

## ABILENE, THE JEWISH HERODS AND ST LUKE.

Ἐν ἔτει δὲ πεντεκαδεκάτῳ τῆς ἡγεμονίας Τιβερίου Καίσαρος, ἡγεμονεύοντος Ποντίου Πιλάτου τῆς Ἰουδαίας, καὶ τετραρχούντος τῆς Γαλιλαίας Ἡρώδου, Φιλίππου δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ τετραρχούντος τῆς Ἰουραίας καὶ Τραχωνίτιδος χώρας, καὶ Λυσανίου τῆς Ἀβιληνῆς τετραρχούντος. Luke iii 1.

THE selection of Lysanias for inclusion in this note of date has for a long time puzzled me, as it has, I gather, puzzled many others. It is difficult to understand why one minor potentate of Syria should be chosen, when others, Aretas, for instance, of Nabataea, or the dynasty of Chalcis, have, at all events at first sight, as good or better claims. It is not as if the natural features of the district made Abilene a natural part of the land of the Jews, or as if there had existed a long tradition of political association between the two states or any such tradition of a sort worth mentioning at all. The facts are the other way about. Geographically Abilene goes with the north: it was a hill district connected with the northern hills. Historically before the time of which St Luke is writing it had had no real or permanent political connexion with Israel or Judaea, not even in the time of Solomon or of Jeroboam II or of the Maccabees. Whatever may have been the facts regarding the progress northwards of these monarchs, their efforts had but a transient success; there was certainly no subjugation, no occupation of this mountain district. Defeated on the plains, its mountaineers retired to their strongholds, made some sort of a submission and bided their time; their 'conquerors' had to be content to leave it so. The Herods, indeed, had had their eyes upon it for over half a century, but though they were working northwards and in the end possessed both it and much of the larger kingdom of which it had once formed a part, in A. D. 30 they had only reached its foot-hills. Probably enough, as St Luke tells us, a kinsman of Lysanias the elder, also called Lysanias, ruled at Abila at this date<sup>1</sup>; but the ruler's name is immaterial, for whoever ruled it, Abilene was not Herodian in A. D. 30; in mentioning it in this connexion St Luke goes outside the area governed or ever previously governed by the Herods or by any earlier Jewish ruler. The Jews, moreover, of our Lord's time had little in

<sup>1</sup> An inscription, seen at Abila and copied by Pococke (*C. I. G.* 4521) but now lost, commemorates the public spirit of Nymphaeus, freedman of the tetrarch Lysanias, who had made himself responsible for the building of a road and temple; in other words he had helped to beautify and civilize his patron's capital. The *κύριοι Σε[βα-στο]* mentioned in the inscription cannot well be any but Tiberius Augustus and Livia Augusta (A. D. 14-29)—a fact which, taken with other evidence, makes it over-bold to deny with any dogmatism the existence of a Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene, in the second and third decades of the first century of our era.

common with the Ituraean freebooters of Abilene; cut off from each other in almost every respect by the interests and habits which keep states apart, there was also the memory of recent hostility between the two. It is, I presume, generally admitted that our Lord never taught in Abilene. Two possible explanations, therefore, of the inclusion of Lysanias, which at once suggest themselves, can be excluded from consideration.

Abilene, however, became Herodian about A. D. 37 when Caligula gave it to Agrippa I. Philip's tetrarchy went with it. In A. D. 41 Claudius confirmed the grant, other portions of Herod the Great's kingdom being added later, so that at his death (A. D. 44) Agrippa I was ruler of all of his father's kingdom and of Abilene in addition.<sup>1</sup> We need feel accordingly no doubt that St Luke's ante-dated interest in Abilene is due to its subsequent incorporation in the territory of those Herods who maintained their connexion with the Jews; and we may note that at his death Agrippa I's domain corresponded to the area which St Luke in his description had in his mind.

But this is not all the problem. When Agrippa I died, the Romans took over the administration of his kingdom. His son, a youth of 17, at first had nothing. After his uncle's death, however, in A. D. 48 Chalcis proper was conferred upon him. In A. D. 53 or thereabouts he gave up Chalcis, receiving in exchange the northern part of his father's kingdom (the tetrarchy of Philip and Abilene); the rest, a province kept for most purposes distinct from Syria, remaining under the government of Roman procurators. Later, under Nero, almost certainly about A. D. 55, his dominion was extended towards the south, a large and important part of Galilee (the Herodian city of Tiberias with Tarichea and tracts of country round them) and two toparchies in Peraea (Julias, also an Herodian city, and Abela) being transferred to him from the Roman province of Judaea.<sup>2</sup> This transference, however, did not affect the total area governed by the two together; what was given to Agrippa was taken from the procurator. We may note again that, approximately speaking, from A. D. 53 onwards, Agrippa II and the Roman procurator of the time (Felix at first, and later Festus) continued between them to govern all that Agrippa I was governing in A. D. 44—all, not more nor less, with the exception of a small addition to the north. This small addition was the tetrarchy of Varus. Varus, a very minor and very transient potentate, was a descendant of Soemus, the Ituraean king, whose kingdom on his death in A. D. 49 was added

<sup>1</sup> Cf. especially Josephus *Antiquities* xix 5, 1, where a distinction is expressly made between Abilene and what was Agrippa's by ancestral right.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus *B.J.* ii 13, 2, *A.* xx 8, 4—the date is quite clearly given as the first year of Nero.

to the province of Syria.<sup>1</sup> Varus, one of the native dynasty, was, it would seem, in accordance with the usual Roman policy, allowed to retain a portion of his ancestor's kingdom. But the portion left him was very small, hardly of the size of Rutland, and he held it only for four years. It lay just north of Abilene; it had once been part of it or rather of the larger Chalcis, of which Abilene had been itself a part. Varus's tenure being brief and his dominions of very small extent, its identity was lost after their amalgamation in the far larger tetrarchy of Lysanias, which had had a separate political existence for something like half a century. For a purpose such as St Luke's, Abilene could very well cover both, just as Galilee covers Peraea, and ἡ Ἰρουπαλία καὶ Τραχωνίτις χώρα covers the various constituent elements of Philip's tetrarchy, as known to us from other sources.<sup>2</sup> For some years then after A. D. 53 for his and any similar purpose St Luke's description applies to the area ruled by Agrippa II, together with the Roman procurator's province. But in A. D. 66 when the war broke out the Romans took complete control of everything, and in or about A. D. 72, after things had begun to settle down, Agrippa received such accessions to his sphere of government as extended it considerably northwards, apparently as far as northern Lebanon.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus *Annales* xii 23.

<sup>2</sup> As well in fact as the title 'King of England' covers England and the Celtic fringe. While then the antiquary does and must regret the lack of precision, it is easy to understand how St Luke's interest lay in the persons bearing rule in A. D. 30 rather than in the exact boundaries of their authority; the more so as Josephus mentions the tetrarchy of Varus in the *War of the Jews* (ii 16, 8) but not in the *Antiquities* (xx 7, 1). To enable us to fix the extent and position of this tetrarchy we have quite sufficient *data*: (1) within narrow limits we know the boundaries of the kingdom of Chalcis under Ptolemy Mennaei and his son, Lysanias the elder; (2) again within narrow limits we know how much of it at various times went not to Soemus, the kinsman of Varus, but to other people, to the Herods, to the tetrarch of Chalcis proper, to the ruler of Abilene, to the citizens of Heliopolis and to Beyrout; these ate up most of it; (3) Soemus, king of Ituraea, therefore, who was not identical with the later Soemus, king of Emesa, had of it some 600 square miles, less rather than more; (4) of these square miles the Romans in A. D. 49, as we may be certain from what we know about their methods, retained the lion's share and the part the easiest to govern; (5) Varus, therefore, as his *solatium* would get perhaps a third or less, and that, high ground in the main, only partially reduced and civilized; (6) if then the northern boundary of Abilene was the natural one, the depression in the Anti-Lebanon just east of Heliopolis, which would place the capital, Abila, about the centre of its district, Varus got the hill-country to the north of it, or, in other words, about the area I have suggested in the text. It would be co-terminous with Abilene, as we should expect from its inclusion in it when a few years afterwards things were rounded off; (7) an area for this tetrarchy, comparatively inconsiderable in extent, which went not unnaturally with the southern Anti-Lebanon, would explain the silence of the *Antiquities* about it.

To put it briefly then ; from A. D. 37 to A. D. 44, and then again from A. D. 53 to A. D. 66 or at latest A. D. 72, but not afterwards, one of the Jewish Herods with or without the help of a Roman procurator governed an area which in extent practically agrees with the area St Luke purports to describe. Outside these dates the area thus governed was less or considerably more. These facts are certain. Any deduction from them must be to some extent a matter of opinion, but an eminently reasonable deduction is that St Luke chose this area for description because he wrote during part of the period during which these conditions prevailed. Nothing would be more natural than that he should attempt to account for the government of the 'Holy Land' of the time *at* which he wrote ; the correspondence produced between the two by the introduction of Lysanias is remarkable ; the introduction of Lysanias is puzzling, and the description fits only just a few years, and these the few years during which the writing of the Gospel and the Acts may well have taken place. Moreover, if we may make the reasonable assumption that the author of the Gospel and the Acts was also the author of the *ἡμεῖς*-passages, he was in Palestine about A. D. 60 and had seen or heard much of Agrippa, Felix, and Festus, the successors in about a generation of Lysanias, Philip, Herod, and Pontius Pilate. His attention once drawn to Agrippa, many were competent to tell him all the facts, quite recent, of the family's vicissitudes and the rough outlines of the areas its members governed then and twenty years before.<sup>1</sup>

I have said so far nothing of St Luke's alleged dependence on Josephus. So far as I can see, however, resemblances in diction point rather to the existence of a sort of literary *κοινή* of the eastern provinces, meant as Attic, than to a direct dependence. Where St Luke and Josephus narrate the same event, more often than not they either differ in their details or they disagree ; even the stock passage about Theudas (*Ant.* xx 5, 1, 2) is open to this charge ; the passage about Lysanias (*Ant.* xx 7, 1) does not look like copying. The Josephus theory, on the other hand, has difficulties of its own. It credits the author of the Gospel and the Acts with a slovenliness of method and a lack of

<sup>1</sup> Agrippa came, St Luke tells us, to Caesarea with Berenice in order to greet Festus. He was invited to assist at the trial of St Paul, and attended it *μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας*. This looks like the truth. The woman's readiness to greet the successor of her sister's husband, then under a cloud, is to those who know the facts of their relationship as eloquent as the oriental vassal's promptness to exploit the chance of making a display. If an invention, which I do not believe, it has as true a dramatic touch as Claudius Lysias's paraphrase of Acts xxi 27-40, xxii 22-29 (cf. xxiii 26-30), or the delightfully human answer of the Jews at Rome (Acts xxviii 21, 22) to St Paul, 'We know nothing officially against you, but we don't altogether like your friends.'

earnestness of purpose, which do occur in journalism and elsewhere, but require proof in his case. It implies also a late date for the Gospel and the Acts. This is not in itself impossible; but it leaves us with the task of explaining the absence of all knowledge of the fall of Jerusalem and of the deaths of St Peter and St Paul, which is very far from easy.<sup>1</sup> The case for 61 or thereabouts is not disposed of by any means. Perhaps then, in conclusion, I may put my case thus. If St Luke were writing in the early sixties, he would be describing how the Holy Land of the time *at* which he wrote was governed thirty years before. The truth of the converse does not follow of necessity—he may, for instance, not have kept up to date or, though I doubt it, he may be just a journalist; but the converse is highly probable; and we have a point most certainly to be considered, when an attempt is made to fix the date of writing, especially as at first sight, and even on examination, Jerusalem was not yet destroyed when ‘St Luke’ wrote and St Peter and St Paul were still alive.

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<sup>1</sup> As hard in fact as it would be 2,000 years hence to assign to 1915 or any later date a writer (*floruit* limited to 1900–1940) of two volumes on the history of a great religious movement in Belgium in the last decades of last century, who gave no hint of the destruction of the country, whether he was an original authority or no and whatever may have been his point of view.

## PHILO ON EDUCATION.

THAT the ancient world took a great interest in the subject of education is attested by innumerable scattered allusions and observations. Yet it is remarkable that very little systematic or formal writing on the subject survives. That Aristippus and Theophrastus, Zeno and Cleanthes and Chrysippus, Cato and Varro all wrote treatises on education we learn on the authority of Diogenes Laertius and others.<sup>1</sup> But nothing of them survives and very little is known of their views. If we may set aside the *Republic*, we are practically left with the fifth book of the *Politics*, the first two books of Quintilian, and the treatise *περὶ ἀγωγῆς παιδῶν* which is bound up with Plutarch's *Moralia*. Of these three Aristotle is not, I think, for practical purposes of great importance. Neither his general outlook nor his treatment of details seems to have greatly influenced the theory or practice of later times. Well before the date of our era, the system of the *ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία* had been firmly established. It consisted of (1) *Grammaticæ*: originally the

<sup>1</sup> A collection of these is given by Wyttenbach in his introductory note to the *De Lib. Ed. Plutarch. Mor.* vol. vi p. 66.