

The Hebrew Bible

Volume 1C
Writings

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Weitzman, M.P., *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament: An Introduction* (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 56; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Maya Goldberg

13–17.1.4.4 Lamentations

Manuscripts of s-Lam

The text of the book of Lamentations has always been transmitted together with Jeremiah (→ 6–9.1.4), and accordingly the colophon at the end of s-Lam refers in fact to the authoring of the whole book by Jeremiah. Forty-four manuscripts are known, especially complete Bibles and collections of the Prophets. Besides, s-Lam is also present in the so-called “Masoretic manuscripts,” that is, a Syriac collection of difficult words and phrases from Scripture.

Albrektson, *Studies*, demonstrated that it is not possible to distinguish Nestorian from Jacobite readings. He identified two groups of manuscripts, the three most ancient (s^{6hl4}, 7a1, 9a1) and the most recent ones. In addition, manuscripts s^{12a1} and s^{16g6} present some peculiar readings, which assume a common ancestor.

The Syriac “Masoretic manuscripts” represent a textual tradition that is closely connected with the ancient manuscripts. Manuscript s^{9a1} holds a special position in that it includes many readings agreeing with MT (→ 16.2.2) against all the other manuscripts.

Weitzman¹ created a map of the manuscripts displaying textual dissimilarity. He remarks that the three stages of Koster² are also reflected in the history of s-Lam, while some Western manuscripts escaped the standardisation of the text of the Peshitta that took place in the ninth century C.E. Weitzman notices that the greatest degree of textual independence exists between s^{9a1} on the

one hand and s^{12a1}, 16g6 on the other (all Western manuscripts).

Critical Edition

The critical edition of s-Lam was published in 1963 in Albrektson's *Studies*. He made use of thirty manuscripts, eleven of which are the so-called Masoretic manuscripts, all prior to the seventeenth century.

Unlike the project of the Peshitta Institute of Leiden, this is an eclectic edition. The resulting text represents the Peshitta text of the sixth century C.E., which is close to manuscript s^{7a1}, differing in only thirteen details.

Character of the Translation

In 1895, Abelesz wrote that the Hebrew text from which the s-Lam translation was prepared generally reflects MT (→ 16.2.2).³ The translation is clear and precise, without being servile. The independent translation is sensitive to poetic peculiarities. According to him, the translator had a good knowledge of the Hebrew language. He is certainly Jewish, and did not use the Targum (→ 13–17.1.3) or LXX (→ 13–17.1.1.4).

Albrektson (1963)⁴ also shared some of these conclusions, distancing himself from the opinion that s-Lam was a fairly free translation. According to him, the translator's knowledge of Hebrew was inadequate. He has a poor vocabulary as he used the same Syriac word for two Hebrew synonyms in the same verse. He sometimes seems to guess at the meaning of rare words. Sometimes he analyzes Hebrew forms incorrectly or chooses a phonetically similar Syriac word with a different meaning. His exegetical additions give the translation an explanatory flavour (he joins words or clauses with א “and” in almost every verse). When the translator meets a difficult passage, he endeavours to produce clear and plausible meaning.

According to Wernberg-Møller,⁵ Albrektson's reasoning presumes that MT is superior to all the

¹ Weitzman, *The Syriac*, 314–15.

² Koster, “Review.”

³ Abelesz, *Die syrische Übersetzung*.

⁴ Albrektson, *Studies*.

⁵ Wernberg-Møller, “Review.”

other texts. He notices that Albrektson's reluctance to acknowledge the existence of variant readings is to a large extent due to the fear that it might suggest preference for a Hebrew text superior to MT.

Date of the Translation and Identity of the Translator(s)

Observing the different ways in which the same Hebrew word is translated into Syriac, Weitzman⁶ thinks that s-Lam and s-Job (→ 11.3.4) represent conservative translations. The fact that s-Job probably was influenced by s-Lam suggests that Lamentations was translated earlier, as an appendix to Jeremiah (→ 6–9.1.4).⁷

Alexander⁸ accepts Weitzman's theory that the Peshitta derived from a Jewish version of the Hebrew Bible made in Edessa around 200 C.E. He even suggests that s-Lam was translated long before. The closer one brings s-Lam to 70 C.E. the easier it is to understand the *raison d'être* of such a translation. According to Alexander, this view is confirmed by the hypothesis of Bogaert,⁹ according to whom the presence of the *Apocalypse Baruch*, 4 Ezra (→ 11.7.2.2), and of the sixth book of the Jewish War in manuscript s^{7a1} reflects a Judeo(-Christian) tradition of the commemoration of the fall of Jerusalem. Against this hypothesis, in this manuscript, 4 Ezra took the place of 1 Esdras (3 Ezra; → 11.7.1.3), and therefore probably the translation of 1 Esdras was not available to the scribe.¹⁰

Abelesz, A., *Die syrische Übersetzung der Klagelieder und ihr Verhältniss zu Targum und LXX* (Privigye: Verlag der Verfassers, 1895).

Albrektson, B., *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Books of Lamentations* (Studia Theologica Lundensia 21; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1963).

Alexander, P.S., "The Cultural History of the Ancient Bible Versions: The Case of Lamentations," in *Jew-*

ish Reception of Greek Bible Versions: Studies in Their Use in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages (eds. N. de Lange, J.G. Krivoruchko, and C. Boyd-Taylor; Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Judaism 23; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 78–102.

Bogaert, P., *Apocalypse de Baruch: Introduction, traduction du syriaque et commentaire*, Vol. 1 (SC 144; Paris: Cerf, 1969).

Koster, M.D., "Review: B. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Books of Lamentations*," *Or* 24 (1967): 78–81.

Weitzman, M.P., *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament* (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 56; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Wernberg-Møller, P., "Review: B. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Books of Lamentations*," *JSS* 10 (1965): 103–10.

Claudio Balzaretto

13–17.1.4.5 Esther

13–17.1.4.5.1 Background

Translated by the end of the second century C.E., the original text of the Peshitta version of Esther (s-Esth) – as far as such can be retrieved – represents a clear and close (though not slavish) rendering of the Hebrew text as represented by MT (→ 17.2.2). In only a handful of instances, after allowing for the possibility of scribal corruption in the Syriac transmission process, does the extant text of s-Esth reasonably imply a consonantal reading and/or vocalization of the Hebrew text that differs from that of MT (→ 13–17.1.4.5.4). Moreover, the possibility of Jewish influence on the translator(s) of s-Esth is suggested not only by the high degree of Hebrew proficiency to which the Syriac translation attests, but also by the possible incorporation, in at least one instance, of early Jewish (i.e., rabbinic) exegetical tradition (→ 13–17.1.4.5.5).

13–17.1.4.5.2 Text and Editions

As of 2016, the book of Esther has not yet appeared in the Peshitta Institute's *Vetus Testamentum Syriace* (Leiden: Brill, 1977–). The earlier European editions of Walton (1655)¹ and Lee

⁶ Weitzman, *The Syriac*, 178–81.

⁷ Cf. Jerome's *Prologus Galeatus* attesting to a Jewish sequence in which Lamentations was combined with Jeremiah (→ 1.1.2.1.3; → 1.1.2.2.6.4).

⁸ Alexander, "The Cultural History," 91–92.

⁹ Bogaert, *Apocalypse*.

¹⁰ He was aware of the arrangement of the books according to LXX.

¹ This is the date given in the colophon of vol. 2 of Walton, **Polyglotta* (London), in which the *editio princeps* of s-Esth

Ziegler, J., *Ieremias, Baruch, Threni, Epistula Ieremiae* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecae 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957).

Claudio Balzaretti

13–17.2.4.5 Esther

With the exception of forty single-word citations (in a couple of instances two words) in Andreas Masius' *Syrorum Peculium*,¹ the Syro-Hexaplaric text of Esther is, unfortunately, non-extant. The lost manuscript of Masius from which the citations were drawn, and which apparently contained the entire book of Esther, was proven by Rahlfs² to be closely related in character and age to the late-eighth-/early-ninth-century C.E. Milan manuscript (i.e., C. 313 Inf. of the Ambrosian Library, containing the Wisdom and Prophetic Books) published in its entirety by Ceriani.³ Of these citations, only one (*ad* Esth 3:13: **ܠܗܘܝܬ** “young man,” corresponding to the Hexaplaric addition of [ἀπὸ] νεανίσκου [κ.τ.λ.] “[from] young man [to elder, etc.]” after Ἰουδαίων “of the Judeans”) is referenced by Hanhart in his critical apparatus to Esther in the Göttingen LXX, the other citations being reasonably deemed by him as inconclusive with respect to the precise Greek forms that they represent.⁴

Baars, W., *New Syro-Hexaplaric Texts: Edited, Commented upon and Compared with the Septuagint* (Leiden: Brill, 1968).

Hanhart, R. (ed.), *Esther* (2nd ed.; Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 8.3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).

de Lagarde, P., *Bibliothecae syriacae, a Paulo de Lagarde*

collectae, quae ad philologiam sacram pertinent (ed. A. Rahlfs; Göttingen: Dietrich, 1892).

Michael G. Wechsler

13–17.2.5 Armenian Translations

13–17.2.5.1 Ruth

Extensive manuscript collations for a new edition of the Armenian version of Ruth significantly realize Rahlfs' expectations¹ of the translation's potential witness to the Old Greek obscured by the late secondary running text in Zohrapian's edition of 1805 and its limited apparatus.² The Greek text has been consulted according to Rahlfs' critical edition of 1922,³ supplemented by the Cambridge Septuagint.⁴ The version subsists in two strata, the original translation (Arm 1; → 1.4.7) from the early fifth century C.E. and a revision (Arm 2; → 1.4.7) effected about a generation later. Both textual levels derive primarily from Greek, though characterized by different text types and translation technique, as illustrated by the interchange between Boaz and Ruth at the threshing floor at Ruth 3:7. Whereas the revision reflects the Old Greek text's indirect reference to the young woman's appearance (ἡ δὲ ἦλθεν “but she came”; **ԷԼ ԻՄ ԵԼԻՄ** “and she came”), the original translation removes confusion by naming her (**ԷԼ ԵԼԻՄ ԷԼ ՆՈՈՐԹ** “and Ruth also came”) in concert with the Lucianic text (καὶ ἦλθε ρουθ LXX: “and Ruth came” → 13–17.1.6).

Additionally, the early stratum evinces an affiliation with the Peshitta (→ 13–17.1.4.1), as indicated at Ruth 2:19 where Naomi's question to her daughter-in-law is posed as **ՈՒՐ ԵՂԻՐ** “where were you?” in parallel with the Syriac formulation (**ܐܘܪܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܢ** “where were you?”), in contrast to the Old Greek ποῦ ἐποίησας “where did you work?,” which is in agreement with MT (→ 13.2.2). The synthesis of the Peshitta to nuance the interpretation of the Greek parent text is well exemplified in determining who does what at Ruth 3:15. Since Semitic ver-

¹ A. Masius, *Syrorum Peculium, Hoc Est, Vocabula Apud Syros Scriptores Passim Usurpata: Targumistis Vero Aut Prorsus Incognita, Aut In Ipsorum Vocabulariis Adhuc Non Satis Explicata* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1572). Thirty-nine citations were identified and enumerated by A. Rahlfs in his supplement to de Lagarde's introduction in *Bibliothecae syriacae*, 32^e (published after the latter's death), and one was identified by Baars, *New Syro-Hexaplaric Texts*, 3, n. 5 (pace Hanhart, *Esther*, 62, n. 5).

² Rahlfs (ed.), *Bibliothecae syriacae*, 32^h–32ⁱ.

³ A.M. Ceriani, *Codex Syro-Hexaplaris Ambrosianus photolithographice editus* (Monumenta sacra et profana 7; Milan: Bibliotheca Ambrosiana, 1874).

⁴ Hanhart, *Esther*, 62–63.

¹ Rahlfs, *Studie über den griechischen Text*, 139.

² Zohrapian, **Scriptures*.

³ Rahlfs, *Das Buch Ruth griechisch*.

⁴ Brooke-McLean, **The Old Testament in Greek*, Vol. 1.4: *Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (1917).

practice found elsewhere in his fragments.¹⁷ He is also known for replacing transliterations found in LXX (such as ἐν θωδαθά “with *thodatha*”) with transliterations of his own (such as ἐν ἐξομολογήσει “with praise”).¹⁸

19.3.2.4 Text-Critical Value for the Hebrew Text

The four readings do not provide any significant variants from MT (→ 19.2.2). Theodotion’s reading (τοῦ Σιλωάμ “of the Siloam”) in Neh 3:15 does not necessarily indicate that Theodotion read the consonantal text as שִׁלּוֹחַ “the Shiloah” (cf. Isa 8:6) over against the Masoretic pointing שֶׁלַח “the Shelah,” since Theodotion may have chosen to use a contemporary Greek place name for Siloam regardless of his vocalization of the Hebrew text. Symmachus’ translation style accounts for the differences in grammatical number for the readings in Neh 3:1 and 12:27.

Brooke–McLean–Thackeray, **The Old Testament in Greek*, Vol. 2.4: 1 Esdras, Ezra–Nehemiah.

Busto Saiz, J.R., *La traducción de Símaco en el libro de los Salmos* (Textos y estudios “Cardenal Cisneros” 22; Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1978; repr., 1985).

Field, **Hexapla*.

Hanhart, R. (ed.), *Esdrae liber II* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 8.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

Hanhart, R., *Text und Textgeschichte des 2. Esrabuches* (MSU 25; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

Hatch–Redpath, **Concordance*.

Klostermann, A., “Esra und Nehemia,” *RE* 5:500–23.

Muraoka, T., *A Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-way Index to the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010).

Rahlfs, A., “Curiosa im Codex Sinaiticus,” *ZAW* 50 (1932): 309–10.

Reider, J. and N. Turner, *An Index to Aquila: Greek–Hebrew, Hebrew–Greek, Latin–Hebrew, with the Syriac and Armenian Evidence* (VTSup 12; Leiden: Brill, 1966).

Salvesen, A., *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (JSS Monograph 15; Manchester: Victoria University of Manchester, 1991).

Torrey, C.C., “The Apparatus for the Textual Criticism of Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah,” in *Old Testament and Semitic Studies in Memory of William Rainey Harper* (2 vols.; eds. R.F. Harper, F. Brown, and G.F. Moore; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1908), 2.53–111.

Torrey, C.C., *Ezra Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1910; repr., New York: Ktav, 1970).

Jason T. Parry

19.3.3 Peshitta

19.3.3.1 Manuscripts of s-Ezra–Neh

Ezra and Nehemiah are divided into two books by the Vulgate (→ 19.3.6) only, whilst in the Peshitta, just as in the other ancient traditions, there is only one book. The most ancient manuscripts go back to the seventh and eighth centuries C.E.: the two complete ancient Bibles, manuscripts s^{7a1} and s^{8a1}, and a manuscript of 770 C.E. from the convent of Saint Mary Deipara, s^{8h5}. The book is also found in manuscript s^{12a1} (the “Buchanan Bible”), which is almost illegible. It is found furthermore in more recent complete Bibles and in a group of six Nestorian manuscripts that contain the same group of books: 1–3 Maccabees (→ 11.10), 1–2 Chronicles (→ 20.3.4), Ezra–Nehemiah, Wisdom of Solomon (→ 11.15.3), Judith (→ 11.9.4), Esther (→ 13–17.1.4.5), Susanna (→ 11.3.3), Epistle of Jeremiah (→ 11.2.4.3), Epistle of Baruch, Baruch (→ 11.2.1.3).

The text transmitted by these manuscripts is substantially the same. The variants present in the three more ancient manuscripts cannot be explained as deriving from a unique archetype, but they assume a long transmission process. The recent manuscripts show a form of text very similar to that represented by manuscript s^{8a1}. In the three reconstructed development stages of the Peshitta, manuscript s^{8h5} belongs to the oldest stage, manuscripts s^{7a1} and s^{8a1} to the second stage, and manuscript s^{12a1}, the *textus receptus*, to the third.¹

¹⁷ Busto Saiz, *La traducción de Símaco*, 55.

¹⁸ Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch*, 215–17.

¹ Koster, “Translation or Transmission?” 297–312 (312).

19.3.3.2 Critical Edition

The critical edition of s-Ezra and s-Neh was published in 2013 as part of the project of the Peshitta Institute of Leiden² in volume 4.4, which also includes 1–2 Maccabees. It is a diplomatic edition of manuscript s^{7a1}, accompanied by a critical apparatus that takes into consideration manuscripts prior to the twelfth century. The text, prepared by M. Albert, was used in the critical apparatus of the **BHQ* in 2006. The introduction presents a detailed study of all extant manuscripts, grouped by families.

19.3.3.3 Character of the Translation

A first description of s-Ezra and s-Neh goes back to the end of the nineteenth century;³ the deviations from MT (→ 19.2.2) are attributed to errors in the reading or to confusion in the interpretation of the Hebrew. In the first half of the twentieth century, four significant works can be found. The first is limited to the study of s-Ezra and is based on the assumption that the text we have today has been corrupted by copyists. Therefore, it is useless to search for variants amongst the manuscripts instead of focussing on the original Hebrew.⁴ The second work is a collection of variants of six manuscripts of s-Ezra.⁵ This is the work that today still constitutes the reference point for all those who cite manuscript s^{8h5} with regard to s-Ezra–Neh. The third is an analysis of the text of Nehemiah according to the variants of the five versions: LXX (→ 19.3.1), Vulgate (→ 19.3.6), Peshitta, Arabic (→ 19.3.7; → 19.4.8), and Ethiopic (→ 19.4.3).⁶ The fourth work is limited to the study of s-Neh, but has remained unpublished.⁷

The conclusions of these works show that the Syriac translation is not based on LXX (→ 19.3.1) and is rather free. Apart from the omissions or additions that are often attributable to the copyists, the errors are often due to scarce knowledge of Hebrew or to the bad copy of the *Vorlage*. Scholars

usually agree that the Peshitta is of little value for text-critical analysis. In this analysis, scholars base themselves on different sources such as s^{7a1} (Harris, “The Peshitta to Nehemiah”) or Walton, **Polyglotta*. According to Rudolph, the two books were translated by two different persons.⁸

In 2013, the translation technique of Ezra–Nehemiah was studied with a focus on rhetorical and literary characteristics.⁹ The unity of Ezra–Nehemiah was confirmed by the rendering of Neh 6:7:

MT: “there is a king in Judaea”

S: “behold Ezra has begun to reign in Judaea.”

The addition of the name “Ezra” changed the sequence of events. In MT, the two protagonists act independently, first Ezra, later Nehemiah, while in the Peshitta the latter disappears. In the Peshitta, the first person narrator is Ezra, who subsequently becomes the protagonist of the so-called Memoirs of Nehemiah. This feature creates a narrative coherence because the narrator is always Ezra, as indicated by the title of the book.¹⁰ As a consequence, all the chronological indications of MT always refer to Ezra’s journeys. Ezra receives the assignment in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:7), returns to Jerusalem in the twentieth year (Neh 2:1), and finally after the thirty-second year (Neh 13:6).

The Peshitta presents different translation equivalents in different parts of the book. For instance *בני עבדי שלמה* “sons of the servants of Solomon” are represented as “sons of Abar sons of Shalim” in Ezra 2:55 and as “sons of Abar and of Shalim” in Ezra 2:58, while in the parallel text, they are always “sons of the servants of Solomon” (Neh 7:57, 60). Likewise, *התרשנא* “the governor,” occurring five times, is translated in a variety of ways (“the chief of Israel,” “the chiefs/elders of the priests”).

Contradictions in MT are removed in the coherent story of the Peshitta by way of omissions and

² Albert and Nakano, “Ezra and Nehemiah.”

³ Klostermann, “Ezra und Nehemia,” 500–23 (504–07).

⁴ Hawley, *Critical Examination*.

⁵ Moss, “Peshitta Version of Ezra,” 55–110.

⁶ Gotthard, *Text des Buches Nehemia*.

⁷ Harris, “The Peshitta to Nehemiah.”

⁸ Rudolph, *Ezra und Nehemia*, xx–xxi.

⁹ Balzaretti, *Syriac Version of Ezra–Nehemiah*.

¹⁰ Balzaretti, “Esdra il coppiere,” 475–97.

additions. For example, in MT three groups of people complain to Nehemiah (Neh 5:2–5), but in the Peshitta there is an additional one (“there were those who said,” missing in MT-Neh 5:5), together with an actual complaint.

The Peshitta displays a tendency to harmonise the translation by using the same attribute on the recurrence of a name or by repeating a formula occurring elsewhere in the book. For example, Rehum appears three times as “Lord of Tegma,” and that title is added in Ezra 4:23. Ezra is often accompanied by the epithet “scribe,” which is added six more times.

s-Ezra–Neh preserves many of the parallelisms in MT and also creates new ones. On the other hand, sometimes, perhaps due to a tendency to variate, a parallelism present in MT is dismantled or replaced by another one.¹¹ In the case of identical passages, the Peshitta sometimes offers the same translation, and at other times not. Also, free allusions to other biblical passages are added in the Peshitta. Further, in the translation of a pair of terms *a* and *b*, one of the two is replaced by *c* appearing in other biblical passages together with one of the two terms of the pair.

The translation provides a clearer and more consistent presentation of the original Hebrew, though sacrificing some redundant expressions of the *Vorlage*, but with the aim of producing a well-ordered arrangement of the text by means of repetition.

19.3.3.4 Date of the Translation and Identity of the Translator(s)

Weitzman¹² maintains that Ezra–Nehemiah form a unit with 1–2 Chronicles (→ 10.3.4; to which Esther [→ 13–17.1.4.5] could also be added) on account of the elements they have in common. Basing himself on the supposition that these books are missing from the Nestorian canon and from the so-called Masoretic manuscripts (a collection of difficult words and phrases of Scripture) and were rejected by Theodore of Mopsuestia, he assigns the

translation to around 200 C.E., that is, fifty years after the translation of most of the other books of the Peshitta. However, this *argumentum e silentio* is not sufficient proof to give a posterior date to the translation.¹³ A number of clues seem to lead to the supposition that the translator probably was aware of the other books of the Peshitta, and that constitutes a fixed point for a relative chronology.

From the second half of the nineteenth century, it is customary to cite as proof of the Jewish origin of the Peshitta the translation of “evening sacrifice” with “ninth hour” in Ezra 9:4–5 on the basis of *b. Ber.* 26b,¹⁴ but the same rendering could also be explained as Christian (Matt 20:5; 27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:44; Acts 3:1; 10:30). Thus, the translator could have been aware of either a Targumic or a Christian tradition. Further, the rejection of musical instruments in the liturgy reflects a polemic against pagan practice that is found both in Judaism and in the early church. Likewise, in the translation of legislative regulations regarding the temple, omissions and changes create the impression of a greater interest in prayer and in free will in religious practice.

Further, some translation equivalents may indicate the historical and social context in which the translator lived. Thus, the nomenclature relating to the heads of the people shows a pre-eminence given to the role of the elders as opposed to the avoidance of naming the governor or any single head for the Jewish community.

In spite of all this, there remains an objection to the assumption of a Jewish origin: i.e., the use of ܡܫܝܚܐ to indicate “priests,” reserved in the rabbinic literature for pagan priests.

Albert, M. and C. Nakano, “Ezra and Nehemiah,” in *Ezra and Nehemiah – 1–2 Maccabees* (The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version 4.4; Leiden: Brill, 2013).

Balzaretti, C., *The Syriac Version of Ezra–Nehemiah: Manuscripts and Editions, Translation Technique and Its*

¹¹ Balzaretti, “Aspetti retorici,” 109–25.

¹² Weitzman, *Syriac Version*, 169–86.

¹³ Balzaretti, *Syriac Version of Ezra–Nehemiah*, 17–21.

¹⁴ Perles, *Meletemata Peschitthoniana*, 16.

- Use in Textual Criticism* (BibOr 51; Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2013).
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19.3.4 Hexapla

19.3.4.1 Background

Origen lists two Greek books (1 and 2 Esdras) as corresponding to the single Hebrew book of Ezra–Nehemiah in his account of the Hebrew canon (→ 1.1.2.2.5.2), which raises the question of whether he included both Greek versions in the

Hexapla (→ 1.3.1.2.7).¹ The presence of 1 Esdras in the Hexapla is possibly suggested by asterisked materials in Greek manuscripts and by a Syriac version of 1 Esdras from Paul of Tella (→ 19.4.4), which is usually considered Syro-Hexaplaric, but the value of these as witnesses to the Hexapla remains questionable. The presence of 2 Esdras in the Hexapla is confirmed by attributed Hexaplaric readings (→ 19.3.2), a marginal note in Codex Sinaiticus, Syro-Hexaplaric catena excerpts, and possibly by asterisked materials in Greek manuscripts.

19.3.4.2 Editions, Sources, and Auxiliary Tools

Field mentions the Syro-Hexaplaric version of 1 Esdras (→ 11.7.1.3) in the "Prolegomena" to his edition of Hexaplaric fragments, but he includes only 2 Esdras (→ 19.4.4) in the edition.² He reports asterisked material only in 2 Esd 17:72.³ The Larger Cambridge Septuagint reports asterisked material twice in 1 Esdras (1:13; 8:40) and twice in 2 Esdras (4:14; 17:72).⁴ The Göttingen Septuagint gives the fullest account by reporting asterisked material twice in 1 Esdras (1:13; 8:40) and three times in 2 Esdras (4:14; 17:72; 22:14–21).⁵ These verses correspond to MT–2 Chr 35:14b, Ezra 8:14, 4:14, Neh 7:71, and Neh 12:14–21 respectively.

The sources of these asterisks include two tenth-century Greek minuscules associated with recension LXX^b (LXX^{64, 243}), and one tenth-century codex mixtus (LXX¹¹⁹).⁶ Two of the instances of asterisked material (2 Esd 17:72; 22:14–21) are attested

¹ Origen lists the biblical books known to his Greek audience alongside each book of the Hebrew canon. For Ezra–Nehemiah, he lists "Εζρας α' β' ἐν ἐνί, Εζρα, δ' ἐστιν 'βοηθός' (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.2). 1 Esdras consists of a translation of selections from 2 Chronicles (35:1–36:23), Ezra (1:1–11; 4:7–24; 2:1–4:5; 5:1–10:44), and Nehemiah (7:72–8:13), and a story not attested in MT (1 Esd 3:1–5:6).

² Field, **Hexapla*, 1.lxviii.

³ Field, **Hexapla*, 1.780.

⁴ Brooke–McLean–Thackeray, *1 Esdras, Ezra–Nehemiah*, 558, 591, 611, 645.

⁵ Hanhart, *Esdrae liber I*, 58, 124; Hanhart, *Esdrae liber II*, 93, 195, 232.

⁶ Hanhart, *Esdrae liber I*, 8–11, 31; Hanhart, *Esdrae liber II*, 9–10, 30.

Hanhart, R., *Text und Textgeschichte des 2. Esrabuches* (MSU 25; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

Curt Niccum

19.4.4 Late Syriac Translations

19.4.4.1 Manuscripts of Syh-Ezra–Neh

The only evidence as to the Syh-Ezra–Neh (LXX-Esd $\beta \rightarrow 19.3.1$) is manuscript Add 12168 belonging to the British Library dating back to the eighth or ninth century C.E. The manuscript is classified by the editor of the catalogue as *Catena Patrum*; in fact, it contains only extracts of the biblical books with comments of the church fathers inserted ($\rightarrow 21.9$).¹ After the book of Chronicles, there is the “first book of Ezra according to the version of the Septuagint” then follows the second book (“again: from the second book of Ezra, from the words of Nehemiah the son of Chelqia”). At the end of the second book, the colophon says that “these were taken from the book of Ezra according to the version of the Septuagint.” This expression means the Hexaplaric version ($\rightarrow 19.3.4$). In fact, a note reports at the end of the extracts from the book of Daniel that all these extracts come from the translation by Paul of Tella ($\rightarrow 1.4.5.2$).²

In the manuscript, however, there is no patristic comment on the two books of Ezra. Only some pericopes are recorded in order to give an exhaustive idea of the story contained in the two books. Only the section known as the book of Nehemiah is extant from the biblical book of Ezra–Nehemiah (1:1–4a; 2:1–8; 4:1–3, 10–16; 6:15–16; 7:72b–9:3).

19.4.4.2 Editions

The extracts from Nehemiah were published by Torrey, “Portions,” and then by Gwynn, *Remnants*. The comparison between the two transcriptions shows some differences. The text was also used in the Göttingen edition of the *Septuaginta*, and indicated with the abbreviation “Syh.”³

19.4.4.3 Character of the Translation

According to Gwynn, “The Daniel extracts are identified by comparison with Cod. Ambrosianus, as belonging to the Version of Paul; and there can be no doubt that the extracts from Chronicles and Esdras come from that Version likewise.”⁴ The text of the Syriac version of 1 Esdras preserved in this manuscript is, however, different from the tradition represented by the rest of the manuscripts.⁵ According to the editors of the Syriac version of 1 Esdras, manuscript Add 12168 (siglum 9c) “nearly always provides a text closer to the underlying Greek than that in the remaining manuscripts.”⁶ Therefore, it is possible that the same could be said of the translation of Nehemiah preserved in the manuscript.

Wright thinks that the *Catena* was written before 651 C.E.,⁷ i.e., not long after the version by Paul of Tella ($\rightarrow 1.4.5.2$). The first volume of the manuscript of the Syro-Hexapla, owned by Masius but now missing, also contained “Paralipomena, Ezram,”⁸ therefore Gwynn and Torrey think that it deals only with LXX-1 Esd (3 Ezra, $\rightarrow 11.7.1.1$), perhaps with the additions of v-Neh (2 Esdrae; $\rightarrow 19.3.6$). According to Gwynn, v-Ezra (1 Esdrae; $\rightarrow 19.3.6$) was missing in the manuscript of the Syro-Hexapla whereas for Torrey it was easier to think that there were no verses from v-Ezra because the extracts from LXX-1 Esd ($\rightarrow 11.7.1.2$) mainly coincide with the narrative of Ezra.⁹ In fact, the compiler of this *Catena* “wanted to create a kind of Greek companion to the Peshitta.”¹⁰

The version of Paul of Tella is so faithful to the Greek that Gwynn¹¹ was able to make a retroversion into Greek. Torrey recognises the characteristics of the version by Paul, but adds that “the character of the text is thus conflate, including both the Greek

¹ Wright, *Catalogue*, 904.

² F. 161b report in Wright, *Catalogue*, 907.

³ Hanhart, *Esdrae liber II*, 13–14.

⁴ Gwynn, *Remnant*, xvii.

⁵ Hanhart, *Esdrae liber I*, 16.

⁶ Baars and Lebram, “1(3) Esdras,” iv.

⁷ Wright, *Catalogue*, 905–06.

⁸ Masius, *Josue*, 6.

⁹ Torrey, “Portions,” 68–69.

¹⁰ Ter Haar Romeny, “The Greek vs. the Peshitta,” 307.

¹¹ Gwynn, *Remnant*, 54–63.

Version selected by Origen and also the *plus* of the Hebrew.¹²

The Syriac version almost always follows the so-called Lucianic recension (→ 19.3.5) indicated by Hanhart with the initials *L'* (manuscripts LXX^{19,93,108,121}) and *L* (manuscripts LXX^{19,93,108}). In the critical apparatus of the *Septuaginta* in the Göttingen edition, even the readings of the Syro-Hexapla are reported. In Neh 8:7, only the Syro-Hexapla has an addition after “Joshua and Banania” ܐܠܗܐ ܕܪܗܒܢܐ “and these (are son?) of Rehbona (?)” But the verse contains a series of proper names that might have been corrupted in the course of the transmission of the text (Καλλίτας “Kallitas” = ܩܡܦܬܐ “Qamptas (?)” misreading of the Greek as καμπτός “target”; Φαλαίᾱς = ܦܗܢܗܐ “Phinehas”). Also in Neh 8:12 after “and to send portions,” there is an addition by the Syro-Hexapla ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ “to those who had none.” This addition matches Neh 8:10, where the population was invited to “send portions to those who had none.”

The tendency to match can also be seen in other verses. In MT-Neh 8:10–11, the population is invited twice not to complain “do not grieve” (ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ). In LXX-1 Esd 9:52–53, the same verb is repeated twice (μὴ λυπεῖσθε “do not grieve”); however, in LXX-Neh, there are two different verbs (μὴ διαπέσητε ... μὴ καταπίπτετε “do not faint ... do not despond”). Instead, the Syro-Hexapla uses the same verb twice, ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ “do not dishearten.” On one hand, LXX-Neh prefers variety, while on the other, the Syro-Hexapla reconstructs parallelisms. Another case of parallelism can be found in the translation of συνετίζοντες “who taught” (LXX-Neh 8:7, 9), which was translated initially as ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ “who evoke attention”¹³ and secondly as ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ “who explain” (the difference between *d/r* is only a dot). The marginal reading reports even the first time ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ “who instruct.”

Regarding the rendering of proper names, the translator shows two tendencies. By avoiding a Syriac equivalent (example: *Chisleu*, see below Neh 1:1)

and by avoiding the transcription of Greek forms (Neh 2:1 ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ “Artaxasta” versus ἀρταξέρξου “Artaxerxes” of the Lucianic recension).

Manuscript Add 12168 has also marginal variants. Some appear to come from s-Neh (→ 19.3.3), as in Neh 1:1, where the name of the month of Chisleu, Χασελεῦ “Chaseleu,” is ܐܠܗܐ “Achslow,” but in the margin there is the reading ܕܠܐ “Canon,” which is the current form in s-Neh. In Neh 1:3, “those remaining ... there in the country” (ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ/ܠܐ ܕܠܐ) have become “those remaining ... there in the town” (ܠܐ ܕܠܐ) in the margin; but in this case we do not know if it is an alternative reading that was taken from s-Neh or if it was only an addition, as in some Greek manuscripts (ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ ἐν τῇ πόλει “in the land, in the town” LXX^{B,S,V}). In Neh 2:2, the king says to Nehemiah that he does not seem “disheartened” (ܕܠܐ) while in the margin there is the variant ܠܐ “ill,” which corresponds to s-Neh. The Lucianic recension has ἀρρωστῶν “ill” and LXX-Neh has μετριάζων which means “to be moderate.” There is, however, proof of the use of μετριάζω meaning “being ill,”¹⁴ but it is difficult to decide which form goes back to the Lucianic *Vorlage*, whether the one in the text or that in the margin.¹⁵ In Neh 4:16 (“each with her boy”), in the margin there is a variant ܠܐ “boy,” which is found in s-Neh (ܠܐ “her boy”) but perhaps a more genuine Syriac word was used rather than ܠܐ “youths,” which is of clear Greek derivation.

In Neh 2:6, the marginal text attests a different reading of the Greek *Vorlage*; instead of “limits” (ὄρον/ܠܐ ܕܠܐ), there is “oaths” (ܠܐ ܕܠܐ), which assumes a Greek translation ὄρκον “oath” (not found in the manuscripts of LXX). In Neh 4:10, the marginal reading seems to be an interpretation of the text. “Half of *those who had violently shaken*” (ܠܐ ܕܠܐ, but in Greek with the passive form ἐκτετιναγμένων “who had shaken off”) is understood as half “of the braves” (ܠܐ ܕܠܐ).

¹² Torrey, “Portions,” 70–71.

¹³ Torrey, “Portions,” 73, transcribes here ܠܐ ܕܠܐ as “who are experts.”

¹⁴ Janz, *Deuxième*, 130–31.

¹⁵ Hanhart, *Esdrae liber II*, 14.

Baars, W. and J.C.H. Lebram, “1(3) Esdras,” in *Canticles or Odes, Prayer of Manasseh, Apocryphal Psalms, Psalms of Solomon, Tobit, 1(3) Esdras* (The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshitta Version 4.6; Leiden: Brill, 1972).

Gwynn, J., *Remnants of the Later Syriac Versions of the Bible, Part 2: Old Testament: Extracts from the Syro-Hexaplar Version of the Septuagint: Made in the Seventh Century by Paul of Tella: Genesis, Leviticus, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Nehemiah* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1909).

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19.4.5 Armenian Translations

19.4.5.1 Background

Although Ezra–Nehemiah were originally one, and have remained so in the Greek tradition, in the composite text of 2 Esdras from which the Armenian version derives, the latter, as witnessed in our extant biblical manuscripts, has been divided in transmission into the units of Second Ezra and Nehemiah. Granted its Greek origins, the Armenian lacks the following sections of the Hebrew

of Nehemiah (Neh 3:37–38; 11:12–35; 12:2–9, 25, 29; → 19.2.2). The version has aroused relatively little scholarly interest apart from its inclusion in Hanhart’s edition of the Greek,¹ with its collation based on the standard Zohrapian² edition, whose running text is provided by manuscript 1508 (dated 1319) of the Venice Mkhitarist collection. The latter’s apparatus permits access to selected readings of seven other Old Testament manuscripts in the same collection, as well as comparisons with the first printed edition of the Armenian Bible, that of Oskan Erewanc’i,³ whose base text was mainly provided by manuscript 180 of the Maštoc’ Mate-nadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, Republic of Armenia, a manuscript commissioned by King Het’um II in 1295 from the accomplished scribe Step’anos Goyneric’anc’.

19.4.5.2 Textual Character

The Armenian evinces no categoric affiliation with any of the major recensions in these books. Although it witnesses a number of agreements with the Lucianic text (→ 19.3.5) – especially additions and omissions in alignment with MT (→ 19.2.2) – these are neither as significant nor as frequent as to warrant classifying it as a representative of that text type.

19.4.5.3 Translation Technique

As the Greek version of the book (→ 19.3.1) is one of the most literal renderings in the Old Testament, following its Hebrew parent text (→ 19.2.2) so closely in word order and morphological structure that it has been likened to a modern “interlinear translation,”⁴ often it not only ceases to preserve Greek idiom, but obscures the underlying sense. Consequently, all the daughter versions, to varying

¹ Hanhart, *Esdrae liber II*.

² Zohrapian, **Scriptures*, 300–306 (Second Ezra) and 306–14 (Nehemiah).

³ O. Erewanc’i, *Astowaçašownč Hnoy ew Noroc’ Ktakaranac’ nerparownakōg: Šarakargowt’eamb naxneac’n meroc’ ew čšmartasirac’ t’armančac’* (Bible of the Old and New Testament) (Amsterdam: Holy Etchmiadzin and Holy Sargis Zoravar Press, 1666).

⁴ Wooden, “Interlinearity,” 119–44.

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