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ARTICLE VIII.

CRITICAL NOTE.

THE NEGEB IN EXODUS.

THE use of the word נֶגֶב, *Negeb*, for "south" in chapters xxvi.-xl. of Exodus has long been a crux, since the word properly means the dry land in the south of Judah, and this was not to the south of the Israelites in the wilderness. As Robertson Smith emphatically put it: "Moses could no more call the south side the Négeb side of the tabernacle than a Glasgow man could say that the sun set over Edinburgh."¹ J. Weiss in his recent edition of Exodus² says, with reason, that in xxvi. 18 the word is a gloss, but he does not go into the evidence for the matter. I find that the LXX presents some striking phenomena in some of the relevant passages, and it seems to me desirable to draw attention to these. The final solution of the problem cannot be reached until more study has been devoted to the textual history of the concluding chapters of Exodus, but I think that this is likely to be helped by calling notice to the singularities that have special reference to our difficulty.

There are five passages in which the Massoretic text presents us with the word; viz. xxvi. 18 with the recapitulatory passage xxxvi. 23, xxvii. 9 with its recapitulatory passage xxxviii. 9, and finally xl. 24 (LXX 22). The last of these passages does not call for special mention, as the LXX does not differ from the Massoretic text, and attention will therefore be concentrated on the other four.

It must first be noticed that in all four cases the Massoretic text presents us not with one word to denote direction, but with two, "the south side, southward," etc. In all these

¹The Old Testament in the Jewish Church (2d ed.), p. 326. For the contrary view, see the Bibliotheca Sacra, vol. iv. (1898) p. 524.

²Das Buch Exodus übersetzt und erklärt. Graz und Wien. 1911. Vol. LXIX. No. 274. 11

cases the first word only is *Negeb*, the second being the unexceptionable תימנה. The tautology is, of course, strongly in favor of the gloss theory. And it is supported by the fact that in three instances the LXX clearly had only *one* word, while the fourth passage (xxxvi. 23) is missing altogether from the pre-Hexaplar Greek. But this is not all.

In Exodus xxvi. 18, 20, 22, the Massoretic text has the order south, north, west. Not so the LXX. It has north, south, west (though there is some weak authority obviously influenced by the present Hebrew for the Massoretic order). Further, it uses, for "south," τὸ πρὸς νότον, i.e. its rendering for תימנה in verse 35 of the same chapter, where even the Hebrew does not read *Negeb*. Hence it seems that the view of Weiss is here strongly supported by the Greek evidence.

In the other two passages the facts are more complicated. While this makes them harder to interpret it certainly adds to the interest. In chapter xxvii. a convenient conspectus of the important facts may be given as follows:—

REFERENCE.	MASSORETIC TEXT.	SEPTUAGINT.
Ex. xxvii. 9.	On the side of the Negeb, southwards.	(1) On the southward side (τὸ πρὸς λαβὰ being used), B and four cursives. (2) On the northward side, M (margin) and about five cursives. (3) On the southward side (τὸ πρὸς νότον), F, M (text), and the great majority of Septuagintal authorities.
Ex. xxvii. 11.	On the northward side.	(1) On the eastward side (ἀπὸ ἀριστερῆς being used), B, M (margin), and three cursives. (2) On the northward side, A, F, M (text), and almost all the other authorities.

REFERENCE.	MASSORETIC TEXT.	SEPTUAGINT.
Ex. xxvii. 12.	On the westward side.	On the westward side.
Ex. xxvii. 13.	On the eastward side, orient-wards.	(1) On the southward side [νότον] B and a number of cursives. (2) On the eastward side [ἀνατολάς], A, F, M(text), and almost all authorities.

To appreciate these facts fully it will be necessary to have regard to the evidence in the recapitulatory passage; but certain phenomena may be noted at once. Only in the case of verse 12 is there complete agreement. In the other verses the LXX is divided against itself. F and the text of M, together with the great majority of the authorities, clearly represent a Hebrew that differed from the Massoretic text only in having one expression, instead of two, for south in verse 9, and for east in verse 13. While, therefore, they testify to the fact that the Massoretic text is glossed, they do not otherwise assist us to recover the original order of the LXX. If we turn from them to B, the best MS., we find that of the four quarters, *two* (verses 9 and 13) are south, and the north is entirely missing. Further, two words are used for south, *λίβα*, in verse 9, and *νότον* in verse 13. Obviously there must originally have been a "north," and one or other of these two words has replaced the earlier text. Which of the two is it? The answer is clear for three reasons: (1) in verse 9, B's "south" may be an accommodation to the later Hebrew, but it cannot be so in verse 13. Hence it is more likely to be corrupt in the earlier verse; (2) "north" has been preserved by some good authorities as the original reading in verse 9; and (3) the presumption is in favor of the original translators having used the same word *νότος* as in the other passages of these chapters rather than *λίψ*. Hence we may infer that the original LXX had north, east, west, south. It should further be noticed that the rarer *ἀπηλιώτης* for "east" in verse 11 is far more likely to be the original text of the LXX than the common *ἀνατολάς*.

Much of this receives striking confirmation from the phenomena presented by xxxviii. 9-13 (in the LXX xxxvii. 7-11). The material words in the Massoretic text are the same as in the earlier passage, but the best LXX text has five quarters. In xxxvii. 7 = M. T. xxxviii. 9 it reads "southwards," *λιβα* being used, but M(text) and many cursives have *νότον*. In verse 9 it has two clauses — the earlier "northwards," the second "southwards," *νότον* being used. The second clause is, however, omitted by M and many other MSS. In verse 11 it has *ἀνατολάς* with very weak evidence for *νότον*. It should be added that an old Latin copy reads "north" in verse 7, "east" in verse 10, and "west" in verse 11.

I think that the five quarters in this passage afford corroborative evidence that the original Septuagintal text of chapter xxvii. knew nothing of the Negeb. The order was different, and, alike for east and south, it found only one word in its Hebrew. In the latter respect it indubitably had a purer Hebrew text than our Massoretic text. Whether its order of the four quarters is the more original is a subject on which I am not prepared to offer an opinion. And with respect to its text in xxxvii. it seems to me that judgment must be suspended until the whole problem of the text of the concluding chapters of Exodus has been thoroughly investigated.

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