

The Peshitta: Its Use in Literature and Liturgy
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KONRAD D. JENNER, THE PESHITTA INSTITUTE

R. BAS TER HAAR ROMENY, THE PESHITTA INSTITUTE

- [1] At the end of the fifties, the Leiden Peshitta Institute undertook the publication of the Peshitta of the Old Testament on behalf of IOSOT. Thirteen volumes have been published so far and four more are to come. In addition, several detailed studies of the text of Peshitta manuscripts have given us a picture of the development of the Peshitta text. There is, however, still another important desideratum. Right at the beginning of the project, it was noted that a much better knowledge of the Old Testament texts preserved in the patristic literature of the Syriac Churches was a prerequisite for obtaining a full picture of the text history. The lack of critical editions of a large part of this literature forbade inclusion of this material at that stage.
- [2] We believe that the moment has come to fill this gap. As much progress has been made on the Syriac Fathers in the intervening years, it is time to see where we stand: what has been done so far in this respect, what should be done, and how can we integrate the results of this research into the picture that has been formed on the basis of the study of Bible manuscripts?
- [3] Connected to these are a number of other questions. Peshitta scholars have come to appreciate the importance of providing a context for the textual history of the Peshitta. On the one hand, this is the context of church history. Peshitta manuscripts should be linked, if possible, to their place of origin or use. The development of the text is an event within the history of the Syriac Churches. The witness of the Syriac Fathers can also be of great importance in this respect. On the other hand, we should think of the history of exegesis and liturgy. It is not only the text of the readings that is of interest; we should also investigate the way the Peshitta was received and assessed by its users, whether in exegetical or historical literature or in liturgy.
- [4] It is our hope that during this Symposium attention will also be paid to the New Testament. We think that the issues mentioned above (in §3) will be of relevance for the Old as well as the New Testament.

- [5] This complex set of questions is the subject of the Third Peshitta Symposium, to be held in Leiden just after the Basel IOSOT Conference of 2001. Keynote speakers include Professors Sebastian Brock and Luk Van Rompay.
- [6] Prospective participants are kindly asked to take note of the dates and to indicate their intention of attending and reading a paper; a second announcement and a call for papers will be sent out in the course of this year.