

THE OLD LATIN.

THE importance of the Latin Versions is not confined to their critical worth. Whatever value we may attach to the Latin interpretations of phrases occurring in the original Greek, it is undeniable that they have greatly influenced Western theological thought. Even the most literal version is also in some sense a commentary: the Latin indeed has none of the authority which sometimes attaches itself to the Syriac rendering of words and phrases originally spoken in an Aramaic dialect; yet to us it is historically more important. Many of our current conceptions of theological ideas have come to us through this Latin channel. The word 'eternal' is a familiar instance: another is Luther's famous difficulty with *agite paenitentiam* as an equivalent for μετανοεῖτε. But the influence in question is not confined to such serious matters. We more often think of the place of the Crucifixion as 'Calvary' than as 'Golgotha'. Again, from the history of the Latin Bible we learn, that Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy have always been called by their Greek names in Western Europe. In Tertullian we also find Arithmi instead of Numeri; yet as early as S. Cyprian the fourth book of the Pentateuch had a vernacular name, as it has among ourselves to-day.

Nevertheless the main worth of the Latin Versions to us is their critical value as 'authorities' for the text. Since the time of Lachmann the importance of the ancient codices of the Old Latin has always been recognised in New Testament criticism, even by scholars to whom 'Western' and 'corrupt' were in all cases synonymous terms. It is however to those who frankly accept Dr Hort's theory of the Syrian (or Antiochian) revision that this value is necessarily greatest, whatever may be their

feeling with regard to 'Western' texts. As long as in the thousand Greek MSS of the Gospels were seen so many practically independent authorities the evidence of a version might be neglected. But Dr Hort's scheme so reduces the vast mass of Greek witnesses, that the Western texts found in the early versions regain much of their true *numerical* preponderance of attestation. Moreover with a comparatively narrow basis of really weighty Greek evidence, the possibility of sporadic error in our best MSS must always be a factor in the account, and the value of a version which in its origin at least was utterly independent of the eclectic Greek texts of the fourth century becomes more evident than ever.

I have spoken of the Old Latin *Version*; the phrase is in itself an assumption. *Tot exemplaria quot codices*—'every MS gives a new type of text'—was the opinion of S. Jerome; and it is only in quite recent years that criticism has got even a little beyond this stage. At the same time the fact that our Latin authorities often conspire together in variants found in hardly any extant Greek MS was early noticed; whether there were one or two independent versions is a comparatively minor question in face of the undoubted fact that the independent versions were few in number. Among the more striking examples of the agreement of the Old Latin codices (or of a majority of them) against most other authorities are the substitution of Ps ii 7 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee' for the words uttered from heaven at the Baptism in Lc iii 22; and the curious transposition of the clauses of Lc ix 62, so that the verse runs 'No man that looketh back and putteth his hand to the plough is fit for the kingdom of God.' Neither of these is in any way supported by the Old Syriac; so that they seem to be examples of readings geographically 'Western'.

In classifying our Old Latin authorities and attempting to write a history of the texts they present, each group of the books of the Bible must be treated separately. It is not till the seventh century that we hear of Latin Pandects—great MSS of the whole mass of Canonical Scriptures. A mere glance indeed at the extant evidence for the various books shews the different ways in which their text has been manipulated. The perplexing variety of the

Latin texts of the Gospels, the Psalms, and Isaiah, may be contrasted with the uninterrupted transmission of the book of Wisdom, a book highly esteemed and largely quoted, in which, strange to say, the text of S. Cyprian's citations hardly differs from the Clementine Vulgate. These however are extreme instances.

There are two books of the Old Testament which may be conveniently treated apart from the rest. The recensions in which they are extant are well known from Greek sources, and differ so extensively from one another as to be easily recognised in the corresponding Latin translations. These are the books of Daniel and Job.

The Old Latin authorities for the book of Daniel may be divided into two families, according as they follow the genuine LXX or the version of Theodotion. Theodotion's version is by far the most commonly met with. The purely Latin attestation for it begins with the 3rd cent. African tract *De Pascha computus* (dated AD 243) and Commodian¹; it further includes Lucifer and the other 4th cent. writers². But the ancient LXX version, as represented by the Cod. Chisianus and the Hexapla, is found in all the undoubtedly genuine works of Tertullian, including the Montanistic tracts written towards the end of his life. It is also found in the Commentary on the Apocalypse by S. Victorinus of Pettau, who was martyred in AD 303. The genuine chiliastic conclusion of this work, containing the clearest use of the LXX Daniel, was first published in the *Theologisches Literaturblatt* of April 26, 1895, by Dr Haussleiter of Greifswald; but the LXX text is to be traced in the earlier part of the work as well (*Migne* v 338, 340, and *Beatus*, pp. 440, 441). The quotations of S. Cyprian occupy a curious position midway between the LXX and Theodotion, suggesting that the change from the one version to the other was taking place in his own times, at least at Carthage³.

Thus the earliest Latin version of Daniel as witnessed by

¹ See *Instruc* II 13 = Dan xiii 56 *Theod*; and *Apol* 267, 268 = Dan ix 24, 26 *Theod*.

² Theodotion's version is also found in the Latin translation of Irenaeus. It is therefore probable that S. Irenaeus himself used Theodotion, as the differences between the two Greek versions of Daniel are too great to have been altogether obscured in translation.

³ See Note 1 at the end of this Essay.

Tertullian, by S. Victorinus of Pettau, and partly by S. Cyprian, was made from the LXX; a later Latin version was made from Theodotion. And so we see that we cannot write the history of the Latin versions from the evidence of MSS alone. For in the book of Daniel we have fragments of two magnificent Latin codices of the 5th cent., the *Weingarten* MS and the *Würzburg* Palimpsest; but both give Theodotion's version and shew no trace of the LXX text.

The language of all the Biblical quotations in *De Pascha computus* distinctly points to Africa, and its date is contemporary with S. Cyprian. Yet in the long quotation of Dan ix 25—27 it keeps to Theodotion throughout, agreeing indeed very closely with the first hand of B. This might suggest that we have evidence of early revision from the Greek even in the African Bible. The book of Daniel may however have been subjected to exceptional treatment; if Theodotion's version was to be preferred to the LXX, it was a question of the adoption of an entirely new work, not the gradual correction of one type of text by another. S. Cyprian's mixed text of Daniel never reappears except in those writers who directly quote the *Testimonia*, and it may never have existed as a Biblical text except in his own half-corrected MS. All other Latin authorities use a text wholly that of the LXX or wholly Theodotion's¹. The fact that during the third century the African Church, following the example of the rest of Christendom, exchanged the LXX of this book for Theodotion need not make us reject the presumption that Greek MSS were less frequently met with in Africa than elsewhere, and that there, if anywhere, sporadic correction of the Latin version from Greek MSS of the Bible was uncommon.

But there is another consideration of more general interest connected with the substitution of Theodotion for the LXX in the book of Daniel. It is a remarkable fact that Ecclesiastical writers are quite silent about this important change. The utmost

¹ In 'Tert' *aduersus Iudaeos* the portions taken out of Tertullian *contra Marcion* iii follow the LXX; but in the earlier sections of *adv. Iudaeos* (e.g. § 8), to which there are no parallels in Tertullian, the quotations from Daniel follow Theodotion. Note that *concidentium* (*adv. Iudaeos* § 3), an interpolation in the text of Dan ii 35, appears to come directly from Cypr. *Test* ii 17.