

**THE ANNOTATORS OF THE
CODEX BEZAE
(WITH SOME NOTES
ON SORTES SANCTORUM)**

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BY

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THE ANNOTATORS
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The present condition of the Bezan problem.

THE interest which attaches to the Codex Bezae arises partly out of the dignity which naturally belongs to the leading representative of what is known as the Western Text of the New Testament, and partly from the Sphinx-like character both of the MS. and of its text, for it seems hard to write satisfactorily the history of either the one or the other. All investigations which have hitherto appeared have something tentative and preliminary about them, and one condition of progress still lies in the assiduous contradiction by scholars of the positions of other scholars and the persistent and reciprocal exposition of errors and partial statements. We are thus driven into a more microscopic scrutiny of the problem, and if we do not know to-day all that we want to know concerning Codex Bezae and the Western Text, the probability is that we shall know it to-morrow, or that some one else will know it the day after to-morrow.

It will be remembered by all who are interested in the problem of the Bezan origins that in my *Study of Codex Bezae* I discussed at some length the asserted Gallican origin of the book and the traces of Gallicism on the Latin side of its text. Rejecting as improbable and undeserving of attention certain

suggestions which had been made by Schulz and Kipling that the Codex Bezae was written in Egypt, we proceeded to test *de novo* the general belief that it was written in France.

A striking confirmation of this belief was found in the fact that the system of *Sortes Sanctorum*, which was found to have been inscribed on the pages of the Codex Bezae in Greek somewhere about the tenth century, was also found in Latin in the pages of a famous Latin MS. belonging to the Abbey of S. Germain and dating from the tenth century; and we inferred from the proved consanguinity of the MSS. a probable collocality. This argument, whatever be its value, has not been invalidated.

In the next place we sought to identify the system of liturgical annotations which are found throughout the Codex with a possible Gallican usage, related more or less nearly to the Byzantine system. In this, as will be seen below, our judgment was much at fault, and the supposed verifications of Gallicism from liturgical use are not established.

We discussed the question whether Scholz had correctly stated that the home of the MS. was in Central Gaul, as an inference from the presence of Latin forms which might be described as Gallican; and pointed out that there was hardly one of the instances given by Scholz that would stand criticism.

But we proceeded to show, what had not previously been suspected, that the Bezan Latin was full of sixth-century transitional forms, which intimated that the Vulgar Latin of the original translator was far on its way to one or other of the Romance languages.

The point arose at once whether the language in question was French or Italian. The *pro* and *con* of the argument was not easy to estimate.

The form *ame amie* for *amice* (p. 21) seemed to suggest France rather than Italy. So did *hoernum* (p. 21) for *hodiernum*, and (p. 23) *hante* for *habente*; but on the other hand *fate* for *facite* (p. 22) seemed to be more Italian than French, and so did *no[c]te*, where some reader had erased the *c* as non-sonant.

On p. 26 it was stated "that the balance of the evidence is in favour of regarding the MS. as a Gallican rather than an

Italian production." In a later chapter on the 'Phonetics and Morphology' of the Codex, it was shown that there were cases like the use of *sum* for *sunt* which appeared to have an Italian flavour, and the suggestion was thrown out that the MS. had perhaps after all come to Lyons from the other side of the Alps.

It will be found that the further enquiry resolves itself into two separate questions, (i) what is the local origin of the Latin translators and transcribers? (ii) what is the nationality of the annotators? The two groups are separated by nearly three centuries, and a conclusion under one head is not necessarily the conclusion under the other. In three hundred years an Eastern MS. may move West, or a Western one may move East; a Northern MS. may move into Africa, or, with greater probability, an African MS. into Europe. We should, therefore, as far as possible, keep the questions apart; and for this reason our present volume will deal with the annotators rather than with the first translator or his succession of transcribers. And it may be noted in passing that when we actually come to the Latin text and its peculiarities, we shall have a peculiarly difficult task before us in separating those forms or tendencies which may properly be called Romance forms from those which are only Vulgar Latin: and the more we know about both, the slower we may perhaps be to say, either that this peculiarity is African Latin, or that the other is Romance French. But in all these cases we must go on criticising and being criticised until we know enough to say that we have found the truth. In this tract, however, we do not expect to go beyond the annotators, and we shall leave the early scribes and the translators alone for the present. Neither shall we be able to discuss in these pages the very important allied problems which concern the scholar who reads the Latin text of Irenaeus by the side of his Codex Bezae and notes the coincidences; or who studies the parallels between the Latin of the famous Lyons Pentateuch and the Latin of Codex Bezae.

If it could be assumed that Irenaeus' works were translated in his own church at Lyons, we could argue many things from the parallels between *d* and *Ir^{mc}* (to use the symbols of the

Apparatus Criticus). In the same way if we could argue that the Codex Lugdunensis had always been at Lyons¹, we could register a number of Bezan forms as Gallican, in a more than tentative manner. But here also we must forbear for the present, and reserve what might be said for some other time or, which is perhaps better, delegate it to some other person.

It appears from this self-denial in the investigation that we are not discussing the question of the Bezan origins in the wide sense in which that question is usually asked. We are not asking whether its Latin text was made in Antioch or in Carthage or in Rome. Our problem is a subordinate one. But if subordinate, it is also co-ordinate, and the solution of it, if one can be rendered probable, will help greatly to the solution of the larger problem.

In any case, we are driven to the enquiry. On a number of sides doubts are being expressed as to whether the Codex Bezae is a French MS. at all. Dr Sanday suggests to me that it may have come from Ravenna; Mr Lake has publicly declared for Amalfi²; and my lamented friend M. Berger, while admitting the force of my argument from the *Sortes Sanctorum* in the Codex Bezae and in the S. Germain MS., went on to suggest that I carried ingenuity to the verge of paradox and that the only person who could solve the problem was Dr Sanday; both of which propositions may be true; if, however, only one of them is to be counted correct, we should naturally prefer the latter³! The feeling that we had come almost to an *impasse* in the history of the Codex Bezae has led the editors of the *Journal of Theological Studies* to invoke

¹ I was interested recently in noting, under this head, the occurrence of the form *mascle* for *masculus* in several passages of Numbers in Cod. Lugd. Is it not a peculiarly French (Provençal) spelling?

² On the Italian Origin of Codex Bezae in *Journal of Theol. Studies*, i. 441—445.

³ Berger, *Un ancien texte des Actes des Apôtres*, p. 16. "Un rapprochement très ingénieux fait par M. R. Harris entre ce manuscrit et le célèbre manuscrit 15 de Saint-Germain tend à lui donner pour lieu d'origine la vallée du Rhône. Il est vrai que les corrections qu'il a reçues pendant longtemps de plusieurs écrivains qui savaient le grec jettent quelque doute sur cette hypothèse.... M. R. Harris, avec sa critique pénétrante mais quelquefois paradoxale, etc."