵³ Motto, *Testamento*, p. 59 (paragraph "L'avvenire").

¹⁵⁴ *Lemoyne Report* [cf. p. 10, above].

¹⁵⁵ *Viglietti Report* [cf. p. 21, above].

To his departing missionaries Don Bosco had recommended: "Take special care of the sick, the children, the aged and the poor [...]."¹⁵⁶

To parallel Don Bosco's preferential option for young people there is a new pastoral methodology and a new missionary strategy which enlists young people as partners in the mission, that is, as mediators of the faith to their families, to their tribes. This strategy proceeds from an entirely original and creative insight—namely, that the young are to be evangelized and educated, not merely to safeguard the moral order of society, nor merely to restore them in recognition of their personal worth, but also to enable and empower them for their God-given role in society. Thus the young, once evangelized and educated, become the agents through whom Christian society is built up anew or restored.¹⁵⁷ An aspect of this role, in a missionary setting, is their mediation of the faith to their people.

In Don Bosco's memorandum to Card. Alexander Franchi of May 10, 1876, the strategy is clearly, if idealistically, set forth:

The course of action (*progetto*) that seemed best to adopt was to establish shelters, schools, hostels, and [other] educational institutes on the borderlands of the savages. Once the children are brought into an educational setting, contact with the parents would be facilitated, and gradually the way to their savage tribes would be opened. [...] Seven from among our older native pupils have already asked to study for the priesthood. It is their desire (so they say) to return [to their tribe] and convert their families still in the savage state.¹⁵⁸

The concept occurs in *Dream III* at several points. After being shown the "great number of savages" inhabiting the southern regions, "the harvest reserved for the Salesians," Don Bosco comments: "Men and women will join our ranks and will become preachers themselves. Their very children, whom it now seems impossible to convert to the faith, will become the evangelizers of their families and friends." A little later, in the hall of glory, the Interpreter explains to Don Bosco that "People from foreign lands, savages, who drank the milk of divine teaching from their educators have themselves become proclaimers of the Word of God." Again in the hall, when Don Bosco asks about a group of strange-looking children, he is told: "These are the reinforcements who will guarantee

¹⁵⁶ Fifth keepsake: Borrego, *Recuerdos*, p. 43; cf. *EBM* XI, 364.

¹⁵⁷ Braidó, *Progetto*, p. 22-24.

¹⁵⁸ Ceria, *Ep* III, p. 59.

The strategy is also set forth in nearly identical terms in the essay on Patagonia under the heading of *Nuovo Progetto* [cf. Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 161f.].

the continuance of the reign of God which has been established also among us."¹⁵⁹

Don Bosco had already seen the children in that role in *Dream I*. As he was wondering how those "brutal people" could be converted, he relates: "At that moment I saw a small group of missionaries, different from the former, advancing with cheerful mien toward [the savages], preceded by a band of youngsters. [...] I realized that their arrival was causing widespread joy among that throng of barbarians."¹⁶⁰

Thus it is that young people play an important role in all but the second of the five missionary dreams.

[iii] Complementary Relationship between Civilization and Religion: Total Human Development

By civilization Don Bosco meant an evolved condition of society in which education, science, the arts, agriculture, industry, commerce, etc. flourish together in an harmonious manner—obviously, for him, in the European manner. He believed that such a desirable development could not be obtained except through the Christian religion and the Christian way of life. Consequently, missionary activity had to aim at implanting the Christian faith together with the civilized way of life in complementary fashion—at developing a "Christian civilization." What he had in mind, in spite of his "European bias," was the total human development of the natives, or (in modern terms) human promotion and evangelization jointly.¹⁶¹

In the "Conclusion" of his essay on Patagonia, to stress the urgency of the mission among those natives, Don Bosco writes:

Who would not weep at the thought that several million human beings are still totally ignorant of the Christian faith, and lack in fact any idea of religion and of the moral law, and lie buried in the shadow of death? [...] They have neither civilization, nor government, nor industry, nor agriculture, nor commerce. Among them brute force decides all questions [...]. They allow their children to die. They refuse to educate them. They have no concept of marriage [...]. They are continuously at war, killing and slaughtering each other. In many instances they feed on human flesh. [...] Now God in his goodness wills to free from Satan's cruel slavery these poor people who from the depth of their misfortune

¹⁵⁹ *Lemoyne A* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 87 and 89].

¹⁶⁰ *Barberis Report* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 48].

¹⁶¹ Cf. texts cited in: Desramaut, *Pensiero*, p. 55-57; Braidò, *Progetto*, p. 26; Borrego, *Recuerdos*, p. 19-21.

are crying out to the Lord: "O God of love and mercy, free us from the evils that enslave us; send also to us that gospel light with which other peoples have for many centuries been blessed."¹⁶²

It is in this frame of mind that Don Bosco concluded his narrative of *Dream II* with the comment:

At first the task of converting the savages to Christian morals will be a most difficult one; but their children will most willingly accept the teachings of the missionaries. Through them colonies [settlements] will be founded; civilization will replace barbarism; and a great number of savages will enter the fold of Jesus Christ.¹⁶³

Earlier in the same *Dream II*, when Don Bosco inquired about the building and other materials he saw heaped up at the Straits of Magellan, the Interpreter replied: "This is all at the planning stage. But these savages will one day become so docile that they will freely come to be taught religion, civilized living, and commerce."¹⁶⁴

The close relationship between religion and social-economic life is expressed in *Dream III*, in an interesting comment on the migration of Europeans to America. Don Bosco says: "From the moment that churches began to be plundered in Europe in 1854? [*sic*], from that moment commerce began to decline—and it will continue to decline."¹⁶⁵

We referred, above, to Don Bosco's "European bias." Obviously, as a man of his times, Don Bosco suffered from common missiological prejudices, two of which are very serious indeed.

The first of these may be called, for lack of a better term, the "European bias." This was the deeply-rooted conviction (unquestioned at the time) that "civilization" was Europe's exclusive prerogative; and that consequently, if native people were to be civilized as well as evangelized, they would also have to be "Europeanized." This is acculturation in one direction; and it is a kind of colonial ideology, generally accepted then, and not quite dead even now (if the designation "European" is replaced by "Western"). The remark overheard in the hall in *Dream II*, and reported by Don Bosco in his own hand, immediately comes to mind: "Europe, Christian Europe, the great teacher of civilized living

¹⁶² Borrego, *Patagonia*, p. 165.

¹⁶³ *Lemoyne B* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 78].

¹⁶⁴ *Lemoyne B* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 76f.].

¹⁶⁵ *Lemoyne A*, marginal note [cf. *Installment I*, p. 87].

and of the Catholic faith, seems to have grown apathetic with regard to the foreign missions."¹⁶⁶

The second handicap, which was typical of conservative Catholic thinking at the time, and which P. Braidò describes as "the most dated and impermanent aspect of Don Bosco's 'project'," was the outmoded model of Christian society hoped for—one which, practically speaking, involved a return to the *ancien régime*.¹⁶⁷

True, Don Bosco was not one to be guided inflexibly by theoretical models. He would be supple enough to recognize the signs of the times. Nonetheless, of itself, such thinking could ultimately defeat the effort at that total human development which was the supreme desire of his missionary heart.

But even with these drawbacks, the missionary dreams reveal a Don Bosco aflame with the most intense moral and religious inspiration for the mission. Not only do they evidence a burning zeal on his part to hasten the coming of God's reign; they also affirm his total commitment to making a more richly human life, as well as Christian salvation, available to all of God's children.

[iv] A Salesian Missionary Spirituality ¹⁶⁸

Don Bosco's missionary spirituality comes to the fore in the dream narratives we have been considering more through the spirit which pervades them than through worded spiritual teaching or advice. But even this latter element is not lacking, though it appears only incidentally and in an unsystematic way. Yet, when these reflective lines and comments are taken together, they add up to what may be regarded as a little directory for a Salesian missionary spirituality.

I shall transcribe them here without comment.

¹⁶⁶ Lemoyne B, Don Bosco's autograph marginal note [cf. *Installment I*, p. 68].

P. Braidò [*Progetto*, p. 26f.], in discussing the matter, remarks that Don Bosco's ideas would not have differed greatly from those expressed (with involuntary irony) in a report on the third Salesian missionary sending which was published in the newspaper *L'Unità cattolica*. As quoted in the *Salesian Bulletin* it reads in part: "It is a matter of bringing to the natives there our mild customs, our knowledge, our gentle way of living; of going among people who have no moral standards (*costume*), live without law, and are ignorant even of the things most needed for a human life" [*Bollettino Salesiano* 1 (1877:2) p. 7, in ASC 73 Bollettino, FDBM 106 E11].

¹⁶⁷ Braidò, *Progetto*, p. 10f.

¹⁶⁸ For a description of Don Bosco's missionary spirituality, applicable also to the missionary dream narratives, cf. Borrego, *Recuerdos*, p. 23-31.

By sweat and by blood will the savages be returned to the tree and be made pleasing to the Lord of life. [*Dream II*]¹⁶⁹

With the gentleness of St. Francis de Sales will the Salesians succeed in drawing the peoples of [South] America to Jesus Christ. [*Dream II*]¹⁷⁰

Not with worldly wisdom, not with good health (*sanità*), not with wealth, but with zeal and prayer, will you be able to do much good and to further the glory of God and the salvation of souls. [*Dream III*]¹⁷¹

I realized that the Salesians are now just sowing the seed. Those who will come after us will gather in the harvest. [...] The Salesians will succeed in bringing this about through humility, work and temperance. [*Dream III*]¹⁷²

The important thing is that the Salesians do not yield to love of ease and shrink from work. [...] If they do not surrender to the vice of gluttony, they will have a long future assured. [*Dream IV*]¹⁷³

Their labors will bear fruit, because the Lord will stand by them always—provided they will not prove unworthy. [*Dream IV*]¹⁷⁴

Do not fret. This is for your sons to accomplish, for your sons' sons, and for their sons after them. Only, hold the line firmly. [*Dream V*]¹⁷⁵

Be on your guard against the error that is so common today—the free mingling by those who cultivate human knowledge with those who pursue divine knowledge. Heavenly wisdom must avoid contact with earthly wisdom. [*Dream V*]¹⁷⁶

[This is a] very important piece of advice affecting the future of our missions: let the Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of

¹⁶⁹ Lemoyne B [cf. *Installment I*, p. 73].

¹⁷⁰ Don Bosco's concluding comment, Lemoyne B [cf. *Installment I*, p. 78].

¹⁷¹ Don Bosco's dream advice to his departing missionaries, Lemoyne A [cf. *Installment I*, p. 85].

In later drafts this passage was rephrased: "Not with worldly wisdom, but with holiness (*santità*); not with wealth, but with zeal and prayer [...].

¹⁷² Lemoyne A [cf. *Installment I*, p. 87].

¹⁷³ Lemoyne Report [cf. p. 10, above].

¹⁷⁴ Lemoyne Report [cf. p. 10, above].

¹⁷⁵ Viglietti Report [cf. p. 22, above].

¹⁷⁶ Viglietti Report [cf. p. 23, above].

Christians make every effort to promote priestly and religious vocations. [*Dream III*]¹⁷⁷

One thing above all must be observed and recommended—that my children practice Mary's [characteristic] virtue always. [*Dream V*]¹⁷⁸

I realized that they were reciting the rosary, missionaries and savages, peaceably together. After a while one of the missionaries intoned the [hymn], "Praise Mary, Ye Faithful Tongues;" then everyone with one voice joined in the song. [*Dream I*]¹⁷⁹

Fidelity even to the sacrifice of one's life; Salesian gentleness; zeal and prayer; asceticism of work and temperance; religious observance; *fuga mundi*; vocations; Mary's virtue; devotion to Mary—this is a compendium of missionary spirituality.

Conclusion

In the foregoing discussion of Don Bosco's five missionary dreams, I have sought to delineate the historical and cultural context out of which Don Bosco's missionary vocation was shaped and out of which the dreams subsequently arose. It has been my special concern, with the help of archival sources, to trace the editorial process, and to present a reliable text, for each dream narrative. In the interpretative comments that close the present essay, harking back to the principles outlined in the general introduction (*Installment I*), I have tried to describe what might, or what might not be, the true significance of these dreams. To this end the dreams were seen as expressions of Don Bosco's and the Salesian Society's vocation-mission.

I should like to emphasize in conclusion that these dreams do not merely project Don Bosco's hopes for an enduring worldwide Salesian apostolate, but also articulate (albeit under prophetic caution) his *certainty* about the success of his great life's project. It is because of such certainty on the Founder's part that these, perhaps more than other dreams, have served as encouragement and reassurance to his spiritual children. Generations of Salesians the world over have referred back to these dreams and have rightly seen in them a confirmation of their own apostolate.

After all, they have Don Bosco's word: "We shall always find favor, even in the eyes of evil people, because our special apostolate is such that it

¹⁷⁷ Closing comment, *Lemoyne A* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 91].

¹⁷⁸ *Viglietti Report* [cf. p. 23, above].

¹⁷⁹ *Barberis Report* [cf. *Installment I*, p. 49].

calls forth everyone's good will, of good and bad people alike."¹⁸⁰ And they have his promise (delivered with a note of triumph?) that "they will see the stupendous future which divine Providence has in store for us—if we are faithful. Within 150 or 200 years the Salesians could be masters of the whole world."¹⁸¹

Salesians may rest assured that this certainty arose neither from human calculation, nor from clever deduction, nor from perceiving and seizing the opportunity in given historical moments. Rather, it sprang from Don Bosco's very vocation and from the illumination that accompanied it, because of his fidelity. These dreams are instances of such illumination, and the light which they shed on the Salesian Society for its mission is the light that emanates from the very mission of the Founder.

¹⁸⁰ *Dream IV*, Concluding comment, *Lemoyne Report* [cf. p. 10, above].

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*