

SALATHIEL QUI ET ESDRAS.

SINCE I raised the question implied in the above title in this JOURNAL (xviii 1917, p. 167) I have come upon a piece of fresh evidence as to the identity of these persons.

It is in the tract of Epiphanius *de xii gemmis* which we have only in an imperfect Latin version preserved in a collection of papal and other letters known as the *Collectio Avellana*. The MS tradition depends on Vat. lat. 3787 of the eleventh century. The last edition is in the Vienna Corpus by Günther (xxxv p. 770: Dindorf iv 1. 212).

Epiphanius is telling at great length the story of the Cuthaeans or 'Samaritans', deported into Palestine, which we have in 2 Kings xvii. He also tells it in the *Panarion* (*Haer.* viii 8): in both places he uses some non-Biblical source.

The Assyrian king (Nebuchadnezzar in the *Panarion*, not named in *de gemmis*) asked the Jewish elders (who were then at Babylon *cum Hesdra sacerdote*) how it was that the Israelites had managed to live in their land, because the Cuthaeans &c. whom he had deported thither were being ravaged by wild beasts and were petitioning to be allowed to leave the country. The elders replied that no one could live there but those who kept the law of God: 'qui (rex) cum poposcisset ab eis legem, ei protinus obtulerunt. ipse uero reddens exemplaria legis authentica penes se detinuit, quae direxit incolis et habitatoribus terrae Cudaeis et Cuthaeis ac reliquis cum Hesdra sacerdote (*non Hesdra illo qui uocabatur Salathihel, cuius erat pater Zorobabel, qui Zorobabel erat filius Iechoniae*). hic igitur Hesdras quem diximus ascendens Hierosolymam penta-teuchum tantummodo . . . detulit eis,' etc.

The *Panarion* (see below) has not the parenthesis which I have italicized.

The priest who brings the law to the colonists and is here called Esdras, is not named in the Bible. Other writers who call him Esdras are Theophanes Cerameus (hom. 38) who certainly copies Epiphanius, Cedrenus i 188 (Paris) who may do so, Damascenus *Haer.* who epitomizes Epiphanius. Rabbinic tradition gives other names.

But the parenthesis in Epiphanius is the important thing. It is a hitherto unnoticed confirmation of 4 Esdras iii 1 'ego Salathiel qui et Esdras'.

Is it independent of 4 Esdras? Epiphanius certainly shews no knowledge of that book elsewhere. He does not allude to the miraculous

restoration of the Scriptures by Esdras, as many Fathers do: and here he does not describe Esdras as a prophet, which would have been the obvious thing to do had 4 Esdras been his source. As far as the argument from silence goes, one must say yes to the question. It is not beside the mark to note that there are but three known quotations from 4 Esdras in Greek, and only one of these names its source.

Of course he has introduced confusion into his statements, or it would not be Epiphanius. He makes Esdras-Salathiel the son of Zorobabel, whereas Z. is everywhere else the son or nephew of S.¹ Yet we must remember before condemning him that we have his words only in a bad Latin version. The Greek may have been misunderstood. Such words as μετὰ Ἐσδρα τοῦ ἱερέως, οὗτοι ἐκείνου τοῦ Ἐσδρα τοῦ ὀνομασθέντος Σαλαθιήλ, τοῦ καὶ πατρὸς τοῦ Ζοροβαβέλ, τοῦ καὶ υἱοῦ Ἰεχονίου, which represent the correct traditional view, might easily be wrested by a stupid man into what we have. I do not insist upon this, however: it does not affect the main point, which is that Epiphanius, who seems not to know 4 Esdras, agrees with it in identifying Esdras with Salathiel. He supplies a new ground for believing that the identification was not invented by the writer of 4 Esdras but was a current notion adopted by him. He confirms my suspicion that the 'Assir, Salathiel' of 1 Chr. iii 17 was indeed interpreted (regardless of philology) as equivalent to 'Ezra, Salathiel'.

Before I try to emphasize the importance of this, I will quote another passage of Epiphanius (*Haer.* viii 8) treating of the same matter as the *de gemmis*.

οἱ δὲ (the Jewish elder) ἀφθόνως δεδωκότες μετὰ καὶ τοῦ νόμου Ἐσδραν τινὰ ἱερέα ἀποστέλλουσι παιδευτὴν τοῦ νόμου ἀπὸ Βαβυλῶνος, πρὸς τὸ παιδεῦσαι τοὺς ἐν τῇ Σαμαρείᾳ καθεσθέντας Ἀσσυρίους . . . γίνεται δὲ τοῦτο ἐν τῷ τριακοστῷ ἔτει πλείω ἢ ἐλάσσω τῆς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ Ἱερουσαλήμ αἰχμαλωσίας. ἐπαίδευε τοίνυν Ἐσδρας καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸ γένος τὸ ἐν Σαμαρείᾳ, καὶ ἐκλήθησαν Σαμαρεῖται οἱ τὸν νόμον διὰ τοῦ Ἐσδρα τοῦ ἀπὸ Βαβυλῶνος ἦκοντος ὑποδεξάμενοι. διήλθε δὲ χρόνος ἐτῶν τεσσαράκοντα ἄλλων, καὶ ἡ αἰχμαλωσία ἀνείθη, καὶ ἀπῆλθεν Ἰσραὴλ ἀπὸ Βαβυλῶνος, 'Mirifica rerum temporumque perturbatio!' says Petavius *in loc.*, doubtless with reason: but the interest for me lies in the underlined words, with which compare 4 Esdras iii 1 'Anno tricesimo ruinae ciuitatis'. No one will maintain that Epiph. gets this date of the thirtieth year from 4 Esdras (or from the Bible): rather it must be from the unknown non-Biblical source which furnishes him with the name Esdras and with other details of his story. For anything I can see to the contrary, this

¹ Except in the Rabbinic traditions quote. *by Friedmann (*S'rubabbel* p. 11), which make Z. and S. one and the same.

source may also have been used by the author of 4 Esdras ; but that is merely a guess.

To sum up : 4 Esdras knows of a person named Salathiel and Esdras who lived under Nebuchadnezzar (Spanish text) in the thirtieth year of the captivity : clearly not the Ezra of the Bible.

Epiphanius knows of a person named Esdras and Salathiel ('son of Zorobabel and grandson of Jechonias'); and of another person named Esdras who in the thirtieth year of the captivity taught the Samaritans the law. He also knows of the Ezra of the Bible. The two are independent witnesses to a tradition of a person named Esdras and Salathiel who was not the Ezra of the Bible. That is my thesis.

If it is sound, it surely must have a destructive influence on the theory that 4 Esdras is a composite work. I believe I am justified in saying that the occurrence of the name Salathiel at the beginning of the book is the starting-point of all such theories : it is the one argument which is not of a purely subjective character. Wipe it out, and nothing remains but a number of alleged inconsistencies in conception and variations in style which appear (not only to myself, but to scholars such as Sanday, Headlam, Burkitt, Clemen, and Gunkel) to be no greater than a single author working upon traditional lines could admit.

Now I submit that we have sufficient evidence of an external and objective kind to justify us in wiping out that argument. In my former article I shewed that in old times a distinction was made between Esdras the seer of 4 Esdras and the Ezra of the Bible, and that they were described as having lived 100 years apart. I also suggested a reason for the identification of Esdras with Salathiel. I now produce fresh evidence ; an author who shews no knowledge of 4 Esdras shews knowledge of the identification.

The Apocalypse of Salathiel, the centre of all the theories of dissection, is a ghost-book : conjured up by Kabisch in 1889, it has hovered about us long enough. I never liked the look of it, and I earnestly hope that it may now be permitted to vanish.

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