

EGO SALATHIEL QUI ET EZRAS.

WHO was the supposed author of 4 Esdras? In other words, who is the Esdras whose name appears at the beginning of the book, and at intervals throughout it?

The natural and usual answer is that he is Ezra the scribe, the part-author of the canonical book of Ezra. But is this certain? If so, why, at the outset, is he called 'Salathiel who am also Esdras', and how comes it that he lives in the 30th year of the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, whereas Ezra the scribe lived 100 years later? In Esdras's time Jerusalem is lying waste: in Ezra's time it had long been restored.

To this it is answered that 4 Esdras is a composite book and that the groundwork of it is an Apocalypse of Salathiel. A redactor wished to make Ezra the vehicle of his message, and put together, with additions of his own, a good deal of Apocalyptic matter, including the Salathiel Apocalypse: and, though surprisingly clever at concealing the sutures of his patchwork, he omitted to remove the tell-tale name of Salathiel from the first lines of it (see Box *Ezra Apocalypse* i, xxii, &c.). So stated (and I think the statement is fair, though curt) the answer does not seem to me very plausible.

Did the difficulty of date appeal to any one in old times? Yes: a distinction was occasionally drawn between Esdras the prophet and Ezra the scribe. There are two texts of the (later) chapters i, ii of 4 Esdras, which I have called French and Spanish. The Spanish seems to be the older. The French text attributes to Esdras the genealogy given to Ezra in Ezra vii 1: the Spanish calls him the prophet the son of Chusi. The anonymous author of *Inventiones nominum* (J. T. S. 1903 pp. 224, 230) speaks of a Chusi as father of the major prophet Hesdras, and, further, says that there were two of the name Hesdras, one the prophet, the son of Chusi, who renewed the Scriptures from memory; the other the scribe who came back to Jerusalem; 'and between the two are about 100 years'. The author of a prologue to 4 Esdras in the erratic Leon MS (printed by Violet, p. 439) draws from this tract, and insists upon the distinction. The same authority calls the book 'liber Esdre filius cusi prophete', and in iii 1 reads (seemingly, for Violet's statement is not quite clear) 'ego sarathias filium cusi qui et esdre'.

On the other hand, writers such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria,

&c., who speak of the restoration of the Law, attribute it to Ezra the scribe. See the quotations in my *Introduction* (p. xxxvii).

Some persons, then, drew a distinction between Esdras the prophet and Ezra the scribe. But how could the words 'ego Salathiel qui et Ezras' be justified?

Of Salathiel (Shealtiel) we know hardly anything; but we have his genealogy in 1 Chron. iii 17.

'And the sons of Jeconiah: Assir, Salathiel his son.'

The Haggadists upon this say that Assir and Salathiel are one name: so does the author of *quaest. Hebr. in Par.*

The evidence, and the interesting story of Salathiel's birth, are to be found in a tract by M. Friedmann (*S'rubabhel*, 1890) to which Mr I. Abrahams kindly drew my attention.

Salathiel, then, had a second name, and that name was Assir (אסיר). Could it be readily confused with Ezra (עזרא)? Orientalists say No. Yet something like this has happened. Gildemeister's Arabic version (made, it is thought, direct from Greek) writes El-Useir (one of the two MSS has El Asir) in iii 1: the other Arabic version has Ezra throughout.

Or, if Assir is not *confused* with Ezra, might not the identification, once made by one who had his reasons for it, seem plausible and be accepted? This is, I think, what has happened. The author of 4 Esdras has consciously invented an earlier Ezra, one who never returned to Jerusalem, and was taken up to heaven when his work was finished: impossible, therefore, to be identified with the historical Ezra. But to this creature of his imagination he has transferred one act which was, rather vaguely, attributed to the historical Ezra, namely, the restoration of the Scriptures, which he has transfigured into a miracle. I think it is correct to say that the seer and the scribe have absolutely nothing else in common. In order to mark the date of his hero, he has, once, at the beginning of the book, identified him with a historical personage of the desired date, and he was guided in his choice by the fact that this personage had a second name not very unlike that of Ezra.

But why did he choose to call his imaginary prophet Ezra? Because he desired to make the restoration of the Law the climax of his hero's work (as early as iv 23 it is said that the Law is destroyed), and, perhaps, he wished to antedate this restoration: but in view of the existing tradition that the restoration was due to Ezra, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to substitute another name for his. To invent 'another man of the same name' (particularly if he had another name as well) was unobjectionable.

Such is my conjecture as to the procedure of the author of 4 Esdras. I find it more reasonable than the belief in a redactor who was at once

supremely adroit and grossly negligent: far more reasonable than the belief that 4 Esdras is, in the commonly-received sense of the words, a composite book.

A general remark may be permitted in conclusion. We ought to remember that identifications of this kind were rife among Jewish scholars, and were made very light-heartedly. In the *Quaest. Hebr. in Reg. et Par.* many will be found. *Inter alia*, Ezra himself is said to be identical, not only with the prophet Malachi, but also with Josedech the father of Jeshua the priest, while Salathiel is Pedaiah the father of Zerubbabel. The equation Esdras=Salathiel would not be so startling to its first readers as it is to us.

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EXTRACTS FROM A GOSPEL LECTIONARY (OLD LATIN) OF THE SPANISH CHURCH.

My friend the Rev. E. S. Buchanan, whose labours on the Old-Latin text are well known, kindly sent me, a year ago, a copy of *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. lxxii no. 288 Oct. 1915, in which his own paper 'A new Bible Text from Spain' occupies pp. 529-544. It contains a report of some results of his examination of the MS of Beatus (a Spanish contemporary of Alcuin and Charlemagne) which belonged to Mr J. Pierpont Morgan, and is said to have been purchased by a Spaniard from the convent of San Clemente, Toledo, where it had been for eight centuries. The MS was written in 968-970, and contains a commentary on the Apocalypse and on the Book of Daniel. It has a special interest as bearing evidence of correction by several hands, aiming at reducing the biblical quotations into conformity with the Vulgate or Hieronymian text. One of these correctors has dated his own contribution as introduced in 1220. Among many interesting extracts from Beatus, cited in that article, are the four which I mention here:

(a) 'Quia super hanc petram hedificabuntur a Spiritu Sancto discipuli eius' (St Matt. xvi 18).

(b) 'Pacem meam per Spiritum Sanctum do uobis. [pacem relinquo uobis] non quomodo mundus, ego a Deo do uobis' (St John xiv 27).

(c) 'Cecidit super collum eius et fleuit' (St Luke xv 20).

(d) 'Ego et pater et spiritus sanctus unum sumus' (St John x 30).

I will add here two observations from one of Mr Buchanan's contributions to the series of Notes and Studies in the *Journal of Theo-*