

## REVIEWS

## CARDINAL RAMPOLLA'S MELANIA THE YOUNGER.

*Santa Melania Giuniore Senatrice Romana: Documenti Contemporanei e Note.* (Roma: Tipographia Vaticana, 1905.)

WHILE Nuntio in Madrid in 1884 Cardinal Rampolla examined a number of the Escorial MSS, and found among them a Latin *Vita Melaniae Iunioris*, presenting an evidently purer form of the Life than the Metaphrast's Greek. He copied it, intending to edit it; but owing to the constant pressure of his public duties he was unable to do so, and in 1889 the Bollandists published the *Vita* from two inferior MSS (*Analecta Bollandiana* viii). Later on they discovered in a Barberini MS a Greek *Vita*, earlier than the Metaphrast's; this they printed in 1903 (*Anal. Boll.* xxii). On being freed from the cares of statecraft and diplomacy on the accession of Pius X, Cardinal Rampolla returned to those studies that had been his first love and for which he had never lost his affection; and he has produced a sumptuous and stately folio that probably contains all that can be known from extant materials concerning the younger Melania and the whole circle in which she moved. The central portion of the book contains the documents: (1) the Latin *Vita*, critically edited from the seven known MSS; it is a notably better text than that of the Bollandists, the Escorial MS being the best; (2) a careful print of the Greek *Vita* from the Barberini MS, accompanied by an Italian translation; (3) the chapter of the Lausiaca History of Palladius devoted to the younger Melania, the critically reconstructed Cambridge text and the inferior (metaphrastic) text of Meursius being printed side by side, with the Latin version below. These documents occupy nearly a hundred pages.

Besides this there is an Introduction and a number of Notes. The Introduction deals with Roman society in the fourth and fifth centuries, with the career of the younger Melania, and with the historical sources for her story. This last section raises some questions of textual criticism, which, as matter of detail and as calling (I think) for further consideration, had better be dealt with first of all. The chief of these questions concerns the original language of the *Vita*; was it Latin or Greek? Various

arguments in support of each view are considered, and it is concluded that the question cannot be decided with certainty; still the verdict is given in favour of the Latin *Vita*. The crucial argument turns on a citation from the Lausiac History of Palladius, made in c. 1 of the *Vita*. The relevant texts are printed in the Introduction to my edition, p. xxxiii. The fact that the Latin is practically a literal translation of the piece of Palladius, whereas the Greek is considerably paraphrased, shows with certainty that the Latin *Vita* is not a translation of the Greek *Vita* as contained in the Barberini MS. But when we examine the passage in the Greek *Vita*, we find that, in spite of the paraphrasing, it preserves a considerable element of Palladius's actual phraseology. Thus :—

## Palladius.

Εἰ μὲν αἰρῆσαι συνοικισθῆναί μοι  
κατὰ τὸν τῆς σωφροσύνης λόγον, καὶ  
δεσπότην σε οἶδα καὶ κύριον τῆς ἐμῆς  
ζωῆς ὁμολογήσω σε.

καὶ μόνον τὸ σῶμά μου ἐλευθέρωσον,  
ἵνα πληροφορήσω μου τὴν  
κατὰ θεὸν ἐπιθυμίαν.

*Vita*.

Εἰ μὲν βούλει . . . κατὰ τὸν τῆς  
σωφροσύνης συνοικισθῆναί μοι νόμον,  
καὶ κύριόν σε καὶ δεσπότην τῆς οἰκείας  
ζωῆς ἐπιγράφομαι.

μόνον τὸ σῶμά μου ἐλευθέρωσον  
. . . οὕτω γὰρ πληροφορήσω τὴν κατὰ  
θεόν μου ἐπιθυμίαν.

It is evident that a retranslation of the Latin back into Greek could not have reproduced in this way the words of Palladius. The priority of the Latin could be maintained only by the hypothesis that the Greek translator recognized that the piece was taken from Palladius, and looked out the passage in a MS of the Lausiac History. Such an hypothesis would present little difficulty in regard to a biblical text; but in the present case it could be admitted only for most peremptory reasons, which do not exist. The phenomena of the case thus point clearly to the solution offered on p. xxxiv of my Introduction, viz. that the *Vita* was originally written in Greek, but that the Barberini MS contains a rewritten and somewhat paraphrased text. Should a better MS not be forthcoming, the best that can be done towards the restoration of the primitive text would be a critically reconstructed edition of the Greek *Vita* by means of the Latin, by the same method that I was compelled to employ in certain chapters of the Lausiac History.

On p. lv is a criticism of my text of the Lausiac History, which, though confined to the chapter on Melania the younger (61), virtually affects the entire book. The view is maintained that the text which I have edited (G), though a much better text than its metaphrastic rival (B), represented by Meursius's edition, is an abridgement of the original text. This judgement is mainly based upon the Latin version, which is (properly) taken as a discriminant between the two Greek texts. But

the Latin version is here edited from some Vatican MSS presenting a text deteriorated by revision on the basis of a Greek MS of the metaphrastic type (see my *Lausiaca History* i pp. 59-64 ; ii p. lxxvi). Had the pure form of the text, preserved in the Cassinese and Sessorian MSS, been printed, the difficulties and doubts felt by the Cardinal would not have presented themselves.

The Notes, forty-eight in number and filling 200 pages, are a veritable monument of erudition and indefatigable industry. Every imaginable question that could be raised concerning Melania is dealt with in the most painstaking and elaborate manner. Her pedigree and that of her husband are worked out in ten notes, culminating in two great genealogical tables. In the other notes all sorts of questions of archaeology, liturgy, history are discussed, so that the Notes are a mine of information for students of the fourth and fifth centuries. I was especially interested in the first Note, in which the chronology of the Lives of the two Melanias is dealt with—a subject I had briefly handled in my *Palladius*. It was a satisfaction to find that in so difficult and delicate a piece of work,—how difficult and delicate only those know who have had occasion to scratch beneath the surface of received chronology,—the two chronological schemes agree on nearly all points; the chief difference is in the period assigned to the sojourn of Melania and Pinian in Africa, and here I had overlooked the statement of the *Vita* that they spent seven years there before going to the Holy Land.

The book is superbly printed by the Vatican Press, and is ornamented with four fine pages of facsimile reproductions of the MSS.

That such a book should have been produced by one who for nearly twenty years had borne the burdens that now fall on a Cardinal Secretary of State, and Secretary of State under a master so active and exacting as Leo XIII, is certainly a phenomenon. For in this volume Cardinal Rampolla shews that on the common basis of scholarship and learning he can meet on equality professional scholars. If a general criticism had to be passed, it would be a regret that, owing to the enforced delay of twenty years in publication, the value of the original documents to be edited is not more proportionate to the quality of the work that has been bestowed upon them.

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