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Mr Dix suggests that in the clause ἐάν τίς σοι δῷ ῥάπισμα ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιὰν σιαγόνα (D. i 4) the word δεξιάν is not original. He shews reason for thinking that it was not in the original form of the Diatessaron, and he points out that it is not in Isaac of Nineveh, though it is in *A.C.* But even if Isaac had been using the *Didache*, this seems slight evidence for connecting the *Didache* with the Diatessaron: Tatian and Isaac might both depend on St Luke (vi 29), who has not the word.

Finally, even if use of the Diatessaron could be traced in the 'interpolation' of D., that would be no argument for the genuineness of the passage: rather the reverse—unless use of the Diatessaron could be traced *elsewhere also* in D. R. H. CONNOLLY.

THE EARTH FROM THE EIGHTH HEAVEN: A Note on Dante *Paradiso* xxii 133–154

'Thence to me all the seven planets showed
how vast they are, how swift they are, and how
far, far apart they are in their abode.
With the Eternal Twins revolving now,
I saw our madding little threshing floor
spread out from river mouth to mountain brow:
Then turned I to the beauteous eyes once more.'

(Melville B. Anderson's translation of lines 148–154 in the *World's Classics*.)

Beatrice has carried Dante up the ladder with incredible speed into the Eighth Heaven, and they find themselves in the Constellation of Gemini. She bids him turn his eyes downwards through the seven spheres which they have traversed, and notice what the earth looks like, that he may judge of the immense distance:

'e vidi questo globo
tal ch'io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante.'

From the altitude where they stand they can watch the movements of the Five Planets, Moon, Sun, Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, revolving in immeasurable space; compared with this sight, how insignificant appeared the earth, on which men fight so fiercely for wealth and power! It looked like an *aiuola*, a threshing-floor, a tiny plot. Dante uses the word only once again, and then in its Latin form, *areola*, *de Mon.* iii 16 line 90, where he urges the curator orbis, the Romanus Princeps, to aim at promoting the peace of the world, 'ut scilicet in areola ista mortalium libere cum pace vivatur'. The word is by no means a conventional one in this connexion. What induced Dante to

choose the figure of a *threshing floor* to describe the earth? No doubt he wished to convey a touch of satire; and sometimes, even on the most august occasions, homely, naïve, images occur to him without any sense of incongruity. But there is more behind the figure, and indeed behind the whole of this scene, than appears at first sight.

Last year Prof. Langdon published a newly arranged and improved text of the ancient Babylonian *Legend of Etana and the Eagle* (Paris, 1932). The story runs that Etana, thirteenth king of Kish after the Deluge, had no son to succeed him; he prayed to Shamash to grant him the plant of birth in order that he might beget a son. Shamash directs him to the Eagle, who, after some entreaty, consents to fly with him up to the first heaven, the heaven of the Moon, the Sun, the Clouds, and Venus. Then the Eagle proposes a further ascent, to the gate of Anu, Enlil and Ea, the heaven of the Constellations. As they ascend

'The eagle spoke unto him, unto Etana:—
Behold, my friend, the land, how it is.
Look upon the sea and the sides of the mountain house.
Lo, the land becomes a mountain: the sea has turned to waters of...'

Higher still they went:

'He carried him upward two double hours' marches.
The eagle spoke unto him, unto Etana:—
Behold, my friend, the land, how it is: the land is like . . .'

They ascend yet higher, this time three double hours' marches, and again the Eagle says:

'Behold, my friend, the land, how it is.
The sea is turned to a canal of a gardener.'

Then they enter the gate of Anu, Enlil and Ea, which Prof. Langdon thinks may mean the Constellation of Gemini.

So far they have scaled two heavens. Then the Eagle proposes a still higher ascent, to the gate of Ishtar (here, the queen of heaven), and thence to Anu, in other words to the highest heaven of all, above the fixed stars. After some hesitation, the further ascent begins in stages, one, two, three double hours' marches. The Eagle takes up his refrain:

'My friend, look upon the land, how it is.
The land is turned into a garden, . . .
And the wide sea is like a wicker basket.'

But Etana refuses to go farther: 'My friend', he says, 'I will not ascend to heaven'. So the Eagle plunges downward with Etana on its back. The bold adventure failed, the plant of birth was never won. The gods denied to man the darling wish of his heart.

There was something in the story which appealed to human instincts

everywhere, and it lived on, until, to our astonishment, it reappears in the *History of Alexander the Great*, a romance which was widely circulated in the early Christian centuries, and kept its popularity throughout the Middle Ages. It seems to have been written originally in Greek, and translated into Latin *c.* A.D. 300, and into Syriac in the eighth century. Prof. Langdon in his introduction to the *Legend of Etana* refers to the Greek texts which have been collated by Gabriel Millet in *Syria* iv (1923), pp. 85–123. One of the best recensions, though only a torso, is preserved in the Bodleian (Oxf. Misc. 283), and Millet uses it as his main authority. It may be added that the Bodleian also possesses an early French translation in a splendidly illuminated manuscript of the fourteenth century. In the *History* Alexander writes a letter to his mother (ch. 28), and tells how he left his camp, climbed a high hill, and met with extraordinary adventures. He mounted to heaven by yoking two great birds to a *basket* (the word actually occurs in the old French translation), in which he was borne aloft nearly to the utmost height, when he was stopped by a bird-man, who warned him not to attempt to know the secret things which are above. Here the Oxford MS must be quoted: *καὶ πάλιν εἶπε πρός με· πρόσχες, Ἀλέξανδρε, ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν κάτω. Ἐγὼ δὲ μετὰ φόβου προσχὼν εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὄφις μέγας κύκλῳ καὶ μέσον τοῦ ὄφεως ἄλων σμικροτάτη. καὶ λέγει ὁ συναντήσας μοι· ἐπίστρεφε οὖν τὸ δόρυ ἐπὶ τὴν ἄλωνα ἥτις ἐστὶν ὁ κόσμος· ὁ γὰρ ὄφις ἡ θαλασσά ἐστιν ἡ κυκλοῦσα τὸν κόσμον ἥγουν πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.* Another recension of the Greek text in the Bibliothèque Nationale runs to the same effect, but with differences in wording (MS C. Bibl. Nat. lines 7–14): *καὶ πάλιν φησὶ [ ] πρόσχες [ ] ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν κάτω. ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος μετὰ φόβου προσείχει, καὶ ἰδοὺ εἶδεν ὅτι ὄφις μέγας κύκλῳ, μέσον δὲ τοῦ ὄφεως ἄλων [ ] καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ συναντήσας· γινώσκεις τί ἐστὶ ταῦτα; ἡ ἄλων ἐστὶν ὁ κόσμος· ὁ δὲ ὄφις ἡ θάλασσα [ ] ἡ κυκλοῦσα [ ] τὴν γῆν.* The Latin version is worth quoting too: 'Tanta autem altitudine ascenderunt ipsi grifes, quod videbatur Alexandro orbis terrarum sicut area, in qua conduntur fruges. Mare vero ita videbatur tortuosum in circuito orbis sicut draco.' The version goes on to say that the *grifes* lose their strength, fall to the earth, and bring Alexander back to his army.

It seems, then, that Dante must have been familiar with the Romance of Alexander (cf. *Inf.* xiv 31–36), probably in the Latin, possibly in old French. Now we know where the *aiuola*, the *areola ista mortalium*, came from; it is the ἄλων of the Greek version, the *area* of the Latin. But the connexion goes far beyond the use of a single word, however significant. The idea of a mortal man being carried up to the heights of heaven was elaborated in the Babylonian epic, and freshly applied in the Ascension of Alexander: the persistence of the Eagle *motif* in both

is noteworthy. In the *scala* between the seventh and the eighth heaven (*Par.* xxii 101) there is a resemblance to the stages, one, two, three hours' marches, by which the Eagle carried Etana to the heaven of Anu, the highest of all. The five planets which Dante sees correspond with three at least in the Etana legend, while in both the heaven of the constellations is higher than the heaven of the planets. It is remarkable that the Babylonian, the Greek, and the Italian all give the same bidding in almost identical words: 'Behold, my friend, the land, how it is', *πρόσχες ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν κάτω*, 'rimira in giu'; still more remarkable are the figures used for the diminutive earth and the encircling sea. But there is one noteable difference between the *Divina Commedia* and its forerunners. Etana never reached the plant of birth which he climbed the skies to find; Alexander, at the summit of his circuit, was forcibly hindered from learning the secrets of heaven; but Dante attained to the Beatific Vision. It is the difference between heathen and Christian conceptions of the ultimate goal. G. A. COOKE.

SOURCE-MARKS IN BEDE MANUSCRIPTS

IN the preface to his commentary on St Mark the Venerable Bede makes the following request to posterity:—

And I humbly pray the reader that, if he should deem these works of ours worthy of copying, he should also carefully preserve in the transcribing the notation of those names which have been placed above in the margin, just as was admittedly done for the commentary on St Luke that we, with the help of God's grace, composed many years ago.[1]

Until quite recently it was generally assumed that none of these source indications had survived in extant manuscripts of Bede. But in 1926 Father E. J. Sutcliffe drew attention to two manuscripts, now in the Vatican library, of the commentary on St Mark, in which borrowed passages from Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and Gregory I are indicated by the letters, AV, AM, HR, and GR.[2] The present writer has lately had occasion to examine Bede manuscripts in the British Museum and in half a dozen continental libraries. The fresh evidence obtained shows that the medieval copyists, especially in the earlier period, were by no means as forgetful of Bede's wishes as used to be supposed. Of twelve *codices* of the commentary on St Mark no less than ten contain at least some of the marginal source indications which Father Sutcliffe observed in the Vatican manuscripts.

A list of these is here given:—

1. Paris: B. N. lat. 9573. 320 × 261 mill. Two columns. Written very early in the ninth century by a Carolingian hand, but with frequent

[1] Migne *Patr. Lat.* xcii. [2] *Biblica* 7, 428–439.