

A NOTE ON THE *ACTA PAULI*.

HAS the possibility ever been seriously considered that the *Acta Pauli* are wholly a continuation of the Canonical Acts, and do not, in parts, come parallel to them? It has been generally assumed that at any rate most of the episodes previous to the Martyrdom are meant to be intercalated in the gaps left by the author of the Canonical Acts. But I am anxious that the question should be put and answered, whether the narrative of the *Acta Pauli* is not *all* to be regarded as following upon that of Luke.

Objections of course spring to the mind at once. Does not Paul refer to the fight with beasts at Ephesus in 1 Cor. xv as a past event; and did not an account of that fight occur in the *Acta Pauli*? Undoubtedly; but I would ask as a counter-question: Is it likely that the author of the *Acta Pauli* had formed any idea of the chronological order of the Epistles? Is it not quite probable that he regarded them as having all been written within a short time of the Apostle's death (like those of Ignatius); and that he assumed any event mentioned in the Epistles and not in the Acts to have occurred subsequently to the period embraced in that book?

The reasons which have led me to reflect seriously upon the possibility I have mentioned are, first, considerations of analogy, derived from the study of this literature as a whole, and secondly, indications in the text of these particular Acts.

With regard to the first, it is obvious that the other Apocryphal Acts are all continuations of the New Testament narrative. When it is desired to introduce detail belonging to the sphere of the Gospels or the Canonical Acts, retrospect is employed. Such retrospective episodes are the account of our Lord in the Acts of John, the Eubula story in Peter, and the miracle of the Sphinx in Andrew and Matthew: the *Clementine Recognitions*, too, contain much retrospective matter.

The indications which the *Acta Pauli* themselves give are puzzling. I will cite in the first place the case of the Thecla episode. All that part of the *personnel* of this episode which is derived from the Pauline Epistles (*viz.* Demas, Hermogenes, Onesiphorus, Titus) is from one Epistle, obviously written late in Paul's career, *viz.* 2 Tim. It presupposes, moreover, a visit of Titus to Iconium; we read that Titus had told Onesiphorus what Paul's appearance was (§ 2). According to the view which I am stating, therefore, Paul's visit to Iconium is meant to be placed quite late in his life.

Almost the only other episode in the *Acta Pauli* (before the *Martyrium*)

which brings the Apostle to a place which he visits also in the Canonical Acts is the Philippian section, where Paul, imprisoned at Philippi, writes a letter to Corinth. This visit to Philippi cannot, surely, be identical with that of Acts xvi. The imprisonment of Paul is the result, not of the exorcising of the prophesying maiden, but of the conversion (probably) of Stratonice, the wife of Apollophanes. And there are indications that it is not a first visit which is being narrated; brethren are mentioned as rejoicing at Paul's arrival.

Another point is that the Church at Corinth is evidently a mature and well-established organization. There are deacons, who bring the Corinthian letter to Paul, and elders who write the letter. One of these is Stephanas, who, one can hardly doubt, is the Stephanas of 1 Cor. i 16. All this must mean that Paul had already resided at Corinth, and founded a Church. But in the Canonical Acts his first visit to Corinth is subsequent to the visit to Philippi.

Another sentence in the same section seems to shew that we are dealing with events quite late in the Apostle's life, at a time when his death was looked for as somewhat imminent: 'Es waren nämlich in grosser Betrübnis die Korinther wegen Paulus, dass er würde aus der Welt gehen, ohne dass die Zeit ist' (Schmidt p. 73). Possibly it was only his peril at Philippi that caused the fear; of this I am not satisfied.

Again, a sentence in the Corinthian letter may perhaps be taken as referring to Paul's deliverance from imprisonment at Rome. 'Denn wir glauben, wie offenbart ist der Theonoë, dass der Herr dich gerettet hat aus der Hand (?) des Gesetzlosen (*ἀνομος*)' (Schmidt p. 75). Is not the *ἀνομος* likely to be meant for the Emperor?

It is urged that the arrival of Paul at Rome at the beginning of the *Martyrium* is represented as his first visit to that city, and that the prophecies of Cleobius and Myrte (Schmidt pp. 82, 83) are also to be interpreted as referring to a first visit. I can see no necessity for this. The incident of Cleobius and Myrte is, I cannot doubt, copied from that of Agabus in Acts xxi, which refers to what was by no means Paul's first visit to Jerusalem: I can detect nothing in the language of Cleobius or Myrte which is incompatible with the idea that Paul had already been at Rome once. I must say the same of the *Martyrium*: but here it is quite clear that Nero at any rate had never seen Paul before.

To complete the theory which I am putting forward to be knocked down, I must add a sketch of what it requires us to assume as the general outline of the *Acta Pauli*.

At the beginning we should have been told, perhaps very much in the fashion of the opening words of the *Acts of Peter (Actus Vercellenses)*, how Paul was released from imprisonment at Rome, and then, possibly,

how he set out for Spain. Any account of the Spanish journey must have been short; there is just a possibility that some retrospective reference to it may have been introduced into the body of the book.

The detailed narrative evidently began nearer the writer's own home in Asia. The story of Anchaes is quite likely to have been the first of its kind in the book (it occurs on the ninth page of the manuscript). Then follow Thecla, Hermocrates, the Sidonian and Tyrian episodes, and then the gap. Into this must be fitted the fight with beasts at Ephesus, Paul in the mines¹, Paul at Jerusalem, and then a return westward, which brings Paul to Philippi and to Athens, as I believe (for I still hold to the speech in John of Salisbury as a citation of the *Acta*). Whether this intervened between the prophecy of Cleobius and Myrte and the *Martyrium*, we can hardly tell.

It is quite likely that I have missed some points which would put this theory out of court completely and in a moment. I cannot say that I am a decided supporter of it: I only put forward the suggestion of its possibility, and ask that it may be entertained along with others. I should like to add an expression of the warm admiration which I, in common with all students, feel for the way in which Dr Carl Schmidt has brought order out of chaos in dealing with the mass of fragments to which his manuscript had been reduced.

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PROLEGOMENA TO THE *TESTIMONIA* OF ST CYPRIAN.

ON two points there can be no division of opinion among patristic students: the importance of the evidence of St Cyprian and especially of his book of 'Testimonies' to the earliest form of the Latin Bible, and the unsatisfactory nature of the only critical edition, that of Hartel (A. D. 1868) in the Vienna *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*.

Hartel used for the *Testimonia* only five MSS, A (Sessorianus Iviii in the library of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme: now 2106 in the Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele), B (Bamberg 476), L (Vienna 962: originally at Lorsch), M (Munich 208), W (Würzburg theol. 145): and of these he pinned his faith predominantly to A, which appeared to him to give the most consistent text, though he carefully guarded himself from

¹ With reference to this story, I should like to suggest the possibility that Frontina is dead, and that the casting down over the precipice was a local mode of burial.