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Epimenides' Minos

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ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

EPIMENIDES' MINOS.

SOME sixteen years ago I read with a form the *Acts of the Apostles* as edited by Mr. T. E. Page. In commenting on St. Paul's speech at Athens, Mr. Page gave with various references the story of Epimenides' visit to Athens after a plague, and in particular he gave Diogenes Laertius' statement (I. 110) that the sage λαβὼν πρόβατα μέλανα τε καὶ λευκὰ ἤγαγε πρὸς τὸν Ἀρειὸν¹ πάγον κακείθεν εἶασεν ἵεναι οἱ βούλοιντο, προστάξας τοῖς ἀκολουθοῖσι ἔνθα ἂν κατακλίνουσι αὐτῶν ἕκαστον θύειν τῷ προσήκοντι θεῷ· καὶ οὕτω λήξει τὸ κακόν. ὅθεν ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἔστιν εὐρεῖν κατὰ τοὺς δήμους τῶν Ἀθηναίων βωμοὺς ἀνωρύμους, ὑπόμνημα τῆς τότε γενομένης ἐξιλάσεως. It was, I confess, without mathematical demonstration, yet, as it seemed to me, with reasonable probability, that I associated from that time the altar ἀγνώστω θεῷ with Epimenides. When, therefore, about a year ago I saw a reference to Prof. Rendel Harris' articles in the *Expositor* (October, 1906, pp. 305-317; April, 1907, pp. 332-337; 1912, pp. 348-353) and his suggestion that St. Paul had quoted from Epimenides' *Minos*, I supposed that the Apostle not unnaturally quoted from the philosopher who, as he might have been told, had, at least indirectly,

caused the altar to be set up. Some later discussions of the subject seem to make it desirable to develop this suggestion more fully.

It will conduce best to clearness, perhaps, if we first restate Prof. Harris' discovery. He found in the Syriac commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, written by Isho'dad of Merv (*circa* 850 A.D.) and in Syrian Gannat Busame a passage declaring that both τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν and also ἐν αὐτῷ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν were quotations from known heathen poets. Minos, it was said, wrote an ἐγκώμιον on his father Zeus in opposition to the Cretan story that Zeus was a king, slain by a wild-boar, with a tomb still shown amongst them. Minos said, according to the Professor's retranslation into Greek:

Τύμβον ἐτεκτήναντο σέθεν, κύδιστε,
μέγιστε,
Κρήτες, αἰὲ ψεύσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέ-
ρες ἄργοί·
'Αλλὰ σύ γ' οὐ θνήσκες, ἔστηκας γὰρ
ζοὺς αἰεὶ·
'Ἐν γὰρ σοὶ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθ' ἡδὲ καὶ
ἐσμέν.

The other passage is referred to Aratus,² and the quotation correctly given. But

¹ Prof. Rendel Harris notes in a private letter to me that this suggests that Areopagus in the *Acts* is really the hill, and not the court. Cf. Mr. Page's note *ad loc.*

² The resemblance between Aratus' *Phainomena* 5 and Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* 4 supplies a parallel to the resemblance between the *Minos* and Callimachus.

the Minos passage presents a puzzle, for the second line, quoted in the *Epistle to Titus*, is found in Callimachus¹ (*Hymn to Zeus*, line 8), and in a context that must be quoted:

Ζεῦ, σὲ μὲν Ἰδαίοισιν ἐν οὐρεσι φασὶ
γενέσθαι,
Ζεῦ, σὲ δ' ἐν Ἀρκαδίῃ· πότεροι, πάτερ,
ἐψεύσαντο;
Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται· καὶ γὰρ τάφον,
ὦ ἄνα, σείο
Κρήτες ἐτεκτῆμαντο, σὺ δ' οὐ θάνες·
ἐσσι γὰρ αἰεὶ.

This is sufficiently like Isho'dad's quotation to make us enquire what is the relation between the two passages. Prof. Rendel Harris saw that Isho'dad is closely dependent upon Theodore of Mopsuestia, and there is no possibility of questioning this; so that the reference to Minos may perhaps be safely thrown forward to *circa* 400 A.D. But the Professor did more. He found in Diogenes Laertius' *Life of Epimenides* that he wrote on Minos and Rhadamanthus. He therefore suggested that the passage was quoted from Epimenides. But in *Berliner Philol. Wochenschrift*, July 26, 1913, 935-38, Dr. Hugo Gressmann criticises this attribution. (1) He objects to the Professor's retranslation: this, however, can be met by another attempt, as will be seen below. (2) He argues that an ἐγκώμιον would be part verse, part prose, referring to the rhetorician Himerios' work for an example. Even if this be sound, it would not show that this was not a verse-passage from the work. (3) He understands Diogenes to say 'ausdrücklich' that Epimenides' work on Minos and Rhadamanthus was in prose. This is a matter of interpretation and punctuation, and it will be best to quote the original (I. x. 5, §§ III-2):

ἐποίησε δὲ Κουρήτων καὶ Κορυβάντων
γένεσιν καὶ θεογονίαν, ἔπη πεντακισ-
χίλια· Ἀργοῦς ναυπηγίαν τε, καὶ
Ἰάσονος εἰς Κόλχους ἀπόπλουν, ἔπη
ἑξακισχίλια πεντακόσια. Συνέγραψε δὲ
καὶ καταλογάδην περὶ θυσίων, καὶ τῆς ἐν
Κρήτῃ πολιτείας· καὶ περὶ Μίνω καὶ
Ῥαδαμάνθους, εἰς ἔπη τετρακισχίλια.

¹ Imitated by Dionysius' *Perieget.* and Nonnus.

Here we might take it that the philosopher's prose writings were on Sacrifices and the Cretan Constitution only, and in harmony with this argue that the attribution to the work on Minos and Rhadamanthus of 4,000 lines indicates that it was verse. We may observe, too, that if Diog. Laert. II. iii. 8, § 11 πρώτος δὲ Ἀναξαγόρας καὶ βιβλίον ἐξέδωκε συγγραφῆς, either we must bring Epimenides' date down low enough to extend beyond Anaxagoras' publication, or we must suppose Epimenides' prose-works to be admitted forgeries, or perhaps most reasonably we must distinguish Epimenides' style of writing from Anaxagoras' mere prose. (4) Finally, and this he seems to regard as the clinching proof that it is 'unmöglich, das ganze hier vorliegende Zitat auf "Epimenides" zurückzuführen'—he refers to Crönert *De Lobone Argivo* (in 'Χάρτες Friedrich Leo dargebracht,' Berlin, 1911, pp. 123 ff.) for proof that this notice of Diogenes goes back to Lobon, and has no historical value. But we must observe that if this be correct, then we cannot use this valueless passage to establish what is asserted just before that the *Minos* was prose. A comparison with Diogenes' *Life of Thales*, p. 22, shows that Lobon is there the authority for saying that Thales' writings ran to 200 lines, and perhaps for the words of his epitaph, and for four of his sayings. It is clear that it is of a piece that Lobon should have recorded about Epimenides the assertions quoted above as to his writings. Diogenes states also that Lobon declared that Epimenides founded the temple of the σεμναὶ θεοὶ at Athens. More will be said presently about Epimenides' life: here it is necessary first to hear Dr. Gressmann out, and then to call up an ancient witness against him. (5) Dr. Gressmann proceeds to say that the line Κρήτες ἀεὶ κ.τ.λ. attributed by Diels (*Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*² II. p. 189) to the beginning of the *Χρησμοί* smacks of 'prophetische Scheltrede,' and has been assigned with all other native 'Kretika' and 'Minoika' to Epimenides. If the point of this is that the work is not from the pen of the philosopher Epimenides himself, but is pseudepigraphic,

I do not suppose that Prof. Rendel Harris or anyone else would feel that he was called to be careful to answer the indictment. But when Dr. Gressmann goes on 'Jedenfalls geht das Zitat Ischodads nicht auf "Epimenides," sondern auf Kallimachos zurück, der in seinem *Hymnos an Zeus* (I, 8) singt,' u.s.w., we must serve a summons on St. Jerome. That polymath, in his *Commentary on the Epistle to Titus*¹ (vol. vii. pp. 685 ff. = vol. iv. of the Benedictine edition), writes the following emphatic assertion: 'Dicitur autem iste versiculus in Epimenidis Cretensis Poetae Oraculis reperiri: . . . ipse liber Oraculorum titulo praenotatur: . . . Sunt qui putent hunc versum de Callimacho Cyrenensi Poeta sumptum, et aliqua ex parte non errant. Siquidem et ipse . . . ait . . . Verum ut supra diximus integer versus de Epimenide poeta ab Apostolo sumptus est, et eius Callimachus in suo poemate est usus exordio.'

Before we come to final grips with Dr. Gressmann, we will summarise the rest of his article: (6) He regards the combination of the *Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται* proverb with the legend of Zeus' grave as distinctively Callimachean, though he leaves it open whether someone had preceded Callimachus in making the combination. He suggests that later Callimachus' lines were worked up into a rationalising poem, and still later a Christian author attached to this the line quoted in the *Acts* xvii. 28.

(7) He quotes from Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Commentary on Titus*, which is preserved to us (ed. Swete II. p. 243): οἱ κατὰ τῶν χριστιανικῶν συντάξαντες δογμάτων ἐνταῦθα ἔφασαν καὶ τον μακάριον Παῦλον ἀποδέχεσθαι τὴν τοῦ ποιητοῦ φωνὴν καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρεῖν αὐτῷ, ὡς ἂν δικαίως ταῦτα ὑπὲρ τοῦ Διὸς περὶ Κρητῶν εἰρηκότι . . . οὐ γὰρ τὸ ποίημα οὐδὲ τὴν τοῦ ποιητοῦ ἀποδέχεται φωνήν, ἀλλ' ὡς παροιμία τῇ τοῦ ποιητοῦ φωνῇ χρησάμενος, and declares that this is hard to reconcile with the standpoint implied in Isho'dad and the Gannat Busame,

and emphasises that it is remarkable if Theodore commented on the quotation in his commentary on the *Acts* rather than in that on the *Epistle to Titus*.

In turning up the Callimachus passage I used Bishop Blomfield's edition, and that thorough old scholar supplied in his notes several additional references. The natural conclusion to draw from the *catena*² of authors would seem to be that a poem attributed at least to Epimenides was read by St. Paul, that as time went on this quotation fell out of recognition, and most men who were not professed scholars only knew the Callimachus passage, with the consequence that they assigned to Callimachus St. Paul's quotation in the *Epistle*, and did not recognise the words in the *Acts* as a quotation, but St. Jerome with his wide and multifarious reading, and no doubt other polymaths like him, had come across Epimenides' *Minos*. From him no doubt comes Luciani³ Scholiastes, Tom. I.: ὁ Ἐπιμενίδης Κρής ἦν χρησμολόγος οὐ καὶ τὸ Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται λόγιον. So, too, *Cod.*⁴ *Laura* 184: Ἐπιμενίδου χρησιῶς . . . κέχρηται δὲ καὶ Καλλιμάχος τῇ χρήσει where the *καὶ* is important, as in Euthalius' καὶ Καλλιμάχου ἡ αὐτή.

The contrary theory that the Epimenides' quotation or poem was manufactured in post-apostolic times, so that St. Paul was quoting Callimachus, and that the later poem threw together two N.T. passages is discountenanced, if not refuted, by the words *ἰδίου αὐτῶν προφήτης*, which can hardly be thought to describe Callimachus. The sane inference is that the Epimenides poem was known when the *Epistle* was written, and, if so, there seems to be no

¹ It confirms the view developed in the text that in the short *spurious* commentary (vol. xi.) we read, 'Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται, Callimachus scilicet.'

² Augustine, *contra Adv. Leg.*; Chrysostom, *Serm. 3. Epist. ad Tit.*; Origen, *adv. Celsum*, lib. 3, chap. 43 (Callimachus) and Theodoret. The origin of the proverb is variously traced by Eustathius and a scholiast on Callimachus to Idomeneus' dishonest distribution of Trojan spoils, and Antiochus τὰ κατὰ πόλιν μυθικά, book 2 (in Athenodorus of Eretria *ὑπομνήματα*, book 8), to Medea's cursing of him for pronouncing her less beautiful than Thetis. Cf. Ptol. Hephaestion (of Trajan's date) in Photius *Biblioth.* p. 483; Zenob. iv. 62, and Meursii *Cret.* p. 233.

³ Cf. Socr. III. 26 and Nicephorus X. 26.

⁴ Cf. Clement Alexandr. I. 14 and Athanasius, *de Incarn.* xiii.

particular reason for supposing the poem to be pseudonymous. We may next notice, therefore, certain points in the story of Epimenides' life which seem susceptible of safe rehabilitation from our conflicting authorities.

1. In Olympiad 47 he was fetched to purify Athens, *i.e.* 592-588. The varying figures of Suidas (44), Ambrosius (27), Diogenes (46) and Casandre Codr. (47) can all best spring from ΔΓΓII.¹

2. He lived to be 149½ years old. This explains the 299 ὡς Κρήτες λέγουσι—evidently they reckoned half-years—and ΗΓΓIII would give rise to the 154 of which Xenophanes of Colophon said he had heard, and the 157 which Phlegon in his *περὶ μακροβίων* said Epimenides died βιούς.

3. Whatever be the explanation of the statement that Nicias, son of Nice-ratus, fetched Epimenides to Athens, the date 592/88² harmonises with the statement that he was brought for τὸ Κυλώ-νειον ἄγος.

4. If Demetrius ὁ Μάγνης pronounces 'modern and in Attic' the letter said to have been sent by him to Solon, it does not follow that he did not write one. The date we have already established allows it. With this go the statements that he was alive after Pisistratus' tyranny began, that Xenophanes 569-477 criticised him, that he foretold the Arcadian defeat of Sparta at Orchomenus, and that Pythagoras was with him before returning to Samos from his travels and before he went thence to Italy. It is possible then that he paid two visits to Athens, the second taking place as Plato³ says in 500 B.C., and, if so, we shall understand the statement, that he died soon after purifying Athens, to fix his death about that year—let us say the spring of 499. His birth then would be in the autumn perhaps of 649⁴ B.C., and perhaps his 'sleep' was

through 57 half-years. Our dating makes him nearly 60 years old when he came to Athens in 592. As for Crönert's attack on Lobon and Dr. Gressmann's observation that Epimenides' *Minos* was in prose, according to Diogenes Laertius; I. x. § 112, we must notice that from Lobon comes also the remark that he founded the temple of the σεμναὶ θεοί at Athens, that it is quite reconcileable with the genuineness of the Pauline quotation that the *Minos* was a work half prose, half verse, as Isho'dad perhaps implies, and we have seen that it is at least arguable that Diogenes does not state the *Minos* to have been in prose.

As for Dr. Gressmann's criticism of the attempted reconstruction of the last hexameter in the quotation, we have only to say that it is easy to turn its flank by suggesting *e.g.*

ἐν γὰρ (or γ' ἄρα) σοὶ ζῶμεν καὶ (or τ' ἰδὲ) κινεόμεσθα καὶ ἐσμέν.

And finally Dr. Edward Norden's criticisms in his *Agnostos Theos* (Teubner, 1913) on the account in Diogenes (pp. 57 ff.), in the *Acts*, and in St. Jerome (pp. 117. ff.) are unconvincing as against the view suggested in this article that at some point, if not at several, on the Areopagus was to be seen an altar to an indeterminate god.⁵ St. Jerome's statement that there was one 'diis Asiae et Europae et Africae, diis ignotis et peregrinis' is doubtless true, and as usual a testimony to that scholar's wide knowledge, but it is not really relevant. His remark, however, that St. Paul would readily substitute the singular for the plural is sound, and contains a truth too often neglected by modern philologists; and I will venture to conclude by arguing that such a substitution is as natural in an orator of the forum and not of the study as it is characteristic of St. Paul to quote phrases relevantly if their context is ignored, irrelevantly if it is remembered, and I would instance in *Galat.* iii. 20

date for the birth is right, and that the Cretan 299 conceals 314 half-years. This would not affect our other figures.

⁵ This agrees with a communication of Prof. Rendel Harris, 'we ought to translate ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ anarthrously, as "to an unknown god."'

¹ This notation is attested by *Oxyrhynch. Papyr.*

² The true date of Solon's archonship seems to be 591/0 (Sandys' *Aristotle Const. of Ath.* p. 50), and this followed Epimenides' visit.

³ *Laws* 642 D.

⁴ Suidas' date, Ol. 30=660/56 B.C., may be due to taking him to have lived 157 years. His date, Ol. 44, for the (first) purification may show that he reckoned him to be 57 years of age at that time. It is possible that Suidas'

ὁ δὲ Θεὸς εἰς ἐστίν, and then argue that the similarly relevant-irrelevant Κρηῆτες αἰεὶ ψεύσται in *Tit.* i. 12 is an 'undesigned coincidence' which supports the traditional view of the authenticity of that epistle.

T. NICKLIN.

August 1, 1914.

Since this was written I have seen that Mr. A. B. Cook (*Zeus*, p. 664) reconstructs the lines thus, making the last line much what I have done:

Σοὶ μὲν ἐτεκτὴναιτο τάφον, παννύπερτατε
δαῖμον,
Κρηῆτες αἰεὶ ψεύσται, κακὰ θηρία, γασ-
τέρες ἀργαί.
'Αλλὰ γὰρ οὐ σὺ θάνες, ζῶεις δὲ καὶ
ἴστασαι αἰεὶ.
'Εν σοὶ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινεόμεσθα καὶ
εἰμὲν.

Further, Prof. Rendel Harris in the *Expositor*, Eighth Series, No. 49,

January, 1915, pp. 29-35, has been able to add several fresh points from Isho'dad's *Commentary on Titus*: e.g. 'The Poet of Crete . . . some say his name was Maxinidus, others that it was Minos . . . Zeus, that is to say, living, . . . was a tyrant and a rebel . . . that he was killed.' The Professor observes: 'The Greek origin comes out clearly in the etymology which is given to the name Zeus. A comparison with Theodore's *Commentary on Titus*, extant in the Latin, shows coincidences and that Isho'dad's sources are Theodorean. . . .

Maxinidus is a Syriac corruption of Epimenides. The commentary of Bar Salibi only preserves the original mythology, that the grave of Zeus is the lie of the Cretans, and even this is obscured, by putting the responsibility of the lie upon the poet, and contradicted. Epimenides' name is replaced by Aratus.'

THE HOMERIC HYMNS.

II.

Herm. 41 ἔνθ' ἀναπηλῆσας γλυφάνφ
πολιοῖο σιδήρου
αἰῶν' ἐξέτόρησεν ὀρεσκόοιο
χελώνης.

'Αναπηλῆσας is one of the great mysteries of this Hymn. It has been explained in various ways, and various emendations have been offered. Messrs. Allen and Sykes enumerate eight (*q.v.*) and refuse to entertain any. Mr. E. White has added one more ἀναπηρώσας.

The tradition is not so very far from the truth after all. There are but two vowels wrong, one of them only because the letters are not rightly divided. The true reading is

ἐνθεν ἀπειλῆσας . . .

For assurance let us compare

H 225 στῇ ῥα μάλ' Ἑκτορος ἐγγύς,
ἀπειλῆσας δὲ προσήυδα.
Φ 161 ὧς φάτ' ἀπειλῆσας, ὁ δ' ἀνέσχετο
δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς
Πηλιάδα μελίνην.
Τ 161 Αἰνείας δὲ πρῶτος ἀπειλῆσας
ἐβεβήκει,

N 582 βῆ δ' ἐπαπειλήσας Ἑλένφ ἥρωι
ἄνακτι, (Read βῆ δ' ἐπ' ἀπ.)

Now, what is the procedure of the baby god? Outside the cave he has been exceedingly civil to his tortoise. In l. 38 there is a hint of something different, but nothing really alarming. So far it has been a suave "Will you walk into my parlour?" said the spider to the fly.' The tortoise, unlike the fly, has no choice in the matter. Hermes takes it up with both hands,

χερσὶν ἀν' ἀμφοτέρησιν αἰέρας

(not αἶμ': for that is necessarily implied, if both hands are used: ἀνααίρας) and carries it inside. Then he makes a threatening demonstration, ἐνθεν ἀπειλῆσας, and the nature of it is worth a moment's attention. He does not make another speech. There is no necessity to suppose that he uttered a single word. What does he do then? He performs a sort of minatory war-dance before his victim. It is all pantomime and dumb show, indicative of his real and immediate intentions. This is the way of the natural man, the un-