

## "4Q TESTIMONIA" AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

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A HEBREW text, discovered in Qumrân Cave 4, was recently published by J. M. Allegro, who has given it the provisional title of "4Q Testimonia."<sup>1</sup> Its contents are described as "a group of *testimonia* of the type long ago proposed by Burkitt, Rendel Harris and others to have existed in the early Church."<sup>2</sup> *Testimonia* is the current name for systematic collections of Old Testament passages, usually of messianic import, which are thought to have been used by early Christians. This name is derived from a work of Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum*, whose subtitle is *Testimoniorum libri tres*.<sup>3</sup> Cyprian's work, at least in its first two books,<sup>4</sup> is a collection of Old Testament passages, compiled with an apologetic purpose *adversus Iudaeos*. Similar collections were made by other patristic writers as well. But the existence of such collections of *testimonia* in the primitive Church and the relation of them to the formation of the New Testament have often been denied and affirmed during the past sixty years. To some scholars it seems that such collections, which they also call "florilegia," "anthologies," or "a catena of fulfilments of prophecy," must be the basis of some of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament. Others have denied the existence of such *testimonia*. Consequently, if the provisional title, "4Q Testimonia," given to the new Qumrân text proves to be correct, then Allegro is right in saying that "this document will certainly revive interest in the question" of the *testimonia*.<sup>5</sup>

The present article, at any rate, will bear out Allegro's prediction of interest. We propose to give a brief survey of the problem of the *testimonia* in the study of the New Testament and then try to situate the

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Allegro, "Further Messianic References in Qumran Literature," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 75 (1956) 182-87, Document IV.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186. J. T. Milik, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert: Qumran Cave I* (Oxford, 1955) p. 121, has also referred to this text as *testimonia*. See also *Revue biblique* 60 (1953) 290.

<sup>3</sup> Edited by G. Hartel, *CSEL* 3/1 (1868) 33-184.

<sup>4</sup> The third book is generally regarded as a later edition; cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology* 2 (Utrecht and Antwerp, 1953) 363.

<sup>5</sup> Allegro, *art. cit.*, p. 186, note 107.

new document in the context of that problem. Our discussion will treat: (1) the hypothesis of the *testimonia* collections, (2) the reaction to the hypothesis, (3) extant *testimonia*, and (4) the significance of "4Q Testimonia."

#### THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE TESTIMONIA COLLECTIONS

While the majority of the *OT* quotations in the *NT* agree substantially with the text of the Septuagint (LXX), as we know it today, there is a good number of quotations that are closer to the Masoretic Hebrew text (MT). Some, however, diverge considerably from both. The Epistle to the Hebrews, for instance, is a striking example of dependence on the LXX, while a certain group of quotations in the Gospel according to St. Matthew has always been considered outstanding for its departure from this text. The picture presented by the *OT* quotations in the *NT* is a complicated one and has evoked study from the early centuries of the Church's existence on. The facile solution, often employed to explain the discrepancies between the quotations and the known Greek or Hebrew texts of the *OT*, is that of the "quotation from memory." Even St. Jerome took refuge in this solution: "In omnibus paene testimoniis quae de Vetere Testamento sumuntur istiusmodi esse errorem, ut aut ordo mutetur aut verba, et interdum sensus quoque ipse diversus sit vel Apostolis vel Evangelistis non ex libro carpentibus testimonia, sed memoria credentibus, quae nonnumquam fallitur."<sup>6</sup> It would be foolish to deny that the *NT* writers, especially Paul in his letters, quoted the *OT* at times from memory. But to use this solution everywhere would be a gross oversimplification.

Recourse to the hypothesis of previously compiled collections of *OT* passages, especially to those which might have depended on different recensions of the *OT* books, has often been had by scholars in recent times to explain some of the problems that arise from the use of the *OT* by Paul and Matthew. It is thought that these collections of *testimonia* were composed for various purposes, devotional, liturgical, or apologetic. Providing handy summaries of the main *OT* passages for the busy missionary or apostolic teacher, they would have dis-

<sup>6</sup> *Comm. in Michaeam* 2, 5 (PL 25, 1255 [ed. 1865]). For ancient discussions of the use of the *OT* in the *NT*, see H. Vollmer, *Die alttestamentlichen Citate bei Paulus, textkritisch und biblisch-theologisch gewürdigt nebst einem Anhang über das Verhältnis des Apostels zu Philo* (Freiburg and Leipzig, 1895) pp. 1-6.

pensed him from consulting the *OT* itself or from carrying it around with him. To use a phrase of Rendel Harris, they would have been "a controversialists' *vade mecum*." It has even been suggested that Paul refers to such collections, when he instructs Timothy to bring along with him "the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and the books, especially the parchments (*tas membranas*)" (2 Tim 4:13).

The use of such collections of *testimonia* was postulated to explain four problems of the *OT* citations in the *NT*: (a) the attribution of citations to wrong *OT* authors; (b) the "formula quotations"<sup>8</sup> found in Matthew; (c) the divergence of the *OT* citations from the LXX and their closer agreement with the Hebrew; (d) the composite quotations.

### *Citations Attributed to Wrong Authors*

The chief cases of such ascription are Mk 1:2-3 and Mt 27:9-10.<sup>9</sup> In Mk 1:2-3 we read: "As is written in the prophet Isaiah: 'Here I send my messenger on before you; he will prepare your way. Hark! Someone is shouting in the desert: Get the Lord's way ready, make his paths straight.'"<sup>10</sup> Although the second citation in verse 3 is taken from Is 40:3, the first is drawn from Mal 3:1, or possibly from Ex 23:20. Yet both are introduced by the phrase, "As is written in the prophet Isaiah." Rendel Harris suggested that this ascription in the earliest of our Synoptic Gospels was due to "some collection of Testimonies."<sup>11</sup> If we imagine a collection of prophetic texts strung together, some with and some without their sources indicated, the solu-

<sup>7</sup> Rendel Harris, *Testimonies* 1 (Cambridge, 1916) 55.

<sup>8</sup> This term has been used by Sherman Johnson, "The Biblical Quotations in Matthew," *Harvard Theological Review* 36 (1943) 135, and adopted by K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament* (Uppsala, 1954) p. 45, as the translation of the German "Reflexionszitate." Such quotations are introduced by the evangelist himself into his account of an event, which he regards as the fulfilment of a saying of the *OT*. The German term is actually a better expression than the current English phrase, as it reveals the nature of the quotation.

<sup>9</sup> A third case might be added, Mt 13:35, if the reading in Sinaiticus is adopted, where *Ēsaïou* is added after *dia* in the phrase *dia tou prophētou legontos*. But Isaiah is not quoted; the text comes rather from Ps 78:2. If the name of Isaiah is omitted with most of the other MSS, the sense of the word *prophētou* can be explained with K. Stendahl (*op. cit.*, pp. 117-18) by showing that the quotation comes from a psalm of Asaph, whom early Jewish tradition regarded as a prophet (1 Chr 25:2).

<sup>10</sup> Translations of the *NT* are taken from E. J. Goodspeed, *The Complete Bible: An American Translation* (Chicago, 1951).

<sup>11</sup> Rendel Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 49; see also pp. 21-22.

tion suggested by Harris would not be impossible.<sup>12</sup> Krister Stendahl has pointed out that a stronger argument for such an interpretation is that both the Malachi and Isaiah texts contain the phrase *pinnah-derek*, "to prepare the way," an expression which occurs only here and in two closely related Isaiah passages, 57:14 and 62:10.<sup>13</sup> Possibly a collection of texts existed that dealt with "preparing the way" and in the course of time it was thought that all the passages were from Isaiah.<sup>14</sup>

In Mt 27:9-10 Jeremiah is said to have written, "They took the thirty silver pieces, the price of the one whose price had been fixed, on whom some of the Israelites had set a price, and gave them for the Potter's Field as the Lord directed me." But this saying is partly a quotation and partly a paraphrase of Za 11:13 with a possible allusion to Jer 18:1 (LXX) and Ex 9:12. Once again Harris suggests that "Matthew has been using a *Book of Testimonies*, in which the history and tragic end of Judas was explained as a fulfilment of ancient prophecy, and that the mistake . . . either existed in the *Book of Testimonies*, or was accidentally made by the evangelist in using such a book."<sup>15</sup>

### *The "Formula Quotations"*

In the Gospel according to St. Matthew there are ten citations from the OT which form a special group within that Gospel. They occur in various places throughout the work: four in the infancy stories, five in the ministry narratives, and one in the account of the passion.

<i>Group A</i>		<i>Group B</i>	
1:22-23	(Is 7:14)	4:15-16	(Is 8:23; 9:1)
2:15	(Hos 11:1)	8:17	(Is 53:4)
2:17-8	(Jer 31:15)	12:17-21	(Is 42:1-4)
2:23	(Is 11:1)	13:35	(Ps 78:2)
27:9	(Za 11:12-13)	21:4-5	(Za 9:9; Is 62:11)

<sup>12</sup> V. Taylor in his recent commentary, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (London, 1953) p. 153, admits that "Mark may have inadvertently introduced it from a collection of Messianic proof-texts," while observing that there are good reasons for the view of Holtzmann, Lagrange, and Rawlinson that the Malachi-Exodus text might be a "copyist's gloss."

<sup>13</sup> Stendahl, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> See N. J. Hommes, *Het Testimoniaboek* (Amsterdam, 1935) pp. 174 ff., who maintains that such a group of texts did exist under the heading of Isaiah in pre-Christian times.

<sup>15</sup> Rendel Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

The citations of Group A are found in passages that are peculiar to Matthew; those of Group B occur in passages that have Synoptic parallels, but which Matthew has modified to suit the incorporation of the quotation (contrast the Markan parallels). Now several points are to be noted in connection with these passages of Matthew. First of all, they have a special introductory formula, either *hina* (*hopōs*) *plērōthē to rēthen* or *tote eplērōthē to rēthen tou prophētou legontos*, not found with the other OT citations in the first Gospel.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, this type of citation is found only in Matthew;<sup>17</sup> it is a *Reflexionszitat*, added by the writer and not attributed to another person. Thirdly, the language of these citations is generally judged to be different from the other citations of the OT in Matthew and from those in Mark and Luke. They manifest a much greater similarity to the Hebrew text of the OT than the others, which are more faithful to the LXX.<sup>18</sup> Such peculiarities of this group of citations demand an explanation and that has often been found in the theory of the *testimonia*.<sup>19</sup> It is thought that Matthew drew upon a collection of such texts, since their use admirably suited the purpose he had in writing his Gospel.

*Citations that Diverge from the Text of the LXX*

This feature of some of the OT citations has already been mentioned, especially in the case of the formula quotations. Such a deviation from the LXX text, however, is found in a number of instances outside of Matthew. According to E. F. Kautzsch,<sup>20</sup> who made a thorough study of the eighty-four Pauline citations and compared them with the LXX (Alexandrinus), thirty-four of them agree with the LXX, while thirty-six depart from it "leviter." There are ten passages where the citations "longius recedunt" from the LXX, "ita tamen ut dissensus . . . ad liberam allegandi rationem referendus videatur."

<sup>16</sup> Chiefly for this reason we have not included in this group the quotation of Mi 5:2, which occurs in Mt 2:6. However, a case might be made out for its inclusion in Group A. Stendahl treats it in his discussion of the formula quotations; cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 99-101.

<sup>17</sup> The quotation of Za 9:9, employed in Mt 21:5, is also found in Jn 12:15, but this is outside the Synoptic tradition.

<sup>18</sup> See Johnson, *art. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>19</sup> See T. Stephenson, "The Old Testament Quotations Peculiar to Matthew," *Journal of Theological Studies* 20 (1918-19) 227-29; L. Vaganay, *Le problème synoptique* (Paris, 1954) pp. 237-40.

<sup>20</sup> E. F. Kautzsch, *De Veteris Testamenti locis a Paulo apostolo allegatis* (Leipzig, 1869) p. 109.

In two passages (Rom 12:19; 1 Cor 14:21) the "quotation" is judged to be quite free, but still capable of being recognized as a quotation. Finally, in two other passages Paul cites Job clearly according to the Hebrew text.<sup>21</sup> Kautzsch suggests that Paul only knew Job in the Hebrew and had no acquaintance with the Greek translation of that book. But these differences that exist between the various classes of citations are significant enough to make Vollmer have recourse to "Citatenkomposition"<sup>22</sup> as well as to different Greek versions (Aquila or Theodotion or Symmachus) to explain the variants. It should be noted, however, that deviation from the text of the LXX, taken by itself, is rarely considered sufficient evidence to postulate the previous existence of a quotation in a collection of *testimonia*. But it is often a confirmation of one of the other reasons for such a postulate.

### *The Composite Quotations*

Perhaps the chief reason for postulating the existence of collections of *testimonia* in the early Church is the phenomenon of composite quotations found in various *NT* books. We met an example of such a quotation in discussing the text of Malachi that is attributed to Isaiah in Mk 1:2. The term, composite quotation, designates the stringing together of two or more *OT* quotations which are given more or less completely. It is to be distinguished from a conflated quotation, such as Mt 22:24: "Master, Moses said, 'If a man dies without children, his brother shall marry his widow and raise up a family for him.'" Here we have parts of Gn 38:8 and Dt 25:5 fused together. Moreover, a composite quotation is different from allusions to the *OT* which are strung together. The Apocalypse is generally said to contain not a single *OT* quotation, yet is replete with *OT* allusions. The clearest examples of composite quotations are the citations that are strung together without intervening comments or identification of their author(s). Such citations are rare in the Gospels; the following is usually given as an example: "*My house shall be called a house of prayer*, but you make it *a robbers' den*" (Mt 21:13). The italicized words come from Is 56:7 and Jer 7:11; in both cases the text is quite similar to the LXX. See further examples in Mk 10:6-8 (Gn 1:27; 2:24); Mt 19:18-19 (Ex 20:12-16 or Dt 5:16-20 and Lv 19:18).

<sup>21</sup> See Stendahl, *op. cit.*, p. 159, for slightly different figures, but substantial agreement.

<sup>22</sup> Vollmer, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

It is in the Pauline letters that we find the best examples of composite quotations. We shall give but two examples. In the first instance the *Stichwortverbindung* that unites them is the word "heathen" or "nation." In the second the unifying element is rather the description of the man who is not upright, with the enumeration of different parts of the body as a secondary element.<sup>23</sup>

Rom 15:9-12

As the Scripture says,

"I will give thanks to you for this among the heathen,  
And sing in honor of your name." (Ps 17/18:50;  
cf. 2 S 22:50)

And again,

"Rejoice, you heathen, with his people." (Dt 32:43 LXX)

And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you heathen,  
And let all nations sing his praises." (Ps 116/17:1)

Again Isaiah says,

"The descendant of Jesse will come,  
The one who is to rise to rule the heathen;  
The heathen will set their hopes on him." (Is 11:1,10)

Rom 3:10-18

As the Scripture says,

"There is not a single man who is upright,  
No one understands, no one searches for God. (Ps 13/14:1-3)

All have turned away, they are one and all worthless;  
No one does right, not a single one."

"Their throats are like open graves,  
They use their tongues to deceive." (Ps 5:10)

"The venom of asps is behind their lips." (Ps 139/40:4)

"And their mouths are full of bitter curses." (Ps 9B/10:7)

"Their feet are swift when it comes to shedding blood,  
Ruin and wretchedness mark their paths, (Is 59:7-8;  
cf. Prv 1:16)

They do not know the way of peace."

"There is no reverence for God before their eyes."<sup>24</sup> (Ps 35/36:2)

Further examples may be found in Rom 9:25-29 (Hos 2:25,1; Is 10:22-3; 1:9); 10:15-21 (Is 52:7; 53:1; Ps 18/19:5; Dt 32:21; Is 65:1-2); 11:8-10 (Dt 29:3 [cf. Is 29:10]; Ps 68/69:23-24); 11:26

<sup>23</sup> See J. Huby, *Saint Paul, Épître aux Romains* (11th ed.; Paris, 1940) p. 145, note 1.

<sup>24</sup> M. Dibelius, "Zur Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments ausserhalb der Evangelien," *Theologische Rundschau*, N. F. 3 (1931) 228, finds it hard to believe that Paul himself sought out all these passages from the OT for the purpose of incorporating them in the Epistle to the Romans. He, too, thinks in terms of a preexisting list of passages that Paul simply made use of here.

(Is 59:20; 27:9); 11:34–35 (Is 40:13; Jb 41:3); 2 Cor 6:16–18 (Lv 26:12 [cf. Ez 37:27]; Jer 51:45; Is 52:11; Ez 20:34; 2 S 7:14).<sup>25</sup>

Composite quotations are also found in the early patristic writers (e.g., Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Justin Martyr) and they obviously served as a basis for the later extended collections of *testimonia* by Tertullian, Cyprian, and Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa. After studying the composite quotations in the NT and the early Fathers, E. Hatch postulated the existence of collections of such texts. This was the beginning of the *testimonia* hypothesis in 1889, although Hatch did not use this name for it.<sup>26</sup> A thorough study of the Pauline composite citations was undertaken by Hans Vollmer, who published his results in

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<sup>25</sup> It may be debated whether the following passages are really composite quotations, because of the intervening comments: Rom 9:12–13 (Gn 25:23; Mal 1:2–3); 9:33 (Is 28:16; 8:14); 10:6–8 (Dt 30:12; Ps 106/7:26); 10:11–13 (Is 28:16; Jl 2:32); 12:19–20 (Dt 32:35; Prv 25:21–22); Gal 4:27–30 (Is 54:1; Gn 21:10–12); 1 Cor 3:19–20 (Jb 5:13; Ps 93/94:11); 2 Cor 9:9–10 (Ps 111/12:9; Is 55:10; Hos 10:12). Composite citations are also found in Heb 1:5 (Ps 2:7; 2 S 7:14); 1:7–13 (Dt 32:42 LXX and 4Q Deut; Ps 103/4:4; 44/45:7–8; 101/2:26–28; 109/10:1); 2:12–13 (Ps 21/22:23; Is 8:17–18); 5:5–6 (Ps 2:7; 109/10:4); 1 Pt 2:6–10 (Is 28:16; Ps 117/18:22; Is 8:14; 43:20–21; Ex 19:6 [cf. 23:22]; Hos 1:6,9).—L. Cerfaux proposes the extended use of a florilegium in 1 Corinthians; see “Vestiges d’un florilège dans 1 Cor. 1,18–3,24?”, *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 27 (1931) 521–34; *Recueil Cerfaux* 2 (Gembloux, 1954) 319–32.

<sup>26</sup> E. Hatch, *Essays in Biblical Greek* (Oxford, 1889) p. 203: “It would be improbable, even if there were no positive evidence on the point, that the Greek-speaking Jews, who were themselves cultured, and who lived in great centres of culture, should not have had a literature of their own. It is no less improbable that such a literature should have consisted only of the Apocalyptic books, and the scanty fragments of other books, which have come down to us. It may naturally be supposed that a race which laid stress on moral progress, whose religious services had variable elements of both prayer and praise, and which was carrying on an active propaganda, would have, among other books, manuals of morals, of devotion, and of controversy. It may also be supposed, if we take into consideration the contemporary habit of making collections of *excerpta*, and the special authority which the Jews attached to their sacred books, that some of these manuals would consist of extracts from the Old Testament. The existence of composite quotations in the New Testament, and in some of the early Fathers suggests the hypothesis that we have in them relics of such manuals.”—Prior to Hatch’s study, C. Weizsäcker thought that Paul had composed for himself a sort of “creed” in the form of citations from the OT which he used in his teaching. He compared the quotations in Rom 1–4 with those in Galatians and showed how they could be separated from their context to give this impression. Similarly the citations in Rom 9–11. “Dieser Schriftbeweis ist nun ohne Zweifel nicht erst bei Abfassung der Briefe so aufgestellt, sondern der Apostel hat ihn sich überhaupt zurecht gemacht, und nur in diesen Briefen bei gegebenen Anlass verwendet” (*Das apostolische Zeitalter der christlichen Kirche* [Freiburg, 1886] pp. 113–14; 3rd ed. [1902] pp. 110–11).



1895.<sup>27</sup> He believed that certain combinations of texts were due merely to the juxtaposition of certain key-words ("zufällige Berührung eines Stichwortes").<sup>28</sup> Such a case is found in Rom 11:26, where the *kai hautē* of Is 59:21 brings to mind the *kai touto* of 27:9; such a similarity would be sufficient reason to join these two verses. Likewise in Rom 10:6–8 the *anabēsetai* of Dt 30:12 provides the link with *katabēsetai* of Ps 106/7:26. But he also found other cases of combined citations that reveal a deliberate process of compilation ("eine planmässige Zusammenstellung").<sup>29</sup> The latter citations reveal a tendency in Paul to cite passages from the three parts of the OT: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (or at least from two of them). See the examples cited above from Rom 11:8–10 and 15:9–12.<sup>30</sup>

Whereas E. Hatch had postulated a collection of Greek testimonies, compiled by Hellenistic Jews, Vollmer preferred to think that the compilations had already existed in Hebrew, in which such passages were assembled for dogmatic purposes from the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. This, he thought, could be established by such a passage as 2 Cor 9:10, where the word "rain" is the unitive element of the last three quotations (Is 55:10; Dt 28:11–12; Hos 10:12) that are fused together—even though this word does not appear in the parts quoted by Paul. Such a compilation of texts would have been impossible in Greek, since the unitive element is lacking in the third text according to the LXX. Hence, the "rain" texts must have been collected in Hebrew, and probably in pre-Christian times.<sup>31</sup>

Whenever the *testimonia* hypothesis is discussed, the names of Burkitt and Rendel Harris always come to the fore. Though the idea did not originate with Burkitt, it seems that he was the first to use the name, *testimonia*, to designate the systematic collection of such OT

<sup>27</sup> Vollmer, *op. cit.* (supra n. 6).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>30</sup> This manner of quoting the OT had been pointed out long ago by Surhenus, "*spr hmšyh*" sive "*biblos katallagēs*," in *quo secundum veterum theologorum Hebraeorum formulas allegandi et modos interpretandi conciliantur loca ex Vetere in Novo Testamento allegata* (Amsterdam, 1713) Book 2, Thesis 11, p. 49. He showed that Paul was following good rabbinical practice in citing the OT in this fashion.

<sup>31</sup> Vollmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–42. But the case is weakened by the fact that the words for "rain" are not the same in all the passages; moreover, in the third instance the verb *ywrh* is used in a figurative sense (and contains a play on its meaning). For further criticism of this example, see O. Michel, *Paulus und seine Bibel* (Gütersloh, 1929) pp. 42–43; Hommes, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

texts.<sup>32</sup> Harris gathered evidence to support the hypothesis both from the *NT* and from the early Fathers.<sup>33</sup> However, Harris went beyond Burkitt in maintaining that the passages all belonged to one Testimony Book. Nor was he content to regard the collections as *testimonia pro Iudaeis*, as E. Hatch had done, but considered them as Christian compilations (therefore, in Greek), *testimonia adversus Iudaeos*. "If such collections of Testimonies on behalf of the Jews existed in early times, before the diffusion of Christianity, then there must have been, *a fortiori*, similar collections produced in later times, when the Christian religion was being actively pushed by the Church in the Synagogue."<sup>34</sup> His contention is supported by the existence of such collections *adversus Iudaeos* in the writings of Cyprian, Tertullian, and Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa.

But Harris went still further with his theory. The various composite quotations and those that are attributed to wrong authors not only belonged to an original Testimony Book, but they were actually part of "the missing *Dominical Oracles* written by Matthew and commented on by Papias."<sup>35</sup> Matthew, a member of the apostolic company, who is credited with the composition of *ta kuriaka logia*, is now claimed as the author of the *testimonia*. The five books of Papias' commentary could conceivably refer to this Testimony Book, divided into five parts, just as the first Gospel is. In this way Harris thought that he had found an answer to the oft-repeated question, "What were the *logia* on which Papias commented?"

#### THE REACTION TO THE HYPOTHESIS

It is not surprising that the theory of the *testimonia* in the extreme form presented by Rendel Harris was not accepted by most scholars. While the evidence he had collected might support the contention that collections of *testimonia* did exist in the early Church and possibly even prior to the form of the *NT* writings, there is certainly no evidence that they formed one book, nor that they had anything to do with the

<sup>32</sup> F. C. Burkitt, *The Gospel History and Its Transmission* (Edinburgh, 1907) p. 126.

<sup>33</sup> Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*. 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1916, 1920). Stendahl, *op. cit.*, p. 207, has pointed out that most of the patristic material to which Harris refers was previously collected by A. von Ungern-Sternberg, *Der traditionelle alttestamentliche Schriftbeweis 'De Christo' und 'De Evangelio' in der alten Kirche bis zur Zeit Eusebs von Caesarea* (Halle a. S., 1913).

<sup>34</sup> Rendel Harris, *op. cit.*, 1, 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109, 116-17.

Logia of Papias' statement about Matthew.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, the extreme form of the hypothesis has been generally abandoned, but many scholars admit that *testimonia* collections must have preceded various sections of the NT.<sup>37</sup>

There have been a few scholars, however, in recent times who have questioned both the existence of *testimonia* and the extent to which they were used in the early Church. So far we have seen that the existence of *testimonia* collections was a mere postulate; they are a convenient way of explaining certain puzzling features in the NT. But possibly these features can be explained in another way.

It has often been pointed out that Paul had rabbinical tradition to give him the model for his composite quotations from the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. This method of "stringing together" texts like pearls on a thread was known to the rabbinical schools; he who strung the texts together was called *hārōzā* (from *hrz*, "to pierce," "to bore through" in order to put on a string). Such a stringing together of texts was especially common at the beginning of synagogal homilies.<sup>38</sup> Since the Torah was the definitive deposit of God's revelation to Israel, there was never an idea of a progressive revelation. Moses had revealed all and no prophet could ever add to the Torah. The Law was only to be explained, and the Prophets and Writings quoted in conjunction with a passage from the Law were intended only to show

<sup>36</sup> For criticism of Harris' work see A. L. Williams, *Adversus Judaeos* (Cambridge, 1935) pp. 6-10; Hommes, *op. cit.*, p. 251 ("Papias is de *Deus ex machina* in zijn systeem"); L. Cerfaux, "Un chapitre du Livre des 'Testimonia' (Pap. Ryl. Gr. 460)," in *Recueil Cerfaux* 2, 226, note; Stendahl, *op. cit.*, pp. 209 ff.; P. Feine and J. Behm, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (10th ed.; Heidelberg, 1954) p. 24; J. A. Findlay, "The First Gospel and the Book of Testimonies," in *Amicitiae corolla: Essays Presented to J. R. Harris*, ed. H. G. Wood (London, 1933) pp. 57-71; Ch. Guignebert, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 81 (1920) 58-69.

<sup>37</sup> See, for instance, W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh, 1908) pp. 264, 282; J. Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (Edinburgh, 1920) pp. 23-25; M. Simon, *Verus Israel: Etude sur les relations entre chrétiens et juifs dans l'empire romain (135-425)* (Bibliothèque des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 166; Paris, 1948) p. 186; Vaganay, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-40; H. Lietzmann, *An die Galater* (Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 10; 2nd ed.; Tübingen, 1923) p. 33; D. Plooij, "Studies in the Testimony Book," *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam* (Literature Section, New Series, Part 32, No. 2; 1932) pp. 5-27.

<sup>38</sup> See A. F. Puukko, "Paulus und das Judentum," *Studia orientalia* 2 (1928) 62; Michel, *op. cit.* (supra n. 31), pp. 12-13, 83; Hommes, *op. cit.*, pp. 324-54. Cf. supra n. 30.

how Scripture repeated what was already in the Torah. Given such an interpretative method of quoting Scripture in rabbinical circles, Paul's composite quotations might be judged merely to be an imitation of this method. If that is so, then one of the main reasons for postulating the existence of the *testimonia* disappears.

O. Michel, in his painstaking study of the OT in the Pauline letters, uses this argument and goes even further in denying the existence of *testimonia* collections, mainly because "es fehlt jede Spur spätjüdischer Florilegien. Das bleibt zu beachten."<sup>39</sup> He remarks:

There are no traces of pre-Christian *florilegia*, neither of the late Hellenistic Jewish type (Hatch), nor of the late rabbinical sort (Vollmer). Moreover, the hypothesis of R. Harris, that there were early Christian *florilegia*, which would have been composed prior to the writings of the NT, cannot be regarded as probable. Collections of that sort occur first in an early Christian setting; they can be proved to exist with Melito of Sardis and Cyprian. Probably their origin can be traced to an even earlier time; the Epistle of Barnabas perhaps supposes them. But the impression we get is that the Gentile Christian Church compiled these *florilegia* for missionary and polemical purposes.<sup>40</sup>

Others have not been so radical in their denial as Michel. Their criticism of the hypothesis affects rather the way in which the *testimonia* are said to have been used or the extent to which they were employed. For example, C. H. Dodd is of the opinion that the theory as proposed by Harris "outruns the evidence, which is not sufficient to prove so formidable a literary enterprise at so early a date."<sup>41</sup> Dodd has studied fifteen of the OT passages that occur in the NT, which are cited by two or more writers in *prima facie* independence of one another (Ps 2:7; 8:4-6; 110:1; 118:22-23; Is 6:9-10; 53:1; 40:3-5; 28:16; Gn 12:3; Jer 31:31-34; Jl 2:28-32; Za 9:9; Hab 2:3-4; Is 61:1-2; Dt 18:15, 19). An examination of the contexts of these passages shows that they served as units of reference usually wider than the brief form of the words actually quoted. For the context, and not merely the individual verse of the OT that is quoted, has often influenced the vocabulary and the idea of the passage of the NT into which it is incorporated. The fifteen passages and their contexts should be reckoned as wholes or units of reference in the OT for some of the essential

<sup>39</sup> Michel, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>41</sup> C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of the New Testament Theology* (London, 1952) p. 26.

articles of the primitive kerygma.<sup>42</sup> Hence it seems that large sections of the *OT*, especially of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Psalms, were selected as the result of a convention among early Christian evangelists and teachers to support their kerygmatic activities. These sections reveal, then, their method of biblical study. Consequently, particular verses quoted from such *OT* passages should be regarded "rather as pointers to the whole context than as constituting testimonies in and for themselves. At the same time detached sentences from other parts of the Old Testament could be adduced to illustrate or elucidate the meaning of the main section under consideration."<sup>43</sup> The quotations from the *OT*, then, are not to be accounted for by the postulate of a primitive anthology or isolated proof-texts. "The composition of 'testimony books' was the result, not the presupposition, of the work of early Christian biblical scholars."<sup>44</sup>

K. Stendahl is in complete agreement with this last statement of Dodd. His book, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*,<sup>45</sup> presents a thorough study of the quotations of the first Gospel. Along with many others, he distinguishes two sorts of quotations in Matthew. He calls one group a "liturgical" type, because the text of these quotations agrees closely with that of the LXX, the version of the *OT* which was standard for the liturgy. The other group is a *peshet* type of quotation, which manifests a dependence on a Greek text of the *OT*, but which also "presupposes an advanced study of the Scriptures and familiarity with the Hebrew text and with the traditions of

<sup>42</sup> Dodd divides the *OT* citations into four groups to illustrate these themes (see pp. 107-8):

	Primary Sources	Supplementary Sources
Apocalyptic-eschatological Scriptures	Jl 2-3; Za 9-14; Dn 7	Mal 3:1-6; Dn 12
Scriptures of the New Israel	Hos; Is 6:1-9:7; 11:1-10; 28:16; 40:1-11; Jer 31:10-34	Is 29:9-14; Jer 7:1-15; Hb 1-2
Scriptures of the Servant of the Lord and the Righteous Sufferer	Is 42:1-44:5; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12; 61; Ps 69; 22; 31; 38; 88; 34; 118; 41; 42-43; 80	Is 58:6-10
Unclassified Scriptures	Ps 8; 110; 2; Gn 12:3; 22:18; Dt 18:15-19	Ps 132; 16; 2 S 7:13-14; Is 55:3; Amos 9:11-12

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>44</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>45</sup> See *supra* n. 8.

interpretation known to us from the Versions."<sup>46</sup> The latter type is distinguished by the introductory formulas of express fulfilment—the "formula quotations." They are called a *peshet* type, because they are considered to be the result of a targumizing procedure, resembling the interpretation of Habakkuk that is found in the Qumrân *peshet* on Habakkuk (1QpHab). "All of Matthew's formula quotations give evidence of features of text interpretation of an actualizing nature, often closely associated with the context in the gospel."<sup>47</sup> Stendahl believes that the Habakkuk text found in 1QpHab never existed as a "text" outside the commentary. The eschatological conviction of the Qumrân sect explains the remarkable freedom they exercised with regard to the text. As the significance of Habakkuk's words became gradually more and more understood through the coming and the instruction of the Teacher of Righteousness, the prophet's message could be made more lucid. Hence the scholarly study, in which the sect engaged,<sup>48</sup> would make it possible, in the light of this greater comprehension of Habakkuk's message, to choose or reject among the various traditions of interpretation they were acquainted with. This study resulted in the adoption of variant readings, or perhaps even in a deliberate change of the text, to suit their theological ideas. Hence the text in the *peshet* would not really represent the text found in a copy of Habakkuk used by them, for instance, for liturgical purposes. Stendahl believes that a similar interpretative or targumizing process was at work on the OT text that is found in the formula quotations of Matthew. The special formulas of introduction would correspond to the Qumrân *peshet* formula, *pšrw* 'l. . . . Consequently, the fact that the text of these quotations differs from the LXX in contrast to the "liturgical" type of citation is to be explained more by this interpretative process than by appeal to citations from the Hebrew or to derivation from a list of *testimonia*.

Moreover, Stendahl finds that the formula quotations of Matthew show a greater similarity to the LXX than is often claimed—a fact which makes it necessary to correct the prevailing view that they are dependent on the MT. He believes that the formula quotations orig-

<sup>46</sup> Stendahl, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 200–201.

<sup>48</sup> For the Qumrân sect's study of the Scriptures see IQS 6:6–7 and the activity of the *dōrēš hattōrāh* in CD 8:6 ff.; 9:8; 4Q Florilegium, 2 (Allegro, *art. cit.*, p. 176).

inated in Greek, the language of the Matthaean Church; he denies, therefore, that the first Gospel ever existed as a consistent Aramaic unity. The first Gospel is for him a handbook for teaching, preaching, and church government, into which the formula quotations have been worked, side by side with the other type of quotation. They are the specific product of the School of St. Matthew.

In the last chapter of his book Stendahl asks the question, "Did Matthew make use of Testimonies?" He thinks that a Book of Testimonies might explain (1) the composite quotations, (2) the ascription to wrong authors, and (3) the readings which differ from the editions known to us—especially if these differences remain constant in the testimony tradition. He admits, moreover, that the *testimonia* might fit well into the picture of early Christian preaching. But there are simpler alternatives than the testimony hypothesis to explain the composite quotations. The *midrashim* provide us with an example of a storehouse of quotations brought together by means of association; rabbinical methods account for most of the features Harris wanted to explain by his Book of Testimonies. "This is not to say that the primitive church did not know and use testimonies, oral or even written, but so far as Matthew is concerned, these testimonies are not responsible for the form of the quotations, least of all for that of the formula quotations."<sup>49</sup> Thus Stendahl's position comes close to that of Dodd.

#### ARE THERE ANY EXTANT LISTS OF TESTIMONIA?

When we ask this question, we mean aside from the evidence in the patristic writers such as Cyprian and Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa. There are two, possibly three, texts that have been considered as *testimonia* that we must now consider. The first is a Greek text published by C. H. Roberts in 1936, bearing the identification P. Ryl. Gk. 460.<sup>50</sup> It is a fragmentary papyrus, which had been acquired by the John Rylands Library, Manchester, in 1917; its provenance was probably the Fayyûm and it is dated in the fourth century A.D. This fragment of

<sup>49</sup> Stendahl, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

<sup>50</sup> C. H. Roberts, *Two Biblical Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester* (Manchester, 1936) pp. 47–62. "It is not to be expected that the text of such a manuscript would be of any importance for textual criticism; neither its omissions . . . or additions . . . are of any significance, although a tendency to disagree with Vaticanus (B) may be noticed" (p. 56).

two columns belongs to two other scraps of an Oslo papyrus codex published by G. Rudberg in 1923.<sup>51</sup> When put together, the three pieces contain the following verses of the OT in Greek:

Folio i recto	Is 42:3-4 66:18-19
Folio i verso	Is 52:15 53:1-3
Folio ii verso	Is 53:6-7; 11-12
Folio ii recto	An unidentified verse Gn 26:13-14 2 Chr 1:12 Dt 29:8, 11

Roberts published together with the photograph of the Rylands papyrus the text of both the Rylands and the Oslo fragments. The latter were described by their first editor "as a *Textbuch für kultische Zweck* [sic], the property of some poor Christian community in Egypt, and the editors of the Oslo papyri write that 'Isaiah combined with Genesis suggests that the book was meant for liturgical use.'"<sup>52</sup> But since the verses from Isaiah include parts of the famous messianic passages from chapter 52-53, while all the other extracts in this papyrus, if not directly messianic in character, can be related to the history of Christ or of Christianity, Roberts suggested that we have a part of a Book of Testimonies in these fragments.

But because the passages from Isaiah found in this text are not among those that appear in Harris' *Testimonies* and because there is no trace of introductory formulas, Roberts did not think that he had found a "fragment of the Testimony Book desiderated by Dr. Harris."<sup>53</sup> Rather, it was probably a collection of "prophetic" passages of the OT, composed for a devotional purpose in the fourth century, when the need for polemics against the Jews would be less than in the second.

While we cannot say with certainty that this papyrus fragment belongs to a list of *testimonia*, it is most probable that it does. We have found no reviewer of Roberts' publication who questions his identifica-

<sup>51</sup> G. Rudberg, *Septuaginta-Fragmente unter den Papyri Osloenses* (*Proceedings of the Scientific Society of Kristiania* 1923/2; Kristiania, 1923); later republished by S. Eitrem and L. Amundsen, *Papyri Osloenses* 2 (1931) 10 f.

<sup>52</sup> Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.



tion of this text.<sup>54</sup> If we reject this identification, we may well ask for an alternative satisfactory explanation. The fact that the fragments date from the fourth century A.D. does not exclude the previous existence of such a list, of which this might be a copy.<sup>55</sup> Whether one wishes to ascribe to this collection of texts a merely devotional scope, as does Roberts, or a polemical (anti-Jewish) purpose, as does L. Cerfaux,<sup>56</sup> the fact is that this papyrus bears witness to the existence of such lists at a fairly early date. It lends some support to the hypothesis of the *testimonia*, which cannot be lightly dismissed.

Strangely enough, C. H. Dodd, who devoted a whole book to the OT passages cited in the NT and who more or less rejects the idea of collections of *testimonia* prior to the NT, does not mention this papyrus. Perhaps he does not consider it of any value for the early period. In itself it is not proof for the period in which the NT was formed. Consequently, O. Michel's view would still seem to be valid.

It is at this point that we return to the Qumrân fragments recently published by Allegro. "4Q Testimonia" is a fragment that is apparently

<sup>54</sup> See H. I. Bell, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 23 (1937) 138: "Mr. Roberts is almost certainly right in describing it as a portion of a book of 'Testimonies'. . . . Everyone of the extracts contained in them can, without too much forcing, be made to serve as a 'testimony'." L. Cerfaux, in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 33 (1937) 71: "Il est clair maintenant que nous avons affaire à des *Testimonia*." E. C. Colwell, in *Journal of Religion* 18 (1938) 462: "The most important of the editor's conclusions is that this papyrus in its disagreements with the testimonies of Cyprian and Gregory of Nyssa shows that there were various testimony books in use in the early Christian centuries." J. Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past* (Princeton, 1946) p. 324. Only H. G. Opitz, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 56 (1937) 436, expresses himself with a bit of caution.

<sup>55</sup> See L. Cerfaux, *Recueil Cerfaux* 2, 225, note 31: "Notre collection est assez artificielle et tardive. Le texte a été révisé à la bonne tradition des LXX: les variantes ne sont guère que celles des grands onciaux. Néanmoins, il subsiste des indices que l'auteur a travaillé sur des florilèges antérieurs."

<sup>56</sup> In *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 33 (1937) 71-72: "M. Roberts estime que son florilège est simplement messianique et qu'il a été formé par un motif de piété. Il paraît cependant assez proche de deux chapitres des *Testimonia* de Cyprien pour que nous lui soupçonions une parenté plus marquée avec la littérature antijuive. On peut le comparer en effet avec *Test.*, I, 21: *Quod gentes magis in Christum crediturae essent* et avec *Test.*, II, 13: *Quod humilis in primo adventu suo (Christus) veniret*. Il est construit comme *Test.*, II, 13, commençant par trois longues citations d'Isaïe (la première et la troisième communes avec ce chapitre) et continuant par une seconde série de citations scripturaires. Avec *Test.*, I, 21 il a en commun le deuxième texte d'Isaïe et le début du troisième. La deuxième série de citations du pap., ayant son point du départ en Gen., est très proche de la série correspondante de *Test.*, I, 21; on se base de part et d'autre sur un même principe en recourant aux bénédictions et promesses de l'Ancien Testament."

almost complete in itself, lacking only the lower right-hand corner. "It is clearly not part of a scroll, for there is none of the close stitching at the left-hand side one associates with a scroll page."<sup>57</sup> It consists of a single page measuring about 23 cm. high and 14 cm. wide. Its text is a compilation of the following biblical passages: Dt 5:28-29; 18:18-19; Nm 24:15-17; Dt 33:8-11; and finally a section which "has no apparent messianic import and is not entirely scriptural."<sup>58</sup> J. Strugnell, one of the international group of scholars working in Jerusalem on the publication of the Qumrân documents, has discovered this same passage among other 4Q fragments, to which he has given the provisional title of 4Q Psalms of Joshua. The fragments seem to be part of an apocryphal work used by the Qumrân sect and hitherto unknown.

The following is Allegro's translation of 4Q Testimonia:

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
|          | And (Yahweh) spoke to Moses, saying,   |
| Dt 5:28  | "You (?) have heard the sound of the words of this people who have spoken to you. They have spoken well everything which they have said. (29) If only this were their own determination: to fear me and to keep all my commandments, through all the years, so that it might be well with them, and with their sons forever."  |
| Dt 18:18 | "A prophet I will raise up for them from the midst of their brothers, like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will say to them everything which I command him. (19) If there is a man who does not listen to my words, which the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself shall seek satisfaction from him." <sup>59</sup>  |
| Nm 24:15 | "And he uttered his message and said, Oracle of Balaam, son of Beor, and oracle of the man whose eye is clear; (16) oracle of one who hears the sayings of El, and knows the knowledge of Elyon; who observes the vision of Shaddai, with eye skinned and uncovered. (17) I see him, but not now; I watch him, but not near. A star shall march forth from Jacob, and a scepter will rise from Israel; and he will crush the heads of Moab and destroy all the sons of Sheth." |
| Dt 33:8  | "And of Levi he said, Give to Levi thy Thummim, and thy Urim to thy loyal bond-man, whom thou didst test at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; (9) who said to his father and to his mother, I do (not) know you; and his brother(s) he did not acknowledge, and his son(s) he did not  |

<sup>57</sup> Allegro, *art. cit.*, p. 182.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>59</sup> Allegro, *ibid.*, p. 183, calls attention to the use of these verses in Acts 3:23. There is probably an allusion to Nm 24:17 in Ap 22:16; so Allegro, Nestle, Merk.

recognize. For he kept thy word, and thy covenant he guarded; (10) and he made thy judgments clear to Jacob, thy Torah to Israel. They place incense before thee, and whole burnt offering upon thine altar. (11) Bless (Yahweh) his might, and the work of his hands accept. Smash the loins of his adversaries and those who hate him, that they may never stand."<sup>60</sup>

4Q Ps Jos     At the time when Joshua finished praising and giving thanks with his praises, then he said, (Jos 6:26) "Cursed be the man who builds this city; with his firstborn shall he lay its foundation, and with his lastborn shall he set up its gates." And behold a man accursed, the devil's own (lit. the one of Belial), shall arise, to be a fowler's snare to his people, and destruction to all his neighbors. And he shall arise [. . . so] that the two of them may be instruments of violence. And they shall return and build (i.e., build again) the [. . . and will] establish for it a wall and towers, to provide a refuge of wickedness [. . .] in Israel, and a horrible thing in Ephraim, and in Judah [. . . and they] shall cause pollution in the land, and great contempt among the sons of [. . . bl]ood like water on the rampart of the daughter of Zion, and in the boundary of Jerusalem.

The 4Q Testimonia resemble the Roberts Papyrus in that they are strung together without introductory formulas and intervening comments on the text. In the same article Allegro also published part of another fragment from Qumrân Cave 4, which he entitled provisionally "4Q Florilegium."<sup>61</sup> So far we have been given only four of the nineteen lines it is said to contain. Since the provisional title is "Florilegium" and since it contains at least two *OT* passages,<sup>62</sup> it seems to be a text related somehow to *testimonia*. However, an interpretative comment is inserted after the first *OT* passage and the second is intro-

<sup>60</sup> We call attention to the reading, *bl yqumw*, instead of the MT *mn yqumwn* in v. 11. At the time of the composition of this list the archaic *mn* (= *man*, the interrogative pronoun) was probably no longer understood and so was changed to *bl*, just as the archaic *yqumwn* was changed to *yqumw*. A less likely possibility, however, is that this fragment preserves for us a reading that is older than that of the MT. For *mn* as *man*, see F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman, "The Blessing of Moses," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 67 (1948) 204; W. F. Albright, "The Old Testament and Canaanite Language," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 7 (1945) 23-24; *id.*, "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23/1 (1950-51) 29.

<sup>61</sup> Allegro, *art. cit.*, pp. 176-77, Document II.

<sup>62</sup> Allegro, "Further Light on the History of the Qumran Sect," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 75 (1956) 95, had previously revealed that 4Q Florilegium also contains a "comment on Ps 2:1-2"; "all that remains of the *pešer* itself, apart from the introduction, is: '... the chosen ones of Israel in the last days, that is, the time of trial which is com[ing].'"

duced with the formula, "as it is written." We are told that the text "is mainly concerned with the reestablishment of the House of David in the last days."<sup>63</sup> Allegro translates the text as follows:

- 2 S 7:11-14    "[And] the Lord [tel]ls you that he will build a house for you, and I will set up your seed after you, and I will establish his royal throne [foreve]r. I [will be] to him as a father, and he will be to me as a son." *He is the Shoot of David, who will arise with the Interpreter of the Law, who [ . . . ] in Zi[on(?) in the l]ast days; as it is written,*
- Amos 9:11    "And I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen." *That is the "tabernacle of David which is falle[n]" and after]wards he will arise to save Israel. [Italics indicate the commentary.]*

Though this text is not a *testimonia* list such as we have been discussing, it is not to be neglected, for it shows how a list of *testimonia* could be worked into a text by the Qumrân interpreters and so will provide illustrative material for parallel cases in the NT, especially in the Pauline literature. However, we must await the full publication of the text before a final judgment can be given about its character. That is why we said earlier that it is only probable that three lists of *testimonia* are extant.

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 4Q TESTIMONIA

The first question that must be answered with regard to the 4Q Testimonia text is, "Is it really a collection of *testimonia*?" If a doubt arises about Allegro's identification, it is because of the last section, quoted from the 4Q Psalms of Joshua. Until we see the other fragments of this work, we cannot be sure about its character. Allegro admits that the part here quoted has no messianic import. There is, of course, no reason why all the texts must have it, for we are not sure of the reason why they were so compiled. Hence, the presence of such a text in the list does not prevent it from being a collection of *testimonia*. Yet its presence is peculiar, even though we do admit that its incorporation in such a list can be compared to the NT use of extra-canonical works like Enoch (see Jude 14).<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Allegro, *art. cit.* (supra n. 1) p. 176. For its significance, see R. E. Brown, "The Messianism of Qumrân," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 19 (1957) 79-81.

<sup>64</sup> N. Wieder, "Notes on the New Documents from the Fourth Cave of Qumran," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 7 (1956) 75-76, thinks that rabbinical haggadah may help solve the riddle of the relationship between the first three *testimonia* and the final section. The rabbis regarded the story of Hiel (1 K 16:34), to which the last passage refers, as testimony to the truth of the biblical prophecies of Joshua.

Moreover, the first section quoted in this text comes from Dt 5:28–29, which de facto has no more messianic import than the 4Q Psalms of Joshua. But it is closely joined to Dt 18:18–19 in the first paragraph (note the paragraph dividers on the plate published by Allegro). Msgr. P. W. Skehan is quoted as saying that "the combination of Dt 18:18–19 with Dt 5:28–29 is already found in the Samaritan Pentateuch at Ex 20:21."<sup>65</sup> This fact likewise explains the first few words of the fragment, *wydb̄r : : : ʾl mōšh ʾmwr*, "And (Yahweh) spoke to Moses saying." They differ from the introductory formula of Dt 5:28, *wyʾmr yhw̄h ʾly*, which Allegro thinks has been changed "for the purpose of the Testimonia selection."<sup>66</sup> As a matter of fact, the introductory phrase found in 4Q Testimonia is identical with that used in the Samaritan Hebrew Pentateuch at Ex 20:21b; it reads *wydb̄r yhw̄h ʾl mōšh ʾmwr*.<sup>67</sup> That there is some connection here between this text and the Samaritan Pentateuch is obvious, even though we have not yet discovered just what it is. At any rate, the close joining of the two passages of Deuteronomy in one paragraph shows that they were regarded as a unit, which ends with the promise of a prophet to come.

The promise of a prophet, a successor to Moses, in the first paragraph, followed by the Oracle of Balaam in the second, and the Blessing of Moses (Jacob) accorded to Levi in the third, presents a sequence that can only be described as a collection of *testimonia* used in Qumrān theological circles. Nm 24:17 must have enjoyed a certain favor in these circles, for it is quoted once in the War Scroll (*IQM* 11:6) and once in the Damascus Document (*CD* 7:19–20).<sup>68</sup> If, then, the identification of this text as a list of *testimonia* compiled in view of Qumrān theology is rejected, we have a right to ask for a better explanation of the text.

Accepting, then, the identification of this text as most likely a collection of *testimonia*, we ask what light it sheds on the problem of *testimonia* in NT study. The particular sequence of texts found in 4Q

<sup>65</sup> See Brown, *art. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>66</sup> Allegro, *art. cit.* (supra n. 1) p. 182, note 48.

<sup>67</sup> A. von Gall, *Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner* (Giessen, 1918) p. 159. Cf. H. Petermann, *Pentateuchus Samaritanus*, fasc. 2: Exodus (Berlin, 1882) p. 189: *wml̄l yhw̄h ʿm mōšh ʾmwr*.

<sup>68</sup> See J. Carmignac, "Les citations de l'Ancien Testament dans 'La guerre des fils de lumière contre les fils de ténèbres,'" *Revue biblique* 63 (1956) 237–39.

Testimonia and in the Roberts Papyrus does not agree with any of the *NT* or patristic composite citations. In fact, one of the striking features about the whole problem of the *testimonia* is that there are very few composite citations that are repeated in the various *NT* or patristic writers. Even the sequence of Is 28:16, Ps 117/8:22, Is 8:14 (found in Mt 21:42, Rom 9:33, 1 Pt 2:6–8, and *Ep. Barn.* 6,2,4) appears with such differences and omissions that it would be hard to establish that they all came from one collection.<sup>69</sup> Such a fact should not be lost sight of.

On the other hand, we do have in 4Q Testimonia a collection of *OT* passages strung together in a way that resembles the composite citations of the *NT*. If we are right in thinking that 4Q Florilegium is related to the *testimonia*, then we have a concrete example of how *testimonia* were worked into the text of a Sectarian writing. This use of *OT* citations will illustrate the Pauline usage of *OT* quotations with intervening comments.<sup>70</sup> If the hypothesis of *testimonia* lists had been excogitated to explain the existence of the Roberts Papyrus and the 4Q Testimonia (and Florilegium), we might have reason to suspect it. But most of the discussion antedates the publication of these documents, which, in turn, confirm the existence of such collections. One can now point to 4Q Testimonia to answer Michel's objection, "Es fehlt jede Spur spätjüdischer Florilegien." For this text from the fourth cave at Qumrân bears witness to the existence of such a literary procedure in late Judaism. Moreover, both Dodd and Stendahl will have to alter their views slightly. While the collections of *testimonia* that are found in patristic writers might be regarded as the result of early Christian catechetical and missionary activity, 4Q Testimonia shows that the stringing together of *OT* texts from various books was a pre-Christian literary procedure, which may well have been imitated in the early stage of the formation of the *NT*. It resembles so strongly the composite citations of the *NT* writers that it is difficult not to admit that *testimonia* influenced certain parts of the *NT*.

Even if we have not uncovered in these texts any exact parallel for

<sup>69</sup> Harris, *op. cit.*, 1, 26–32, makes much of this example. Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. 26, comments: "Indeed striking, but it is almost the only one of its kind." Stendahl, *op. cit.*, p. 212, thinks that it is rather "a *verbum Christi*," which served as the "nucleus for the later formation of the testimony."

<sup>70</sup> See the texts listed *supra* n. 25.

the sequences of *OT* passages cited in the *NT*, it is not without significance that the extant *testimonia*, especially those of Qumrân, contain passages which are quoted in the *NT*—outside of composite quotations. Dt 18:18–19 is used in Acts 3:23; 7:37; 2 S 7:11–14 in 2 Cor 6:18; Jn 7:42; Heb 1:5 (in a composite quotation); Amos 9:11 in Acts 15:16. Like the early Christian Church, the sect of Qumrân had favorite texts of the *OT*. From what we have already learned about Qumrân theology, it is not surprising that many of these texts are the same as those in the *NT*. Given the use of similar texts and given a similar way of handling *OT* texts, we must conclude that the 4Q Testimonia document is an important discovery for our understanding of the formation of the *NT*.

Stendahl's study of the quotations in Matthew is a careful comparison of the passages cited with the various Greek and Hebrew texts and versions of the *OT*. He has convincingly shown that the formula quotations in Mt depend much more on the LXX than was previously thought.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, recently published preliminary reports about the Qumrân biblical texts indicate that we shall have to revise some of the notions commonly held about the relation of the LXX to the MT. Fragments from Cave 4 have revealed a Hebrew text of various biblical books that support the readings of the LXX against those of the MT.<sup>72</sup> The text tradition of the LXX must be taken seriously

<sup>71</sup> An extensive criticism of Stendahl's book can be found in B. Gärtner, "The Habakkuk Commentary (DSH) and the Gospel of Matthew," *Studia theologica* 8 (1954) 1–24. He questions Stendahl's interpretation of the double readings in the Habakkuk *peshet*, which led him to maintain that the *OT* text found in DSH was not known outside this commentary. Utilizing a fragment of a Greek translation of Habakkuk, found in the Judean desert and published by D. Barthélemy, "Redécouverte d'un chaînon manquant de l'histoire de la Septante," *Revue biblique* 60 (1953) 18–29, Gärtner has convincingly shown that "in three passages where DSH offers a reading differing significantly from the MT, the Greek version agrees with DSH. . . . Similarly on a number of other points it seems to me that the Greek version gives evidence that the sect had its own peculiar tradition of the text of the Minor Prophets" (p. 5). Consequently, "one may ask whether the sect in general had knowledge of what we call the MT to the Minor Prophets" (p. 6). If this is so, then there is no basis for Stendahl's contention that the sect deliberately altered the text according to its theological interpretations. Gärtner also criticizes Stendahl's use of the term *peshet* to designate the type of quotation that would have been produced by the school of St. Matthew. He shows that the manner of citation in Matthew is quite different from that of the *peshet* on Habakkuk.

<sup>72</sup> See F. M. Cross, Jr., "A New Qumrân Biblical Fragment Related to the Original Hebrew Underlying the Septuagint," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*

and the differences between it and the MT can no longer be written off merely as "free" translations or as mistranslations. Theological opinions of the translators influenced their work at times, as is well known, but outside of such areas where this is obvious or proven, the LXX should be regarded as a witness of a different Hebrew recension, when it does not agree completely with the MT. The discrepancy in readings, however, between the LXX and the MT varies in value according to the OT book under discussion.<sup>73</sup>

The Qumrân discoveries have brought to light Hebrew recensions, differing from the MT, which were in use in Palestine in the last centuries B.C. and in the first A.D. It is possible that such recensions influenced also the NT.<sup>74</sup> If readings from the OT were taken from Hebrew texts of this sort—often betraying a "Septuagintal tendency"—and were incorporated into lists of *testimonia*, this could explain the different textual tradition that sometimes appears in the quotations in the NT. As for the formula quotations, which as a group are closer to the Hebrew than to the LXX, when compared with the "liturgical" type of quotations, it may be that the "Septuagintal tendency" that Sten-dahl has found in them is due to dependence on a Hebrew text with

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132 (1953) 15–26; Moshe Greenberg, "Stabilization of the Text of the Hebrew Bible, Reviewed in the Light of the Biblical Materials from the Judean Desert," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 76 (1956) 157–67.

<sup>73</sup> See F. M. Cross, Jr., "The Scrolls and the Old Testament," *Christian Century*, Aug. 10, 1955, 920–21; P. Katz, "Septuagintal Studies in the Mid-Century," in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology: Studies in Honour of C. H. Dodd* (Cambridge, 1956) pp. 200–208.

<sup>74</sup> A text of Exodus from Qumrân Cave 4 (4QEx<sup>a</sup>) reads *hms wšb'ym npš wymt*, thus confirming the LXX version of Ex 1:5, which has *pente kai hebdomekonta eteleutēsan*, whereas the MT mentions only "seventy" persons. Acts 7:14, however, mentions "seventy-five"; see *Revue biblique* 63 (1956) 56. Heb 1:6 quotes Dt 32:43, agreeing with the LXX against the MT; a text from 4Q now confirms the reading in the LXX and Hebrews: *whšthrw lw kl ʾlhym*; see P. W. Skehan, in *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 136 (1954) 12–15. Allegro, *art. cit.* (supra n. 1) p. 176, note 25, seems to think that Amos 9:11, which is quoted in 4Q Florilegium and in CD 7:16, is "in the form offered by . . . Acts 15:16, against MT and LXX." The MT has *ʾqym*; 4Q Florilegium and the Damascus Document have *whqymwty*, a waw-conversive perfect instead of the imperfect. This is supposed to reflect a text tradition preserved in Acts by *kai anoikodomēsō*; see C. Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents* (Oxford, 1954) p. 29, whom Allegro quotes. This interpretation is certainly possible, but there is just a chance that too much is being derived from the form of the waw-conversive perfect. Actually the LXX reads *anastēsō*, a form that is certainly closer in meaning to *qwm*, used by both the MT and the 4Q Florilegium, than is the *anoikodomēsō* of Acts.



such a tendency, such as we know existed in Palestine at the beginning of our era. It should be noted that Allegro has emphasized the "Septuagintal tendency of the text tradition used by the compiler of 4Q [Testimonia]." <sup>75</sup> But the further publication of the 4Q biblical fragments must be awaited before this aspect of the problem can be pursued.

In conclusion, the text of 4Q Testimonia furnishes pre-Christian evidence of a literary process that led to the use of composite quotations in the *NT* and thus supports the hypothesis of *testimonia*. The discovery of this text thus confirms the opinion of Vollmer that Hebrew collections of *OT* passages did exist among the Jews before the time of Christ. This discovery, however, does not invalidate the views of C. H. Dodd about the use of *OT* contexts among early Christian writers and teachers. But it is not possible to regard the use of *testimonia* as the final term of such a development, as Dodd has suggested. Nor does it rule out the activity of a "School of St. Matthew," as postulated by K. Stendahl, but the activity of that school will have to be explained otherwise. While we would not go so far as to say with Allegro that "this *testimonia* document from Qumrân is one of the most important of the works found," <sup>76</sup> it is true that it throws new light on an old problem.

<sup>75</sup> Allegro, *art. cit.* (supra n. 1) p. 186, note 107. In Dt 18:19 the word *lmby*, "the prophet," is found in the 4Q text, in the LXX, and in the citation used in Acts 3:23, but it is missing in the MT. In Dt 33:8 the LXX and 4Q Testimonia read, "Give to Levi," which is not found in the MT.

<sup>76</sup> J. M. Allegro, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (Harmondsworth, 1956) p. 139.



# Diatessaronic Witnesses Preserve the Earliest Text of John's Gospel

## Four Versions of Turning Water Into Wine (John 2:1-11)

by Yuri Kuchinsky

In this article I will compare four versions of that famous incident of Jesus turning water into wine -- the canonical version, the Magdalene Gospel version, and also the two very interesting versions as found in the Dutch Diatessaron (the Liege Gospel), and in the Persian Diatessaron. These comparisons will establish quite clearly that these three Diatessaronic texts share a large number of textual parallels against the canonical text. And, in turn, this seems to indicate that these similarities go back to very ancient times indeed. In my view, in so far as these three medieval texts all agree with each other, these agreements point to the passages where the most primitive text of this part of John's Gospel is now identified.

Below, you can see four versions of this story side by side, in 4 separate columns. Some words and passages are highlighted in 5 different colours, and this highlighting is explained further below.

<b>JOHN 2:1-11 (RSV)</b>	<b>MAGDALENE GOSPEL Chapter 10 # How Jesus Made Wine Out Of Water</b>	<b>THE LIEGE DIATESSARON (D. Plooij, ed., Amsterdam, 1929- 1970, pp. 99-103)</b>	<b>THE PERSIAN DIATESSARON (G. Messina, ed., Rome, 1951, p. 47)</b>
1 On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; 2 Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples.	1 On the third day Jesus CAME TO Galilee, and was LED to a FEAST, with his disciples. And his mother was there.	One day there was a wedding feast in a city which was called Chana, in the land of Galilee, and there was Mary, Jesus' mother. Jesus and his disciples were also called	On the third day there was a wedding feast at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding feast.

		there to the feast.	
3 When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come."	2 And IT CAME TO PASS that THERE failed wine. 3 And his mother said to him that they had no wine. 4 And Jesus said that the hour has not yet come THAT [he] SHOULD SHOW HIS POWER.	(1) It happened at this wedding that (2) there lacked wine. Then Jesus' mother spoke to him and said, "They lack wine". And Jesus answered her, "Woman, what have I in common with thee? Mine hour is not yet come". [...]	The wine was running out. The mother of Jesus said, "They have no wine." He said, (3) "WHY DO YOU SAY THIS, MOTHER? The time has not yet come."
5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons (metretas duo he treis).	5 And then his mother said to the servants that they should do all that he tells them to do. 6 Now, there were six jars that the GOOD MAN AND ALL THE MEN WASHED FROM, each MEASURING THREE GALLONS.	Then his mother spoke to those that were serving there and said, "Whatever he says to you, do that". There stood six stone jars, which had been set there after the manner of the Jews, who (5) used to do their purification in such vessels. Those held as much as (6) two or three measures.	The mother said to the servants, "Whatever he tells you, do it." And there were six stone jars there, that they had placed there for the ablutions of the Jews, each holding (6) two or three measures. And the people were seated in the banquet room.
7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast (architriklinos)." So they took it. 9 When the steward of the feast tasted	7 And Jesus told them that they should fill them full of water. 8 And they filled them full RIGHT AWAY. 9 And Jesus told them to take THEM UP, AND TO CARRY THEM TO HIM WHO WAS THE CHIEF OF THE	Then Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water". And they did so, and filled them to the brim. "Now scoop and (8) carry it to (9) the master of the house", and they did so. And when the master of the house tasted of the wine that had been made	Jesus said to them, "Fill these jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. (7: OMIT "DRAW SOME OUT") "And give [this] to (9) the head of the assembly." They (8) carried and gave [this] to the head of the assembly. He tasted

the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn [entlekotes] the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom (nymphion) 10 and said to him,	FEAST. 10 And they took THEM UP, AND CARRIED THEM OVER. 11 And as soon as THE GOOD MAN had drank thereof, he CALLED the BUTLER, and said to him,	of water, and knew not how it had happened, (but the servants knew it well, who had filled the jars with water), the master of the house (10) asked for the bridegroom and said to him thus,	the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the mixers who had filled the [jugs with] water knew). The head of the assembly (10) called the bridegroom, and says to him,
"Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely (methistosin), then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." 11 This, the first of his signs (semeion), Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory (doxan); and his disciples believed in him.	"Every WISE man serves the BEST wine first, and when men are [already] drunk, then HE SERVES the one that is NOT AS GOOD. 12 And you have kept the BEST wine even until now." 13 This WAS the first MIRACLE that Jesus did. 14 And BECAUSE OF THAT his disciples believed in him.	"Every man is wont to give first the (11) best wine, and after that, when they have drunk of this, (12) he gives wine of his which is weaker. But thou has kept thy (13) best wine until now". This (14) was one of the first (15) miracles that Jesus did in Chana of Galilee, and there he revealed his divine (4) power. And (16) therewith his disciples were strengthened in the faith.	Every man brings out the good wine first; when men have drunk freely, then he (12) brings out inferior wine. You have kept the good wine until now." This (14) was the first (15) miracle, that Jesus did in Cana in Galilee, and [he] manifested the (4) power of God; and his disciples believed in him.

In the Table above, the Magdalene Gospel Special Material is printed in CAPITAL LETTERS (these are the phrases in the Magdalene text that are not found in the canonical John). The 16 special parallels that the Magdalene Gospel shows with the other two Diatessaronic witnesses (with either or both of them) are all numbered *according to their order in the Magdalene text*, and then are commented upon later on.

The passages in the canonical text that are not found in the Magdalene Gospel are coloured yellow ochre.

In the passages that are coloured blue, all 3 Diatessaronic witnesses agree against the Greek and the Latin Vulgate text.

The passages that are coloured green indicate the agreements between the Magdalene Gospel and the Dutch Diatessaron.

The two passages in the Persian DT that are parallel to the Magdalene Gospel are coloured yellow.

Two agreements between the Dutch and the Persian Diatessarons are coloured fuchsia red.

## THE PROBLEMS WITH THE CANONICAL JOHN

First, let's try to examine the canonical version objectively. Of course, for many of us, it's a very familiar text, so we tend not to see the textual problems there. And yet, there are some big problems there, for sure -- immense problems of interpretation, that the scholars have been arguing about literally for ages. For example,

1. Why is Jesus being so rude to his mother, apparently gratuitously so?
2. Why are these water jugs so huge -- they seem to be more like water cisterns! How long would it take to fill all six of these up with water? There seems to be a distinctive lack of realism in the canonical version of this story.
3. But the biggest interpretative problem in the canonical text is what can be described as the "Mystery of the *Architriklinos*" -- which RSV translates as "steward of the feast". Who is this "steward", what exactly is his social status, and why is he ordering about even the *bridegroom*, of all people? This seems totally Imponderable, and all the commentators seem to be stumped by this...

Well, now it turns out that our three Diatessaronic versions, taken together, and especially the Magdalene version, solve these three mysteries easily enough.

Of course, I believe that the Magdalene Gospel version of this story is the most primitive of them all. This is based, among other things, on my detailed study of great many other passages in this gospel -- and a large number of these analyses are now

published in my new book. So this is why I will now start my analysis with the direct comparison between the Magdalene text and the canonical John. And later, I will introduce the two other Diatessaronic witnesses, and analyse all the agreements between them and the Magdalene Gospel -- altogether, they are 16 in number.

## THE MAGDALENE TEXT COMPARED TO THE CANONICAL VERSION

As we can see, the Magdalene and the canonical versions are very similar in length (221 words vs. 215 words, if we compare the modern English translations). There's a lot of shared material there, as well as some seeming expansions, although these expansions tend to be quite different in the two versions.

One of the biggest and the most striking differences in the Magdalene Gospel (MG) is that, in this text, this is not a wedding, and it's not taking place at Cana. So this is just a feast that Jesus has been invited to.

Also, the harsh words that Jesus uses in the canonical version to address his mother are absent in MG. As we can see above, in the Persian version the words of Jesus to his mother are different from all other versions -- and yet there's a clear parallel there with MG, because both in MG and in the Persian Diatessaron (DT) there's not a hint of rudeness there.

The size of the water jugs is also different, of course, however is this to be explained. In MG 10:6, they are 3 gallons, while in the canonical Jn 2:6 they are "20 or 30 gallons". Normally, this more modest size of these jugs should be counted as an indicator of primitivity for the Magdalene version. This basic parallel is also shared by the other two of our Diatessaronic witnesses (although, as we will see later, there are some minor differences there as well between them).

In connection with this, also to be noted is the detail that, in MG, the servants take the jugs together with the wine to be tasted by the "chief of the feast", while, in the canonical Jn, only some wine is taken to be tasted. And the same thing as in MG also seems to be happening in the Persian DT. This indicates that the smaller size of the jugs is an integral part of the narrative both in MG and in the Persian version, so this was not merely some sort of a manuscript mistake.

Another striking difference in MG is that it's the "chief of the feast" who is in charge of this whole affair, and not merely a "steward/headwaiter", like in the canonical Jn. The importance of this detail is that, as a result, in MG, the story appears to be a lot more coherent and logical. Indeed, logically, how can it be that the "headwaiter" can chide the groom for keeping the best wine for the last? Shouldn't this be the other way around, since it is the headwaiter, himself, who should have normally been in charge

of the wine?

And so, in the Magdalene text it is indeed the "chief of the feast" who chides the butler/headwaiter for keeping the best wine until later. (Of course, since in MG the feast is not a wedding, there is no "groom" involved in this story at all.) And, very importantly, this higher social status for this gentleman is also supported by both the Dutch and the Persian texts.

So now, let's take a look at the other two Diatessaronic witnesses.

### THE DUTCH DIATESSARON (the Liege Gospel)

The English translation, as used here, is reprinted from the D. Plooij edition (*Koninklijke Akademie Wetenschappente* [the Proceedings of the Royal Dutch Academy], vol. 31, Amsterdam, 1929-1970, pp. 99-103)

This medieval Dutch Gospel is certainly a lot better studied, compared to the Magdalene Gospel. The manuscript, itself, dates to the 13th century, and it exists in one copy only. Also, this was of course the text that WL Petersen has extensively compared with the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew (Howard's text), and found lots of special and sometimes unique parallels between the two.

In his time, Dr. Daniel Plooij, a highly respected New Testament scholar, has done a very detailed study of every passage in this very special medieval text (that is generally considered as a great classic of early Dutch literature). He also compared it with great many other ancient and medieval biblical witnesses, in all sorts of languages, and found huge numbers of parallels there -- probably thousands of them! And Plooij also used the Magdalene Gospel very extensively in his textual comparisons (usually for those passages where MG agrees either with the Liege Gospel, or with some other important ancient witnesses). Yet, alas, his monumental work is almost completely forgotten at this time.

Still, the Liege Diatessaron is a fully recognised biblical witness, and it is included in the apparatus of the standard Nestle-Aland Greek gospels. Two English translations of this medieval Dutch text have been published.

The parallels between the Magdalene Gospel and the Liege in John 2:1-11 are 14 in number (including 8 triple parallels between all three of our Diatessaronic witnesses). It looks like these 14 parallels happen to come from a common Latin source, which was most likely an Old Latin Diatessaron, now lost, that, in turn, was probably based on a previous Semitic language Diatessaron -- either in Aramaic or Hebrew.



## THE PERSIAN DIATESSARON

The Persian Diatessaron, just like the other two of our Diatessaronic witnesses, also exists in one copy only (located in Florence, Italy). It was edited and translated into Italian by G. Messina (DIATESSARON PERSIANO, ed. G. Messina, "Biblica et Orientalia" 14, Rome, 1951; the translation from the Italian is mine). The Persian text is dated in the year of 1547, but this seems to be a translation from the Old Syriac Aramaic, as prepared in the 13th century by a Jacobite priest (see Petersen, TATIAN'S DIATESSARON, 1994, p. 260). Petersen finds that there is "frequent recourse" there to the readings of the Old Syriac. Also, according to Petersen,

"Messina noticed that the Persian Harmony's text contained an exceptional number of Semitisms." (Petersen 1994:260)

In my view, the parallels between the Magdalene Gospel and the Persian Diatessaron, 10 in number, are the most interesting. So here we have this extremely fascinating fact that a very obscure medieval English gospel shows some unique and remarkable parallels with a very obscure medieval gospel from Persia. How do we explain this? The explanation that I have already suggested seems like the best and the simplest of them all -- these similarities are resulting from a common dependence of these two texts on a very ancient Semitic language text of John's Gospel, that dated back before our common Greek text.

As I say, it's widely believed that the Persian Diatessaron derives from the still more ancient Aramaic (Syriac) Diatessaron, which is also plentifully attested otherwise in various other ancient texts. And it is also important to note that the Old Syriac, the language of that ancient Diatessaron, is apparently the closest to the language that the Historical Jesus, himself, spoke.

It may seem strange that, in the whole history of biblical scholarship, nobody has realised any of this before. (But let's also keep in mind that the Persian Diatessaron had only been published for the first time in 1951. And the Magdalene Gospel had only been published for the first time in 1922.) But there doesn't really seem to be any other explanation -- or at least any better explanation -- for these unusual textual agreements. Also, considering just how neglected the Diatessaronic field is at this time, and seeing just how few scholars are currently working in it, these things shouldn't really be all that surprising...

Yet, nevertheless, as has been mentioned already, quite a few of these agreements *have* been noted in passing by D. Plooij. And one of them has also been noted by G. Quispel, another highly respected New Testament scholar (Quispel, TATIAN AND

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS, 1975, p. 169). And, even more importantly, both these scholars have also noted some additional very important parallels for these passages with various ancient and medieval biblical texts -- which happens to provide some good supporting evidence for my own analysis. But neither Plooij nor Quispel developed this evidence further, in the same way as I'm doing now.

## THE ANALYSIS OF ALL 16 PARALLELS

So now, let us examine all these 16 parallels in sequence, as they are found in the text of the Magdalene Gospel.

#1

MG: And IT CAME TO PASS

LIEGE DT: It happened at this wedding

This expression, "it came to pass", seems like a very conventional turn of phrase as used by the traditional storytellers. It looks like this may have been quite a primitive detail. It's missing in the Persian, so in this passage the Persian text was probably later abridged.

#2

MG: that THERE failed wine

LIEGE DT: that there lacked wine

There is an exact parallel in the Dutch with the word "there". In his notes, Plooij does draw attention to this MG variant. And he also supplies a parallel for this in Ephrem the Syrian.

#3

This is a very important parallel between MG and the Persian (lacking in the Liege). While MG completely lacks the harsh words that Jesus says to his mother, as found in the canonical Greek Jn 2:4, the Persian DT includes some generally kind words instead.

#4

The word "power" is found in all three of our Diatessaronic texts, the Persian, MG, and the Dutch -- although this word is found in MG in connection with Jesus towards the beginning of the story, rather than at the end, like in the Persian and the Dutch Diatessarons. The word used in the canonical version here is "glory = doxas", which is quite a different word.

#5

MG: the GOOD MAN AND ALL THE MEN WASHED FROM  
LIEGE DT: the Jews, who used to do their purification

Although the parallel between MG and Liege is not exact here, still, these two expansions seem to be in parallel overall. The canonical version lacks any such details.

#6

The size of the jugs seems smaller in all 3 DT versions. There's a very close parallel here between the Dutch and the Persian. In connection with this, in his apparatus for the Dutch DT, Plooiij supplies the following Latin version as found in Zacharias Chrysopolitanus, "*binae vel ternae mensurae*".

The canonical Greek has "*metretas duo he treis*" here. "*Metron*" is an ancient unit of measure, equivalent to about 9 gallons, and so RSV here translates this as "twenty or thirty gallons". But the Diatessaronic texts have "*mensurae*" rather than "*metretas*".

#7

Just like MG, the Persian omits "Now draw some out". This seems to imply that, just like in MG, rather than just a sampling of the wine, the jugs themselves are being carried over to be tasted by the "head of the assembly" (since they are smaller and more portable). Also, see my comments about this above.

#8

MG: CARRY THEM (used twice in MG)  
LIEGE DT: carry it

A pretty close parallel here in all 3 of our DT witnesses with this specific word "to carry". In the canonical version, we find "to take".

#9

MG: THE CHIEF OF THE FEAST  
LIEGE DT: the master of the house  
PERSIAN DT: the head of the assembly

This is a very important parallel between all 3 of our DT witnesses. Its importance is in that it indicates that originally this gentleman was probably the most senior character in this whole story (besides Jesus). In my view, originally the scene was not a wedding, so it didn't yet have the "groom" in its early form.

The Greek word that is used here in the canonical John is ARCHITRIKLINOS, which seems to denote the fellow in charge of the TRICLINIUM, or a dining room (in the classical antiquity, this was usually a household slave). The Revised Standard

Version, which is generally preferred by the academic community, translates this as "steward". (Please see further the Appendices to this article in regard to the expressions "the good man", and ARCHITRIKLINOS.)

The Persian DT has "il capo dell'adunanza" here, which certainly seems more senior than a mere "steward".

But in the Dutch Diatessaron, this character is described as "the master of the house", which certainly conveys a much higher status than what we find in the Greek text. So, in my view, all three of these Diatessaronic witnesses taken together indicate that, in the original version of John's Gospel, this was the most senior person in the whole house.

And so, the social status of this character was probably reduced later, and he became an ARCHITRIKLINOS. As I see it, in the process of doing so, the "groom" had also been introduced into the story, and thus this whole scene was made into a wedding. Still, this editing job seems to have been rather clumsy overall, since this aspect of the story -- i.e. the precise relationship of the "steward" and the "bridegroom" -- seems pretty obscure, and is barely coherent as it stands now in the Greek text.

Plooij neglected this parallel between the Liege and MG in his notes.

#10

The past tense is used here in all three of our DT texts (CALLED the bridegroom), as opposed to the present tense in both Greek and Latin canonical versions. Normally, I wouldn't have picked up on such a small parallel, but Plooij also lists in his apparatus a whole range of additional support for this in the Syro-Latin tradition.

#11

MG: the BEST wine

LIEGE DT: the best wine

An exact parallel here between MG and Liege. Again, Plooij omits this parallel with MG in his notes. And yet he comments that the Liege version of this story does not really involve any drunkenness, as such. (In the Liege, this seems like one of those later encratic/ascetic expansions that the Diatessaron is believed to feature, as noted by numerous scholars.)

#12

The words "to bring out" are used twice, unlike in the canonical version. A very similar grammatical construction is found here in all 3 of our DT witnesses.

G. Quispel also lists some more witnesses for this repetition of "to bring out/to set

forth" in this verse, including the Arabic DT, and the following Latin version from Ludolph of Saxony, "*tunc apponit id quod deterius est*" (TATIAN AND THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS, 1975, p. 169).

Plooij missed this parallel in his apparatus.

#13

MG: the BEST wine

LIEGE DT: thy best wine

Again, an exact parallel in MG and Liege with the word "best". Not noted by Plooij.

#14

MG: This WAS

LIEGE DT: This was

PERSIAN DT: This was

Again, like in #1, we have a much simpler grammatical construction here, and this time it's found in all 3 of our DT witnesses. Such a turn of phrase seems more primitive than what we find in the canonical version.

Plooij does cite MG here, and also notes a number of additional parallels with some Old Latin mss.

#15

MG: MIRACLE

LIEGE DT: miracles

PERSIAN DT: miracle

This parallel seems quite important (not noted by Plooij). In my view, the original version of this story didn't yet have this rather odd word "sign".

In general, in the context of this narrative, I see "miracle" as earlier than "sign". Our Diatessaronic versions use the word "miracle" to describe this miracle that Jesus had performed, which is like calling things with their proper names. On the other hand, it would be a lot more difficult to explain why the original version here should have had "sign", and then, for some unknown reason, this would have been replaced with "miracle" in all 3 of our DT witnesses.

#16

MG: BECAUSE OF THAT

LIEGE DT: therewith

This parallel is pretty close (not noted by Plooij). Such a turn of phrase, i.e. saying that the disciples believed *because* of the miracle, seems quite simple, so this may well have been a feature of the original text of John.

So what would have been the reason for a later omission such as this in the canonical version? In my view, this was probably because of the thinking on the part of some late Johannine editors that Jesus' powers were in general so awesome that the disciples already knew him to be a diving being -- so they didn't need such simple materialistic proofs in order to believe.

(Please note that in the Dutch parallel the disciples are merely "strengthened in the faith" because of this miracle. In other words, they already had faith in Jesus before. So this would seem like a later adjustment in the Dutch, compared with MG.)

Thus, we have 14 parallels here between MG and the Dutch DT. And there are 10 parallels between MG and the Persian DT; 8 of them are also shared by the Dutch, at least to some extent.

## THE PARALLELS BETWEEN THE DUTCH AND THE PERSIAN TEXTS

And now let us look at the two very interesting parallels between the Dutch and the Persian Diatessarons.

First, there is a very clear parallel there in the phrase "but the servants who had *filled the jugs* with water knew". In the canonical version, it is,

"the servants who had *drawn the water* knew".

So, in Latin, this would be *hauserant*/to draw out against *impleverant*/to fill up.

This parallel is noted by Plooij in his apparatus. Of course he didn't yet know about the Persian DT when he produced his analysis, but he did note the parallels here between the Dutch DT and the Syriac, Arabic, Sahidic, and Bohairic versions -- a whole lot of them. And yet the Magdalene Gospel lacks this whole long passage, that seems like a later expansion.

Next, also we may note that both the Persian and the Liege DTs add some related expressions to the word "power". In the Persian text, Jesus "manifested the power of God". And in the Dutch DT, it is "*his divine power*".

So it seems like, compared to the Liege, the Persian DT sees Jesus more in a Jewish-Christian Ebionite sort of way. In other words, there's more of a leaning towards the low Christology in the Persian text.

The two parallels that are shared by MG and the Persian (#3 and #7) seem very primitive. The two parallels between the Persian and the Dutch DTs against MG generally seem less primitive. (Also, some other minor parallels of such a type may be found here and there).

In his notes, Plooij also cites plenty of other parallels between the Liege and various ancient sources, such as versions of Ephrem's COMMENTARY, a wide variety of gospel and Diatessaron manuscripts, Irenaeus, the COMMENTARY by Zacharias Chrysopolitanus, etc. To me, this indicates that the Liege DT is based on a version of Old Latin Diatessaron that had plenty of parallels with the texts that were quite common in the Ancient Near East. And yet, most likely, this was a more developed version of an Old Latin Diatessaron, compared to the one which served as the basis for the Magdalene Gospel.

MG is cited by Plooij very often indeed (perhaps hundreds of times) throughout this whole edition of the Dutch Diatessaron. And yet, as we have seen, he still misses plenty of other parallels between the Liege and MG.

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So, here we have the two basic versions, the canonical and the Diatessaronic. Indeed, many elements of the latter can be reconstructed fairly easily out of these 3 DT witnesses.

These close textual parallels between the Magdalene Gospel, and the Dutch and Persian Diatessarons seem to indicate that these three texts ultimately derive from some mysterious pre-canonical version of the Gospel of John. And similar comparisons can of course be made for the other three New Testament gospels.

So what does all of this mean, really? Quite simply, it looks like the more primitive text of the Gospel of John is now identified for the first time ever.

Now, of course, many people might say in reply, "Our canonical John is dated to the first century, and this DT stuff only goes back to the second" -- big deal...

Well, this is not quite how I see it and, realistically, this is not how this matter should be seen. Yes, indeed, this DT stuff does only go back to 150 CE or so (which is where I date the MG, although many of the underlying texts that went into its composition are probably considerably earlier). But it is *securely* dated to 150 CE. Meanwhile, the canonical version of this particular passage is only dated *securely* to the fourth century, which is when our main Gospel of John manuscripts, the *Sinaiticus*, and the *Vaticanus*, are dated.

To be sure, there's also the matter of the Papyrus 66 that needs to be considered in this general argument. As the textual scholars know, P66 is the earliest long text of John's Gospel that we now possess. It is generally dated to ca 200 CE (although E.G. Turner dates it to 200-250 CE; see Comfort and Barrett, *THE COMPLETE TEXT OF THE EARLIEST NT MANUSCRIPTS*, Baker, 1999, p. 367). But this text is rather problematic, because it contains a huge number of variants from the standard canonical text. For example, by my count, in our test passage of Jn 2:1-11, there are the whole 21 variations, although most of them rather minor, in P66.

In general, I see the canonical text of John acquiring its present form (more or less) around the time of Irenaeus (ca 200 CE). So even if we assume that our passage of Jn 2:1-11 can be securely dated to the time of Irenaeus, still, the Diatessaronic witnesses will have preserved the version that is earlier. Thus, who should really have the burden of proof here, as to trying to demonstrate which version of this particular passage is more primitive? *A priori*, whose text should be seen as being earlier?

But the clearest general argument for the primitivity of the Diatessaronic version of this passage is the argument based on the Syro-Latin agreements. Indeed, let me remind that my analysis has now identified 10 parallels between MG and the Persian DT in this passage. And since the Persian DT is believed to depend on an Old Syriac Diatessaron, this will make these agreements the Syro-Latin agreements.

Thus, if it is accepted that these textual agreements between MG and the Persian Diatessaron indeed fall into the category of Syro-Latin agreements, then they should precede the canonical Greek text. After all, great many eminent textual critics expressed the opinion that the Syro-Latin agreements tend to indicate the more primitive textual layer in NT gospels. Among these scholars are B.F. Westcott (1896), F.C. Burkitt (1899), E. Nestle (1901), A. Souter (1909), C.H. Turner (1928), and A. Voobus (1951). [More on this subject of Syro-Latin agreements [can be found here.](#)]

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## THE APPENDICES

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The original medieval English text of this narrative [can be found here.](#)

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### A NOTE ON "ARCHITRIKLINOS":

This seems like a very unusual word, because, in the form in which we find it in



John's Gospel, it has no clear attestation before the time when the gospel is believed to have been written. The earliest attestation outside John is found in Heliodorus, a writer who lived in the fourth or third century CE (*Aethiopica*, or "Ethiopian Romance" 7.27.7). According to some scholars, Heliodorus may have been a Christian bishop in Thessaly.

And yet the Latin author Petronius (1st century CE), in his famous novel THE SATYRICON, attests this word in a different form as *tricliniarches*.

According to C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 1955, p. 161, "[W]e lack Jewish evidence for any office corresponding to the title ARCHITRIKLINOS". And he further suggests that this may indicate a Hellenistic origin for this story. But, myself, I think there's no real need to locate this whole story in a Hellenistic milieu. Rather, I would simply suggest that this word alone may have been inserted during a later editing.

So, in my view, the original version of Jn 2:1-11 did not yet feature the figure of an ARCHITRIKLINOS. I suggest that this term was introduced by a later editor, in the process of a major re-editing of the whole story. In the original text, rather than ARCHITRIKLINOS, the story most likely featured "the master of the house", a figure with a significantly higher social standing. This is what the Diatessaronic texts indicate.

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## A NOTE ON THE "GOOD MAN":

In MG, the words "good man" (*gode man*) are mentioned twice in this story (MG 10:6a, and 10:11a). So it's clear that, in MG, this "good man" is basically identified with "the chief of the feast".

It seems like the underlying Latin expression here was *pater familias*, equivalent to *oikodespotes* in Greek, or "master of the house" in English.

The word *oikodespotes* is used in NT gospels 12 times, and its Vulgate Latin equivalent is almost always *pater familias*. (In Mk 14:14 only, the Latin equivalent is *domino domus*.) The Dutch Diatessaron uses the medieval Dutch word *hushere* in this passage, which has been translated in the Plooij edition as "the master of the house". (Unfortunately, in his textual commentary, Plooij doesn't consider this matter in any detail.) It's also quite interesting that KJV translates *oikodespotes* five times as "the goodman of the house".

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Go to [Part 2 of this study.](#)

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**94,194**