

THE GOSPEL HARMONY OF CLEMENT OF LLANTHONY

J. RENDEL HARRIS
MANCHESTER, ENGLAND

IT is well-known to scholars that the attempt to combine the four Gospels of the New Testament Canon into a single connected and consistent account has been a favourite occupation from the very earliest days of the Church. It is not easy to say how far the Harmonies which are still in existence are independent of one another; we can see at the beginning of the tradition of harmonised texts the suggestion of a pair of such harmonies, one of them the work of Tatian the Assyrian, the other of Ammonius the Alexandrian,¹ but we do not know whether these two are independent, nor can we say with any degree of confidence whether the celebrated Harmony which was made in the sixth century by Victor of Capua, and which is preserved in the beautiful Codex Fuldensis, is an Ammonian or a Tatianic product. It is one or the other, but the possibility is not excluded that they may be one and the same. We are sure, however, that most of the subsequent Latin Harmonies, as well as some of those in other languages such as Frankish or Dutch, are direct descendants from Victor. It was natural enough that scribes should not wish to repeat *ab initio* the task of arranging the four gospels into a story, just as it was natural that they should wish to have such a story, either for private study or for use as a church lectionary. There is, however, evidence that from time to time attempts were made

¹ Jerome has also something to say about a Harmony by Theophilus of Antioch.

to write the Fourfold Life of Christ afresh, and one of these attempts is a British product, known as the Harmony of Clement, of which many copies are extant in English libraries, though it has hardly had any attention paid to it by the scholars of the continent, where copies are almost unknown. It has more than one feature of interest. If we were only looking at it as one more Vulgate Harmony, we might put it on one side, as it could not possibly compete with the text of Victor of Capua, from which, indeed, it may ultimately be descended; yet even in that case it would be a monument of careful Biblical study in the British Isles, and the interest which it aroused was not confined to Llanthony Abbey, where it was produced, but it was carried to and copied in various monastic *scriptoria*, such as Glastonbury, Durham, and a number of centres in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. It is an index of a revival of the study of the Gospels. The text which was thus scattered over the various centres of learning in England and Wales was, at an early date, done bodily into English, and the tradition affirms that this translation was the work of Wiclif himself. That fact alone, if it can be securely established, would make the early English Harmony into a national monument. There is, however, another feature of interest about the Llanthony Harmony, which is of greater value for scholars. If we examine the existing copies of Clement's work, we shall find it in a finished form, accompanied by proper prologues and explanations of its method and use, and sometimes with an attached commentary, perhaps by another hand than that of the Harmonist, but there is not generally anything to indicate the way in which the writer went about his task. Suppose, however, we visit the Cathedral Library at Durham, where we shall find a huge volume containing (or, at least, based on) Clement's work; when we examine it, we shall see that it contains the Harmony in making as well as the Harmony made. First of all, an incident in the Gospel or a section of the Gospel is related in terms of the successive Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, or as many of them as contribute to the incident or the section in question. Then the writer works the four authors, or as many as there may be, into a single mosaic, marking each

group of words with the sign of its author. The result is the actual harmony. We can see it on the loom, we can watch the weaving. Now this is lost in the ordinary copies of the Clement Harmony, whose care was not to see how the Harmony was made, but to use it as made; but the process is of the first importance, not only for a right understanding of Clement, but because the artist is following a method which must have been that of the very first harmonists.

For consider how different is the task which lies before an early Christian harmonist, or a monastic harmonist of the middle ages, from what presents itself to a modern student who attempts to make for himself a Gospel Harmony. We should buy a couple of penny Testaments, and with scissors and paste cut out and re-arrange the Gospel story: but it would not be possible to do this with papyrus rolls in the second century or with vellum codices in the thirteenth century. *Transcription was a necessary preliminary to harmonization*; the accounts to be combined must be placed side by side, or one under the other, before the dovetailing and unification of the texts can be accomplished.

And, indeed, we have first-hand evidence that this was the case; for Eusebius tells us in his celebrated letter to Carpianus which stands at the beginning of so many Greek and Latin Gospels, that Ammonius of Alexandria put the Gospels side by side, and that he took the hint from Ammonius, when he made his celebrated table of harmonized Canons. We are not to infer that Ammonius did nothing more than indicate the parallel sections of the Four Evangelists, but we must realise that he, at least, did that; and if he had not done it, Tatian would have had to do it on his own account. Thus the story of the Diatessaron of Tatian is at once illuminated by the story of the Harmony of Clement of Llanthony.

And this is not all. Scholars will remember that the early Gospel texts, both Greek and Latin, contain a number of marginal figures, which form two series; one of them indicates the sequence of the particular gospel that one may be engaged on, as for instance, that we are looking at the 25th section of Luke, but under the 25 we see another figure, taken from

a series which runs from 1 to 10, which tells us, by a reference to ten tables made by Eusebius, that other evangelists have said the same thing as the 25th section, for example, of Luke.

Now, if one looks at the arrangement of Clement of Llanthony (and the arrangement of Ammonius must have been similar), we can see at a glance what other evangelists are involved in the forthcoming combination. Eusebius' arrangement of sections with numerical canons, follows at once from the grouping of the evangelical matter in each incident or section.

Thus the Clementine Harmony shows us the key to the manufacture of the original Diatessaron, whether that work is to be credited to Ammonius or Tatian or both.

So we repeat that the Llanthony Harmony, which we can watch in the making, or re-making, with the aid of the great manuscript at Durham, is of special interest, first to Englishmen, who honour Wiclif, and next to all Biblical Scholars, who want to solve the riddles of the original Diatessaron.

Now let us see whether we can get some closer idea of Clement's Harmony and determine whether it has any literary antecedents.

Here is the opening prologue to the Harmony as it is found in a Glastonbury MS. of the 14th century in the University Library at Cambridge (Dd. 1. 17):

"Clemens Lantoniensis ecclesiae presbiter n(ato) pacem otiumque. Hujus operis fili carissime causam requiris et fructum queris et qua fretus autoritate quatuor euangelistarum narrationes in unam contraxerim. Queris et tituli et ordinis rationem. Prima igitur, duo, causae scilicet, et fructus, licet circa idem versentur aliqua tandem distinctionis ratione dividi possunt. Causa enim est ut prae oculis habeam quae ab unoquoque quatuor evangelistarum sunt dicta, quae praetermissa, quae praeoccupata, quae et commemorata. Non enim omnes omnia dicunt, et quae dicunt non omnia secundum ordinem naturalem loco suo dicunt, sed quae posterius facta praeoccupant et quae ante facta postea commemorant."

"Unusquisque autem evangelistarum, ut ait beatus Augustinus, sic contexit narrationem suam ut tanquam nichil praetermittentis series digesta videatur, tacitis enim quae non vult dicere, sic ea quae vult dicere illis quae dicebat adiungit ut ipsa continuo sequi videantur. Sed cum alter ea dicit quae alter tacuit diligenter ordo consideratus indicat locum ubi ea potuerit a quo praetermissa sunt insilire, ut ea quae dicere intenderat ita superioribus copularet tanquam ipsa nullis interpositis sequerentur. Fructus autem huius operis triplex est: primus quod brevitatis compendium praestat, ea tamen quae singuli dicunt nulla brevitate contracta sunt; quae vero duo vel tres vel omnes certa abbreviacione restricta sunt: semel enim posita sunt, addito autem quicquid quilibet eorum praeter ceteros apponit: secundus, quia concordiam quatuor evangelistarum demonstrat, nec autem alium alii confert quo dissidentes vel concordantes appareant: sed loca quae contraria et sibi repugnantia simul ponit ut ex hoc diligenti inquisitori non esse dissidenciam innotescat: tertius, quia ordinem rerum gestarum declarat ut in seriem ipsorum evangeliorum per hanc distinctionem facilius intelligencie aditus pateat et evangelicae ordinationis ratio clarius elucescat. Sed ne simplicitatem meam tanquam de presumptae novitatis nota cuiuspiam temeritas arguere praesumat, *agat pro me (inquit) Eusebius Cesariensis episcopus qui Am'm'onium Alexandrinum qui usibus ecclesiae unum pro quatuor evangelis dereliquit studium atque industriam super hoc probat, seseque accepta occasione ex eiusdem viri studio evangelicorum canonum titulos ordinasse testatur.* Agat et Augustinus pro me qui in libro de concordia quatuor evangelistarum in huiusmodi studium et inchoandi initia praestat modumque procedendi demonstrat et perficiendi facultatem sumministrat. Ratio tituli ex supradictis patet. Ordo aut necessitatis est aut commoditatis aut rationis. Necessitas cogit, commoditas aptat, ratio narrationis ordinem non demutat."

After this follows a capitulation of the twelve parts into which the work of Clement is divided. These capitulations are also in the Durham Harmony. But now an important difference comes to light between the Glastonbury and Durham texts. The foregoing preface is, apparently, Clement's

own. No such preface is in the Durham Ms: but the portion which we have underlined is introduced as from Clement in the following manner:

"Sic enim fere per omnia procedit Clemens; et si queratur a me qua auctoritate quo et fine vel utilitate hoc fecerim ad primum respondeo cum Clemente, 'Agat' inquit, 'pro me Eusebius etc.,'" as underlined in the text.

It follows that the Durham Ms. is not Clement at all, but some later follower of his who has used his work. Clement in the first person has disappeared: Clement in the third person has taken his place. It is generally held, on the authority of Leland and others, that the Redactor of Clement's work is William of Nottingham, who was at the head of the Franciscan order in England in the middle of the 13th. century. What we want to know is the amount of change that William of Nottingham introduced into the text and the arrangement of Clement's Harmony. His commentary upon the text is a secondary matter.

One of the first things we notice is that he has inserted into his text, in the large missal hand with which the Biblical text is dignified for the major part of the Ms., the historical notices for the four Evangelists, when they first come on the scene. These are not peculiar in themselves; but, in the Harmony of Zachary of Chrysopolis, they constitute the second of the Prefaces to the Harmony; so the question arises whether the Redactor is acquainted with Zachary, whose Harmony belongs to nearly the same date as is assigned to Clement.

The answer is in the affirmative. In transcribing Clement's final arrangement of the text, he frequently draws a parallel between Clement's results and those of Ammonius and Zachary. Ammonius is the mediaeval name for the Harmony of Victor of Capua, and for Mss. based on Victor. So the Redactor has been comparing Clement with Victor (i. e. ultimately Tatian) and Zachary (who is also ultimately Tatian). For instance the account of John the Baptist is prefaced by the separate passages from Mt., Mark and Luke, and then the harmonized passage is introduced by the words

"His visis: Clemens ex omnibus praedictis
talem facit continuationem":

and the following comment is made

"Compendiose scribunt tam Matthaeus quam Marcus:
hoc modo continuavit tam Ammonius quam Zacharias."

This means that, as far as the text of this section goes the sequence is the same in Victor, Zachary and Clement. The only difference between the three at this point is that Clement has written out at length the passages of the Gospels which he is going to combine. This is one of the most important features of the Durham Ms. We do not know of a similar feature in any Gospel Harmony of the mediaeval period: it is easy to see that, if it is a part of the original Clement, it would be promptly discarded by transcribers, for who would want to take the mosaic to pieces again when it had once been made into a unity? and if it is difficult to believe that such a piece of literary scaffolding would remain after the building had been finished, it is still more difficult to believe that any later artist would restore the scaffolding after it had been taken down.

This, then, will be the chief value of the Durham Ms., in that it shows us Clement at work in the first stage of his harmonisation. The separate sections of the Gospels are co-eval with the Harmony.

The question is at once raised whether it may not be the case that the scaffolding and the building are alike to be traced, at least in part, to an earlier period than Clement himself. In the case of Zachary of Chrysopolis, for instance, we can see that his text is really the Vulgate text of Victor, broken up into convenient portions for commentary; indeed it is difficult to believe that any monk in the middle ages did all the work of harmonisation of the Gospels over again, when he had, on the one hand, the work of Victor of Capua, and on the other the treatise of Augustine, *De Consensu Evangelistarum*.

Now let us take a specimen section of Clement's work from the Glastonbury Ms. and compare it with the text of Victor,

with the Arabic text of Tatian's Harmony and, of course, with the Durham Ms. We have as follows:

Capitulum secundum: m^r 1^o: mathei 3^o lucae 3^o (m^r)
Fuit Johannes. m^t baptista. m^r baptizans et. m^t in deserto judeae dicens. penitentiam agite. appropinquavit enim regnum celorum. l. et venit in omnem regionem Jordanis. predicans baptismum penitentiae in remissionem peccatorum.²

mt. Hic est enim qui dictus est per Ysaïam prophetam: dicentem, Vox clamantis in deserto: parate viam domini, rectas facite semitas ejus. l. Omnis vallis implebitur,³ et erunt prava in directa et aspera in vias planas et videbit omnis caro salutare dei.⁴

mt. Ipse autem Johannes habebat vestimentum de pilis camelorum et zonam pelliceam circa lumbos suos. Esca autem ejus erat locustae et mel silvestre. Tunc exiebat ad eum Jerosoluma et omnis Judaea et omnis regio circa Jordanem et baptizabantur in Jordane. m^r flumine⁵ m^t. ab eo confitentes peccata sua. Videns autem multos pharisaeorum et saducaeorum venientes ad baptismum suum dixit eis, Progenies viperarum quis demonstrabit vobis fugere a ventura⁶ ira.

Facite ergo fructum dignum penitentiae, et ne velitis dicere intra vos, Patrem habemus Abraham. Dico enim vobis quia potens est Deus de lapidibus istis suscitare filios Abrahae. Jam enim securis ad radicem arboris posita est. Omnis ergo arbor qui non fecit fructum bonum excidetur et in ignem mittetur.⁷

² The Codex Fuldensis of Victor and the Arabic Harmony of Tatian put this sentence of Luke before Matthew (*dicens*).

³ A line appears to have been lost here.

⁴ At this point Fuld. and Tat^{arab} insert Joh. 17-18 and Tat. goes on with Joh. 119-28. The Durham Ms. inserts Joh. 115-18.

⁵ Not in the Fuldensis.

⁶ Dunelm: *futura*: and so Fuldensis.

⁷ Here Dunelm recites after Mt. 31-10 *ut supra* Mc. 15-6 and Luc. 37-9, but the three passages are not harmonized; and then Luc 310-14 as here and in Fuldensis.

l. et interrogabant eum turbae dicentes, Quid ergo faciemus? Respondens autem dicebat illis. Qui habet duas tunicas det non habenti, et qui habet escas similiter faciat. Venerunt autem et publicani ut baptizarentur et dixerunt ad illum, Magister. Quid faciemus. At ille dixit ad eos: Nichil amplius quam quod constitutum est vobis faciatis. Interrogabant eum et milites, dicentes: Quid faciemus et nos? Et ait illis: Nemini concutiat, neque calumpniam faciatis et contenti estote stipendiis vestris.

It will be seen that the traditions of the various harmonies are not quite concurrent, so that we must not draw conclusions too rapidly. One thing is, however, quite clear; each evangelist is credited with what belongs to him: when we diverge from Matthew into Mark or Luke, the text says so, and when return is made from Mark, Luke or John to Matthew, the return is marked. Thus we have the series of inserted initials in Clement, in the Fuldensis and in the Arabic Tatian. The same thing is true of the Harmony of Zachary, if we may judge from the occasional survivals of the inserted initials in the printed text: for instance, take the following sequence: (Migne. PL 186 col. 164)

M⁹⁴ R⁸⁶ L⁸⁷ et¹⁴⁶

Qui autem negaverit me coram hominibus. R. et confusus me fuerit in generatione ista adultera et peccatrice. M. negabo eum coram Patre meo, qui est in caelis. L. et coram angelis suis. R. et Filius hominis confundetur eum, cum venerit in gloria Patris sui cum angelis sanctis.

Here M. stands for Matthew, R. is the second consonant in Mark, L. is for Luke: so that we have not only a summary reference to the parallel passages at the head of the section, but also the detailed references in the text to the matter incorporated from the separate evangelists. Thus the method employed by Zachary is the same as that in Clement and in Fuldensis; and we have shown elsewhere that the employment of the second consonant in the Evangelist's name to distinguish the one evangelist from the other is a device of the Tatian Harmony preserved in the Arabic.

The next thing that we observe is the prevalence of the Ammonian Sections. All the Harmonies which we are examining have them, with the exception of the Arabic Tatian. With these sections they commonly add the Eusebian number, which relates any particular group of sections to the tables of Eusebius. In the case of Zachary they stand like this:

$$M^{133}_i R^{37} L^{77} A^{309}:$$

this means that what follows comes from the 133 th. section of Mt. the 37 th. of Mark, the 77 th. of Luke and the 309 th. (it should be 109 th.) of John, and that these four parallel sections are in the first table of Eusebius.

In the case of the Fuldensis to which Zachary is closely related, they stand on the margins of the Ms.

In the case of the Durham Ms. the actual sections are given one after another, so that either they have been expanded from the numbers given, or are themselves primitive.

Now let us see whether the same feature occurs in the Old Dutch Harmony at Liège, to which Dr. Plooij has recently been drawing attention.

When the Liège Harmonist comes to the preaching of John the Baptist, he introduces it as follows:

“Van derre materien so spreken drie evangelisten, Lucas, Matheus ende Johannes, ende segt Lucas aldus.”

This answers exactly to the opening of the thirteenth section in Zachary, which is headed

$$L^{6}_{iii} M^7 A^2$$

Evidently the Liège Harmonist had the Ammonian sections before him in his copy in the very order of Zachary. In the same way, when he comes to the imprisonment and decapitation of John the Baptist, he says again:

“Van derre materien spreken drie evangelisten Marcus, Matheus ende Lucas, ende sprect Marcus aldus.”

We conclude that in the ancestry of the Liège Ms. also there was a reference to the Ammonian sections.

The prevalence of this feature in the Primitive Latin Harmonies being established, we have now to ask the question as

to how far back the use of the Ammonian sections can be traced in this branch of Biblical literature. Does it go back to an earlier date than Eusebius, or, in any form, to Tatian himself?

It is well-known that Eusebius improved on the sections of Ammonius, by classifying them under ten separate heads ranging from such passages as are attested by all four evangelists or by three or two of them down to those which have the attestation of a single evangelist. If then the number which indicates the Eusebian grouping of the sections, such as we have seen in preceding cases, is present, and *if it is not a later accretion*, the Harmony which has the indicating number is post-Eusebian. Such cases as that of the Fuldensis and the Harmony of Zachary of Chrysopolis come under this head. If, however, Victor of Capua added the Eusebian numerals, there is no reason for denying priority to the Ammonian sections in the Ms. from which he copied. On the other hand, the prefaces to the existing Latin Harmonies usually transfer long passages from the Epistle of Eusebius to Carpianus, in which he describes his method of making and marking the Evangelical Canons. In Zachary for instance, in the Liège Ms., and in the Durham Ms. It would, therefore, seem that we should not be very far from the truth if we said that the ancestry of the existing Harmonies contained Eusebian matter, as in the Codex Fuldensis.

This does not mean, however, that the fundamental form of the Latin Harmonies is later than Eusebius, nor that the apparatus of the Harmonists (numerals, sections and prefaces) is all due to later hands. It is still open to us, for instance, to enquire whether any part of the Prologues of Victor, Zachary and the others is the survival of a prologue due to Ammonius or Tatian; and also, and this is a matter of even more importance, whether it is possible to find, in the parallel sections prefixed to the Durham Harmony, the remains of the Ammonian sections which we have shown to be a necessary preliminary to the Tatian Harmony; in the light of which juxtaposition we may be able to understand why, in the tradition of the Syrian Church, it is sometimes said that Ammonius and Tatian are the same person.

The student who is familiar with the Mss. of the New Testament has always been struck by the extent to which the margins of his documents are decorated with Ammonian and Eusebian numerals, and his first reflection upon them usually takes the form of an observation that these figures are the equivalent of the marginal references in modern Bibles. When, however, he begins to trace the history of his Mss., and especially when he examines early Syriac and Armenian texts, he finds that these figures, arranged along the lower margin of his copies, and in harmonized form, show at a glance what Evangelists are in internal parallelism and how many of them. These foot-harmonies are evidently the survival of the original Ammonian sections; and their wide circulation is a clear testimony to the part which the Harmonies have had to play in the evolution and diffusion of the Gospels.

How far, it may be asked, is it possible to reconstruct a text of Ammonius from the Durham Harmony, on the hypothesis of the ultimate dependence of Clement upon Ammonius? The question is not an easy one to answer. We can easily demonstrate the dependence of the Liège Harmony upon the Victor tradition, (as we shall show, presently, by an example); but when we come to the Llanthony texts there will be so much readjustment and subdivision that the way-marks are lost, and the hypothesis seems to be contradicted. For instance when we put the sections in Victor and in Liège side by side, we have the following parallels.

<i>Victor</i>	<i>Liège</i>
[Luke 1 1-4]	
John 1 1-5	John 1 1-5
Luke 1 5-80	Luke 1 5-80
Matt. 1 1-16	Matt. 1 1-24
[Lucan Genealogy from Abraham to God]	[Genealogy added at a later point]
Matt. 1 17-25	
Luke 2 1-39	Luke 2 1-39
Matt. 2 1-23	Matt. 2 1-23
Luke 2 40-52	Luke 2 40-52

Luke 3 1-3

Matt. 3 2-3

Luke 3 5-6

John 1 7-18

Luke 3 1-3

Matt. 3 2-3

Luke 3 5-6

John 1 7-18

and so on.

The coincidence in the divisions is almost perfect, and where it is broken, the cause is apparent; the prologue to Luke was no part of the original Harmony; and from the fact that the specially Lucan part of the Genealogies is inserted at quite different places, it may be inferred that the Genealogies were a fluctuating factor of the Harmony, and only came into it gradually.

If we try the same method of parallelism for Durham and Liège, or even for Glastonbury and Durham, we shall not find it easy to reconstruct a common primitive, and it is clear that there has been a good deal of disturbance of the Harmonistic sequence. Until we can find out the causes of this disturbance, our hypothesis that the sections of the Durham Ms. are primitive must remain unverified.

In the foregoing account of the Harmony of Clement it has been tacitly assumed that Clement made his own apparatus for the Harmony, and that the main thing to be learned from him was the method of composition of such a harmony, which could not be very different from that adopted by Tatian himself. If however, it be true, as the Clement Harmony suggests, that Tatian presupposes Ammonius, why should we take it for granted that Clement had no literary antecedents? May it not be that he also presupposes the Ammonian matter? If we find upon examination that the Sections of the Gospel which he transcribes are wholly, or in part, the Ammonian sections, then these parts are of the first importance. They may be expressed in Vulgate language, but they are the oldest, if not the only, tabulation of the Ammonian sections in detail, apart from their representation by means of numerals.

So we must examine these parts of the Durham Ms. carefully to see if they are genuine Ammonius. It should also be borne in mind that it is extremely improbable, *a priori*, that

the work of Ammonius would be done over again by every person making a Harmony. Even in the Middle Ages, and in the enthusiasm of a revival of Biblical study, the brevity of life has to be allowed for. It will take as long time as any student can afford to introduce Vulgate readings in place of pre-Vulgate, make the necessary supplements of omitted matter, and re-arrange what may have been displaced. We may almost take it for granted that Ammonius is the father of all harmonisation by parallel or consecutive sections. The Llanthony Harmony shows us clearly, how his work would be involved in the Harmony and then would itself disappear; for we see the successive copyists of Clement discarding the preliminary matter as no longer necessary after the consecutive story has been produced. And if that be true of the Llanthony Harmony, it may be equally true of others at Alexandria, Edessa or elsewhere. The sections would disappear except so far as the margins of the Harmony indicated them by alphabetical or numerical signs.

In another direction we have a suggestion of the non-originality of Clement in the arrangement of his Biblical matter. It will be found that such originality as characterises him is in his Commentary, and not in his text. Here we have abundant scope for literary activity, and in the use of Augustine. Bede and other writers, we may recognise both freshness and erudition. The case is nearly the same with Zacharias of Chrysopolis, who occupies on the Continent a position comparable with that of Clement in England. Here also we have a Harmony *plus* a system of glosses; but there is no preliminary Tabulation of the Gospels, or, if it ever existed, it has disappeared. It is probable that Zacharias was simply reproducing as far as the text goes, the tradition of the Fuldensis, or some closely related Harmony. His collection of glosses may, however, very well be his own.⁸

⁸ William of Nottingham's edition of Clement, to which reference was made above, was presented to the Durham library by Bishop Langley in 1437. See Surtees Society, *Catalogues of the Library of Durham Cathedral*, p. 119.