

SOME NOTES ON THE GOSPEL-HARMONY
OF ZACHARIAS CHRYSOPOLITANUS

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DR. Plooij's recent discovery of a Dutch Harmony of the Gospels of the 12th or 13th century, translated from a lost Latin Harmony of an earlier type than the Codex Fuldensis, will set us all examining the existing Latin Harmonies of the Gospels as well as those in other languages which appear to be translated from the Latin. We have been too much in the habit of assuming that Victor of Capua, and his lovely Ms. (the Codex Fuldensis) was the last word in regard to Tatian, as far as Western Europe is concerned; and we used the Fuldensis to give us the approximate order of Tatian's Gospel, by comparing it with the Arabic Version of the Harmony, which also had a Tatianic origin. How constantly in Western Catalogues one came across the statement that a Ms. contained the Four Gospels in the form of a Vulgate Harmony with the preface of Victor of Capua, and assumed that there was nothing more to be done with it, for its Vulgate could hardly be purer than Victor's, and if it began with John 1:1 ("In principio erat verbum") it could be labelled as Tatian's and left at that. And now it seems that a renewed search has to be made in order that we may find out earlier texts or at least earlier readings than those of Victor of Capua, and so get nearer to the lost Latin Harmony of Tatian, as Dr. Plooij has done with his Liège Ms.

In the little preface which I wrote for Dr. Plooij to his announcement of *A Primitive Text of the Diatessaron*, I pointed out that there were two special types of Gospel Harmony

belonging to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which would require to be studied. One is the British type, which passes under the name of Clement of Llanthony; it is almost unknown in Continental Libraries: the other bears the name of Zacharias Chrysopolitanus, (Zachary of Besançon); it is almost unknown in English Libraries. It is of this latter that I want to say a few simple words, which may be useful to those who are impelled, by interest or necessity, to occupy themselves with the tedious study of the arrangement of the Four Gospels in a single sequence, and with the consequent production of a primitive *Life of Christ*. Everyone who begins such a critical task will of course make himself thoroughly familiar with the leading features in Tatian's arrangements. He will have landmarks to guide him. Of these the first and foremost is that the Harmony begins with John 1 1. ("In the beginning was the Word"), and any Harmony which begins in that way has a high probability of belonging to the Tatianic group. Nor is this probability seriously lessened if the Harmony should show the Prologue to Luke either before or after the first verses of the Prologue to John. The fact that it sometimes precedes and sometimes follows arouses at once a suspicion which can frequently be raised to a demonstration that it is a later addition to the text.

Probably the next direction in which to look for landmarks would be the position of the early chapters of John in the sequence of the reconstructed gospel. Where does the text put the Cleansing of the Temple, the Marriage at Cana, the Interview with Nicodemus, or the Woman of Samaria? It was to be expected that Tatian, who makes Matthew his chief authority, should put the Cleansing of the Temple after the Triumphal Entry; but it was not so imperative that the non-Synoptic matters referred to in John 2, 3, and 4 should be dislocated from the beginning of the Gospel, and scattered over the remaining sections, so that if we were to search for them in the Liège Harmony, we should find the Marriage at Cana in the 57th section, following the Sermon on the Mount and the evangelical instructions in Mt. 10, the Discourse with Nicodemus at the 163rd section, the Woman of Samaria at the 115th section. The position of these sections will indicate to us whether we

are engaged upon a Harmony which goes back to the original work of Tatian.

We must not be surprised, however, if in the earlier pages of the Harmonies that have come down to us we find unexpected variations in the order, and some divergence from the Tatianic arrangement. This is largely due to the influence of St. Augustine's tract on *The Consent of the Evangelists*, in which he turns Harmonist on his own account, and attempts to reconstruct portions of a specimen Harmony for the faithful. The reaction from the *De Consensu* upon the *Diatessaron* is one of the main difficulties in an intelligent study of Gospel Harmonisation. Vogels, who has written a very interesting tract on the *De Consensu*¹—has seen clearly the connection between Augustine and the mediaeval Harmonies, but apparently he failed to recognise that the earliest mediaeval Harmonies were themselves much earlier than Augustine and actually based on Tatian. The following passages will show what we mean:

p. 136. "The first Gospel Harmony of the middle ages which has come down to us is that of Zachary of Chrysopolis (composed about 1150)— — — St. Augustine was not the only cause of the apparent arbitrariness and lack of order in the mediaeval Harmonies. A good part of the blame lies upon the shoulders of another work, to wit, the Gospel Harmony — — — which Victor of Capua held to be the *Diatessaron of Tatian*."

That is something like laying the blame for an unsatisfactory Harmony by Tatian upon the back of Tatian himself; for it will be seen, upon examination, that this Harmony of Zachary is only another case of direct descent from Tatian! Tatian is the disturbed, not the disturber. Let us then take a look at the Harmony of Zachary and see what we can learn from it. The text will be found in Migne, *Patr. Lat.* tom. 186.

In the first place then, it is a Vulgate Harmony. In the next place, it prefixes the Lucan Prologue, after which it goes on with

Caput Primum.

In principio erat verbum etc. (John 1 1-5).

¹ St. Augustin's *Schrift De Consensu Evangelistarum* (Freiburg im Breisgau. 1908).

We notice the agreement with the Codex Fuldensis of Victor, which also begins with the Lucan Prologue, but betrays it to be an addition by the table of prefixed capitulations in which we read:

PRAEFATIO.

1. In principio verbum, deus apud deum, per quem facta sunt omnia.

When we make a further comparison of the chapter divisions in Zachary, with those in the Fuldensis, we can have no doubt that they are the same system. Zachary has taken his text from one of the Victor Mss. As far as that text goes, it is wrong to date it in 1150 A. D., and to treat it as a mediaeval work. The commentary may be Zachary's: the text is certainly not his; he is in direct dependence upon Victor of Capua and his antecedents.

Here is another proof of dependence: Zachary prefixes three prefaces to his work, explanatory of the method in which a Harmony of the Gospels should be compiled. The third of these prefaces is largely made up out of the preface which Victor of Capua prefixes to the Codex Fuldensis. Not only so, but in one most important respect Zachary goes behind Victor and is earlier in date. For toward the close of his preface, when he has explained the way in which Eusebius arranged the sections of Ammonius of Alexandria under ten tables, he adds the remark that the separate evangelists can also be recognised by their initial letters, 'per R litteram Marcum, per M Mattheum, per A aquilam summum evangelistam, Joannem, per L vero Lucam.' It will be seen that Matthew should have come first, and been marked with an initial M, then Mark should follow, and as M is no longer available nor does MA define the writer, the next consonant R is selected. For John, whom he regards as the greatest evangelist, the initial I is replaced by the first letter of *Aquila*, to show that John is the eagle in the tetrad of living creatures in Ezekiel. So the Liège Harmony begins by saying that 'Sente Yan——ghelijcet den vligenden are.' This will sound very unimportant: but when we turn to the Arabic Harmony, which Ciasca edited in 1888 from two Mss. in the Vatican, we find an introductory note to the Harmonized text, in which it is explained as follows: that 'Tatian the Greek collected the

Gospel called the Diatessaron — — — from the four Evangelists, to wit, Matthew the elect, *whose sign is M*, Mark the chosen, *whose sign is R*, Luke the beloved (physician) *whose sign is K*, and John the beloved (disciple) *whose sign is H*.' Here we have the same method of notation, with the difference that Luke is denoted by his second consonant, as was the case with Mark, and something similar occurs for John. Obviously there must be some connection between Zachary's method of marking the evangelists and that of the author of the Arabic Harmony; this can only be due to the use of common material; in other words it is Tatian's method of denoting the separate evangelists which has come down to us in Latin and in Arabic. We are again at an earlier level than that of the Codex Fuldensis, as Dr. Plooij showed to be the case also with the Liège Harmony.

Let us examine a little closer the parallels between the text of Zachary and that of Victor. We were alluding above to the place occupied by the Marriage at Cana. In the Codex Fuldensis it is introduced thus:

XLVI. Et die tertio nuptiae factae sunt in Chanam galileae;

In Zachary it is as follows:

Caput XLV. Et factae sunt nuptiae in Cana galileae.

Which of these is right? We turn to the capitulations in the beginning of the Fuldensis, and we find

XLV. Ubi ihesus in Chanan Galileae aqua vinum fecit.

Then the chapter division is right in Zachary. A more important question arises with regard to 'the third day.' This cannot be correct in a Harmony which has displaced the incident from the beginning of the Gospel. It was certainly not in Tatian's text, nor does Zachary insert the words, though his text is closely conformed to the Vulgate. The Liège Harmony says 'Upon a day,' and it is quite possible that this may be the original form. Certainly Victor's form is not the primitive.

It will be seen that a careful study of a supposed mediaeval Harmony like this of Zachary will often throw great light upon the structure of Tatian's own work, and the early forms in

which it circulated; but there is another direction in which we may get fresh illumination: granted that the text is that of the Vulgate, there is a series of comments attached to the text, which will often betray or suggest an earlier Latin text than the Vulgate to which they are attached. The importance of this will be seen most clearly by one or two examples.

In John 8 58 we have the following comment upon Jesus' words: 'Before Abraham was, I am.'

'non ait; *fui*, sed, *sum*, quia divinitas tempus non habet.'

It might be thought, at the first reading, that this was only a casual remark of an expositor, but it is at least lawful to ask whether any text ever read what our commentator says we ought not to read. When we ask the question we find that the Liège Harmony (c. 178) actually says,

'over waer seggie u eer Abraham so was ic;'

that the Lewis Syriac reads 'I was' and not 'I am;,' and that Ephrem, in his commentary upon the *Diatessaron* (ed. Mösinger 197) says, 'antequam Abraham erat, *ego jam fui*.'

We must not say too positively that this was the reading in Zachary's copy, but we may say that it is a genuine reading of the *Diatessaron* both in Latin and in Syriac. As regards Zachary's comment, it probably came from Bede, for Bede says:

'*Ante enim praeteriti temporis est, sum praesentis; et quia praeteritum et futurum divinitas non habet, sed semper esse habet, non ait, Ante Abraham ego fui, sed ante Abraham ego sum;*'

but where did Bede find this *Diatessaron* reading? Here is another case of a similar type, where we again suspect an Old-Latin and *Diatessaron* reading, but are not able, as in the former instance, to complete the proof.

In John 7 34 our Lord tells the Jews that 'where I am, thither ye cannot come.' Upon this Zachary comments:

(c. 129) 'Non dixit; *ubi ero*: sed, *ubi sum*: quia sic venit divinitas ad nos, ut de caelo non recederet — — — Deus autem implet omnia, et ubique est — — — Non dixit; *non poteritis*, ne desperarent: sed, *non potestis*, dum tales estis.'

We turn again to the Liège Harmony (c. 174), and we find in the text

daer ic syn sal (i. e. ubi ero)

and

en suldi nit mogen comen:

(i. e. non poteritis venire)

that is, the very readings to which Zachary objects. They are, evidently, readings of the Old Latin, but the proof of their being Diatessaron readings is not yet complete.

In Luke 19 41 we have the account of our Lord's weeping over Jerusalem, and saying "If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace!" The sentence is incomplete; it is of the nature of a prolonged interjection, a kind of sob that goes with the Redeemer's tears. The Harmonists, however, attempt to complete the sentence, (they should have known better), by explaining what would have happened if Jerusalem had known. To this end they appear to have inserted the words 'wouldst have wept' after 'even thou,' so as to read,

'If thou hadst known, thou too wouldst have wept.'

That this was once the Harmonised text may be seen in several ways. Zachary makes three separate attempts at a comment on the passage, and each time he brings in the word 'fletes.'

(c. 116) 'Litteram sic lege, *Si cognovisses — — — etiam tu, subaudis fletes — — — Et quidem in hac tua die — — — quae ad pacem tuam, subaudis fletes — — — Flevit, dicens quia si cognovisses etiam tu mecum — — — ad pacem quae tibi est, subaudis fletes.*'

Now turn to the Liège Harmony (p. 159), and we find Kennestu also wale wat di nakende is also ic doe, *du soudst oc weenen:*

and here Bede comes again to our aid with the remark

Quia si cognovisses et tu, subaudis fleveras.

The Latin Harmonists appear to have had either *fletes* or *fleveras* in their texts; whether the reading goes back to the earliest times, it would be rash to speculate.

But here is a case where we can go right back to Tatian, and where we suspect that the readings were in Zachary's copy, before the complete dominance of the Vulgate.

Where our Lord is talking to the Samaritan woman, the disciples appear on the scene, with the provisions that they have bought in the city, and are surprised to find their Teacher engaged in conversation with a woman. 'Nemo tamen dixit, Quid quaeris? aut quid loqueris cum ea.' Upon which Zachary observes:

(c. 87) Non ausi sunt interrogare discipuli mulierem, *Quid quaeris, aut Dominum, quid cum ea loqueris?*

Here the questions in the Gospel are separated, the first half being addressed to the woman, the second to our Lord. This expansion is not a mere piece of subtlety on the part of a mediaeval commentator. The Liège Harmony (p. 115) has in its text

'Nochtan en seide harre nienegheen *toten wive*, wat suks tu, noch *tote hem*, wat spreks tu jegen hare.'

When we turn to the Lewis text, we find the Syriac says nearly the same thing:

'They did not indeed say to him (? to her), What soughtest thou? or What wast thou saying to her?'

A microscopic change in the text will bring us very near to the Liège reading.

So we suspect that the latter reading is *quam proxime* the text of Tatian.

Enough has been said by way of introduction to this interesting Harmony.

The next stage is to make a corresponding enquiry into the nature of the Harmony of Clement of Llanthony, a work which has a peculiar interest for English scholars, as being the original text upon which Wiclif worked. We shall probably find that it also throws light upon the method of composition employed by Tatian himself.

Who, then, was Zachary of Chrysopolis?

We have been studying a commentary upon the Four Gospels, treated as one consecutive story, which is ascribed to a writer otherwise unknown, who is by students of ecclesiastical history referred to the twelfth century and the town of Besancon: with less general agreement, we may say that he was a bishop. As an author he is representative of the movement, which arose in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, for the popularisation of Biblical study in general, and of the Life of Christ in particular. Every one of these *Diatessara* is a life of Christ, and the multiplication of them puts the thirteenth century in some senses into parallelism with the nineteenth: and one naturally enquires whether anything further can be determined with regard to the school of thought that is represented in the new movement for Biblical study. If we were in the second century, instead of the twelfth, and were engaged upon a genuine and primitive copy of Tatian's *Diatessaron*, a very slight hint would enable us to track out Encratite touches in the story: the modification of the diet of St. John the Baptist to milk and honey, the explanation of the shortness of the wine supply at Cana, the reduction of the flesh-meat diet in the banquet of the King who makes a marriage for his son, would all suggest to us that the compiler of the One-in-Four was an ascetic; we could also infer from the brevity of the married life of Hannah the prophetess, for whom seven days of incomplete connubial bliss were sufficient, or the transfer of the dogma that 'for this cause a man shall leave etc.' from the voice of God to that of Adam, that the writer was, at least, a quasi-celibate. Thus internal evidence of the text would help us to the identification of the author and his views. We might be certain also, with a higher degree of assurance, that if Tatian had accompanied his text with a running commentary, the commentary would have betrayed Encratism even more clearly than the text; for the text is to some extent sacrosanct, while the commentator is free: one can say what one likes, and be what one is, in the notes.

Now if this is true of the first and greatest of Gospel Harmonies, it will be true of later attempts at the co-ordination of

the Four Gospels. The hand of the writer will be detected in the script, not so much now in the text itself, which is fenced in by Jerome and his clan, but in the commentary, where the new authors are free to range through the whole of their monastic libraries, and pick out what they consider to be useful for personal edification or the purposes of propaganda.

Zachary, for instance, has at his disposal very little Greek, and a good array of Latin authors. He does occasionally quote Chrysostom, probably in a Latin translation of some of that father's works; but his main supply comes from Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome and Bede, with occasional dips into other writers; of these Augustine is the principal source, either at first hand, and usually by actual reference to tract or treatise, or through an abbreviator who goes by the name of Albinus. Through Bede, who knows some Greek, he sometimes gets a Greek reading or interpretation; through Jerome, who knows Hebrew as well as Greek, he gets some bits of Hebrew lore, and some of the best known of Jerome's quotations from the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. All of this might seem to be colourless enough, and not likely, to betray any tendency of thought, or the leanings towards any school of the writer's day. When, however, we read the commentary of Zachary through, we are surprised at the resultant impression made upon us; a real person, with decided opinions of his own, is looking over the shoulders of the elect authors whose pockets he has been picking.

The first thing we observe is his anti-Roman and anti-Papal attitude. A good Catholic, quoting Augustine, would never of his own motion and accord, produce the sentiments of Augustine on the Primacy of Peter. Here, for instance, is a note on John 1 42 which is said to come from Augustine:

(c. 16). 'Vocatur autem Petrus ob robur mentis, quia solidissimae *petrae Christo* adhaesit. Et notandum quod hic Petrus nomen acceperit, non ubi ait illi Jesus, Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam.'

He has in his mind the statement in 1 Cor. 10 that '*the rock was Christ*.' Accordingly on the very next page where Jacob's

ladder is explained as the fulfilment of John 1 51, the writer tells us that Jacob *anointed the stone* on which he had slept, and the *Stone* is to be understood as Christ. No doubt this is primitive doctrine and goes back to the earliest collection of *Testimonies* from the Old Testament. He refers to the same identification in his comments on the circumcision of Jesus, where the parallel is made in the ancient manner with the flint knives of Joshua (Jesus) and says:

(c. 7). 'Petrinis autem cultris circumcidit Josue intraturos terram repromissionis, *quia petra erat Christus.*'

When he comes to the temptation of our Lord, and the suggestion that, if he throw himself down, he will not dash his foot against *a stone*, he must needs quote, irrationally indeed, from Jerome on the 91st Psalm: where the believer is said to be

(c. 15) 'Angelicis manibus vallatus, ad lapidem (*id est Christum*) non offendit pedem suam, qui *lapis* est *offensionis et petra scandali.*'

There must be some tendency to be recognised in this repeated allusion to Christ as the Stone. It comes in so gratuitously at times: for instance, when the sick man at Bethesda is told to take up his bed, the writer explains the matter allegorically as being equivalent to an injunction to bear one another's burdens. 'Do not be troubled that a senseless thing can be used to teach us the love of our neighbours,

(c. 88) 'quandoquidem *Dominus lapis dictus est.*'

But let us come to the famous passage in Mt. 16 18: 'Thou art Peter.' Zachary quotes ostensibly from Jerome as follows:

'Merito accepit hoc nomen Petrus, qui *in petram Christum* credebat, et secundum metaphoram dicitur ei: Aedificabo Ecclesiam meam *super hanc petram*, hoc est *super hoc firmamentum fidei.* Vel ita: (Beda in homil.) Super hanc petram quam confessus es, id est, *super me ipsum.*'

Whatever may be the sources of his comments, it is clear that they are not Catholic nor Roman: at a later date we should say, this is a Protestant interpretation.

Zachary returns to the same theme in John 21, where he quotes from Augustine to the effect that our Lord loved John more than Peter: he explains that Peter is named from the rock, not the Rock from Peter;

(c. 180) 'non a Petro petra, sed Petrus a petra nomen accepit. — — — Ideoque, ait Dominus, super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam, *Super hanc petram*, scilicet quam confessus est Petrus, dicens: Tu es Christus etc. *Petra enim erat Christus*. Super fundamentum etiam ipse Petrus aedificatus est.'

The statement is somewhat modified by the reference to the doctrine of the Keys, but in any case this repeated affirmation of *Petra est Christus* against *Tu es Petrus* betrays a tendency of an anti-Roman character. An amusing instance is the dove in Canticles that makes her nest in the holes of the rocks; *Petra Christus est*.

In the next place we observe that the writer occupies a very uncatholic attitude towards sacraments. He comes very near to a Lutheran position when he discusses the Baptism of our Lord, and baptism generally: he refers to Gregory in the fourth book on Job:

(c. 14) 'Quod apud nos valet aqua baptismi, hoc egit apud veteres vel pro parvulis *sola fides*.'

He objects to the doctrine that the daily bread of the Lord's prayer is the Communion, and doubts if it be material bread at all; consequently he goes back to Tertullian and the second century, when the prayer was read in the form 'Give us this day for bread the Word of God from Heaven.' This is said to be taken from Jerome; the quotations, if such, are striking enough:

(c. 34) 'Restat igitur ut panem quotidianum intelligamus spiritualement, praecepta scilicet divina.'

If any one does not like this interpretation,

'quotidianum panem simul petamus et necessarium corpori et sacratum, *visibile et invisibile Verbum Dei*'.

After that we are not surprised to find him quoting Augustine's famous saying 'Crede et manducasti.'

(c. 156) 'Unde Augustinus: Quid paras dentes et ventrem. Crede et manducasti. Realis vero et sacramentalis comestio junguntur — — — *Buccella panis est portio fidei, quam ponit Deus in ore cordis.*'

In regard to baptism the Catholic doctrine of the impropriety of re-baptism is emphasised strongly: even laymen or women may baptize:

(c. 64) 'A quocunque detur ministro nihil refert. Minister enim ministrat, Christus baptizat. Unde illud: *Hic est qui baptizat.* Quapropter sive a clericis, sive a laicis, seu etiam a mulieribus necessitate imminente detur, non tamen reiteratur.'

(c. 154) 'Erravit Petrus — — — cum se totum lavandum Deo obtulit. Quem Deus correxit, ostendens semel baptizatum, non esse rebaptizandum.'

He will even quote Beda as to the non-necessity of the outward sign of a sacrament, provided there is no contempt of religion intended:

(c. 119) '(Beda). Quantum itaque valeat etiam sine visibilis baptismi sacramento, quod ait Apostolus: *Corde creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem.*'

In dealing with the subject of confession, Zachary points out that it is not a primitive custom

(c. 99) 'Lacrymas Petri lego, confessionem non invenio. — — — Confessionis institutio nondum promulgata fuerat in primitiva Ecclesia. — — — Credere cogimur Apostolos baptizatos fuisse, quod quando vel quomodo factum sit, non legimus. — — — *Lacrymae poenitentium, apud Deum pro baptismo reputantur.*'

He quotes Augustine in favour of the general validity of heretical sacraments:

(c. 95) 'Catholica ecclesia non improbat in haereticis sacramenta communia, in quibus nobiscum sunt, sed divisiones a nobis et sententias veritati adversas.'

As to the authority of the priesthood, what are we to think of his quoting Jerome on the power of loosing and binding, to the following effect:

(c. 190) 'Istud locum episcopi et presbyteri non intelligentes, aliquid sibi de Phariseorum superciliis assumunt cum apud Deum *non sententia sacerdotum, sed reorum vita quaeratur.*'

Probably the foregoing extracts will suffice to shew the mind of the writer. He is a Catholic, of course, but of a very liberal school of interpretation: and what he is individually, may fairly be the description of the movement which he represents. Many of the sentiments to which we have drawn attention, are the very same as occur in the early Protestant writers, and are an anticipation of Protestantism itself, both as regards soteriology, and as regards ecclesiastical discipline. We can easily understand how in England a similar movement became the origin of the Wickliff teaching and propaganda. Zachary of Chrysopolis was a reformer before the Reformation. His quotations betray him.