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ARTICLE IX.

THE GREEK VERSION OF THE PENTATEUCH.

De Pentateuchi Versione Alexandrina Libri tres. Scripsit Henr. Guil. Jos. Thierschius,[1] *Phil. Dr., Theol. Lic. Erlangen,* 1841.

By Prof. H. B. Hackett, Newton Theol. Institution.

HABES, lector, opusculum de ea re elaboratum, quam pauci hodie curant, plurimi ne curandum quidem a quopiam judicant. So says the author in laying his work even before the critical public of his own country. We trust, however, that of the few who take an interest in such labors, some are to be found also among us. The production here noticed relates to an important circle of study, and one that affords room for a much more extended investigation than it has yet received. There are various aspects and phenomena of the Hellenistic Greek as contained in the Septuagint, which remain still to be examined. Some of the obscurity which rests upon certain portions of Hebrew syntax, is destined to be cleared up, if ever, by light that shall be derived from this source. A just treatment of the New Testament idiom depends still more, both lexically and grammatically, upon a full acquaintance with the usage of the Septuagint Greek. An advance in this direction may be regarded as one of the most urgent wants, for which provision needs to be made, at the present time, in this branch of biblical study. In the work of Thiersch now before us, we have a favorable specimen of what is required, in order to supply this deficiency. In the last edition of his Grammar of the New Testament, Winer pronounces it beyond comparison the best treatise on the linguistic element of the Seventy, which has as yet appeared. It is confined to an examination of the five books of Moses. It consists of three parts; the first of which treats of the principles which the Seventy have observed in their translation of the Pentateuch ; the second, of the Greek dialect in which they have written ; and the third, of the Hebraisms which are to be found in their version.

In his prefatory remarks, the author speaks of the occasion

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[1] The author is at present Professor in the theological Faculty of the University at Marburg, and is a son of the well known Greek grammarian of the same name.

which led him to undertake this labor. It was in consequence of suspicions with which he found his mind assailed, in reference to the purity of the generally received Hebrew text. He had observed that the Seventy frequently depart from it in their translation, and often in such a manner as to give an essentially different sense. He was anxious, therefore, to ascertain the ground of such deviation, and especially whether it was of such a nature as to warrant the belief that it could have originated from competent Ms. authority. For the purpose of obtaining satisfaction on this point, he devoted himself for two years together to the careful study of the Hebrew and Greek Pentateuch. The book under consideration is made up almost entirely of the results of this examination. All unsifted, traditionary material has been excluded; and, for a German performance, much less than the ordinary space has been allotted to the history of preceding opinions and labors.

In the first division of the treatise, it is shown that the Alexandrian translators proceeded evidently in making their version on principles which allowed them an almost arbitrary latitude, and that in the exercise of this they can reasonably be supposed to have made the changes which appear in their version, without seeking the origin of them in a different Hebrew text. Whatever may be true of other books of the Old Testament, it is clear that those who put the Pentateuch into Greek, could not have designed to furnish an exact copy of the original. They have departed from it sometimes for the sake of what perspicuity seemed to them to require. They have asserted everywhere the right of making what they translate intelligible to their readers, according to their own ideas of the meaning to be conveyed. They have not only adhered to this law in justifiable cases, but in some passages which they found it difficult to understand, have ventured boldly upon a single view of the sense, instead of leaving the language so as to suggest the possibility of other expositions or conjectures. Expressions and ideas which they regarded as wanting in proper reverence for the Deity, they took the liberty to alter without scruple ; and narrations of any kind which they thought would not be entirely honorary to them in the eyes of other nations, they softened and put in a milder light. Instances also occur, in which they have substituted their own sentiments for those of the sacred writers, and especially in which they have obtruded upon the text various peculiar dogmas of the Alexandrian philosophy. The changes of a rhetorical character, which they have admitted, are innumera-

ble. They vary the form and phraseology of the Hebrew almost
at pleasure, for the purpose of securing a more elegant Greek
diction; they avoid the bolder figures of the oriental style and,
though they seek to retain as far as possible the graces which be-
long to the poetic language of the Hebrews, they express for the
most part entirely in the Greek way those idiomatic phrases of
daily life, which are so important to a just conception of the char-
acter and genius of a foreign people. The requisite examples
for supporting these positions, are presented in the proper connec-
tion. The conclusion under this head naturally is, that changes
should not be hastily made in the Hebrew text on the authority
of the Septuagint. There is no occasion for emending it or hav-
ing our confidence in it disturbed, on account of the manner in
which the Greek version differs from it. The rules which the
authors of it followed in the performance of their labor, account
sufficiently for most of this diversity, and evince the necessity of
the utmost caution in the adoption of new readings, recommended
merely by their agreement with the Greek translation. The au-
thor's own language is : Hac dissertatione videmur demonstrasse,
eam esse versionis Pentateuchi Alexandrinae indolem, ut ad
explicandum quidem textum Masorethicum non parum conferat,
ad mutandum vero nisi magna cum temeritate adhiberi nequeat.

In the second division of the treatise, the author considers the
characteristics of the Greek dialect employed by the Seventy.
The inquiry here relates to the Greek basis of this dialect, as
distinguished from its Hebrew coloring. With the exception of
some additional examples, and a proposed modification of some
minor statements, the author adopts the views already sanctioned
by such men as Salmasius, Sturtz, Buttmann, Winer, and others.
The Greek which the translators of the Septuagint employed,
was that current at Alexandria among those for whom they
wrote, without any of that striving for *Attic* purity, which is ap-
parent, even in some of the later Greek authors. In addition to
its other properties which are well known, this form of the Greek
language was distinguished for occasional Alexandrianisms, i. e.
terms having a signification peculiar to northen Africa, as well
as some examples of words *graecised* from the old Egyptian. Of
the orthography which prevailed in the Alexandrian dialect, that
is, the manner of representing the pronunciation of particular
words, where the Greek language furnished different signs for the
same sound, the insertion or omission of the breathings, the eli-
-sion or insertion of letters for the sake of euphony, etc., a much

more exact account is given than is contained in the older work
of Sturtz. The recent discovery of so many ancient inscriptions,
of papyrus rolls and other similar documents, has illustrated the
usage in these respects in a manner unknown to the earlier writ-
ers. The grammatical idioms which are mentioned, are, for the
most part, the same that others have noticed. The dual number,
as in modern Greek, has entirely vanished. The optative is used
with much less frequency and with less precision, than in the
earlier Greek. Irregularities occur in the contraction both of
nouns and verbs. Some verbs which are intransitive in regular
Greek, have acquired here an active sense. One instance at
least of the ecbatic use of ἵνα must be admitted, viz. Gen. 22: 14.
The negatives οὐ and μή are employed almost without exception
in accordance with the strictest Attic usage. In reference to syn-
tactical arrangement and construction, the style of the Pentateuch
presents comparatively little which is anomalous.

The third and last part of the book presents to us its most val-
uable contents. The Alexandrian translators were Jews by birth;
and the manner in which they employed the Greek language,
must have been influenced by this circumstance. It is the object
of our author to consider here the nature and extent of this influ-
ence, so far as it is developed in the Pentateuch. The Hebraisms
which occur in the New Testament have been distinguished
by critics as perfect and imperfect—the former being those which
are peculiar to the Hebrew, the latter those which are common to
it with the Greek. Mr. Thiersch applies this distinction to the
style of the Septuagint, and, as might be expected, finds there ex-
emplifications of it in both ways. The instances however of pure
or perfect Hebraism are those naturally which receive most at-
tention; and the results here are not only of general interest to
the philologist, but capable of being applied to the study of the
New Testament Greek. Some of the statements which are pre-
sented in connection with this branch of the subject, are the fol-
lowing.

The general coincidence in the laws which regulate the use of
the article in Greek and Hebrew, left no occasion for any great
departure from the proper Greek idiom in the manner in which
the Seventy have employed this part of speech. One exception
however must be made to this remark, in a case which does not
appear to have been duly noticed. It is a well known principle
in Hebrew, that the article is not prefixed to substantives which
are made definite by a following genitive or by a suffix pronoun.

In imitation of this, the article is sometimes omitted under the same circumstances in the Pentateuch, where the genuine Greek construction would have required it.[1] It is not improbable, that this peculiarity of the Hebrew has occasioned the singular omission of the article in Acts 2: 36, though Winer has proposed there a different explanation. Again, the influence of the Hebrew may be traced in the use of the personal pronouns, which is the more important to be remarked, inasmuch as the style of the New Testament has been affected in a similar manner. In strict Greek usage, the pronouns of the first and second persons are not accustomed to be expressed, unless they mark a special emphasis; and the same is true in Hebrew, with one extensive exception. The Hebrew language has a great fondness for the participle; and since the participle has no means like the proper verb, of indicating its relation to its subject by a change of termination, it became necessary to connect with it the pronoun, especially when it was of the first or second person, for the sake of distinctness. In translating such constructions, the Seventy have not always kept in view this object of the pronoun, but have sometimes expressed it in instances where the Greek would have dispensed with it.[2] Even the still more idiomatic use of the relative in connection with a personal pronoun so as to form a single relative expression, has been retained in some passages. This construction, so entirely foreign to the pure Greek idiom, is not unknown to the New Testament.[3]

The Hebraizing tendency of the Seventy appears further in the manner in which they employ the noun in all its various cases. Thus the nominative absolute, at the commencement of a proposition, though by no means unused in Greek, occurs in the Pentateuch both with a frequency and a boldness of position, which can be explained only as an effect of that similar license practised in the Hebrew, with which the translators were so familiar.[4] There is another species of independent nominative

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[1] The examples of this adduced are Deut. 16: 15, ἐὰν δὲ εὐλογήσῃ σε κύριος ἐν πᾶσι γενήμασί σου καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ σου ; ib. 28. 25, ἐν πάσαις βασιλείαις τῆς γῆς ; Lev. 23. 31, ἐν πάσαις κατοικίαις ὑμῶν ; ib. 25: 24, κατὰ πᾶσαν γῆν κατασχέσεως ὑμῶν.

[2] Thus Gen. 30: 1, δός μοι τέκνα, εἰ δὲ μὴ τελευτήσω ἐγὼ for מֵתָה אָנֹכִי.   So also Ex. 2: 14. 13: 15, etc.

[3] In the Pentateuch, see Gen. 28: 13. Deut. 9: 28, etc.   In the New Testament, see Acts 15: 17 in a citation from Amos, Rev. 7: 2. 12: 14, etc.

[4] An example of this is Ex. 32: 1—ὁ γὰρ Μωϋσῆς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὃς ἐξήγαγεν ἡμᾶς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου—οὐκ οἴδαμεν, τί γέγονεν αὐτῷ.

which they often use, which is placed not at the beginning of the
sentence but after other nouns—a construction which John in the
Apocalypse has imitated, but perhaps no other New Testament
writer.[1] In such instances, an oblique case would naturally be
employed in Greek, or the subsequent part of the sentence be re-
cast in some way; but the Hebrew having no declension, prop-
erly so called, and adhering more rigidly to an unbroken, uniform
structure, would be very apt to lead a Hellenistic writer to ex-
press himself in this irregular manner. The wide range of sig-
nification to which the genitive construction was appropriated in
Hebrew, has occasioned an almost corresponding latitude in the
application of the genitive in the Greek style of the Seventy.
The dialect of the New Testament, it is well known, abounds in
illustrations of the tendency of the Hellenistic Greek to assimi-
late itself to the Hebrew in this respect. The relation of the
Greek dative the Hebrews represented, for the most part, by
making use of Lamedh; and on the whole, the Greek translators
have confined themselves to the legitimate province of this case.
Their use of the accusative, on the contrary, deviates widely from
its office in the classic Greek writers. It expresses often, after
the manner of the Hebrews, the material out of which a thing is
made or the manner in which it is done, where the Greeks would
have employed a preposition or some different phraseology.[2] The
double accusative which the Greek and Latin languages so often
place after verbs of a certain signification, the Seventy sometimes
employ correctly in their version, but sometimes they *hebraize*, by
translating the preposition which it was customary to insert un-
der such circumstances in Hebrew.[3] Some other verbs they con-
strued, not with the accusative as the Greek custom demanded,
but with prepositions in conformity with the Hebrew practice.[4]

In comparing the use which the authors of the Greek version
have made, of the verb in its various forms, with that of the He-
brew verb, we have opened to us a wide field of observation,

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[1] This may be illustrated by Deut. 4: 11—καὶ τὸ ὄρος ἐκαίετο πυρὶ ἕως τοῦ
οὐρανοῦ· σκότος, γνόφος, θύελλα. There are many bolder examples. Comp.
Numb. 20: 5. Deut. 7: 8. 10: 7, etc.

[2] Thus Ex. 24: 39—τάλαντον χρυσίου καθαροῦ ποιήσεις πάντὰ τὰ σκεύη ταῦ-
τα. Comp. Gen. 6: 1. Ex. 26: 1, etc.

[3] For example, ποιήσω σε εἰς ἔθνος μέγα, Ex. 44: 18, and often where εἰς
stands for ל .

[4] The Hebrew said קָרָא בְּשֵׁם and the Hebrew translator in accordance with
it, ἐπεκαλέσατο ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι. The accusative in regular Greek would follow
as the direct object of the verb.

which has not yet been fully explored. It may be remarked in
general as the result of our author's study, that the different voices
or conjugations of the Hebrew verb are in the main correctly rep-
resented in the Pentateuch, by the corresponding separate verbs
in which the Greek language is so rich. The praeterite tenses
in Greek they employed with propriety; but the use of the future
like the New Testament writers, they extended to the expression
of ideas for which the instinct of the native Grecian would have
dictated a different form. This is seen particularly when there
is occasion to speak of a thing as something that is wont to be
done, that ought to be done or ought not to be, that may be done
or cannot be, and the like. Such conceptions the Greeks seldom
present in the future tenses, but avail themselves rather of the
present, of auxiliary verbs, or of the optative and imperative modes.
In the Hebrew on the contrary, the future or imperfect form of
the verb is the prevailing one for such purposes. It is worthy of
notice also that where in Hebrew the past tense follows an im-
perative to which it is joined by Vav consecutive, our transla-
tors turn the former often into a future.[1] The periphrasis of the
participle with the verb of existence will scarcely ever be found
to occur, unless it be justified by the nature of the thought which
is to be conveyed. The infinitive absolute which is employed in
so peculiar way as a qualifying or emphatic accompaniment of
the simple verb, the Alexandrian interpreters express often by
prefixing to such verb a participle of the same meaning in such
tense as the point of time to be designated requires.[2] Several of
the leading grammarians, as Matthiae, Kühner, Winer, have re-
garded this as a legitimate Greek construction; and in this point
of view, it would be the frequency of it only in the Septuagint,
which is singular. But from this opinion Thiersch dissents; and
goes into an examination of the examples upon which these
scholars have relied for the correctness of their statement. He
maintains that in all the passages of this kind which have been
brought forward, the participle performs in reality its ordinary
office in Greek, and that in no case does it qualify the verb which
it accompanies in a manner corresponding to that of the infinitive
absolute in Hebrew. His conclusion is that this mode of repre-
senting the Hebrew idiom in question was peculiar to the Seven-
ty, and was originated by them for this purpose. To this partic-

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[1] Thus is the oft recurring formula—λάλησον τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐρεῖς αὐ-
τοῖς = דַּבֵּר לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ .

[2] As βλέποντες βλέψετε.

ular mode of representation, however, they did not restrict themselves. The other most common method was that of connecting with the verb a noun of the same signification in the dative, as equivalent in Greek to the Hebrew infinitive.[1] This mode of expressing intensity has its frequent parallels in Greek and could not properly be represented as a Hebraism. The infinitive with Lamedh prefixed which has so extensive an application in Hebrew, could not fail to have an influence on the use of the Greek infinitive in writers who had accustomed themselves to such different habits of expression. This effect proceeded so far that there was in fact scarcely any relation of one verb to another, which they did not sometimes express in the infinitive. It was appended to the verb with such latitude as to be epexegetical of it, whatever might be the logical relation which it sustained to it. The genitive of the article was usually prefixed as the sign of this connection. The article thus used denoted not only design, purpose, as in the classic Greek writers, but consequence, result; so that the infinitive with the article as employed in the Septuagint and the New Testament, occupies almost the entire province of the Hebrew infinitive. This extension of the same form of speech to represent such different relations of thought, will not appear on reflection to be so very surprising. The transition from the idea of intending a thing to that of doing it, from the object of an action to its performance, is one that is easily made, and in another form has been exemplified in the Greek language itself. In all the earlier writers ἵνα was employed in a strict telic sense, but in the course of time it receded more and more from this rigid use and became at length ecbatic in its import.

On the whole, few traces of the manner in which the Hebrews employed the preposition, appear in the style of the Alexandrian translators. Into one violation of Greek purity, however, they have been led through the force of their Hebrew associations in regard to the mode of expressing the comparative degree. This was done by means of the positive degree of the adjective and the preposition מִן. To this idiom they have virtually adhered in using ἤ, ὑπὲρ, παρά, in cases of comparison where the Greek language requires μᾶλλον or the comparative degree. We meet with the same peculiarity in the New Testament. A few instances occur, in which by a Hebraism εἰ stands elliptically in the language, of oaths as equivalent to a strong negative declaration, precisely like אִם   Winer has pointed out three or four examples of

[1] Thus ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἐπεθύμησα.

the same usage in the New Testament. It was inevitable that
the multiform uses of η in binding together thoughts related to
each other by every variety of logical connection, should not have
led to applications of the Greek particle most nearly correspond-
ing to it, which were unknown to regular Greek writers. Hence
καὶ is found often where the obvious requisition of the context
shows that the clauses which it unites, are not in any proper sense
of the word, consecutive in their character, and where a writer,
imbued fully with the spirit of the language, would have put
some term of greater logical precision, instead of so vague a con-
nective.

The work of Prof. Thiersch, of which we have given this gen-
eral sketch, places before us the most important facts in relation
to the linguistic character of the Greek Pentateuch. There is
some reason to hope[1] that he or M. Lipsius who has long occupied
himself with this study, may soon communicate to the public the
results of a similar investigation, extended to the remainder of this
version.

ARTICLE X.

PICKERING'S GREEK LEXICON.

By Samuel H. Taylor, M. A., Principal of Phillips Academy, Andover.

THE progress in the study of the Greek language in our
country within the last twenty years, may be estimated with
some degree of correctness, by the improvement in Greek lexi-
cography during that period. Twenty years ago, almost the only
Greek lexicon used in our schools, was that of Schrevelius, the
definitions of which were in Latin, and the limited number of
words which it contained, made it suitable for only a small circle
of authors. In 1826, the same year that Donnegan's Greek lexi-
con appeared in England, the translation of Schrevelius by Messrs.
Pickering and Oliver, was published in this country, with the
addition of upwards of 2000 articles. The publication of this
lexicon at once relieved the student of the awkward and weari-
some process of studying one dead language through the medium

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[1] So we venture to understand the wish to this effect, which Winer has ex-
pressed in a note to the last edition of his New Testament Grammar.