

ART. II.—NOTES ON ACTS XXI. 37, AND HEB. VII. 6.

‘Ο δὲ ἔφη Ἑλληνιστὶ γινώσκεις· οὐκ ἄρα σὺ εἶ ὁ Αἰγύπτιος, ὁ πρὸ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀναστατώσας καὶ ἐξαγαγὼν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον τοὺς τετρακισχιλίους ἄνδρας τῶν σικαρίων.—ACTS XXI. 37, 38.

And he said, Dost thou know Greek? Art thou not then the Egyptian, . . . ? R. V.

IT will be observed that I have here placed a colon instead of a note of interrogation after Claudius Lysias’s words, Ἑλληνιστὶ γινώσκεις. Paul having just addressed the Chief Captain in the Greek language with the words: Εἰ ἔξεστί μοι εἰπεῖν τι πρὸς σε, what inducement could there be for the latter to ask him the question, whether he knew Greek or not? A note of admiration, if such a thing were used in Greek, would be far more suited to the circumstances of the passage than a note of interrogation.

Then, as to the latter part of the passage, Winer, after Hermann, followed by Alford, affirms that οὐκ ἄρα must signify, not *nonne igitur?* but *non igitur*: “Thou art not, therefore, the Egyptian,” etc. Thus Paul’s knowledge of Greek is converted into a proof that he was not a certain notable Egyptian Jew. This view is also taken by Dr. A. Roberts in his extremely interesting “Discussions on the Gospels.” Dr. Roberts suggests that a “rude Egyptian” might possibly be ignorant of Greek, an explanation which appears to be accepted by Dr. Sanday in his equally interesting controversy with Dr. Roberts as to the language habitually employed by our Lord. It may, therefore, be worth while to re-discuss the question of οὐκ ἄρα, especially as I have fresh evidence to adduce upon the point.

The assertion that the expression οὐκ ἄρα signifies *non igitur* is true to a certain extent, and to a certain extent only. It is very frequently used in that sense, especially by Aristophanes and Plato; but Æschines, Demosthenes, and Sophocles agree in also using it in the sense of *nonne igitur?* Thus the dictum of Hermann and Winer simply rests on an insufficient basis of induction, and the Revisers have done well in retaining the interrogative of the Authorised Version at the end of verse 38. For if an Egyptian Jew could not speak Greek, it is difficult to imagine what language he could have employed for the common purposes of life and business. Upon Dr. Roberts’ own showing, Egypt was undoubtedly the stronghold of Hellenism—the Septuagint translation was to all intents and purposes the Bible of the Egyptian Jews; nay, the learned Philo himself appears to have been ignorant of Hebrew, as seems also to have been the case with the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Now for my authorities for the interrogative use of οὐκ ἄρα.

In section 20 of the oration of Æschines against Ctesiphon, we find the following passage :

Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τὴν βουλὴν τὴν ἐν Ἀρείῳ πάγῳ πρὸς τοὺς λογιστὰς ὁ νόμος κελεύει λόγον καὶ εὐθύναις διδόναι κ.τ.λ. Οὐκ ἄρα στεφανωθήσεται ἡ βουλή ἢ ἐξ Ἀρείου πάγου; οὐδὲ γὰρ πατέρα αὐτοῖς ἔσται. Οὐκ ἄρα φιλοτιμοῦνται; πάννυγε, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀγαπῶσιν ἐάν τις παρ' αὐτοῖς μὴ ἀδικῇ, ἀλλ' ἐάν τις ἐξαμαρτάνῃ, κολάζουσιν.

For firstly the law orders the council in Areopagus to give in an account in writing and submit to an audit. . . . Shall not, therefore, the council of Areopagus be crowned? No, for it is not an ancestral custom for them to be so. Are they, therefore, not actuated by patriotic feeling? Yes, very much so; nay, they are not contented, if any one in their number be free from actual guilt, but if any one be in error, they punish him.

It certainly appears to me unquestionable that an interrogation is put in an excited manner by οὐκ ἄρα, just as it is by ἄρα alone in section 182 of the same oration: ἀχάριστος ἔρ' ἦν ὁ δῆμος; οὐκ, ἀλλὰ μεγαλόφρων. "Was, therefore, the people ungrateful? No, but magnanimous." It is worthy of notice, also, that of the two questions asked above by οὐκ ἄρα, the first is met by a negative and the second by an affirmative answer.

Again, in Demosthenes against Aristocrates, p. 686, § 197, I find :

Οὐκ ἄρα τοῖς ἑαυτοῦς ἀγαθόν τι ποιῶσι χάριν εἶχον; σφόδρα γε, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι.

Were not, then, our ancestors grateful to those who did them good? Yes, exceedingly so, Athenians.

And in Sophocles, "Ajax," 1238, we have:

οὐκ ἄρ' Ἀχαιοῖς ἄνδρες εἰσι πλὴν ὅδε;

Have the Greeks, then, no men save Ajax?

In this passage there was nothing to prevent Sophocles from using the very common expression, ἔρ' οὐκ, instead of οὐκ ἄρα—if his meaning could have been conveyed by the particles in an inverse order.

There is also a passage (λ. 553) in the Odyssey of Homer which may be claimed, and is claimed, by Damm and others, for the interrogative sense of οὐκ ἄρα :

Ἄταν, παῖ Τελαμῶνος ἀμύμονος, οὐκ ἄρ' ἐμελλες
οὐδὲ θανάῳ λήσεσθαι ἐμοὶ χόλου, εἵνεκα τευχῶν
οὐλομένων;

Ajax, son of excellent Telamon, wert thou not then even after death about to forget anger against me, on account of the baneful arms?

The interrogation suits the remainder of the tender and touching endeavour of Ulyssus to propitiate Ajax much better than the half-satirical tone of the negative inference, "So, then, thou wert not even after death about to forget anger against me."

An Egyptian Jew would have been likely to speak Greek better than one from Palestine, and the goodness of St. Paul's language and pronunciation would not unnaturally suggest to

Claudius Lysias the hypothesis of his being an Egyptian Jew of influence.

[I am glad to find that the above view of this passage is also that taken in Thayer's Grimm's Lexicon. No evidence is, however, there adduced for the interrogative use of οὐκ ἔρα.]

Ὁ δὲ μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν, δεδεκάτωκεν Ἀβραάμ, καὶ τὸν ἔχοντα τὰς ἐπαγγελίας εὐλόγηκεν.—HEBREW'S vii. 6.

But he whose genealogy is not counted from them hath taken tithes of Abraham, and hath blessed him that hath the promises.—R. V.

There is a not unfrequent use of the perfect tense, especially noticeable in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but by no means confined to it, in the writings of the New Covenant, which it does not appear possible to bring under the ordinary rules relating to that tense, and which, therefore, deserves particular consideration. It looks to me like a peculiar and technical use. I will first endeavour to exhibit this in the passage immediately under consideration, and then try it experimentally upon its congeners.

Why do we not find the simple aorists of historical statement, εἰδεκάτωσεν and εὐλόγησεν? We have the aorist just above in verse 2, δεκάτην ἐμέρισεν, and also in verse 1, εὐλόγησας. I cannot answer the question under any recognised rules respecting the difference between the aorist and perfect tenses. It is easy enough to *write* with the Revised Version: "He whose genealogy is not counted from them *hath* taken tithes from Abraham, and *hath* blessed him that hath the promises." But what is the meaning of this "*hath*"? Is a stress to be laid on the auxiliary "hath," just as on the auxiliary "do" in Othello's oft-quoted speech: ". . . but I *do* love thee!" But, then, such a stress on the auxiliary is a purely English idiom, and cannot be imported into the Greek, which has a special form for the perfect tense, indicating either the completion of an action, or its continuance in itself or in its results to the present time. If, however, it be intended to convey the impression that not only did Melchisedek, as a matter of fact, tithe and bless Abraham, but that he stands for ever in the Scriptures stated to have, and represented as having, done so, then I am quite satisfied, although I am afraid the "*hath*" of the Revisers will not suit all the passages to which it ought to be applied, nor do they themselves venture to apply it in more than a limited number of instances. Indeed, over and above those passages which admit of explanation from the ordinary rules of the perfect tense, there are many which present indications, that the perfect is technically used so as to include either simply γέγραπται, or ὡς γέγραπται.

Thus I should propose to paraphrase the verse, which stands

at the head of this little essay, in the following manner: "He, whose genealogy is not counted from them, is stated in the Scriptures to have taken tithes from Abraham, and to have blessed him that hath the promises."

Thus the perfect tense would appear to indicate an appeal to Scripture as an irrefragable argument. *It stands so written.*

Let us now extend the sphere of our examination, and see whether the explanation just given will, or will not, solve the difficulty of many passages, better than sometimes straining and sometimes neglecting the English compound perfect with "have."

A little further on, Heb. vii. 9, we find: "And, so to say, through Abraham even Levi, who receiveth tithes, *is represented* as having been tithed, or as having paid tithes" (δεδεκάτωται), "for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedek met him."

In Heb. vii. 11, we have: "If then [surely not "now," μὲν οὖν] perfection had been through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people *is represented* as having received the law) (γενομοθέτηται), what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron?"

Heb. vii. 13: "For he of whom these things are said *is represented* as belonging to another tribe." The Revisers relegate their perfect with "have" to the bottom of the page, "Gr. 'hath partaken of,'" and render thus: "For he of whom these things are said belongeth to another tribe." The following perfects, προσεγήνοχεν in 13, and ἀνατίταλκεν in 14, admit also of explanation under the ordinary rules of the perfect tense, so I do not attempt to press them into my service.

Heb. viii. 5: "Even as Moses *is represented* as being warned (ξεχρημάτισται)." Here the Revisers simply drop the perfect with "have" without any notice, and give "even as Moses is warned." "Even as Moses *stands warned*"—*i.e.*, in the Scriptures—would express the tense here admirably.

Heb. x. 9: τότε εἶρηκεν. "Then he *is represented* as saying," in the Psalm from which the quotation is taken.

Heb. xi. 5: "For he *stands represented* as having witness borne to him (μεμαρτύρηται), that he had been well pleasing unto God."

Heb. xi. 17: "By faith Abraham *stands represented* as offering up Isaac." Here, too, the Revisers find it impossible to bring in the perfect with "have."

Heb. xi. 28: "By faith Moses *stands represented* as instituting or holding (πεποιήκε) the Passover." The Revisers again relegate the perfect with "have" to the bottom of the page, "Gr. 'hath made,'" and give—"By faith he kept the

passover." The solitary perfect *πεποιήκει* comes in a very singular manner among a series of ordinary aorists.

Passing from the Epistle to the Hebrews to other Epistles, we find in 1 Tim. ii. 14: "And Adam was not deceived (*οὐκ ἠπατήθη*), but the woman *stands represented* (*γέγονεν*) as coming into transgression through being deceived (*ἔξαπατηθεῖσα*)." Why this change of tense from aorist (*ἠπατήθη*) to perfect (*γέγονεν*), unless for some such reason as that for which I am contending?

Gal. iv. 23: "But the one by the bondwoman *stands represented* as begotten (*γεγέννηται*) according to the flesh, but the one by the freewoman through the promise." Here the Revisers use the present tense instead of the perfect with "have."

So in the Book of the Acts, vii. 35: "This man (Moses) God *stands represented* as sending (*ἀπεσταλκεν*) as a ruler and redeemer."

Turning now to the Evangelists, we find in St. John vi. 32: "Moses is not *represented* as giving you (*οὐ δέδωκεν*) the bread out of heaven, but My Father is giving you the bread out of heaven." Here the Revisers ignore the perfect tense altogether. "It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you. . . ." And in St. John vii. 19: "Does not Moses *stand represented* (*δέδωκεν*) as giving you the law?" the Revisers simply write: "Did not Moses give you the law?" Again, in vii. 22: "Moses *stands represented* as giving you (*δέδωκεν*) circumcision, not that it is of Moses, but of the Fathers." Once more, in St. John, ix. 29: "We know that God *is stated* in the Scriptures to have talked (*λελάληκεν*) with Moses."

Lastly, in St. Matt. chap. xix. verse 8, we find: "He saith unto them, Moses for the hardness of your hearts permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning (*οὐ γέγονεν*) it *is not represented* in the Scriptures as having been so." In the Revised Version the passage is scarcely English: "But from the beginning it hath not been so," as the perfect would properly imply, "and is still not so."

I hope I shall be considered to have made out a fair case for a special explanation of a number of very awkward perfect tenses in the New Testament, as simply exhibiting a technical method of including an appeal to the Scriptures (*γέγραπται* or *ὡς γέγραπται*) in a statement of fact. The perfect with "have" cannot always be used in such cases, and when it is so used, it is often at the expense of straining either the Greek or the English perfect, which do not range over exactly the same sphere. But it seems to me that no violence is done to any passage, if the explanation contended for above be accepted.

A. H. WRATISLAW.