



A Pair of Citations from the Diatessaron

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Source: *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1891), pp. 153-155

Published by: The Society of Biblical Literature

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4617137>

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A PAIR OF CITATIONS FROM THE
DIATESSARON.

BY ISAAC H. HALL.

[N the catalogue of Christian books and writers composed by 'Ebed-yeshu' (or 'Odisho', as the Nestorians pronounce it), written about A.D. 1300, occurs the passage :

" Yeshu'dad (or Îsho'dad) of the same place [i.e. Ḥadath or Ḥadith, the place of Solomon, the writer just previously mentioned by 'Ebed-yeshu'] composed an exposition of the New [Testament], and also the book of the Beit^h Maut^hhê [i.e. part of the burial service] in a concise manner [*lit.* in a word of brevity]."

Yeshu'dad flourished about A.D. 852; his Commentary on the New Testament is still extant, though not yet printed. There is at least one manuscript of it in this country, and I think part of a second. I myself lately came into possession of a third, but it contains only his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. My manuscript is written in fine Nestorian script, dated the 21 Adar in the year 2041 of the Greeks, or 21 March, 1730 A.D. The testimony of this writer to a reading or to a passage in Tatian's Diatessaron is at least of as high a grade as the Arabic version published by Ciasca, and I therefore give one testimony therefrom, which differs entirely from the Arabic version. I give the text and context, as the matter is quite an important one in several aspects. The comment has to do with Matthew iii. 5, last clause. The text is as follows, omitting most of the needless Nestorian pointing, except in important words.

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Or, translated :

“*And his food was locusts and wild honey*—with *pethacha beth* [i.e. in the word ܘܡܢܐܘܟܠܐ]; the Greek ܘܡܢܐܘܟܠܐ with vowelless *beth*. With regard to this, some say that ‘locusts’ means roots and sweet plants (*gauche*); but in the Diatessaron ‘milk and honey’ is written.”

It can scarcely be doubted that Bar Hebraeus had good evidence for his statement. He *may* have had Yeshu’dad for his authority, but the form and matter of his writing look as if he knew something more of the Diatessaron than that paragraph of Yeshu’dad could give him. Is it not possible that the Diatessaron was known to him, and thus was actually extant down to the latter half of the thirteenth century?