

“FROM THE TREE.”

IN his suggestive paper, “The Lord Reigned from the Tree,” J. H. A. Hart points out (EXPOSITOR, Nov. 1905, p. 329), that, apart from its citation by Justin and Tertullian, the phrase “from the tree” actually occurs in Psalm xcvi. (xcvi.) in one document, which is at least not nominally Christian—a cursive Psalter: there, however, it is read, ἀπὸ τῶ ξύλω. Mr. Hart explains this reading in the following way:

Of all transcriptional variants in Greek MSS. that of ἀπὸ for ἐπί is among the commonest. The dative, of course, calls for ἐπί and not ἀπὸ, and no one who has handled many cursive manuscripts would hesitate to accede to its just demand. The reward of this concession is immediate and ample. ἐπί τῷ ξύλω will be in Hebrew יָעַ לַע. . . . The variation . . . ἀπὸ for ἐπί may be a Christian emendation or a pure accident, etc.

That is all very ingenious; but why not stick to the explanation, which seemed to me always a matter of course, that ἀπὸ τῶ ξύλω is simply a translation from the Latin “a ligno,” preserving in Greek the ablative case of the Latin? The Greek MS. 156, which alone has preserved this reading, betrays also at other places Latin influence. It has an *interlinear Latin* version. It is again unique, as far as we know at present, in preserving the Latin “*quinta sabbati*” as πεμπτη σαββατου in the heading of Ps. lxxx. (lxxx.). See on ἀπὸ τῶ ξύλω Swete’s *Introduction* (second edition, p. 160 note), pp. 424, 467. If codex U of the Psalms were complete, probably we should read there, “ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου”; see F. E. Brightman, “The Sahidic Text of the Psalter,” (*Journal of Theological Studies*, ii. p. 278), as we read ἀπὸ ξύλου in R (the Greek and *Latin Codex Veronensis*); for it is found in the Sahidic Version too. The most interesting example of the influence of one language on the other in

the section of prepositions which I have at hand at this moment, is *σίνε πάτρις οἶον ἄνευ πατρός* (Plutarch, *Quæst. Roman.* 103).

I fear the explanation of Mr. Hart, ingenious as it is, will not stand proof.

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