

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
The Victoria Institute
OR
Philosophical Society of Great Britain

VOL. LXXV

1943



LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY
THE INSTITUTE, 1, CENTRAL BUILDINGS, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

GREEK MANUSCRIPTS AND ARCHÆOLOGY.

By SIR F. G. KENYON, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.Litt., LL.D., F.B.A.

A TIME of war is not likely to be favourable to archaeological research or literary criticism; and the present war has swept over all the Bible lands, and has absorbed, and still absorbs, the time of all the younger, and not a few of the older scholars to whom we should naturally look for such research. Excavation has been impossible, publication has been difficult, and inter-communication between scholars in different parts of the world has been impeded or wholly interrupted. The present report must therefore be based mainly on work done shortly before the war, with a little overlap into the war years.

The principal event in the sphere of the textual criticism of the Greek Bible during the past decade has been the publication of the Chester Beatty papyri. The discovery of this group of fragmentary MSS. of many books, both of the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) and of the New Testament, was first announced in November, 1931, and between July, 1933, and October, 1938, the texts of all the MSS. of the canonical books were published, together with complete photographic facsimiles of all except two, which still await completion. As a supplement to this series (published in this country by Messrs. Emery Walker) must be mentioned a volume published at Princeton University in 1938, under the editorship of A. C. Johnson, H. S. Gehman, and E. H. Kase, entitled *The John H. Scheide Biblical Papyri: Ezekiel*, which contains 21 leaves from the same MS. as one in the Chester Beatty collection. The MS., when complete, contained the books of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Esther; the Scheide leaves include the text of Ezek. xix, 12–xxxix, 29, with gaps of five leaves, while the Chester Beatty fragments are the upper halves of 8 leaves of Ezekiel (xi, 25–xvii, 21), 13 of Daniel (iii, 72–viii, 24), and 8 of Esther (ii, 20–viii, 6, with the apocryphal portions belonging to them, which in our Apocrypha are numbered as parts of ch. xiii–xv). The Princeton leaves, which are approximately perfect, thus make a very substantial addition to our knowledge of this MS., which cannot be later than the first half of the third century, and is by Wilcken assigned to the second.

But besides the canonical books in the Chester Beatty collection (which, it may be remembered, comprises portions of the books of Genesis, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther, Ecclesiasticus, the four Gospels, Acts, all the Pauline Epistles except 2 Thessalonians and the Pastorals, and Revelation), one MS. contained portions of two non-canonical works, the Book

of Enoch and a homily on the Passover and Passion by Melito, bishop of Sardis in the second half of the second century. Six of the fourteen leaves composing this MS. belong to the University of Michigan, and it was arranged that the whole should be edited by Professor Campbell Bonner of that University, who executed the work with great competence. The Enoch appeared as Part VIII in the series of *Studies and Documents* controlled by Professor and Mrs. Kirsopp Lake in 1937, and the Melito as Part XII in the same series in 1940; and a photographic facsimile of the whole MS. was issued as a volume of the Chester Beatty series, under the editorship of the present writer, in 1942. Besides these 14 leaves, there were three small fragments in the same writing, which evidently could not form part of either Enoch or Melito; and these were brilliantly identified by Professor Bonner as belonging to an apocryphal Book of Ezekiel, of the existence of which there is evidence in Clement of Alexandria, whose quotation from it in part coincides with one of the Beatty fragments.

The Enoch text occupies pages bearing the numbers 15-26, and comprises ch. xcvi, 6-cvii, 3 (ch. cv and cviii being omitted). The fourteen pages lost before these would not have sufficed for all the preceding chapters of the complete work, and it may be presumed that the extract began with ch. xci, where a distinct section begins. It ends with the title, "The Epistle of Enoch," which might well be applied to this section, but not to what precedes it. The homily of Melito follows immediately, with the author's name at the head of it. It occupies sixteen full pages, and is apparently near its conclusion on the last of these. The Ezekiel fragments may have either preceded the Enoch (since ch. xci-xcvii would not have filled all the missing pages), or followed the Melito, since the seven missing leaves at the beginning must have been balanced by seven at the end, the MS. being a single-quire Codex of 28 leaves, of which the middle 14 have been preserved.

The book of Enoch was originally written in Hebrew, but of this no fragment has survived. Of its translation into Greek, a few words were known from the quotation by St. Jude, and some extracts (from ch. vi-x, xv) were preserved in the 8th century chronographer Syncellus. The whole work became known when the traveller, James Bruce, brought back three MSS. of an Ethiopic version in 1773. From one of these Archbishop Richard Laurence published an English translation in 1821. The Greek text of ch. i-xxxii was recovered from a vellum codex discovered at Akhmim in Egypt in 1886 (which contained also portions of the Gospel and Apocalypse of Peter); and now the Chester Beatty MS. has added the end of the work, ch. xcvi, 6-cvii, 3, ch. cv and cviii, which are alien intrusions in the Ethiopic text, being omitted. The exordium to this final section (misplaced as xcii, 1-5, which should precede

xcī) describes it as "The book written by Enoch for all my children who shall dwell on the earth, and for the future generations who shall observe uprightness and peace." Enoch foretells the increase of violence and apostasy, which the Lord will punish. He recounts the events of seven "weeks," of which six are yet to come, after which the elect righteous shall be chosen. Three weeks more shall follow, and then the first heaven shall pass away, and a new heaven shall appear. After that "there will be many weeks without number for ever, and all shall be in goodness and righteousness and sin shall no more be mentioned for ever." The rest of the book is taken up by exhortations to the righteous, denunciations of the wicked, and a forecast of the Day of Judgement. Chapters cvi and cvii are portions of a different work, narrating the birth to Lamech of a wonderful son, of whom Enoch says that he shall be named Noah, and that in his days there shall be a great deluge, in which all mankind except himself and his three sons shall perish.

The homily of Melito has hitherto been known only by a few quotations. Eusebius mentions him as a bishop of Sardis in the time of Marcus Aurelius, and includes in a list of his works two treatises on the Passover. Tertullian describes his style as "elegant and rhetorical," and the newly-discovered text fully bears out this description. It is a highly rhetorical and artificial comparison of the Passover and the Passion, full of elaborate antitheses and of juxtapositions of Old Testament antitypes and their fulfilment, of which the following is a sample :—

"You have heard now the story of the type and of the retribution [*i.e.*, the story of the Exodus, especially the slaughter of the first-born]; hear also the plan of the mystery. What is the Passover? It is so called from that which befell, that is, from 'suffer' [Pascha, paschein]. . . If you wish to see the mystery of the Lord, look at Abel who was slain like him, at Isaac who was bound like him, at Joseph who was sold like him, at Moses who was cast out like him, at David who was hunted like him, at the prophets who in like manner suffered for Christ's sake."

An indictment of Israel for its ingratitude follows :—

"Thou wast of good cheer, while he was hungry; thou wast eating bread and drinking wine, while he drank vinegar and gall; thou wast glad of countenance, while he was sad; thou wast rejoicing, he was oppressed; thou wast singing, he was judged; thou gavest command, he was nailed to the cross; thou wast dancing, he was being laid in the tomb; thou wast lying upon a soft cushion, he in the grave and the coffin."

There is much more in the same style. The whole homily makes no addition to the evidences or doctrines of Christianity; but it is a

remarkable specimen of the homiletical literature of the second century, and its recovery in a manuscript written in the fourth century is a proof of its continuing popularity.

The main service of the Chester Beatty papyri has been to fill the gap between the original composition of the books of the Septuagint and the New Testament and the great vellum codices of the fourth and later centuries on which our knowledge of their text has hitherto been based. We now have manuscripts (imperfect, it is true, but still substantial) which carry back the tradition to the beginning of the third, and in some cases of the second, century. These earlier witnesses show that, while much verbal variation had crept into the record in the course of the second century, the substance is the same and is authentically preserved. That is enough for the ordinary reader of the Bible, who only needs to be assured that the books which he reads do in fact belong to the period to which Christian tradition has assigned them and have come down to us in a substantially correct form. Minor details of variant readings concern chiefly the textual specialists. For them the chief point of interest has been the identification, principally by Streeter and Lake, of a certain type of text as that which was used by Origen in the latter part of his life (A.D. 231-253), when he was living at Caesarea, and which has consequently been named "Caesarean," though it may in fact have been brought by Origen from Egypt. This type of text was first recognized as something distinctive (though not then as Origenian, but merely as a type current in Calabria in the 13th century) by W. H. Ferrar, whose work was completed and published by T. K. Abbott in 1877. It then consisted of four MSS. numbered in the catalogue of N.T. MSS. as 13, 69, 124, and 346, and commonly known as the "Ferrar group" or "Family 13." This group has been recently restudied by Kirsopp and Silva Lake, who have edited the text of Mark from these MSS. in Part XI of *Studies and Documents* (1941). This serves as a basis for another work which the same scholars have in hand, an edition of the Caesarean text of Mark, in which they will take into account, not only Fam. 13, but also the kindred Fam. 1 (edited by Lake in 1902), the Washington and Koridethi vellum MSS. (W and Θ), the Georgian version, and finally the Chester Beatty Gospels papyrus, all of which preserve, to a greater or less degree, traces of this textual type. There is therefore now much material for the establishment of this textual family, but the material is difficult to handle, and scholars await with interest the results of the studies of Professor and Mrs. Lake, which they are happily free to pursue in spite of the war.

Another work in which the results of recent discoveries are set out for the use of students is the new Oxford critical edition of the Greek New Testament. This was undertaken by a committee of

which the Bishop of Gloucester is chairman, with a view of providing an up-to-date successor to the edition published by Tischendorf in 1869-72. The editor is the Rev. S. C. E. Legg. The need of such an edition, to incorporate all the new material that has accumulated since 1872, is evident. The first volume, containing St. Mark, was published in 1935; the second, containing St. Matthew, at the end of 1940. St. Luke is now in preparation, but all printing is necessarily suspended until after the war.

Of the Greek Old Testament there is not much to report. A fasciculus (Vol. III, Part I) of the great Cambridge Septuagint, edited by A. E. Brooke and N. M'Lean, appeared in 1940, containing Esther, Judith, and Tobit. This completes the narrative books of the O.T. (apart from Maccabees); but the death of Dr. Brooke and the illness of Dr. M'Lean are a grievous blow to the progress of the work, and no announcement has been made of the arrangements to carry it on. Meanwhile the Septuaginta-Kommission of Göttingen has likewise taken the Old Testament in hand. Its large-scale edition has wisely begun with books not likely to be reached by the Cambridge editors for a long time. The Psalter was published by Rahlfs in 1930-31, 1 Maccabees by Kappler in 1936, Isaiah by Ziegler in 1939, and 2 Maccabees is in preparation. Besides these a text of Genesis with a reduced apparatus was issued by Rahlfs in 1926, and a complete Septuagint, based on the three MSS, Σ , A, and B, with a short textual apparatus, in 1935. This differs from Swete's shorter Cambridge Septuagint (1887-94) in giving a revised text instead of simply the text of B, but its apparatus is more slender.

There is plenty of work awaiting scholars when peace shall restore the possibility of scholarly work and of material production.