

NOTES AND STUDIES

THE DURA FRAGMENT OF TATIAN¹

THE small vellum fragment here considered is of an importance quite out of proportion to its size. It is about four inches square, and contains on one side the greater part of fourteen lines of writing, the other side being blank. It is of importance as being a fragment of the *Diatessaron* of Tatian in Greek, and from its date, which is evident from its having been found in an embankment made between A.D. 254 and 257 along the city wall at Dura-Europus on the Euphrates. It was discovered in March 1933, in the course of excavations conducted by Professor Clark Hopkins for Yale University and the French Academy, and it has now been edited (with an excellent facsimile) by Dr C. H. Kraeling of Yale.

What do we know about the *Diatessaron*? It is a Harmony of the Four Gospels, made into a continuous text by taking phrases from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Historically this was connected with Tatian, a second-century Christian, who was a disciple of Justin Martyr at Rome. He wrote a still extant 'Address to Greeks', attacking paganism, and Epiphanius tells us that after Justin's death Tatian returned to his native Mesopotamia (about 170) and preached his heresy there.² From Eusebius as well as Epiphanius we learn that he was the compiler of the *Diatessaron*. Further, the *Diatessaron*, according to the Syriac tradition, was the form in which the Gospel first reached Edessa, a small principality east of the Euphrates, which became the literary centre of Syriac-speaking Christianity. It was brought there by Addai, whom the Edessenes believed to have been sent by the Apostles themselves. This is certainly much too early, and I have been led to conjecture that 'Addai' was the native name of the man who called himself 'Tatianos' to Greeks—like Saul and Paul, or Kepha and Peter. [See this JOURNAL vol. xxv p. 130.]

The *Diatessaron* does not survive in Syriac, the language in which alone it played an important part. It was suppressed during the episcopate of Rabbula (411-435), who substituted for it his revised version of the Separate Gospels, now commonly called the Peshiṭta. The Commentary on the *Diatessaron* by Ephraim Syrus has also disappeared, but survives in an Armenian translation.³ Many of the Gospel quotations

¹ *A Greek Fragment of Tatian's Diatessaron*, by C. H. Kraeling (London, Christophers, 1935).

² Epiph. *Haer.* xlvi 1 p. 391.

³ Ed. by G. Moesinger, 1876.

in Aphraates and in the genuine works of Ephraim were doubtless made from the Harmony, not from the separate Gospels. Besides these we have a late Arabic translation of the Syriac Harmony, made from a form in which the Syriac text had been assimilated to the wording of the Peshiṭta.

Further, we have evidence in the West of a Harmony closely akin to the *Diatessaron*. Codex Fuldensis, a leading MS of the Latin Vulgate, was written for and corrected by Victor, bishop of Capua, who signed his name in it (making a blot from a spluttering pen in doing so) in the year A.D. 546. It contains the Gospel in the wording of the Vulgate but arranged in a Harmony. In a preface Victor explains that he found it anonymous, but that on reading Eusebius (as we should do) he came to the conclusion that it was the work of Tatian. Victor does not claim himself to have adapted the text to that of the Vulgate: he only asserts that he added Canons to the text, i.e. he treated the Harmony as a modern scholar would do, who put the conventional chapter and verse numeration in the margin of an ancient MS.

A copy of this work exists at Reims. More important is the survival of certain Dutch Harmonies, of which the oldest appears to be one at Liège, written about 1300. This work seems to have been translated from the Latin about fifty years earlier.¹ The Latin text to which these Harmonies go back is not quite identical with Codex Fuldensis, but is closely akin to it. This comes out clearly from a minute examination of the texts, from which it is evident that underlying the almost entirely Vulgate text of F and the Dutch Harmonies is an Old-Latin text, which no doubt is original.

A Gospel Harmony has two independent characteristics: it has a text, and it has also an order. In both the Arabic and the Latin forms the text has been assimilated to the current Biblical text, but the order seems to have been well preserved. They often agree surprisingly: it is evident that they represent a similar tradition. But it is not always so. *Ar* (the Arabic) puts the Marriage at Cana before the call of Peter and the Sermon on the Mount, F (Fuldensis) puts it after. *Ar* puts the healing of the Paralytic and the disputes about Sabbath observance before the Sermon, F a long way after, for in F the Paralytic comes just before Jairus's daughter and the Sabbath disputes some way after that. Further, the Sinful Woman comes in *Ar* between Matt. xii 22 f and Lk. x 1 ff, but F combines this story with the meal in the house of Simon the Leper, just before the Passion, and identifies the woman with Mary of Bethany, sister of Lazarus (F 138 f). In all

¹ There is another MS at Stuttgart, another at The Hague, and there is a fragmentary MS at Cambridge. The first three are edited by J. Bergsma *Bibliothek van middelnederlandsche Letterkunde* 54, 55, 61 (1895-1898).

these cases the Dutch agree with F, but Ephraim's Commentary agrees with the Arabic.

There are, therefore, two forms of the Harmony, a Western and an Eastern. The New Fragment from Dura is definitely Eastern. It corresponds to chapter lii 22^b-26 of the Arabic (mainly concerned with Joseph of Arimathaea), whereas in F it corresponds to a piece of § 171 followed by part of § 172, the two pieces being separated by John xix 31-37, which comes earlier in the Arabic.¹ This is the real significance of the new discovery.

Which is the earlier, the Western or the Eastern form? Dr Kraeling, on p. 21, quotes Zahn to the effect that in F we have 'a poorly planned and poorly executed revision of the Diatessaron'. No doubt it is inferior as a Harmony, and no doubt Tatian's form, the Eastern form, now attested by the Dura Fragment, is much better. But the natural inference is that the better form is a 'second edition, revised and improved', and that the Old-Latin Harmony, which underlies both F and the Dutch, is the earlier, rougher, first attempt.

I see no reason to withdraw my conjecture about the origin of this famous Harmony,² that it was not a rival to the Gospels themselves, but rather the first of the versions. 'The "Gospel", the Corpus of writings which the sense of the Church had selected, especially at Rome, in the very generation when Tatian lived and worked, consisted of four Greek books. Such a selection was a practical assertion that these books were in some way "inspired". A few years after Tatian had departed to the East, a Greek writer in the West, St Irenaeus, is found asserting the mysterious and providential significance of the quadruple number of these apostolic books, so that to cut and pare them into a single framework might seem hazardous at so late a date as 160 or 170, especially in Rome. But during the very same period a great change was coming over the Roman Church; it was ceasing to be a community of Greek-speaking persons and becoming more and more a community of Latin-speaking persons. Except the writings of Hippolytus, Tatian's own Address to Greeks is the latest important Greek work by a Christian domiciled in Rome. In what form should these Latin-speaking Christians hear the "Gospel"?'

'May not', I went on to say, 'the first Harmony of the Gospels ever made have been a Latin Epitome for Latin Christians, who as yet had nothing but the Greek original? . . . It explains the absence of references to the Diatessaron in the West and the rarity of surviving

¹ An interesting small point is that F identifies Salome with the mother of the sons of Zebedee, but the Arabic, supported by the Dura Fragment, makes them two persons.

² *J.T.S.* xxv 128 f.

copies. The particular usefulness of the work had soon come to an end, for within thirty years, perhaps less, all Four Gospels were available in Italy in Latin—imported no doubt from Carthage, where Christianity was Latin almost from the beginning.

Further, I asked whether Tatian had anything to do with this original Latin Harmony. 'That Tatian had anything to do with an ancestor of Codex Fuldensis, or that such a Harmony was known in the West as *Diatessaron*, is not an immemorial tradition; it is nothing more than a conjecture made by Victor of Capua on the strength of a passage in Eusebius. The MS found by Victor was anonymous, and he had no traditional evidence for connecting it with the name of Tatian. All the tradition that connects Tatian with the *Diatessaron* relates to the *Diatessaron* in Syriac. Eusebius never seems to have seen the work himself.'

From Epiphanius we learn that Tatian spent the latter part of his life in his native 'Assyria', i.e. no doubt Osrhoene and the country round. From the discovery of the Dura Fragment we infer that he had provided himself with a Greek version of the Roman Harmony, which he had rearranged and improved, and to which, no doubt, he had given the name of *Diatessaron*. When he came to Edessa, the capital of Osrhoene, he found that Syriac was on a social equality with Greek, for it was the language of an independent royal State. It was in Edessa that the preaching of Addai-Tatian was a success, and no doubt a primary cause was that he had turned his *Diatessaron* into the vernacular.

In Edessa the Syriac *Diatessaron* held its own for two hundred years, and influenced the text of the Syriac Separate Gospels. It was only suppressed by authority in the fifth century. But in the Greek-speaking lands west of the Euphrates it died out without a trace, save that a fragment of a liturgical roll somehow dropped from somebody's hand and got buried with the rubbish, when a little before 257 they were strengthening the wall of Dura against the attacks of Shapur, the King of Kings.

NOTE ON LK. xxiii 51 IN THE DURA FRAGMENT

THE description of Joseph of Arimathaea is a mosaic from all Four Gospels, in which Lk. xxiii 51^o comes before 51^a. In 51^c *Dura* reads $\mu\pi\omicron\sigma\epsilon\delta\epsilon\chi^{\tau\omicron} [\tau\eta\nu] \beta[\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu] \tau\omicron\upsilon \theta\upsilon$ in agreement with the Greek: syr. *S* and *C* (and also syr. *S* in Mk. xv 43) have 'the kingdom of *Heaven*'. In 51^a our Old Syriac authorities all have a peculiar reading: 'did not equal his mind with the accusers' syr. *SC*, 'was not joined in his thoughts and actions with the accusers' (Ephraim, *Moes.* 266), 'was

not agreed with the accusers in his plans and his actions' (*Arab.* lii 26). Clearly the Greek was paraphrased. But the Dura fragment agrees with the Greek, having *ουτος ουκ | [ην συνκατατ]ιθεμεν[ο]σ τη β[ουλη]*. It is unlucky that no more is legible, so that we cannot tell whether 'accusers' belongs only to the Syriac or to Tatian's Greek also, but it is clear that the text of the Fragment here cannot be a retranslation from the paraphrastic Syriac.

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THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS OF THE DIDACHE

READERS of this JOURNAL have learnt from articles and reviews by Dr J. Armitage Robinson, Dom R. H. Connolly, and Dr F. C. Burkitt (vols. xiii p. 339, xxxiii pp. 25, 237, xxxv pp. 113, 225) that the Didachist (to use Dr Robinson's useful term) in the first half of the Didache—the Two Ways—made use of the Shepherd of Hermas and was very largely dependent on the Epistle of Barnabas, the material from which he re-arranged to suit his own purpose; also that his mind is stored with scriptural phrases which he evidently quotes from memory.

I should now like to call attention to the general structure of the book, and to make some observations concerning the second part of it, chapters vii to the end, which is sometimes spoken of as the Church Directory. In the first part of the book, chapters i–vi, there are nearly forty quotations from or reminiscences of Holy Scripture, chiefly the Gospels, sometimes the Epistles, and occasionally the Old Testament. A careful underlining of these scriptural parallels and of the passages which the Didachist has borrowed from Barnabas shews very little remaining that may be thought to be original. Chapter iii §§ 1–6, which has no counterpart in Barnabas and is quite unlike anything else in the rest of the Didache, has been carefully examined by Dr J. A. Robinson who suggested with great probability that it had been borrowed from some Jewish or early Christian work.¹ If this view be correct the original contribution of the Didachist in these chapters has been reduced to an almost negligible quantity.

The Didachist has, as we have learned, carefully selected his material. He has taken over the disorderly matter from Barnabas and re-arranged it. Sometimes his method has been arbitrary, but it is always, to quote Professor F. C. Burkitt, 'the work of a neat and methodical compiler'.² But further than this he has, in the planning of his compilation, employed artificial and numerical divisions, after the manner of Jewish authors; and this we now propose to shew.

¹ *J.T.S.* xxxv 241–242.

² *J.T.S.* xxxiii 26.