

**A GRAMMAR OF THE OLD
TESTAMENT IN GREEK
ACCORDING TO THE SEPTUAGINT.
VOL. I. WITH INTRODUCTION,
ORTHOGRAPHY AND ACCIDENCE**

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Introduction, Orthography and Accidence by Henry St. John Thackeray

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ACCORDING TO THE SEPTUAGINT

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VOL. I

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INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. GRAMMAR AND TEXTUAL CRITICISM.

Is it possible to write a grammar of the Septuagint? That is the question which must constantly arise in the mind of one who undertakes the task. The doubt arises not because the Greek, strange as it often is, is utterly defiant of the laws of grammar: the language in which the commonly received text is composed has some laws of its own which can be duly tabulated. The question rather is, "Where is the true 'Septuagint' text to be found?" We possess in the Cambridge Manual Edition the text of the Codex Vaticanus with a collation of the other principal uncials: in Holmes and Parsons we have a collation of the cursives and versions: and now in the Larger Cambridge Septuagint we have the first instalment of a thoroughly trustworthy collection of all the available evidence. But we are still far from the period when we shall have a text, analogous to the New Testament of Westcott and Hort, of which we can confidently state that it represents, approximately at least, the original work of the translators. Is it, then, premature to attempt to write a Grammar, where the text is so doubtful? Must the grammarian wait till the textual critic has completed his task?

It is true that no final grammar of the LXX can be written at present. But the grammarian cannot wait for the final verdict of textual criticism. Grammar and criticism must

proceed concurrently, and in some ways the former may contribute towards a solution of the problems which the latter has to face.

The grammarian of the Greek Old Testament has, then, this distinct disadvantage as compared with the N.T. grammarian, that he has no Westcott-Hort text for his basis, and is compelled to enter into questions of textual criticism. Moreover the task of recovering the oldest text in the O.T. is, for two reasons at least, more complicated than in the N.T. In the first place, the oldest MS, containing practically a complete text, is the same for both Testaments, namely the Codex Vaticanus, but whereas in the one case the date of the MS is separated from the dates of the autographs by an interval (considerable indeed) of some three centuries, in the case of the O.T. the interval, at least for the earliest books, is nearly doubled. A yet more serious difficulty consists in the relative value of the text of this MS in the Old and in the New Testaments. The textual history of either portion of the Greek Bible has one crisis and turning-point, from which investigation must proceed. It is the point at which "mixture" of texts begins. In the N.T. this point is the "Syrian revision," which, although no actual record of it exists, must have taken place in or about the fourth century A.D. The corresponding crisis in the history of the LXX text is Origen's great work, the Hexapla, dating from the middle of the third century. This laborious work had, as Septuagint students are painfully aware, an effect which its compiler never contemplated, and he must be held responsible for the subsequent degeneration of the text. His practice of inserting in the Septuagint column fragments of the other versions, Theodotion's in particular, duly indicated by him as insertions by the asterisks which he prefixed, caused the multiplication of copies containing the insertions but wanting the necessary precautionary signs. This, together with the practice of scribes of writing in the margins (from which

they were in later copies transferred to the text) the alternative renderings or transliterations contained in the other columns of the Hexapla, is the *fons et origo mali* as regards the Septuagint text. Now, whereas the Codex Vaticanus was written before the Syrian revision of the N. T., or at any rate contains a pre-Syrian text, it is posterior to the Hexapla, and contains a text of the O.T. which, though superior on the whole to that of Codex Alexandrinus, is yet not entirely free from Hexaplaric interpolations.

A few instances may be quoted showing the sort of mixture with which we have to deal.

(1) Take the A text of 3 Kingdoms at any of the passages where B has no rendering of the Massoretic text e.g. 3 K. ix. 15 ff. *αὕτη ἡ πραγματία τῆς προσημῆς ἧς ἀνήγειρεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Σαδωμων οἰκοδομημαὶ τὸν οἶκον κυ, καὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ σὺν τῆν Μελώ κ.τ.λ.* We are at once struck by the occurrence of *σὺν* preceding the accusative, which occurs in *πρ.* 16, 24, 25, and is recognised as Aquila's rendering of *פֶּן*: other striking words are found to be either expressly stated to be Aquila's renderings in this passage or to be characteristic of his version and absent, or practically absent, from the record in the Concordance of LXX usage (e.g. *καθίδουε* and *ἀπήρτισεν* in verse 25). Similar interpolations, presumably from Aquila, occur in the A text at 3 K. viii. 1, xi. 38 (N.B. *εὐσευχῆσω*: the verb is frequent in Aquila, but occurs once only again in LXX viz. 3 K. ii. 26 where probably the text of both B and A has been interpolated), xiii. 26 (N.B. *τῶ λέγειν* = *לֵאמֹר*), 29 (with *νεκρομαῖον* cf. *σ' 101. xiv. 8 νεκρομαῖον*), xiv. 1—20, xxii. 47—50: there are smaller insertions, apparently from the same source, in the A text of 4 K. e.g. xii. 4, xvi. 9 (*Κιρρηθόδε*), xvii. 14, xxv. 9.

From these passages we infer that in these two books (i) the shorter text of B is the older, (ii) that the passages which B omits were either absent from the Hebrew which the translators had before them or that the omission was intentional, the translation not aiming at completeness, (iii) that A has supplied the missing portions from Aquila, as Origen had probably previously done in the Hexapla, (iv) that B has remained comparatively, though probably not wholly, free from Hexaplaric interpolation.

(2) Or take the book of Job. A careful reading of the Greek and Hebrew will reveal the existence of two completely different styles, a free paraphrastic rendering in idiomatic

Greek, with every now and again passages of quite another character, containing Hebraisms, transliterations, etymological renderings of Divine names (*Ἰακώβ* = יַעֲקֹב, *ὁ Ἰσχυρὸς* = הַיָּחִיזֵק), in fact a rendering that aims at completeness and accuracy without much regard to style. Now we are told that the original version was much shorter than the received Hebrew text, and that Origen supplied the missing portions from Theodotion: and, by good fortune, the Sahidic version has preserved a pre-Origenic text, from which the Theodotion passages are absent¹. We are thus enabled to mark off in Dr Swete's text, the Theodotion portions. But we cannot even then be quite certain that we have got back to the original text. Passages from Theodotion may have already, independently of the Hexapla, found their way into the Greek text on which the Sahidic version was based, or that text may have been affected by "mixture" of another kind. Still, a study of the vocabulary of the bracketed Theodotion passages will provide a criterion by means of which the critic will be better prepared to detect the influence of his style elsewhere. It will be noticed that in this book the text of B, and of all the uncials, is Hexaplaric.

(3) Or take the list in Jos. xxi. of the cities with their "suburbs" (צַבְרִימַיִם) which were given to the Levites, and note how in *v. 2—11* and again in *v. 34—42* the word for "suburbs" is rendered, 17 times in all² by (τὰ) περισπόρια (*ἀστῆρ*), whereas in the intervening verses 13—32 it is rendered 35 times by (τὰ) ἀφωρισμένα (*ἀστῆρ*)³. Now Aquila read περισπόρια in *v. 15* (vide Field's Hexapla). It appears probable, then, that the original text had a shorter list of cities and suburbs = τὰ ἀφωρισμένα (cf. Lev. xxv. 34, Jos. xiv. 4), and that Aquila's version has again, as in the A text of 3 K., been drawn upon to complete the list⁴. Here again interpolation has affected the text of both B and A.

The elimination of Hexaplaric additions being, thus, the first task of the textual criticism of the LXX, a study of the style and vocabulary of the three later versions, more especially

¹ A list of the passages omitted in the Sahidic VS is given in Lagarde *Mittheilungen* 1884, p. 204. Cf. esp. Hatch *Essays in Bibl. Greek* 215 ff.

² Also by A in *v. 19*.

³ Excluding τῆν (τὰς) ἀφωρισμ. in 27, 32, which render another word.

⁴ In N. xxxv. 2—7 this word "suburbs" is rendered by four separate words, viz. προδστια, ἀφορισματα, σικκιροδστια, δμορα. Variety of rendering characterizes the Pentateuch, and it is not necessary to infer Hexaplaric influence here.

of Theodotion, is a necessary preliminary. The study of Theodotion's style is the more important for two reasons. (1) It was always a popular version, mainly, no doubt, because it steered a middle course between the idiomatic Greek, tending to paraphrase, of Symmachus, and the pedantic un-Greek literalism of Aquila: it combined accuracy with a certain amount of style. Theodotion's version of Daniel supplanted the older paraphrase in the Christian Bible, and it was to Theodotion that Origen usually had recourse to fill the gaps in the older version in the Septuagint column of the Hexapla. (2) Aquila's version betrays itself by certain well-known characteristics, whereas Theodotion fragments are not so easily detected. On the other hand we have in his version of Daniel (where it deviates from the Christian text), and in the Θ portions of Job, a considerable body of material from which something may be learnt as to his characteristics. A complete vocabulary of the portions which can certainly be attributed to Theodotion is a desideratum.

In concluding these few observations on the text, it must be added that the present writer has practically confined himself to the text of the uncials collated for the Cambridge Manual edition. The first instalment of the larger Cambridge LXX has been consulted for all passages in Genesis where important grammatical points arise, though most of this portion of the Grammar was prepared before its appearance. Occasional use has also been made of Lagarde's edition of the Lucianic text, Field's Hexapla, and the great corpus of cursive evidence collected in the edition of Holmes and Parsons. A full use of the last-named work would not only have delayed the appearance of this work for perhaps many years, but would also have caused it to exceed the limits laid down for it, without (it is believed) a proportionate addition to any value which it may possess.

§ 2. GROUPING OF LXX BOOKS.

We have in the Septuagint a miscellaneous collection of Greek writings—some translations, others paraphrases, others of which the Greek is the original language—covering a period of upwards of three centuries, from the Pentateuch, the translation of which, there is no reason to doubt, goes back into the first half of the third century B.C., to the academical essay known as 4 Maccabees and the latter portion of Baruch, which must both be placed towards the close of the first century of our era. It is clearly desirable and should not be impossible, considering the length of this period, to find some means of classifying this motley collection. The first and obvious division is into translations and original Greek compositions. But the translations, though on a casual perusal they might appear to stand all on one level of mediocrity, on closer investigation are found to fall into certain distinct categories.

The object in view, and the method by which we seek to attain it, are not unlike the object and the method of the textual critic. The object, in this case, is not the grouping of MSS according to the character of the text which they contain, but the grouping of books or portions of books according to their style. The study of individual books from the linguistic point of view is followed by the study of groups. It would, of course, be unreasonable to expect undeviating uniformity of translation of the same Hebrew word in any one translator: if, however, it is found that a phrase is consistently rendered in one way in one portion of the Greek Bible, and in another way elsewhere, and if, as we proceed to extend our investigations to the renderings of other Hebrew phrases, the same divergence between two portions of the LXX is apparent, we gain an increasing assurance that we have to deal with two distinct groups of books, which are the production of different translators and possibly of different epochs. Each group may