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Excerpt

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HERMAS IN ARCADIA.

THE object of the present paper is to set at rest a critical difficulty which has been raised concerning the interpretation of the tract of Hermas which goes under the heading of the Ninth Similitude; and to indicate a direction in which further light may be obtained on the vexed question of the date of this remarkable writer. The difficulty is in the first instance one of interpretation: we find in the writings of Hermas a blending of the real experiences of life with imaginary importations from current mythologies which render it hard to decide whether the writer wishes us to take him seriously, or to apply to his works an allegorical interpretation such as was common enough in early times, both in pagan and Jewish and Christian circles. And it is probably this perplexity rather than a mere personal fondness for such interpretations which led Origen to explain even the most strongly defined personal allusions in Hermas, the names of Clement and Grapte, in a spiritual manner. We may at least conclude that the subject invited such treatment. We may easily agree that the allusions to his life in Rome in the first Vision are genuine history, from which the step to the second Vision, which contains a visit to Cumæ, seems natural, as does also the account of the walk on the Via Campana in the third Vision. But if we admit these passages to be meant for a literal acceptation, we certainly cannot admit the interview with the Church-Sibyl to be anything but a work of imagination based on popular religious mythology. And we should not find it easy to determine where the literal ends and the allegorical begins. We are thus in much the same case as an interpreter of the Pilgrim's Progress would be who had sufficient knowledge of Bunyan's history to see that the "certain den" with which the book opens is the Bedford prison, and who had sufficient

insight to determine that the rest of the book was allegorical, but who was wanting both in the historical information and in the intuitive perception by which to detect the traces of Bunyan's personal history which lurk behind the folds of the Allegory. It is however generally held that the mention of places not very remote from Rome ought to be accepted as sufficient evidence that the writer is giving us history rather than romance. The Via Campana, at least, scarcely admits of being allegorized, nor the mile-stones which Hermas passes on the road: with Cumæ the question is a little more involved, but even here the general opinion has been, and probably will remain in favour of the positive geographical acceptation of Hermas' words.

Such being the case, it is not a little surprising that, when we have so many Italian allusions in the book of Visions, we should find ourselves transported in the Ninth Similitude into Arcadia, and there regaled with an allegorical account of the building of the Church, which outdoes in fantastic detail the whole of the previous accounts. Are we to assume that, as in the case quoted from the Pilgrim's Progress, the initial note of place is to be accepted literally, and that from that point we plunge into allegory; or is the whole a work of imagination from the start? In the latter case, how can we explain the change of literary method involved in the comparison between a real Rome, Cumæ, Via Campana, and a poetic Arcadia? In the former case, how did the Roman Hermas find his way into the most inaccessible part of Greece? It was no doubt through some such questioning that Zahn was led to propose an emendation in the text of Hermas so that instead of reading

καὶ ἀπήγαγέν με εἰς Ἀρκαδίαν

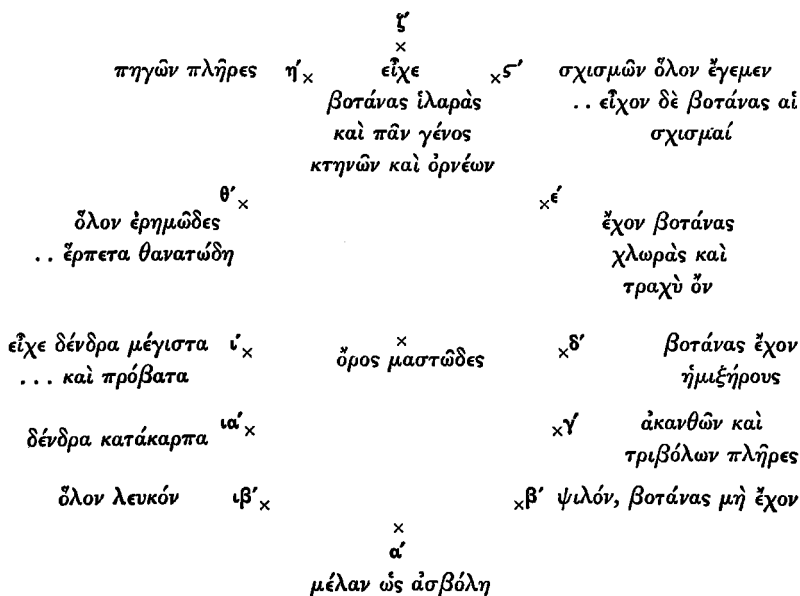
we should put *Ἀρικίαν* for *Ἀρκαδίαν*. The advantage of this correction was that it transferred the scene again to the neighbourhood of Rome, and restored the literary parallelism between the Ninth Similitude and the book of Visions. To support this conjecture, Zahn first brought forward a case where the word *Ἀρικίαν* had been corrupted in transcription, viz.: a passage in the Acts of Peter and Paul, c. 20, where the scribe has in error given *Ἀραβίαν*. If Arabia, why not Arcadia?

Then he proceeds to shew that the country around Aricia corresponds to the description given by Hermas of Arcadian

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scenery, and, in particular, he identifies the "rounded hill" (*ὄρος μαστῶδες*) to which Hermas was transported, with the Italian *Monte Gentile*. I do not know whether this suggestion of Zahn has met with any great favour, although it is ingenious, and not outside the bounds of possibility. The objection to it is chiefly that which falls to the lot of the majority of conjectural emendations, viz.: that it is not necessary; for, as I shall shew presently, the whole description of the country visited by Hermas, corresponds closely with the current accounts of Arcadian scenery, and is probably based upon them. So that if I do not discuss Zahn's hypothesis directly, it is because it is a last resort of criticism to which one must not look until the normal methods of interpretation have broken down. Let us then examine the scene into which Hermas introduces us; and the interpretation which he puts upon what he sees. We are told in the first place that his guide led him away into Arcadia and there seated him upon the top of a rounded hill from whence he had a view of a wide plain surrounded by mountains of diverse character and appearance. We will indicate the description of these mountains by the following diagram, in which the successive eminences are ranged in a circular form, and attached to each is the leading characteristic which is noted by Hermas:—



Now before we begin to look for identifications with the scenery of any particular country or neighbourhood, we should try to subtract from the description those details which are artistically inserted by Hermas in order to bring certain views of his own before the minds of his reader under the cover of his allegory. The matter of the Ninth Similitude so far as it concerns the building of the tower and the shaping of the various stones is already present in the third Vision; and there is much in the description that is parallel to the account given of the various stones which are brought from the twelve mountains. For example, just as in the third Vision we find stones brought for building that are white, and some that are speckled (*ἐψωριακότες*); some that are squared, and some that are round; some that are sound, and some that have cracks in them. When we find, therefore, that in his Ninth Similitude Hermas makes his first mountain black as soot and his twelfth perfectly white, we know that it is more likely to be an expansion of the previous allegory than a natural feature; and when we find him saying that some of the mountains had chasms (*σχισμαί*) in them, we must rather refer to the stones that have cracks in them (*σχισμὰς ἔχοντες*) than to any peculiarity of the mountain region, however the description may seem to invite the identification with the peculiar characteristic of Arcadia, the *κατάβαθρα* or underground passages and hollows of the mountains into which the rivers of that country so commonly precipitate themselves.

A similar process of subtraction must be made on account of the similarity between this Ninth Similitude and the one that precedes it. In this case the allegory turns upon the distribution by the angel of the Lord of a number of branches which he had cut from a great willow-tree. After a while the angel summons the people to whom he had given them and scrutinizes them carefully. Some brought back their branches withered, others half-withered and with cracks on their surface, (*ἡμιξήρους καὶ σχισμὰς ἐχούσας*), others again were green, (*χλωράς*), others had fruit, and so on. A comparison of these terms with those used by Hermas of his mountains will shew that there has been a use made of the Eighth Similitude in the Ninth.

Nor must we suppose that there is any special identification with the particular number twelve. The number is introduced artificially and for the following reason: the mountains out of

which the stones are taken are declared to represent the peoples of the earth out of whom the church is builded; now the idea prevailed at an early period that since the Jewish Ecclesia was composed of twelve tribes, something of a similar nature was to be predicated concerning the Christian world which had replaced and comprehended the Jewish world. Otherwise how was an explanation possible of the sealing of the 144,000 in the Apocalypse? But then these twelve tribes could not be identified with nationalities and must therefore represent so many different types of character.

This is undoubtedly Hermas' idea, and it shews us that we must not suppose any geographical enumeration to be involved in the number twelve. The author of the *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum* amongst his many traces of antiquity gives us the following on Matt. xix. 28: "Adhuc autem audeo, et subtiliorem introducere sensum, et sententiam alterius cuiusdam viri referre. Exponit autem sic: Quoniam sicut Judaeorum populus in duodecim tribus fuit divisus, sic et universus populus Christianus divisus est in duodecim tribus secundum quasdam proprietates animorum et diversitates cordium, quas solus deus discernere et cognoscere potest, ut quaedam animae sunt de tribu Reuben, quaedam de tribu Simeon vel Levi vel Juda."

These twelve classes according to Hermas are

- α. Blasphemers and traitors.
- β. Hypocrites and wicked teachers.
- γ. Rich men and those who are involved in the business of life¹.
- δ. The double-minded.
- ε. Badly-trained, self-willed people.
- ς. Slanderers and keepers of grudges.
- ζ. Simple, guileless, happy souls who give of their toils without hesitating and without reproach. (Cf. Teaching of Apostles.)
- η. Apostles and teachers.
- θ. Bad deacons who have plundered the widow and orphan. Lapsi who do not repent and return to the saints.

¹ Note that these are said to be *πνιγόμενοι ὑπὸ τῶν πράξεων αὐτῶν*, and correspond to the mountain covered with thorns and briars; the reference to the Gospel (the thorns sprang up and choked them) seems indisputable.

ι. Hospitable bishops who entertain the servants of God.

ια. Martyrs for the Name, including those who thereby obtain a remission that was otherwise inaccessible to them.

ιβ. Babes of the Kingdom who keep all the commands of God.

These, then, are the twelve tribes of the new Israel; and, as I have said, we do need to identify twelve mountains.

When we have made the deductions intimated from the imagery, we are left to identify the locality from the remaining data; and this we shall proceed to do. And to begin with, let us observe that the idea of Arcadia presented itself early in connection with Christianity. For example, that beautiful composition which passes under the name of the second epistle of Clement, but which seems rather to be an early Christian homily, declares (c. xiv) the pre-existence of the Church in the following terms: "Wherefore, my brethren, if we do the will of God our Father we shall be of the first Church, viz.: the spiritual one, which *was created before the sun and moon*... For the Church was spiritual as was also our Jesus¹, and was manifested in the last times." No doubt this language is in part to be explained like the Valentinian Syzygy of Man and the Church by reference to a gnosis on Genesis i. 27. The writer of the homily says as much; the first Adam having been created male with female, so was the second; but what should be noticed is that the terms used to describe the pre-existence are not borrowed from Genesis, but from the Arcadian tradition that they existed in their mountain fastnesses before the moon, and it was thus that they explained their name of *Προσέληνοι*. What the writer of the homily means is that the Christian Church is the true Arcadia. And thus we have at once the explanation of the ideal journey which Hermas makes into Arcadia. For we find the same view held in the second Vision of Hermas (Vis. ii. 4. 1), where we are told even more decidedly that the Church was created first of all things. Similar ideas must have been common enough in the earlier centuries. So much being premised, let us put ourselves into the position of Hermas on the supposition that he has no more than the ordinary notions concerning Arcadia. We should simply be

¹ That Christ was before "the Sun and Moon" is proved by Justin, *Dial.* 76, apparently from Ps. 72. 17, 110. 3.

able to say that Arcadia was the innermost part of the Peloponnesus, and that it was shut in on every side by a ring of mountains. The rudest idea that could be formed would therefore be that of a plain within a circular mountain-wall; precisely the kind of view with which the Ninth Similitude opens. Here dwell the remnants of the primitive and virtuous race of men whom the gods loved to visit, whose chief virtues were, according to Polybius, *φιλοξενία* and *φιλανθρωπία*. It may be noticed in passing, though I do not attach any importance to it, that Hermas makes one of his spiritual tribes, the good bishops, representative of the virtue of hospitality.

But it is plain that Hermas' knowledge goes beyond the elementary notion sketched above. This can be seen best by noticing the points which occur in the description of the mountains which have no special parallel in the allegorical explanation of the characters whom the mountains represent. For example, he adds to his description of his seventh mountain the fact that there were found on it all manner of beasts and birds; the eighth mountain is full of springs; the tenth mountain has sheep resting under the shade of its timber; the ninth is full of snakes and evil beasts; the eleventh shews fruit trees, and so on. But especially one should draw attention to the sixth mountain, whose description is *ἔχον βοτάνας χλωρὰς καὶ τραχὺ ὄν*. The same language is used again in c. 22 *τοῦ ἔχοντος βοτάνας χλωρὰς καὶ τραχέος ὄντος*. Here all the editors print the word *τραχὺ* as an adjective, and it may be so; but if an adjective it is suggested by the name of one of the mountains of Arcadia. A reference to a map of Arcadia will shew this mountain on the eastern side of the plain of Orchomenos: E. Curtius in his Peloponnesos (i. 219) describes it as follows: "Den östlichen Berg nannten die Alten seiner rauhen und schroffen Form wegen Trachy."

I suppose it will hardly be maintained to be an accidental coincidence that Hermas, writing of Arcadia, or professing to do so, should twice describe a particular mountain by the name which the ancients used to designate one of the mountains of Arcadia. So far from any such assumption being likely, the mere mention of the name Trachy would be sufficient to intimate that we were in Arcadia.

This identification being then made, we are able to take the next step, and to determine the plain in which the scene is laid

and the rounded hill from which the scenery is viewed. This seems at first sight to be difficult, because, although to an outsider Arcadia might be pictured as a happy valley within mountains, in reality, like Switzerland, with which it has often been compared, it does not furnish any one central plain, but innumerable valleys and small plains; and although there are one or two larger and more spacious than others, none seems to correspond to the rounded form which Hermas' language would at first lead us to expect. But the mention of Mount Trachy shews that the plain must be the plain of Orchomenos, in the midst of which stands, dividing it into upper and lower respectively, the hill of Orchomenos, the strongest natural fortress of Arcadia and perhaps of ancient Greece. This then must be the *ὄρος μαστώδες* of Hermas; it rises to a height of nearly 3000 feet immediately from the plain, and was famous even in Homeric times as one of the early Greek strongholds and cities¹.

Thus far we might have arrived from a study of the itinerary of Pausanias, from whose description of Arcadia we must make not a few references. Thus in xiii. § 2 we have the following notes: *Ὀρχομενίοις δὲ ἡ προτέρα πόλις ἐπὶ ὄρους ἦν ἄκρα τῆ κορυφῆ καὶ ἀγορᾶς τε καὶ τειχῶν ἐρείπια λείπεται*: and in § 3. *ἔστι δὲ ἀπαντικρὺ τῆς πόλεως ὄρος Τραχύ. τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ χαράδρας ῥέον κοίλης μεταξὺ τῆς τε πόλεως καὶ τοῦ Τραχέος ὄρους κάτεισιν ἐς ἄλλο Ὀρχομένιον πεδίων· τὸ δὲ πεδίων τοῦτο μεγέθει μὲν μέγα, τὰ πλείω δὲ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ λίμνη*. It appears, therefore, that the name Trachy was current for the mountain on the east of Orchomenos in the second century: Pausanias seems to have given us here a careful and correct description of the country.

Some of the other mountains to which Hermas makes reference may now be identified by the aid of Pausanias. For example, the ninth mountain is said to be full of serpents and noxious beasts. The mountain referred to is Mt. Sepia. The name is supposed to be derived from the venomous viper that was found there; and there were legends enough about the neighbourhood, even in Pausanias' time, to make it appear a country which was formerly something like Ireland before the arrival of St. Patrick.

¹ Curtius, *Peloponnesos*, i. 220. "Die orchomenische Berg, eine Kuppe von 2912 F. Höhe, welche Ithome ähnlich ist, und wie diese zwei Ebenen beherrscht, steigt unmittelbar aus dem Nachlande empor."



MAP ILLUSTRATING HERMAS' VISIT TO ARCADIA

Here they said that Ærytus, the son of Elatos, met his death from the bite of a serpent. Cf. Pausan. *Arcad.* iv. 4, Κλειτορι δὲ τῷ Ἀζᾶνος οὐ γενομένων παιδῶν ἐς Αἴπυτον Ἐλάτου περιεχώρησεν ἢ Ἀρκάδων βασιλεία. τὸν δὲ Αἴπυτον ἐξελθόντα ἐς ἄγραν θηρίων μὲν τῶν ἀλκιμωτέρων οὐδὲν, σήψ δὲ οὐ προϊδόμενον ἀποκτίνυσι. τὸν δὲ ὄφιν τοῦτον καὶ αὐτὸς ποτε εἶδον· κατὰ ἔχιν ἐστὶ τὸν μικρότατον, τέφρα ἐμφορῆς, στίγμασιν οὐ συνέχεσι πεποικιλμένος κτέ.

xvi. 1, Τρικρήνων δὲ οὐ πόρρω ἄλλο ἐστὶν ὄρος Σηπία καὶ Αἰπύτῳ τῷ Ἐλάτου λέγουσιν ἐνταῦθα γενέσθαι τὴν τελευταίην ἐκ τοῦ ὄφeos κτέ.

Now, I think, if we compare Pausanias' account of Ærytus' death while hunting, through no great beast, but by the bite of a viper, with Hermas' statement that in the ninth mountain there were ἔρπετα θανατώδη, διαφθείροντα τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, he will have little doubt that the mountain meant is Mt. Sepia.

The identification of these two mountains, Trachy and Sepia, I regard as established. They are respectively the fifth and ninth of Hermas' series, and whatever further progress in identification is possible, the results must harmonize with these so that the other mountains enclose a plain with them, and from an examination of the situation of these two on a map of Arcadia it is not difficult to infer that the order in which Hermas reckons his mountains is East—North—West—South. I am not, however, very sanguine of making any further identifications that would be equally convincing. It would be, however, possible to detect the origin of Hermas' many-fountained mountain. For we are informed by Pausanias that the emperor Adrian brought water for the city of Corinth all the way from Stymphalus: Paus. ii. iii. 5, Κρήναι δὲ πολλαὶ μὲν ἀνὰ τὴν πόλιν πεποίηται πᾶσαι, ἅτε ἀφθόνου ρέοντός σφισιν ὕδατος, καὶ ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Ἀδριανὸς ἐσήγαγεν ἐκ Στυμφήλου. The language of Pausanias is in close correspondence with Hermas, and the mountain is located in the eighth place in the field of view. The umbrageous mountain under the shade of which flocks of sheep were gathered might find its identification in the Mt. Skiathis, described by Pausanias as follows, xiv. 1, Καρυῶν δὲ στάδια πέντε ἀφέστηκεν ἢ τε Ὀρυξίς καλουμένη καὶ ἕτερον Σκίαθις. ὑφ' ἑκατέρω δὲ ἐστὶ τῷ ὄρει βάραθρον τὸ ὕδωρ καταδεχόμενον τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πεδίου.

According to this identification Mt. Skiathis should be the next