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DOCUMENTS

A FRAGMENT OF THE 'PENITENCE OF JANNES
AND JAMBRES.'

THE title of an apocryphal book concerned with the doings of the two Egyptian magicians Jannes and Jambres (or Mambres) occurs in the invaluable Gelasian Decree, in this form :

'Item liber qui appellatur Poenitentia Janne (Jamre) et Mambre apocryphus.'

The names which precede it are those of the Penitence of Cyprian, and the Penitence of Origen.

Further, two passages in Origen's Commentary on Matthew distinctly imply the existence of a book of Jannes and Mambres in his time. In the first (tract. 26) after citing Paul's allusion to the wizards, he says, 'Nec enim scimus *in libris canonizatis* historiam de Ianne et Mambre resistentibus Moysi.' He goes on to make a very similar remark about the quotation in 1 Cor. ii 9. In the second passage (tract. 35) his words are plainer: 'Item quod ait *Sicut Iannes et Mambres restiterunt Moysi*, non inuenitur in publicis scripturis sed in libro secreto qui suprascribitur Iannes et Mambres liber.'

Outside these three passages it would not, I think, be easy to adduce any distinct ancient allusion to such a book, unless we reckon a testimony of a very different kind—that of Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xxx § 11), who says: 'Est et alia magices factio a Mose et Ianne et Lotape ac Iudaeis pendens.' And I think it will be agreed that his words do not impress one with the idea that he was writing with the documents that he mentions before him.

For the rest, the traditionary literature about Jannes and Jambres has been brought together by the indefatigable Fabricius (*Cod. Pseud. V. T.* i 813 sqq., ii 109 sqq.), and, more recently, has been examined by Iselin in *Zeitschr. f. wissenschaft. Theol.*, 1894, p. 321 sqq. The latter devotes himself chiefly to examining the allusions to the two wizards that occur in Oriental chronicles. The side of the subject which has been treated by Fabricius and Iselin does not really concern me here.

My object is to reproduce a forgotten fragment which has some appearance of having belonged to the Penitence of Jannes and Mambres. This may or may not have been (but most probably was) identical with Origen's Book of Jannes and Mambres.

It has been in print for many years, in a little book not easy to procure, *Narratiunculae Anglice conscriptae*, edited by T. O. Cockayne and published by J. R. Smith, Soho Square, in 1861. For the loan of a copy of this I am indebted to Professor Skeat. One manuscript only, so far as I know, has preserved the text. This is a beautiful book, apparently once the property of Battle Abbey, and dating from the eleventh century—the Cotton MS Tiberius B. v. On fol. 87, at the end of a tract, in Latin and Anglo-Saxon, on the Marvels of the East (which also occurs, in Anglo-Saxon only, in the famous Beowulf manuscript, Vitellius A. xv), is the text I now reproduce. The Anglo-Saxon version is on p. 50 and the Latin on p. 67 of the *Narratiunculae*. My transcript was made from a photograph of the leaf, taken for me by Messrs. Dossetter. Some words and letters have been lost owing to a tear, or to decay of the vellum, perhaps caused by the colours of the picture on the verso of the leaf. I have supplied these as well as I could, relying on Cockayne for the supplements to the Anglo-Saxon portion.

The text is illustrated by two excellent pictures. The first, a small one on fol. 87 *a*, represents two nude men standing among rocks and conversing. Perhaps this really illustrates the last section of the Marvels of the East, which speaks of men who dwell on burning mountains.

The second is a full-page picture on fol. 87 *b*. It represents Mambres standing on a mountain and holding an open book, face outwards, to which he points. The mountain has opened, and in its cleft we see Hell. A gigantic figure covered with tufts of hair, and with clawed hands, is clutching souls and drawing them into his mouth. Other devils and souls bound with serpents—and one lying under a huge stone—fill up the rest of the field. It is a remarkably imaginative and in its way beautiful painting.

I proceed to give the text as it stands on fol. 87 *a* :

Aperuit mambres libros magicos fratres sui | iamnis. et fecit micro-
mantiā et eduxit | ab inferis idolum fratres sui | Her segð hu mambres
ontynde ða drylican | bec his breðer iamnes 7 him geopenude þa |
heagorune ðæs deofelgildes his broður. |

Respondit ei anima iamnes dicens. Ego frater | tuus non iniuste 5
mortuus sum. Sed uere iuste | et ibit aduersum me iudicium quoniam
sapientior | eram omnium sapientium magorum. Et | astiti duobus
fratribus moysi et aaron qui | fecerunt signa et prodigia magna propter

hoc | mortuus sum et deductus sum de medio ad | inferos. Ubi est
 10 combustio magna et lacus | perditionis unde non est ascensus. Et nunc
 frater | col. 2 | mi mambre . adtende tibi in uita tua ut | beneficias
 filiis tuis et amicis apud inferos | enim nihil est boni nisi tristitia et
 tenebre | et postquam mortuus fueris et <eris apu>d in|-feros inter
 mortuos fuerit abita<tio> t<ua et sedes> xx | lata cubitis et longa cubitis
 15 quatu(or) | Andsparode him iamnes saul þyssum p<(or)>dum | þu broðor
 ic naht unrihtlice eo<m dead> | ac soðlice 7 rihtlice ic eom dead 7
 go<des do>m | pið me standeð for þam ðe ic pæs ano<slic?>era |
 þonne ealle oðre dryas 7 ic piðstode t<þam> | gebroðrum moyses hatte
 7 ááron þa | þorhtan ða micclan tacna 7 forebea<cn> | forþan ic eom
 20 dead 7 forþam ic eom ge<le>dd | on helpara rice mid . þær is seo
 miccl(e byrn) nys | pæs ecan pites . 7 þær is se seað pæs sing<ales> |
 susles þanon ne byð ænig upp adon . Nu <min> | broðer mambre
 beheald þe on þinum lif<e> þ ðu do þel þinum bearnum 7 þinum
 freo<nd>um | forþan þe on helle ne byð napiht godes | nemðe unrotmys
 25 7 þystru 7 æfter þam | þe ðu dead bist þonne cymst ðu to helle | 7 be
 tpx deadum mannum bið þin earding | stop niðer on eorðan 7 þin seað
 bið tpegea | cubita pid 7 feopra lang ۞

Such is the text of the fragment. It is difficult to resist the impression that it comes from a larger book; and to me it seems that it may very well be taken from the beginning of the Penitence of Jannes and Mambres.

The first sentence (*Aperuit Mambres, &c.*) is, I think, plainly an abridgement of a longer narrative. We expect some statement as to who the actors are, and some further details, if not of the means employed by Mambres to restore his brother, yet at least of the manner in which the ghost appeared. The Anglo-Saxon translator has paraphrased this opening sentence and made it into a kind of rubric for what follows.

The opening of the speech of Jannes' ghost seems like the answer to a question; and indeed we ought to be told in what terms Mambres had addressed it. This is another indication that the opening paragraph is an epitome of a longer text.

It is probable that *ibit* (l. 6) is a mistake for *iuit*: all the other verbs in the sentence are in past tenses. Yet it is not necessarily a mistake, for the reference may be to the judgement at the last day.

Sapientior . . . omnium . . . magorum (l. 7). The suggestion is natural that this construction points to a Greek original. It is common in versions from the Greek: cf. *Apoc. Pauli* uidebis horum maiora septies.

Astiti (l. 7): query, *restiti*. The latter word gives the sense required. *De medio* (l. 9) = *ἐκ μέσων*.

Combustio (l. 10) in place of *ignis* or *flamma* rather savours to my

mind of a translator, and the phrase *nihil est boni nisi tristitia* (l. 12) has also a Hellenistic complexion.

As to the two supplements introduced into the text, they are neither of them perfectly certain, in spite of the fact that the text of the Anglo-Saxon version is complete. The sense required in the first of the two places (l. 13) is not doubtful, but whether the lost words were *eris apud* or *ueneris ad*, I do not feel sure. The latter is rather closer to the Anglo-Saxon.

The second place (l. 14) is more puzzling. The remains of the last letters of the line will not suit at all with the proper word, which is *duobus*, nor with the numeral sign *ii*. To my thinking they look like nothing so much as 'xx': and this gives a poor sense. If 'xx' was really the reading of the Latin, it was a wrong reading. Evidently what is meant is that the habitation of the soul in Hades is of the dimension of a grave—four cubits long and two broad.

For the supplements in the Anglo-Saxon text I am indebted, as I said, to Mr. Cockayne's edition. I sometimes differ from him as to the legibility of certain letters in the manuscript.

As to the matter of the fragment. In one of the writings classed with it in the Gelasian Decree, the Penitence of Cyprian, we see a document calculated to give us a fair idea of the nature of what is gone. Cyprian, the hero of the Penitence, is the wizard of Antioch, the convert and fellow-martyr of Justina; and in his work he tells—with a quantity of interesting detail—the story of his initiation into the black art, and his practice of it, and its failure when confronted with the power of the true God. Very much the same would the contents of the Penitence of the two Egyptian magicians have been, only it is doubtful whether they, or at least both of them, made so fine an end as Cyprian.

The Penitence of Cyprian is not a manual of magic: it is rather an imaginative romance. The descriptions of magical ceremonies and of spirits are picturesque, but vague; and a considerable portion of it is occupied with the lamentation of the wizard for his past misdeeds, and the encouragement to hope for pardon which is administered by those to whom he appeals. It bears a slight resemblance in its earlier chapters to the Testament of Solomon, which I think its author must have read. But there are in it also two allusions to Jannes and Jambres, which, though they are not conclusive, yet make it to my mind far from unlikely that the Penitence of Jannes and Jambres has furnished a model for the piece. In § 6 (Acta SS. Sept. vii 207) the prince of the devils praises Cyprian. *Εὐφύεις με μεράκιον προσείπε, νέον Ἰαμβρῆν, εὐτρου εἰς λειτουργίαν, ἄξιον τῆς κοινωνίας ἐκείνου*; and in § 17 Cyprian says of himself, *οὐ πείθουμαι γὰρ χεῖρονά μου γεγενῆσθαι ἄνθρωπον, ὑπερβαλὸν Ἰαννῆν καὶ Ἰαμβρῆν τοὺς λεγομένους· ἐκείνοι ἐν τῷ γοητεύειν ὁμολόγησαν θεοῦ δάκτυλον· ἐγὼ*

δὲ παντελῶς διακείμενῃ μὴ εἶναι θεόν· εἰ ἐκείνοις ὁ θεὸς οὐ συνεχώρησε κἀν ἐν μέρει ἐπιγνοῦσιν αὐτόν, ἐμοὶ πῶς συγχωρήσειε παντάσῃσιν ἀγνοήσαντι; The last clause of this second passage, intimating that the Egyptian wizards did not find pardon, is the only one that goes beyond canonical records, and even that need not be more than an inference from the Bible. Still, the repeated mention of the names, coupled with the fact that (so far as I can see) other prominent magicians of the Bible—Simon Magus, Elymas, and the Witch of Endor—are not alluded to, is worth consideration.

We may assume for a moment that the Latin fragment printed above is taken from the Penitence of Jannes and Mambres, and try to deduce from it what the course of the story in that book may have been.

Jannes is dead. He has been cut off in some strange and sudden manner, and the surviving brother Mambres—apparently not as yet so much of a professional wizard as Jannes—is induced by the strangeness of his death to inquire into the matter. He does know some magic, for he is able to use his brother's rites successfully, and bring up his soul from Hades. He must have addressed Jannes and asked why he had come by his end. The reply of Jannes contains matters which must have been known to his brother—e. g. the statement that he had been a great magician and had withstood Moses and Aaron—but these are intended for the reader's information, and belong to the conventions of early literature.

The general complexion of the speech, with its exhortation to Mambres to avoid coming into the place of torment, resembles the words of the rich man in hell. Whether our fragment is under an obligation to the parable or not, we cannot possibly decide on the evidence before us.

The story must have had a sequel. Any attempt at reconstructing it lands us in the region of pure conjecture. We can imagine Mambres taking the advice of his brother, falling at the feet of Moses, confessing his wicked arts, burning his books, and becoming a devout proselyte. This is the only *dénouement* that we are warranted in imagining by the title *Poenitentia Ianne et Mambre*.

It may be asked what probability there is of a short fragment of an old apocryphal book being excerpted and preserved in Latin. There are instances of the kind. A single chapter of a Latin version of the Book of Enoch was published by me not long ago from the Royal MS, 5. E. xiii (a Worcester book, as I believe), and a bit of the Testament of the Lord had turned up before that in a manuscript at Trèves. Detached extracts from the book of Pseudo-Philo are found, moreover, in two manuscripts whose original home was Trèves, where one is now, the other being at Cheltenham.

It is not likely that we can now unravel the immediate pedigree of

the fragment before us. The tract on the Marvels of the East, in company with which it is found, may possibly be made to yield some clue to other investigators; I have not succeeded in extracting anything useful from it.

Lastly I will note that the Anglo-Saxon and Irish scholars seem to have been in possession of a good deal of rather rare apocryphal literature. In the *Saltair na Rann* are episodes from some form of the *Vita Adae et Evae*. Cynewulf had before him a complete Latin text, since lost, of the *Acta Andreae et Matthiae*. The Dialogue of Solomon and Saturn is, I believe, rightly regarded by Kemble as connected with the *Contradictio Salomonis*, condemned in the Gelasian Decree; and the existence of a fragment of the Book of Enoch in a manuscript of English origin has already been mentioned. These facts increase the probability of the theory that in the text here discussed we have a fragment of the ancient Penitence of Jannes and Mambres¹.

M. R. JAMES.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE STICHOMETRY OF THE BARBERINI MS.

(See *J. T. S.* for January 1901, pp. 246-251.)

THROUGH the kindness of Dr. Mercati I am able to make some rectifications in, and some additions to, the account of the Biblical stichometry in MS Barb. iii 36 which I derived from E. Klostermann's *Analecta* and discussed in the January number of the *JOURNAL*. In the first place the date of the MS is not eleventh or twelfth century, but tenth or eleventh. Next, two numbers were given wrongly: the second figure for the Minor Prophets should be 3500 not 3600, and the figure for 2 Corinthians should be 612, as in the codex Sinaiticus of the Bible, not 712, as in the Freisingen MS. Thirdly it was misleading to say simply that the Barberini MS omits the figures for Titus Philemon and the Apocalypse, without adding that the MS is defective at the end—it breaks off in fact in the middle of the summary of the Epistle to Titus.

C. H. TURNER.

¹ One of Alfred's additions to the text of Orosius (i 7) is to the effect that the wizards 'Geames and Mambres' advised the Egyptians to pursue the Israelites in their flight to the Red Sea. Perhaps it was on this occasion that Jannes perished: such a fate would be in accord with Jewish legend.