

# The Septuagint.

PROFESSOR GRAETZ'S THEORY.

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IN the April issue of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, notice was taken of a remarkable article which appeared in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* of October 1890. This article, signed by Professor Graetz, proposes to fix the date of the Greek Pentateuch (LXX.) as late as the fifth decade of the second century B.C. The importance of the question thus opened seems to justify some examination of the arguments on which Dr. Graetz bases his theory.

His contention is briefly as follows. The translation was made under the auspices of an Alexandrian king. But since it accentuates the antagonism of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which arose out of the Maccabean wars, the work cannot have been executed before the days of Jonathan (161-143), and belongs to the reign of Ptolemy Philometor (d. 146), well known as a supporter of the Jews, and patron of the Onias who founded the temple at Leontopolis. Each of these conclusions hinges upon a verbal criticism.

1. The use of ἄρχων and ἀρχή to represent אֲרֹנָה and אֲרֹנָה in Deut. xvii. 14-19 disposes Professor Graetz to accept the statement of 'Aristeus' so far as to admit that the version was made at Alexandria, under the auspices of a Ptolemy. Such a sentence as (15) ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου καταστήσεις ἐπὶ σεαυτὸν βασιλέα might have had a suspicious sound in the ears of a foreign king, and the wary translator wrote ἄρχοντα. Thrice in this context ἄρχων stands for βασιλεύς; and ἀρχή is twice used for βασιλεία.

But the force of this argument is at least much weakened by a glance at other contexts. Ἀρχων is used to translate אֲרֹנָה in Gen. xlix. 20 (Ἀσὴρ . . . αὐτὸς δώσει τρυφὴν ἄρχουσιν), where it is difficult to believe that the word was preferred out of any tenderness for royal scruples. On the other hand, βασιλεύς holds its own in Gen. xxxv. 11 (βασιλεύς ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος σου ἐξελεύσονται). The fact seems to be that the less definite term was occasionally used as a mere synonym for the more exact; comp. Sirach xlv. 13-16 (προφήτης Κυρίου κατέστησεν βασιλεία [v. 1. βασιλείαν], καὶ ἔχρισεν ἄρχοντας ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ. The ἄρχοντες are here Saul and David, and the ἀρχή is a βασιλεία.

2. Professor Graetz sees a Pharisaic colouring in Lev. xxiii. 11-16, which indicates a date as late as, if not later than, the middle of the second century. The Pharisees were at variance with the Sadducees as to the interpretation of the phrase שִׁבְעָה יָמִים,

which occurs in vers. 11, 15. Now, in ver. 11 the present text of the LXX. distinctly favours the view of the Pharisees, rendering τῆ ἐπαύριον τῆς πρώτης, sc. τῶν ἁζύμων (comp. ver. 7 and Matt. xxvi. 17). But are we at liberty to infer that τῆς πρώτης is here the original rendering? Dr. Graetz answers in the affirmative. "When in ver. 17 the same phrase is rendered ἀπὸ τῆς ἐπαύριον τῶν σαββάτων, this must be an interpolation in the LXX. by ἄλλος. The original translator could not have been guilty of such gross inconsistency or thoughtlessness as this variation would imply." It seems to me more likely that τῆς πρώτης in ver. 11 is the gloss, and τῶν σαββάτων the original rendering in both places. Nothing is more common than to find a corrector altering something which is opposed to his own views at its first occurrence, and forgetting to alter it when it occurs again; the converse is certainly less natural. Moreover, τῆς πρώτης in ver. 11 is not in undisputed possession. Dr. Graetz observes that Origen had noticed a variant τοῦ σαββάτου or μετὰ τὸ σάββατον, and this reading reflects itself in a little group of existing cursives (Cod. 85<sup>ms</sup>; comp. Codd. 29, 83, and Ald.). On the other hand, one or two authorities show a disposition to make ver. 15 correspond with the present text of vers. 11 (Codd. 85<sup>ms</sup>, 130<sup>\*</sup>); and it is possible that a similar tendency has been at work in ver. 16, for τῆς ἐσχάτης can scarcely be an original rendering of שִׁבְעָה, and looks like an attempt to set up a contrast to τῆς πρώτης.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it seems open to a defender of the earlier date of the Greek Pentateuch to invert Dr. Graetz's reasoning, and to argue that τῆς πρώτης in ver. 11 is a Pharisaic gloss of the time of Philometor, which implies the existence of the version in pre-Maccabean times. I refrain from entering upon the questions of external evidence to which his article incidentally refers, and content myself with venturing to express the conviction that the two criticisms on which he principally relies are inadequate to bear the burden of so serious a responsibility.

<sup>1</sup> The reading of ἑβδομῆς for ἑβδομάδος by Cod. Alexandrinus and the second and third "hands" of Cod. Vaticanus (B\* has βδομάδης), as well as several cursives, suggests an original τῆς ἑβδομῆς ἑβδομάδος, with τῆς ἐσχάτης as a variant. There seems to be no trace of the O. L.; but the Vulg. attempts, I think, to combine both readings: "ad alteram diem expletionis hebdomadae septimae."