

Introduction

By Paul de Lagarde

Translated by Andrew Eastbourne, with additions by Carol Downer and additional notes by Roger Pearse

At some time or other in London, in the British Museum, I read a book by Robert Curzon, which he entitled *Catalogue of Materials for Writing, Early Writings on Tablets and Stones, Rolled and Other Manuscripts, and Oriental Manuscript Books, in the Library of the Honourable Robert Curzon, at Parham, in the County of Sussex*. From this, I learned very many things worth knowing, but in particular I saw the report of a codex of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, translated into the Egyptian language and explained by a *catena* selected from the works of the Fathers; Robert Curzon had learned from the subscription that the codex dated to the year A.D. 395.

It was not possible to examine that *Catalogue* of Curzon's a second time; for it can neither be bought in the book-sellers' shops, nor be supplied by public libraries in Germany, since it can only be procured as a favour—as a gift of the author.

William Wright expressed doubts about that subscription in April 1865 in the *Journal of Sacred Literature* (7: 218-19). He denied that *catenae* were so ancient, adding that John Chrysostom, who died in 407, Cyril of Alexandria, who was raised to the rank of bishop in 412, and Severus of Antioch, who died in 538—fragments of whom, as Robert Curzon had reported, were included in this *catena*—could not be cited in a codex of A.D. 395.

Joseph Lightfoot, now Bishop of Durham, saw the codex; in F. Scrivener's book, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* (Cambridge, 1874), p. 335, he discussed it as follows:

The volume, *Parham 102, described in the printed Catalogue (no. 1, vellum, p. 27) as a MS of the Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark, is really a selection of passages taken in order from the four Gospels with a patristic catena attached to each. The leaves however are much displaced in the binding, and many are wanting. The title to the first Gospel is †ΕΡΜΗΝΙΑ ΝΤΕ ΠΙΕΥΑΣΤΕΛΙΟΝ ΕΘΟΥΑΒ ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΤΘΕΟΝ ΕΒΟΛΩΡΙΤΕΝ ΖΑΝΜΗΥ ΝΙΣΑΦ ΟΥΟΖ ΝΦΩΣΤΗΡ ΝΤΕ †ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ, etc. 'The interpretation of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew from numerous doctors and luminaries of the church.' Among the fathers quoted I observed Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, Clement, the two Cyrils (of Jerusalem and of Alexandria). Didymus, Epiphanius, Eusebius, Evagrius, the three Gregories (Thaumaturgus, Nazianzen and Nyssen), Hippolytus, Irenaeus, Severianus of Gabala, Severus of Antioch (often styled simply the Patriarch), Symeon Stylites, Timotheus, and Titus.

In the account of this MS in the Catalogue it is stated that 'the name of the scribe who wrote it is Sapita Leporos, a monk of the monastery, or monastic rule, of Laura under the sway of the great abbot Macarius,' and the inference is thence drawn that it must have been written before 395, when Macarius died. This early date however is at once set aside by the fact that writers who lived in the sixth century are quoted. Prof.

Wright (Journal of Sacred Literature vii. p. 218), observing the name of Severus in the facsimile, points out the error of date, and suggests as an explanation that the colophon (which he had not seen) does not speak of the great Macarius, but of ‘an abbot Macarius.’ The fact is, that though the great Macarius is certainly meant, there is nothing which implies that he was then living. The scribe describes himself as ἀνοκ θὰ πιταλεπωρος ἐταρσθὰι, ‘I the unhappy one (ταλαιπωρος) who wrote it’ (which has been wrongly read and interpreted as a proper name Sapita Leporos). He then gives his name θεοδ ποιρι (Theodorus of Busiris?) and adds, πιατῆωα μμοπαχος ἵτε τλαυρα εθογαβ ἵτε πιωϣ† αββα μακαριος, ‘the unworthy monk of the holy laura of the great abbot Macarius.’ He was merely an inmate of the monastery of St Macarius; see the expression quoted from the Vat. MS. LXI in Tattam’s Lexicon p. 842. This magnificent MS would well repay careful inspection; but its value may not be very great for the Memphitic Version, as it is perhaps translated from the Greek.

Joseph Lightfoot's transcription from the manuscript must be judged against what I have edited on p. 232 on the basis of careful examination of the codex itself: the learned man overlooked the indicated Year of the Martyrs, or did not understand the last words Theodorus set down; it is certain that it is that very translation of the Gospels that was read in churches in northern Egypt, while it is clear from reading it that the *catena* was translated from the Greek. Now, since Robert Curzon, with that mindset whereby the British nobles are ever ready to help in every fine endeavour, had promised on 1 May 1866 (after I wrote to him from Schleusingen) to grant me free access to the very valuable books he had collected, in the year 1874 I asked Robert, Lord Zouche, the son of that most magnanimous man, who had meanwhile been summoned to heaven, to honour his father's promise (I was intending to edit the Egyptian Psalter). He very kindly, with truly unheard-of benevolence, entrusted to my piety¹ and learning both the most ancient fragments of the Egyptian Psalms and the codex of which I have just been speaking, sending them to Göttingen. This favour was all the more gratifying, the more certain it was that neither in my own Germany were such treasures possessed—for I was born after the riches of the globe had been distributed—nor in the whole of Europe was there to be found, apart from myself, a man who had both studied theology and had acquired some acquaintance with the Egyptian language, and was willing to expend toilsome and thankless effort—and to suffer a large enough financial loss—on the task of editing this *catena*.

A single page² was found to have been added to the codex; I insert a copy of this here:

Mr Rt Curzon brought this volume from the Coptic Monastery of Souriani on the Natron Lakes, to the west of the village of Jerraneh, on the Nile; in the month of March. 1838. It consists of 254 leaves of vellum, which contain 2 indexes, and the Gospels of St Mathew, & St Mark, with the commentaries of St Cyrill, St Chrysostom, Eusebius, Gregory the Patriarch, Titus, &c.

The leaves are not in their proper places, the two Gospels being mixed together, they have been put together just as they came over, to prevent their being lost. The name of

¹ Or, "conscientiousness." Lat. *religio*.

² Or, "folio"—i.e., two leaves made by folding one sheet. Lat. *folium*.

the scribe who wrote this MS, is Zapita Leporos, a monk of the monastery of ^{sic} Laura, under the rule of the Abbot Macarius. Macarius of Alexandria, Abbot of the Monks of Nitria, died according to the *Art de verifier les Dates*; either in the year 395, or 405. it would therefore appear ^{sic} that this manuscript must have been written before the end of the fourth century, in which case it is the most antient book in existance ^{sic} with a date, several of the Syriac MSS which were brought to England from the same monastery in which this was discovered, are supposed to be of equal antiquity, the earliest of those which have any date given in them, is a quarto of Eusebius, which was written in the year 411. it is now in the British Museum, it seems however that this manuscript is even more antient, as it was probably written about the year 390.

After the last page of Matthew, the bookbinder inserted a sheet of European paper, on which is read the subscription, reproduced by a hand experienced in inscribing Egyptian [characters]"³—and its final letters, φηοϣτε χριϣτε ⁴, are given in full, with the addition of this translation:

I pray ? μετανοία ⁵, remember me in love ὅπως ⁶ my Lord Jesus Christ he may be willing to have mercy on me and on you I, Chapita Leporus [am the one] who wrote it, a monk of the Holy Laura of the great Abbot Macarius May he save (me) from the shame of the punishments Amen Amen ⁷ Christ the Holy⁸.

Whether I am right to believe that this was written by Arthur des Rivières, let those who can compare in person the Munich mss. written by Arthur des Rivières ⁹ (1 4, 100 101¹⁰ of the catalogue [?]) with this Parhamian page decide.

Anyone who has a modest knowledge of Egyptian palaeography can see that what is written at the end of the subscription is χρόνος τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρων χε ¹¹; and “Year 605 of

³ I.e. "writing Coptic."

⁴ Coptic= ‘Christ God’.

⁵ μετανοία = repentance.

⁶ ὅπως = so that. Subjunctive. The Greek words in this "translation" are Greek borrowings in the Coptic text.

⁷ Literally “let it be (so), let it be (so)”.

⁸ The last two characters in the manuscript, χ̅ε̅, are not an abbreviation for “Christ God”, nor “Christ the Holy”, as the page suggests, but as De Lagarde rightly says mean “605”!

⁹ *Journal Asiatique*, series 10, tome 11 (1903), p.181 indicates that Arthur des Rivières was transcribing Coptic texts ca. 1845, and that at least some of his transcriptions as held as “ms. copt.” in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich.

¹⁰ I.e., volume 1, part 4 p.100-101. *Catalogus Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis, Tomi Primi Pars Quarta, Codices orientales*, 1875. On pp.100-1 are a number of transcriptions by Arthur des Rivières.

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=a5RBAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA100>

¹¹ I.e. "Year 605 of the Holy Martyrs".

the Martyrs”, as even boys know, on the basis of Ideler's very well known book, the *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, 1: 164,¹² is 888 or 889 of our era.

The pages of the codex, as we have read earlier, were sewn together by the bookbinder at random; I cannot say how much trouble was caused me by this negligence, as I transcribed and edited it. For it was not even indicated by the least sign which Gospel's translation was contained on each individual page. At this juncture, so as not to appear to truth-loving critics to have omitted things which are worth knowing, I confess that I took no care for the *formulae* written on the individual pages—*παδῶν ἰησοῦς παῖ πη*¹³ and *παδῶν ἰησοῦς πυχρῆνος ἀριβοῆ [θιν] ἐροι*¹⁴ and [others] similar to these, and that I left out the words so often repeated—***Gospel*** and ***Interpretation***; the first of these is accustomed to be placed before Biblical words in the scribe's vermilion, the second before the explanations of the Fathers.

I set down the order of the pages here, adding the title of the relevant Gospel to which the individual pages belong; the copyist himself ***[Arabic]*** pointed out with Greek numerals the beginnings and ends of the gatherings comprising eight folios [= 16 leaves] each.¹⁵

<u>[Pages of the Codex in Binding Order]</u>	<u>[Greek numerals]</u>	<u>[Number of Pages]</u>
[pp.] 3-4 [of] Luke		2
[pp.] 5-14 [of] Matthew	[p.] 14 [marked] α [= 1]	10
[pp.] 7-16 [of] Luke	[p.] 16 [marked] ιθ [= 19]	10
[pp.] 145-160 [of] Luke	[p.] 145 [marked] κη [= 28]	16
	[p.] 160 [marked] κη [= 28]	
[pp.] 161-172 [of] Matthew		12
[pp.] 15-32 [of] John	[p.] 16 [marked] λ [= 30]	18
	[p.] 17 [marked] λα [= 31]	
	[p.] 32 [marked] λα [= 31]	

[And so on: the right-hand side of the page is simply a continuation of the table, with the same format. The variations from this pattern: (1) Near the bottom of the left-hand side, for pp. 165-176 of Luke: on p. 176, λ is "barely readable"; (2) For the last entry on the left-hand side, "marked, as it seems, by the first hand, but σι [??] has been changed to β: Mark"—not only is this a strange departure from the numbering system, he does not include these as pages of Mark in the subsequent enumeration of surviving pages...]

Therefore, not 254, but 256 folios survive [i.e., the total number of pages = 256 x 2 = 512]:

Of Matthew: [pp.] 5-14, 33-44, 47-62, 65-76, 79-110, 113-172, 175-208;

Of Mark: [pp.] 1-72;

Of Luke: [pp.] 1-4, 7-34, 47, 48, 55-58, 65-160, 163-176;

Of John: [pp.] 15-128, 131, 132.

¹² Now accessible at Google books at <http://books.google.com/books?id=qmw9AAAAAYAAJ> .

¹³ I.e. “My Lord Jesus, have pity on me.”

¹⁴ I.e. “My Lord Jesus Christ, help me.”

¹⁵ I.e., the first page and last page of each 16-page section is marked with Greek numerals indicating the number of the section.

In the process of editing, I had to abstain from every desire to correct the text: for we are still in the "Aldine" age of Egyptian philology.¹⁶ Hence it is the case that not even in spelling did I call the manuscript back to the grammarians' rules, which the copyist very frequently contravened. [However,] I have added diacritic marks to the words; I have separated the words; I have divided the discourse—all as it seemed best to me, not as it had seemed to the copyist.

The great benefit of the volume is four-fold: for 1) this *catena* was written in the ancient language of the Egyptians, and so we can learn Egyptian from this book; 2) it is a fairly ancient copy, all but complete, of the Egyptian Gospels; 3) it adduces a considerable number of passages of the Fathers; and 4) as to the Monophysite Church as it existed in Egypt, it teaches us what its theology was in the 9th century.

Here is an index of the orthodox Fathers and heretics who are cited in the *catena*, whom I will discuss in another place:¹⁷

Apollinarius 118, 36
Arians 207, 19
Arius 118, 35 218, 28
Athanasius 75, 12 79, 24 80, 3
Basilus 10, 25 37, 5 67, 39 111, 27 211, 12 223, 13
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216, 3 219, 27 34/35 220, 12/13 33/34 221, 7 28 222, 9 24
225, 35 226, 12 31 35 228, 1

¹⁶ I.e., the beginnings of it.

¹⁷ In this table, De Lagarde is giving page number, comma, line number – and then (where relevant) moving to the next reference with no intervening punctuation: Thus Athanasius appears on p. 75 line 12; p. 79 line 24; p. 80 line 3 – and so on. The entries on the list that are not simply names: διδαχὴ τῶν ἀποστόλων = the Teaching (Didachê) of the Apostles; "Eremita deserti" = a hermit of the desert; "haereses" = heresies; "haeretici" = (the) heretics; "interpretes nonnulli" = quite a few interpreters; "pater quidem πνευματοφόρος" = a certain inspired father.

[Note that this electronic version of the table has been produced by OCR, so may contain scanning errors, and readers are advised to consult a PDF of the original. But the names and quantities of quotations may be useful to readers who have no need to know specific page and line numbers*].

[Claudius 170, 4]

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[Clement of Alexandria, Strom. γ 13, 92] : 205, 33

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Hippolytus 65, 34 107, 7 22

[Ignatius to the Ephesians 19]: 75, 3 243

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Quite a few interpreters 28, 30
Irenaeus 230, 13
Isaiah the anachorite 10, 9
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[Vespasian 170, 7].

All those who wish to do so may use my volume, but only with the proviso that without my permission it is not permitted to reproduce what I have edited, nor to include it in the margin of an edition of either the Egyptian New Testament or of the Fathers.

I would like to thank Robert, Lord Zouche, to the highest extent of my abilities for sending the manuscript to me in Göttingen to use.