

ARTICLE VIII.

CRITICAL NOTE.

SOME SUBSTITUTIONS IN OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS.

IN previous papers a number of cases of textual substitution have been examined. The present article will be devoted to some further instances. We shall find that in some cases, at any rate, our textual authorities display a good deal of hesitancy, and that the true reading often persists by the side of the alteration. But this is not always so. There are passages where we can see, in spite of the consentient testimony of all the authorities, that a change has taken place, and there are others where we can only speak with less certainty and suggest a greater or less probability. In some places we shall be dealing with alterations that have been recognized by other writers, but in more than one passage the views expressed will, so far as I know, be enunciated for the first time.

We may begin by directing attention to the fact that in a series of passages the LXX or its Hebrew original refused to apply the term "god" to certain deities of other nations where the original text clearly used it. In Num. xxv. 2 the Masoretic text, in connection with the Moabite women, speaks of "the sacrifices of their gods" and worshipping "their gods." Jerome, perhaps more correctly, reads "their sacrifices," but retains the second "gods." The LXX, however, will have none of this. In the earlier part of the verse, it only has "gods," and all the other Septuagintal authorities read "idols." In the latter all the Septuagintal texts, without exception, have "idols." Similar phenomena may be observed in the Septuagintal Dan. iii. 18; v. 4, 23; Isa. xxxvii. 19, and other passages. In 1 Kings xi. 33 Ashtoreth is the goddess of the Sidonians in the Massoretic text, but their "abomination" in the LXX, which in the same verse speaks of "the idols of
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Moab, and their king [= Malkom], an offense of the children of Ammon." The Massoretic text and Vulgate have "god" in each case.

A moment's consideration will show that in each of these instances the Greek reading is the worse. There can be no doubt that such terms as "abomination" were never applied in any age or country by a devout worshiper to the object of his adoration, and a great master of style would not use the term in such a connection. This gives us a clue to the true text in many other passages.

The LXX gives 1 Kings xi. 7 and 5 in the following form: "5 Then Solomon built a high place for Chamos, an idol of Moab, and for their king [= Malkom], an idol of the children of Ammon, 6 and for Astarte an abomination of the Sidonians." Presumably the original text had god (goddess, as we should say of Astarte) in each case. We should not think of "abomination" as the text of the original author, but as a later substitution. This is clearly proved by the Hebrew of verse 33, where we find Ashtoréth, Chemosh, and Milcom mentioned again with the appropriate term god (goddess). The Vulgate reads as follows in 1 Kings xi.: "5 but Solomon worshiped Astarte, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Moloch the idol of the Ammonites. . . . 7 Then Solomon built a high place to Chamos, the idol of Moab, in the mount which is opposite Jerusalem, and to Moloch, the idol of the children of Ammon." It will be noted that we here have "idol," not, as in the Hebrew, "abomination." This is the more remarkable because the Vulgate generally has an offensive phrase where the Massoretic reading is one of the words for abomination. If the printed Vulgate correctly represents Jerome's rendering, the question will arise, what Hebrew he had before him.

In 2 Kings xxiii. 13 we again find these foreign deities enumerated. Hebrew and Greek (with unimportant variations) have "abomination" in each case, but in the third instance Lucifer reads *simulacro* (image). The Vulgate, on the other hand, gives "*idolo . . . offensioni . . . abominationi*" for the three words.

The case of 2 Kings xxiii. 24, "the idols and all the *abominations* that were spied in the land of Judah," seems to me more doubtful. "Abominations" is the reading of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin: "gods" would not fit. On the other hand, "graven images" would make excellent sense, and the removal might be due to the commandment. In the absence of evidence this must, however, remain very uncertain. I confess that, for my own part, I think it unlikely that "abominations" is the original text.

In Jer. iv. 1 we read: "if thou wilt put away thine abominations from my presence." This is supported by the LXX. But Duhm and Giesebrecht both think that the "abominations" are images of idols. The Vulgate reads "*offendicula*." Here the context points to concrete objects like graven images as being probably the original object of the verb.

Concrete objects, again, must be meant in vii. 30: "they have put their abominations in thine house," and again Jerome has "*offendicula*."

In xxxii. (LXX xxxix.) 34 the phrase recurs: "They placed their abominations in the house," etc., and this time Jerome is even more explicit. "*Idola sua*" is his rendering.

It is submitted that in all these cases some word like "graven images" is required.

In Ezek. vii. 20 the textual evidence seems to point to the presence of two alternative substitutions in our Hebrew which speaks of the "images of their abominations, their detestable things," *not* "and their detestable things." The original LXX seems to have had one word only. Jerome reads "*imagines abominationum suarum et simulacrarum*." Perhaps "gods" was the original reading.

There are other passages in Ezekiel which must be regarded as extremely doubtful, but they would best be considered by an editor of the text of the prophet's book, as the phenomena are complex and would require the study of other subjects that lie outside the scope of the present paper.

Almost the most convincing example of all is to be found in Isa. xliv. 19, where the parallel passages (ver. 15, 17; cp. 10)

enable us to restore the true text לֵאלֹהִים god. It is in the great argument against idolaters, and the prophet says: "15 he maketh a god and worshipeth it; he maketh a graven image and falleth down thereto . . . and the residue he maketh a god [even his graven image];¹ he falleth down unto it and worshipeth, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god . . . 19 . . . neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also, I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an *abomination*? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?" Clearly the speech could not have had "abomination" originally, and Jerome, in fact, reads "*idolum*." But sense, context, parallelism, imperatively demand לֵאלֹהִים god.

There are a few passages in the Pentateuch where similar phenomena may be observed. Exodus viii. 22 was discussed in the BIBLIOTHECA SACRA for January, 1915 (pp. 108 f.). In Deut. xxix. 16 (17), "Ye saw their and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold," we should clearly restore either "gods" or (more probably) "graven images" for "abominations." Deuteronomy xxxii. 16 is a more doubtful case. Yet I hesitate to believe that the poet wrote "with *abominations* provoked they him to anger." On the other hand, in Lev. xviii. 30, "the statutes of the abominations which were done before you" cannot possibly be authentic; but this is a much glossed passage, and if we could see the autograph of the chapter, it would probably present a very different appearance from any of our extant texts.

Another obvious substitution is to be found in 2 Chron. xv. 8, "he put away all the abominations [Jerome, *idola*] out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin . . . and he renewed the altar of the Lord." Jerome's "idols" hits the mark. Some word like "graven images" seems necessary. So too we should probably restore some such word in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 33, "Josiah took away all the *abominations*."

¹This phrase may be a gloss.

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