

TRADITION AND THE ROMAN ORIGIN OF THE CAPTIVITY LETTERS

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IN MODERN discussions upon the place of composition of the four captivity letters it is commonly asserted that Rome and the period of St. Paul's imprisonment described in the last chapter of Acts have the support of tradition. No one, of course, will deny that the Roman origin of the captivity letters is in some sense a teaching of tradition. But tradition is a word of many meanings, and the same may be said of traditional interpretation. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the character of the traditional interpretation which locates St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to the Ephesians, and his note to Philemon, in the first Roman captivity.

Now there is no denying that the Roman origin of these letters is the teaching of tradition, at least in the sense that this thesis has been constantly maintained by Greek and Latin exegetes ever since the sixth century. But it has long been recognized that the productions of later exegesis are for the most part mere compilations or recompilations from writings of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Thus later Greek exegesis goes back in general to the time of St. John Chrysostom: the catenists simply quarried blocks of comment from Chrysostom, Theodoret, and other leaders of the preceding age of exegesis. Latin commentators in like manner are largely dependent on Ambrosiaster, often cited as Ambrose, and on St. Jerome. And the wide influence of Pelagius' commentaries—an influence exercised largely through the medium of Pseudo-Jerome and Pseudo-Primasius—has been more fully understood only in recent years.

In the main, therefore, our inquiry may be limited to the leading exegetes, Greek and Latin, at the close of the fourth and in the early fifth centuries. To be sure, there were commentators before Ambrosiaster and Chrysostom; but, as we shall see, the Latin works of Victorinus Afer have nothing positive on our subject. As for the Greek commentators, the works of such men as Didymus, Eusebius of Emesa, Apollinaris of Laodicea, Acacius of Caesarea, Diodorus of Tarsus, Severian of Gabala, and the rest, are in great part lost; what remains

comes down to us in the fragmentary citations of *Catena*. These fragments, critically edited in 1933 by K. Staab,¹ furnish little information on their authors' views as to the *locus* of the captivity letters. As for still earlier writers, there are some notices in Origen's commentary on Romans that bear on our subject. And as there is a chance that the Marcionite Prologues go back to the second century, the evidence of these short notes must also be consulted.

Perhaps it would be handier for purposes of reference to group the views of the various writers letter by letter. Unfortunately, the nature of the evidence is such as to make it more convenient to discuss in turn the views of each commentator on all four letters. Moreover, it will be advisable now and then to note commentators' views on points somewhat outside the scope of our main problem. Thus we may have to take notice of a writer's position on the time and place of other Pauline letters or on the general question of Paul's captivities in Rome. We shall start with the Greek authorities.

THE GREEK SOURCES

The Marcionite Prologues.—It is with some hesitation that we place these prologues at the head of our Greek documentation. True, the theory first proposed by Dom de Bruyne² as to the Marcionite origin of the Pauline prologues found in the oldest Vulgate manuscripts has been very generally accepted. According to that theory—a theory independently advanced by Corssen and expounded by Harnack—the prologues were originally written around the middle, or in the second half, of the second century, and probably by Marcion himself. An alternative explanation of the prologues was given by W. Mundle in 1925. Understanding the prologues in an entirely Catholic sense, Mundle accounts for these short notes as developments of certain themes stressed in Ambrosiaster. Latin in origin, the prologues would belong probably to the fifth century, at any rate some time between Ambrosiaster and *Codex Fuldensis*. Mundle's thesis received an enthusiastic welcome from Lagrange.³

¹ K. Staab, *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirche* (Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, XV; Münster i. W.: Aschendorff, 1933).

² Donatien de Bruyne, O.S.B., "Prologues bibliques d'origine Marcionite," *Revue bénédictine*, XXIV (1907), 1-16.

³ M. J. Lagrange, O.P., "Les prologues prétendus Marcionites," *Revue biblique*, XXXV (1926), 161-73; cf. also W. Mundle, "Die Herkunft der 'marcionitischen' Prologe zu den paulinischen Briefen," *Zeits. für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XXIV (1925), 56-77.

Without taking sides in this controversy, we may be permitted to discuss the prologues at this place. Even today the theory of Marcionite origin seems still to hold the field. Of course, due note must be taken of the fact that the documents are probably Latin in origin and to be dated in the fifth century. At all events one must admit that there are some interesting statements in them on the history of Paul's captivity letters.

The extant prologue to Ephesians reads as follows: "Ephesii sunt Asiani. hi accepto verbo veritatis perstiterunt in fide. hos conlaudat apostolus, scribens eis ab urbe Roma de carcere per Tychicum diaconum."⁴ If the prologues are a work of the fifth century, this form of prologue VI is certainly to be accounted genuine. Those, however, who maintain their Marcionite origin, follow Dom de Bruyne in regarding as secondary and recensional the form of prologue VI quoted above. They attempt a reconstruction of it on the basis of comparisons apparently implied in the following Colossian prologue and in accordance with Marcion's known views on the addressees of Ephesians. As reconstructed it would read: "Laudiceni sunt Asiani. hi praeventi erant a pseudoapostolis . . . ad hos non accessit ipse apostolus . . . hos per epistolam recorrigit. . . ." But less effort is made to determine what information had been conveyed on the place of origin of "Laodiceans" (= Ephesians).

At all events, the companion letter to the Colossians is said in prologue VII to have been written at Ephesus during a captivity of the Apostle in that city: "apostolus iam ligatus scribit eis ab Epheso." But the two remaining captivity letters are put in the Roman captivity. While, of course, it is impossible on intrinsic grounds to suppose that Colossians and Philemon originated at different places, it is still a matter of some significance that mention should be made of an Ephesian captivity of the Apostle, and that one of his letters should be assigned to that date.

If the prologues are really Marcionite and belong to the second century, they provide very early attestation to a captivity not mentioned in Acts though postulated by many modern exegetes. Here it should be observed that there is nothing specifically Marcionite in the

⁴ A. von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott* (Texte und Untersuchungen, XLV; 2d ed.; Leipzig: Hinrich, 1924), p. 129*. The prologues may also be found, e.g., in Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 161 f.

place indications of the prologues. Thus the Epistle to the Galatians is said to have been written at Ephesus and that to the Romans at Corinth. Again, the prologues state that the two letters to the Thessalonians were written at Athens—a view which, based no doubt on an inference from I Thess. 3:1, recurs frequently in other documents.

But if, on the other hand, the prologues are a fifth century production, the case is different but significant in another way. Here we must anticipate what we shall see when we come to Ambrosiaster and the other early Latin commentators. If the non-Marcionite explanation of the prologues is correct, if Ambrosiaster was used in their composition, one thing at least is certain: The place indications in the prologues were not borrowed from Ambrosiaster, a commentary notoriously deficient in such matters. And given the immense prestige enjoyed by the commentaries of Ambrosiaster, Jerome, and Pelagius in Latin Christendom, it is difficult to imagine a Latin of the fifth or early sixth century inventing an Ephesian origin for Colossians. Indeed, after Jerome's day, a Latin would hardly differentiate the place of origin of Colossians from that of the other captivity letters. Dependence on an earlier authority, as old as, or older than, Ambrosiaster, would seem to be indicated.

Origen.—Of Origen's commentaries on the captivity letters only fragments remain, and these, thanks to citations in various *Catenaë*. However, J. Gregg was able to reconstruct out of these scattered materials a fairly large part of the commentary on Ephesians. But, unfortunately for our purpose, the catenists were chiefly interested in passages of doctrinal content. Still one fact emerges from the restored commentary on Ephesians: Though the biblical text Origen employed in writing the commentary omitted the words *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* (Eph. 1:1),⁵ he himself regarded the epistle as addressed to the Ephesians. So wherever he placed the composition of this epistle, Ephesus at any rate is ruled out.

Origen's commentary on Romans (A.D. 246), which comes down to us mainly in Rufinus' translation, has some interesting information on Philippians. In the preface to that commentary, he states that Philip-

⁵ This is evident from the character of Origen's comments on Eph. 1:1b (ed. Gregg, *Journal of Theological Studies*, III [1901-2], 235). But Origen himself refers to the letter as "Ephesians."

prians was written before I Corinthians; for it was his principle that Paul appears more perfect in each succeeding letter: the later the letter, the more perfect the Apostle appears. Thus apropos of I Cor. 9:27 he says of Paul, "erat quidem in magnis profectibus; aliquid tamen de se velut nutabundus eloquitur. . . ." Then he continues:

Sed et ad Philippenses scribens, quiddam in se minus adhuc esse illius, quam postea assecutus est, perfectionis ostendit, cum dicit conformari se morti Christi, 'si quomodo occurrat in resurrectionem, quae est a mortuis' [Phil. 3:11]. Non enim diceret 'si quomodo,' si ei iam tunc res indubitata videretur. Sed et in consequentibus eiusdem epistolae haec eadem ostendit. . . .⁶

There follow quotations of Phil. 3:12 ff.

If Origen held this view consistently, he must be regarded as dating Philippians long before Paul's Roman captivity. For he is clear on the sequence of the earlier letters: I Corinthians, he holds, was written a considerable time before II Corinthians; II Corinthians preceded Romans;⁷ Romans, in turn, was written at Corinth prior to the Apostle's departure for Palestine at the close of the third missionary expedition.⁸

Granted that Origen's argumentation is quite subjective, one must at the same time admit that he felt he was permitted to hold this early dating of Philippians. Would he have done so in face of a well-defined tradition placing the composition of Philippians at Rome? Certainly, in the matter of the authorship of the Gospels, he shows himself a man of tradition. So, too, in the question of Paul's authorship of Hebrews, he defers to the tradition handed down from "the men of old" (*οἱ ἀρχαῖοι ἄνδρες*).⁹ We shall have occasion later, when we are discussing St. Jerome's views, to return to Origen's position on Philippians.

St. John Chrysostom.—By common consent Chrysostom stands first among the major patristic commentators of St. Paul. A disciple of Diodorus of Tarsus and a fellow-student of Theodore of Mopsuestia, he holds a position in Greek exegesis that is quite unique. The foremost representative, probably, of the Antiochian school, he is himself

⁶ Origen-Rufinus, *Comment. in epist. ad Rom.*, praef. (PG, XIV, 834 B-C).

⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, 835 B-C; cf. also *Comm. in Rom.* 15:23 (PG, XIV, 1271 A).

⁹ *Hom. in epist. ad Heb. fragmentum*, in Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica*, VII, c. 25, n. 13 (ed. Schwartz, *CGS Berol.*, Euseb. Tom. II-2, 580).

in turn the fountainhead of a great exegetical tradition that dominates the following ages. Naturally, then, it is of great importance to determine exactly the position of this great doctor in our present problem.

First of all, Chrysostom was very conscious of the fact that several of Paul's letters had been written from captivity. In his preface to the homilies on Colossians he makes this statement: "While all the letters of Paul are holy, there is something more to those sent out when Paul was in prison: such is the letter to the Ephesians, such the letter to Philemon, such the letter to Timothy, such the letter to the Philippians, such is this present letter [to the Colossians]."¹⁰ Here, of course, Chrysostom is including II Timothy among the captivity letters. Although that letter lies outside our present inquiry, reference will occasionally be made to it by reason of its connection with the question of Paul's second Roman captivity.

We may first take up Chrysostom's views on the place of composition of Philippians. There is a rather complete discussion of this question in the preface to the homilies on Philippians. The passage, though lengthy, must be quoted; its importance lies in the fact that in it we have a clear picture of Chrysostom's approach to our problem.

At the time that Paul was writing to them [viz., the Philippians], it happened that he was in chains. That is why he says in the letter 'so that the chains I bear for the sake of Christ have become manifest in all the praetorium' [Phil. 1:13], giving the name 'praetorium' to the royal palace of Nero. At any rate, Paul was in chains and then freed: this he indicates in his letter to Timothy: 'At my *first defense* no one came to my support, but all forsook me; may it not be laid to their charge . . .' [II Tim. 4:16-17]. So the chains to which Paul refers preceded that defense. As for Timothy's absence at that time, the fact is clear: 'At my first defense *no one* came to my support.' Writing in this fashion Paul makes the point clear. Paul would not have written this to Timothy if Timothy knew about the matter. Now the fact that Timothy was actually with Paul at the time this letter [to the Philippians] was written, is clear from Paul's own statement, 'I hope in the Lord Jesus soon to send Timothy to you' [Phil. 2:19], and again, 'I hope in the Lord Jesus to send him to you as soon as I see how things stand with me' [Phil. 2:23].

Paul was indeed freed of his chains, and later on he was put in chains again after he had visited the Philippians. . . .¹¹

¹⁰ *In Col.* 1:1, hom. I, n. 1 (PG, LXII, 299); the column numbers are always to Migne's Greek text of Chrysostom.

¹¹ *Comment. in epist. ad Philipp.*, arg., n. 1 (PG, LXII, 177-79).

It is Chrysostom's clear teaching in this long passage that Philippians was written during Paul's first Roman captivity. Though he speaks of Paul's captivity without naming Rome, he states at once that the praetorium (Phil. 1:13) is to be identified with the palace of Nero. Later, when he reaches this same text in the body of the commentary, he merely remarks, "For at that time this was the name given to the royal palace."¹²

The reference to the "members of Caesar's house" (Phil. 4:22) is interpreted in a similar manner. It is this latter passage that he stresses in his preface to the homilies on Romans—a preface which also serves as a general introduction to the Pauline letters. There he makes this statement: "It was from Rome that Paul wrote to the Philippians; that is why he says, 'All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's house.'"¹³

And now for the great exegete's views on the remaining captivity letters. In the general preface to Romans he states that Philemon is among Paul's last letters. His basis for this assertion is the expression "Paul an old man" (Phm. 9). Incidentally, it may be noted, Chrysostom is guilty of exaggeration in taking that expression as meaning that Paul was then "bordering on extreme old age" (*πρὸς γὰρ ἐσχάτῳ γῆρα*).¹⁴ While in the preface to Romans Chrysostom does not say in so many words that Philemon is a Roman composition, that point is clearly implied by the general context. In his commentary on Philemon he is quite explicit on the Roman origin of the letter. In the preface of this commentary he notes that the slave Onesimus came to Paul, then a prisoner at Rome, and in the discussion of Phm. 4, Chrysostom comments on the great distance of Phrygia from Rome.¹⁵

The interrelation of Philemon and Colossians makes it advisable to call attention to one or two other views of Chrysostom on this document. He infers that the slave owner Philemon resided at Colossae; for with the majority of commentators, he identifies the Epaphras of

¹² *In Phil.*, hom. II, c. 2 (PG, LXII, 192). We may note that neither Chrysostom's seeming identification of the Epaphroditus of Philippians with the Epaphras of Colossians nor his views on Epaphroditus' journeys seem to have influenced his position on the *locus* of Philippians.

¹³ *In epist. ad Rom.*, arg., n. 1 (PG, LX, 393). ¹⁴ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁵ *In epist. ad Philem.*, hom. II, n. 1 (PG, LXII, 708).

Phm. 23 with the man of that name mentioned in Colossians.¹⁶ Other points of contact between the two letters are noted. Thus the identity of the Archippus of Phm. 3 with the man of that name at Col. 4:17 is likewise pointed out.¹⁷ It is rather curious that in Chrysostom's preface to Romans a certain stress is laid on the priority of Philemon to Colossians, a priority based in some way on the journey of Onesimus and Tychicus to Colossae (Col. 4:7);¹⁸ still, this priority, as we shall see, was not understood to involve any great length of time.

On the Epistle to the Colossians Chrysostom is quite explicit. The letter was written at Rome during Paul's imprisonment. But here again, if it is to be properly evaluated, Chrysostom's position must be studied in his own words. His discussion of the problem is to be read in the preface to his homilies on Colossians. His rather involved statement runs as follows:

This letter [to the Colossians] seems to be later than that to the Romans. For while he wrote that letter before he had visited the Romans, this letter was written after he had already seen the Romans and at a time when he was near the end of his preaching career. This is evident for the following reason. In the letter to Philemon he uses the expression 'being such, Paul an old man' [Phm. 9] in his plea for Onesimus. Now it is in this letter [to the Colossians] that he sends Onesimus [back to Philemon] as he himself indicates in the words 'with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother' [Col. 4:9]—calling him 'faithful and beloved' and a 'brother.' So, too, it is in this letter that he makes the bold statement 'from the hope of the gospel which you have heard, the gospel that has been preached in the whole creation under heaven' [Col. 1:23]; for that preaching took a long time.

And this [Colossian] letter is, I think, earlier than that to Timothy which was written on towards Paul's death. For in the latter epistle he says, 'I am already being poured out in sacrifice' [II Tim. 4:6]. As for the letter to the Philippians, it was earlier than this [letter to the Colossians]; for in the Philippian letter Paul was, it appears, in the first stage of his imprisonment at Rome.¹⁹

A few remarks on this long passage. The relation of Colossians to Philemon is once again brought out, this time in the person of Onesimus who is mentioned in both letters. In his general preface to Romans, Chrysostom had already excluded the possibility of another Onesimus.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, hom. III, n. 1 (cols. 715-16).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, hom. I, n. 1 (col. 705).

¹⁸ *In epist. ad Rom.*, hom. I, n. 1 (PG, LX, 393).

¹⁹ *In epist. ad Coloss.*, hom. I, n. 1 (PG, LXII, 299-300).

He will return to this identification of the Onesimus mentioned in both letters when he takes up the discussion of Col. 4:9.

Before entering on an examination of the reasons that moved Chrysostom to place the composition of Colossians at Rome, we shall have first to take note of one or two time problems suggested by the long passage just quoted. First, the priority of Philemon to Colossians. As we saw above, Chrysostom states in the preface to Romans that Philemon is earlier than Colossians. Still, it seems fairly obvious from his long statement in the preface to Colossians that, whatever priority Philemon enjoyed, he regarded both letters as practically contemporaneous.

On the other hand, in determining his position on the temporal relation of Philippians, Colossians, and II Timothy one must proceed with caution. The last lines in the text quoted above are not so clear, and Migne's form of the text is not critically established. But taking into account the reasons given by Chrysostom in support of his statements on the matter, the Epistle to the Colossians seems to come between Philippians and II Timothy. Does this mean, according to Chrysostom, that Colossians belongs to Paul's second Roman captivity? This is a question that is difficult to answer. For it should be noted that he *seems* to insist that the letter to Philemon—which in his view is somewhat earlier than Colossians—belongs to the very latest period of Paul's life. "As for the letter to Philemon," he says, "it too [like II Timothy] is in the latest period [ἡ δὲ πρὸς Φιλήμονα ἐσχάτη μὲν καὶ αὐτῆ], for Paul was bordering on extreme old age when he wrote it."²⁰

Whether or not Chrysostom put Philemon—and consequently Colossians along with Ephesians—in the second captivity, he is definite enough in assigning Colossians a Roman origin. His reason, however, for connecting this letter with Rome seems to lie mainly in its relation to Philemon. His statement that Colossians was written when Paul was "at the end of his preaching career" is founded on the fact that while Philemon was written in Paul's old age, both it and Colossians mention Onesimus in circumstances that imply their contemporaneity of composition. And, probably by way of subsidiary proof, Chrysostom calls attention to Paul's statement that at the time Colossians

²⁰ *In epist. ad Rom.*, hom. I, n. 1 (PG, LX, 393).

was written the gospel had already been preached throughout the whole world.²¹

Again he is quite explicit on Ephesians. He states that "Paul writes the letter from Rome when a prisoner," and he calls attention to the reference to Paul's imprisonment in Eph. 6:19-20.²² Contrary to what one might expect, he says nothing in his comments on Tychicus' mission (Eph. 6:21) to indicate the contemporaneity of Ephesians and Colossians, but the parallel passage in Colossians is explained in this sense. At Col. 4:9 Chrysostom has this note, "And Paul sends this very man [Tychicus] to the Ephesians also, and for the same reason, namely 'that he may learn your state of affairs and that he may console your hearts.'"²³

The dominant position enjoyed by Chrysostom in later Greek exegesis has already been remarked. In view of the great influence he exercised it will be well worth our while to give a summary of his views. Evidently (1) he regards the captivity letters as a group apart, including II Timothy in their number. (2) He notes the close connection between the note to Philemon and the Epistle to the Colossians, and (3) does not fail to point out that Philemon, like Colossians, was sent to the city of Colossae. (4) Colossians and Ephesians are connected in the person of the messenger Tychicus. (5) The fact of Paul's old age indicates the Roman origin of the note to Philemon. (6) Ephesians, in turn, is connected with Rome by reason of its relation to Colossians; and Colossians is to be located at Rome in view of its practical contemporaneity with the note to Philemon. (7) The relation of Philippians to these three letters lies chiefly in the fact that it, too, is a letter written in captivity. (8) As for its connection with Paul's Roman captivity, Chrysostom appears to rely entirely on the references to the "members of Caesar's house" and to the "prae-torium." (9) While he distinctly locates Philippians in the period of Paul's first Roman captivity, it is possible that he understood Philemon—and, consequently, Colossians and Ephesians—to belong to the second Roman captivity of the Apostle.

²¹ *In epist. ad Coloss.*, hom. I, n. 1 (PG, LXII, 299). Although they are parallel texts, Rom. 1:18 and I Thess. 1:8 are not applied by Chrysostom in this way.

²² *In epist. ad Ephes.*, arg. (PG, LXII, 10 bis). Migne fails to number the Greek and Latin title pages of the Ephesian commentary.

²³ *In epist. ad Coloss.*, hom. XI, n. 1 (PG, LXII, 375).

So much, then, for the exposition of our problem as found in Chrysostom, the major source of later Greek tradition on the subject. Yet it cannot help being observed that in all the passages consulted he is not once found appealing to earlier tradition or pointing to a common agreement among exegetes of his time. His views are based throughout on an examination of the data provided by the letters themselves. Nor should we make the mistake of thinking that he was uninterested in ancient tradition,²⁴ or that he paid no attention to the views of other exegetes.²⁵ But the fact remains that his treatment of our problem is entirely exegetical. Whether all his arguments would be accepted by Catholic scholars today, is a question beyond the scope of our inquiry. What is to be remembered is that the great preacher and exegete treats the subject in question exclusively along lines of internal criticism.^{25a}

Theodore of Mopsuestia.—Theodore's defects of method and doctrine and his condemnation after death by the Fifth General Council (A.D. 553) must not be allowed to obscure the fact that he is one of the major figures in ancient Greek exegesis. His doctrinal bias and his emphatic rejection of the allegorical sense do not of course affect his treatment of problems such as that under discussion. While the Greek text of his commentaries—except for fragments saved by catenists—is lost, his commentary on the shorter epistles of St. Paul is extant in a rough but reliable Latin version. They seem to have been written A.D. 400–415.²⁶

As for the *locus* of the captivity letters, Theodore's view of the case appears chiefly in his prefaces to Ephesians and Philemon. However, there are also other data. If his position on our problem seems in places to contrast sharply with the views of Chrysostom, his friend and contemporary, it will be found that the Bishop of Mopsuestia is

²⁴ Note his remarks on those who held that Romans had been the earliest of Paul's letters: *In epist. ad Rom.*, arg., n. 1 (*PG*, LX, 392).

²⁵ Note his discussion of the four evangelists: *In Matt.*, hom. I, n. 3 (*PG*, LVII, 17).

^{25a} Without the Mechitarists' *Commentarii in epistolas D. Pauli . . . ex Armeno in Latinum . . . translati*, it has been impossible to discuss St. Ephrem's views. From Ephrem's prologue to II Timothy (quoted in *Beginnings of Christianity*, Part I, Vol. III [London: Macmillan, 1926], p. 453 note) it appears that he did not distinguish two Roman captivities of Paul: according to Ephrem the *penula* and *libri* of II Tim. 4:13 were sold by Paul to meet the rent of the *domus conducta* (Acts 28:30); cf. also *Revue biblique*, XXXIV (1925), 149.

²⁶ J. M. Vosté, O.P., "La chronologie de l'activité littéraire de Théodore de Mopsueste," *Revue biblique*, XXXIV (1925), 77–78.

at least consistent in his theories and that he does not stand in complete isolation.

In discussing his position it should at once be noted that his commentaries show an intimate knowledge of the narrative of Acts. He makes a real effort to fit into the framework of Acts the incidents of Paul's life known only from the epistles. Thus he holds that at Paul's departure from Ephesus (Acts 20:1) Timothy was left in charge. And, like many another ancient authority, he places the composition of I Timothy during Paul's journey across Macedonia (Acts 20:1 f.).²⁷

From the successful *prima defensio* (II Tim. 4:16), Theodore infers that the Roman captivity of Acts 28 ended in Paul's release.²⁸ And Paul's subsequent missionary activity seems to have included a journey to Spain.²⁹ As there appear to have been some in Theodore's day who gave the Apostle John the credit of founding the Ephesian Church, Theodore is very insistent on asserting that that apostle came to Ephesus only after the outbreak of the Jewish War.³⁰ At about the same time, according to Theodore, began Paul's second captivity in Rome. And II Timothy was written during this period.

With these preliminaries out of the way, we may now take up Theodore's notices on the place of composition of the captivity letters. First of all his views on Ephesians. Here we are at once confronted with the startling fact that the time assigned by Theodore to the composition of this letter precludes the possibility of its Roman origin; for he holds, and consistently holds, that Ephesians was written prior to Paul's ministry at Ephesus. This point he makes clear in the very first words of his preface to Ephesians:

Scribit Ephesiis hanc epistolam beatus Paulus, eo modo quo et Romanis dudum [= ? ποτέ] scripserat quos necdum ante uiderat. et hoc euidenter ipse ostendit, in ipsa epistola sic scribens: 'propter hoc et ego audiens eam fidem . . . et caritatem . . . non cesso gratias agere pro uobis' [Eph. 1:15-16]. numquam profecto dixisset se auditu de illis cognoscentem gratiarum pro illis facere actionem, si eos alicubi uel uidisset, uel ad notitiam eius ulla ratione uenire potuissent.³¹

²⁷ Compare *In II Tim.*, arg., and *In II Tim.* 1:3-4 (ed. Swete, *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii* [Cambridge, 1880-82], II, 67 f., 70).

²⁸ *In Phil.* 1:12-14 (ed. Swete, I, 205); *In II Tim.* 4:17-18 (ed. Swete, II, 230 f.).

²⁹ *In Rom.* 15:28 (ed. Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, p. 171).

³⁰ *In epist. ad Ephes.*, arg. (ed. Swete, I, 115 ff.).

³¹ Ed. Swete, I, 112 f.

Here Theodore likens the Ephesian epistle to that sent to the Romans. Both documents, he claims, were written before Paul visited the respective cities. And whatever one may think of his argument based on the *audiens* of Eph. 1:15, he put full confidence in it. Later on in the same preface he repeats his thesis. Indicating that Paul's Ephesian ministry preceded the appointment of Timothy as head of the Asian churches, he notes further that the composition of Ephesians preceded Paul's ministry in Ephesus. "Paulus uero," he says, "hanc epistolam scripsit ad eos illo tempore quò adhuc non uiderat eos." Evidently in Theodore's view, as Swete points out, "the Ephesian letter must be . . . connected with those of the second missionary journey."³²

Contrary to what is sometimes supposed, Theodore is not alone in this early dating of Ephesians. Severian of Gabala († *post* A.D. 409), Theodore's contemporary and Chrysostom's well-known rival and adversary, maintains in like manner that the composition of Ephesians preceded Paul's evangelization of Ephesus. But, unlike Theodore, the Bishop of Gabala speaks of the Apostle John as founder of the Ephesian Church. Severian's statement on our subject is to be found in the prologue to his commentary on Ephesians: "Just as Paul wrote to the Romans before he had seen them, so too it happened in the case of the Ephesians: John preceded him there and laid the [foundation of the] gospel among them, but when the right time came Paul exhorted them not to be governed by [the Mosaic] law."³³ We may note in passing that Severian was not among the lesser commentators of the Antiochian school.

But to return to Theodore. In the course of his commentary on Ephesians he does not fail to note, with moderate emphasis, that the letter was written from some captivity. It is only later in his comments on Phm. 1 that he really stresses the fact: "[Paulus] scripsit quidem et ad alios plures cum esset in uinculis, sicut ex ipsis epistolis perspicere est possibile, et maxime in ea quam [ad] Ephesios scripsisse uidetur. . . ."³⁴ Theodore makes no attempt to localize this captivity.

His commentary on Colossians is somewhat disappointing. True, he notes in the preface to this commentary that the letter was written

³² *Ibid.*, I, 116 note to line 5.

³³ Prologue to Ephesians (ed. Staab, p. 304).

³⁴ Ed. Swete, II, 267.

before Paul visited Colossae. This view, shared by most modern commentators, is based by Theodore on references in the letter.³⁵ As for the interrelation of Colossians and Ephesians, he has little to say. He passes over without comment the mission of Tychicus (Col. 4:7 f.), mentioned both in Colossians and in Ephesians. However he does take note, in the commentary on Colossians, of the resemblance of Colossians to Ephesians in thought and language.³⁶ In discussing these resemblances he always speaks in such a way as to suppose the priority of Ephesians to Colossians. His comment on Col. 3:18 is introduced in this fashion, "deinde et in hac parte *imitans* illa quae ad Ephesios scripserat, uertitur. . . ."³⁷

The marked relation of Colossians to Paul's letter to Philemon is even less noted. Epaphras is simply described as the apostle of Colossae; Aristarchus is no more than named; at Col. 4:9, Onesimus is described in the commentary as the one "qui a uobis uenerat," but there is no mention that this same Onesimus is much in evidence in the letter to Philemon. As for Archippus, though it is clear from Phm. 2 that he resided at the home of Philemon (and, as may be easily inferred, in Colossae), Theodore sets him at Laodicea.³⁸

Just as the commentary on Colossians does not mention the relation of that letter to Philemon, so the commentary on Philemon fails to make reference to Colossians. Indeed, in the whole course of this commentary there is not a single reference to the local and temporal interrelation of the two letters. The names Archippus, Epaphras, and Aristarchus (Phm. 2; 23; 24) evoke no cross-reference to Acts or Colossians.

Still there are some points of interest in the commentary on Philemon. In the preface to the commentary, Theodore does note that Paul was a prisoner at the time of writing, and he returns to this thought more than once in the commentary.³⁹ But nowhere is there an explicit statement of Paul's Roman captivity. One passage, however, might be understood in this sense. Commenting upon Phm. 9, Theodore emphasizes the fact of Paul's old age at the time of writing: "qui

³⁵ *In epist. ad Ephes.*, arg. (ed. Swete, I, 253).

³⁶ *In Col.* 1:21 f., 25 ff. (ed. Swete, I, 277 f., 280 f.).

³⁷ Ed. Swete, I, 305.

³⁸ *In Col.* 4:17 (ed. Swete, I, 311).

³⁹ *In Phm.* 1, 9, 10, 13 (ed. Swete, II, 267, 268, 277, 279 f.).

enim 'seniorem' audit, Paulum scire poterat eo quod longo tempore pietatis studio inoleuerit, et multa fuerit hac de causa passus; inchoauit enim praedicare euangelium cum adhuc esset adolescens; occurrit uero in senectutis aetatem semper Christo in passionibus persistens."⁴⁰

If Theodore's data on Colossians and Philemon are somewhat disappointing, that cannot be said of his statements on Philippians. He distinctly places this letter in Rome. At the end of his preface to Philippians he states: "tantum uero adicere dictis dignum est ad manifestandum textum epistolae, quoniam scribit ista ad eos [sc., Philippenses] ab urbe Roma, cum esset in uinculis, quando contigit eum Caesarem adpellare et propterea a Iudaea ductus est Romae, Nerone illo in tempore regnante."⁴¹

While this statement is clear enough, no effort is made to back it up. There is no claim of a tradition in this sense, nor is there any attempt at an exegetical proof. Theodore simply states his thesis. And in the commentary itself very little information is conveyed in the scholion on the phrase "the members of Caesar's house"; he says simply, "erant enim qui exinde crediderant."⁴² Nor do several references to Epaphroditus throw any light on the question. Only one passage gives us a clue to Theodore's reasoning. Commenting on Phil. 1:13 he makes this statement: "nam quod dixit in toto praetorio, ut dicat: 'in regiis, et illis quae circa eum [sc., Caesarem] sunt'; praetorium illud nominans, quod nunc ex consuetudine *palatium* nominamus."⁴³ Even here, however, his aim is not to establish the Roman origin of the letter, but to call attention to the wide success of Paul's preaching.

That he here has in mind Paul's first Roman captivity is made clear in the preceding context. After recounting the Apostle's captivity from Palestine to Rome and his successful defense before Nero he continues:

ideo et in secunda ad Timotheum epistola, quam a Roma ad eum scripsit, non tunc quando et ad Philippenses scribebat—etenim tunc cum ipso [sc., Timotheo] ad illos scripsit—sed secunda uice, quando illic capite est punitus, scribens dicit:

⁴⁰ Ed. Swete, II, 276.

⁴¹ Ed. Swete, I, 198.

⁴² *In Phil.* 4:22 (ed. Swete, I, 252).

⁴³ Ed. Swete, I, 206 f. Swete suggests, *loc. cit.*, that *eum* in the text may be an error for *ea*, which would refer to *regiis*, the 'royal palace.'

'In prima mea defensione nemo mihi adfuit . . . et liberatus sum ex ore leonis,'
Neronem indicans.⁴⁴

While interesting for the fact that it gives us Theodore's reasons for distinguishing two captivities and for dating II Timothy in the second captivity, this passage is of use to us here in that it places Philippians in the earlier captivity. His reason, whether convincing or not, is that Timothy, who was not with Paul at the time of the second captivity, is named along with Paul in the praescript of the Philippian letter.

And now a brief review. Examining the various passages in Theodore that bear on our question, we shall not find a single appeal to tradition. Nor is there any hint of a tradition on which he might be drawing. Everywhere his views are founded on inferences either from Acts or from passages in the epistles. And let us not be so rash as to assume that Theodore spurned tradition or neglected the views of his contemporaries.⁴⁵

Thus he makes a tacit reference in the commentary on Gal. 2:11 ff. to the controversy, then current, concerning the real or feigned character of the dispute between Peter and Paul at Antioch. Again, he makes a sustained attack on the allegorists, in the comments upon Gal. 4:24 ff. His opposition to those who held that the Church of Ephesus was a foundation of St. John's has already been noted. Finally, while ancient writers were not accustomed to cite their authorities by name, Theodore does on occasion refer to "the ancients," and even names Flavius Josephus as one of his authorities.⁴⁶ But, be that as it may, there is no reference either to authority or to tradition in the present matter.

Theodoret of Cyrrhus.—Theodoret is one of the great lights of the Antiochian school, and the outstanding commentator of the period

⁴⁴ *In Phil.* 1:12-14 (ed. Swete, I, 205 f.).

⁴⁵ "Ancient commentators were accustomed to study and copy earlier models, and were studied and copied by later models in their turn. Theodore, though he was of too independent a mind to copy his predecessors as much as others did, probably studied them quite as much, to judge from the frequency with which he records the views of 'certain people' and expresses disagreement with them" (C. H. Turner, "Patristic Commentaries," *Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible*, Extra Vol., p. 512^a).

⁴⁶ *In II Tim.* 4:10 (ed. Swete, II, 227).

that followed the deaths of Chrysostom and Theodore. The commentaries on Paul are probably to be dated between A.D. 432 and 438.⁴⁷ Needless to say, they shared with those of Chrysostom a dominant influence in later Greek exegesis. Indeed Theodoret's work enjoyed a certain advantage over that of Chrysostom. Where Chrysostom's explanations are buried away in homiletic tractates, the work of Theodoret is one of systematic commentary.

On the subject of the place of origin of the captivity letters, Theodoret does not fail, ordinarily, to note his views. Yet his interest, it must be admitted, is rather in the order in which Paul's letters were written. We may add, too, that he endeavors to fit his views into the framework of Acts.

A general conspectus of Theodoret's views is given in the introductory pages to his commentary on the epistles.⁴⁸ He divides Paul's letters into two groups of seven. The first group, he holds, was written by Paul before his journey to Rome, while the second group was written from the Eternal City. The four oldest letters of the first group are I and II Thessalonians and I and II Corinthians. Seventh place goes to Romans. All that is ordinary enough, but what may surprise a modern is Theodoret's placing I Timothy and Titus in fifth and sixth places.

Among the letters written from Rome first place goes to Galatians—another surprise. Next come the four captivity letters in which we are interested; these are followed by Hebrews and II Timothy. Our four captivity letters, Theodoret holds, were written in this order: Philippians, Philemon, and then, after an interval, Ephesians and Colossians.⁴⁹

In discussing his statements on the origin of these letters, we may follow the order in which he understands them to have been written. So first of all Philippians. In the general preface already mentioned Theodoret makes this statement: "The Philippians were the next to receive a letter from Paul at Rome; this is clear from the closing passage of that letter: 'The members of Caesar's house send you greetings' [Phil. 4:22]."⁵⁰ This is the only argument of any sort adduced

⁴⁷ Cf. C. H. Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 517^b.

⁴⁸ *Praefatio in XIV Epist. S. Pauli* (PG, LXXXII, 37 C-44 A).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, (cols. 41 C-44 B).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, (col. 41 C).

by Theodoret in support of the Roman composition of the letter. In the preface to Philippians the fact is simply assumed. As for the comments on Phil. 1:12-13, he does no more than repeat, though much more cautiously, the earlier statement of Chrysostom. Citing the texts in question, Theodoret comments:

Profit of the gospel is the name Paul gives to the throng of believers. The reason for these [chains], he says, has become quite clear to all in the royal palace. For it is the royal palace [*τὰ βασιλεια*] that he styles 'praetorium.' Now *it is likely* [*εἰκός δέ*] that this was the name it had at that time. For power was then in the hands of the government at Rome.⁵¹

The argument already quoted from the general preface is not repeated, or referred to, when Theodoret reaches Phil. 4:32 in the commentary. There he merely notes with pardonable pride:

Great was the consolation Paul gave to the Philippians when he informed them how the divine gospel had mastered the royal palace and how even members of the impious emperor's household had been captivated by it unto [eternal] life.⁵²

So much for Philippians. It is in his treatment of the letter to Philemon that the special features and the personal character of Theodoret's exegesis appear. Though he holds, of course, that Ephesians and Colossians are companion letters, he maintains that Philemon preceded both by a considerable interval of time. If his line of argument as presented in the general preface is less clear, the special preface to Philemon and the comments on Phm. 14 and Col. 4:7-9 leave no doubt on his stand.⁵³

He supposes this sequence of events: (1) The slave Onesimus flees to Rome. (2) There he meets Paul then a prisoner. Subsequently Onesimus is converted and baptized. (3) Next Paul writes the letter to Philemon and gives it to Onesimus to smooth away the difficulties of his return to Colossae. Thereupon Onesimus journeys from Rome to Colossae. (4) In answer to Paul's implied request (Phm. 13 f.), Philemon has Onesimus return to Rome and minister to Paul's needs. (5) Later when Paul has completed his letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, he gives Onesimus as a companion to Tychicus on the long journey back to Colossae.

⁵¹ *In Phil.* 1:12 f. (PG, LXXXII, 564 A).

⁵² *In Phil.* 4:22 (PG, LXXXII, 589 B-C).

⁵³ PG, LXXXII, 872 A, 876 B-C, 624 C-D.

Evidently, in this reconstruction of events, the note to Philemon cannot be regarded as contemporaneous with Colossians. To be sure, Theodoret does not defend this reconstruction as certain. He clearly implies, indeed, that the central point is no more than probable: "Philemon, *as is likely* [ὡς εἰκόσ], sent him back [to Paul]; but the divine Apostle again sent him, in company with Tychicus, [to Colossae], now that Onesimus had become a minister of the gospel."⁵⁴ But even though Theodoret looked on this sequence of events as only probable, it is the sequence which he followed.

As for Ephesians and Colossians, he insists in his general preface on their community of origin. He points out that both letters were sent in care of Tychicus and calls attention to the parallel passages in which Tychicus' mission is mentioned.⁵⁵ He seems to base his conclusion that Paul wrote both letters at Rome primarily on the fact that Rome was the *terminus a quo* of the journey of Tychicus just mentioned. And the latter point he infers from the words, "Tychicum misi Ephesum," in II Timothy, a letter written from Rome. In Theodoret's own words:

The blessed Tychicus was sent by Paul from Rome, as Paul himself informs us in the second letter to Timothy. For after saying, 'Make haste to come to me . . . Take Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me in the ministry,' Paul added, '*I sent Tychicus to Ephesus*' [II Tim. 4:9-12]. . . . So after he had preached to the Ephesians Paul set forth a second time for Macedonia and Achaea and from there to Judaea. And so it was after working at Ephesus that he reached Rome. And from Rome Paul wrote informing [Timothy] that he had sent Tychicus to Ephesus. Now Tychicus was the bearer of the epistle to the Ephesians.⁵⁶

Theodoret's reasoning here might be more convincing if he held that the Roman captivity of Acts 28 had terminated in the Apostle's death, or if, admitting two Roman captivities, he placed Ephesians and Colossians in the second. It so happens, however, that he distinctly asserts the thesis of a twofold captivity; indeed he assigns a journey to Spain in the intervening period of apostolic activity.⁵⁷ He is also explicit in assigning Colossians—and consequently Ephesians

⁵⁴ *In Col.* 4:7 ff. (PG, LXXXII, 624 C).

⁵⁵ *Praef. in XIX Epistolas* (PG, LXXXII, 41 D).

⁵⁶ *In epist. ad Ephes.*, arg. (PG, LXXXII, 508 C-D).

⁵⁷ *In II Tim.* 4:17 (PG, LXXXII, 856 B).

—to the earlier of these captivities. He argues that whereas Timothy was with Paul when Colossians was written, the Apostle was without companions in his second captivity. He presents his argument as follows:

The letters [to the Ephesians and Colossians] were written from Rome after Paul's escape from the first peril, and this is clearly indicated in the very prologue of the [Colossian] letter. For Paul made the thrice-blessed Timothy an associate in the [praescript of] the letter. But at the time when, under Nero, he went through his first contest, none of his intimates was with him. This fact is clearly stated by Paul in his letter to Timothy, 'In the first defense no one came to my support.' And [later] when Paul was nearing the very end of his life, the divine Timothy was not living at Rome but rather in Asia. This is clearly indicated in the second letter to Timothy. For after saying, 'I am already being poured out in libation' [II Tim. 4:6], Paul says a moment later, 'Make haste to come to me soon' [II Tim. 4:9]. And then he adds, 'Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas' [II Tim. 4:12].⁵⁸

Although we might spend some time noting how Theodoret differs from Chrysostom and Theodore in ascribing to Paul the evangelization of Colossae, we must pass on to our examination of Theodoret's method and procedure. His views on the place of composition of our letters seem to rest entirely on the data of the letters or on inferences from those data. It must have been noticed in our quotations from Theodoret that there is not one single reference to long-standing tradition. And, though normally at one with Chrysostom, he did not scruple to depart from Chrysostom's position on more than one point.

As we have said before, it is not our purpose in this paper to pass judgment on the lines of argument used by the ancient commentators. Still we may legitimately call attention to one or two points. For though it would be too much to say that the Bishop of Cyrrhus assumes, rather than proves, the Roman composition of our letters, it must be admitted that more than one of his arguments is to be accounted flimsy and weak. Thus his peculiar position on the temporal relation of Philemon to Colossians weakens the link between those two letters. And his inferences, it must be confessed, from the "prima defensio" (II Tim. 4:16) are more than unsatisfactory. True, in the case of Philippians Theodoret refers to "Caesar's house" and to the

⁵⁸ *In epist. ad Coloss.*, arg. (PG, LXXXII, 592 A-B).

“praetorium” evangelized by Paul. Exegetes of today, however, may not regard these references so highly as did Theodoret, Theodore, and Chrysostom.

Certainly Theodoret made an honest effort to piece together the stray bits of evidence scattered here and there in Paul’s letters. But with what success? Surely, his position on the Roman composition of Galatians and his early dating of I Timothy and Titus are not too reassuring. He does not seem here to have been following ancient tradition.

Later Sources.—Several other authorities are occasionally cited in support of the Roman composition of the captivity letters. Thus reference is made now and then to St. John Damascene, Euthalius, Pseudo-Athanasius, and to the *subscriptions* and *argumenta* found in many MSS of the Pauline Epistles. As these authorities are all later than the commentators considered above, we might leave them unnoticed. However, a few remarks will be in place.

And first Euthalius. Here we must indeed walk warily. There seems as yet to be no certainty as to the identity or time of this mysterious personage. Styled a deacon at times and at times Bishop of Sulce, Euthalius has been the object of much discussion and controversy. For reasons that need not be considered here, J. Armitage Robinson, in his study of the Euthalian material published by Zacagni in 1698,⁵⁹ dated the genuine work of Euthalius between A.D. 323 and 350.⁶⁰ Of the remaining Euthalian material a portion was ascribed to the labors of Evagrius in A.D. 396, while the balance was thought to be the work of later compilers.

With the publication by von Soden of an eleventh-century MS from Mt. Athos containing a “Confession of Faith of Euthalius Bishop of Sulce,” which on internal grounds belongs to the period A.D. 662–680,⁶¹ an entirely new factor entered the Euthalian controversy. In consequence, C. H. Turner in 1904 identified Euthalius’ see as Sulci in

⁵⁹ L. A. Zacagni, *Collectanea Monumentorum Veterum Ecclesiae Graecae et Latinae* (Romae, 1698). The Euthalian materials, reprinted in part by Galland in 1774, appear in Migne (PG, LXXXV, 619–790) in a form still less complete.

⁶⁰ J. A. Robinson, *Euthaliana* (Texts and Studies, III-3; Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1895), p. 101.

⁶¹ H. von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, I-1 (2d ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1911), 638–41.

Sardinia and brought Euthalius himself down to the seventh century. And, in Turner's view, the important part of the Euthalian materials were now those passages deriving from Evagrius, the later part being the work of the seventh-century Euthalius.

Whatever is to be said of this controversy,⁶² it is evident that Euthalius is a very obscure person. The uncertainty of authorship just outlined deprives of all real value the testimony found in the Euthalian material relating to the place of composition of Paul's letters. Thus, in Robinson's view of the case, the general list of places from which Paul's letters were written is non-Euthalian matter.⁶³ Turner, on the other hand, would regard the passages as earlier than his seventh-century Euthalius; the items in Turner's section no. vi "may be Evagrius, but are in any case less important."⁶⁴ As for the Euthalian *hypotheses* or *argumenta* on our four letters, both Robinson and Turner rightly observe that this part of the Euthalian materials⁶⁵ is an outright interpolation from the Pseudo-Athanasian *Synopsis*.⁶⁶

The work of Pseudo-Athanasius is dated by Zahn in the sixth century.⁶⁷ This dating seems to have won general acceptance. According to the *Synopsis*, our four letters were written at Rome. But it should be noted that in this document we have to deal with mere assertions of fact; no appeal to tradition is made by Pseudo-Athanasius nor is any proof offered in support of his various theses. The *Synopsis* simply reflects the views of the time. A valuable witness in the history of the canon, it is of little importance in our present question. Thus, for example, it located Galatians and II Thessalonians at Rome.⁶⁸ Certainly Pseudo-Athanasius enjoys no independent authority.

Next to be considered are the *subscriptions* appended in many MSS to the text of our four letters. As we have already said, the testimony

⁶² Cf. J. A. Robinson, "Recent Work on Euthalius," *Journ. Theol. Stud.*, VI (1904-5), 87-90.

⁶³ Robinson, *Euthaliana*, p. 27; compare p. 18. The same list of place names will be found in Migne (*PG*, LXXXV, 724 C-725 A).

⁶⁴ Turner, *op. cit.*, Hasting's *Dict. of the Bible*, Extra Vol., p. 529^a.

⁶⁵ These materials will be found in Migne (*PG*, LXXXV, 748 A-749 C, 752 D-753 C, etc.).

⁶⁶ Robinson, *Euthaliana*, p. 20; Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 528^b.

⁶⁷ T. Zahn, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, II-1 (Erlangen und Leipzig: Deichert, 1890), 315.

⁶⁸ *PG*, XXVIII, 417 C, 424 A.

of these adjuncts to the sacred text is occasionally invoked to show the existence of an ancient tradition on the Roman composition of our letters.⁶⁹ Among the older MSS these subscripts are found in A of the fifth century, in the ninth century codices K L P, and in several minuscules; also in Codex Vaticanus, but in a sixth century hand.⁷⁰ They are not in Codex Sinaiticus. The presence of these subscripts in Syriac and other versions is in all likelihood owing to Greek influence.

The subscripts vary little from manuscript to manuscript. For our four letters they read as follows:

Eph.: *εγγραφη απο Ρωμης δια Τυχικου*

Phil.: *εγγραφη απο Ρωμης δια Επαφροδιτου*

Col.: *εγγραφη απο Ρωμης δια Τυχικου και Ονησιμου*

Phm.: *εγγραφη απο Ρωμης δια Ονησιμου οικητου* (with a longer variant that need not concern us).

Such is the constant pattern of these place-notes; and there can be little doubt that the subscripts to all of Paul's letters came, directly or indirectly, from the same biblical workshop. Everywhere are reflected the views current in the fifth, sixth, and following centuries.

As for the independent value of these notes, they locate I and II Corinthian letters at Philippi, Galatians at Rome, and I and II Thessalonians at Athens. Again, I Timothy, according to the subscripts, was written "from Laodicea which is the metropolis of Phrygia," or, as a variant has it, "from Macedonia." It seems rash, indeed, to repose confidence in such materials.

Similar subscripts, along with the Euthalian stichometry, are to be found attached to St. John Damascene's commentaries, at least in the Migne edition.^{70a} These subscripts are of course additions to the commentary. In this set of subscripts, I Corinthians is said to have been written at Philippi, Galatians at Rome, I and II Thessalonians at Athens, and I Timothy at "Laodicea, the metropolis of Phrygia Pacatiana." However, it should be noted that this last point is also taught by Damascene himself; for in his comments on Col. 4:16 he

⁶⁹ The subscripts are gathered together in H. von Soden's *Die Schriften des N. T.*, I-1, 300.

⁷⁰ The subscript appended to II Thessalonians in Codex Vaticanus may be seen in H. J. Vogels' *Codicum Novi Testamenti Specimina* (Bonnae: Hanstein, 1929), tab. 3.

^{70a} For our four epistles, cf. *PG*, XCV, 856 C, 884 A, 904 D, 1033 A.

identifies the "Laodicean letter" with I Timothy.⁷¹ At all events, historical interpretation was not Damascene's strongpoint.⁷²

And lastly the *argumenta* prefixed to the text of St. Paul's letter in many MSS.⁷³ The same judgment is to be passed on these short paragraphs as on the *subscriptiones*. They appear to be the work of a single person or group. As for our captivity letters, the *argumenta* agree in assigning all four letters to Rome, but the one on Ephesians maintains that Paul had not yet visited Ephesus! Like the subscripts, these prologues place the Galatian letter at Rome, and I Timothy either at Laodicea or in Macedonia. They locate I Thessalonians at Athens and II Thessalonians at Rome. Obviously, this group of documents is without intrinsic value.

THE LATIN SOURCES

Before embarking on our examination of the major Latin commentators, we must say a word on what survives of the commentaries of Caius Marius Victorinus Afer. A. H. Travis dates the commentaries *ca.* A.D. 360–363.⁷⁴ Despite Jerome's unflattering critique of Victorinus' scriptural knowledge,⁷⁵ the ancient rhetorician's comments might have been of real interest in our quest; for Victorinus did not entirely disregard questions of place.⁷⁶ However, his commentary on Ephesians makes no mention of the place of composition, though it remarks several times on Paul's status as a prisoner. Unfortunately, too, the first part of Victorinus' commentary on Philippians—the prologue and the comments on Phil. 1:1–15—has been lost. But Victorinus' note on Phil. 4:22 may perhaps be understood to suppose the Roman composition of that letter. He says: "Ipsi vos praecipue salutant, qui sunt de domo Caesaris" (Phil. 4:21c–22). Et virtutem evangelii ostendit, quod de domo Caesaris crediderunt multi: qui

⁷¹ *In Col.* 4:16 (PG, XCV, 904 C).

⁷² Thus he understands the *per circuitum* of Rom. 15:19 as referring not only to the Roman Empire but also to the lands of the Persians, Saracens, Armenians, and other barbarians (PG, XCV, 561 A).

⁷³ The *argumenta* on our four letters will be found in von Soden, *op. cit.*, I-1, 343 f., 349.

⁷⁴ A. H. Travis, "Marius Victorinus: a Biographical Note," *Harvard Theological Review*, XXXVI (1943) 88, note 14.

⁷⁵ *Comment. in Gal.*, prol. (PL, XXVI, 308 A).

⁷⁶ Thus of Galatians he says, "Epistola ad Galatas missa dicitur ab apostolo ab Epheso civitate" (*Comm. in Gal.*, I, prol. [PL, VIII, 1145 D]).

utique *erecti* esse debuerant, et *nihil aliud quam de Caesare cogitare*."⁷⁷ Here Victorinus seems to hint that the converts in question stood near the awful presence of Caesar. For the rest, there is nothing else relevant to our problem in Victorinus.

Ambrosiaster.—The commentaries that have gone under this name since the early seventeenth century are to be dated in the pontificate of Damasus (A.D. 366–384).⁷⁸ Though doctrinally somewhat tainted, *Ambrosiaster* is a work of high merit in many respects; and its influence on later Latin exegesis was immense.⁷⁹ Although this writer and Pseudo-Augustine are one and the same, his historical identity is still wrapped in mystery.

The data of *Ambrosiaster* on the captivity letters are very disappointing. He does, however, furnish some information on Ephesians and Philemon. First, then, his views on Ephesians. We may notice in passing that *Ambrosiaster* is one of those who deny Paul's foundation of the Church of Ephesus.⁸⁰ As for the Roman composition of the letter, he is quite clear and explicit. At the end of the short prologue to his Ephesian commentary he states: "[Paulus Ephesios] ad meliora scriptis hortatur de urbis Romae custodia; quia veniens ab Hierosolymis in custodia sub fideiussore intelligitur degisse, manens extra castra in conductu suo."⁸¹ The reference to Paul's captivity as described in Acts 28:30 is clear and unmistakable. Unfortunately, *Ambrosiaster* has nothing further on the subject.

In like manner he explicitly assigns Paul's letter to Philemon to the same period of captivity; for *Ambrosiaster's* scholion on Phm. 10 ff. reads: "Onesimum ergo profugum recurrentem ad divinum auxilium, cum esset in custodia urbis Romae, baptizavit apostolus, videns in illo utilitatis spem."⁸² But that again is the extent of *Ambrosiaster's* information on the subject. And there is, furthermore, nothing in the commentary on Philemon to indicate the relation of that letter to Colossians.

Strange to say, *Ambrosiaster* does not even mention the place of

⁷⁷ *In Phil.* 4:21–22 (*PL*, VIII, 1234 D).

⁷⁸ A. Souter, *A Study of Ambrosiaster* (Texts and Studies, VII-4; Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1905), pp. 166 ff.

⁷⁹ For details cf. *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸⁰ "Ephesios apostolus non fundavit in fide, sed confirmavit" (*Comment. in Ephes.*, prol. [*PL*, XVII, 371 D]).

⁸¹ *Ibid.* (col. 373 A).

⁸² *PL*, XVII, 505 C-D.

composition of the remaining two letters. The prologues to Colossians and Philippians are silent on the subject. Ambrosiaster's comment on "the members of Caesar's house" (Phil. 4:22) does not touch the question. And his remarks on the "praetorium" (Phil. 1:13), if rather startling, are irrelevant to our study. His comment there is as follows: "In omni praetorio, et in ceteris omnibus, id est, *in omni Iudaismo*, et per universas ecclesias gentium; praest enim Iudaismus, quia ipsi facta promissio est. . . ." ⁸³ As for Ambrosiaster's commentary on Colossians, it does not even allude to the interrelation of that letter and the note to Philemon. Nor is any further information forthcoming in the *Quaestiones* of Pseudo-Augustine, a writer now identified with the author of our commentary. ⁸⁴

In general, Ambrosiaster seems to be so taken up with the doctrinal side of Paul's letters that points of historical interest are usually passed over in silence. Occasionally a "no need of comment" is to be found after *lemmata* which in other commentators would call forth several lines of historical comment. Indeed, Ambrosiaster hardly ever notes the place of composition of Paul's letters. Thus it is only by comparing the comments on Rom. 1:13 and 15:25 f. that Corinth may with probability be inferred as the place of origin of Romans. In like manner it is only by inference from the comments on I Thess. 3:1-6 that Athens (or Corinth) may be judged to be Ambrosiaster's choice for the place of composition of I Thessalonians. Ambrosiaster's prologues to the letters, with the single exception of that to Ephesians, make no mention of the places where the different letters originated.

But the exception just mentioned must be duly noted. Whether or not it is evidence of a general persuasion as to the Roman origin of Ephesians, this singular departure from Ambrosiaster's common practice must be taken into consideration. On the other hand, it must also be observed that Ambrosiaster's thesis of the Roman origin of Ephesians and Philemon is merely stated, without further comment.

⁸³ *PL*, XVII, 405 C. However strange this reading may appear, it is the genuine text of Ambrosiaster; cf. Souter, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

⁸⁴ After a long examination of the question of their identity, Souter, *A Study of Ambrosiaster*, p. 157, arrives at a definitely affirmative conclusion; *idem*, *Pseudo-Augustini Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti CXXVII* (*CSEL*, L; Vindobonae-Lipsiae, 1908), p. XXIII.

There is no reference either to preceding tradition or to contemporary agreement on the subject.

As for that writer's views on the origin of the letter to the Colossians, we cannot legitimately infer from his position on Ephesians that he would likewise locate the composition of Colossians in the imperial capital. For Ambrosiaster does not seem at all conscious of the local and temporal relation of Colossians to Ephesians and Philemon. Thus in the whole course of his Colossian commentary he does not appear to have made a single reference to parallel passages in Ephesians; and in the commentary on Ephesians he has only one cross reference to Colossians,⁸⁵ and that of no special significance.

Indeed, Ambrosiaster does not appear to have treated the captivity letters as a group; neither does he appear to have been overinterested in Paul's captivities. He does not even clearly differentiate between the two Roman captivities.⁸⁶ And certainly, Ambrosiaster's silence on the place of origin of Philippians, even in passages where he should have spoken, makes it impossible for us to take for granted that he taught the Roman origin of that letter.

St. Jerome.—Two of our captivity letters, Philemon and Ephesians, are among the four Pauline letters on which St. Jerome has left commentaries. Written for Paula and Eustochium, these somewhat hurried compositions are to be dated *ca.* A.D. 387–389. The commentary on Ephesians is considerably indebted, so Jerome informs us, to the commentary of Origen on that epistle, and in a lesser degree to the work of Apollinaris and Didymus.⁸⁷

But it is in his preface to the commentary on Philemon and in his notes on Phm. 1 that Jerome comes closest to a general introduction to the life and letters of Paul. Jerome, unlike Ambrosiaster, lays great stress on the captivity of the Apostle. At the words "vinctus Christi Iesu" (Phm. 1), Jerome's commentary calls attention to the status of Paul the prisoner, the feature common to our four letters. He says: "Quod autem sequitur 'vinctus Iesu Christi,' in nulla epistola

⁸⁵ The reference is to Col. 2:19. *In Eph.* 1:23 (*PL*, XVII, 376 D).

⁸⁶ Thus at Rom. 15:24, 28 (*PL*, XVII, 176 D, 177 C) he does not state that Paul went to Spain, and his commentary on II Tim. 4:16–18 (*PL*, XVII, 497 A–498 A), though probably to be understood as implying two captivities, is not very definite.

⁸⁷ *In Eph.*, prol. (*PL*, XXVI, 442 C).

hoc cognomine [Paulus] usus est, licet in corpore epistolarum—ad Ephesios videlicet et Philippenses et Colossenses—esse se in vinculis pro confessione testetur.”⁸⁸ Then follow a dozen lines of comment on Paul’s choice of that cognomen in his note to Philemon. Next Jerome turns to the question of time and place.

Observing that many a man has lain in prison, but few can claim the title “vinctus Christi,” Jerome continues:

Sed quicumque pro Christi nomine et pro eius confessione vincitur, ille vere vinctus dicitur Iesu Christi, et sanguis effusus is tantum martyrem facit, qui pro Christi nomine funditur. *Scribit igitur ad Philemonem Romae vinctus in carcere, quo tempore mihi videntur ad Philippenses, Colossenses, et Ephesios epistolae esse dictatae.*⁸⁹

The subject here is definitely one of time, with questions of place as a necessary consequence.

Jerome’s starting point in the discussion is the time and place of the letter to Philemon. And that work, he says, is Roman in origin. His reasons for the assertion—if and insofar as he gives reasons—seem to be, first, the fact of Paul’s imprisonment, and secondly, the Apostle’s emphatic use of the cognomen “prisoner of Christ Jesus.” For, Jerome insists, Paul’s use of this title in the praescript of the letter is very unusual and emphatic. Indeed, that very emphasis seems in Jerome’s view to point to Paul’s Roman captivity, the captivity par excellence of the Apostle. Such must be Jerome’s meaning if his words, “scribit igitur,” are to be given illative force. As for the remaining captivity letters, it was Jerome’s personal opinion (“mihi videntur”) that they had been composed at the same time and place.

Next Jerome enters upon a discussion of Philippians, Colossians, and Ephesians; he gives in each case his reasons for asserting their contemporaneity with Philemon. The passage cited above is immediately followed by his special discussion of Philippians:

Ad Philippenses illa ex causa: primum quod cum solo Timotheo scribit, quod et in hac epistola [sc., ad Philemonem] facit; dehinc quod vincula sua manifesta dicit facta pro Christo in omni praetorio. Quid sit autem ‘praetorium’ in ipsius epistolae fine significat: ‘Salutant vos omnes sancti, maxime autem qui de Caesaris domo sunt.’ A Caesare missus in carcerem, notior familiae eius factus, persecutoris domum Christi fecit ecclesiam.

⁸⁸ *In Phm.* 1 (*PL*, XXVI, 605 A).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* (col. 605 B).

There are two distinct arguments in this passage. First of all, Jerome endeavors to establish a time relation between Philippians and Philemon. As an indication of their contemporaneity he calls attention to the fact that in both letters Timothy is named in the praescript. Jerome's second argument is without reference to Philemon. The word "praetorium," Jerome argues, indicates Paul's Roman captivity. But here it will be seen that Jerome—unlike Chrysostom, Theodore, and Theodoret—does not claim that "praetorium" was a first-century designation of the imperial palace. That it has that meaning in Philippians, is inferred by Jerome from the mention of "Caesar's house" at the end of the letter.

There is no need to quote in full the following passage on Colossians.⁹⁰ Here Jerome simply takes note of the general relation of Colossians to Philippians and especially to Philemon. He observes that as in Philemon so here Timothy's name is to be found in the praescript. And in Colossians, too, Paul's imprisonment is set forth emphatically. Jerome quotes several verses of Colossians to bring this point home. His conclusion is: "Hoc ideo, ut sciamus has quoque epistolas de carcere et inter vincula fuisse dictatas." There is also a discussion of certain special features of Colossians: here the problems connected with Onesimus, his owner Philemon, and Archippus are duly set forth.

Last to be considered is the Epistle to the Ephesians. Jerome's reasons for locating it in Paul's Roman captivity are the following:

Ad Ephesios vero illam ob causam, quod pro Christo et hic vinctum se esse dicat; et eadem, quae ad Colossenses iusserat, in huius quoque epistolae fine praecipiat, ut uxores subiciantur viris et viri uxores diligant . . . et ad extremum epistolam suam hoc fine concludat: 'Quid agam, notum vobis faciet Tychicus . . . quem misi ad vos . . . ut . . . consoletur corda vestra.' Tychicus autem is est, qui et ad Colossenses cum Onesimo mittitur, et eo tempore Onesimum habuit comitem, quo Onesimus ad Philemonem literas perferebat.⁹¹

Jerome's first argument is the fact that Paul was a prisoner at the time of writing. But more important is the relation of Ephesians to Colossians, manifested in their community of content and in their common bearer Tychicus. Both letters have the same series of practical precepts (Eph. 5:22—6:9; Col. 3:18—4:1), and both were delivered to their

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* (col. 605 C).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, (col. 606 B).

respective addressees by Tychicus. And Tychicus was accompanied by Onesimus to whom Paul had entrusted the letter to Philemon.

Jerome returns to this question in his comments on Eph. 6:20. As the matter is presented there from a somewhat different standpoint, the passage must be seen: "Et quidem qui simpliciter intelligit [sc., verba 'pro quo legatione fungor in catena'], dicit propter testimonium Christi eum de carcere et de catenis haec Romae positum scripta misisse."⁹² Then, a few lines below, Jerome joins Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians as to time and place. Having quoted the verses (Eph. 6:21 f.) describing Tychicus' mission, he continues: ". . . ideo Tychicum missum Ephesum, ut nuntiaret eis vincula apostoli Pauli nota facta esse *in omni praetorio*, et catenam illius ad fidem evangelii profecisse, eo tempore quo et ad Colossenses scripsit dicens: 'Quae circa me sunt . . . nota faciet vobis.'"⁹³ Here, of course, the phrase, "in omni praetorio," is a reference to Philippians.

One point more. Jerome holds that the captivity described in Acts 28 ended in the Apostle's acquittal. His comments on Phm. 22 seem to point in that direction, and he certainly held that Paul carried out the intended visit to Spain (Rom. 15:24, 28).⁹⁴ Yet, it must be admitted, certain of Jerome's remarks on Ephesians give the impression that he himself was undecided whether Ephesians should be dated before or after Paul's journey to Spain. Thus Jerome says: "Videbat quippe [Paulus] se de Ierusalem usque ad Illyricum evangelium praedicasse, isse Romam, ad Hispanias *vel perrexisse vel ire disponere*."⁹⁵

And now for a résumé. In Jerome's presentation of our problem the Roman origin of Philemon is in the key position. And Jerome apparently regards the Roman composition of that letter as an accepted fact in the eyes of Paula and Eustochium; for his phrase, "mihi videntur," refers only to the other three letters. But even in the case of Philemon, it is to be noted, Jerome, like Chrysostom, makes no claim of long-standing tradition. His arguments run entirely along lines of internal criticism.

As for the remaining three letters, Jerome's view on their Roman origin is based entirely, or in the case of Philippians partially, on an

⁹² *In Eph.*, III, c. 6 (*PL*, XXVI, 553 B). ⁹³ *Ibid.* (col. 553 CD).

⁹⁴ *In Phm.* 22b (*PL*, XXVI, 616 C-617 A); *in Isa.*, IV, c. 11 (*PL*, XXIV, 151 A).

⁹⁵ *In Eph.*, II, c. 3 (*PL*, XXVI, 485 B).

equation in time and place to Philemon. And this equation, again, is founded not on tradition, but on the data of the letters. And Jerome presents his conclusions as his personal view.

A word or so now on Jerome's phrase, "mihi videntur." One might well suspect that this phrase is an indication of Jerome's disagreement with views of Origen on the subject. It is now well known that Jerome, generally speaking, followed Origen rather closely in the commentary on Ephesians, so closely, indeed, that Jerome's commentary was of the greatest help to Gregg's revision of the Cramer fragments of Origen's commentary on Ephesians.⁹⁶ Now it may well be that, just as Origen put Philippians at a date too early for Paul's Roman captivity,⁹⁷ so on the other captivity letters he held views at variance with the thesis of Roman origin. This understanding of the case would explain Jerome's words, "mihi videntur," on a subject on which the major writers of the time seem to have agreed.

The Roman composition of Philippians, as we have said, was not entirely based by Jerome on its equation in time and place to Philemon. There is no need to repeat what he said of the "praetorium" and of "Caesar's house." But we cannot help noting that Jerome, like Theodoret afterwards, keenly appreciated the dramatic side of Paul's conquests in the house of Caesar. Understanding the phrase in its strictest local sense, Jerome saw Paul winning victories for the gospel in the very shadow of Nero, the great persecutor. The thought filled Jerome's heart with joy; for "the home of the persecutor was made a church of Christ." And in his comment on Eph. 6:21 f., Jerome notes Paul's triumph: "Grandis enim consolatio erat, audire Paulum, Romae in domina urbium et in arce Romani imperii, de carcere et de vinculis triumphantem."⁹⁸

Pelagius.—The commentaries of this famous monk from Britain were composed *ca.* A.D. 406–409.⁹⁹ Now critically reconstructed by A. Souter, this work may not be passed over in our investigation; for, like Ambrosiaster, Pelagius' commentaries exerted, at least in-

⁹⁶ J. A. F. Gregg, "The Commentary of Origen upon the Epistle to the Ephesians," *Journ. Theol. Stud.*, III (1902–3), 233 f.

⁹⁷ Cf. *supra*, p. 167.

⁹⁸ *In Eph.*, III, c. 6 (*PL*, XXVI, 553 D).

⁹⁹ A. Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul*, I, Introduction (*Texts and Studies*, IX-1; Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1922), pp. 4 ff.

directly, a very deep influence on later Latin exegesis.¹⁰⁰ And this work of Pelagius was itself indebted in part to earlier writers of both East and West.

Paul's status as a prisoner is not presented by Pelagius with the emphasis that one might reasonably expect. Thus at Eph. 3:1 he presents us with alternative scholia: "sive Cat[h]enis. Sive: Christi amore ligatus. . . ." Again Pelagius' remarks on Col. 4:18 clearly point to Paul's imprisonment. In the case of Philippians there are several references to Paul's captivity, v.g., the scholia on Phil. 1:7, 13, 14; we shall discuss below the comments on Phil. 1:12 f. and 4:22. Finally Pelagius' short prologue to Philemon and his comment on Phm. 9 state distinctly that Paul was a prisoner at the time of writing.

As for the interrelation of the four letters, it is nowhere stated by Pelagius that they were all, or even some of them, written in the same general period. True enough, Pelagius identifies the Archippus of Phm. 2 with the man of that name mentioned in Col. 4:17; still, nothing much can be inferred from that identification alone. Strange to say, there is no indication of the connection, in the person of Onesimus, between the letters to the Colossians and Philemon. This, however, may be due to the fact that Pelagius' biblical text of Colossians may have read "Ones[tiss]imus," whereas in Philemon the reading was "[H]onesimus."¹⁰¹

As for the connexion between Colossians and Ephesians, Pelagius again has very little to say. True, on one occasion he gives a cross reference, when, commenting on Col. 3:19, he says, "numquam rem naturalem hortaretur, nisi continentes esse coeperunt, *sicut ad Ephesios plenius subnotatum est.*"¹⁰² But the mission of Tychicus, mentioned in the two letters, seems to have had no special significance in Pelagius' view.

And now for Pelagius' statements on Paul's Roman captivity. He is definite in dating Philemon at that period. The prologue to Philemon begins with the words: "Incipit ad Philemonem, cui apostolus a Roma scribit de carcere pro [h]onesimo seruo eius. . . ."¹⁰³ And it is equally

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 5 f., 343 f.

¹⁰¹ A. Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions . . .*, II, Text (Texts and Studies, IX-2; Cambridge, 1926), pp. 471, 538. Souter brackets whatever is wanting in either of his primary authorities, Codd. Augiensis CXIX and Baliolensis 157.

¹⁰² Ed. Souter, pp. 468 f.

¹⁰³ Ed. Souter, p. 536.

clear that Pelagius had in mind Paul's first Roman captivity. For though he is not at all certain that Paul ever made the projected voyage to Spain,¹⁰⁴ Pelagius does maintain that the captivity during which Philemon was written ended in the liberation of the Apostle. This is clear from Pelagius' comment on the passage (Phm. 22): "para mihi hospitium: nam spero per orationes uestras donari uobis." His comment is clear: "Hic ostenditur, quia prima uice sit ex Urbe dimissus."¹⁰⁵ From this note and from the scholion on II Tim. 4:6 it is clear that Pelagius held that Paul went into captivity at Rome a second time—a captivity that ended in a martyr's death.

Clear as Pelagius is on the time and place of origin of Philemon, he is utterly silent when it comes to Colossians and Ephesians. He may have held that they were Roman in origin, but he certainly does not say so. And his failure, already noted, to indicate the relation of Ephesians to Colossians and the relation of Colossians to Philemon makes it impossible for us to extend his views on the Roman origin of Philemon to the other two letters.

Philippians, on the other hand, is explicitly assigned by Pelagius to the Roman captivity. Yet here, too, his statements are somewhat disappointing. His remarks on the Roman composition of the letter come in the scholion on Phil. 1:12, not in the prologue and not at 1:13 as we should be inclined to expect. The passage runs as follows:

'Scire autem uos uolo, fratres, quod [ea] quae circa me sunt.' Hi[n]c consolatur eos de sua tribulatione, quia audierant eum uinctum [in urbe] Roma[e] custodiri. 'Magis ad profectum euangelii uenerunt, ita ut uinacula mea manifesta fierent in Christo in omni praetorio et [in] ceteris omnibus.' Non solum non obsunt, sed etiam profuerunt, dum manifestatur me non pro [aliquo] crimine, sed pro Christo omnia sustinere.¹⁰⁶

This, of course, is all very brief; it contains hardly more than a statement of the origin of the letter in Paul's Roman captivity. And Pelagius is no more informative in his comment on Phil. 4:22; the "members of Caesar's house" are simply described as "qui sunt nuper de Caesaris domo conuersi."

So slight is Pelagius' contribution that there is no need to recapitulate

¹⁰⁴ "Utrum in Hispaniã[m] fuerit incertum habetur" (*In Rom.* 15:24 [ed. Souter, p. 118 f.]).

¹⁰⁵ Ed. Souter, p. 539.

¹⁰⁶ Ed. Souter, pp. 390 f.

his views. Suffice it to say that here again there is not a single reference to earlier tradition. Like Ambrosiaster, Pelagius seems to be almost without information on our subject. Lest a false impression be created by the lack of fullness in these two commentators as contrasted with Jerome, a few words must be added to show their sources of information.

Except for Victorinus Afer, Ambrosiaster was more or less a pioneer in the Latin exegesis of Paul's epistles. There were, of course, earlier Greek sources at his disposal, but his attitude to things Greek seems to have been consistently hostile.¹⁰⁷ Still, he was in position to draw on Roman traditions. The case of Pelagius is quite different. This author shows considerable dependence on earlier writings, both Greek and Latin. He knew not only the writings of Ambrosiaster but also the earlier works of Jerome and Augustine.¹⁰⁸ As for Greek sources, he seems to have been acquainted with Chrysostom's homilies; he had access to Origen at least through Rufinus' translation published at Rome *ca.* A.D. 405.¹⁰⁹ Whether Pelagius used Theodore of Mopsuestia, or whether Theodore used Pelagius, or finally whether both drew from Diodorus of Tarsus, are matters still undetermined. At any rate, Pelagius had access to major representatives of Greek exegesis; so his silence, whatever be said of Ambrosiaster's, cannot be laid to a comparative lack of information on current views as to the Roman origin of the captivity letters.

A. PRIMITIVE TRADITION?

It is now time for the direct discussion of our primary problem: Was there a primitive tradition bearing witness to the Roman composition of the captivity letters? As we pointed out at the beginning of this paper, there exists an exegetical tradition going back to the age of Chrysostom and Jerome. But is there evidence of a tradition going back from the age of Chrysostom and Jerome to the primitive age of the Church? Is there evidence in our earliest extant authorities of an

¹⁰⁷ A. Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions . . .*, I, 177.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 176-87.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 193 ff. (Chrysostom). For the rest, Souter (pp. 188 ff.) is dependent on A. J. Smith's study, "The Commentary of Pelagius on 'Romans' compared with that of Origen-Rufinus," *Journ. Theol. Stud.*, XX (1919-20), 127-77.

antecedent tradition going back to earliest times? That is our problem.

Here it should be carefully borne in mind that the tradition in question is essentially historical in character. We are not discussing a case of dogmatic tradition dealing with faith or matters closely connected with faith. And in problems of historical tradition, needless to say, agreements on the part of a great number of later witnesses are not necessarily decisive factors.

Again, there is a vast difference between our present case and that, for example, of the witnesses commonly cited in discussions on the authorship of the Gospels. There we have fairly general testimony dating from around the close of the second century, testimony professedly derived from preceding tradition. Under the circumstances we are warranted in inferring general agreement on the main points of Gospel authorship around the middle of the second century or even earlier. Now, general agreement on such a subject and at that early period can be reasonably explained only on the basis of first-century tradition. But on the question of the Roman origin of the captivity letters our chief witnesses are some three hundred to four hundred years after the event—surely a mighty lapse of time in historical tradition! And one may not assume, without examination of the case and without proof, that witnesses so long after the event are necessarily the repositories of a primitive tradition.

Although our various witnesses have already been described in the foregoing part of this paper, a few words must be added on their general background. The Greek commentators whose views we have registered belong mainly to the Antiochian school of exegesis. Thus Chrysostom and his friend Theodore were fellow students under Diodorus; Severian of Gabala was of the same generation as Chrysostom and Theodore. Theodoret is a close adherent in the following generation to the views of Chrysostom. But even these four commentators, great as some of them were, represent but a small part of the literary output of the Antiochian school. As for the Alexandrine school of exegesis, little of its great exegetical work has been preserved. Though the school of Alexandria was on the downgrade by the close of the fourth century, it is to be regretted that the exegetical

work of men such as Didymus is no longer available. True, in our present study we have been able to use Origen-Rufinus on Romans. And we have Jerome's word that his commentary on Ephesians was greatly influenced by the school of Origen. The same is probably true of Jerome's other Pauline commentaries.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, the Alexandrine school exerted a certain influence on Pelagius, again through the medium of Origen-Rufinus on Romans.

We must also note the influence of the Roman Church on our three principal Latin witnesses. All three were in direct contact with the Roman Church at one time or another; the same may be said of Victorinus Afer. Thus Jerome's residence in Rome when he served as secretary to Pope Damasus preceded by only a few years his work on the Pauline epistles. Moreover, it should be remembered that Jerome wrote those commentaries for two noble ladies of the Roman aristocracy. As for Ambrosiaster, there is evidence that this mysterious personage had his residence at times in Rome and was well acquainted with the Christian usages of the Eternal City.¹¹¹ Finally, the commentaries of Pelagius were actually written and published at Rome. So we have reason to suppose that our Latin commentators should have been fully cognizant of a local Roman tradition, if such existed, on the Roman composition of the captivity letters.

And now for the general position adopted by our ancient commentators, Greek and Latin. There is no need to make a fresh survey of their evidence to be convinced of their general agreement on the Roman origin of the captivity letters. Though there are exceptions, these commentators agree in general in not assigning any place other than Rome to the captivity during which Paul wrote the four letters. Thus, despite the fact that Paul's captivity at Caesarea lasted about as long as the Roman captivity of Acts 28, no reference is ever made by our commentators to the Caesarean captivity. Yet the concessions granted by Felix (Acts 24:23) were probably such as would allow Paul to dictate and send letters from the "praetorium of Herod." Notwithstanding all this, our commentators never mention Caesarea; indeed, most of them actually name Rome as the scene of Paul's captivity at

¹¹⁰ It is certainly true of the commentary on Galatians; cf. *In Gal.*, prol. (*PL*, XXVI, 308 B).

¹¹¹ A. Souter, *A Study of Ambrosiaster*, pp. 165 f.

the time the four captivity letters were written. This is a phenomenon that calls for explanation.

Now, there is little if any sign of interdependence, in the present case, between the various commentators. Indeed, their variety of approach to the problem would seem to eliminate conscious borrowing of one commentary from another. On the other hand, it would strain probabilities to suppose that the thesis of Roman composition arose spontaneously among these more or less contemporaneous authors. So there can be hardly any question but that this thesis had been rather commonly accepted in exegetical circles in the generations immediately preceding Chrysostom.

It seems safe, therefore, to suppose that the Roman composition either of all or of some of the captivity letters had been generally professed by the earlier scholars at least of the Antiochian school. Our major Greek commentators, as we have said, are Antiochian. On the other hand, the extant evidence does not make it possible to extend our conclusion to the scholars of the Alexandrine school. As for the West, there was little work in exegesis before the time of Ambrosiaster. Victorinus Afer's position on our question is not clear.

No Definite Tradition

Though we are willing to admit that there had been, prior to the time of Chrysostom, a fairly general consensus, at least in the Antiochian school, as to the Roman composition of the captivity letters, there does not appear to be any evidence that that consensus was founded on a definite and clean-cut tradition coming down from primitive times. First of all, the various statements to be found in our ancient sources regarding the *locus scriptiois* of the rest of Paul's letters provide no presumptive evidence of a primitive tradition regarding the captivity group. It is only in the case of epistles whose data, either alone or in combination with that of Acts, indicate clearly the place of their composition that our ancient authorities are really reliable. And even on those letters the ancient commentators are sometimes silent; when they give their views on the subject, those views are based entirely on the data of the text. Nor even then are their views always reliable.

Not to stress exceptional views such as the localization of I and II Corinthians at Philippi (so the *subscriptions*) or the localization of

II Thessalonians at Rome (so Pseudo-Athanasius, *hypotheses*), there are other variations of the greatest interest. Though modern exegetes prefer Corinth, in consideration of the short time spent by Paul at Athens, our ancient sources commonly place the composition of the two Thessalonian letters at Athens; this view of the ancients is obviously quite dependent on I Thess. 3:1. We have already called attention, when we were discussing Theodoret, to the early dating of I Timothy and Titus. Apropos of this last letter we should note that our ancient commentators (and many moderns too) infer from Tit. 3:12 that that letter was written at Nicopolis—something that Paul does not say. As for the Nicopolis in question, Greek commentators understand this as a reference to Nicopolis in Macedonia, but Jerome maintains that it was Nicopolis in Epirus—quite a different place.¹¹² Though more could be said on this subject, enough has been said to show that there was no primitive tradition concerning the place of composition of the rest of Paul's letters.

So much, then, for a primitive tradition concerning Paul's letters in general. As for the captivity letters in particular, we must note first of all the consistent failure of our six commentators to invoke tradition in support of the thesis of Roman origin. Granted that appeals to tradition were not of frequent occurrence in the purely exegetical works of Christian antiquity, it is still a matter of surprise that no reference should have been made to primitive tradition, had any such tradition existed. And this procedure is all the more surprising in men like Chrysostom and Jerome. We have already noticed references to tradition in Chrysostom; similar references were made by Jerome.¹¹³

That there was really no ancient tradition on the subject in question seems all but certain in the circumstances. And that conclusion is greatly reenforced by the failure of Eusebius to mention any such tradition. True enough, arguments based on the "silence of Eusebius" are dangerous things; but a primitive tradition of the sort here supposed would, we have every right to expect, be recorded in the *Church History* of Eusebius. For one of Eusebius' express aims was to note

¹¹² *In Tit.*, prol. (PL, XXVI, 556 A).

¹¹³ Thus in the short accounts of the apostles and evangelists, *De viris illustr.*, cc. 1-9 (PL, XXIII, 607 B-625 A).

down, in the case of *homologoumena*, whatever statements he had found concerning them in authors before his time.¹¹⁴

There are still other factors to be considered. It cannot have escaped notice in our study of the ancient commentators that they occasionally failed to express their views on the place of origin of this or that captivity letter. Thus Theodore of Mopsuestia, as we saw, fails to mention the place of origin of Colossians, and he does not provide any data from which we might at least infer his views. As for the letter to Philemon, this same writer may possibly be understood to indicate the period of Paul's Roman captivity; but even there the inference is entirely ours and is in no way suggested by Theodore. It may indeed be reasonably asked whether a well-informed writer of the Antiochian school would omit mentioning the place of origin of Colossians and Philemon, were he aware of an age-old tradition attesting the Roman composition of the captivity letters.

In its own way, the attitude of Ambrosiaster and Pelagius is even more significant. While both agree in assigning Philemon to the Roman captivity, Ambrosiaster does not mention the place of origin of Colossians, and Pelagius is guilty of a similar omission in the case of Colossians and Ephesians. Though Ambrosiaster asserts the Roman origin of Ephesians, Pelagius does not; where Ambrosiaster is silent on Philippians, Pelagius asserts its Roman origin. While these two commentators tend to supplement each other's views, they are at one in passing over the *locus* of Colossians. The attitude displayed by these two commentators—call it indifference, if you wish—is hard to understand on the supposition that they were aware of an ancient tradition on the matter. And in view of Ambrosiaster's known predilection for things Latin it seems very unlikely that he would have failed to record a Roman or Latin tradition on the place of origin of the captivity letters.

Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that even among our fourth- and fifth-century exegetes there are discordant views at least on the origin of Ephesians. This fact is not to be overstressed, but it is there none the less. Whatever we may think of the early dating given this letter by Theodore and Severian, the fact remains that even in the

¹¹⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. eccles.*, V, 8, 1 (ed. Schwartz, *CGS Berol.*, Eusebii Tom. II-1, 442).

Antiochian school two distinguished exegetes could propose a view that clearly precludes the Roman origin of Ephesians. Indeed, one cannot help suspecting that, were more of the exegetical work of Antioch preserved, even greater diversity of view might have been found. At all events, Theodore was not a man who entirely disregarded tradition; we have noted his insistence on the traditional view as to the time of the Apostle John's coming to Ephesus. Our knowledge of Severian is more limited;¹¹⁶ but we do know that he was one of Antioch's outstanding exegetes. As for the western part of the Church, there is no evidence of views contrary to those of Chrysostom and Jerome, unless, of course, the "Marcionite Prologues" are to be dated later than Ambrosiaster. In that case we have evidence of a view, influential enough to find place in our earliest Vulgate MSS, that Colossians was written in an Ephesian captivity of Paul!

If, on the other hand, the prologues just mentioned were really the work of Marcion or one of his immediate disciples, then we have evidence of a second-century view that Colossians (and possibly Laodiceans [= Ephesians]), was written by Paul during an Ephesian captivity. As we observed when we were discussing this question, there is nothing specially Marcionite in the place indications given for the other epistles. Would there be any doctrinal advantage to Marcion in going counter to an established tradition on the point? For the rest, the prologues do place Philemon and Philippians in Paul's Roman captivity. And, we must remark, there is no question here of using the prologues—should they really be Marcionite documents of the second century—to establish the Ephesian origin of Colossians; in any case, it is manifestly impossible to suppose with these prologues that Colossians and Philemon were written at different places. Our point is rather that a second-century writer should have departed in this one letter from an accepted view of tradition.

Whatever is to be said of the Marcionite Prologues, the position of Origen is at least in partial contradiction to the thesis of the Roman origin of the captivity letters; for, although this third-century writer definitely does not locate the composition of Ephesians at Ephesus, he very clearly locates that of Philippians at some place other than

¹¹⁶ Among ancient writers the sole extant reference to Severian's work as a commentator appears to be that of Gennadius, *De scriptoribus eccl.*, 21 (*PL*, LVIII, 1073 B).

Rome. And when we were treating of Jerome's views on our problem, we indicated that Origen may also have denied the Roman origin of Colossians and Ephesians. At any rate, Origen's stand on Philippians is clear, and Origen was a man who took ancient tradition into account.

Another indication that certainly does not suggest ancient tradition is to be found in the very passages in which our commentators assert the Roman origin of this or that captivity letter. Here we have in mind, not so much the failure of the ancient commentators to lay claim to primitive tradition, as their general procedure in treating the question. First of all, it is clear from the numerous quotations given in this paper that they based their conclusions entirely on the data of Paul's text. Either they built arguments on the data of the epistles, or they made no attempt to substantiate their thesis.

Furthermore, the arguments advanced do not always appear to have been regarded as certain; the thesis of Roman origin appears never to be proposed as one of obligation. Indeed, on more than one occasion our commentators speak, perhaps not hesitantly, but certainly as men giving nothing more than an opinion. Thus Chrysostom, whose homiletic manner does not ordinarily permit shadings of opinion, does not appear in his remarks on Colossians to be delivering a view that must necessarily be accepted. As for Jerome, there is no need to dilate further on his phrase, "mihi videntur." And we have seen that Theodoret's one argument for the Roman origin of Philippians is put forth with some reserve. In this connection we should note that there is no outcry raised by our commentators against variant views. The fiery Jerome's tone is mild enough in his preface to Philemon. Certainly Theodoret and possibly Chrysostom were aware of the position of Theodore and Severian on Ephesians; yet no reference is made to the fact, nor is there anything in their writings in the way of controversy or formal refutation.

Furthermore, there is no marked unanimity in our commentators' choice of argument or in their argumentative procedure. A glance at the summaries given above of the views of Chrysostom and Jerome will suffice to convince anyone of this. While with both commentators the *locus* of Philemon is the key to the date and location of Ephesians and Colossians, Chrysostom infers the Roman origin of Philemon from

the phrase, "Paul, an old man," whereas Jerome argues entirely from the "vinctus Iesu Christi." A third line of argument occurs in Theodoret. Unable to infer the Roman origin of Ephesians and Colossians from that of Philemon because of his peculiar views on the anteriority of Philemon, Theodoret turns to the words, "Tychicum misi Ephesum" of II Timothy. And with regard to Philippians, Chrysostom and Jerome do not argue in quite the same way; Theodoret, in turn, appears to be less certain of the argument founded on the "praetorium" of Phil. 1:13.

The practice of our ancient commentators to argue *entirely* from the data of Paul's text is hardly consonant with a consciousness on their part of an existing primitive tradition. And the variety of their argumentation hardly points to a truly traditional approach to the problem. Yet, on the other hand, this same variety of argument gives the impression that they were leaving no stone unturned in an effort to establish the Roman origin of the captivity letters. Indeed, one almost gets the impression that there was a tradition on the matter—a tradition to which they never refer—and that they were striving to follow its lead.

Possibility of a Vague Tradition

From what has just been said, the possibility of some sort of tradition cannot be entirely ruled out. There may have been a general tradition as to Paul's literary activity during the first Roman captivity. It would account for the tendency already noted to put as many as possible of Paul's letters in the Roman captivity period. But that very tendency, not to mention the facts noted in the preceding section, attests the vagueness of the tradition, if indeed any such tradition existed. For the rest, there is no solid historical reason for supposing the existence of such a tradition.

Without postulating such a tradition it is easy to see how, whether rightly or wrongly, the captivity letters would come to be connected with Paul's captivity at Rome. Starting from the fact that our four letters are manifestly captivity letters, ancient exegetes might easily pass on to the conclusion that the four letters were Roman captivity letters; for if we are able to judge by our fourth- and fifth-century commentators, there was a tendency to regard Paul's Roman captivity as

his captivity par excellence. Thus, quite apart from our question of the captivity letters, ancient commentators rarely make reference to Paul's two years of imprisonment at Caesarea. The Caesarean captivity, in their view, was merely a prelude to that of Rome, and accordingly was treated only in passing.

Again, the dramatic side of Paul's Roman captivity may have had an influence on earlier exegetes, as it clearly had on Theodoret and Jerome. Furthermore, the mention of Paul's old age in Philemon, independently of exaggerated explanations such as Chrysostom's, would point obviously to the latter period of Paul's life as the time of composition. And it was in that period that the Roman captivity took place. As for Philippians, mention of "Caesar's house" would be enough to suggest Rome as the place of Paul's imprisonment.

CONCLUSION

While we deny the existence of a definite and detailed tradition in the case, we are willing to admit the possibility of an earlier tradition, vague and indefinite in detail. On the other hand, there is no need to postulate any such tradition; the inferred consensus of exegetes prior to Chrysostom can be explained without recourse to primitive tradition.

As for our fourth- and fifth-century commentators, their views are surely to be held in highest esteem. Yet their views in favor of the Roman origin of the captivity letters neither constitute a truly probative argument for the Roman origin of those letters nor do they seem to be of such a character as to be binding on the Catholic exegete. While Catholic exegetes, in situations such as the present one, should follow the example of those commentators of long ago and canvass the evidence of the Pauline text, they need not always agree with the conclusions reached by the great men of the fourth and fifth centuries. If, then, some or all of the captivity letters really date from the period of Paul's first Roman captivity, that fact, in the absence of solid historical tradition, must be established primarily from the internal evidence of the four letters.