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I am not in a position to pursue to its end the examination of the new Greek text. Before this can be done with profit, we must have a decipherment of the very early Vienna palimpsest of the Latin version, of which Tischendorf read only a few short passages. This will help us to decide whether Peeters is right in his view that all the Greek and Latin texts we have go back to a Syriac base.

No Syriac equivalent of the first three chapters of the Latin *Thomas* has as yet been found. It is noteworthy that in the very old Syriac MS used by Wright, *Thomas* follows immediately after the *Protevangeliium*; but there is no attempt to amalgamate the two books.

Quite enough of the (gnostic?) second-century Gospel survives in the various versions to make a thorough examination of all the authorities worth undertaking.

M. R. JAMES.

THE ORIGIN OF פִּתְגָמָא

THIS and other strange words in Ezra and Daniel are explained by commentators as Old Persian. The explanations are derived from an article by Gildemeister in the *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* iv pp. 208-215, and have been repeated by one after another without question or investigation. As the article appeared in 1842, it is not unreasonable to reconsider the etymologies there proposed in the light of the progress made in OP philology since that date. I only propose to deal here with one word which has been troubling me lately.

פִּתְגָמָא (Gildemeister, p. 214) occurs in a Hebrew context in Esther i 20 and Eccles. viii 11; in an Aramaic context in Dan. iii 16, iv 14, Ezra iv 17, v 7, 11, and vi 11. It is generally taken to mean a 'command', or in a weakened sense a 'word'. Lagarde in his 'Armenische Studien' in *Abh. d. k. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen* xxii no. 4 (p. 126), 1877, compares φθέγμα, but whether he means it etymologically or as a translation is not clear.

Since it is used in Ezra, Daniel, and Esther of the Persian king, Gildemeister (and the rest following him) makes it an OP word *patigâma* from *patigam* to 'arrive'. It is then made to mean a 'message', as modern Persian پيام, said to be for پيغام (cf. the compound پيغامبر *nuntium afferens*). Perhaps some one who has more knowledge of Zend than I possess will say whether such a noun as *patigâma* is a correct formation and what its meaning should be. As far as I can find out, no such noun occurs. Yet if it was borrowed by Aramaic, it should be a

very common word which was heard frequently and for which there was no exact equivalent. Moreover, if it means 'message', it is a most unsuitable word in some passages. The Great King did not send messages. He gave orders. 'I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with all diligence' (Ezra vi 12). Further, if it came to mean only 'word' why should it have been used at all instead of the ordinary Aramaic? While thinking over these difficulties it occurred to me that it might be the Greek ἀπόφθεγμα, a troublesome word for a Semite to pronounce. I asked Mr Lobel whether this was ever used in the sense of a 'decision' or 'edict' (pronouncement). He told me that it was not so used, but (said he) why should not your word be ἐπίταγμα? In fact I believe that it is ἐπίταγμα, in the proper sense of a despotic command, and that this meaning suits the passages better than any other.

Ezra iv 17 'Then sent the king an *order*' (RV 'answer' is only a guess. LXX καὶ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ βασιλεύς). V. 19 shews this to be the meaning: מני שים טעם 'I hereby make a decree', and it was not to be altered (v. 21) עך מני טעמא יתשם 'until I make a (new) decree'. It was not a mere message or answer, and the style of it is shewn by v. 22 'Take heed that ye be not slack herein'.

Ezra v 7 'they sent the *decree*' bodily for verification (RV 'a letter', LXX ῥήσιν). It was included in the letter (v. 6). It is true the text is not very skilfully managed just here (in v. 4 the first person is out of place), but it is inconceivable that different words should be used for the same letter in two consecutive verses (as RV). The meaning seems to be (v. 6) 'The copy (?) of the letter that Tattenai . . . sent (enclosing the decree) and it was written therein thus'.

Ezra v 11 'And thus they replied to us (by quoting) *the decree*' (RV 'returned us *answer*', LXX ῥήμα). They had the decree ready, and played it as their trump card.

Ezra vi 11 'whosoever shall alter this *decree*' (RV 'word', LXX ῥήμα).

Dan. iii 16 'we have no care to answer thee as to this *decree*' (RV 'matter', LXX ἐπιταγή, Theod. ῥήματος). It is the decree mentioned in v. 10.

Dan. iv 14 'The *decree* is by decision of the watchers' (RV 'sentence', LXX om., Theod. ὁ λόγος). It is stated in vv. 11-13.

Esther i 20 'And when the king's *decree* . . . shall be published' (so RV, LXX νόμος and λόγος). It is the royal command proposed in v. 19, which will be a 77.

Eccles. viii 11 'Because *sentence* against an evil work is not executed speedily' (so RV, LXX ἀντίρρησις, with the reading פְּעֻמָּה). Here the meaning is extended—the decree of a judge. It is remarkable that the word should occur at all in this late book. It had evidently passed into common use and had lost its special meaning.

In all the passages it seems to me that the meaning of ἐπίταγμα is suitable. Then how came it to be adopted in Aramaic (and later in Hebrew) as a loan-word? Both Aramaic and Greek were international commercial languages under the Persian rule, and each borrowed from the other. I suggest that on the royal roads by which commerce travelled, there must have been regulations and tariffs established by royal decrees which were known in Greek as ἐπίτάγματα (פְּתֻגְמָתָא, an excellent Aramaic plural, though the form does not occur). The term would then come to be used by traders, whether Aramaean or Greek, for all royal decrees. By the time of the LXX it had ceased to be understood. Yet the Masoretes, to their credit, followed a correct tradition in pointing the first syllable with an *i*, and were not led astray by the analogy of פְּתֻשָׁן and פְּתֻכָּן. In the Targums the word (adopted from Biblical Aramaic) has lost all definite meaning, and is said to be used simply as a synonym for דְּבַר 'word', 'thing', but I have not examined the passages.

A. E. COWLEY.

PROSE RHYTHM IN THE *PASSIO S. PERPETUAE*

THE third-century work known as the *Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis* consists of three parts: an introduction and conclusion by an unnamed redactor; a narrative written, we are told, by S. Perpetua herself, recounting her imprisonment and four visions; and a much shorter narrative by another martyr, Saturus. In recent years the identity of the redactor has been made the subject of some discussion, Dr Armitage Robinson (*Cambridge Texts and Studies* i 2) arguing very ably in favour of Tertullian. It has also been questioned whether the narratives of the martyrs themselves are, as they claim to be, written in their own words, *sua manu et suo sensu*; most scholars agree that they are genuine in the main, but some incline to the idea of a rehandling by the redactor.

In preparing for the press a translation of the *Passio* it seemed to me that an examination of the clausulae of the text was desirable and might be illuminating. Unfortunately, the total number of sentences which can be tested (quotation and conversation being excluded as is customary) is so small as to diminish somewhat the significance of the results obtained. Certain things, however, seem clear.

(1) The redactor's prose is the rhythmical prose of a practised writer and exhibits most of the conventional clausulae. His percentage for the form — ◡ — ◡ — is particularly high. Where the instances con-

sidered are so few in all, it would be unreasonable to argue from the prevalence or absence of Tertullian's most characteristic rhythms to the identity of the writer, though in fact the low percentage of —○○○—○ would seem to be in accordance with Tertullian's usage.

(2) Perpetua has a fairly high percentage of good clausulae, but her preferences are not the redactor's, e. g. she favours ————○—, which he avoids. Further, since most of her metrically harsher endings, not only in clausulae but also in cola and commata, make good accentual forms (e. g. *méntis Diáboli, praésens non fúerat, últro tradiderat*, a recurrent type), I think it probable that she consciously uses a *cursus mixtus*. In any case, her rhythms are sufficiently different from the redactor's to make it reasonably certain that her narrative was never revised by him.

(3) The short vision of Saturus reveals no conscious use of rhythm, quantitative or accentual. It also is evidently untouched by the redactor.

(4) The redactor's rhythmical prose seems to make necessary an emendation which indeed is already required by the sense. In cap. 18 all the MSS but one, and all the editions, read *comminabantur de hoc. Ut . . . peruenerunt*, thus spoiling an excellent clausula and yielding no satisfactory meaning, since there is nothing to which *hoc* can plausibly refer. I propose to accept the reading of Codex Sarisburiensis, namely, *comminabantur. Dehinc ut . . . peruenerunt*.

W. H. SHEWRING.