Translation Technique and Translating a Translation, with Special Reference to Ezekiel 8–11

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Abstract

The Peshitta of Ezekiel had been regarded as a free translation since the time of Cornill to the Commentary of Zimmerli. Martin Mulder, however, regarded it as a fairly literal translation. The relationship of the Peshitta of Ezekiel to the Septuagint has also been described in different ways, with some scholars postulating a substantial degree of dependence of the Peshitta on the Septuagint. This paper will look at some aspects of the translation technique of the Peshitta of Ezekiel. This study demonstrates the freedom of the translator when faced with rare words and his use of idiomatic Syriac, but his fidelity to his *Vorlage* as well.

Introduction

The Peshitta of Ezekiel had been regarded as a free translation since the time of Cornill to the Commentary of Zimmerli on Ezekiel. The editor of the critical text of the Peshitta, Martin Mulder, however, regarded it as a fairly literal translation. In a number of articles he had stated this view, but unfortunately he was unable to publish a major study on the translation technique of Ezekiel. The relationship of the Peshitta of Ezekiel to the Septuagint has also been described in different ways, with some scholars, following Cornill, postulating a substantial degree of dependence of the Peshitta on the Septuagint. This paper will look at some aspects of the translation technique of the Peshitta of Ezekiel and its influence on the translation of the Peshitta in English. Matters that will receive special attention are set formulas, such as dates and

the translation of divine names, rare words (such as in 8.2), particles, word order, simplification, additions, and the conjugations and modes of the verbs. This study demonstrates the freedom of the translator when faced with rare words and his use of idiomatic Syriac, but his fidelity to his *Vorlage* as well. These aspects will have to be reflected in the translation. For the purpose of this paper Ezekiel 8–11 is examined in detail.

General remarks on Peshitta Ezekiel

Cornill was the first scholar to make an intensive study of the text of Ezekiel in the Peshitta in relation to the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint.[2] His view had remained the dominant one up to the publication of the critical text of Ezekiel by Mulder. Cornill's study was largely based on the text in the Paris Polyglot by Gabriel Sionita, the London Polyglot and the edition of Lee.[3] Lee had used the collations contained in the London Polyglot to correct the omissions of the Paris Polyglot. Cornill's conclusion was that the text of Lee was a useful edition that was good enough to be used for text-critical purposes.[4] Cornill discussed the *codex ambrosianus* (7a1) as well,[5] but did not regard it highly. His conclusion was that 7a1 had been corrected and revised to bring it in agreement with the Masoretic Text. He regarded 7a1 as the worst witness to the original Peshitta, with almost no text-critical value at all.

Many scholars accepted the view of Cornill. Cooke, for example, classified the Peshitta with the other versions as being directly or indirectly dependent on the Septuagint. He did not discuss the Peshitta in detail, but was satisfied to refer to Cornill.[6] Zimmerli used the edition of Lee for his commentary as well.[7] In agreement with Cornill, he regarded the Peshitta as a freer translation, with stylistic improvements and transpositions. Difficult passages were frequently abbreviated.

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[2] C.H. Cornill, *Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhand-lung, 1886), pp. 137–156.
[3] Cornill, *Ezechiel*, pp. 137–140.
[4] Cornill, *Ezechiel*, p. 140.
[5] Cornill, *Ezechiel*, pp. 140–145.
[6] G.A. Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1936/1970), p. xl.
[7] W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, I (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), p. 77.

Mulder had quite a different view on the Peshitta of Ezekiel.[8] He summarised his view in four points:

– The Peshitta of Ezekiel was a literal translation of the Hebrew and it used the Hebrew independently;[9]
– The Hebrew *Vorlage* is often evident even where the Peshitta did not translate literally or *verbatim*;
– The Peshitta has more text-critical value than any of the ancient versions, with the exception of the Septuagint; and
– The value of the older manuscripts exceeds that of the editions prior to the Leiden Peshitta, as well as the value of the younger manuscripts.

In the following sections a number of representative examples from Ezekiel 8–11 will be discussed to cast light on the translation technique of Peshitta Ezekiel.

1. Set formulas, such as dates and the translation of divine names

In Ezekiel 8.1 a date is given in the Masoretic Text, as follows:

ויהי בשנה הששית בששי בחמשה לחדש

The Peshitta renders it as follows:

ܘܗܘܐ ܒܫܢܬܐ ܫܬܝܬܝܬܐ ܒܚܡܫܬܐ ܒܝܪܚܐ ܫܬܝܬܝܐ

The Peshitta puts the day before the month, and links the word for month with the numeral. This is a matter of translation technique, as the same kind of formulation appears in most instances of the dates in the Peshitta (cf. 1.1).

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[8] Cf. M.J. Mulder, 'Some remarks on the Peshitta Translation of the Book of Ezekiel', in P.B. Dirksen and M.J. Mulder (eds.), *The Peshitta: Its Early Text and History. Papers read at the Peshitta Symposium held at Leiden 30–31 August 1985* (MPIL, 5; Leiden: Brill, 1988), p. 180, and M.J. Mulder, 'Die neue Pešita-Ausgabe von Ezechiel', in J. Lust (ed.) *Ezekiel and his Book. Textual and Literary Criticism and their Interrelation* (BETL, 74; Leuven: University Press – Peeters, 1986), p. 110.

[9] It is interesting to note that this characterization of the translation technique of the Peshitta of Ezekiel is the same as Tov's characterization of the Septuagint. Cf. Tov, E. *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research. Revised and Enlarged Second Edition* (Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), p. 250.

The Syriac is probably easier to follow than the Hebrew and this should be regarded as an example of simplification.

The double divine name of the Masoretic Text (אדני יהוה) is consistently rendered by ܡܳܪܶܐ ܡܳܪ̈ܰܘܳܬ݂ܐ. This differs from the rendering of the Septuagint, where only one name is used.[10]

In 10.5 the Masoretic Text has קול אל שדי. The Peshitta has ܐܰܝܟ ܩܳܠܶܗ ܕܰܐܠܳܗܐ. In 1.24 the Hebrew has the same expression, with אל. The Peshitta has the same translation there, but without the suffix to the noun.

The Hebrew word for remnant (שארית) is usually translated by ܫܰܪܟܐ in Ezekiel. However, in 9.8 a verbal form is used (ܐܶܫܬ݁ܰܚܪܶܬ), as in 5.1.

In 9.10 the Masoretic Text has the phrase: וגם אני לא תחוס עיני. The Peshitta has ܘܳܐܦ ܐܶܢܐ ܠܐ ܐܶܚܽܘܣ ܥܠܰܝܗܽܘܢ. In 7.4 the Peshitta translates the Hebrew literally, retaining the eye. The same happens in 5.11; 7.9; 9.5; 8.18; 16.5; and 24.14. The translation of 9.10 occurs in 24.14 as well. This example shows that the translator did not always render the same phrase in the same way.

In 11.8 and 21 the Masoretic Text has the word נאם. The Peshitta uses the verb ܐܶܡܰܪ.

In 11.24 the Masoretic Text has כשדימה. The Peshitta has ܐܰܪܥܐ ܕܟܰܠܕܳܝ̈ܶܐ. The land of the Chaldeans or Chaldea both occur in the Masoretic Text, but the Peshitta consistently translates with 'the land of the Chaldeans'.

2. Rare words

At the end of 8.2, the Peshitta has ܚܶܙܘܐ ܕܰܐܠܳܗܐ for the rare Hebrew word החשמלה (כעין). This rendering is also found in 1.27, while in 1.4 the same Hebrew word is translated by ܚܶܙܘܐ only. The rendering of the Peshitta does not follow the Septuagint with regard to this rare word. This could be an example of those instances where the translator, when faced with a word that he does not know, tries to mimic the sound of the Hebrew word.[11]

The Hebrew word שקוץ appears a number of times in Ezekiel. In 11.18 it is translated with ܕܶܚܠܬܐ. The same translation occurs in 7.2. It is translated with

[10] Cf. W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, II (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), pp. 556–562. For a discussion of the divine names in the Greek Ezekiel, cf. L.J. McGregor, *The Greek Text of Ezekiel: An Examination of its Homogeneity* (SBLSCS, 18; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1980), pp. 57–93.

[11] Cf. G. Greenberg, *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Jeremiah* [MPIL, 13; Leiden: Brill, 2002], pp. 198–200). My attention was drawn to this possibility by Janet Dyk at the meeting of the IOSOT in Ljubljana.

ܪܬܐܘܥܠ and ܪܝܐܬܐ in other instances. This is an example of the translator not always translating the same Hebrew word with the same Syriac word.

3. The conjugations and modes of the verbs.

The Peshitta usually uses the mode of the verb that one would expect, such as a perfect for a perfect, or an imperfect for an imperfect, or a perfect with ܘ for the imperfect with waw consecutive in the Masoretic Text. As one would expect, the use of the participle is more extensive in the Syriac.[12] In those instances where the Hebrew has a prophetic perfect, the Peshitta does not use the perfect, but rather the imperfect. Vice versa, where the Masoretic Text has an imperfect for e.g. continuous action in the past, the Peshitta does not use the imperfect, but rather the participle with the perfect of ܗܘܐ.[13]

In 8.17 the Hebrew has a perfect in a relative sentence, while the Peshitta has a participle. The Peshitta probably interpreted it as a perfect pointing to the present. In 11.5 the Hebrew indeed has a perfect pointing to the present. For emphasis the personal pronoun of the first person singular is placed before the verb. The Peshitta has a participle, with the pronoun before and after the participle. The emphasis is retained in this way, while the rendering with a participle is a very good equivalent of the Hebrew.

In 9.4 the Peshitta translates a perfect with waw consecutive, following on an imperative, with an imperative, demonstrating a good understanding of Hebrew syntax in this instance.

In 9.10 the Masoretic Text has a prophetic perfect, translated by an imperfect in the Peshitta. In 11.16 two prophetic perfects are followed by an imperfect with waw consecutive, pointing to the future as well. The Peshitta uses the imperfect in all three instances, again demonstrating its understanding of Hebrew syntax.

In 10.5 a Niphal perfect is rendered by an Ethpeel participle with the perfect of ܗܘܐ, probably for a continuous action in the past. However, as the consonantal Hebrew could be a participle as well, it may be that the Peshitta read it as a participle. A similar example occurs in 10.22.

In 8.1 the Masoretic Text has two participles in nominal sentences. The participle is used to denote continuous action in the past. The Peshitta has the participle followed by the perfect of ܗܘܐ in both instances.[14] Compare also

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[12] Cf. C. Brockelmann, *Syrische Grammatik* (Leipzig: Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1976), pp. 113–114, for the variety of the uses of the participle in Syriac.

[13] Cf. Brockelmann, *Syrische Grammatik*, p. 114.

[14] Cf. Brockelmann, *Syrische Grammatik*, p. 114.

8.11; 10.11, 16, and 17. In 8.6 two participles in the Masoretic Text are rendered by participles, without ܗܘܐ.

In 8.6 the Masoretic Text has a participle in a simple question, while the Peshitta has a perfect. In 8.15 and 17 it is the other way round. In 8.11 the Masoretic Text has a participle plus pronoun, while the Peshitta has a perfect (he answered).

In 11.2 the Masoretic Text has a participle with article used in the place of a relative sentence. The Peshitta has ܕ plus participle. This is the conventionalised Syriac rendering of the Hebrew construction. In 11.3 the Masoretic Text starts the verse with the participle with article. The Peshitta has ܘ plus participle.

In 9.1 the Hebrew לאמר is rendered by ܘܐܡܪ.

In 11.7, at the end, the Masoretic Text has a verb in the third person perfect that should probably be altered to an imperfect first person singular.[15] The Peshitta has a participle, with first person singular pronoun.

In all instances the rendering of verbal forms by the Peshitta is in accordance with an idiomatic translation and demonstrates a good understanding of Hebrew syntax.

4. Word order

As far as word order is concerned, the Peshitta usually follows the word order of the Masoretic Text closely. Only those instances where significant variation occurs will be mentioned.

In 8.12 the position of the participle differs in a relative sentence. The Masoretic Text has it following the subject (the elders of Israel), while the Peshitta has it before the subject. In the same verse the same variant occurs in a negative sentence as well. Compare 11.13 too. In 8.13 the personal pronoun serving as subject of a participle is omitted in the Syriac.

In 9.4 the Hebrew has ויאמר יהוה אליו. The Peshitta has a different word order: ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝܐ

At the beginning of 10.10 the Hebrew has ומראיהם דמות אחד לארבעתם. The Peshitta reads ܘܓܘ ܗܘܐ ܚܕ ܚܙܘܗܘܢ ܘܕܡܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܐܪܒܥܬܝܗܝܢ. The word order and the construction are different. It is probably an attempt to simplify the difficult Hebrew, and not a reflection of a different Vorlage. In this instance the Septuagint agrees with the Masoretic Text.

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[15] Cf. *BHS*, note a at 11.7 and M.H. Goshen-Gottstein and S. Talmon, *The Book of Ezekiel* (HUB; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2004), note 2 at 11.7, as well as Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, I, p. 229.

In 10.13 the word order differs. The Masoretic Text has two prepositional phrases before a passive verb. The Peshitta has the first prepositional phrase before the verb, but places the verb before a pronoun without suffix. In this instance the Masoretic Text has an unusual word order and an unusual passive verb, while the Peshitta has simplified the sentence. In 11.13 the Masoretic Text has the verb at the end of a sentence and the Peshitta has it at the beginning. In 11.14 the Masoretic Text has verb, subject, preposition, while the Peshitta has the preposition after the verb. In 11.20 the Peshitta has a different word order at the beginning of the sentence, where the Masoretic Text twice has the object before the verb. The Peshitta places the verbs first.

In 11.2 the Masoretic Text has a nominal sentence without copula. The Peshitta adds ܐܢܘܢ ܠ. The same happens in 11.7. In 11.10 and 12 a second ܐܠܐ is added.

The examples discussed above point to two tendencies in the Peshitta, as far as word order is concerned. It frequently puts short particles directly following the verb. In some instances where the Hebrew has an unusual word order, the Peshitta uses the more usual word order, for example by putting the verb at the beginning of a sentence.

5. Abbreviation or simplification

At the end of 8.3 the Masoretic Text reads: אשר שם מושב סמל הקנאה המקנה. (NIV: where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood). The Peshitta has a shorter reading: ܕܩܐܡ ܗܘܐ ܨܠܡܐ ܕܛܢܢܐ (where the statue of jealousy stood). This should be regarded as a simplified version of the difficult Hebrew, where the last word is often seen as a gloss for the previous word, or explained as dittography.[16]

The Hebrew phrase בחדרי משכיתו 'in the rooms of his image/sculpture (= picture gallery)' in 8.12 is unusual. This is the only instance where this phrase occurs in the Masoretic Text.[17] The Syriac has simplified it with 'in his secret inner-chamber' (ܒܬܘܢܗ ܟܣܝܐ).

In 8.14 the Masoretic Text has the following at the end of the verse: והנה שם הנשים ישבות מבכות את התמוז. The Peshitta has: ܘܗܐ ܬܡܢ ܢܫܐ ܕܝܬܒܢ ܘܒܟܝܢ ܠܬܡܘܙ. The insertion of the particle ܕ as well as ܘ serves to simplify the sentence.

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[16] Cf. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, I, pp. 216–217, and L.C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19* (Word Biblical Commentary, 28; Dallas: Word, 1994), p. 119.

[17] Cf. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, I, pp. 220–221.

In 9.7 the Masoretic Text has the imperative of the verb יצא, followed by a perfect. The Peshitta simplifies by omitting the verb in the perfect, giving just the command, and not the performance of the command as well.

The whole of 10.11 can be regarded as an example of simplification. This is a good example for this discussion. The Hebrew has בלכתם אל ארבעת רבעיהם ילכו לא יסבו בלכתם כי המקום אשר יפנה הראש אחריו ילכו לא יסבו בלכתם. The Peshitta has ܘܟܠ ܕܐܙܠ ܗܘܐ, ܟܠ ܐܘܟܬܐ ܠܚܬܡܗ ܐܙܠ ܗܘܐ, ܠܐ ܗܦܟ ܗܘ, ܐܠܐ ܠܐܬܪܐ ܕܐܙܠ ܗܘܐ ܪܫܢܝܗܘܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܙܠ ܗܘܐ, ܠܐ ܗܦܟܝܢ ܗܘ. The Hebrew has the infinitive בְּלֶכְתָּם three times, but it is retained only once in the Peshitta. The use of the participle with the perfect of ܗܘܐ to indicate a repetition of the action in the past can be noted as well.[18]

Another example of such a free rendering is in 10.14. The Hebrew has וארבעה פנים לאחד פני האחד פני הכרוב ופני השני פני אדם והשלישי פני אריה והרביעי פני נשר. The Peshitta reads as follows: ܘܐܦ̈ܐ ܐܪܒܥܐ ܠܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܦ̈ܐ ܩܕܡ̈ܝܬܐ ܐܦ̈ܐ ܕܟܪܘܒܐ ܘܐܦ̈ܐ ܕܬܪܝܢ ܐܦ̈ܐ ܕܐܢܫܐ ܘܐܦ̈ܐ ܬܠܝܬܝܐ ܐܦ̈ܐ ܕܐܪܝܐ ܘܐܦ̈ܐ ܕܐܪܒܥܐ ܐܦ̈ܐ ܕܢܫܪܐ. Exactly the same information is given, but in quite a different form.

In 11.16 and 17 the Peshitta omits the imperative of the word 'to say' before a messenger formula.

6. Particles

The way in which the particle הנה is rendered is quite interesting. In 8.2 the Hebrew has וָאֶרְאֶה וְהִנֵּה, rendered by ܘܚܙܝܬ ܘܗܐ in the Peshitta. This is what one would expect. In 8.4 and 5 the Hebrew particle occurs without the verb preceding it, and it is again rendered by ܘܗܐ. However, in a number of instances it is rendered by the verb ܚܙܐ, in 8.14, 16; 9.2 and 11; and 11.1. In 8.8 the Hebrew has והנה פתח אחד at the end of the verse. Here the Peshitta has a free translation: ܘܐܫܟܚܬ ܬܪܥܐ ܚܕ (and I found a gate). In 8.17 the Peshitta omits the particle. In the Hebrew, the particle has a pronominal suffix. This is rendered by the independent personal pronoun in the Peshitta.

For Hebrew nouns with the directional ה, the Peshitta consistently uses the preposition ܠ (cf. 8.3 and 5).

In a number of instances the Peshitta adds ܕ before a noun to make it a bit less specific in reference, like 'the house of Israel' in the Masoretic Text 8.6,

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[18] Cf. Brockelmann, *Syrische Grammatik*, p. 114.

against 'those of the house of Israel' in the Peshitta. Compare also 8.11 and 17. In 9.11 the Peshitta adds ܘ before a passive participle.

In 8.12 the particle כי is translated by ܘ. In the same verse the Hebrew has two asyndetic sentences at the end of the verse. The Peshitta links them with ܡܛܠ.

In 8.14 אל is translated with ܒ.

The Hebrew nota accusativi is frequently rendered by ܠ, as in 8.14. In 11.8 the Masoretic Text has an object without marker at the beginning of the verse, with the verb 'to fear'. The Peshitta adds the preposition ܡܢ.

The Hebrew interrogative for a simple question (ה) is frequently not rendered by the Peshitta, as in 8.15 and 17 and 11.24. In 8.17 the Hebrew has the particle a second time, shortly after the first. In this case the Syriac has ܕܐܠܐ.

In 8.16 the Hebrew פתח is without preposition, but it clearly indicates a place where something happened. The Syriac added the preposition ܒ. In this instance the Peshitta is making explicit what is syntactically implicit in the Hebrew. In 10.19 the Peshitta adds the preposition ܒ to a noun in the so-called adverbial accusative in the Hebrew, to make the indication of location explicit. In 11.13 the same happens to make the instrument explicit.

In 11.16 the Hebrew has שם, as an indication of movement to a certain place (or people). The Peshitta uses ܠܗܘܢ. In 11.18 שמה is rendered by ܠܗ.

In 9.8 the Hebrew has ויהי כהכותם at the beginning of the verse. The Peshitta has ܘܗܘܐ ܕܟܕ ܡܚܐ. Compare 11.13 as well. In 10.6 the Masoretic Text has ויהי בצותו. The Peshitta again has ܟܕ plus a perfect. Compare also 10.19. In 10.6 another infinitive with ב used to indicate time is rendered by ܘ plus a finite verb in the same verse. ב + infinitive is rendered by ܟܕ with a participle in 10.3 and by ܘ ܟܕ with a participle in 10.5 and 11 and 10.16 and 17. 10.11 has additional examples of a phrase of ב + infinitive in the Hebrew rendered by participles in the Peshitta.

In 8.6 the Masoretic Text has an infinitive with ל rendered by ܘ plus a finite verb in the Peshitta. This is probably required by the syntax of the Syriac, and thus a good translation. The same is true of the examples in the previous paragraph, as is the rendering of לאמר by a perfect of the cognate verb (cf. e.g. 10.6).

In 10.11 the Hebrew כי is rendered by ܐܠܐ. The Hebrew particle is used adversatively.[19] This is an indication that the translator understood this particular aspect of Hebrew grammar quite well.

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[19] Cf. GKC par. 163a.

The Syriac uses the preposition ܡܢ for a number of Hebrew composite prepositions, such as מעל and מאצל (cf. 10.16 and 11.15, 23).

In 11.16 the Peshitta omits the particle כי twice, probably as simplification. In 11.20 the Masoretic Text has למען at the beginning of the verse. The Peshitta has ܘ.

7. Additions

In 8.2 the Peshitta adds the verb ܚܙܐ near the end of the verse to make a long sentence easier to understand.

In 8.6 the Peshitta adds ܘܒܬܪ at the end of the verse. This could be an attempt to harmonise this verse with verses 9 and 13.[20]

In 8.11 the Masoretic Text has the following: ויאזניהו בן שפן עמד בתוכם עמדים לפניהם. The problem is especially related to עמדים לפניהם. The Peshitta reads: ܘܗܘܘ ܩܝܡܝܢ ܩܕܡܘܗܝ (and they were standing before him). This can be regarded as an example of simplifying the Hebrew.

In 8.15 the Peshitta adds ܘ before an adjective in a comparative construction after the preposition ܡܢ.

In 8.16 the Hebrew has a nominal sentence without copula (there were about 25 men). The Peshitta adds the participle ܩܝܡܝܢ (about 25 men were standing). The same happens in 9.6. In 9.2 a Hebrew nominal sentence has the copula, but it is rendered by ܕܡܐ ܗܘܐ in the Peshitta. The copula is added to a participle in 10.3, 12; and 11.21. In 10.17 the Hebrew has a sentence without copula at the end of the verse. The Peshitta has ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ. In 10.10 the copula is omitted by the Peshitta. The copula is added to a nominal sentence in 10.19 and 11.3. Most of these examples can be regarded as testifying to idiomatic Syriac.

In the final phrase of the verse in 8.16 the Hebrew has the following: והמה משתחויתם קדמה לשמש. The Peshitta has: ܠܫܡܫܐ ܘܣܓܕܝܢ ܘܩܕܡܝܢ. The Hebrew verb is a problem, being a hybrid form.[21] The Syriac has two verbs, rendering קֵדְמָה as a verb. This is a good example of a problem in the Hebrew and where the Peshitta has its own solution, not in agreement with the Septuagint, that rendered the hybrid form with a participle.

In 9.5 the Peshitta adds 'that were with him' to 'He said to those', to make the reference clear.

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[20] Cf. Goshen-Gottstein and Talmon, *Ezekiel*, note 3 at 8.6.
[21] Cf. *BHS*, footnote 16b.

In 10.7 the Peshitta adds ܠܒܪ before the participle (ܕܠܒܫ) to make the phrase easier to understand.

In 9.8 the Peshitta adds ܩܠܐ ܪܡ to the verb 'to cry', as the Masoretic Text has in 11.13.

In 11.11 the Hebrew has the negative particle in the first sentence in the verse, and it is implied in the second sentence. The Peshitta adds the negative particle in the second sentence as well.

In 10.2 the Hebrew has ויאמר twice, at the beginning and end of the first part of the verse. The Peshitta renders the first one with ܘܩܪܐ. This is probably no more than stylistic variation, as are the examples discussed in the following two paragraphs.

The same kind of variation occurs in 11.5, where the verb אמר is used four times in the Masoretic Text. The Peshitta retains the first three, which are connected to the Lord. The fourth one, pointing to the words of the people, is rendered by ܪܢܝ.

In 11.6 the Masoretic Text has the word חלל twice. The Peshitta uses two different participles to render the word (ܡܚܠܠ and ܚܒܝܨ).

In 11.9 the Hebrew has the verb נתן, used with the connotation of delivering someone in somebody's hands. The Peshitta uses the verb ܥܠܡ (ܘܐܫܠܡܬܗ) ad sensum. In 11.21 the Hebrew uses the verb נתן in the sense of giving someone his due punishment (דרכם בראשם נתתי). The Peshitta uses the verb ܦܪܥ (to recompense, repay, requite).

Discussion

Many of the examples discussed above testify to the fidelity of the translation to its Vorlage. However, the use of idiomatic Syriac is often the reason for minor variations. This can be seen in the way in which the date is reformulated in 8.1, as well as in the translation of the double divine name.

The translation of the divine name אל שדי by ܐܠܗܐ could indicate unfamiliarity with that name. The only Hebrew word that the translator did not understand in the section under discussion is החשמלה (כעין).

There are many indications that the translator (or translators) had an excellent knowledge of Hebrew. His use of the conjugations and modes of the verb is perhaps the outstanding example in this regard. It is quite evident that he understood the syntax of the Hebrew verbal system very well, with no rendering that could be regarded as pointing to a lack of knowledge in this regard. Examples are his translation of a perfect with waw conversive as an imperative in 9.4, his use of a participle with ܗܘܐ for an imperfect used

for continuous actions in the past and the rendering of prophetic perfects by imperfects. His frequent use of the participle is evidence of a trend to use idiomatic Syriac. The differences in word order can probably be ascribed to this trend as well, especially with regard to the movement of particles earlier in sentences.

10.11 and 14 are good examples of the tendency to simplify difficult passages in the Hebrew. This can be done either by omitting part of the Hebrew, or by adding something in the Syriac. In 10.14 the Hebrew has בלכתם three times. The Peshitta retained the first one, but omitted the last two, making the section easier to follow, but retaining all the important elements. More extensive rephrasing appears in 10.14, as discussed above.

Some of the additions in the Peshitta are aimed at making difficult Hebrew passages easier to understand, such as the addition and change in 8.11. From the example discussed in 8.16 it is also clear that in these instances the rendering of the Peshitta was seldom influenced by the Septuagint.

A very interesting feature of the translation is the way in which the Hebrew particle הנה is treated, such that it disappears in the Syriac in many instances, often replaced by the verb 'to see'. The use of prepositions to make the function of so-called adverbial accusatives explicit is another example of an idiomatic translation that shows a good grasp of the original. To this can be added the way in which infinitives with prepositions are rendered, usually by subordinate clauses, as well as the addition of the copula or personal pronoun to nominal sentences. The instances where the Peshitta brought in variation, such as in 11.9, also testify to idiomatic Syriac.

In the discussion above mention was made of some instances where the Peshitta and the Septuagint agree against the Masoretic Text. There are many instances, however, where the Peshitta does not agree with the Septuagint, such as in 8.2, 8.16 and 10.10, texts where one could easily understand influence from the side of the Septuagint. It seems as if many of the instances of agreement between the Septuagint and Peshitta may be ascribed to polygenesis, to use Weitzman's term.[22]

Translation technique and translation

The examples discussed above point to the translation technique as described by Mulder, but he did not mention the use of idiomatic Syriac as one of the

[22] Cf. M.P. Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament. An Introduction* (Cambridge: University Press, 1999, pp. 69–70.

trade marks of this technique. In a translation of the Peshitta into English this must be honoured, by translating in idiomatic English. The notes could reflect the variants to the Masoretic Text contained in the Peshitta, but also refer to passages important for understanding the technique of the Peshitta.

As an example a translation of Peshitta Ezekiel 9 is given. The notes are related to matters discussed above. In the proposed translation of the Peshitta in English more notes will be included, especially notes dealing with the relation between the Peshitta and the Masoretic Text and the question of the *Vorlage* of the Peshitta.[23]

1. He called out with a loud voice, while I heard,[24] and said: Come near,[25] avengers of the city, each with his destructive weapons in his hand.
2. I saw six men coming from the direction[26] of the upper gate, which faces[27] to the north, each with his destructive weapons in his hand. Among them was a man dressed in linen. He fastened cords of sapphire around his loins.[28] They came and stood next to the bronze altar.
3. The glory of the God of Israel rose from the cherub who was standing at the corner of the house. He called to the man clothed in linen with fastened cords of sapphire around his loins.[29]
4. The Lord said to him: Go around in the city, in Jerusalem. Make a mark between the eyes of the men who are sighing and who are being tormented because of all the abominations and evil[30] that are being perpetrated in her.
5. To them that were with him he said in my sight:[31] Follow him through the city and kill. Do not let your eyes show pity and do not have compassion.

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[23] The proposed translation referred to is the New English Annotated Translation of the Syriac Bible, where I am one of the team working on Ezekiel. Cf. K.D. Jenner, A. Salvesen, R.B. ter Haar Romeny and W.T. van Peursen, 'The New English Annotated Translation of the Syriac Bible (NEATSB): Retrospect and Prospect (PIC 23)', *Aramaic Studies* 2 (2004), pp. 85–106.

[24] Literally 'in my ears'.

[25] The Hebrew has 'bring out'.

[26] Literally 'way'.

[27] The Masoretic Text has a passive participle here (Hophal). The sense of the Hebrew is similar to the active participle used in the Peshitta.

[28] The Hebrew has 'with a scribe's kit at his loins'. The Peshitta agrees with the Septuagint in this instance.

[29] Here the Peshitta is closer to the Septuagint.

[30] This is a plus in the Peshitta, corresponding to 8.9.

[31] The Hebrew has 'in my eyes'.

6. Old men and young men, maidens and infants, and women: massacre them.[32] However, everyone who has the mark on him, you must not kill. Begin at the sanctuary. They began with the old men that were standing before the house.

7. He said to them: Defile the house and fill the courts with the slain. Depart, kill in the city![33]

8. While they were destroying I was left alone. I fell on my face and cried out with a loud voice[34] and said: Oh, Lord of lords, are you destroying everyone who remained of Israel and are you pouring out your anger over Jerusalem?

9. He answered me: The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is extremely great. The land has been filled with blood, the city has been filled with treachery. They say: The Lord has abandoned the land, the Lord does not see us.

10. But as far as I am concerned, my eyes will not take pity on them and I will not have compassion. I will bestow their ways on their heads.

11. Then I saw the man dressed in linen, who replied, saying: I have done as you have instructed me.

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[32] Literally: 'kill them to destruction'. The family of 9a1 reads 'to the desert'. Cf. Mulder, 'Peshitta', p. 172.

[33] The Hebrew has 'Depart! They departed and killed in the city.' The Peshitta is closer to the Septuagint.

[34] This is a plus in the Peshitta, corresponding to 11.13.