

# The Peshitta: Its Use in Literature and Liturgy

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## THE GREEK VS. THE PESHITTA IN A WEST SYRIAN EXEGETICAL COLLECTION

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The use of the Greek text as an alternative to the Peshitta of the Old Testament, or as an addition to it, would seem to have been an early development, born out of necessity. When translations of Greek commentaries were made, the translators found that their own Syriac Bible was not exactly the same as the Bible the Greek exegetes were writing about. It goes without saying, however, that the Syrians also developed different opinions on the value of the various witnesses. In this paper I will give a somewhat rough sketch of this development, in which I will concentrate on the West Syrian side of the picture, as evidenced in an exegetical collection handed down to us in one of the manuscripts collected by Moses of Nisibis,<sup>1</sup> which found its way via Deir es-Suryan to the British Library in London, and which I will call, for want of anything better, the *London Collection*.

The manuscript in question, BL Add. 12168, consists of 255 leaves, but the beginning of the text is missing.<sup>2</sup> It was written, according to William Wright, in the eighth or ninth century in a good, regular Estrangela. It contains what Wright called a *Catena Patrum*, and what we, being used to a more narrow definition of a catena,<sup>3</sup> should perhaps

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<sup>1</sup>There is a note to this effect on fol. 255b of the manuscript; cf. W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838* 2 (London, 1871; reprinted Piscataway, NJ, 2002), 908. On Moses of Nisibis and his collection, see S.P. Brock, 'Without Mushē of Nisibis Where Would We Be? Some Reflections on the Transmission of Syriac Literature', in R. Ebied and H. Teule (eds.), *Acts of the VIIIth Symposium Syriacum (Sydney 2000)* = *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56 (2004), 15–24.

<sup>2</sup>See the description in Wright, *Catalogue* 2, 904–908. Cf. also Lucas Van Rompay, 'Development of Biblical Interpretation in the Syrian Churches of the Middle Ages', in M. Sæbø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. The History of Its Interpretation* 1. *From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300)* 2. *The Middle Ages* (Göttingen, 2000), 559–577, especially 564.

<sup>3</sup>F. Petit, 'La chaîne grecque sur la Genèse, miroir de l'exégèse ancienne', in G. Schöllgen and C. Scholten (eds.), *Stimuli: Exegese und ihre Hermeneutik in Antike und Christentum: Festschrift für Ernst Dassmann* (JAC.E 23; Münster, 1996), 243–253.

call an exegetical collection, an anthology of excerpts from a number of authors. Wright suggested that the compiler lived in the first half of the seventh century, as the work contains a passage on various important dynasties, which seems to present the Sasanids as still ruling.<sup>4</sup> This would mean that he was writing before the death of Yezdegerd III in 651, who was the last representative of this dynasty. Yet it is quite possible that he copied this passage from somebody else without updating it, which would make it possible to date the work slightly later. The terminus a quo of the work is 616/617, as our compiler used the Syro-Hexapla, the Syriac version of the Septuagint column of the Hexapla. In a note he mentions its translator, Paul of Tella, and he dates the work to the year 928 of Alexander.<sup>5</sup>

The work as a whole has not been edited, but it would be wrong to say that it has been neglected. Its extracts from the Syro-Hexaplaric text of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles have been published by Charles C. Torrey and John Gwynn at the beginning of the last century.<sup>6</sup> In 1939 Ceslas Van den Eynde published a work on Gregory of Nyssa's homilies on the Song of Songs, in which he also presented the evidence from our collection.<sup>7</sup> More recently, Robert W. Thomson edited the material on Psalms attributed to Athanasius from this manuscript.<sup>8</sup>

### 1. *A Reading from Genesis 49*

Whoever plunges into the work in order to study its quotations, finds a rather bewildering situation: there are large chunks of Syro-Hexaplaric text, but here and there we also find an odd quotation from the Peshitta, as well as a number of quotations that seem to lack any obvious link to either of the two Syriac versions just mentioned. A typical example of such a reading is the one in the table on the following pages under 'London Collection'. Let us have a closer look at this reading first. The table gives the Peshitta according to the Leiden edition, Jacob of Edessa's revision according to the Paris manuscript Syr. 26, the reading of the *London Collection*, the Syro-Hexapla according to the Midyat

<sup>4</sup> Fol. 67b; cf. Wright, *Catalogue* 2, 905–906.

<sup>5</sup> Fol. 161b; cf. Wright, *Catalogue* 2, 906; full quotation on 907.

<sup>6</sup> C.C. Torrey, 'Portions of First Esdras and Nehemiah in the Syro-Hexaplar Version', *AJSL* 23 (1906–07), 65–74; J. Gwynn, *Remnants of the Later Syriac Versions of the Bible* 2 (London, 1909; reprinted Piscataway, NJ, 2005), 5–25 [1–2 Chronicles and once again Nehemiah].

<sup>7</sup> C. Van den Eynde, *La version syriaque du commentaire de Grégoire de Nysse sur le Cantique des cantiques : ses origines, ses témoins, son influence* (BMus 10; Leuven, 1939), 46–49.

<sup>8</sup> R.W. Thomson, *Athanasiana Syriaca* 4, text (CSCO 386, Syr. 167; Leuven, 1977), 1–116; translation (CSCO 387, Syr. 168), 1–94.

manuscript published in facsimile by Arthur Vööbus<sup>9</sup> (with some corrections from the Mardin manuscript edited by Wim Baars<sup>10</sup>), as well as the Masoretic Text and Göttingen Septuagint for comparison.

The passage from Gen 49 is very difficult and at times obscure. The result is that independent translators can be expected to make widely differing choices, and that those who just copy others can be exposed without trouble. The fact that after the first two lines, hardly any line in a translation is identical to a line in any of the others, is conspicuous: we are obviously dealing with four more or less independent enterprises. Yet it is possible that one translation influenced the other or was even a revision of another, using the same or a different Greek or Hebrew text as the source of corrections. Thus Jacob of Edessa's version was a revision of the Peshitta on the basis of one or more Greek manuscripts.

In this passage, the presence of the Peshitta in Jacob's version is not absolutely clear—he must have felt compelled to revise heavily here. Still there are two instances which put Jacob's use of the Peshitta beyond doubt: the ܐܠܗܝܡ 'God Almighty' in the second line of verse 25, and the ܡܝܢ ܬܠܬ ܐܬܪܝܢ 'from under' in the fourth line of the same verse, which have no basis in any Greek manuscript. Perhaps also the word ܕܡܝܬܐ 'growth' in verse 22, for which he gives an alternative rendering in the margin (compare the Septuagint's 'a son grown up'). Chronologically, it is possible that Jacob, who finished his revision of Genesis in 704, used the Syro-Hexapla. However, in many cases where his text reflects a Greek model, he appears to have chosen different words and constructions. In a number of instances his version also reflects non-Hexaplaric variants.<sup>11</sup> In fact, as elsewhere in Genesis, all points of agreement between Jacob and the Syro-Hexapla can be explained by the use of Greek manuscripts, the constraints of Syriac idiom, or the influence of the Peshitta. It is not necessary to assume that Jacob used the Syro-Hexapla.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> A. Vööbus, *The Pentateuch in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla: A Fac-simile Edition of a Midyat MS. Discovered 1964* (CSCO 369, Subs. 45; Leuven, 1975), fols. 17b–18a.

<sup>10</sup> W. Baars, *New Syro-Hexaplaric Texts: Edited, Commented upon and Compared with the Septuagint* (Leiden, 1968), 71–72.

<sup>11</sup> Thus in our section from Gen 49 the word ܐܢܝ 'my' of the first two lines of verse 22 may reflect the plus  $\mu\omicron\nu$ , which is found in a number of witnesses (though this particular example could also be explained as a case of polygenesis). Jacob also does not read the Hexaplaric plus in verse 23.

<sup>12</sup> R.B. ter Haar Romeny, 'Jacob of Edessa on Genesis: His Quotations of the Peshitta and his Revision of the Text', in R.B. ter Haar Romeny and K.D. Jenner (eds.), *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day* (MPIL; Leiden, forthcoming); cf. also A. Salvesen, 'The Genesis Texts of Jacob of Edessa: A Study in



## IN FOUR SYRIAC VERSIONS

LXX*	London Collection	Syro-Hexapla
Υἱὸς ἡὔξημένος Ἰωσήφ, υἱὸς ἡὔξημένος ζηλωτός, υἱὸς μου νεώτατος· πρός με ἀνάστρεφον.	ܘܫܘܠ ܠܚܫܝܬܐ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܚܫܝܬܐ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ	ܘܫܘܠ ܠܚܫܝܬܐ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܚܫܝܬܐ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ ܠܝܘܢ
εἰς ὃν διαβουλεύμενοι ἐλοιδοροῦν, καὶ ἐνείχον αὐτῷ κύριοι τοξευμάτων·	ܐܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܐܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܐܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܐܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ	ܐܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܐܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܐܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܐܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ
καὶ συνετρίβη μετὰ κράτους τὰ τόξα αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐξελύθη τὰ νεῦρα βραχιόνων χειρῶν αὐτῶν διὰ χεῖρα θυνάστου Ἰακώβ, ἐκείθεν ὁ κατισχύσας Ἰσραήλ·	ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ	ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ
παρὰ θεοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς σου, καὶ ἐβοήθησέν σοι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐμός,	ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ	ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ
καὶ εὐλόγησέν σε εὐλογίαν οὐρανοῦ ἁνωθεν καὶ εὐλογίαν γῆς ἐχούσης πάντα· ἔνεκεν εὐλογίας μαστῶν καὶ μήτρας,	ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ	ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ
εὐλογίας πατρὸς σου καὶ μητρός σου· ὑπερίσχυσεν ἐπ' εὐλογίαις ὀρέων μονίμων, καὶ ἐπ' εὐλογίαις θινῶν ἀενάων·	ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ	ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ
ἔσονται ἐπὶ κεφαλὴν Ἰωσήφ, καὶ ἐπὶ κορυφῆς ὧν ἡγήσατο ἀδελφῶν.	ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ	ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ

Syro-Hexapla: 23, 26 Hexaplaric symbols and marginal readings appear only in the Midyat MS || 23, ܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܢ || 24 ܠܠܝܢ Mardin] ܠܠܝܢ Midyat || 26 ܠܠܝܢ Mardin] ܠܠܝܢ Midyat | ܠܠܝܢ 27] mg. ܠܠܝܢ | ܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ mg. ܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ ܠܠܝܢ

The text of the *London Collection* reflects the Septuagint more than any other possible *Vorlage*. This starts right after the first two lines with the word ܠܡܥܠܐ ‘enviable’ which can render Greek ζηλωτός, but has no contact with the Hebrew עַל־בְּיָעַן ‘by a spring’, or the Peshitta’s ܠܡܥܠܐ ܥܝܢܐ ‘rise up, spring/eye’. Now ܠܡܥܠܐ is also the choice of Jacob and the Syro-Hexapla, but the rendering of the Collection proves its independence in the same line, in the rendering of νεώτατος with ܠܝܬܝܢ ‘small, younger’. In the last line of the verse, it may seem to follow the Syro-Hexapla with ܠܡܥܠܐ ܕܡܥܠܐ ‘(re)turn to me’, but this illusion is taken away as early as in the next line, where only the choice of the first verb agrees with the other two versions. The reading of the last word of verse 23, ܠܡܥܠܐ ܕܡܥܠܐ ‘lords of bows’, rather than ‘of arrows’, may be taken as an interpretative rendering, though it is also possible that something went wrong in the copying process, as the word is missing in the next line.

If one wished to prove the influence of the Peshitta on the London reading of these verses, one has no more to go by than the ܠܡܥܠܐ of the first verse, which could of course also come from the two other Syriac versions. Other points of agreement, such as ܠܡܥܠܐ ‘with power’ and ܠܡܥܠܐ ‘mighty one’ in verse 24, are excellent and obvious renderings of the Greek text. If one were to demonstrate the influence of either Jacob or the Syro-Hexapla, one would of course expect many points of agreement, especially where the text is difficult, but one would *need* to find some readings that cannot be explained as obvious renderings of the common Greek text, either because they reveal a particular variant in the *Vorlage*, or because they give a peculiar, non-evident or simply wrong solution to a problem. Thus the Syro-Hexaplaric rendering ܠܡܥܠܐ, ‘brooklets, mountain streams’, for θινῶν (from θίς ‘heap, sand-bank, hillock’) in verse 26, would have given us an indication of possible Syro-Hexaplaric influence, if we had found it somewhere else. But as the table shows, the *London Collection* has ܠܡܥܠܐ ‘heights’, which is closer to the meaning of the Greek. In short, I would say that the *London Collection* here offers an independent rendering of a Greek text, and probably a non-Hexaplaric one, as the variant καὶ διεδικάσαντο in verse 23, represented in the Syro-Hexapla as ܠܡܥܠܐ ‘they judged, they went to law, disputed’ with an asterisk, has not been rendered.

A feature that strikes the reader of the version in the *London Collection* is a certain sloppiness. There are large minuses at the beginning

Variety’, in W.Th. van Peursen and R.B. ter Haar Romeny (eds.), *Text, Translation, and Tradition: Studies on the Peshitta and its Use in the Syriac Tradition Presented to Konrad D. Jenner on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (MPIL 14; Leiden, 2006), 177–188.



of verses 24 and 25, not all conjunctions have been rendered, and there is no rendering for *ἐνεκεν* in verse 25. These problems may have been caused by errors in the copying process of this text or its Greek *Vorlage*, of course. However, even if we cast these issues aside and compare the London version and the Syro-Hexapla, it is clear that the latter comes much closer to a word-for-word translation with a high degree of formal equivalence. It exhibits renderings like ܠܠܕܢ ܝܕܐ 'more he was stronger' for *ὑπερίσχυσεν* in verse 26. Jacob of Edessa is at times also interested in rendering the formal equivalent, though it is clear that his version represents a modified, more reader-oriented version of the ideal. Thus in the example of verse 26 Jacob does render ܝܕܐ, but he puts it after the verb, and he reads ܠܠܕܢ rather than ܠܠܕܢ. The rendering of these verses in the *London Collection*, on the other hand, is more at home in the sixth century, if we follow Sebastian Brock's classification and sketch of the development of translation technique.<sup>13</sup> It is literal, non-expansionist, but does not conform to the mirror type that sought a formal equivalent even below the word level.

## 2. The Translation and Abridgement of Cyril's *Glaphyra*

In addition to the independent renderings from the Greek we have just seen, the *London Collection* also quotes the Syro-Hexapla and, to a much lesser extent, the Peshitta. The key to understanding this phenomenon can be found in the structure of the work. The beginning of the work, a whole quire, which may have contained some introductory material and the larger part of the commentary on Genesis, is missing. However, a colophon at the end of Genesis makes it clear where most of the material comes from. It says: 'End of these (words) from the book of Genesis, explained as abridged from the *Glaphyra*' (fol. 5b). If we compare the remaining pages of the Genesis commentary with Cyril of Alexandria's *Glaphyra*, they do indeed appear to have the same structure: explanations interspersed with a number of larger quotations, such as the one we have just dealt with. The difference is that the Syriac comments are shorter: Cyril's text is rather wordy, and some Syrian reader understood that if Cyril were to be handed down and read in Syriac, he had to be rendered in a more compact way.

A translation of Cyril's *Glaphyra* is in fact attributed to Moses of Ingilene (early sixth century). It is found in two manuscripts, according

<sup>13</sup> S.P. Brock, 'Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique', in R. Lavenant (ed.), *Symposium Syriacum 1980* (OCA 221; Rome, 1983), 1–14, reprinted in his *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (Aldershot, 1992), chapter X. See esp. pp. 11–12.

to Ignazio Guidi in all probability *disiecta membra* of the same codex from the Nitrian desert.<sup>14</sup> The first part, consisting of the correspondence between the translator and a certain Paphnutius, which serves as an introduction, and the first pages of the commentary itself, are kept in the Vatican Library and were edited by Guidi in 1886.<sup>15</sup> Fragments of the rest are found in BL Add. 14555.<sup>16</sup> Even on the basis of the material edited by Guidi, two remarks can be made: (a) Moses' translation was not an abridged version, but a full rendering, and (b) the biblical quotations are comparable to the ones found in the *London Collection*: they are independent renderings of the Greek; literal, but not overdone.

Important is the fact that Moses of Inghilene explains his approach to the biblical text in his letter to Paphnutius.<sup>17</sup> He tells him not to be in doubt when he finds differences between Syriac biblical manuscripts and the quotations in his version of the *Glaphyra*. He explains that one finds many such differences between the different versions, and invites the reader to compare the older Syriac version with the version of the New Testament and Psalms made directly from the Greek by Polycarp for Philoxenus of Mabbug. He goes on to explain that he and his assistants render the text 'as it is in the Greek'. Sebastian Brock explained that the fact that Moses needed an apology for his practice meant that it was a novel approach.<sup>18</sup> Earlier translations, such as the Syriac version of Basil's *Hexaemeron*, usually followed the Peshitta even if this conflicted with the biblical text of the Greek model.

The Isaiah quotations in Moses' translations have already been studied. John Gwynn had contended that these quotations were taken from, or at least closely followed, a Philoxenian version of Isaiah.<sup>19</sup> He based himself on a comparison with the Syro-Lucianic fragments of Isaiah published by Antonio Ceriani.<sup>20</sup> These fragments seem to be what is left of a version of the Old Testament or part of it, translated a cen-

<sup>14</sup> I. Guidi, 'Mosè di Aghel e Simeone Abbate', *AAL.R* 4th series 2.1 (1885–86), 397–416, 545–557, esp. 398.

<sup>15</sup> Guidi, 'Mosè di Aghel', 399–416.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Wright, *Catalogue* 2, 483–484.

<sup>17</sup> Guidi, 'Mosè di Aghel', 404 ll. 5–17.

<sup>18</sup> Brock, 'Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique', 9, 12; compare also the two other letters of translators mentioned by Brock (*ibidem*, 9 n. 15; cf. also n. 39 below), as well as the letter of the Abbot Simeon, published by Guidi, 'Mosè di Aghel', esp. 551 l. 26–552 l. 6.

<sup>19</sup> J. Gwynn, 'Polycarpus (5)', in W. Smith and H. Wace (eds.), *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines during the First Eight Centuries* 4 (London, 1887), 431–434, esp. 433.

<sup>20</sup> A.M. Ceriani, 'Esaiae fragmenta syriaca versionis anonymae et recensionis Jacobi Edesseni', in *Monumenta sacra et profana* 5 (Milan, 1875), Syriac 1–40. The fragments are taken from British Library Add. 17106.

tury or so before Paul of Tella made his Syro-Hexapla. It was quoted, and perhaps even ordered, by Philoxenus of Mabbug. Geoffrey Jenkins, who studied this material, also investigated the supposed link between Moses of Inghilene and the Syro-Lucianic readings.<sup>21</sup> He had to conclude, however, that there was no such link. The Isaiah quotations in the *Glaphyra* are independent renderings from the Greek; it also seems that Moses or some of his assistants allowed themselves some freedom, as there are a number of differences between Cyril's text and the Syriac version. This conclusion agrees closely with our observations on the Genesis quotation in the *London Collection*.

It is a matter for further study, but I think it fairly probable that the shorter Cyril quoted in the *London Collection* was based on Moses' version. The only other possibility would be that somebody who followed exactly the same principles with regard to the rendering of the biblical text, produced it directly on the basis of the Greek. The question, then, is whether our compiler or someone else was responsible for the abridgement. There are two reasons why the second solution would seem to be more likely. First, it appears that abridged editions may have circulated more widely. Simeon of Ḥisn Manṣūr, the compiler of the collection found in MS Vat. Syr. 103, added part of Cyril's *Commentary on Isaiah* to the *Commentary of the Monk Severus*, explicitly referring to it as an abridged edition, in the same way that the compiler of the *London Collection* referred to the abridged *Glaphyra*.<sup>22</sup> Second, we find at least two other abridged commentaries in the *London Collection* in which the biblical text was dealt with in a different way. We shall come across these two when we follow our way through the collection.

### 3. *The Right Version of the Biblical Text*

In the following books of the Pentateuch, it becomes clear that our compiler knew more books than Cyril's *Glaphyra* alone: he mentions two other works from this author. He also refers to several works of Severus of Antioch, mentions Ephrem twice, and quotes Gregory of Nazianzus with a very precise reference to the second of the *Theological Discourses*.<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, the Greek text of the latter work does not

<sup>21</sup> R.G. Jenkins, *The Old Testament Quotations of Philoxenus of Mabbug* (CSCO 514, Subs. 84; Leuven, 1989), 186–199.

<sup>22</sup> R.B. ter Haar Romeny, 'The Peshitta of Isaiah: Evidence from the Syriac Fathers', in Van Peursen and Ter Haar Romeny (eds.), *Text, Translation, and Tradition*, 149–164, esp. 155.

<sup>23</sup> Fol. 23a. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 28 (*Oratio theologica* 2), ed. P. Gallay and M. Jourjon, *Grégoire de Nazianze. Discours 27–31 (Discours théologiques)* (SC 250; Paris, 1978), 106 ll. 4–8.

give the full quotation from Exod 33:20ff. which we find in the *London Collection*. The biblical quotation in the Syriac text appears to have been taken from the Syro-Hexapla, just like many other quotations from Exodus in the *London Collection*. The compiler actually rendered parts of the book in the form of a series of excerpts from the Syro-Hexapla, as for instance the story of the golden calf and the tables of stone. It seems that he decided no longer to follow a single commentary, but to take extracts from the Syro-Hexapla and add comments from various sources, sometimes with an attribution, at other times without one. Here and there, however, our compiler did adopt the scriptural reading from the commentary he wanted to quote, and in this way the form of the biblical text quoted can help us to reveal the origin of the exegesis. The Peshitta is found only in one or two instances, however. After the Pentateuch we find the commentary on Job, where Olympiodorus, Chrysostom, and Severus seem to have been his main sources. Ephrem is again the only Syriac exegete mentioned by name.

A treatise on Bible translations follows some very short comments on Judges (fols. 37b–39b). It gives some insight into the compiler's ideas on the right version of the Scriptures. The treatise consists of two parts. The first part is written in the kind of Syriac which can only be understood after a retroversion to the Greek, which does place our work firmly in the seventh century.<sup>24</sup> It mentions the various Greek versions and the use of critical marks by Origen, and explains that the first translators, the seventy-two wise men who came from the city of Tiberias, were working under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For this reason the later translations, made by only one person, were less reliable. I have not been able to trace the Greek text that must have been the *Vorlage* for this passage. The second part deals with the same issues, and is taken from Epiphanius' treatise *On Weights and Measures*, as indicated by our compiler. It is not as literal, and it is independent of the full version edited by James Elmer Dean in 1935.<sup>25</sup>

If one compares the treatise on Bible translations in the *London Collection* with the exposition of the versions given by Moses bar Kepa towards 900,<sup>26</sup> the use of Epiphanius and the interest in the various

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Brock, 'Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique', 12–14.

<sup>25</sup> J.E. Dean, *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures: The Syriac Version* (Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 11; Chicago, 1935).

<sup>26</sup> Moses bar Kepa, *Introduction to the Psalter*, G. Dietrich (ed.), *Eine jakobitische Einleitung in den Psalter, in Verbindung mit zwei Homilien aus dem grossen Psalmenkommentar des Daniel von Ṣalaḥ* (BZAW 5; Giessen, 1901), 106–116. For the attribution to Moses bar Kepa, see J.-M. Vosté, 'L'introduction de Mose bar Kepa aux Psaumes de David', *RB* 38 (1929), 214–228. The text is also found in his

Greek versions are clear points of agreement. The two authors must have shared the feeling that a commentary that quotes more than one version needs to give some information on the different versions. The striking difference between the two is the fact that Moses bar Kepa also explains about versions in Syriac, in a passage added to the material he took from Epiphanius. In the *London Collection*, we do find information on the Syro-Hexapla elsewhere in the commentary, as indicated earlier, but not on the Peshitta. The fact that the London compiler seems completely to ignore this version is probably a good indication of his ideas on this version.<sup>27</sup>

Yet the Peshitta is not completely absent from the collection; in fact, it makes its presence felt among the Syrians in many respects in this work. It appears that our compiler wanted to create a kind of Greek companion to the Peshitta. He took into account that his readers were probably familiar with the Peshitta. So he put Job after the Pentateuch, as is quite common in Syriac tradition, in contrast to the order of the Milan Syro-Hexapla.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, he placed Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah after Kings. Together with the fact that he presents these books in the form of well-chosen extracts from the Syro-Hexapla, without commentary, this may point to the fact that there were not many copies of these texts in circulation. The Leiden edition is based on only four or five copies from the period up to 1200. Now in some other instances the Leiden edition is also based on a small number of witnesses—which is one reason why the witness of the Fathers is so important—, but this situation is rather extreme. The position of these books in the Syriac canon was not very stable, it seems,<sup>29</sup> and our

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*Commentary on the Hexaemeron.* The Syriac text has not yet been edited, but a translation is available in L. Schlimme, *Der Hexaemeronkommentar des Moses bar Kepha* (GOF 1.14.1; Wiesbaden, 1977), 167–173.

<sup>27</sup> For the implications of this for the compiler's view of his tradition, as well as his contribution to the identity formation of the Syrian Orthodox, see R.B. ter Haar Romeny, 'The Identity Formation of Syrian Orthodox Christians as Reflected in Two Exegetical Collections: First Soundings', *ParOr* 29 (2004), 103–121, and idem, 'Greek or Syriac? Chapters in the Establishment of a Syrian Orthodox Exegetical Tradition', in: F. Young *et al.* (eds.), *Studia Patristica. Papers Presented at the Fourteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2003* (Leuven, forthcoming).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. S.P. Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition* (2nd ed.; Gorgias Handbooks 7; Piscataway, NJ, 2006), 43–44, 114–117; see also D. Phillips, 'The Reception of Peshitta Chronicles: Some Elements for Investigation', in the present volume, 259–295, esp. 261–262.

<sup>29</sup> See however Phillips, 'The Reception of Peshitta Chronicles'. The compiler's interest in matters of canon and canonicity also appears from an excursus on the canonical books, based among others on Athanasius' *39th Festal Letter*; cf. Wright, *Catalogue* 2, 905.

compiler may have wanted simply to point to the existence of these books. The absence of a commentary on these books may of course also be explained by the fact that in terms of Greek commentaries on Chronicles, he would not have had much choice. But on the other hand, he could have decided simply to omit these books.

Further indications that the *London Collection* is a kind of Greek companion to the Peshitta can be found in the text of the commentary itself. For instance, a comment on Exod 20:24, which discusses the material that was to be used for building an altar, explains not only that the Syro-Hexapla's word ܠܝܪ 'earth, land' should be interpreted as ܠܝܡ 'mud, clay', but also gives the reading ܠܝܡܝܪ 'earth, soil' used in the Peshitta.<sup>30</sup> The London collector does not refer explicitly to the latter version, but would seem to assume that the latter word is known to the readers as the rendering of the Peshitta.

#### 4. *Two More Abridged Commentaries and their Biblical Text*

In the meantime, we have moved from Judges to Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra. We cannot deal with all the books which follow in our collection now, but have to limit ourselves to Psalms and the Song of Songs. Here one finds the two other abridged commentaries mentioned above.

The compiler of the *London Collection* took a shorter version of Athanasius' commentary as the basis of his treatment of the Psalms, adding only a few fragments from others. This shorter Athanasius has already been edited, together with the remains of a full version.<sup>31</sup> Harry van Rooy discusses the scriptural readings in this full version in the present volume.<sup>32</sup> In his opinion it is probable that they represent the Philoxenian version of the Psalms. Considering the parallel with the translation of Cyril's *Glaphyra*, where it appeared that the quotations in the Syriac version were *ad hoc* renderings of the Greek, I am hesitant to follow Van Rooy. Though it is clear that the translation method used in these quotations is comparable to that of the versions associated with Philoxenus,<sup>33</sup> there is nothing to prove that they were actually taken from an existing version. Philoxenus himself does not quote these

<sup>30</sup> Fol. 11a. The word ܠܝܡ appears as a marginal gloss in the manuscripts of the Syro-Hexapla.

<sup>31</sup> See note 8 above.

<sup>32</sup> H.F. van Rooy, 'The Peshitta and Biblical Quotations in the Longer Syriac Version of the Commentary of Athanasius on the Psalms (BL Add. 14568)', in this volume, 311–325.

<sup>33</sup> As described by R.J.V. Hiebert, *The 'Syrohexaplaric' Psalter* (SBL.SCS 27; Atlanta, GA, 1989), 252–257.

readings, not even in his later works.<sup>34</sup> They may therefore very well also be independent renderings of the Septuagint text.<sup>35</sup>

The shorter Athanasius used in the *London Collection* would seem to be an abridgement of the full version discussed so far.<sup>36</sup> Not only can much of the text of the actual commentary be traced within the full version, but also the nature of the biblical text in the abridgement points to this. In my opinion, the person who made the abridgement has taken the trouble to replace the scriptural readings of the original version by those of the Syro-Hexapla. However, while he substituted the Syro-Hexaplaric renderings for those independent ones from the Greek, he overlooked a number of words and phrases. The reader who does not know about this prehistory and expects to find quotations from the Syro-Hexapla is confronted with inexplicable variants. These variants can now be accounted for: they go back to the biblical text of the original, longer version.<sup>37</sup>

The situation for the Song of Songs is very much similar. Here a shorter Gregory of Nyssa was the main source for our compiler. The editor, Ceslas Van den Eynde, has already demonstrated the link between this shorter Gregory and the longer one,<sup>38</sup> which, interestingly, is accompanied by a letter similar to the introductory letter that Moses of Inghilene wrote for the *Glaphyra*.<sup>39</sup> In this letter the translator states not only that he has followed the biblical text of his model, but also that he has appended the full Peshitta text to his version, in order to enable comparison. It is evident therefore that even those sixth-century translators who adopted the Greek text from their *Vorlage* were very conscious of the influence of the Peshitta. Its presence was always felt.

<sup>34</sup> Jenkins, *Old Testament Quotations*, 177, and R.J.V. Hiebert, 'The "Syro-hexaplaric" Psalter: Its Text and Textual History', in A. Aejmelaeus and U. Quast (eds.), *Der Septuaginta-Psalter und seine Tochterübersetzungen* (MSU 24; Göttingen, 2000), 123–146, esp. 135–136.

<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately we cannot be sure of the biblical text used in the Greek original. Montfaucon's edition, reprinted in *PG* 27, is culled from catena fragments (cf. G.M. Vian, *Testi inediti dal Commento ai Salmi di Atanasio* [SEAug 14; Rome, 1978], 9–10). The lemmata containing the biblical text have been added by the editor.

<sup>36</sup> Thus also Thomson, *Athanasiana Syriaca* 4, text (CSCO 386, Syr. 167), vii, who does note that the abridgement also contains some material of its own. Has the compiler added comments from an additional source?

<sup>37</sup> Cf. now H.F. van Rooy, 'The Text of the Psalms in the Shorter Syriac Commentary of Athanasius', in Van Peursen and Ter Haar Romeny (eds.), *Text, Translation, and Tradition*, 165–175, who also noted possible influence from the Peshitta. However, the agreement is always limited to a single word (in one of his two samples just a preposition) and may very well be accidental.

<sup>38</sup> See note 7 above.

<sup>39</sup> Edition in Van den Eynde, *La version syriaque du commentaire de Grégoire de Nysse*, 71–76, translation 99–102.

In a way, the method of these West Syrian translators may be compared to that of their colleagues in the Church of the East, who translated Theodore of Mopsuestia in the fifth and sixth centuries. Wherever they found large discrepancies between the Peshitta and the Greek biblical text expounded by Theodore, they gave both readings, introducing the one based on the Septuagint with the word *yawnaya* 'the Greek'.<sup>40</sup>

### 5. Conclusion

We have seen that the commentaries of Athanasius, Cyril, and Gregory of Nyssa were 'Syriacized' in three stages: after the full translation, first an abbreviated version was produced. Later Syriac authors such as the writer of the *London Collection* compiled their own commentaries on the basis of either version. At the same time, another development was taking place: West Syrian authors increasingly were aiming at an exact rendering of the biblical text of the commentaries they translated or edited. The earliest translations, from the fourth and fifth centuries, had adopted the Peshitta text instead of rendering the Septuagint text from their models. Perhaps slightly later than their East Syrian colleagues, in the early sixth century, some West Syrian translators found that there were often too many differences between the Peshitta and the biblical text of the Greek commentaries. Obviously, it is hard to understand a comment that explains a difficulty in the Septuagint if one only has a different reading taken from the Syriac Bible to go by. Philoxenus of Mabbug had also pointed to the necessity of exact renderings for doctrinal purposes. As they explained in letters accompanying their works, they started to translate the biblical text directly from the commentaries.

When the seventh century brought the ideal of the mirror-type translation, some West Syrians decided to adopt the readings of the Syro-Hexapla when condensing or editing exegetical works. This allowed them to render the Greek biblical text that formed the basis of these works in a way they considered even more exact. They also regarded the Syro-Hexapla as more accurate than the Peshitta in general. Though some of its sources still reflect the standards of the sixth century, the *London Collection* as a whole is clearly a product of the last stage, that of the seventh century. As, however, the work also shows that the Peshitta was still omnipresent among the Syrians, it gives the impression of being intended as a Greek companion to the Syriac Bible.

<sup>40</sup> A full discussion of this practice can be found in L. Van Rompay, *Le commentaire sur Genèse-Exode 9,32 du manuscrit (olim) Diyarbakır 22*, transl. (CSCO 483, Syr 205; Leuven, 1986), xxxviii.