

# **External influences in the Peshitta version of Proverbs**

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## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

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The views expressed in this thesis are not necessarily those of the University of Stellenbosch.

## Abstract

The study of the Peshitta version of Proverbs started as research into the text-critical value of the Peshitta. By utilising the translation technique an attempt was also made to determine on which *Vorlage(n)* this book is based. In the course of this investigation it became clear that all the additions, of which the longest are found in chapter 9, cannot be sufficiently explained only by ordinary translation technique and/or style. Although these pluses may have been in the translator's *Vorlage*, there is considerable concurrence between the pluses and most of the deviations in the Syriac text with the Greek text, which indicates other reasons for their existence.

It can be accepted with reasonable certainty that the Peshitta translator utilised the LXX to a considerable extent in order to establish a legible and simple translation. This fact is widely accepted and most scholars' treatises merely confirm most of the conclusions to which Hermann Pinkuss came in an article published in *Z.A.W.* of 1894. The exact nature and extent of this utilisation, however, have not been satisfactorily established as yet. In all the ordinary cases this utilisation extends from difficult and corrupt readings to readings that, according to the translator, may have been ethically or morally unacceptable.

It was reasonably successfully shown that the Peshitta translator used a Hebrew text that probably did not differ from the MT to any significant degree. For example, the translator experienced similar problems with the MT to those that modern translators have to contend with. These problems were solved with the aid of the LXX and sometimes by means of harmonisation with other verses in the text.

Judging from the translation technique of the Peshitta version of Proverbs it is clear that, where the translator came across some difficulty in the Hebrew text, he used the interpretation of the LXX quite liberally. The term *interpretation* should actually be stressed, because the Peshitta translator did not merely translate from the LXX. The tendency of the Syriac translation is always in line with the translation technique, which primarily attempted to explain what is written in the Hebrew. For this reason there are, in relation to the MT, fewer additions in the Peshitta than in the LXX. The Peshitta translator tried wherever possible to remain as close to the Hebrew text as the *Vorlage* and his understanding of the text would allow him.

A larger problem, however, is to explain the existence of more extensive additions, which in some cases consist of several verses. After considering the relation of the Peshitta with other versions, it became clear that the possibility of other external influences, including the social and religious environment, had to be considered. Pinkuss stated that the Peshitta does not appear to present any connection with the Jewish or Christian religion. It should be borne in mind, however, that Judaism and Christianity share many ethical tenets. Furthermore, the Peshitta translation reveals remarkable nuances and would present only extremely subtle references to any belief.

The Peshitta is after all a Christian document and the additions should perhaps be explained as an extension of the translation technique, which is to present the reader with a clear, unambiguous translation. Therefore the translation should perhaps be considered closely within the context of its religious milieu, namely, Syriac-speaking Christianity.

Firstly, one should not expect Christianity in the East to present the reader with a dynamic, equivalent translation where every element of the text is carefully translated into Syriac. The rules of translation in the Syriac Church differed from the conventional translation technique in the West (which was too often concerned only with the avoidance of misinterpretation). It developed independently, because in a critical stage of the development of the Peshitta text (the fourth and fifth century), the Syriac Church was virtually cut off from the intellectual influence and debate in the West, which was critical in combatting the extensive increase in sectarian and heretical tendencies in the Church. Furthermore, most of the believers, and even priests, knew only Syriac.

Secondly, Eastern Christianity had more than Hellenism and a few philosophies that opposed the truth. The Church had to contend with a prolific number of cults and religions (not to mention sects) in all the cities in Syria.

Thirdly, due to political factors, Syriac literature developed its own identity and traditions with regard to the establishment of Christianity in Osroene. The long strife that the Church had experienced with the Church in the West also fostered a unique self-image that the Syriac Church had of itself in the world. The schools in Edessa played a major part in perpetuating this tradition.

Owing to the above-mentioned factors there would have been a number of readings in the Peshitta text that, according to the translator, warranted the changing of some words and phrases in the translation of Proverbs. Some familiar symbols and words with familiar references in the Syriac mind may have influenced the translation as well. Some variants are antiheretical and others are anti-anthropomorphic.

The influence of Judaism should not be discarded in seeking the “rules” of translation in the Eastern Churches. The influence was more marked here than in the West. Numerous Jews even converted to Christianity and the intellectual contribution of Jews made to the Syriac Church and life is undeniable. Some Jewish practices (like the crowning of the bridegroom during the wedding ceremony) were maintained in the Eastern Churches. That this influence should come to the translation of texts was inevitable. Of course, the date of translation is important, but traditions did remain for a long time. In the light of all this, the additions in Proverbs do not render the Peshitta a Targum, but they should be considered a legitimate part of translation in Syriac Christianity.

In conclusion, the external influences that played a part in the translation of the Peshitta are complex and are not

limited to the Peshitta *Vorlage(n)* alone. The nature and extent of the influences on the translation of the Peshitta need to be extended to the socioreligious milieu as well.

All the verses discussed in this thesis are investigated on their own merits and any identifiable influence is considered.



## Opsomming

Die studie van die Peshitta weergawe van Proverbia het begin as 'n tekskritiese ondersoek na die tekskritiese waarde van die Peshitta. Daar is gepoog om aan die hand van die vertalingstegniek van die vertaler ook te probeer bepaal watter *Vorlage(n)* hierdie boek ten grondslag lê. In die loop van die ondersoek was dit egter duidelik dat gewone vertaaltegniese en/of styl nie al die byvoegings waarvan die twee langstes in hoofstuk 9 voorkom, voldoende kan beantwoord nie. Alhoewel hierdie plusse in die *Vorlage* van die vertaler kon wees, is daar sterk ooreenstemming tussen die plusse (sowel as die meeste ander afwykings in die teks) en die Griekse teks wat die vermoede van ander oorwegings vir hul byvoeging laat ontstaan.

Daar kan met redelike sekerheid aanvaar word dat die Peshitta vertaler geredelik gebruik gemaak het van die LXX om 'n maklik leesbare en eenvoudige vertaling daar te stel. Hierdie feit word deur alle geleerdes aanvaar, waarvan die meeste, wat Proverbia betref, net die gevolgtrekkings bevestig waartoe Hermann Pinkuss in 'n omvattende artikel in die Z.A.W. van 1894 gekom het. Die aard van hierdie gebruikmaking is nog nie ten volle bepaal nie. In alle gewone gevalle kan hierdie raadpleging strek van moeilike en korrupte lesings tot by lesings wat na die mening van die vertaler eties of moreel onaanvaarbaar was.

Dit is ook redelik suksesvol uitgewys dat die vertaler van 'n Hebreeuse teks, wat nie te veel verskil van die MT nie, gebruik gemaak het. Die vertaler het byvoorbeeld ook dieselfde probleme gehad as wat moderne vertalers met sekere lesings het. Soms is hierdie lesings m.b.v. die LXX en soms d.m.v. harmoniëring met ander gedeeltes opgelos.

Die vertalingstegniek van die Peshitta weergawe van Proverbia is van so 'n aard dat waar die vertaler moeilike Hebreeuse lesings raakgeloop het, het hy geredelik van die interpretasie van die LXX gebruik gemaak. Selfs die veranderde lesings stem ooreen met die huidige MT. Die woord *interpretasie* word gebruik, want die Peshitta vertaler het die LXX lesings nie sonder meer onveranderd aanvaar nie. Die tendens van die vertaling was altyd in lyn met die vertalingstegniek, wat poog om die Hebreeus te verklaar. Om dié rede is daar heelwat minder byvoegings in die Peshitta t.o.v. die MT as die LXX en is daar duidelik met die vertaling gepoog om so na as moontlik aan die Hebreeuse teks te bly.

'n Groot probleem is egter nie om die voorkoms van afwykings nie, maar om die uitgebreide plusse wat in sommige gevalle hele verse beslaan, te verduidelik. Pinkuss het al verwys na die Peshitta vertaling as sou dit geen beduidende aanknopingspunte met die Christelike of die Joodse godsdiens hê nie. Daar moet egter in gedagte gehou word dat baie etiese vraagstukke deur Jode sowel as Christene gedeel word. Verder is die vertaling genuanseerd en indien enige verwysings bestaan, sou dit subtiel wees - om die minste te sê. Hierdie byvoegings,

of te wel plusse, kan egter aan die hand van die leefwêreld van die vertaler en sy teiken-gehoor, d.i. die Siries-sprekende Christene van die provinsie Osrhoene, verklaar word.

Die Peshitta is egter 'n Christelike dokument en moontlik moet die verklaring vir hierdie afwykings gesien word as bloot 'n voortsetting of verlenging van die vertalingstegniek naamlik om 'n duidelike, ondubbelsinnige vertaling daar te stel. So gesien kan die vertaling eerder in 'n religieuse lig, gesetel in 'n spesifieke samelewing, ondersoek word.

Eerstens, in die Siriese Christendom moet daar nie 'n dinamiese vertaling waarby elke element van die Vorlage presies weergegee word, verwag word nie. Die reëls wat in die Christelike kerke in die ooste gegeld het, verskil van die konvensionele vertalingstegniek in die weste, waar 'n tegniek wat hoofsaaklik gerig was op die vermyding van enige waninterpretasie, gevolg is. Die Siriese kerk het nie die diep intellektuele insette in die Christelike godsdiens en die gepaardgaande uitgebreide literatuur gehad wat enige sektariese en heretiese tendense in die kiem kon smoor nie. Buitendien was die oosterse Christendom op 'n kritieke stadium van die ontwikkeling van die Peshitta teks (die vierde en die vyfde eeu), afgesonder van die westerse kerk. Boonop was 'n oorgrote meerderheid van sy lidmate, asook selfs sy priesters, net Siries magtig.

Tweedens, die oosterse kerke het baie meer as net die Hellenisme en 'n paar Filosofieë as teëstanders van die waarheid gehad. Daar was doodeenvoudig net te veel kultusse en randgodsdienste, om nie eers te praat van sektes waarmee die Kerk te kampe gehad het nie.

Derdens, die Siriese literatuur en tradisies wat verband gehou het met die vestiging van die Christendom in Osrhoene, het baie groot invloed gehad op die selfbeeld van die Siriese kerk betreffende sy plek in hierdie teenswoordige wêreld. Die skole van Edessa waar al hierdie literatuur onderrig is, het ook 'n rol gespeel om die tradisies voort te sit.

Weens al die bostaande faktore was die vertaler van die Peshitta genoodsaak om enige dubbelsinnigheid wat kon voorkom in enige vers in Proverbia, in die kiem te smoor. Daar is boonop ook subtiele verwysings wat m.b.v. sekere woordkeuses en byvoegings vertaal is, sodat dit na bekende simbole en sake van die leefwêreld waarmee die Siriese leser vertrou sou wees, verwys het. Sommige variante is ook anti-hereties en anti-antropomorfisties van aard.

Verder was die oosterse Christendom nader aan die oosterse leefwyse in die algemeen en sou die invloed van die Judaïsme hier sterker wees as in die weste, veral gesien in die lig van die feit dat daar heelwat Jode was wat hulle tot die Christendom bekeer het. Selfs sekere Joodse gebruike is ook in die Siriese Kerk bedryf (soos die kroning by 'n bruilof). Dat hierdie invloede tot by die vertaling van die literatuur sou strek, is onvermydelik. Die Joodse Christene het Hebreeus geken en die kerk was dus nie aangewese op die kennis van die Westerse Kerk nie (met wie hulle nie altyd kontak gehad het nie). Boonop was Latyn 'n ontoeganklike taal vir baie mense in die Siriese

kerk. Natuurlik is datering van die vertaling belangrik, maar ongeag die Christene se verhouding met die Jode, sou vroeë invloede beswaarlik net uit die Kerk uit weggeval het.

Ten slotte, die eksterne invloede wat 'n rol gespeel het in die vertaling van die Peshitta is kompleks en is nie beperk tot die Peshitta se *Vorlage(n)* alleen nie. Die aard en omvang van die invloede op die vertaling van die Peshitta behoort die sosio-religieuse milieu in te sluit.

In die ondersoek na die eksterne invloede is al die verse op meriete beoordeel.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Foreword

The object of this thesis is to resolve the question of which external influence(s) could have played a part in the differences between the Hebrew (Masoretic text-MT<sup>1</sup>) text and the Syriac translation of the book of Proverbs. There are clear differences between them in some passages and unless the source(s) of these differences can be established no authoritative conclusions can be drawn as to the text-critical value of the Syriac text.

Proverbs has some advantages over other books of the Old Testament (OT) as a corpus of study concerning the influence(s) that may be prevalent in the translation of the Peshitta.<sup>2</sup> Firstly, Proverbs is a structured translation, with regular features, that simplifies the verse - by - verse comparison between the Peshitta and the MT (and other texts). Secondly, the style of the sayings is economical, with numerous chiasms and parallelisms. The Hebrew has no uniformity as far as word order is concerned and puts heavy demands on the translator so as to capture the meaning of each verse or unit successfully (especially the last 20 chapters, which have independent sentences with no apparent logical connections among them). These independent units or sentences, however, lighten the task of the researcher, because he has easily recognisable units to compare with other versions and texts. Lastly, Proverbs contains numerous words with probable ideological connotations that may reflect any religious or cultural influence, should there be any, in a translation like the Peshitta.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. 1.3. in this chapter

<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that there is an unqualified relation between the influences on Proverbs and the influences on other books of the OT. Depending on the translation technique, style of writing, relationship with other versions, approach to the subject material, etc., the identification and clarification of the external influences on Proverbs may serve at least as a pointer to a viable approach to the rest of the Peshitta version of the OT, since some of these influences may apply to the other books as well.

<sup>3</sup> As far as religious influences are concerned the eloquent remark of Gerleman (1950, p. 15) should suffice: "One might say that Proverbs, like most of the Hebrew Wisdom literature, might tempt a translator, because of its very character, to give the text a new stamp. Nowhere in the Old Testament is the national character less marked than in the *chokma*. The Old Testament sages are surprisingly unaffected by particularistic tendencies. Law, cult, Covenant, Messianic hope, none of these data, essential for the national feeling, is dealt with in Proverbs. *Chokma*, instead refers to humanity and is international in character. In this no man's land it is but natural for a translator to consider it within his rights to embellish the text at his own discretion." Although it is not usual for a translator to translate a text at his own discretion, it would rather depend on his attitude towards his *Vorlage* and the book of Proverbs itself.



## 1.2 The purpose and scope of the study

The purpose of this study is to determine the text-critical value of the Peshitta version of Proverbs. This links up with the long-term object of the Peshitta project,<sup>4</sup> which is to determine the text-critical value of larger translation units. Since there are so many aspects in a translation unit that can be researched, this study concentrates primarily on the pluses, minuses and clear deviations from the MT. In an effort to do this the translation technique is established and is defined by the application of certain criteria. The translation technique, in conjunction with the translator's<sup>5</sup> general approach to his *Vorlage*, thus serves as the basis for this study of the Peshitta text.

In an effort to determine to what extent the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Peshitta differs from the MT, the Peshitta version should also be compared with other translations. On the basis of such study one may perhaps come closer to characterising the Hebrew *Vorlage* of this translation. If, for instance, it is determined by the utilisation of certain criteria that the text is translated quite freely, the deviations could have been caused by the insertions or influence from external sources rather than a different *Vorlage*.

The complex and somewhat obscure history of the origin and transmission of the text should also be considered. The origin of the Peshitta is usually fixed around the second century C. E., although some of the earliest texts date only from the fourth and fifth centuries (Brock, 1984, p. 1; Haefeli, 1927, pp. 5-6; Pinkuss, 1894, p. 107; Baumstark, 1911, pp. 40, 53-54). Most of the references to the translation of the Peshitta are found in legends of which the most important one is probably the legend about Addai, the subject of King Abgar of Edessa, who was commissioned by the newly converted king to translate the OT (Haefeli, 1927, p. 5).

To execute a valid text-critical study of the Peshitta a representative corpus must be researched. The reason is that there may be a relation between a variant or addition in one instance and a variant or concept in another verse in a different chapter, which may be overlooked and seriously mislead the perspective of the conclusions drawn from the research concerning the source of this difference or addition. It is therefore necessary to include the whole book of Proverbs for the study. Furthermore, the differences are found, with varying degrees of frequency, throughout the whole book of Proverbs. The scope of the study represents, as already mentioned, the pluses, the minuses and those words or phrases that cannot be reconciled with the MT text. Other versions of Proverbs (the LXX and Targum) may also throw some light on the origin of these variants.

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<sup>4</sup> The Peshitta project operates under the guidance of Prof. Johann Cook at the *Research Unit for Computer Applications on the Language and Text of the Old Testament* at the University of Stellenbosch.

<sup>5</sup> For practical reasons the word "translator" instead of "translator(s)" is used in this study. Should there be specific cases where one must refer to more than one translator, it will be pertinently mentioned. The same applies to the MT, LXX and Targum, where different mss. will be mentioned in the applicable instances.

### 1.3 Method

In this thesis the MT is used as the point of departure from which to compare the Peshitta text. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the MT currently represents the most complete tradition of the Hebrew text.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, it is also an authoritative text, although this does not imply a value judgement (cf. Tov, 1981, pp. 36-37)<sup>7</sup> about the absolute authority of the MT text as a reference point (other texts are also considered). It is utilised purely for comparative reasons, since the other texts (the LXX and Targum) are also judged with reference to the MT. The Hebrew text used in this thesis is the 1977 edition of the *Biblia Hebraica* by R. Kittel and all references to the text-critical apparatus by Fichtner is from this edition.

Another important aim of the text-critical scrutiny undertaken here is to identify and evaluate another Hebrew textual tradition(s).<sup>8</sup> It is therefore imperative that the variants in the Peshitta translation should be isolated before they are text-critically examined (Tov, 1981, p. 50). Since it would be a massive task to study every detail of the translation, it is more meaningful to concentrate on the minuses, pluses and recognisable variants in the translation. This approach would comply with the need to have isolated variants, as mentioned above.

It needs to be explained what these different deviations entail. As pluses are considered those words or phrases that, after the Peshitta is compared with the MT, have no equivalents in the MT. Likewise, minuses would be those elements in the Hebrew reading that the Peshitta text lacks. Variant readings (or deviations) are those instances where the Peshitta translation does not agree with the Hebrew text (although neither text has more elements than the other). Such an endeavour does entail numerous problems, which many times become clear only as the research progresses.

The more obvious ones are, for instance, certain idioms and idiomatic expressions that are easily misunderstood by the translator and therefore rendered by more words than are necessary. The same applies to technical terms. This means that the translator's rendering of the Hebrew could be part of his translation technique. There are also

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<sup>6</sup> Tov (1981, p. 34) states succinctly: "MT is taken as the point of departure for describing variants because it contains the *textus receptus* of the OT and not because its contents is preferable to other textual traditions."

<sup>7</sup> It is true to say, as Tov did, that "the selection within the family of MT, of either the Aleppo codex or the Leningrad, does imply a value judgement."

<sup>8</sup> "The textual scholar must first determine whether a given deviation from MT in a translation reflects a Hebrew variant, for only if it does will he be interested in its contents" (Tov, 1981, p. 37). Added to this he says (ibid, p. 38): "From the translator's point of view, every difference (deviation) from MT could, in theory, reflect a variant reading. However, many such details were inserted by the translators without any relation to the Hebrew text before them, while others developed in the course of the textual transmission of the translation."

syntactical, grammatical and structural differences between Hebrew and Syriac to be considered (cf. Cook, 1985a, p. 19). Then there is the matter of differences in *Vorlagen*. A single Hebrew concept (conveyed by one word in the MT) may be represented adequately by two words in the Peshitta or a Syriac word in the Peshitta may have a semantic field that includes the corresponding two words of the MT. In both cases the Peshitta translation is probably not due to different *Vorlagen*, but rather reflects different perceptions by the translator or redactor. In any case, all verses must be judged on merit. There is no clear-cut or easy way to identify deviations in the Peshitta text.

Translation technique is another crucial consideration in this study (Tov, 1981, pp. 50, 187). The degree of literalness<sup>9</sup> with which the translator approached his *Vorlage* has a direct bearing on the identification of variants in the Peshitta. One of the best criteria for the analysis of translation technique is word consistency. The degree of literalness may also be established by the criterion of word consistency (Tov, 1981, p. 60). Using the translation technique can assist the researcher in assessing the variants more effectively.

With all the above-mentioned in mind, the analysis of the variants involves the following procedure: (1) The comparison of the variants with other passages in the Peshitta text of Proverbs itself. (2) The comparison of the verses containing the variants with corresponding verses in other versions (the LXX and Targum) of Proverbs. (3) The comparison of the variants with similar passages in other books (the Peshitta and other versions are used in this case). (4) The comparison of the variants with other verses and/or parts of verses in other texts (these include the MT, LXX and Targum). (5) The study of Christian and Jewish exegetical material that may have a bearing on the variants (e.g. *Midrash Mishle*).

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<sup>9</sup> Tov (1981, p. 53) says: "When analysing translation techniques from the point of view of the translators' attitudes towards the Hebrew text, it is probably best to start from the criteria for literalness, not because literalness formed the basis of most translations, but because these criteria can be defined more easily than those for free renderings."



## 2. The problems of the Peshitta

### 2.1 Introduction

The problems surrounding the Peshitta can be put forward by means of some questions: (1) Who translated the Peshitta? (2) Where and when was the Peshitta translated? (3) Which text(s) served as *Vorlage(n)* for the translation? (4) What are the influences that affected the Peshitta? Although the last question is the primary concern of this study, it cannot be viewed without considering the others, no matter how vague they may be.

If, for instance, it is known for certain that the translation was done by Jews, very little Christian influence may be expected. The date is just as important, however, because the Jews and Christians had varying relationships in Edessa during the course of the centuries that this translation was done. In fact, there were Christian Jews in Edessa as well.<sup>1</sup> Another important factor is the reason for translating the OT into Syriac.<sup>2</sup> In other words, who acted as the target audience of the Peshitta?

According to Haefeli (1927, pp. 7-9) the following should be regarded as reasonable certainties: (1) The Peshitta had its origin in Edessa, which was the city where other important Syriac works were created.<sup>3</sup> The precise time and place are not known. (2) Ephraim Syrus and Jacob of Edessa mention explicitly that "*translators*" were involved in the Peshitta. It is not clear whether they were Jews or Christians.<sup>4</sup> Perles<sup>5</sup> believes that they were Jews on the grounds that the Pentateuch was greatly influenced by the Jewish Halakah and Haggadah. It is important, however, to judge each book on its own merit as well. Proverbs, for instance, was clearly influenced

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- 1 The famous Bishop Rabbulla of Edessa received thousands of Jews into Christianity. Furthermore, the Jewish-Christian sect of the Elkesaites was well known in the region (Segal, 1970, pp. 44, 103).
  - 2 About this Segal (1970, p. 165) says: "The desire of Christians for a standard form of Bible text in Syriac doubtless arose out of the theological controversies conducted in a largely Hellenistic environment, and from the need for the clear expression of accepted dogma."
  - 3 Regarding the predominant role played by Edessa in the Syriac-speaking world, Baumstark (1911, p. 40) states succinctly: "Es ist näherhin Edessa, das hier, eine ähnliche Stellung wie Athen in der Entwicklung der griechischen, Florenz in der Entwicklung der italienischen Sprache und Literatur einnehmend, seinen Dialekt zum einheitlichen Idiom eines ganzen nationalen Schrifttums werden sah."
  - 4 There are diverse opinions concerning the theological convictions of the translator, to which Pinkuss (1894, p. 119) replies: "Die Proverbien boten ja in der That kaum genügende Anknüpfungspunkte für dogmatische Auslegung in jüdischem oder christlichem Sinne." Haefeli (1927, p. 6) also refers to this and adds that coinciding dogmatic connections, which would point to irrevocable Jewish or Christian exegesis, should first be determined before any conclusions concerning the religious background of the translator can be drawn (it should also be considered that possible interpolations came later).

by the LXX, a fact that may exclude Jewish translators, although the Targumic character of the text does not exclude Jewish influence altogether.<sup>6</sup> (3) Haefeli also concludes that it was translated from a Hebrew *Vorlage* that differed very little from the MT. A closer examination of the variants may reveal a *Vorlage* not unlike the one used by the LXX translators. The interdependency of the LXX, Targum and MT suggests some connection among them, although this is not necessarily on the level of their *Vorlagen*. (4) The Peshitta came into being over a considerable period of time and certain interpolations may have occurred in the course of its development. As far as Proverbs is concerned, all the deviations appeared in every ms. of the text of Proverbs, which indicates that the deviations, especially the pluses, were part of the text from the very beginning (cf. paragraph 2.2.4). Most of the differences among the texts and families of texts are of an orthographical nature and involve small units like suffixes.<sup>7</sup>

Other important influences may have contributed to the Peshitta text. The influence of the LXX on the Peshitta is generally accepted,<sup>8</sup> but the nature and the extent of this influence are diverse.<sup>9</sup> The influence of the Targum on the Peshitta has also been researched, but the influence of the Midrash on the Peshitta version of Proverbs has not been treated extensively. Although an attempt has been made to ascertain the influence of the Midrash and other Jewish exegetical material on the deviations in Proverbs, it should be borne in mind that some Midrashic material that may have influenced the text may be lost (Maori, 1975, p. vii).

The religious split in the Syriac church during the fifth century is another possible influence on the Peshitta translation and has wider implications for the reconstruction of the Peshitta text as well.<sup>10</sup> Strictly speaking the different text editions should be compared with one another to see if the division played any part in the

<sup>5</sup> Haefeli refers to his *Meletemata Peschitthoniana*, 1859.

<sup>6</sup> McCullough (1982, p. 25) states: "We might posit, for instance, that the Syriac O.T. was the work of Jewish Christians, and it can be argued that behind parts of it are clear signs of Targumic material."

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the text history, p. i-xii, of the published text.

<sup>8</sup> Dathe, J.A. 1796. *De ratione versionis chaldaicae et syriacae Proverbiorum Salomonis*. Opuscula ad crisin et interpretationem V. T. spectantia, Leipzig; Baethgen, F. 1878. *Untersuchungen über die Psalmen nach der Peschitta*, Kiel; Credner, C. A. 1827. *De prophetarum minorum versionis syriacae, quam Peschitto dicunt indole*, Göttingae.

<sup>9</sup> Cook pp. 40-41 (1988) is of the opinion that Septuagintal influence in the Pentateuch has been overestimated in the past.

<sup>10</sup> The view of Rahlfs (1889, p. 165) would suffice: "Was wir sonst mühsam suchen müssen, ist uns hier durch die Geschichte gegeben: die Handschriften der Peschitta zerfallen in zwei Familien, in die Nestorianischen und Jakobitischen. Dass diese beiden Gruppen sich gegenseitig beeinflusst haben sollten, ist bei dem Gegensatz (sic.) zwischen den Nestorianern und Jakobiten so gut wie ausgeschlossen. Wir können also durch Vergleichung der östlichen and westlichen Gruppe einen gemeinsamen syrischen



translation of the Peshitta. The Leiden edition of the Ambrosian ms. is used in this particular study. There are also other editions. Pinkuss himself compared some editions with each other and according to him it seems on the surface that these editions originated from a common text.<sup>11</sup> If the Peshitta was translated early in the fifth century, one may perhaps not find any anti-Monophysite influences.<sup>12</sup> Koster showed in his study of the text of Exodus that a relationship between the Nestorian and Jacobite mss. and other texts does exist.<sup>13</sup>

Last but not least are the numerous cults that prevailed in the whole Syriac - speaking region.<sup>14</sup> The Peshitta may reflect some antiheretical influences, but since there are so many heretical views to contend with, it is almost impossible to unravel those passages in the Peshitta that speak against a particular sect or cult.

## 2.2 What is the Peshitta?

### 2.2.1 The character of the text

The first impression is that there are no fundamental differences between the Peshitta version of Proverbs and the MT. That may imply that the translator worked from a Hebrew text that did not differ substantially from the

Peschitta-Text herstellen, welcher mindestens so alt ist, wie die Trennung zwischen den Ostsyryern und Westsyryern, also wie das J. 484 oder 489." Cf. also the discussion by Dirksen (1985, pp. 469-484).

- <sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 81: "Ich denke mir also das Verhältnis von a (cod. Ambrosianus) zu u (cod. Urumiaer Ausgabe) derart, dass beide auf einen gemeinsamen Text zurückgehen, der aber nach der Trennung der Kirchen bei den Ost- und Westsyryern eine Umgestaltung erfahren hat. Ein Vertreter dieses gemeinsamen, bei den Nestorianern umgestalteten Textes mag u (Urumiaer Ausgabe) sein, und in so weit mögen die ersten beiden von Rahlfs s. 165 aufgestellten Regeln richtig sein, aber ein Zusammengehen von a und u gegen g (Pariser Polyglotte) ist jetzt nicht mehr an und für sich entscheidend, da die Zeugen sich dann nicht wie 2:1, sondern wie 1:1 verhalten. Est ist also auch hier, wie bei Regel 2 eine besondere Untersuchung nötig, auf welcher Seite ein blosser Fehler, oder eine absichtliche Korrektur vorliegt."
- <sup>12</sup> Hiba, the successor to Bishop Rabbula (who died in 435/6) in the see of Edessa, was not unfavourable to the Nestorian party (Segal, 1970, p. 93).
- <sup>13</sup> Koster (1977, pp. 529-532) states in his general conclusions that the text of the Western (Jacobite) tradition is very closely related to the ancient mss. (An-mss.), while the Eastern (Nestorian) tradition is close to what he calls the standard text - "TR, the standard text, was originally none other than the text of the oldest Nestorian authorities, complete mss. as well as mas and l-mss. Therefore, with the Peshitta we do not have to abandon, as so often happens, a possible distinction between the eastern and western tradition in order to show all the more clearly the discrepancy between the text of the ancient and the later mss., for these two divisions coincide for the greater part: the difference between the western and eastern text is expressed in the differentiation between the BTR (An-mss.) and the TR text."
- <sup>14</sup> The most important ones were the Gnostics, followers of Marcion in particular. Then there were the Manicheans, Elkesaites, Sabians and a number of pagan cults incorporated from neighbouring centres like Hierapolis (Segal, 1970, pp. 54-56).

MT.<sup>15</sup> This seems to be the general consensus, but a detailed study may still refute this probability. This does not mean that the Hebrew *Vorlage* is slavishly followed, or that every single word of the Hebrew was translated punctiliously, irrespective of the results. The translation character displays a rather flexible approach that would still do justice to the meaning of the Hebrew text.

The style of translation in the Peshitta indicates a distinct inclination on the part of the translator towards simplicity and fluidity. There are many examples of this.

Sometimes the translator made use of double translation (cf. 17. 3 *מִצְרָף כַּמָּ - צִפָּא* and 17. 9 *אֶלֶף 9 - אֶלֶף 9*), omissions<sup>16</sup> and reformulations<sup>17</sup> to explain difficult Hebrew concepts and sentences. Certain verbs, conjunctions and suffixes are also treated freely in the Syriac rendition. The translator used the status constructus instead of adjectives and concrete concepts instead of abstracts.<sup>18</sup> Hebrew synonyms are sometimes rendered with one word (2. 16, 7. 5, 8. 19) and two different Hebrew words by one Syriac word<sup>19</sup> (in such cases often with simpler, more general terms). Single Hebrew terms do not escape the tendency towards simplification either (8. 27 and 29 *חֹק* becomes *בְּבָר* and 10. 31 *יָנַב* becomes *בְּבֹלַב*). Questions, especially rhetorical questions, are sometimes replaced by a negation (5. 20), confirmation (16. 16, 22. 27), denial or even conditional sentence (23. 25).

The translator sometimes departed from his *Vorlage* as well. This does not mean that he altered the meaning of his text, but rather that he made a concerted effort to render the Syriac legible to the common reader. He deviated from the compendious and formal Hebrew style by inserting more particles like *ו* and *אֲלֵא*. This means that

<sup>15</sup> Existing differences that may be present, can already from the outset be explained by the fact that, as Haefeli (1927, p. 7) puts it: "...die hebräische Textvorlage unpunktiert war, oder gehen aus einer bestimmten Übersetzungsmanier hervor."

<sup>16</sup> In 17. 14<sup>b</sup> *וְלִפְנֵי הַתְּגִלָּע הָרִיב גָּשׁוּשׁ* ("quit before the quarrel breaks out") is translated as *הַבְּרָב מִתְּרָא* instead. The translator shortened the Syriac reading without damaging the sense at all. There are other more extensive omissions that involve small elements in the translation and were considered superfluous by the translator. Real minuses are very rare in the Peshitta text. Examples of the omissions are 1. 23 *הַנְּהָה*, 24. 31 *וְהַנְּהָה*, 11. 23 *אֵךְ*, 20. 10 *גַּם*, 10. 22 *הָיָא*, etc.

<sup>17</sup> A good example of such a reformulation is 12. 14<sup>a</sup>, where *מִפְּרִי פִי־אִישׁ יִשְׁבַּע־טוֹב* ("From the fruit of a man's lips he is filled with good things") in the MT is translated *הַטָּוֹב מִפְּרִי פִי־אִישׁ נִמְלֵא* ("the good man is filled by the fruit of his mouth"). The Peshitta interpretation avoids ethical difficulties by qualifying the "man." The Hebrew statement may have been understood by the Peshitta translator to mean that a man will be rewarded for the better, irrespective of what such a man produces in speech; this is clearly in violation of the expressed view of Proverbs that *wisdom* is rewarded.

<sup>18</sup> In 25. 12 *שָׁמַעַת עַל־אָזְנוֹן שְׁמַעַת* is rendered as *מִדְּבַר דְּבַר מִדְּבַר*; cf. 9. 6, 11. 14, 24. 9, etc.

<sup>19</sup> In 26. 3 *שֵׁבֶט* ("strap") and *מִתְּנָה* ("halter") are both rendered *וּמֵטָא* ("rod"); in 28. 3 *רֶשֶׁת* and *רֶשֶׁת* are rendered as *רֶשֶׁת*. Other instances appear in 8. 28 and 34, 10. 28, 11. 27, 15. 1, etc.



there are far more particles in the Peshitta version than can be accounted for in the MT.<sup>20</sup> In the first seven chapters alone some 74 particles, mostly  $\alpha$ 's, were inserted in the translation.<sup>21</sup> There may be some cases where the translator made some haplographical mistakes (6. 32, 28, 25).

## 2.2.2 The Peshitta and the LXX

Although the existence of a relation between the Peshitta and the LXX is generally accepted, there is no agreement on the nature of this particular relation.<sup>22</sup> The versions themselves contain inherent difficulties, which should be considered. Neither the Peshitta, nor the LXX is a homogeneous work. This means that numerous translators/redactors perhaps participated in the development of both texts. Furthermore, the Peshitta text, used as basis for this study, is not an established text. Indeed, both texts comprise readings from various mss. (cf. Di Lella, 1979, p. vii; Rahlfs, 1971, pp. vi-xiv). Text-critically, it is proper that all mss. should be compared with each other.<sup>23</sup> It is also a known fact that different groups of translators worked on the LXX. The same applies to the Peshitta to some extent. It is not clear whether Proverbs was translated by one or more translators.

The difficulty in determining the relation between the Peshitta and the LXX is compounded by the fact that the influence is of a sporadic nature (Barnes, 1901, p. 187; Goshen-Gottstein, 1963, p. 140). The Peshitta does not follow the LXX in all cases. The LXX also has far more pluses than the Peshitta. The interpolations from the LXX in the Peshitta are not consistent and lack an evident method.<sup>24</sup> The only significant factor may be that so many agreements between the Peshitta and the LXX involve unclear or corrupt readings.

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<sup>20</sup> This has major implications for a workable definition of the translation technique involved. Do we consider all these particles pluses or should we rather approach the translator's literalness from the point of view of the overall meaning of the sentence?

<sup>21</sup> Cook (1985a, p. 20) states that the Peshitta translator had a preference for syndetic constructions, which is clearly evident in the Proverbs version.

<sup>22</sup> Baumgartner, for instance, accepts the utilisation of the LXX by the Peshitta, but he rejects the view that it was employed by the translator at the beginning of the translation. The interpolations and alterations occurred much later; perhaps they were made in the seventh century by Paul of Tella. Pinkuss states that the LXX was directly used by the translator himself (Haefeli, 1927, p. 42; Pinkuss, 1894, p. 104 f.).

<sup>23</sup> Fortunately, in the case of the Syriac translation, practically all variants in Proverbs, which reveal substantial connections with the LXX, appear in all the Syriac mss. with very little alterations, if any. This can point to the possibility that the insertions appeared at a very early stage, if not right in the beginning of the translation process of the Peshitta (cf. paragraph 2.2.4).

<sup>24</sup> One of the characteristics of the style of translation, already mentioned above, is the translator's preference for syndetic constructions. Particles like  $\text{ܐܘܪܝܢ}$  and  $\text{ܐܘܪܝܢܐ}$  occur 10 times in the first six chapters of Proverbs and in these cases there is an equivalent in the MT in only one instance, i.e. Prov. 6.26 ( $\text{׀ָ׀}$ ). A number of these particles have equivalents in the LXX, although some do not. The question is whether



### 2.2.3 The Peshitta and the Targum

There is also a relation between the Peshitta text of Proverbs and the Targum of Proverbs. This is particularly clear when the Targum of Proverbs is compared with other Targums. The main difference between the Targum of Proverbs and other Targums is that the Targum of Proverbs discloses Syriac linguistic characteristics<sup>25</sup> and substantially shares the exegesis of the Peshitta.<sup>26</sup> It has numerous Syriac forms and words. The Targum of Proverbs also lacks the extensive paraphrases found in the LXX and Peshitta; neither is there any haggadic material.<sup>27</sup> It does not even share important additions like Prov. 9. 12 and 18 with the Peshitta.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, the main question is whether the Peshitta actually had the Targum as *Vorlage*. The opinions on the priority of the Targum are varied.<sup>29</sup> Given the evidence of the Syriac influence and the characteristics of the Targum it seems plausible that the Targum made use of the Peshitta rather than the other way round.<sup>30</sup> In a

these particles are translated from the Greek or whether some of them at least should be regarded as resulting from the translator's own style.

- <sup>25</sup> Pinkuss (1894, p. 110) writes: "Die Sprache ist von vorwiegend Syrischer Färbung, der Wortschatz, Erscheinungen in Deklination und Konjugation sind grösstenteils syrisch. Mehr noch als das Angeführte spricht für die Priorität von S der Umstand, dass T an mehr als 100 Stellen, wie ich oben gezeigt habe, mit G übereinstimmt, wo auch S = G ist, und was noch mehr entscheidet, auch an einer Anzahl der Stellen, wo S wörtlich = G ist."
- <sup>26</sup> The Targum follows the MT closely and the characteristics that it shares with the Peshitta do not apply to the pluses, because there are virtually none at all in the Targum (cf. 24. 14, 28. 1 and footnote 35). The Targum apparently agrees with the Peshitta in no less than 300 of the 915 verses (cf. Haefeli, 1927, p. 43; Kaminka, 1931/2, p. 171).
- <sup>27</sup> Cf. Haefeli (1927, p. 43): "es findet sich in diesem Targum keine haggadischen Auslegungen wie in den andern Hagiographen und keine Paraphrasen wie in den Targumen zu Job und zu den Psalmen."
- <sup>28</sup> These two particular verses are good examples of how the Targum, in spite of translating *only* the Hebrew, still utilised the Peshitta to give an intelligible reading. In 9. 12 לך is replaced by לנפשך = לנפשי ("yourself") and לץ is rendered as אמ תהוי ממיק ("If you are scoffing"); it reveals grammatical similarities with אמ תהוי ממיק in the Peshitta. In 9. 18 כל = כל (which is lacking in the MT).
- <sup>29</sup> Kaminka (1931/2, p. 173) is of the opinion that the coinciding deviations of the Targum and the LXX suggest that the Targum is based on an early, pre-tannaitic *Vorlage* (third century B.C.) and that this is also used by the LXX (p. 174). In one of his examples, Prov. 31. 8 in the Peshitta is compared with two words in the LXX - λόγῳ θεοῦ (with להלין in the Targum) - unfortunately the rest of the clause in the Targum דלא מסטו דין - is ignored, which may be an interpretation of the Syriac בתבואה ארמה צדקה. The Peshitta may be based on the LXX and/or on v. 9 and the avoidance of θεοῦ is perhaps due to the translator's reluctance to sound disrespectful as is the case in Prov. 14. 31, 16. 4, etc. He also ignores the numerous comparisons with the Peshitta and the fact that the Peshitta shares all the instances of agreement between the Targum and LXX (Pinkuss, 1894, p. 110; Haefeli, 1927, p. 43).
- <sup>30</sup> Examples of this are the use of אף (= אף in the Peshitta; cf. 1. 2 and 3. 19) instead of אף and words ending in ן (3. m. pl.) instead of ן (cf. 4. 25, 5. 17, and 11. 3).



number of cases the Targum also agrees with the Peshitta as opposed to the MT.<sup>31</sup> Thus either the Targum and the Peshitta are based upon the same *Vorlage*, or the Targum was composed under the influence of the Peshitta (Levine, 1981, p. 12). There is grammatical evidence to support the priority of the Peshitta.<sup>32</sup> Regarding the LXX, Pinkuss (1894, p. 110) states that, because of national resistance towards the Greek translation, the LXX could hardly have served as a *Vorlage* for the Targum translation.<sup>33</sup> However, this would depend on the dating of the Targum text.

A very important characteristic of the Targum is the fact that it contains numerous anti-anthropomorphisms (10. 2, 19. 2, 24. 9, etc.) of which only a few instances (21. 13, 22. 11 and 28. 13) are shared with the Peshitta. However, the Peshitta translator did alter certain readings that he thought may be interpreted or perceived as being disrespectful towards God. Verses that may present God as having human traits were avoided as well.<sup>34</sup>

#### 2.2.4 The text history and the pluses

Ms. B. 21 (7a1) Inferiore of the Ambrosian Library in Milan is the basis of the published text (by E.J Brill, Leiden, 1979) from which this study is made. Almost every ms. dated later than the 12th century has also been included in this study. This text is also the basis of the Peshitta database (cf. Cook, 1985a, p. 166).

Only the most prominent pluses will be discussed here to indicate that variants - and pluses<sup>35</sup> in particular - were part of the Peshitta text at an early stage, if not at the very beginning, of the translation.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. 1. 7, 4. 26, 5. 9, 7. 22 f., 9. 11, 16. 4, etc.

<sup>32</sup> Baumgartner argues that a number of "falsche Lesarten" in the Targum are undoubtedly caused by a defective understanding of the Syriac language. The Targum made use of the Syriac  $\Delta$  instead of the Aramaic  $\text{יָת}$  as a sign of the accusative. Also of interest are translations in the Targum that display a tendency to compromise: in 11. 15  $\text{נֶר}$  is translated as  $\Delta$   $\text{נֶר־מֵאֵל}$  in the Peshitta; the Targum retains  $\text{זֶר (= חִילוּנִי)}$  and adds  $\text{לְזִרְיָא}$ . In 17. 14  $\text{מִיָּמִים, פְּנִיָּסָר}$  reads  $\text{רֵאֵא צַר וְנֹחַ}$  in the Peshitta; the Targum reads  $\text{אֲשִׁיר דְּמֵא הֵיךְ מִיָּא}$ . More examples appear in 10. 4, 13. 15, 17. 12, 27. 29, etc.

<sup>33</sup> In the tractate Sopherim 1,7 it says: "The day on which the Greek translation was made was as difficult for Israel as the day on which Israel made the Golden Calf in the Wilderness; for the Torah could not be translated adequately" (Orlinsky, 1975, p. 10; Strack, 1961, p. 414, vol. IV.1).

<sup>34</sup> In 3. 34  $\text{יְלִיץ - הַנִּסְעָה}$ , 14. 31  $\text{חֲרָף}$  (LXX; cf. 17. 5), 16. 4<sup>b</sup> (LXX), 3. 30 -  $\text{גְּמֻלָּהּ רָעָה}$ , 10. 12  $\text{אֲמַרְלָא גְּמֻלָּהּ רָעָה}$ , 29. 14  $\text{תִּכְסֶּה אֶתְרַבָּה}$ , 29. 18  $\text{בְּאֵין חֲזוֹן}$  and 29. 14  $\text{דְּרַלִּים}$ . The Targum goes even further in some instances: cf. 10. 2, 19. 2, 24. 9, etc.

<sup>35</sup> Pluses are those additions in the Peshitta text (compared to the MT) that add to the meaning of the Hebrew text in any particular verse. This implies that many small additions like the  $\text{א}$  will not be discussed, unless there are cases where they do indeed influence the meaning of the text to such an extent that their insertion cannot be regarded as merely part of the style or technique of the Peshitta translator, but that an external influence can be substantiated.

The first plus, **וסא** in Prov. 1. 16, appears unaltered in every ms., without exception. The same applies to the two adjectives of 2. 11. The substantial plus - "and my law like the pupil of the eye" in 4. 4 - appears in all mss. and the only difference in this verse is the **א** that appears before **ל** in mss. 9c1, 9I5, 10c1.2, 11c1, etc. This has no real implication for the plus with regard to the possible external influence in these sentences, since the plus probably appeared quite early in the history of the Peshitta text.

Two of the most significant pluses in Proverbs are 9. 12 and 9. 18. Both are long pluses and they agree substantially with the LXX readings of these two verses. All Syriac mss. contain these pluses and the variations in the various texts stem from corrections and/or faulty interpretations by the copyist of the later text(s). For instance in 9I1, **ל** **ל** **ל** **ל** **ל** reads **ל** **ל** **ל** **ל** **ל**, while **א** is omitted, **ל** is singular in 12a1 fam., **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** reads **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** in 9I5 and 1111.4, **א** **א** **א** reads **א** **א** **א** in 6h16 and **א** **א** **א** is **א** **א** **א** in 12a1 fam. In 9. 18 **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** reads **א** **א** **א** **א** **א**, **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** reads **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** in 7h6, 8a1, 9I1, etc. and **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** reads **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** in 8a1. It is clear that the majority of the pluses are not affected in the mss. and that they were probably always considered as part of the text of Proverbs from its beginning.

The plus in 10. 25 appears without alteration in all the other mss.. The plus in 11. 16 appears unchanged in all mss. and in 12a1 only one word of the plus reads **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** instead of **א** **א** **א** **א** **א**. In 11. 29 **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** is written with a **א** in some mss. (8a1, 9I5, etc.) and **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** is without **א** in 12a1 fam. This does not affect the meaning of the sentence or the plus at all. The plus in 13. 13 appears in all mss. and the only deviation in this verse is **א** **א** **א** **א** **א**, which reads **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** in 6h16 and has no influence on the meaning of the verse. In the case of 13. 23 all the mss. concur.

The two doublets in 14. 22 appear unchanged in all mss. and only in 7h6 does **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** appear without a **א**. In 14. 23 the plus has no deviation in any ms. and in only two cases do **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** and **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** read **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** (in 11c1) and **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** (in 11I5), respectively. In 14. 35 there is an extra **א** before **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** in several mss. and **א** before **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** in 11c1.

Prov. 6. 19 has no deviation among the mss. and in the case of 16. 23 the noun **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** is lacking in 12a fam. (this is probably due to a reading mistake). Prov. 17. 9, 18. 3 and 18. 22 agree in all mss. In Prov. 19. 14 **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** reads **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** in 7a1 and in 7h6, leaving the plus untouched (cf. 17. 2, where 7a1 reads the same word). The sentence in 19. 22 reads substantially the same in all mss., with only minor differences such as the omission of the **א** before **א** **א** **א** **א** **א** in 12a1 fam.

Prov. 20. 4 and 15 have no different readings in any ms. In 20. 19 the plus is lacking in 9c1, 10c1, 11c1 and 12a1 fam. However, all the earlier mss. and some of the later mss. contain this addition. As far as external influence is concerned, this plus was inserted in the Peshitta text at an earlier stage of its development and later omissions can perhaps be regarded as corrections, since this particular plus is somewhat superfluous and it was

obviously inserted from another verse.<sup>36</sup> Chapter 21. 13 and 19 have no deviations in any of the mss. Prov. 22. 3 has small changes like an extra  $\text{ܐ}$  in only one ms. (6h16) and  $\text{ܐܘܢܝܢܐ}$  and  $\text{ܕܒܝܢܐ}$  are singular in this particular ms. as well. Prov. 22. 10 has one orthographical change in 11c1. In 22. 11 the  $\Delta$  ( the accusative sign before  $\text{ܐܘܪܝܢܐ}$  ) is lacking in 12a1 fam., but it does not affect the plus in the least. The same applies to 22. 13 where one difference of preposition (  $\text{ܕܒܝܢܐ}$  for  $\text{ܒܝܢܐ}$  ) in 7h6 does not alter the meaning of the Syriac text. In 23. 30 the  $\text{ܐ}$  before  $\text{ܕܘܪܝܢܐ}$  is omitted from 7a1 and 10c2, while  $\text{ܕܒܝܢܐܘܪܝܢܐ}$  is lacking in 6h16, 7h6 and 8a1 (probably considered superfluous in this context). The long plus appears in all mss.

A change in orthography in one ms. and the lack of one  $\text{ܐ}$  in another ms. do not affect the plus or the phrases of Prov. 25. 13 at all. There is a substantial addition in 25. 20, which is represented in all mss., and only  $\text{ܐܘܢܝܢܐ}$  (probably considered tautological, because there is another  $\text{ܐܘܢܝܢܐ}$  next to it) is lacking in 9c1 and 12a1, while  $\text{ܕܘܪܝܢܐ}$  is plural in 8a1, 9c1, 10c1.2 and 11c1. In 26. 13  $\text{ܕܘܪܝܢܐ}$  reads  $\text{ܕܘܪܝܢܐܘܪܝܢܐ}$  in 7h6 and seems to be a correction based on 22. 13.

In 27. 21  $\text{ܕܘܪܝܢܐ}$  is omitted in 7h6 and 8a1 and is perhaps superfluous, since  $\text{ܕܘܪܝܢܐ}$  does convey the meaning of "crucible". Once again, this omission does not affect the plus, which is present in all mss. without alteration. For 28. 13 there is one change in orthography in 12a1 fam. and the important plus -  $\text{ܕܘܪܝܢܐ}$  - is present in all Peshitta mss.

An important variant is  $\text{ܕܘܪܝܢܐܘܪܝܢܐ}$  in Prov. 30. 30, which appears in all the mss.

It is clear that most of the differences among mss. result from ordinary grammatical or reading mistakes, which are commonly associated with copying from one text to another. There are some rare corrections that can easily be explained in the context of the sentence, or the book as a whole (cf. 26. 13). The basic influences that were prevalent at the very beginning of the translation of Proverbs may have largely been unaffected by the repeated translation and copying of texts in the course of the development of the Peshitta translation.

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<sup>36</sup> It is probably inserted from 10. 14, which gives the same view expressed here in 20. 19; cf. the discussion of this verse in **chapter 20** of the study.



### 3. Translation technique

#### 3.1 Introduction

Translation technique is crucial for the correct identification and judgement of the variations in the Peshitta version of the book of Proverbs. The medieval ideal of word-for-word translation had its beginnings in Bible translations. When Jerome referred to "the Holy Scriptures, where even the word order is a mystery", he did not refer to a new ideal, but rather to the experience of five centuries of Bible translation (Brock, 1984, p. 81). The dilemma then, as now, was the tension between a *verbum e verbo* and a *sensus de sensu* translation. In other words, the translator attempted either to bring the reader closer to the original, which is the aim of a *verbum e verbo* translation, or to bring the original closer to the reader, as the case with a *sensus de sensu* translation.

During the course of his work the translator himself was confronted with a choice regarding his technique. The approach of the translator towards his task was influenced by several factors. Firstly, he had to determine the nature of the text. Secondly, he needed to assess the importance of the two languages involved and, finally, he had to ascertain the extent to which the source language was still understood (Brock, 1984, p. 73). In the case of Syriac, the Greek language had a considerable influence on the development of the Syriac language. The translation of the Bible in particular provided the Syriac-speaking world with a ready-made paradigm of style, vocabulary and idiom within which intellectual discourse and literature could be produced (cf. McCullough, 1982, p. 9).

In the West, the practice of *verbum e verbo* translation was wellknown some time before the period of biblical translation commenced. Roman administrative and legal documents were translated quite literally so that the reader could understand the precise meaning of the original language. In other words, the Greek language always referred the reader to the Latin. The Greek text (of a legal document, for instance) is a word-for-word translation of the Latin, irrespective of the clarity of the Greek rendering to the reader. If the reader understood Latin well he could easily have reconstructed the Latin from the Greek. In cases where the text was too obscure, it was elucidated by an expositor.<sup>1</sup> The expositor had an important role to play as long as literal translations were the norm and where none existed it became imperative to render translations more freely (Brock, 1984, p. 78).

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the matter of translation technique in a bilingual milieu Brock (1984, p. 74) states: "The availability of such an expositor is essential if the techniques of literal translation are to be pushed to the extreme. Thus the literal school of Greek biblical translation, culminating in the work of Aquila (early second century), is only a practical proposition in Palestine, where many Jews were bilingual: this is why the Egyptian Jews, to whom Hebrew was mostly unknown, chose to regard the Septuagint as inspired rather than to correct it and thus render it virtually unintelligible. Likewise the Syriac school of translators



The role played by the prestige of a language is well illustrated by the history of the Syriac translations from Greek. The earliest examples from the fourth and fifth centuries were translated freely into Syriac and Greek idioms were rendered in words that would be easily understood by the reader. From about the middle of the fifth century the Syriac church came under Hellenistic influence and suddenly the Greek wording became important, while the importance of Syriac waned.<sup>2</sup> Even biblical quotes coincided with the Greek renditions at the cost of the Syriac Bible.<sup>3</sup> This new importance afforded to the Greek language of necessity altered the translation technique of translators. The translator's whole approach to the text is influenced by the prestige of any given language. We can thus expect Hellenistic influences in a milieu where an international language like Greek was respected to such a considerable degree. Whether this influence is prevalent in the Peshitta is entirely dependent on the date and locality of the Peshitta translation.

The case is different for religious texts. It was considered more important to bring the reader closer to the text.<sup>4</sup> In ancient Egypt there was a general suspicion of any translation. When translation was finally practised the original language dominated and a literal approach was followed. Later, Judaism also objected to translations, primarily to protect Jewish cultural life against domination by larger cultures. The Hebrew Bible was the focal point of Jewish national life (Brock, 1984, p. 79 ff.).

In the Christian church literal translations became important for different reasons. In the biblical sphere the Septuagint became the authoritative text. Controversy with the Jews compelled the church to obtain a text that corresponded with the Jewish text; the result was the Hexapla of Origin.

Outside the Bible, literalness became important due to the swift dissemination of sects. The avoidance of dubious readings in translations of orthodox writers became paramount. This was to dispel any accusation of heretical views on the part of the translator and to protect the common reader against such views.

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of patristic and biblical literature was also the product of a bilingual culture where the source language had an overriding prestige."

<sup>2</sup> Numerous works were translated into Syriac; among them the writings of Clement, Titus of Bostra and Eusebius, and other theological treatises. The Schools of Edessa were responsible for Nestorius, Diodorus of Tarsus (before 435) and many other Greek authors (Segal, 1970, p. 165 - 166).

<sup>3</sup> This factor can never be underestimated in the study of the Peshitta either. In so many instances (discussed further on) Proverbs in the Peshitta does not merely follow the Greek language, i.e. with regard to the structure of the verses and the meaning of words. In fact, the Greek version of Proverbs itself commanded respect and therefore the interpretation of the Greek readings was trusted in difficult cases (examples of this are also discussed further on, from chapters 1 to 31).

<sup>4</sup> This probably applied to the Peshitta. The reader was important to the translator and the importance of the LXX, coupled with the various sects and cults in Mesopotamia, all contributed to the technique followed in the rendering of Proverbs into Syriac.

Literal translations can inhibit the translator as well. He has to find new techniques to translate the source language. Certain syntactical anomalies are created in order to deal with a *verbum e verbo* translation and should not be automatically attributed to an inability to translate. The receptor language and not the source language was the translator's first language. The development of the Syriac language was also enhanced by Greek influence.<sup>5</sup>

Lastly, it needs to be mentioned that the categories "literal" and "free" are not absolute, but relative and are also subject to the definition of "literal" employed. The modern concept of "free" generally did not exist in the world of the LXX or biblical translation (Barr, 1979, p. 281).<sup>6</sup>

### 3.2 Lexical features

Technical terms form one category of lexical features and there are various ways to translate them, e.g. transcription, etymological translation (usually a neologism), or a cultural equivalent. A general lexical similarity is usually the aim, the focus being on what the translator may consider the most important elements in the vocabulary of the source language. This practice ignores the possibility that concurrences in any two languages do not have the same semantic field. In the minds of past translators the importance of using the same word in the receptor language might have overshadowed all other considerations. However, sometimes the process of analogy aided the techniques of literal translations. Features that already exist in the receptor language were stretched to the limit to serve their purposes. An example of this is the manipulation of the Greek reflexive pronoun. In Syriac literature ܡܢܐ can be found after a word like ܡܫܘܒܐ, indicating the ethical dative (also after verbs, especially of motion). The seventh century translator used this as a good equivalent for *σέαυτόν*. Analogous to this, many new equivalents appeared that were distinctly non-Syriac; *σέαυτόν*, *έαυτόν*, etc., became ܡܢܐ, ܕܢܐ, ܕܢܐܡ, ܕܢܐܡ, etc.

Another important lexical feature especially relevant to Proverbs, is the importance of metaphors. Metaphors, by implication, may defy literalness, since the receptor language operates in a different cultural milieu and may never be satisfactorily translated from a literal point of view.

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<sup>5</sup> The translation of the church's Scriptures into Syriac gave the language a ready-made model for all prose and poetry in the Syriac church. All the important Syriac writers were to reflect the language, idiom and thought of the Scriptures (cf. McCullough, 1982, p. 26).

<sup>6</sup> Barr (1979, p. 281) mentions "types" of literalness. For instance, depending on our definition of literalness and the extent to which a translation deviates from it, the freedom of such a translation can be established. Books, like Proverbs, that may be considered free translations also contain literal methods in translation. Thus literalness sometimes means that these methods were practised more constantly.



### 3.3 The translation technique followed in Proverbs (Peshitta)

Several criteria are applied to establish a workable translation technique for the translator of Proverbs. These criteria are: word consistency, the representation of all Hebrew elements with relevant Syriac equivalents, word order, quantitative representation and the linguistic appropriateness of lexical choices.<sup>7</sup> The first criterion can be investigated successfully with the aid of the computer (cf. Cook, 1985, p. 8; Cook, 1988, p. 35 ff.). It should be stressed that the results can serve only as a guideline and cannot replace the manual investigation of each instance, particularly in cases where there are major differences. The same applies to other criteria. What may seem like a very free rendering may in fact be a legitimate translation when seen within the context of the text itself and when some factors beyond the scope of the above-mentioned criteria are borne in mind.

#### 3.3.1 Representation of Hebrew elements with Syriac equivalents

A logical consequence of consistency is that translators divided the Hebrew text into meaningful segments that are represented by Syriac equivalents. This segmentation can be easily done by computer. But here problems may also arise. In Proverbs for instance, there are cases where some elements that appear in the Peshitta translation have no lexical equivalents in the Hebrew text, although these elements may be *implied* in the Hebrew text and omitted for various reasons.

#### 3.3.2 Word order

In the case of biblical translation where word order was once considered sacred, the reproduction of the correct word order may be essential. The consistent representation of word order can be a very clear feature of a literal translation. Problems may arise if the receptor language has only one equivalent for two different words in the source language, or vice versa.<sup>8</sup> The book of Proverbs, however, presents its own unique problems. For instance, in various cases the prosaic style of Proverbs in the Hebrew text ignores word order for the sake of rhyme or it demands an unnatural word order for reasons of parallelism, chiasm or emphasis. The Peshitta translator was forced to change the word order to render the sentences meaningful for the Syriac reader.

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<sup>7</sup> These definitions of Tov's agree basically with Barr's "distinguishable modes of difference" between literal and nonliteral translations: (1) The division into elements or segments, and the sequence in which these elements are represented. (2) The quantitative addition or subtraction of elements. (3) Consistency or non-consistency in the rendering, i.e. the degree to which a particular versional term is used for all (or most) cases of a particular term of the original. (4) Accuracy and level of semantic information, especially in cases of metaphor and idiom. (5) Coded etymological indication of formal/semantic relationships obtaining in the vocabulary of the original language. (6) Level of text and level of analysis.

<sup>8</sup> One example is the Hebrew infinitive absolute, which has no equivalent in Syriac. This is reproduced as ܝܘܡ + ܐ, after which a perfectum, imperfectum or participle follows.

Furthermore, the Hebrew word order, being sometimes forced, could be interpreted in various ways. Neither could the Syriac translator be accused of nonliteralness in the face of rendering the Syriac unintelligible or too cryptically should he have retained the Hebrew word order.

### 3.3.3 Quantitative representation

Because of stereotyping and a literal approach in general, some translators find it imperative to translate each element with a corresponding concept in the receptor language. Others did not hesitate to add descriptive elements or to subtract whatever they considered superfluous also in the name of literalness. Quantitative representation was not important to the Peshitta translator of Proverbs and, due to the cryptic style of the Hebrew and grammatical peculiarities of Syriac, perhaps impossible as well. Examples of both are Prov. 21. 1, where  $\text{אָרְטָא דְּפָא דִּתְבָא לְבַת דְּתַלְמָא בְּאַרְמֵתָא}$ , reads  $\text{אָרְטָא דְּפָא דִּתְבָא לְבַת דְּתַלְמָא בְּאַרְמֵתָא}$  in the Peshitta, and Prov. 20. 12, where  $\text{גַּם־שֹׁנִיָּהִם}$  reads merely  $\text{אַתְּ}$  in the Peshitta. The Peshitta simplified various idiomatic Hebrew phrases with more or fewer words as well. Whereas the MT text is cryptic, with no apparent connection between independent sentences (especially from chapter 9 onwards), the Peshitta treats every sentence as ordinary, logical, fluent readings with very real connections with other verses in the immediate vicinity of the readings, and with comparable readings elsewhere in the text as well. Thus, this whole approach to the text precludes an exact quantitative representation of the Hebrew in Syriac.

### 3.3.4 Word consistency

If the translation of Proverbs is to be considered a literal one, the translator needed to translate, as best he could, every Hebrew element, root or construction with exactly the same Syriac equivalent throughout the entire text. A statistical analysis of the trend cannot consider the context of each sentence, although it does give some indication of the literalness of a given translation. To add to the perspective of the translation technique, cognisance should be taken of the exceptions, if any, among the various words studied. In Proverbs there are a number of words that characterise the central themes of the book, which seemed appropriate for such an analysis, especially words that contain concepts such as wisdom, foolishness and teaching.

Where the translator made a lexical choice, the extent to which he retained the choice should be studied. For instance, the context, limitations of the receptor language, and his own style may have forced the translator to choose another synonym. In such cases the translation may not be considered nonliteral. As long as the semantic field of these words covers the same ground it remains a literal translation. Other considerations in Proverbs like harmonisation, moralisation and own inner convictions may have prompted the translator to use



another word. That the Syriac translator of Proverbs was particularly subtle in this regard is evident from the analysis of the following words.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.3.4.1" Chastening" (מוסר)

There are 27 instances of מוסר in Proverbs, of which 23 are rendered as נכריה א in the Peshitta. The general Greek term in the LXX is παιδελα. The first exception in the Peshitta is 1. 8, where נכה א ("law") is read instead (παιδελα in the LXX). The Peshitta reading may be a harmonisation with תורת in the second clause of the same verse. In 7. 22 מוסר is rendered as א פהו ח ("chain") in the Peshitta text (δεσμους in the LXX). Fichtner (*BH*, p. 1103) mentions that other versions have a different vocalisation for מוסר. The Hebrew of this whole clause is uncertain and the Peshitta may have been influenced by the LXX,<sup>10</sup> or it had a different Hebrew *Vorlage*. In 13. 24 and 15. 33<sup>11</sup> the Peshitta reads זר א and אנה א, <sup>12</sup> respectively (παιδεύει, παιδελα in the LXX). Both words are synonyms of מוסר and appropriate in their contexts.

### 3.3.4.2" Wisdom" (חכם)

Of the abundant instances of the word "wisdom" 35 occurrences read חכמה in Proverbs. The Peshitta version differs from the MT in only two readings - the rest of the version reads אנה א consistently. In 15. 33 and 28. 26 it is translated as אנה א and אנה א, respectively (the LXX reads σοφλα in both instances). Prov. 15. 33 in the Peshitta is perhaps a harmonisation with 16. 21, 22 and should be judged in that context. Prov. 28. 26 likewise may be based on 2. 7 and 10. 9.

In Proverbs חכם is translated quite consistently with the term אנה א (also אנה א). The only deviation is in Prov. 11. 30, where the whole sentence has a different meaning in the Peshitta and it is either based on a

<sup>9</sup> Since the following words have been obtained from the *CATTS* Database it was inevitable that words with different meanings, but with similar roots, would also be identified in the course of the search. These derivatives were not discarded, because they throw some light on the relation between the versions and consequently they are also included under the different headings. Because the important deviations will be analysed more extensively further on in this study and include many of the words, the discussion of the words is cursory and serves merely to be indicative of the main contention that the translation technique of the Peshitta version of Proverbs is relatively literal and that a statistical utilisation of *word consistency* is not sufficient grounds for judging literalness.

<sup>10</sup> The Peshitta follows the LXX in the whole clause - "like a dog in chains."

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the discussion of חכם in the next paragraph.

<sup>12</sup> Important mss. like 7a1 and 7h6 read אנה א (= "spring," "source") instead. This is probably due to deliberate harmonisation with 16. 22 and the reading in these mss. should not be accepted.

different *Vorlage*, or it is interpreted differently.<sup>13</sup> Either way, it should not be judged on the same terms as other cases. The fact is that a "wrong" reading of the *Vorlage* cannot serve as a basis for establishing word consistency with the intent of establishing the translation technique of this text as a whole. In any case, חכם is translated consistently in the Peshitta.

חֲכָמִים appears in 1. 20; 9. 1; 14, 1 and 24. 7 and there are a further 16 cases of חכמים, which are all translated with עֲבַנְתָּא, עֲבַנְתָּוּא, etc.

### 3.3.4.3 "Discern" (בין)

There are 48 different cases of בין in Proverbs. In the Peshitta 34 of them read some form of the root **ב.נ.ב**. In six cases **ע.ב.נ** is used and in five others **ב.נ.ב**. In 23.1 **א.צ.ו.ה.ר.ב** is used for **בין תבין** and in a sense may represent a minus. The first three variants are practical choices and have no influence on the literalness of the translation from a semantic point of view. However, it is unclear why these variations are used and there is no clear contextual pattern for their preference. Theological tendencies may also be ruled out and it is perhaps only intertextual harmonisations that may throw some light on them.

The utilisation of **ו.ה.ו** in place of **א.ב.נ.ה** in 7. 7 is probably due to the interpretation by the translator, since the teacher (i.e. father) is the subject in v. 6 onward, while the loose women is the subject in the Peshitta (and the LXX). The LXX has no equivalent for **א.ב.נ.ה** in v. 7. The rest of this verse in the Peshitta agrees with the MT.

In 9. 6 the term **ב.נ.ר.ד. ב.נ.ה** is translated as **ו.ה.ו.א. ו.ה.ו.א** and this is suitable for the context of this verse.

**ו.ב.ו.נ** in 10. 13 is not translated at all in the Peshitta. Although the Peshitta reading agrees with the LXX, it may perhaps be based on the same *Vorlage* as the MT and only interpreted like the LXX.

The Peshitta does not agree with the MT or the LXX in 14. 15. The Peshitta reads **ו.ב.נ.ב.ו.א** for **ו.ב.נ.ב.ו.א** and is thus a very good equivalent for the Hebrew text. Consequently, the literalness of the translation is not affected. Fichtner proposes a Hebrew reading of **ל.ת.ש.ו.ב.ה** instead of **ו.ב.נ.ב.ו.א** to concur with **μ.ε.τ.ά.ν.ο.ι.α.ν** in the LXX.

In 15. 14 the Peshitta reads **ו.ב.נ.ב.ו.א** instead of **ו.ב.נ.ב.ו.א** and the LXX reads **καρδία ὀρθή**.

<sup>13</sup> The Peshitta reads **ו.ב.נ.ב.ו.א** **ו.ב.נ.ב.ו.א** **ו.ב.נ.ב.ו.א** ("the souls of the unrighteous are scattered") compared to **ו.ל.ק.ח. ו.ב.נ.ב.ו.א** ("he who wins souls is wise").

In 18. 15 the MT and the LXX read גְּבוֹן and φρονιμος, respectively, while the Peshitta translator has decided on ܕܡܠܐ - perhaps because of the broader context.

The Peshitta is again influenced by the LXX in 24. 12; it reads ܕܡܠܐ, which agrees with γινώσκει.

In 28. 2 the Peshitta interprets the Hebrew *Vorlage* and differs substantially from the LXX as well and ܕܡܠܐ is in the plural.

In 28. 16 the Hebrew concept חֲסִיד תְּבוּנוֹת is translated as ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ (this is a frequent Syriac expression and it is often used to indicate the ignorant). This seems to be an appropriate semantic equivalent and serves well in the context of the sentence. The Hebrew reading may also be corrupt. Fichtner (*BH*, p. 1190) proposes that the last word should read תְּבוּאוֹת. The LXX reads ἐνδεής προσόδων - "lacking revenue".

It is clear from the above discussion that the translation of the root בִּין is relatively literal if the semantic synonyms are also incorporated in the definition of literalness and it is not restricted to the use of one specific Syriac word. Most of the variants may be explained on contextual grounds, while others may be used because of different interpretations.

#### 3.3.4.4 "Evil" (רע)

This word and its different forms occur no less than 65 times in Proverbs, of which 53 are rendered with some form of ܕܡܠܐ, mostly ܕܡܠܐ.

The first exception appears in 3. 30 where the Peshitta has no equivalent for רעה at all, since the Peshitta has no v. 30b in its text and this verse therefore represents a minus.

In 20. 14 the Hebrew is interpreted quite differently and vv. 14 to 19 do not appear in the LXX at all.

ܕܡܠܐ in 25. 20 reads ܕܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܐ in the Peshitta. The Peshitta agrees with the LXX's καρδιαν λυπει. This verse has a long addition, which manifests similarities with the LXX. Therefore this verse has a different interpretation than in the MT and may be based on another *Vorlage* or is perhaps influenced by the LXX.

#### 3.3.4.5 "Man" (אדם)

ܕܡܠܐ occurs 45 times in Proverbs, of which 38 instances read either ܕܡܠܐ, ܕܡܠܐ, or ܕܡܠܐ in the Peshitta. In four cases the translator used ܕܡܠܐ. It is not clear why the translator used ܕܡܠܐ in these cases. However, since it really makes no difference to the text and unless there is a profound religious intention



involved in the specific choice of words, it is probably used merely as a variation. The LXX used *ἀνδρος*, *ἀντήρ*, and *ἀνθρώπος*, which are the usual renditions of אָדָם in the LXX.

In 3. 13 the Peshitta reads כְּבִישׁוֹ בִּי for אָדָם. The LXX has *θνητὸς* ("a mortal"). Fichtner proposes that שִׂאִי or אֲנוּשׁ should be read (as in the LXX and one ms. from Kennicott). This may well have been the reading of the Peshitta *Vorlage*, unless the Peshitta reading is based on the LXX.

In 15. 20 אָדָם is translated as כְּבִישׁוֹ and it coincides with *υἱὸς* in the LXX. According to Fichtner some eight mss. read וּבְרַחֲסֵי. It is therefore quite probable that this rendition is literal.

אָדָם is not translated by the Peshitta translator in 28. 12. The LXX reads *ἀνθρώποι*. It seems that the translator made a reading mistake, adding "man" at the beginning of v. 13.

### 3.3.4.6" Unjust" (פִּשְׁע)

The MT has 14 instances of פִּשְׁע, of which 12 are rendered as אֲדָנָה in the Peshitta. The LXX reads *ἁμαρτία* (cf. 10. 18 - *ἁμαρτ(αν)*).

According to Fichtner (*BH*, p. 1176) Prov. 18. 19 is not a clear text and should perhaps read שֹׁרע instead. The LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate have the equivalent of נוֹשֵׁעַ. Since the Peshitta agrees with the LXX (הִלְדִּי = *βοηθούμενος*), it follows that, either the Peshitta *Vorlage* read נוֹשֵׁעַ, or it is based on the LXX due to an unintelligible reading in the *Vorlage*.

The Peshitta also agrees with the LXX in 28. 21b - הִצְבִּיחַ = *ἀποδῶσεται* for the verb פִּשְׁעִי.

### 3.3.4.7" Knowledge" (דַּעַת)

The important root דַּעַת occurs 49 times in Proverbs and is consistently (without a single exception) translated with אֲדָנָה in the Peshitta.

### 3.3.4.8" Kindness" (חַסָּד)

There are 12 instances of חַסָּד in Proverbs. The LXX translates this word with *ἐλεημοσύνη*, *ἐλεῶν* (14. 21), etc. The Peshitta reads אֲדָנָה six times, חַסָּד three times, and חַסָּד (11. 17), חַסָּד (14, 34) and חַסָּד once each. The last three cases are all legitimate variants within their contexts.

In 11. 17 חַסָּד forms a better contrast to "cruel" in the context of this verse. In 14. 34 Fichtner (*BH*, p. 1172) makes a sound proposal, namely that חַסָּד should be altered to read חַסָּד instead ("sin is a shame to any nation"). In 25. 10 the MT reads: "lest he who hears you brings shame upon you". The Peshitta correctly reads



שׁוּמַם ("to put to shame") instead; the translator probably had no alternative. It is interesting to note that in 20. 28 the Peshitta (as does the MT - דָּחַף) reads כְּחַבְבֵי־לֵב twice; the LXX has δικαιοσύνη and ἐλεημοσύνη, respectively.

### 3.3.4.9 "Work" (עבד)

The root עבד appears 12 times in Proverbs in the MT. In two cases it is employed as a verb (12. 11, 28. 19). In both cases it is read as a verb in the Peshitta and can be translated likewise: "He who works the land, has enough bread". The Peshitta, however, uses עָבַד, while the LXX reads ἐργαζόμενος in both instances. The Peshitta verb is more suitable in the context of the verses in which it appears and it does not impair the literalness of the translation.

The deviation from the MT that occurs in 12. 9 is entirely due to the personal interpretation of the Peshitta translator of an awkward Hebrew reading. The verse in the MT reads : "A humble man who works for himself (עָבַד לָךְ) is better than a great man who lacks bread". The Peshitta reads עָבַד לְעַצְמוֹ instead (the LXX has δουλεύων ἑαυτῷ). The Peshitta reading suits the context and there is a remote possibility that the translator wanted to prevent the translation of עָבַד לָךְ to be read as "he has a slave" (cf. the discussion in chapter 12).

The root עבד appears in 11. 29, 14. 35, 19. 10, 22. 7, 30. 22, 17. 2, 29. 19 and 30. 10, where the Peshitta reads עָבַד throughout. The LXX reads οἰκέτης, δουλεύσει, οἰκέται, etc. The Peshitta rendering of עבד is relatively consistent and, taking into account the merits of each respective case that deviates from the MT, the translation of this word can be considered to be quite literal.

### 3.3.5 Linguistic precision

It is clear from the discussion of the various words above that mere consistency in the use of words does not suffice to determine the translation technique. Linguistic precision or adequacy should also be considered. As a means of establishing the translation technique employed by the translator, this criterion of linguistic precision is very subjective. It cannot be statistically described to gain a satisfactory perspective regarding the extent of literalness involved. Every word has its own merits and should be judged in its own context.

On the whole, the Peshitta translator attempted to present as accurate a text as possible to *the reader* and thus cognisance must have been taken of the precise form and content of all the words in his *Vorlage*. The precision with which this is done reflects the translator's attempt at a literal translation; but this in turn depends on how the translator understood the text, which can and probably did differ from our modern perspective. Some instances in this study may initially appear to convey an addition or a deviation, which could be construed to

contain some external influence. However, closer analysis may instead reveal such an instance as an attempt by the translator to give a linguistically precise equivalent of the *Vorlage*.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.3.6 The consistency of smaller units

These smaller units comprise mostly particles, conjunctions and prepositions like **ܘܢ**, **ܘ** and **ܠ**. These units were not translated consistently at all. The translator added the units wherever he considered it necessary. This phenomenon is due largely to the Syriac grammar and structure,<sup>15</sup> coupled with the translator's apparent intention to render a fluid translation and to clarify the relation between verses.

There are no less than 210 **ܘ**'s in the first seven chapters of Proverbs (MT) that are rendered by means of **ܘܢ** in the Peshitta. The Peshitta contains another 62 **ܘܢ**'s, which have no equivalent in the MT at all. Furthermore, in another seven cases the **ܘܢ** replaces particles and/or elements like **ܠ**, **ܘܢ** and **ܘܢ** of the MT. Two **ܘ**'s in the MT are equivalent to **ܘܢ**. Four instances are replaced with **ܘܢ** and six are rendered as **ܘܢ** in the Peshitta; the majority of these renditions (i.e. in the Peshitta) have equivalents in the LXX. In three cases the Peshitta also reads **ܘܢ** instead of **ܘܢ**.

The majority of these particles (as far as the Peshitta translation is concerned) are inserted to maintain the logical connections between clauses, which are implied in the meaning of the Hebrew text. It would therefore perhaps be misleading to make any assumptions from the statistical analysis of these smaller units and they should rather be judged by manual, contextual comparisons between the MT and the Peshitta.

### 3.4. Conclusion.

With the anomalies of the Peshitta translation taken into account and on the basis of the criteria discussed above, the Peshitta version of Proverbs can be considered a relatively literal translation. In many cases the differences between the Peshitta and the MT indicate a desire on the part of the translator to clarify his *Vorlage*; he did not change the Hebrew sense deliberately. Because the translation technique seems to be relatively literal, it is to be expected that the translator would not have liberally inserted foreign material into the text. The pluses may have occurred in the translator's *Vorlage*, or alternative reasons must be sought for their being inserted.

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14 In this study it has been necessary to discuss these instances as well, since they are contentious.

15 In his study on the relation between the Peshitta Pentateuch and Jewish exegesis Maori (1975, p. iv) also refers to the **ܘܢ**'s and states: "The phenomenon of an added waw is found in hundreds of cases in P. In most cases such an addition merely reflects the demands of Syriac style, and is not a function of exegesis. Hence one should be careful of over-exegesis." The same opinion applies to other smaller elements such as particles, which have no equivalent in the MT, as well.

When the variants in the Peshitta are analysed, the translation technique should always be considered in conjunction with other factors such as text history, the milieu of translation, other versions and exegetical or nonexegetical material.



## Chapter 1

In this chapter the Syriac text has, in comparison with the MT, two additions, neither of which appears in the LXX. These additions are ܠܘܟ in 1. 16 and ܠܘܟ ܩܢ ܠܘܟܟܢ in 1. 26. Apart from these two pluses, the Syriac translation generally follows the MT reading. The LXX exhibits numerous other deviations from the MT and the text seems to concur less with the MT than the Peshitta does. These deviations in the LXX should be examined more closely, because in later chapters most of the pluses in the Peshitta coincide to a large extent with the LXX readings. It is thus important to establish as far as possible the inter-relationship of the Peshitta, the LXX and the MT (*inter alia*).

The deviations of the LXX occur in 1. 4, 7, 11, 18f, 22, 28, 31, and 32. In 1. 4, 22 and 32 ܡܢ ܫܝܦܐܢܐ was translated in the LXX with three different words, all of which have a positive connotation in translation. The Peshitta translator, true to his more conservative translation technique, rendered all three instances with the word ܠܘܟܝܢ.

Prov. 1. 7 is a very interesting case as far as the relationship of the Peshitta with the MT and the LXX is concerned. The LXX has a substantial addition,<sup>1</sup> while the Peshitta has none. Instead of the couplet of the MT, the LXX has a quatrain, which reads as follows:

Ἄρχῆ σοφίας φόβος θεοῦ,  
 σύννεσις δὲ ἀγαθῆ πάσι τοῖς ποιοῦσιν αὐτήν.  
 εὐσέβεια δὲ εἰς θεὸν ἀρχὴ αἰσθήσεως,  
 σοφίαν δὲ καὶ παιδείαν ἀσεβεῖς ἐξουθενήσουσιν.

The third line appears to be a doublet of the first (except that the terms “wisdom” and “knowledge” exchange places), although it may also represent an original parallelism.<sup>2</sup>

The Syriac reads ܠܘܟܝܢ ܠܘܟܝܢ ܠܘܟܝܢ ܠܘܟܝܢ ܠܘܟܝܢ ܠܘܟܝܢ ܠܘܟܝܢ ܠܘܟܝܢ ܠܘܟܝܢ ܠܘܟܝܢ ܠܘܟܝܢ, which resembles the Hebrew reading quite closely (except for the word order). However, by looking

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the second line of 1.7 in the LXX appears in Ps. 111. 10. The Greek translator may have derived this line from the Psalms, although the possibility that v. 7 is the original reading cannot be discounted.

<sup>2</sup> The second line of the LXX reading appears in Ps. 111. 10. The LXX reading may be an insertion, based on the Psalms, perhaps due to the Jewish character of the translation. The *Midrash Mishle*, for instance, states: "...denn David hat gesagt: 'Der Weisheits Anfang ist Gottesfurcht' und Salomo hat gesagt: 'Gottesfurcht ist der Erkenntniss Anfang.' Daraus geht hervor, dass *Weisheit* und *Erkenntniss* beide gleich wichtig sind."

closer at the Peshitta translation one may draw some comparisons with the LXX. Firstly, the first part of the strophe (7<sup>a</sup>) has the word order of the first strophe of the LXX and not that of the Hebrew. Secondly, the particle  $\text{וְ}$  could have been inserted via the influence of  $\delta\epsilon$  in the Greek reading. True to his translation technique it seems as if the Peshitta translator succeeded in conveying only the sense and meaning of the Hebrew text, although he could have consulted some Greek text as well, if only to assist him in constructing an easier reading and a more flowing translation.

Prov. 1. 11 is an awkward verse to translate and the Peshitta translator probably had the same difficulty in translating it sensibly. The Hebrew of v. 11<sup>a</sup> reads  $\text{אִתְּנֵנִי לְכַף אֶמְרָתְךָ לֵבָנָה$  and the Peshitta reads:  $\text{וְאַתְּנֵנִי לְכַף אֶמְרָתְךָ לֵבָנָה$ . The Peshitta reads like the LXX ( $\text{וְ}$  is the same as the LXX) and its translation might be based on the Greek reading -  $\text{παρακαλέσωσί σε λέγοντες ἔλθε μεθ' ἡμῶν}$ . The LXX has a further addition in this verse, whereas the Peshitta follows the MT.

In Prov. 1. 12 the Peshitta reads: "like Sheol let us swallow *him* alive..." (as is the case in the Targum as well as the LXX) as opposed to "...let us swallow *them* alive..." in the MT. The rest of the verse reads exactly like the MT. The Peshitta translator made a connection between vv. 11 and 12 and he subsequently could have considered  $\text{וּבְשׁוֹל}$  together with  $\text{וְכַף אֶמְרָתְךָ}$  ( $\text{וְ}$  in the MT) in v. 11 as the object of the verb  $\text{בִּלְעַתְּ$  and thus his version may even be preferable to the Hebrew reading. Although the Peshitta reading coincides with the LXX, there is no clear indication that the Greek reading is the source of this deviation. As a matter of fact, in the context of the previous and subsequent verses this reading either could have been in the *Vorlage* of the Syriac translator (the same reason applies to the LXX) or it is a deliberate harmonisation within the context of this chapter (cf. the discussion of v. 16 below).

It would almost seem as if the Peshitta translator had a lot of confidence in the Greek translation, but this is not always the case. The Peshitta translator sometimes used other means of resolving difficulties in the Hebrew text (assuming of course that the text he translated from reads much like the MT). In Prov. 1. 16, for instance, the Peshitta has an addition that does not appear in the LXX or the Targum and there is no other external evidence that could serve as a source or even as a motive for its presence.<sup>3</sup>

There is, however, a strong indication of internal influence for this addition. Prov. 1. 16 of the Peshitta reads  $\text{וְכַף אֶמְרָתְךָ לֵבָנָה וְכַף אֶמְרָתְךָ לֵבָנָה וְכַף אֶמְרָתְךָ לֵבָנָה$  compared to the MT's  $\text{כִּי רָגְלֵיהֶם לְרַע יָרֻצוּ וְיִמְהָרוּ לְשִׁפְךַדְּדָם$ . The adjective  $\text{וּבְשׁוֹל}$  has no equivalent in the Targum or the LXX. This whole verse can be viewed as an insertion, because it breaks the connection between vv.15 and 17. The whole section of vv. 15 to 19 is devoted to the description of the fate of the robbers, whose

<sup>3</sup> Concerning Prov. 1.16 the *Midrash Mishle* (Wünsche, 1893) merely compares the robbers to those who serve idols: "Daraus geht hervor, dass jeder, welcher Götzen anbetet, so betrachtet wird wie der, welcher Blut vergießt, wie es heisst: Und sie eilen, Blut zu vergiessen."

intentions are described in vv. 10 to 14. Bearing the unity of this section in mind, it is quite possible that the translator inserted 𐤀𐤎 from v. 11, which reads "If they say to you: 'Come with us, let us wait for blood (𐤁𐤏𐤀), let us lie in wait for the innocent (𐤀𐤎) deceitfully.'" The translator understood this sentence as an ellipsis and the addition in v. 16 is probably a deliberate harmonisation within the context of the whole section from vv. 10 to 19.

In v. 17 the Peshitta translator seems to have been influenced by the LXX. The Syriac verse still conveys the meaning of the Hebrew, although with the more economical use of words. The Syriac does not agree with the LXX entirely. Had the Peshitta translator followed the Greek completely, the translation was in danger of not being literal enough if compared with the Hebrew text. Therefore, the translator used ܐ instead of ܐܘ (the Greek sentence reads in the negative) and in v. 17<sup>b</sup> made use of the Greek (which reads ἐκτελεται δικτυα πτερωτοισ) to translate ܐܘ ܐܘ ܐܘ ܐܘ ܐܘ. The words ܐܘ ܐܘ still convey the MT reading 𐤏𐤍𐤏 𐤏𐤍𐤏 𐤏𐤍𐤏 𐤏𐤍𐤏 but, with the probable utilisation of the Greek reading, in a simpler form.

In Prov. 1. 19<sup>a4</sup> appears a case that is similar to the above. The Peshitta reads ܐܘ ܐܘ ܐܘ in the MT as ܐܘ ܐܘ ܐܘ, which in turn could be based on the Greek reading: πάντων τῶν συντελούντων τὰ ἄνομα.

The following two verses (vv. 20 and 21) also posed a problem for the Peshitta translator and here he probably consulted the Greek text (assuming that the Peshitta translator's *Vorlage* reads like the MT): 𐤏𐤍𐤏 is translated as ܐܘ ܐܘ (as opposed to ὑμνεῖται) and 𐤏𐤍𐤏 reads ܐܘ ܐܘ (the LXX has τειχέων). Regarding the rest of the sentence, the Syriac follows the Hebrew text closely, while the LXX (in comparison with the Hebrew reading) does not only read differently, but also has additions in its text. The Peshitta translator probably found the Hebrew text a little obscure and consulted the Greek text for a better translation of the sense of this verse.

The two nouns in v. 25 are both singular in the MT (𐤏𐤍𐤏 𐤏𐤍𐤏), while they are plural in the LXX. In the Peshitta the first noun (ܐܘ ܐܘ) is plural and the second (ܐܘ ܐܘ) is singular. There are a number of ways in which these differences can be explained and neither the external influence of a Greek text, nor the possibility that the translator merely followed his *Vorlage* can be excluded, although it is obvious that the text presented no difficulties for a translator as competent as the Peshitta's and the words and meaning of this verse are quite simple. The answer lies in an internal influence, namely that the nouns are translated within the context of the whole section from vv. 20 to 33.

In this section the word ܐܘ ܐܘ appears in vv. 30 and 31 and ܐܘ ܐܘ appears in vv. 23 and 30. In all these cases, as in v. 25, the subject of the noun is "Wisdom" and it is for reasons of harmonisation that

<sup>4</sup> V. 19b in the Peshitta is the same as in the MT, while the LXX reads τῆ ἀσεβείᾳ instead of ܐܘ ܐܘ. This is probably from ܐܘ ܐܘ (De Lagarde, 1863, p. 8).



גִּבּוֹרֵי אֱלֹהִים was translated in the plural, especially if v. 25 is compared with v. 30, where both nouns appear in the same context.

V. 27 in the MT also contains a word with a difficult spelling and in this case the Syriac reading agrees with the Greek translation. The Hebrew word is קָשָׁאָה, which was translated as ܩܫܘܐܗ, which means "suddenly" (ἀφνω in the Greek text). Fichtner (*BH*, Kittel, 1977, p. 1157) suggests that קָשָׁאָה should read קָשׁוּאָה ("tempest", "storm"), which seems like a plausible alternative in the context of the sentence.

Instead of "complacency" (וְשִׁלְתָּהּ) in v. 32<sup>b</sup>, the Peshitta has "error" or "forgetfulness" (ܩܠܘܢܐܗ), which may be a free rendering of the Hebrew.<sup>5</sup> This may be the case here, if one considers the fact that ܩܠܘܢܐܗ is synonymous with ܩܠܘܢܐܗܐ ("error") in v. 32<sup>a</sup>. The translator may have understood וְשִׁלְתָּהּ to mean "tranquility", which would not quite fit in the context of the verse. His own rendering of the word would then be a compromise, as he might have thought, and correctly so, that וְשִׁלְתָּהּ should be understood in a negative sense.

The last deviation in this chapter of the Syriac text occurs in v. 33<sup>b</sup> where וְשִׁאֵן מִפְּחַד רָעָה (which follows the clause וְשִׁמְעֵ לִי יִשְׁכַּח־בְּטָח) was rendered as ܩܠܘܢܐܗܐ ܩܠܘܢܐܗܐ ܩܠܘܢܐܗܐ. This translation agrees to some extent with the Greek reading - καὶ ἡσυχάσει ἀφόβως ἀπὸ παντὸς κακοῦ. The word ἀφόβως has no equivalent in the Peshitta, because the Syriac represents only the elements of the Hebrew text. It is not clear why the translator follows the Greek reading, unless the translator misunderstood מִפְּחַד, understanding it in a bad sense, or he understanding it to mean "from fear" instead of "without fear".

<sup>5</sup> Toy (1904, p. 31) states that the Syriac reading is translated from טוֹעֵן and the Greek text from שִׁאֵן or שִׁלָּה in their respective *Vorlagen*.

## Chapter 2

The Peshitta translation of this chapter is relatively literal when compared to the MT. This is particularly the case if the translation of the meaning of the Hebrew is considered of greater importance than other parameters by which literalness can be measured, such as word order and word consistency. The only real pluses in this chapter appear in vv. 11 and 16. Other deviations occur in vv. 2, 8, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18 and 19. Vv. 2, 8, 12 and 14 may represent difficult or dubious readings, while v. 19 contains an intertextual harmonisation.

The first occurrence of a deviation from the MT text of a grammatical nature is to be found in v. 2. In the MT the sentence begins with לְהַקְשִׁיב (ל+ inf.), while the Peshitta translator (followed by the Targum) rendered it as ܠܗܩܫܒܐ (imperf.). This may mean that the Peshitta translator did not understand the sense of v. 2 as the conclusion or the result of v. 1, but that he rather made a grammatical connection with v. 1 in order to continue the construction of v. 1 in v. 2. It is also plausible that he did understand the Hebrew and that, within the context of his particular style of translation, he deliberately retained the construction, introduced by ܠ in v. 1 up to the end of v. 4. The consequence of the condition expressed in vv. 1 to 4 is presented in vv.5 to 8. This consequence is introduced with ܠܗܩܫܒܐ in v. 5.) The Septuagint commences v. 2 with ὑπακούσεται, which makes it different from both the MT and the Peshitta. The *Vorlage* of the Peshitta need not have been different from the Hebrew in this verse; this is simply one example of the approach followed by the translator whereby not only verses, but paragraphs and even chapters are contextually integrated to form a certain unified and uncontradictory reading.

The term אֶתְּךָ is rendered as ܠܗܩܫܒܐ to harmonise with ܠܗܩܫܒܐ in v. 2. There is probably no external influence in this case.

In v. 8 the Peshitta translator translated לְנַצַּר (ל + inf.) as ܠܗܩܫܒܐ (perf.) for probably the same reason as the above. He wanted to retain the construction of the previous verse where, incidentally, ܠܗܩܫܒܐ also appears. As is the case in v. 2, this deviation does not coincide with the Greek reading and the Targum closely follows the Hebrew reading (it reads ותצליל and למנסור, respectively). However, in v. 8<sup>b</sup> the Targum does not contain the suffix of ܠܗܩܫܒܐ and reads ܠܗܩܫܒܐ<sup>1</sup> instead.

The first plus in this chapter occurs in v. 11, where מְזֻקָּה reads ܠܗܩܫܒܐ ܠܗܩܫܒܐ in the Peshitta and βουλή καλή in the LXX. In v. 11<sup>b</sup>, the noun תְּבוּנָה reads ܠܗܩܫܒܐ ܠܗܩܫܒܐ in the Peshitta and εὐνοια ὄσια in the LXX. The Peshitta follows the Greek quite closely in this sentence. Whether these adjectives were in the *Vorlage* of the Greek is a very contentious point. It is also possible, as has been suggested by Cook, that

<sup>1</sup> The word ܠܗܩܫܒܐ in the Targum would be equivalent to ܠܗܩܫܒܐ in Hebrew.

the two Greek readings are based on two Judaic concepts, namely the good and the bad inclinations in man.<sup>2</sup> However, our concern is the Peshitta text. Apart from seeking external motivations or sources for these pluses, the tendency of the translator to give the meaning of the Hebrew and to deviate only slightly in cases where the text could be misunderstood should be seriously considered, especially if no other evidence from an external source is indicated.<sup>3</sup> The Peshitta translator's general concern is with the text itself and whether it is clear enough for the reader of his translation. Therefore, it is conceivable that he made use of the Greek reading only to indicate to the reader that *תְּבִינָה* and *תְּבִינָה* are meant in a positive sense. In addition, the reading harmonises with v. 9 as well.

In v. 12 the word *לְהַצִּילָהּ* (ל + inf.) was translated as *ܠܗܘܝܬܐ* and the LXX reads *ἵνα βύσσηται*. Here is a similar case to that of vv. 1 and 2 and it may have been rendered thus for a similar reason, namely to make a grammatical connection with v. 11 as an alternative to it being read as a consequence of v. 11. The change does not affect the general meaning of the sentence, particularly within the context of vv. 10 to 15.

The Peshitta translator repeated the grammatical change in v. 13 as well. In the second clause instead of *ל + inf.* (*לְלֶכֶת*) the Peshitta has *ܢ + participle* (*ܠܘܟܢܐ*), which expresses the meaning conveyed by the Hebrew reading correctly.

V. 14 has a dubious reading and the Peshitta (and the Targum) follows the Greek reading, although again not completely. The word *תְּהִי עִוְיָה* reads *ܠܘܟܢܐ* (sing.) in the Syriac and *ܘܥܘܝܐ* reads *ܠܘܟܢܐ* (pl.). The LXX reads *καὶ χαίροντες ἐπὶ διαστοφῆ κακῆ*. The Targum follows the Peshitta.

V. 16 is a good example of how subtly the Syriac translator dealt with a reading that can be misunderstood by the reader.

He omitted the equivalent of *וְהָיָה* and then he inserted *ܠܘܟܢܐ* as the subject. This verse should not, however, be studied in isolation from the whole section in which it stands (vv. 10 to 19). In v. 10 the subject is "Wisdom", which upon entering the soul keeps watch over it and saves the man from the influence of bad men (vv. 12 to 15) and bad women (vv. 16 to 19). Perhaps the translator inserted the subject "Wisdom" here to avoid confusion, since, in this pericope, the subject is mentioned only in v. 10. As is the case in many of the previous verses, the translator attempts to keep all the verses within their context. He therefore may have omitted *וְהָיָה* for the sake of brevity and inserted *ܠܘܟܢܐ* from v. 10 to maintain a continuity with v. 16,

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Cook (1988b, pp. 30ff.) and Urbach (1975, p. 472).

<sup>3</sup> In the *Midrash Mishle* *מִשְׁלֵי* is equal to the *Torah*: "Dann wacht die Vorsicht über dich d.i. wenn du deinen Hals unter das Joch der Thora beugst, so wird sie dich behüten, wie es heisst das 6.22: wenn du gehst wird sie dich leiten d.i. in dieser Welt, wenn du liegst, wird sie dich bewachen d.i. in der zukünftigen Welt, und wenn du erwachst, wird sie für dich sprechen d.i. in der Zukunft."



which is broken by vv. 12 to 15 (the influence of bad men). That in turn, introduces the next section (vv. 16 to 19) regarding the influence of bad women.

There was perhaps, another, ethical consideration behind this translation. The fact is that, due to the word order, the term **מֵאִשָּׁה** may have been wrongfully construed as the subject (with **מֵ** taken as "from"). This possibility is completely eliminated by this peculiar translation. The LXX has a text that is totally different from the Hebrew, because it reads as a consequence attached to v. 15, instead of presenting it as a new paragraph.<sup>4</sup>

The Peshitta reads "rearer" **כֹּהֵן בִּנְיָא** instead of "friend" (**אֶלְיָרִי**) in v. 17. The LXX reads **διδασκαλ(αν)**, which means "teacher". It seems as if the Syriac translation is influenced by the Greek reading (the LXX also has a substantial plus at the beginning of the verse). The Targum reads like the Peshitta. Apart from identifying the "rearer" with the object (**מִסְכָּא דְאֶלְמָנָה**) of v. 17<sup>b</sup>, there is no clear motivation for this reading.

In v. 18<sup>a</sup> the translator perhaps misread **שָׁחָה** for **שָׁכַח** (which is the final verb in v. 17) and translated it as **שָׁכַח** accordingly.

The verb "attain" (**יָשָׁג**) in v. 19 is rendered as "remember" (**הִזְכִּיר**) by the Syriac translator. The reason for this may be found in the previous verses where the verbs "forget" (twice) and "forsake" are prominent. The translator apparently wanted to harmonise v. 19 with vv. 17 and 18 contextually, by using the opposite of these particular verbs, without destroying the general meaning of the Hebrew.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Cook (1988b, pp. 6 and 7), where the Greek rendering is discussed. Cook is of the opinion that the LXX translation is intended to be of a religious nature or specifically, Jewish beliefs in Greek garments.

### Chapter 3

Chapter 3 has three independent discourses or paragraphs, each of them introduced by the address "my son". These paragraphs are fragmentary, with different exhortations, warnings, descriptions and appeals following each other without necessarily being connected.

This chapter is generally close to the Hebrew text and the Peshitta contains few deviations that can be regarded as external influences. Deviations occur in vv. 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 24, 26, 30 and 34, of which only v. 19 seems to be of any significance as far as external influences are concerned. The rest can easily be explained and recognised as intertextual corrections or simplifications.

The term  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  ( $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$ ) is transposed by the Peshitta translator from v. 2<sup>b</sup> to v. 3<sup>a</sup>, where it is the subject of  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$ , together with  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  and  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$ . Because the translator renders "Let not them forsake you" ( $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$ ) as "they will not forsake you" ( $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$ ), it does not really represent a deviation from his *Vorlage* (assuming that it does not differ from the MT and that he either deliberately read  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  as  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$ , or misunderstood it to mean the same as  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$ ). As a matter of fact, it is a suitable reading in the context of the paragraph, since these three concepts are regarded as blessings, in addition to the long life in v. 2, that come to the obedient son who keeps the instruction given to him (v. 1). It is furthermore possible that the translator wanted to place  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  together with  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  and  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  ("faithfulness" and "kindness"), because they are in closer semantic proximity to each other than "years of life" and "length of days" in v. 2. This deviation does not appear in the LXX and the Targum has the same reading as the Peshitta.

In v. 4 the Peshitta translator took  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  as  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$ , perhaps because  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  already has a positive connotation and he decided to make  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  a substantive. Thus he could reinforce the motivation for the reader by increasing the reward that the diligent pupil will receive for not forsaking the tutor's good instruction. The LXX reads differently and the Targum reads like the Peshitta, although it follows the Hebrew word order.

Vv. 11 and 12 form one paragraph and here again the Peshitta translator did not bother to translate  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  (v. 11),  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  and  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  (v. 12) with three different words. Instead, he used some form or derivative of the word  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  in all the instances, which complies with one aspect of his translation technique, namely simplification. The Syriac does not agree with the LXX, but it reads like the Targum (the Targum translator also used the same word as the Peshitta translator did in the above cases). No external influence is suspected in this instance.

The Peshitta reading does not concur exactly with the MT (or the LXX) in v. 13. The verbs  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  and  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  read  $\text{אֲשֶׁר־לָוִי}$  in the Peshitta ( $\text{εὐρεν}$  and  $\text{εἶδεν}$ , respectively, in the LXX). The translator merely simplified the translation by not utilising two different Syriac words to translate the two Hebrew verbs. He even retained the

same tense for both verbs. **צבט**<sup>1</sup> is an anomalous verb with a variety of meanings among, which are concepts like "to acquire", "to attain" and "to find."<sup>2</sup> There is no reason to suspect the existence of any external influence on this translation.

In v. 14 the Peshitta follows the MT except for the insertion of **בגודו** (= **טוב**) before **בגודו**, which, although its Hebrew equivalent may have been in the translator's *Vorlage*, seems merely to qualify "her produce". This qualification results in the strengthening of the parallelism with **בגודו** , **בגודו** in this verse. The Targum agrees with the Peshitta (even having exactly the same word order) and leaves out only the equivalent of **בגודו**.

The significance of **בגודו** in v. 15 was totally disregarded by, or unclear to, the translator, who rendered it by means of a bland and neutral **בגודו** instead. This verse is an almost exact duplicate of 8.11, where the translator also used **בגודו** for **בגודו**. Apart from the two extra clauses between the parts of the verse, the LXX correctly reads **τ(μ)ισον** for "treasure" and the Targum has **מדעם**. The translator used an easier Syriac expression to translate the Hebrew idiom and 3. 15 and 8. 11 may also be an intertextual harmonisation.

The Peshitta and Targum present the predicate of v. 18<sup>b</sup> (**בגודו**) in the plural (**בגודו**). This rendition does not necessarily indicate the precise form of the *Vorlage*, since both translators may have altered their translations to conform with grammatical rules within the sentence. The plural establishes a grammatical connection with the first clause. In the light of the very probable dependence of the Targum on the Peshitta, the Targum may have been copied from the Peshitta, which is far more inclined to deviate from the MT than the Targum.

The terms "Wisdom" and "understanding" are accorded the role of attributes of the Creator in the Peshitta translation of v. 19. The Peshitta translator therefore attached the 3. sing. masc. suffixes to the two nouns - **בגודו** and **בגודו**. He probably interpreted the ה's of **בגודו** and **בגודו** as suffixes in order to ensure that the concepts of "wisdom" and "understanding" do not approach hypostatisation in the reader's mind. They are not "fellow creators", but rather reflect the skill shown in the Creation and the quality of that creation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clement (*Paedagogus* II, chapter X) quotes this verse: "Blessed is the man who hath *found* Wisdom, and the mortal who hath *found* understanding" (Roberts, 1951, p. 232).

<sup>2</sup> Payne Smith (1967, p. 576): "**צבט** usually has a prosthetic alaph."

<sup>3</sup> Weiss (1966, p. 189) says: "...an diesen beiden Stellen (Prov. 3. 19, Ps. 104. 24) begegnet zwar die Vorstellung, dass Gott "mit (der) Weisheit" (בחכמה) die Welt geschaffen habe, das instrumentale **ב** gibt aber hier lediglich dem Gedanken Ausdruck, dass Gott bei der Schöpfung der Welt "mit Weisheit" vorging, bezeichnet also im Grunde nur die Qualität von Gottes Schaffen."



Jewish exegesis presents "Wisdom" as one of seven (or 10) instruments with which the world was created,<sup>4</sup> while the early Christians identified "Wisdom" with Christ.<sup>5</sup> Ireneus on his part identified "Wisdom" of Prov. 3. 19 and 8. 22 f. with the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> The LXX does not agree with the Peshitta reading in this regard. All things considered, no external influence, except a religious or ethical one (to prevent misunderstanding) can serve as the source of this translation.

In the final analysis, the fact that the Peshitta intended to make the two nouns the attributes of the Creator still seems to be the most likely reason for this rendition. The Peshitta translator could have taken the two consonants (7) in their Syriac meaning, i.e. 3. masc. sing. suffixes.<sup>7</sup> This reading also serves to harmonise v. 19 with v. 20, where "by His knowledge the waters fell down" is read. The Targum follows the MT.

The MT seems to lack a subject in v. 21<sup>a</sup>. The antecedent can be supplied from vv. 19 and 20, where "wisdom" and "knowledge" are the attributes of God, but probably not from the second clause in v. 21.<sup>8</sup> However, it is exactly this second clause that becomes the subject in v. 21<sup>a</sup> in the Peshitta. The translator probably also found the Hebrew difficult and inserted  $\Delta$  before  $\text{חכמה}$ , translated  $\text{ܡܥܝܢܝܩܐ}$  for  $\text{ܡܥܝܢܝܩܐ}$ , and attached 1 pers. suffixes to the nouns in v. 21<sup>b</sup>, so that the verse reads: "My son, let not to keep my wisdom and my discretion be despicable in your eyes". This reading concurs well with 3. 1, which is similar in meaning, and the translator may have wanted to harmonise the introductory verses of these discourses, i.e. of 3. 21 and 3. 1. The Targum reads like the Peshitta (it even follows the word order) but leaves out the  $\Delta$ . The LXX reading is quite different from that of the Peshitta.

In v. 24 the Peshitta translator changed what he may have perceived as a clumsy, tautological Hebrew reading ( $\text{שׁוֹב}$  is used twice) into a fluid, well-balanced translation to read "And ( $\text{ו}$  instead of  $\text{וְ}$  in the MT - connecting

<sup>4</sup> Saldarini (1975, p. 258) translates: "Where does Scripture teach that the world was created by Wisdom? It says: "The Lord by Wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens." Cf. Ginsburg (1937, vol. V, p. 7) and *Bereshit Rabba*. Jewish exegesis also identified Wisdom with the Tora (*Midrash Mishle*, pp.13-14) to prove the pre-existence of the Tora.

<sup>5</sup> "Ebenso wie das Judentum diese Stellen auf die Tora bezog, indem es die Gestalt der Weisheit und die Tora gleichsetze, so wird nunmehr die Weisheit mit Christus gleichgesetzt: '*Christum primogenitum esse et ipsum esse sapientiam dei, per quem omnia facta sunt*' (cf. Origenes, Commentary of John, I 19: Christus ist  $\text{ἀρχή}$ , "soweit" ( $\text{καθ'ο}$ ) er Weisheit ist; d.h. soweit er Logos ist, ist er nicht  $\text{ἀρχή}$  und zwar wegen Joh 1:1; "Am Anfang....")." Ibid, p.313.

<sup>6</sup> He says that God created the world through the Son and the Holy Spirit and did this freely and without force (ibid. p. 317).

<sup>7</sup> The Peshitta translator has in several cases translated his Hebrew words with the meaning of their Syriac roots, e.g. in 8. 2  $\text{בֵּינָם}$  is translated as  $\text{ܒܝܢܝܡ}$  ("between"), and  $\text{וַיִּבְנֶה}$  ("to place") for  $\text{ܪܳܐܳܡܳܘܳܬܳܐ}$  ("above") in 24. 7.

<sup>8</sup> The whole v. 21 reads  $\text{בְּנִי אֵלֶיךָ מֵעַיִן נִצַּר אֲשֶׁר וּמִחֵמָה}$ .

v. 24 with v. 23) you shall sleep and not be afraid and you shall lie down and your sleep shall be sweet". No external influence can be detected here either. The Targum has a mixture of the MT and Peshitta readings.

The word כסל in v. 26 was probably not clearly understood by the Peshitta translator. It is generally translated as "trust" or "confidence" but it also means "flank" or "loin", which is perhaps what the translator took it for. There could be an influence from the LXX in the Peshitta translator's choice of words - the LXX reads ἐπὶ πασσῶν ὀδῶν σου. He thus simplified it to בג, meaning "with" ("by your flank" is perhaps a metaphor for "to be with you"). The little word בג is quite neutral and meets both of the above-mentioned meanings in the context of this verse. The translator's *Vorlage* did not necessarily differ from the MT. No other version agrees with the Peshitta.

V. 30<sup>b</sup> has no equivalent in the Peshitta text. The omission may be a reading error. There seems to be no clear moral reason to do so, unless the word בא serves as a replacement for the second clause. The Hebrew text reads אֶל-תְּרוֹב עַם-אֲדָם חַנּוּם אִם-לֹא גִמְלָהּ רָעָה and the Syriac has ܠܐ ܝܪܝܗ ܒܗ ܗܘܥܐ ܚܒܐܐ.

In v. 34 the Peshitta omitted to translate אם, as it was unnecessary for his translation (cf. v. 24) and he renders יקץ as ܩܘܠܘܢܐ. This rendition reinforces the statement that the scorners will be overthrown. The particular choice of the verb ܩܘܠܘܢܐ may also be influenced by the Peshitta translator's own ethical consideration (or it may rather be called an anti-anthropomorphic tendency), whereby God does not "scorn" like humans do. In v. 35 the Peshitta and Targum renders מרים as an imperf. - ܡܪܝܢܐ and ܝܚܢ, respectively.

## Chapter 4

In Prov. 4. 1 the preposition לְ (+ inf. in the MT) has been taken as an accusative sign<sup>1</sup> by the Peshitta translator, with the result that לְעַיִן is translated as a substantive: כְּדֹדָא. The Targum and the LXX read like the MT.

V. 4 has a substantial addition at the end of the sentence that is reminiscent of Prov. 7. 2 whence the translator perhaps inserted it - "and my law like the apple of the eye".<sup>2</sup> A comparison of these two verses clearly indicates the probability of this interpretation.<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, not only are 4. 4<sup>c</sup> and 7. 2 exactly the same, but 4.4<sup>ab</sup> also compares well in its contents and context with 7. 1. Perhaps the translator wanted to stress the need to maintain, and be obedient to, the teaching of wisdom. Speculative as it may seem, the translator could also have been motivated by the need to complete the quatrain for the sake of balance, or he could have wanted the Torah to feature prominently in a probable identification with the "words" and "commandments" that should be remembered. The MT (Prov. 7. 2<sup>b</sup>) reads וְיִיָּשְׁרֵן כְּאֵיפֶן הִתְוַדְּוּ and the Peshitta (4. 4<sup>d</sup> and 7. 2<sup>b</sup>) reads וְיִיָּשְׁרֵן כְּדֹדָא וְכִדְבָרָא. The Targum follows the MT reading and the LXX leaves out הִתְוַדְּוּ.

In v. 8<sup>b</sup> the Peshitta reverses the position of the verbs to balance it with 8<sup>a</sup>; the translator did not find it necessary to honour - or simply did not recognise - the chiasmus. The Peshitta may have been influenced by the LXX, which reads περιχαράκωσον αὐτήν, καὶ ὑψώσει σε, τρίμησον αὐτήν, ἵνα σε περιλάβῃ. The Targum exhibits the same word order in this instance.

The MT noun עֵינַי (sing.) in v. 11 is translated as כְּדֹדָא (pl.) in the Peshitta, as it is in the Septuagint (the LXX and Targum are the same). This may be a rhetorical assimilation with כְּדֹדָא in v. 11<sup>b</sup> by the translator, or it may be based on another *Vorlage*. The possibility of the LXX (which reads δδούς) being the source of this reading cannot be excluded, even if it means that it simply contributed to the translator's decision to assimilate these two nouns.

<sup>1</sup> Other examples are in Prov. 1. 18 and 12. 8.

<sup>2</sup> "the apple of the eye" also appears in the LXX in Deut. 32. 10, while the MT reads: כְּאֵיפֶן עֵינֵי ("the apple of his eye"). The *Midrash Mishle* has no exegesis of Prov. 4. 4 (or Prov. 7. 2 for that matter). The pupil of the eye features in Jewish legend, which represents man as a microcosmos: "his tears to a river his mouth to the ocean. Also, the world resembles the ball of his eye: the ocean that encircles the earth is like unto the white of the eye, the dry land is the iris, Jerusalem the pupil, and the temple the image mirrored in the pupil of the eye" (Ginzburg, 1937, vol. V, p. 50).

<sup>3</sup> Of course, the addition could have been in the *Vorlage*, although it does appear that all mss. contained this plus.



צַעַר is plural in the Peshitta, LXX and the Targum in v. 12. The Peshitta also renders יָצַר ("impede" or "restrict") as ܡܬܬܪܫܘܢ ("tremble"), which may be a free rendition of the Hebrew. The verbs in the Peshitta are also more closely related to each other than to the Hebrew. It reads "When you walk, your steps shall not tremble, and when you run, you shall not stumble".

The verb ܩܘܫܪܘܢ in v. 14<sup>b</sup> is a difficult reading, which the Peshitta reads as ܩܘܫܪܘܢ and the LXX as ζηλώσης. If the Syriac *Vorlage* read the same as the MT, it is probable in this case that the Syriac translator again consulted the Greek text to solve this unclear reading.

The Syriac reading also follows the Greek in v. 15<sup>a</sup>; it reads ܩܘܫܪܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ (= ἐν ᾧ αὐτὸς τόπων in the LXX) as the equivalent of פָּרַעְדָּו in the MT. It has been suggested by Toy (1904, p. 95) that the *Vorlage* of the LXX reads מרעוה. This is not unlikely and the same can apply to the Peshitta *Vorlage*; especially since the Hebrew (MT) is a good reading and no change to this chiasmus seems necessary. By far the greatest number of differences between the Peshitta and the MT are brought about by difficult or anomalous readings. The Targum follows the Peshitta.

The Peshitta translator had an obvious difficulty with the Hebrew reading in v. 16<sup>b</sup>, because יִשְׁלֹוּ has no object. Instead of "make (someone) stumble", he gave a free rendition of the Hebrew text: "until they do as they please" - ܩܘܫܪܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ. This does not agree with the LXX, which reads ἀφήρηται ὁ ὕπνος αὐτῶν, καὶ οὗτοι κοιμῶνται. The Targum offers the following reading - ܩܘܫܪܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ - which agrees to some extent with the Peshitta (ܩܘܫܪܘܢ), but retains ܩܘܫܪܘܢ, which is closer to יִשְׁלֹוּ. In v. 19 it is the *wicked* that "know not over what they stumble" - ܩܘܫܪܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ. In this sentence the verb יִשְׁלֹוּ makes sense when compared with v. 16 - ܩܘܫܪܘܢ - and it is translated by the Peshitta translator accordingly.

V. 17 may serve as another example of how the Peshitta translator applied the morphology of a Hebrew word to its meaning in Syriac. The MT reads ܩܘܫܪܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ ("they eat the bread of wickedness"). The Peshitta reads ܩܘܫܪܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ ܩܘܫܪܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ ("their bread is the bread of wickedness"). The translator read ܩܘܫܪܘܢ not as a verb (perf. 3. masc. pl.), but as a noun with a suffix. 3 masc. sing., which he changed to a noun and a plural suffix to fit the context. This may be a viable reason (apart from a different *Vorlage* reading or fear that all bread would be regarded as wicked) for the translator to offer this reading.

A simplification of the Hebrew occurs in v. 18 of the Peshitta. The concept ܩܘܫܪܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ ("light of dawn") reads ܩܘܫܪܘܢ ܕܥܘܠܐܘܢܐ ("a bright light").

The equivalent of the word **כְּאֶפְלָה**<sup>4</sup> in v. 19 is an adjective in the Peshitta (and Targum). The Peshitta also presents a more neutral reading with its rendition (**ܥܒܪܐ**), which also fits well in the context, since it gives the reason why the wicked stumble - their way is *in darkness*. The Peshitta is perhaps influenced by the LXX, which reads **σκοτεινὰ**.

V. 21<sup>a</sup> in the MT reads **אֶל-יְלִיזוֹ מֵעֵינַיִךְ** and the Peshitta reads **ܕܠܐ ܬܘܠܝܢ ܕܚܝܢܝܗ**. Both readings agree with 3.21, although the Peshitta reads for the plural a singular instead. The Peshitta translator made his translation from the root **צלל** - "despicable".

The words **מְקַלְמֶשְׁמֶר** in v. 23 are generally translated: "with all vigilance" (cf. *RSV*, p. 510).<sup>5</sup> The Peshitta, which reads **ܐܘܟܠ ܒܠܐ** ("with all caution"), follows the LXX, which reads **πάση φυλακῆ**. The Hebrew may have been unclear to the translator. The term **מְשֻׁמֵר** also means "guard" or "watch" and even if he did understand this word, he may have misinterpreted **מְקַלְמֶשְׁמֶר** to mean "from all", otherwise the whole expression **מְקַלְמֶשְׁמֶר** may have been unintelligible to him. The LXX offered a good reading, which the translator subsequently employed for his own rendition.

It is probable, but not conclusive, that the Peshitta is influenced by LXX in the rendering of **לְנֶחֱדָה** ("forward") in v. 25. It is improperly understood by the LXX in an ethical sense to read **ὀρθά**.<sup>6</sup> The Syriac concept **ܒܘܝܘܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ** means mostly, although not exclusively, "upright", but "direct" can perhaps also be the meaning here.

The Peshitta paraphrases v. 26<sup>a</sup> of the Hebrew to read "keep thy feet from evil ways" instead of "let the path of thy foot be smooth."<sup>7</sup> This was done by the translator on the basis of v. 27,<sup>b</sup> which reads the same. He either did not quite understand the word **פֶּלֶס**, or may have wanted to simplify it and harmonise it with v. 27.

4 There are 15 mss. (Hebrew) that have **ב** instead of **כ**, which may be favoured because of its connection with v. 18 - the way is dangerous *like darkness*.

5 The *New American Standard Bible* reads "with all diligence."

6 The *Midrash Mishle* (p. 13) states: "Deine Augen sollen immer grade vor sich blicken d. i. wenn du betest, sollen deine Augen und dein Herz auf deinen himmlischen Vater gerichtet sein. Wenn du so tust, dann werden deine Wimpern **βλέφαρά** vor dich hinsehen (dir den Weg lehren)." Hence the LXX reading of the term "forward" was probably affected by Jewish exegesis.

7 The LXX may reveal Jewish influence here as well; it reads **ὀρθὰς** instead of "smooth." The Midrash of this verse reads: "Ermesse den Weg deines Fusses d. i. in der Stunde, wenn der Mensch in das Lehrhaus geht. Wenn du so tust, so werden alle deine Wege *recht* sein" (p. 13).

## Chapter 5

This chapter is a discourse against sexual licentiousness among men. It has the customary introductory exhortation (vv. 3-6) to give heed to the instruction of the teacher and ends with the motive presented as being the fate of the wicked (vv. 22-23). In between this the deadly influence of the harlot is described (vv. 3-6); the pupil is cautioned to avoid her lest loss of wealth and destruction come upon him (vv. 7-14), and is urged to conjugal frugality.

There are a few verses that are intertextual harmonisations, i.e. vv. 1, 2 and 4. Most of the deviations seem to be corrections of unintelligible or obscure readings, e. g. vv. 5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 16 and 20. V. 21 has an anti-anthropomorphic correction.

The first deviation in the Peshitta from the MT is in v. 1, where לְהַבִּינֵנִי is rendered as , נִלְמַדְתָּ בְּיָדֵי . This agrees with the LXX (λόγοις<sup>1</sup>), except that the word is singular. Although the reading may have been influenced by the LXX, it is perhaps a repeat translation from 4. 20 to harmonise with 4. 20.<sup>b</sup> It is therefore quite likely that the original reading was , נִלְמַדְתָּ בְּיָדֵי , which appears in the mss. 8a1, 9c1, 9I3.5, 10c1.2, 11c1 and 11I4.5 (it is possible that these readings are later corrections).

The Peshitta translation of v. 2 is an attempt to establish a connection with v. 1 so that the "son" is still the subject. The Hebrew text is problematic (possibly corrupt) and has no subject<sup>2</sup> (i.e. "you") for the verb. The MT of v. 2<sup>a</sup> reads מִזְמוֹת מְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְרָה, and the Peshitta reads כְּבִדְתָּ בְּיָדֵי אִתְּךָ. The Peshitta translator's rendition not only establishes a logical connection between vv. 1 and 2 (and v. 3), but also solves the problem of a lacking subject in v. 2 by presenting אִתְּךָ as the subject (אִתְּךָ with א instead of ל) and מִזְמוֹת as the object (כְּבִדְתָּ בְּיָדֵי).

In v. 3 the Peshitta reads "her words" (כְּלָמֶיהָ) for "her palate" in the MT (חֶקֶהָ). In v. 2<sup>b</sup> "your lips" is the subject, which will "keep knowledge". This establishes a good comparison with the lips of the harlot in v. 3 (subject again), which drip honey. The Peshitta rendition of v. 3 should probably be regarded as a harmonisation with v. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Jewish exegesis is probably the underlying motive for the Greek rendition: "Zu meiner Unterweisung (Einsicht) neige dein Ohr, nämlich in der Stunde, wenn du sie (die Wörter der Thora) hörst" (*Midrash Mishle*, p. 13). Caution should be taken before ascribing the same motive to the Peshitta rendition, because the approach of the Peshitta translator is usually to harmonise similar phrases in Proverbs and is not necessarily based upon religious grounds.

<sup>2</sup> If מִזְמוֹת is taken as the subject this verse lacks an object instead (cf. *The Jerusalem Bible*).



In the first three verses of this chapter the Peshitta translator shows his remarkable ability to give an unambiguous and logical translation of a sometimes difficult Hebrew text without adding anything extraordinary to it. By contrast, for other translators there seems to have been no alternative to solving the Hebrew reading, but to add elements supposedly missing in the text.<sup>3</sup> The LXX has such a connecting phrase at the beginning of v. 3.<sup>4</sup>

The Peshitta also continues this connection with v. 4. The MT reads "But at the last she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword", while the Peshitta continues the comparison of v. 3<sup>b</sup> in v. 4: "And their ("her words" in v. 3) end are more bitter than (רַק) wormwood, because she is sharper than (רַק) a two-edged sword". The LXX has the comparison in v. 4<sup>a</sup> (adding εὐρήσεις rhetorically), while the Targum has the comparison only in v. 4<sup>b</sup> (מ) and the rest of the v. reads as in the Peshitta.

While the LXX may have influenced the Peshitta to a limited extent in v. 4, the translator of the Peshitta may have found the Hebrew somewhat incongruous and thus made his rendering of the Hebrew *Vorlage* fit the general context of the pericope in which it appears. In order to do that he may have consulted the Greek and changed the suff. 3.fem.sing. to 3.masc. pl. as well.

In v. 5<sup>b</sup> the Peshitta reads כַּסְפֵּי שְׁאוֹל (from סמך-"uphold", "support") for יְהַכִּינֵהּ in the MT. The translator also exchanged the subject and the object so that it reads "Sheol supports her steps", compared with the MT; "her steps lead to Sheol". The LXX translator paraphrased the reading of v. 5 completely and the Targum follows the Peshitta. If the translator did understand the Hebrew to mean "her steps uphold Sheol", his translation can be regarded as a correction to render a logical reading of the phrase.

The word פָּן<sup>5</sup> in v. 6 of the MT is grammatically unclear. The v. in the Peshitta text that has been translated as כִּי אֵין כִּי אֵין כִּי אֵין follows the Greek reading instead - ὁδοὺς γὰρ ζωῆς οὐκ ἐπέρχεται. The Targum reads exactly like the Peshitta, although it still follows the Hebrew word order (it does not have the equivalent of אֵין either).

In v. 9 the Peshitta has אֵין (cf. ζωῆ σου in LXX) instead of הוֹרֵךְ. It is possible that the Peshitta *Vorlage* read הוֹן or חיל instead of הוֹרֵךְ. The Peshitta has a paraphrase for אֵין אֵין to read אֵין אֵין (ἀνελετήμοσιν in the LXX). The Targum reads the first clause like the Peshitta and אֵין אֵין is rendered as נוכריין, which is probably correct, since the original Hebrew reading could have been נכרי. The

<sup>3</sup> The text-critical footnote in *Biblia Hebraica* suggests for instance that the suff. 2. masc. sing. be added to the verbs שָׁמַר and נָצַר, so that מִן־יְהוָה protects "you."

<sup>4</sup> μὴ πρόσσεχε φαύλη γυναικί. Cf. The *Midrash Mishle*, p. 14: "Denn Honigseim träufeln die Lippen der Fremden d. i. mein Sohn hüte dich vor einem buhlerischen Weibe, ..."

<sup>5</sup> Used only (in the construct) adverbially as a conjunctive, which means "lest."

Peshitta omits ܦ in v. 10 and uses ܘܥܢ for ܘܥܢ (σῆς ἰσχύος in the LXX). The Peshitta probably simplified and harmonised the translation of ܘܥܢ in v. 9 in the light of v. 10. The Targum follows the Peshitta in this by reading ܘܥܢ in vv. 9 and 10 and it may possibly represent the correct reading.<sup>6</sup>

The Peshitta also more or less follows the LXX in v. 11. It reads "In your old age your soul will sadden you, when the flesh consumes your body". ܘܥܢ ܘܥܢ (ἐπ' ἐσχάτων<sup>7</sup>) is rendered as ܘܥܢ ܘܥܢ and ܘܥܢ reads ܘܥܢ (μεταμεληθήση). The Peshitta and the Targum follow the MT closely in vv. 12 and 13 (the LXX contains deviations in both verses).

V. 14 in the Peshitta differs to some extent from both the MT and the LXX. However, the translation gives no indication that it is based on a *Vorlage*, which differs from the MT. First, the Peshitta translator rendered ܘܥܢ as ܘܥܢ and then it makes ܘܥܢ plural (ܘܥܢ). Although the reading does not affect the sense of the Hebrew, it does serve to intensify the completeness of the grief to which the disobedient comes and this was perhaps the intention of the translator in his rendering of the Hebrew *Vorlage*.

A good example of the simplification of the *Vorlage*, which is often aimed at by the Peshitta translator, appears in v. 16. The MT reads ܘܥܢ ܘܥܢ and the Peshitta text ܘܥܢ ܘܥܢ. The semantic field of ܘܥܢ includes the meanings of both ܘܥܢ and ܘܥܢ. The LXX follows the MT, but renders the sentence in the negative and the Targum closely follows the MT.

A slight allegorisation is the only difference between the Peshitta and the MT in v. 19. Instead of "breasts" the Peshitta reads "ways" (although a consonantal difference in the *Vorlage*, whereby ܘܥܢ reads ܘܥܢ instead, or a deliberate alteration by the Peshitta translator for ethical reasons may account for the Syriac rendering). ܘܥܢ is not represented in the Peshitta. However, this does not really upset the context of the reading and the word choice serves only to harmonise with ܘܥܢ. The translator may have considered the term superfluous. The translator also simplified the translation by rendering both ܘܥܢ and ܘܥܢ with ܘܥܢ. The LXX allegorises to an even greater extent and reads πολλοστος ἔση for ܘܥܢ. The Targum allegorises throughout the verse, comparing "wife" to the "wisdom" that one always needs to learn (ܘܥܢ = ܘܥܢ).

In v. 20 the Peshitta reads a command instead of a question (ܘܥܢ, ܘܥܢ for ܘܥܢ) in both clauses. This can be ascribed to the influence of the LXX (μη and μηδε). The verse otherwise reads like the MT, while the LXX

<sup>6</sup> The introduction of vv. 9 and 10 in the *Midrash Mishle* (p. 14) reads: "Dass du nicht Andern (Fremden) deine *Kraft* giebst..." and "Dass Fremden sich nicht sättigen von deiner *Kraft*."

<sup>7</sup> ἐπι γερως in *Clem. Stromata* 122<sup>24</sup> is regarded as the genuine text of the LXX by De Lagarde (1863, p. 20).

does not translate *בני*. The Targum reads more like the Hebrew but has *למה* in v. 20<sup>a</sup> and *לא אורף לא* in v. 20<sup>b</sup>. The Targum also reads *תשרג* for *תשגה* (*תשרג* in Peshitta).

The Peshitta usually avoids translating any reading that may appear anthropomorphic<sup>8</sup> in reference to Yahweh (cf. Prov. 14. 31, 16. 4, 29, 14, etc.). In v. 21 the Peshitta reads *מבכה* instead of an equivalent for *מפקלס*<sup>9</sup> (*σκαπεύει* in the LXX). The Peshitta reading avoids presenting Yahweh with the human attribute of "watching over". The Peshitta rendering also harmonises with the first clause of v. 21 (*בנה*). Both the above reasons may have had an influence on the Peshitta translator. The Targum agrees with the Peshitta reading.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. 3. 34, where God is not attributed with the human action of "scorning."

<sup>9</sup> The meaning of this verb is uncertain and is usually translated as "to watch over" (cf. *RSV*, p. 511). The *Midrash Mishle* (p. 15) reads: "und alle seine Pfade erwägt er."



## Chapter 6

The first discourse covers vv. 1 to 19 and is generally aimed at petty vices. The second discourse, from vv. 20 to 35, deals with adultery and is similar to that in chapter 5.

There are some deviations in this chapter of the Peshitta that are caused by difficult readings in the Peshitta *Vorlage* (assuming that the *Vorlage* did not differ from the MT), namely vv. 3, 5, 6, 7, 22 and 23. Some verses are simplifications and as such the deviations should not be regarded as the result of external influences - vv. 12 and 13. Corrections involve inversion (v. 19) and a change from the active to passive (v. 25) or a preference for the LXX interpretation (v. 11). Harmonisation occurs in vv. 2 and 31, while the construct state between two words was ignored or misread in v. 23.

In 6. 1 Fichtner (*BH*, 1977, p. 1161) suggests that  $\eta\text{פִּי}$  should read  $\eta\text{פִּי}$  like the other versions, namely the LXX, the Peshitta, the Vulgate and the Targum. This is not an unmerited suggestion, but not a pressing one either, for it does not affect the reading in any way, except that it is more logical to have a singular here. The Peshitta may thus have had this reading in its *Vorlage*, or it is based on the LXX reading.<sup>1</sup>

V. 2 in the Peshitta differs from the MT in word choice and agrees with the LXX to a small degree. The fact that the Peshitta translates  $\eta\text{פִּי}$  (which appears in both clauses in the MT<sup>2</sup>) with different wordings ( $\text{כַּאֲשֶׁר בְּפִי}$  and  $\text{כַּאֲשֶׁר בְּפִי}$ ) may therefore not be entirely due to the influence of the Greek reading, but rather to an internal harmonisation with other verses in Proverbs where "lips" and "mouth" appear in the same sentence.<sup>3</sup> However, the possibility that it is based on a different *Vorlage* should still be kept in mind.

In v. 3 there are three different readings in the MT, Peshitta and LXX. The Hebrew reads with some difficulty and it seems as if the Peshitta translator, if not making use of the LXX, at least interpreted the Hebrew *Vorlage* differently. The former seems rather to be the case.

First, the Peshitta translator did not translate  $\text{אֲנִי}$ , which is rendered as  $\text{\alpha\ \acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\ \sigma\omicron\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omicron\mu\alpha\iota}$  by the LXX translator. However, in the rest of the verse the Peshitta translator probably made use of the Greek. It reads

<sup>1</sup> The singular "hand" is used throughout the exegesis of this verse in the *Midrash Mishle* (p. 16), where the explanation serves as a warning against abandoning the law of Yahweh and mingling with unbelievers.

<sup>2</sup> Toy (1904, p. 129) mentions that it is strange for the Hebrew to have a repetition like this, as well as the repetition of  $\text{\chi\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\eta, \chi\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\sigma\iota\nu}$  in the LXX, although it reads  $\text{\sigma\tau\acute{o}\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma}$  at the end of v. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Prov. 4. 24, 5.3, 13. 3, 14. 3, 16. 10, 16. 23, 18. 20, 27. 2, 28. 7, etc.



The concept "frowardness" (כַּדְּמָה) is used for "false speech" (עֲקֻמָּה) in v. 12, which may have been influenced by the LXX - ἀφρων. The Hebrew was perhaps unclear to the Peshitta translator. The Targum reads סמולא but has עוולא for און (אב in the Peshitta).

In v. 13 the words יָרָךְ and מִיָּד are rendered as יָרָךְ in both cases by the Peshitta translator. The Targum coincides with the Peshitta (יָרָךְ for both verbs), while the LXX reads ἐννεύει and διδάσκει, respectively. The Peshitta (and Targum) has יָרָךְ in the plural and the LXX follows the MT. The term יָרָךְ is probably used in the sense of "give indications" and it fits the context of the sentence, which means that this reading has not been influenced from an external source, but merely reflects the translator's technique of simplification.

The following two verses in the Peshitta exhibit no deviations from the MT and Targum, while the LXX reads with difficulty; notably χάλρει for שָׁפ and συντριβεται for עֲבָשׁ in v. 16.

The first clause in the Peshitta (and Targum) is appropriately inverted in v. 19 to fit the context of the sentence.

V. 22 may present a problem as far as literalness is concerned; the clause וְכִי יִבְרַח לְךָ אֶת־פִּי וְכִי יִבְרַח לְךָ אֶת־לִבִּי is taken as a doublet instead of as a paraphrase for וְכִי יִבְרַח לְךָ אֶת־פִּי וְכִי יִבְרַח לְךָ אֶת־לִבִּי. The Peshitta agrees with the LXX, which reads ἐπάγου αὐτήν, καὶ μετὰ σοῦ ἔστω. As the Hebrew now reads, the whole sentence in v. 22 is a triplet, which might have influenced the Greek translator to read it as a quatrain for the sake of symmetry instead. The Peshitta translator was not concerned with the issue of symmetry, but perhaps made use of a Greek text to clarify the awkward relationship of וְכִי יִבְרַח לְךָ אֶת־פִּי and וְכִי יִבְרַח לְךָ אֶת־לִבִּי and he probably did not understand וְכִי יִבְרַח לְךָ אֶת־לִבִּי. The Targum follows the MT. The Peshitta (and Targum) probably follows the LXX at the end of v. 23, which reads ἔλεγχος καὶ παιδεία (כְּדִנְיָהּ וְכְדִנְיָהּ in the Peshitta) instead of מוֹסָר מוֹדָר as in the MT ("guidance of admonition").

V. 25<sup>a</sup> of the Peshitta agrees entirely with the MT, while the LXX interprets it as "do not be overcome by the desire of beauty" instead of "do not desire her beauty in your heart."<sup>7</sup> The second clause of this verse in the Peshitta agrees extensively with the LXX, which reads μηδὲ ἀγρευθῆς σοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ("your eyes") μηδὲ συναρπασθῆς ἀπὸ τῶν αὐτῆς βλεφάρων. The Peshitta translates: "Do not be caught by her eyes (כַּחֲבִיטִים) and do not be captivated by her eyelids (כִּי יִבְרַח לְךָ אֶת־לִבִּי = כִּי יִבְרַח לְךָ אֶת־לִבִּי)." Although the translation is in the passive like the MT, the Peshitta translator may have used part of the LXX reading for moral reasons. By means of this translation he wanted, firstly, to accentuate the particular temptation presented by the licentious woman, which would serve as a warning to anyone who may experience this kind of seduction and, secondly, to ensure that the reader of this verse would recognise it as such. Apart from the ethical reason given above, the

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the *Midrash Mishle* (p. 19): "Lass dich nicht gelüsten seiner Schönheit in deinem Herzen."



translator may have intended to harmonise and identify this verse with other occurrences of "eyelids" in Proverbs, particularly with Prov. 30.13. The Targum follows the MT.

In v. 31 the verb **כָּבַד** is repeated from the previous verse to retain the grammatical connection between the two sentences.

The Peshitta also follows the LXX in v. 34, only omitting **αὐτῆς** and utilising a different word order to render it even closer to the MT as far as the meaning of the sentence is concerned.

## Chapter 7

This chapter represents a continuation of the exhortations against the adulteress in the previous two chapters. The subject has a similar arrangement to that in the subsections of Prov. 2. 16 to 19. 5 and 6. 20 to 35, but it is treated more elaborately. The teacher counsels obedience to his word and wisdom in order to preserve the pupil from the adulteress (1. 1-5). The section from vv. 6 to 23 describes her fatal wiles and the chapter concludes with an appeal to avoid her.

In this chapter most of the deviations serve the purpose of harmonisation and simplification (vv. 1, 4, 5, 6, 20 and 22). The rest of the deviations are corrections in the Syriac rendition, which were made for ethical (vv. 14 and 21) or grammatical (vv. 7 and 22) reasons.

Prov. 7. 1 contains the same thought as 3. 1, 4. 21, 6. 21 and 7. 3, namely the teacher's exhortation that his commandments be preserved within the heart of the pupil. It is thus not surprising that the translator rendered מִצְוֹתַי הַצְּבֹן אֶתְךָ, similar to the above verses, to read אֶפְתָּחֵם אֶלְכֵם בְּלִבְכֶם. This reading does not subvert the general meaning of the Hebrew and fits better in the context of the first five verses. V. 3 urges the pupil to "write them on the tablet of your *heart*". Because internal harmonisation occurs quite often in the Peshitta, there is no real reason to suspect a different *Vorlage* reading for this verse. The LXX (παρὰ σεαυτῶ) and Targum concur with the MT, although the LXX has another verse added to this phrase.

Compared to the LXX, the Peshitta text is closer to the Hebrew in v. 4 and differs only in the sense that the translator misunderstood מִקְרֵב ("intimate friend" or "kinswoman") and rendered it as נִרְדָּא - "understanding". The Hebrew morphology of this word is taken in its Syriac meaning<sup>1</sup> (this can serve as confirmation that the Peshitta *Vorlage* had the same reading as the MT). The Targum reads מְנַרְעָא.

V. 5 in the Peshitta represents a minus compared to the MT. The two phrases מִנְקֻרְיָהּ and אִשְׁתָּהּ זָרָה are rendered as נִבְרָהּ in the Peshitta. This may be due to the fact that the Peshitta translator considered מִנְקֻרְיָהּ and זָרָה so synonymous that he regarded the construction as a tautology and replaced it by a single concept, נִבְרָהּ אִשְׁתָּהּ אִבְרָהּ<sup>2</sup>. The LXX and the Targum follow the MT.

The Peshitta follows the LXX closely in v. 6, where בְּתִלְוִין בֵּיתִי is rendered as נִבְרָהּ אִבְרָהּ and אִשְׁתָּהּ reads נִבְרָהּ אִבְרָהּ. V. 6 in the LXX reads ἀπὸ γὰρ θυρίδος ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτῆς εἰς

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 8. 2 (בֵּית) and 8. 22 (קָדָם).

<sup>2</sup> It may also be a case of intertextual harmonisation, as the Peshitta translation of Prov. 7. 5 reads almost exactly like Prov. 2. 16 and may well be based on this particular reading.

τὰς πλατείας παρακύπτουσα. The Peshitta translation changes the subject from the teacher, who sees the youths (v. 7) passing by *her* corner towards her house, to the woman, who *herself* watches the youth passing *the* corner coming to her house (v. 8). The translator, by his rendering of the *Vorlage*, wanted to retain the grammatical connection in the context of vv. 6 to 13. Thus a climax is reached in v. 14, where the woman confronts the youth directly. The Peshitta translation is based on the LXX and the deviation in the Peshitta does not necessarily imply a different *Vorlage*.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that the first mention of the "youth" is in v. 7 and in the plural (בַּפְּתָאִים). It is translated simply as כְּבָבִי in the Peshitta. The translator perhaps took כ as the accusative sign after אָרַא (instead of "among") and thus retained the plural throughout until v. 13, where the adulteress speaks directly to one of the youths.

In v. 10 the Peshitta reads אַפְּסוּמ as the equivalent of וְהִנֵּה in the MT. Thus the Peshitta translator has supplied a verb for א + inf. - לְקָרְאָתָּו (אֵלַי in the Peshitta), because this reading created grammatical tension for the translator. The LXX and Targum follow the MT in this clause. In the second clause the Peshitta and Targum follow the Greek reading to some extent, perhaps because of the unclear meaning of וְצָרָה.<sup>4</sup>

The Peshitta (and Targum) inserts אַפְּסוּ ("to roam") after אֵלַי in v. 12, which agrees with the LXX, ῥέμβεται. The Peshitta translates אֵלַי before אֵלַי (singular) in the second clause with אַפְּסוּ (plural), while the LXX follows the MT.

The Peshitta reads אֵלַי instead of אֵלַי in v. 14 so that the clause reads "they are vow-sacrifices" instead of "vow-sacrifices for me". This rendering of the Hebrew may be due to ethical considerations. That an adulteress is able to make a sacrifice was probably contrary to his beliefs and he felt compelled to make a more "neutral" reading in his text. He does, however, let her make vows (אֵלַי) in the second clause. The LXX and the Targum text follow the MT.

In v. 20 the Peshitta reads אֵלַי for אֵלַי and this agrees with the LXX - πολλῶν - to read the second clause "and he will go home after many days" instead of "he will come home at the full moon". The Hebrew meaning of אֵלַי (i.e. full moon or full moonfeast) may have been lost to the Peshitta translator or it was

<sup>3</sup> The Peshitta translator, for instance, renders אֵלַי as אֵלַי (which is the equivalent of תבין) in order to coincide with the subject, i.e. "her", which is not represented in the LXX.

<sup>4</sup> The Peshitta reads אֵלַי אֵלַי אֵלַי and the LXX has ποιεῖ νέωμ ἐξίπτασθαι καρδίας. The insertion of אֵלַי could also be justified as keeping the connection with v. 7, where it first appears in this paragraph to prevent ambiguity.





## Chapter 8

Chapter 8 is devoted entirely to exalted Wisdom, who addresses the reader directly. There is an introduction and a conclusion, with two closely related sections in between (vv. 4-21 and 22-33). In the first section Wisdom sets forth her noble character and relationship with men who listens to her. In the second section the reasons for her high esteem with Jahwe is explained to the reader. The conclusion sets out the fate of those who either embrace or reject her.

In the Peshitta most of the changes are due to internal factors like harmonisation among verses and even chapters (vv. 22 and 23). Some variants can be considered corrections in cases of ambiguity (v. 7). Where the Hebrew text is obscure, or contains a rare term, the translator made extensive use of the LXX rendition (vv. 1, 7, 9, 14, 22 and 30). Vv. 22 and 23 are of particular interest, because they carry some religious import. The main concern of the translator in these verses seems to be the avoidance of potentially misleading interpretations regarding the role of wisdom. The verses can perhaps be considered antiheretical in the sense that the translator did not want these verses to offer any justification for (other) sectarian or heretical views pertaining to the hypostatisation of wisdom and, by implication, for the legitimacy of their philosophical points of view. The translation protected the reader from misinterpreting the text.

The Peshitta translation in v. 1 seems like a mixture of different elements of the LXX and the MT. Like the LXX, the Peshitta supplies an object for the verb in the second clause, which may have been inserted from the LXX (σοι ὑπακούσθη = נבנא), but the rest of the Peshitta text agrees largely with the MT. The term כח אבא may also have been influenced by *ἔνα*, although it appears at the beginning and not the end of the verse. The Targum has מסול דיכנא at the beginning (in the Peshitta), but תרמי קלה (in the MT) at the end of the sentence. It looks as if the Peshitta translator did not quite know how to translate תקלא and thus made use of the LXX interpretation instead.

V. 2 is grammatically connected to v. 1 by יגד (γὰρ in the LXX), although not in the same manner. The noun עבנדא is also inserted for the same reason from the previous verse and נתיקות קיה is paraphrased, again with the help of the LXX (ἀνὰ μέσον δὲ τῶν τριβῶν) to read חבבא (איהא איהא) *בבבא*. The Targum follows the MT exactly.

V. 3<sup>b</sup> reads חבבא איהא איהא איהא instead of מקבוא פתחים, which is not necessarily based on a different *Vorlage*. It may, in fact, be an alternative repetition of v. 3<sup>a</sup> (חבבא איהא איהא איהא) for the sake of the clarity of the locations from where Wisdom calls out. The LXX agrees substantially with the MT, with only one deviation - *δυσαστῶν* instead of קרה.

V. 4 is introduced by **אני נא** to indicate direct speech, because this discourse is only in the first person. Both the Targum and the LXX follow the MT.

Both the Peshitta and the Targum supply a suffix (3. masc. pl.) to **לב** in v. 5<sup>b</sup> to read **נשמעו בלבם** and **נשמעו בלבם** and **נשמעו בלבם**, respectively. The Peshitta rendition of v. 5 is a continuation of v. 4 in the form of a clause indicating purpose. Vv. 4 and 5 in the Peshitta read: "To you, O men, I call, and my cry is unto the sons of men, so that the simple ones can learn prudence and the foolish can understand in their hearts!" The MT repeats this exhortation in v. 5 to read: "O simple ones learn prudence, O foolish men pay attention!" It is clear that the Peshitta translator was forced, by virtue of his particular rendering of the text, to add "their" after heart.<sup>1</sup> The Targum follows the Peshitta only by reading "their" after heart, but translates the whole sentence as an exhortation, as does the MT. The LXX follows the MT.

The word **פיה** is inserted in v. 7<sup>b</sup> to obviate ambiguity in the reading of the text. As the Hebrew now reads, it can be read either as "wickedness is abomination to my lips", or as "false lips are an abomination to me". The Peshitta reading clearly follows the latter meaning (cf. Prov. 3. 32 and 15. 26). The Peshitta translation is logical and may have been based upon the interpretation of the LXX reading - **ἐβδελυγμένα δὲ ἐναντίον ἐμοῦ χεῖλη ψευδῆ**. The Targum follows the MT.

The Peshitta again supplies the object in v. 9 (**למנו**), which coincides with what is implied in the MT, and both participles are rendered in the plural (in the LXX). The Peshitta reading is based on internal influences as well as the influence of the LXX interpretation. The Targum shows a partial influence by the Peshitta (**שני = למנו**).

The adverb **לב** is added to **בדבתי** in v. 10 and was probably inserted from v. 11. The word **קטורת** reads "fine gold" (**כסף כהן**), which is interpreted thus elsewhere in Proverbs (cf. 3. 14) and in 8. 19, with which v. 10 is probably harmonised. The verb **דבתי** may also have been influenced by **דבתי** in v. 19. The LXX has no adjective for **γνώσιον**, while the Targum agrees completely with the MT. The Peshitta also inserts **למנו**, which is implicit in the MT, for the sake of clarity. The reading of "instruction" instead of "my instruction" may also be a harmonisation with the objects in vv. 9, 10 and 11. The Targum agrees with the MT and the LXX has an addition in this verse.

<sup>1</sup> The Peshitta reading of vv. 4 and 5 differs from the MT in that Wisdom calls to all men with the hope that only the foolish among them may listen. The MT considers all men to be lacking in understanding. This may have seemed to be too harsh a reality to the translator.



V. 11 substantially contains the same idea as stated in Prov. 3. 14 and 15.<sup>2</sup> The addition in 8.11 may have been inserted from v. 10 to retain the logical connection with it and to harmonise v. 11 with other verses like 16.16 and particularly with 3.14 and 15. The Targum and the LXX agree with the MT.

The Peshitta reads כּוּנֵה ("create") instead of שְׁכַנְתִּי ("possess", "dwell") in v. 12. The Targum follows the Peshitta in this rendition of the verb. The Hebrew meaning may have been unclear and the Peshitta translator probably had in mind the verb מָנָה, which has both "create" and "possess" as part of its semantic field. This verb occurs in v. 22, where Wisdom states that she is created (קִנְיָה) by Jahwe.

In v. 13 there is no difference in meaning from the MT, although the Peshitta replaces an adjective with the status constructus<sup>3</sup> and the two words וְיָפִי תְהַפְּכֹת become הַפְּחֵה מֵפְחֵה. The Targum agrees somewhat with the Peshitta, using דְּצִלַּת דִּיהוּהָ for the above-mentioned construction. The LXX reads φάβος κρύλου. This instance may not be a proper deviation at all. At least, no external influence is suspected.

The Peshitta equivalent of אָנִי in v. 14 is אֲנִי, which agrees with the LXX (ἐγώ). The Targum, like the other two versions, has only one occurrence of דִּילִי in this verse instead of three.

The Peshitta, Targum and numerous Hebrew mss. read "righteous" instead of "earth" (אֲרֶץ for צְדִיק) at the end of v. 16. It seems as if the Peshitta *Vorlage* read צְדִיק. The Targum reading may even, however, be a compromise; it reads תְּרִיצוּתָא, which is quite close to the Hebrew equivalent of תְּרִיץ. The Targum translator apparently took the Hebrew reading for תְּרִיץ<sup>4</sup> instead of אֲרֶץ. The LXX reads στήλη.

The Peshitta adds the suffix 1. sing. to וְנִבְנֶה in v. 17, which clarifies the MT text and may have been in his *Vorlage* or may have been loosely based on the LXX, which does not entirely agree with it. The Targum agrees with the Peshitta, leaving out only the one אֲנִי, which is not important for the Aramaic meaning.

The LXX adds another couplet to v. 21, which serves as an introduction to the next verses (cf. the Midrash quoted further on), while the Peshitta's only deviation is the rendering of יָשׁ as מְבֹרָא (ἔταραξις in the LXX and "many years" in the Targum).

<sup>2</sup> Aphrahat (Schaff, 1956, p. 349) says that the righteous shall be tried by the fire, like *gold* and *silver* and *goodly stones*, while the wicked shall perish, like *straw* and *reed* and *stubble*, and proceeds to quote Is. 66. 16: "Ye shall go out and see the carcasses of the men who offended against Me, whose *worm* (Prov. 12. 4) shall not die...." (cf. Prov. 12. 4). Christ is also symbolised by a stone; Is. 26. 16 is quoted in this connection (ibid. pp. 347-8).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. 4. 11, 9. 17, 10. 31, 11. 12, etc.

<sup>4</sup> The Targum *Vorlage* may have read תְּרִיץ.

Vv. 22 and 23 presented some interesting challenges for the translator. Firstly, he rendered  $\text{קָנָה} + \text{נִי}$  in v. 22 as  $\text{כָּרַם}$  and then  $\text{נִסְכְּתָי}$  in v. 23 as  $\text{כָּרַם}$  (in the LXX and passive in Targum). To a large extent it seems as though the choice of verbs can be a matter of degree and is not really different in meaning from the MT. In the Peshitta "Wisdom" was not simply "formed" or "set up" by Jahwe in the beginning, but was really "created". This puts the importance on the creative power of Jahwe in the paragraph in order to dispell any notion that "Wisdom" was present in whatever way as a Creator and initially needed only to be manipulated into some or other form. This tendency is also apparent and does indeed coincide with the translator's intention in Prov. 3.19.<sup>5</sup> Here, like in other parts of the text, he prevented a hypostatisation of "Wisdom" as it may be interpreted in the MT text.

Jewish exegesis did identify "Wisdom" with "Torah" and in the *Midrash Mishle* of v. 9<sup>6</sup> the pre-existence of the Torah is described, with Prov. 8.22 quoted in its description of the seven things created before the world. Also noteworthy is the Midrash of v. 21, which ends with this question: "Wo war der Thora vor der Welterschaffung? Im Himmel, wie es heisst: v. 30 Ich war bei....."

V. 23 also adds  $\text{מִבְּרֵאשִׁית}$  and  $\text{וּלְפָנֵי}$  in the Peshitta to read: "From before ( $\text{מִבְּרֵאשִׁית}$ ) eternity he established me, from the beginning, even before he established ( $\text{וּלְפָנֵי}$ ) the earth". Both words are perhaps inserted from vv. 22<sup>b</sup> ( $\text{מִבְּרֵאשִׁית}$ ) and 23<sup>a</sup> ( $\text{וּלְפָנֵי}$ ) to render a grammatical and contextual connection between the two verses and the rest of the paragraph (cf. vv. 24,<sup>7</sup> 25 and 26). V. 23<sup>b</sup> in the Hebrew, which reads  $\text{מִבְּרֵאשִׁית מִקְדָּמֵי אֶרֶץ}$ , may also have sounded dubious to the translator and he thus split it with  $\text{ה}$  and added  $\text{וּלְפָנֵי}$  after  $\text{מִבְּרֵאשִׁית}$ . This reading in v. 23<sup>b</sup> agrees with v. 24<sup>a</sup> in the LXX, although not entirely ( $\text{πολιθησαι}$  for  $\text{וּלְפָנֵי}$ <sup>8</sup>), and the rest of the verse also differs from the Greek text.

<sup>5</sup> Prov. 3.19 and 20 look at the function of "Wisdom" at the start of Creation. As Weiss (1966, p. 189) says: "Hier wird zunächst berichtet, dass die Weisheit zwar von Gott geschaffen, nichtdestoweniger aber bereits vor der Schöpfung der Welt zugegen (sic.) war."

<sup>6</sup> "Komm und sie! welche Fülle von Güte schon Gott für seine Welt erschaffen, bevor seine Welt erschuf. Welches ist das? Das ist die Thora."

<sup>7</sup> V. 24 also served as proof that God created Wisdom; in GenR 1(2<sup>d</sup>) it is written that R. Gamliel was once told by a Greek philosopher: "Ein grosser Maler ist euer Gott, aber er fand auch gute Farbstoffe vor, die ihm zustatten kamen: Tohu (Wüste), Bohu (Leere), Finsternis, Wind, Wasser u. Tiefen (Tehomoth) Gn 1:2." R. Gamliel answered: "Möge der Geist dieses Mannes hinschwinden! Von ihnen allen steht eine Erschaffung geschrieben"; and then he quoted several texts: Is. 45. 7, Ps. 148. 4-5, Am. 4. 13 and Prov. 8. 24 also to prove the creation of the depths. This whole discourse is an argument against Greek philosophy and for the *creatio ex nihilo*, according to Strack (1961, vol. IV.1, p. 411).

<sup>8</sup> Several Syriac mss., i.e. 6h16, 7h6, 8a1, 9c1, 9l3.35, 10c1.2, 11c1 and 11l1.4.5, do have  $\text{וּלְפָנֵי}$  ("to make") instead of  $\text{וּלְפָנֵי}$  ("to form").

V. 30<sup>b</sup> in the Peshitta is probably based on the LXX reading - ἐγὼ ἤμην ἢ προσέχαιρεν = כַּרְבֵּן אֶתְּכֶם אֶתְּכֶם אֶתְּכֶם . This is perhaps due to a misunderstanding of אֶתְּכֶם אֶתְּכֶם אֶתְּכֶם.

V. 35<sup>a</sup> is also based on the LXX - ἔξοδοί μου ἔξοδοι ζωῆς = כַּוְכָבִים וְכַוְכָבִים וְכַוְכָבִים . The verb פָּצַח in v. 35<sup>b</sup> is translated as ܦܘܚ ("to go out") in the Peshitta, thereby taking the root of the Hebrew word in its Syriac meaning to coincide with the first clause of this verse.<sup>9</sup>

It is clear that some of the verses in chapter 8 may be influenced by the LXX, although they are generally not a complete retranslation of the Greek. The Targum also shows some similarities with both versions but is far more conservative in its approach, keeping close to the Hebrew, even to the point of word order.

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<sup>9</sup> It is possible that the Peshitta translator did not understand the Hebrew correctly (cf. Prov. 12. 2 where the Syriac reads quite differently from the Hebrew rendering of פִּיךָ as ܦܝܚܐ).



## Chapter 9

In this chapter "Wisdom" is personified as a householder who prepares a feast and then invites the uninstructed to take part in it in order to live (vv. 1-6). The discourse then is interrupted by a paragraph composed of different aphorisms (vv. 7-12) and is similar in content to the succeeding chapters. The next paragraph deals with "Folly" as opposed to "Wisdom", who also invites the uninstructed passerby with promises of secret delights (vv. 13-18). The first and third paragraphs are closely related to chapter 7.

V. 1 in the MT reads "Wisdom has built her house, hewn her seven pillars". The Peshitta reads "Wisdom built a house, and set up seven pillars for it" (כּוּנֵה בֵּיהּ is כּוּנֵה in the Targum). The Peshitta differs from the MT only in the fact that the verb "hewn" (הִצִּיבָהּ) is rendered as "set up" (כּוּנֵה). This rendition seems to have been influenced by the LXX, which reads ὑπήρσειεν. The translator may have read or understood הִצִּיבָהּ instead of הִצִּיבָהּ. The reading of "set up" is favoured by the context and completes the parallelism, although this may be only part of the reason why the Peshitta translator made use of the LXX interpretation in this instance. The deviation from the MT in the rest of the verse is not easily explained. The omission of the 3. sing. fem. suff. after "house" (found in both the MT and the LXX) is perhaps due to a deliberate avoidance of the impression that "Wisdom" is merely altering the construction of a house already belonging to her. However, this is a moot point and the variant does not alter the general meaning of the text.

The words עַל־גְּפֵי קַרְמֵי קַרְתָּ in v. 3 are rendered simply as בְּנֵי אֲבוֹתָם and this does not disturb the meaning of the text. Instead of "maidens" the Peshitta (as does the Targum) reads "servants" (in the LXX - δούλους<sup>1</sup>). The rest of the sentence is closer to the MT than the LXX and only אֲנִי אֶכְלֶה is added to introduce the direct speech.

The Peshitta has a similar reading to the MT in v. 4, with the exception that "in here" (הֵנָּה) is translated as "to me" (אֵלַי) instead. This rendition agrees with the LXX, which reads πρὸς με. The Peshitta translator made this alteration within the context of the whole pericope, connecting v. 4 with both vv. 3 and 5, and thus Wisdom, being the speaker, invites the simple to turn to *her* and eat of *her* bread and to drink of *her* wine. The Targum reads exactly like the Peshitta.

<sup>1</sup> The LXX is quoted by Clement in *Stromata* 1:17 (cf. Roberts, 1951, p. 319) in connection with John 10, 8. The "servants" refer to the true prophets inspired by the Lord; they were not thieves, but all those before the Lord's advent were thieves and robbers. Furthermore, Clement writes that "philosophy, it is said, was not sent by the Lord, but came stolen, or given by a thief" (ibid. p. 319). The Peshitta translation may also be regarded as a subtle antiheretical statement, assuming that Wisdom refers to the Lord or to the true doctrine, i.e. Christianity, as opposed to paganism and false philosophy.





and, except for נפש, the plus appears even to go against the thoughts of the Midrash. The Midrash of v. 12 clearly states that wisdom benefits only oneself: "d.i. der Nutzen kommen nur dir zu" (cf. Wünsche, 1893, p. 28). This does not agree with the view of the Peshitta that it is beneficial to one's neighbour as well.

The long plus is probably a description of hell.<sup>5</sup> Because of the length of this plus, it is improbable that the Peshitta translator would have inserted it without very strong motivation. Apart from the possibility that this addition was in the *Vorlage*, the translation may be based on an unknown Midrash or the answer may lie in the importance of this particular image in Syriac church tradition. It could have been identified with the nether-world whose inhabitants thirst for water.<sup>6</sup>

The Hebrew text in v. 13 contains a few difficult words, of which the meanings are unclear.<sup>7</sup> The Peshitta solved this problem by relying partly on the LXX. The second clause follows the LXX. In the first clause the Hebrew was perhaps not comprehended by the translator and the word "boisterous" was therefore, freely rendered as "seductive" (ܩܪܗܘܢܐ). His reading does, however, strengthen the moral tone of the translation and it stresses the immorality of the foolish woman. This also concurs with what is said about the foolish woman in chapter 7 (cf. v. 21).

קָרָה ("city") is not translated in the Peshitta, which renders v. 14<sup>b</sup> as "she sits on a high chair (throne)". The noun קָרָה reads ἐν πλατείαις in the LXX and ועשין in the Targum. The Peshitta translator probably considered "city" superfluous to the meaning of the sentence.

V. 18 contains another long addition, which results in a correspondence with the LXX. The verse reads "He does not know that giants perish there, that there all her guests are in the valley of Sheol. So turn away!, do not linger in that place!, do not let your eye look at her!, for thus will you go through alien water, and pass through an alien river, but turn away from the alien water and do not drink of the alien water, because many days and years of life will be added to you". It is clearly an equivalent reading to the LXX.

The first part of the Peshitta reading of v. 18 actually agrees more with the MT than with the LXX; כבדה כמא is translated from בְּעַמְקֵי as opposed to πέτρων ("trap", "depth") in the LXX. The phrase כבדה כמא is also translated from קְרָאֵיהָ ("her guests") and not from συναντᾶ ("meet her"). But the

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"....d.i. sie machen dich, deine Seele und dein Wissen angenehm, sowie es heisst Prov 9,12: 'Bist du weise geworden, der Weisheit Vortheil bleibt dir' d.i. hast du dich um die Thora bemüht, so hast du guten Lohn zu gewärtigen, lässt du aber von der Thora ab, so werden sich viele Hindernisse gegen dich aufthürmen." It is clear that "knowledge" and "wisdom" are synonymous with the "Thora".

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ginzberg vol. I, pp. 10-12.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ginzberg, vol. I, pp. 10-11 and vol. V., p. 143, note 36.

<sup>7</sup> קָרָה and קְרָאֵיהָ.



translator still translated  $\text{קִבְּרֵי שְׂדֵי עֵינֵי}$  for  $\text{קִבְּרֵי}$ , which is equivalent to  $\text{παρ' αὐτῆ ὀλλυται}$  in the LXX.

It is unlikely that the plus is based on the Peshitta *Vorlage* and a different reason for its insertion should probably be sought in the context of the whole chapter. The chapter deals with two women, Wisdom and Foolishness, who each invites different types of men, i.e. the wise and the ignorant, respectively, to listen to them with promises of rewards for doing so. The long addition suits the context of the paragraph and certain elements of the addition actually appear in other parts of the chapter. For instance, in v. 17 reference is made to "stolen water" with which the foolish woman entices the ignorant, as it is "sweet". This instance may be identified with the "alien water" referred to in the addition, where one is warned against drinking or passing through it. The "many years of life" that will be given to the one who heeds the warning may also refer back to v. 11, where "long life" is promised to the wise by the wise woman.

The addition may have been inserted from the LXX to strengthen and advance the cause of wisdom in its opposition to foolishness. It should also be noted that there can be a connection between the "depths of Sheol"<sup>8</sup> in this plus and the "country given to thirst" in the plus of v. 12. The fact that the "river" is also a well-known image in Greek mythology, may also have influenced the LXX reading. For instance, on their way to Hades the departed souls first had to pass through a river. Furthermore, the purification by water is also well established in the Jewish and Christian religions<sup>9</sup> and this fact may have contributed to the addition in the Peshitta translation (depending on the dating, of course). This addition may be an exhortation to the pupil to abstain from heathen

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<sup>8</sup> Older Midrash texts mention seven compartments in the place where Moloch was worshipped (cf. v. 12). Sheol is one of these compartments. The allegorical interpretation of these seven compartments is that it means a sevenfold punishment; this is also found among Cabbalists, e.g. *Zohar* II, 150b. (Ginzberg, 1937, vol. V, p. 20).

<sup>9</sup> Clement of Alexandria allegorises v. 18 of the LXX to refer to heretical baptism as opposed to the true baptism (Hanson, 1959, p. 120). According to the Cabbalists all the souls must go through rivers of fire, either to be purified or, as is the case of the godless, to be judged there. Another opinion occurs in Konen 29, which says that the righteous bathe in 248 rivers of balsam, one for each member of the body, before entering Paradise (Ginzberg, 1937, vol. V, p. 225).

practices and, as such, it is possibly antiheretical<sup>10</sup> - particularly regarding the heretical baptism of pagan religions and sects as opposed to the true baptism of Christianity.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Mention should be made of the fact that there were numerous pools and ponds in Osrhoene and that water played a significant part in the religious (i.e. healing or baptism) and social life of the people, Christian as well as pagan. Pagan practices abound in nearby Hierapolis. Segal says: "A significant role is played at all these shrines, as at others in the ancient near east, by running water. Edessans were also familiar with the devastation of drought and floods, which did occur relatively often, and were a serious concern to them" (Segal, 1970, pp. 48-54, 73, 79). The symbol of water is thus appropriate in the Peshitta as a thinly disguised warning to anyone who contemplates flirting with other sects or cults and a particularly good allusion to baptism.

<sup>11</sup> Evidence that there may be a connection between the two pluses in chapter 9 (i.e. vv. 12 and 18) with regard to the importance of baptism comes from the writings of Cyprian concerning the baptism of heretics. It is perhaps appropriate to quote directly from it: "Nemesianus of Thubunae said: That the baptism that the heretics and schismatics bestow is not the true one, is everywhere declared in the Holy Scriptures, since their very leading men are false Christs and false prophets, as the Lord says by Solomon: "He who trusteth in that which is false, he feedeth the winds: and the very same, moreover, followeth the flight of birds. For he forsaketh the ways of his own vineyard, he has wandered from the paths of his own little field. But he walketh through pathless places, and dry, and a land destined for thirst; moreover, he gathereth together fruitless things in his hands." And again: "Abstain from strange water, and from the fountain of another do not drink, that you may live a long time; also that the years of life may be added to thee." And in the Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with His divine voice, saying: "Except a man be born again of water and Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." (Roberts, 1951, vol. V, p. 566).

## Chapter 10

From chapters 10 to 22. 16 the aphorisms are more detached. However, without going into any details, in chapter 10 the main thoughts are that goodness and industry bring prosperity, while wickedness and indolence bring only adversity. The parallelisms are usually antithetic.

In spite of the detached nature of the sentences in the Hebrew text, the Peshitta translator continues his harmonisation of the aphorisms with other verses in other chapters (vv. 3, 10 and 25). He also makes use of a number of extra ן's between the clauses to maintain some fluidity in the sentences. Some ethical considerations are apparent in v. 12. However, most of the variants are by and large simplifications and corrections of difficult or dubious readings.

A suff. 3. masc. sing. is attached to the equivalent of **אב** in v. 1 of the Peshitta (אב ן) to concur with **אב** in the second clause. The LXX reads **πατέρα** and the Targum follows the Peshitta.<sup>1</sup> The suffix may have been present in the Peshitta *Vorlage*, since the Targum usually follows the Hebrew quite closely and the suffix is, due to the clarity of the meaning of the verse and in accordance with the curtness of expression in the MT, redundant in this verse. The suffix is logical in the context of the verse and inserted for grammatical reasons.

The Peshitta may have been influenced by the LXX in v. 2, where **א** = **δέ**. But the Peshitta is closer to the Hebrew in the rest of v. 2 as well as in v. 3. For instance, **אב** is translated as **אב** (**δνόμενος**) and **אב** in v. 3 is also rendered as **אב** (plural), while the LXX reads **δσεβω**. The Targum also agrees with the Peshitta in v. 2 - it has **אב**. The particle may have been inserted by the translator himself to accentuate the contrast between the clauses. The particle establishes a logical connection between the two clauses as well.

The meaning of **אב** in v. 3<sup>b</sup> may have been unclear to the Peshitta translator. The Peshitta reads **אב** for **אב**, but **אב** is usually the equivalent for **אב** (the Targum has **אב** here; Cf. Prov. 3. 9, 9. 14 and 24. 4). The LXX reads **αὐτὸς** = **הוא**. It seems that this word may well have read **אב** in the Peshitta *Vorlage*, because the Peshitta did not base its reading on the LXX, which is often the case with corrupt readings. The term also fits the context perfectly and forms an intelligible antithesis to the first clause in this parallelism.

The Peshitta follows the LXX in v. 4 to read: "Poverty brings a man low". This reading does not necessarily imply a different *Vorlage*, since the translator may have interpreted the Hebrew text in the same sense as the LXX and perhaps misunderstood **אב** as well. Furthermore, the Peshitta reading harmonises with Prov. 6.

<sup>1</sup> It is significant that the exegesis in the *Midrash Mishle* (p. 30), saying: "Unser **אב**, Vater ist niemand anders als Gott zu verstehen...", is clearly not represented in the Peshitta translation. The Peshitta treats "father" in the ordinary social context.



11. The variation involves mostly the vocalisation of רִשׁ and the rendering of כַּף־רַמְיָהּ - "slack hand". "Poverty" has become the subject and the verb נַחֲמַכָּה (Pa'el = "subdue") is used instead of "make". The Targum follows the Peshitta and adds רַמְיָהּ, once more bringing the text closer to the Hebrew. The LXX also has another addition - v. 4a<sup>2</sup> - after v. 4.

The Peshitta follows the MT in vv. 5 and 6, while the LXX paraphrases the whole of v. 5 and the word חָסֵס in v. 6.

For רַקֵּב the Peshitta has נָחַץ in v. 7, which agrees with σβέννυται in the LXX. The Targum agrees with the Peshitta. The meanings of the verbs רַקֵּב and נָחַץ are similar and the Peshitta *Vorlage* need not have been different from the MT text (cf. 13. 9, 20. 20 and 24. 20).

V. 10<sup>b</sup> in the Peshitta was either based on the LXX reading, or translated from a different *Vorlage*, since the MT reading is out of place (it is a repetition of v. 8<sup>b</sup>) and it does not complete the parallelism as the antithesis to the first clause. In v. 10<sup>a</sup> the Peshitta adds "deceitfully" (חַבֵּל) from the LXX - μετὰ δόλου. The translator felt inclined to qualify "winking", especially since it is used in a negative sense in connection with the loose woman in chapter 7. The Targum closely follows the MT.

The Peshitta translation of אֶרְבָּה in v. 12 is בַּחֲשֵׁי ("shame"). The translator may have altered the text on purpose. The fact that transgressions that are hidden, or covered by love, may have been ethically unacceptable to him and added to this; the deviation also serves to harmonise with 9. 13.

The Peshitta follows the LXX in v. 13 to read: "He who brings forth wisdom from his lips, hits the fool with a rod". The Targum agrees with the MT. The MT presents no close connection between the two clauses and the Peshitta translator relied on the LXX to establish the connection in his own translation of this verse. Although the meaning of the Syriac reading concurs with the LXX, the Peshitta text may still be based on a Hebrew *Vorlage* - לִבָּא = עֲמִיזָא and חֲסִיר־לֵב = חֲסִיר־לֵב.<sup>3</sup> The Targum follows the Hebrew text.

V. 14 is also a case where the Peshitta translator made use of the LXX to enhance the meaning of the Hebrew text. Not only is the connection between the clauses more clearly established, but a better antithesis between the "wise" and the "foolish" is accomplished as well (cf. vv. 2 and 3).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. De Lagarde (1863, p. 32) where the addition is connected with the additions of Prov. 9. 12 in some mss. Also of particular interest are the comments in the *Midrash Mishle* (p. 28) of 9. 12 that compares the materially rich with those that are rich in the knowledge of the Torah, which profit affects only its owner: "Gleich einem Armen und einem Reichen."

<sup>3</sup> Verse 13 can be compared to 26. 3 where the Peshitta has וְיִמְרוּ for both חֲסִיר־לֵב and חֲסִיר־לֵב in the MT (ῥάβδος and κέντρον in LXX).

The Peshitta (and Targum) follows the Hebrew closely in vv. 15, 16, and 17. The LXX has some differences and an addition in vv. 16 and 17.

The Peshitta agrees partly with the LXX in v. 18<sup>a</sup> ( *χελη δ(κα)ια* ), possibly because of the ambiguous meaning of the Hebrew text. The Targum also agrees with the Peshitta text.

There are some difficulties in v. 23 that the Peshitta translator once more resolved by following the LXX reading; particularly in the first clause. However, he may simply have left out *ל* before *קִסִּיל*, which would give the Syriac text practically the same meaning as the LXX. The Peshitta (and Targum) closely follows the MT in the second clause.

The verb *תִּתֵּן* is rendered as *כִּתְּבֵהּ* (passive) in v. 24 of the Peshitta and this practice is followed by the Targum (*תְּחַיְבֵהּ*). This makes better sense of the Hebrew and may be based on a different vocalisation to read "the desire of the righteous will be granted".

In v. 25 there is an addition in the Peshitta that is not present in either the MT or the LXX. This addition may be based on other verses in Proverbs, where the calamity that overcomes the wicked is also described as being of an instantaneous nature.<sup>4</sup> In 1. 26 the "ruin" also comes suddenly (*כִּי אֶבֶד*), like (*אֶבֶד*) a storm (*כְּסֹפֶה*) in v. 27 of the MT). The preposition *כִּי* at the beginning of Prov. 10.25 is also understood, as happens in the case of the phrases in Prov. 1. 26 and 27, as part of a comparative clause.

V. 26<sup>b</sup> in the Peshitta agrees with the LXX to some extent. The noun *הַעֲצָל* in the MT reads *אֲבָל* in the Peshitta, *παρὰνομία* in the LXX. Both *אֲבָל* and *παρὰνομία* may have been translated from *עוֹלָה* in their respective *Vorlagen*. But, since the rest of the verse does not read the same in the two texts, it seems more probable that the Peshitta translator made use of the LXX itself; if only because of the uncertainty of meaning prevalent in *הַעֲצָל*.

The rest of the Peshitta rendition agrees entirely with the MT in this chapter.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Prov. 1. 26 to 27, 6. 15 and 24. 22. It serves to note that Is. 17. 13 to 14 and 29. 5 to 6, and Jer. 4. 13 show that in the OT judgements and impending disaster to the wicked are generally portrayed as being unsuspected by the victims and coming without apparent warning.

## Chapter 11

Grammatically speaking this chapter does not differ from the previous chapters in its attempt to elucidate the Hebrew text, quite often by utilising the LXX. This is especially the case with difficult readings (vv. 2, 3, 15, 26 and 29). There is one correction due to possible misinterpretation in v. 17, and v. 16 is a harmonisation. V. 31 follows the LXX for what may perhaps be called religious purposes.

In the Peshitta translation of v. 1 the subject of both clauses was changed to read: "The Lord hates false balances, but he is pleased with just weights". The Peshitta rendition does not agree with the MT (or the LXX). This altered reading is perhaps necessary to obviate the reading: "False balances hate the Lord, but a just weight likes him."<sup>1</sup> Such a reading can be inferred from the Hebrew text (cf. *וְהוֹעֵבֵת וְהוֹצִיגוּ*) but, by changing the words into two participles (*כֹּבֵד* and *הַכֹּבֵדִים*), the translator prevents any misinterpretation of the sentence. The Peshitta also reads "weights" (plural) instead of "weight" to concur with "balances" in the first clause. The Targum, as can be expected in cases such as these, also follows the Peshitta reading. No other external influence need be suspected here.

The Peshitta translator translated the equivalent of *כָּאֵן* in v. 2<sup>a</sup> as *כֹּבֵד וְהוֹצִיגוּ* and read *וְהוֹצִיגוּ* as *כֹּבֵד וְהוֹצִיגוּ*. The Peshitta agrees with the LXX reading - *οὐ ἐὰν εἰσέλθῃ ὕβρις*. The second clause reads exactly like the MT. The terms *כָּאֵן וְהוֹצִיגוּ* seem to have been unclear to the translator and he therefore made use of the LXX to clarify them. The rest of the verse, being quite intelligible to the translator, follows the Hebrew text. The Targum shows some influence by the Syriac at the beginning of the verse, but otherwise reads exactly like the MT - *וְהוֹצִיגוּ הוֹצִיגוּ דְעֵלָא*.

The meanings of some words such as *תִּקְוָה* and *וְהוֹצִיגוּ* in v. 3 were probably not clear to the Peshitta translator and he could not have consulted the LXX reading either, because v. 3<sup>b</sup> in the LXX = v. 10<sup>b</sup>. V. 3 in the Peshitta reads "The hope of the upright is established, and the pride of the wicked is ruined". The second clause reads exactly like v. 7<sup>b</sup> in the LXX - *τὸ δὲ καύχημα τῶν ἀσεβῶν ὀλλυται* - which does not agree with the MT at all, while the Peshitta reading of v. 7 agrees entirely with it. Even v. 7<sup>a</sup> in the Peshitta seems to be a compromise, loosely based on v. 7<sup>a</sup> in the LXX, which reads "When a righteous man dies, his hopes do not perish". This deviation may also be a harmonisation with other verses such as 3, 5, 6, 7 and

<sup>1</sup> The intention in this verse is similar to the one in Prov. 20. 10 and 23, where the translator eliminated the possibility that the text may be read disrespectfully with reference to Jahwe by inserting *מֶלֶךְ* before "the Lord". This applies especially to negative verbs like "despise" and "hate". Because of the word order in these verses, it was impossible for the translator to alter the translation by changing the subject.



10.28, which exhibit similarities in thought. However, the Targum reads נשלטן ("shall be driven forth") instead of the root סלף ("to turn aside").

In v. 15 the Peshitta shows some influence of the LXX text. This influence does not really imply copying from the Greek text, but rather that the translator, not quite understanding his *Vorlage*, utilised the LXX interpretation of the Hebrew *Vorlage* - which was probably no different from the MT - for his own rendition. There is evidence to this end in the second clause, where the Peshitta reading is definitely closer to the MT<sup>2</sup> than the LXX; the Peshitta reads "he hates those who are expecting hope", compared to the LXX, which reads "he hates him who has security". The Targum, however, seems to be based on the Peshitta reading and adds an object (באלהא) to the verb in the second clause.

In v. 16 the Peshitta has an addition and the whole sentence (including the addition) agrees, broadly speaking, with the LXX rendition. However, there are a few differences in the Peshitta reading, indicating that the translator did not agree entirely with the meaning conveyed by the LXX text and that he used a Hebrew text for his own translation (at least in the first part of the verse).

Firstly, the translator inserted אכ, which is not represented in the LXX, between the second and third clause of the verse, perhaps to establish continuity. Secondly, the Peshitta reads אהא for πλούτου, probably because it is contrary to the translator's beliefs that "the manly" can lean securely on "riches" and, furthermore, the phrase does not complement the sense of the previous clause - "the lazy are also poor in their riches". Thus the translator avoided identification of the "manly" with the "lazy"<sup>3</sup>. Lastly, the translation is initially based on the Hebrew text rather than on the LXX, because it renders the verbs תתקבו and תתקבו as תתקבו and תתקבו respectively, compared to ἐγείρει and ἐρείδονται in the Greek reading. In any case, the influence of the LXX cannot be denied. It is important to note that the Peshitta rendition is a comparison between two women, much in the vein of Prov. 9. 12 and 18, 12. 4, and 18. 22<sup>4</sup>, and the translator probably utilised the LXX reading to stress the differences between these two women.

The Peshitta reading of v. 17 paraphrases the Hebrew wording of the MT somewhat, perhaps for the sake of clarity. The first clause in the Peshitta reads אהא תתקבו לנפשך ותהא לנפשך אהא as the equivalent of גמל נפשו איש חסד. Both readings have essentially the same meaning and the adjective אהא may

<sup>2</sup> It reads וישנא חקעיהם בותח – "but he who hates suretyship is secure" - in the MT.

<sup>3</sup> Apart from אכ, the Peshitta also interprets the third clause in the LXX, which reads "the lazy come to lack riches", differently.

<sup>4</sup> These women are "folly" and "wisdom" and may represent by implication the true and false religions. This was extended to include Edessa as representative of Christianity in a pagan world (Segal, 1970, pp. 49-56; Roberts, 1951, vol. VIII, pp. 654-655).

have been added to avoid confusing **נְהַבֵּל** with its other meaning, which is spelt the same way, i.e. "corruption", "destruction", etc.

The Peshitta gives a simplification of the MT in v. 18<sup>a</sup>, reading **בְּבֵן בְּבֵן** for **פְּעֻלַת עֵשָׂה**.<sup>5</sup> The Targum follows the Peshitta, although still leaning towards the MT - **שְׂקַר = שְׂקַר** (it reads **בְּבֵן** in the Peshitta).

**בֵּן** is rendered as **בֵּן** in v. 19 of the Peshitta, which agrees with the LXX - **υἱός**. The Peshitta *Vorlage* may have read **בֵּן** instead, because the Peshitta does not follow the LXX throughout and it gives a sensible reading of the sentence, i.e.: "The righteous son leads to life, but the doer of evil leads to death".<sup>6</sup> This sentence may have been translated in the light of Prov. 4. 10 and 9. 11.

The Peshitta reads "the swearer will again be accursed" in v. 25<sup>b</sup> instead of **וּמְרִיבָה גַּם-הִיא יִנְרָא**. The translator probably based his translation of **יִנְרָא** and **מְרִיבָה** on the root **אָרַר**, "to curse". The Targum has "to teach" from the Hif. of **וְרָה** and the LXX reading is corrupt.

The LXX reads **ὑπολαπιστο** in v. 26 and is followed by the Peshitta and the Targum in this rendition (**שֶׁבַק**).

The Peshitta simplified the translation of v. 27 by rendering **שְׂקַר**, **יִבְקֶשׂ**, and **וְרָשׁ** as **בְּבֵן**. The Targum, following the Peshitta to some extent, reads **מְקָרִים**, **בְּעֵי** and **תְּבִיעַ**, respectively.

The Peshitta has a doublet in v. 29<sup>a</sup>. This addition is not surprising, given the difficult and probably corrupt reading of the MT.<sup>7</sup> In this instance, however, contrary to previous difficult verses, the translator did not use the LXX exclusively, but made some compromise by using both the Hebrew and the Greek readings. In the first part of the first clause the LXX reads **ὁ μὴ συμπεριφερόμενος τῷ ἑαυτοῦ οἴκῳ** ("he that does not go about humanely with his house"), which differs from the MT - **עוֹרֵר בֵּיתוֹ** ("he who disturbs his house"). The Peshitta paraphrases this to read "he who builds his house in deceit" and the second part of the doublet in v. 29<sup>a</sup> to read "he who does not remain peaceful in his house". The LXX and the MT read the same in the second part of the first clause, while the Peshitta has "he will leave a sigh to his sons" and for the second part of the doublet in v. 29<sup>a</sup> has "he will share the wind for his sons".

<sup>5</sup> The first clause in the MT reads **רָשָׁע עֵשָׂה פְּעֻלַת-שְׂקַר**, while the LXX reads **ἀσεβῆς ποιεῖ ἔργα ἄδικα**. The Peshitta has **בְּבֵן** for **פְּעֻלַת** and is perhaps influenced by **ἔργα**.

<sup>6</sup> One should be careful not to attribute the Peshitta reading to a possible Christian influence, since the LXX reading, as mentioned, is not followed throughout - **υἱός δίκαιος γεννᾶται εἰς ζωὴν**, - "a righteous son is *born* unto life". The Peshitta translator did not, in case of difficult readings, hesitate to use the LXX. In this particular case he may rather have done that if he had any religious inclination to do so. The translator may, however, have thought that harmonisation of the verbs was more important.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Fichtner (*BH*, 1977, p. 1108).

It is clear that the verb יָנַחַל was understood as a causative verb by the Peshitta translator and he supplied the objects for the two words, נִצְבָּהֶם, "to leave" and נִפְלַג, "to divide", accordingly. Both the Syriac verbs describe the concept of "to inherit". The Peshitta translator stressed the responsibility of the head of the house towards his heirs and he perhaps found the idea that the head of the house "inherits" contrary to common practice and therefore, by necessity, he had to insert "sons".

Since the Peshitta exhibits no clear similarities with the MT or the LXX, the possibility of another *Vorlage* should be considered. The Targum is very close to the MT reading, but is still influenced by the Peshitta in v. 29<sup>b</sup>: "the fool shall ( יהוֹי = נַמְחֵם ) serve the wise".

The Peshitta translator follows his own interpretation of the LXX in v. 30<sup>b</sup>, but agrees with the word order of the MT whence it was originally translated. The Peshitta *Vorlage* may have read like the MT. The last clause וְנִלְקָח נַפְשֵׁיהֶם קָרָם reads "and scattered will be the souls of the wicked" in the Peshitta. The translator made use of the LXX, because the Hebrew text was obscure and he probably did not understand the term וְנִלְקָח within the context of the clause. The alteration may have been deliberately rendered thus in the light of v. 31, particularly the first clause of v. 31, with which this rendering of v. 30 forms a logical connection, presenting the plight of both the righteous and the wicked.

V. 31 is difficult to evaluate, since this famous sentence in the LXX (it differs from the MT) is quoted in I Pet. 4.18: "If the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?" The Peshitta has exactly the same reading as the LXX. Thus either the Peshitta is entirely based on the LXX, or it had the same *Vorlage* as did the Greek text. Throughout the Peshitta it is clear that the translator used a Hebrew *Vorlage* and consulted the LXX in special circumstances, such as in the cases of corrupt readings. Because this sentence is not very difficult in the Hebrew and no attempt was made in the Peshitta to remain even close to the Hebrew text, it is perhaps not too improbable that the translator followed the Greek for religious reasons.<sup>8</sup> The Targum is of little help in establishing the original text, for it follows the MT, displaying some influence from the Peshitta (בִּאֲרִץ = מִמַּחֲסֵן), but it retains בִּאֲרִץ.

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<sup>8</sup> Perhaps being a Christian and having knowledge of the New Testament, the translator felt biased towards the LXX text and, consequently, followed the Greek reading entirely.



## Chapter 12

All the deviations in this chapter, except those in vv. 7, 14 and 20, are based to some extent on the LXX interpretation. Most of these are corrections of anomalous readings, whether they stem from unethical, illogical or simply obscure readings. Some of them are simplifications. Vv. 7, 14 and 20 are harmonisations with similar verses in other parts of Proverbs.

The Peshitta reading of the first part of v. 2<sup>a</sup> - "It will be well for the man who keeps the will of the Lord" - is partially based upon an interpretation of the LXX reading: κρεῖσσων ὁ (אֲרַבְרָב) εὐρὼν χάριν παρὰ κυρίου (אֲרַבְרָב אֲרַבְרָב אֲרַבְרָב). However, the Peshitta *Vorlage* need not have been different from the MT. The Hebrew reading may have been unclear to the translator as is the case with Prov. 8.35. In v. 2<sup>b</sup> the Peshitta's reading of the sentence is in the passive (as is the LXX), but it still reads נִדְּבַע - "to be condemned" (יִרְשָׁע in the MT) - as opposed to παρασιωπηθήσεται in the LXX. The Targum seems to be influenced by the Peshitta - סב מאן דקביל רעותיה דאלהא -

The addition in v. 4<sup>b</sup> of the Peshitta is a virtual equivalent of the LXX reading. The only difference is the insertion of אֲרַבְרָב ("worm") after אֲרַבְרָב (σκώληξ in the LXX).<sup>1</sup> This rendering, in fact, complies with both versions, the MT and the LXX. An important factor that may have influenced this insertion is the milieu of the translation. The fact is, that the word אֲרַבְרָב is also used for the *silkworm*, which would probably have been the best known of all worms to the population in the region of Osrhoene.<sup>2</sup> This double translation of "worm" seems to be in accordance with the translator's inclination towards clarity of meaning in his translation<sup>3</sup> and possibly serves to enhance the contrast between the two women as well.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to Payne Smith אֲרַבְרָב is a boreworm (*teredo xylophagus*) commonly found in wood (the verb אֲרַבְרָב means "to be rotten" or "to be eaten by worms"), while אֲרַבְרָב can be any worm.

<sup>2</sup> Not only was silk the primary trading commodity in Mesopotamia, but Edessa, the capital of the province, lay directly on the famous "silk road", which linked Edessa, Nisibis and Adiabene (Segal, 1970, pp. 42 and 137).

<sup>3</sup> It is perhaps too contentious or remote a possibility, but the term "woman" in this verse may be symbolic of, and be identified with, two rivalling cities in the mind of both the translator and the reader. The plus, i.e. "worm", may be a subtle reference to Hierapolis, which is also known as Mabbog from the Greek Bambyce, under which name this city was also known. The word Bambyce is derived from *Bombyx*, the silkworm of the Near East (Segal, 1970, p. 46). This identification would serve as an excellent contrast to the first clause where "the good wife is the crown of her husband", which in turn would also be a good metaphor for the city of Edessa, the seat of Christian light in a pagan world (cf. Prov. 9. 12 and 18).

<sup>4</sup> In conjunction with the previous footnote, and in view of the translator's possible intention of reinforcing the contrast between the two women (cf. 9. 12 and 18), it should perhaps be borne in mind that the

It should be borne in mind that the Peshitta translator may have read *בַּעַץ בֹּתִיּוֹ מִבִּישָׁה* in his *Vorlage* instead of *בְּעֲצָמוֹתָיו מִבִּישָׁה* (and this may possibly apply to the LXX *Vorlage* as well). Yet it seems more likely that the translator based his reading on the LXX because, firstly, the relation and context of the rare Hebrew wording were unclear to him,<sup>5</sup> and secondly, the Peshitta does clarify *מִבִּישָׁה* to read "and so, by her evil works, the woman destroys the husband" and, lastly, the influence of the milieu of the translation may possibly have played some part in this rendition.<sup>6</sup>

The Targum translation looks like a compromise between the Peshitta and the MT. For the most part it reads exactly like the Peshitta, but the translator omitted the one "worm" and added *גְּרָמוֹי* (*עֲצָמוֹתָיו* in the MT) instead.

In v. 6<sup>b</sup> *יִצְיָלָם* is rendered as *ܠܘܬܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ*, following *ῥύσεται αὐτούς* in the LXX. The verb *ܠܘܟܘܢܐ* is written, contrary to the LXX and MT, as a participle to coincide with the verb *ܠܘܟܘܢܐ* ("to lie in wait") in the first clause. The Peshitta rendering of *ܠܘܬܐ* is either due to the translator's own interpretation of the object-suffix (*ם*) in *יִצְיָלָם*, or based on a vocalisation that is different from the MT rendition. The Targum translation follows the Peshitta exactly - *ܡܦܥܘܢܐ ܠܘܟܘܢܐ*.

The term *אֵינָם* in v. 7 reads *ܠܐ ܢܫܘܚܘܢܐ* in the Peshitta. This rendering of *אֵין* concurs with 10.25, where the same thought is put forward; v. 7 is probably based on 10.25 as well. Again the Targum follows the Peshitta, reading *ܠܐ ܢܫܘܚܘܢܐ*.

The Peshitta follows the LXX by interpreting *לְוִי עֹבֵד* in v. 9<sup>a</sup> as "he serves himself" instead of "he has a servant". The reading of the Peshitta is preferable to the MT, since it is congruent with the thought in the first clause and it supplies an excellent antithesis to the second clause to read (in full): "A poor man, that serves himself, is better than an esteemed man who lacks bread". He probably found the fact that a poor man has a servant incongruent. The Targum follows the MT.

V. 10 in the Peshitta was also influenced by the LXX to read in the second clause "the bowels of the wicked are closed up" (*τὰ δὲ σπλάγχνα τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνελεήμονα*). The Targum follows the MT. The

crowning of the bridegroom was prevalent and still persists in certain of the Eastern churches. There is Old Testament authority for this in Cant. 3. 11 (cf. **Conclusions** in this study), Isa. 61. 10 and Ezech. 16. 12 (Quasten, 1964, p. 176).

<sup>5</sup> The word *רָקַב*, as is clear from Prov. 10. 7 and 14. 30, was understood by the translator. In the above instances it was rendered correctly and in context as *ܠܘܟܘܢܐ* and *ܠܘܟܘܢܐ*, respectively.

<sup>6</sup> The worm was not only a well-known concept in the Syriac-speaking world, but in the Eastern church it was also readily associated with the dead in Sheol. A quote from one of the demonstrations (XXII) of Aphrahat (Schaff, 1956, p. 403) concerning the gluttonous should suffice: "There the *worm* shall consume their bodies, and they shall clothe themselves in darkness over their fair apparel". Cf. also Mk. 9. 48.

Peshitta *Vorlage* need not have differed from the MT, as the reading can be construed from the Hebrew text as it now stands.

V. 11 of the Peshitta agrees with the Hebrew text of the MT closely, while the LXX added another couplet to it. For the phrase *וּמְרַדְדֵי רֵי קָיִם* in the MT, the Peshitta reads *ܩܘܝܡܝܢ ܕܥܝܠܝܢ ܕܥܝܠܝܢ*. It cannot be considered a deviation, since the Syriac conveys the same sense as the Hebrew.

The Peshitta has the same number of elements in v. 12 as the MT and the Syriac seems to be generally based on a Hebrew *Vorlage*. However, the MT presents a dubious and perhaps corrupt text of v. 12, since it has no clear meaning and there is no proper antithesis between the two clauses in the verse. The Peshitta seems to have utilised the LXX entirely, with the exception of *לַחֲבֹה* (not translated in the LXX), which represents *מְצֹד*. The Peshitta translator may have translated the Hebrew word with a neutral verb because he did not understand this word, which appears only once in this book.<sup>7</sup> The second clause in the Peshitta agrees with the MT as opposed to the LXX, while the Targum shows similarities with the Peshitta without departing from the MT (it reads *מִצְדוֹתָא* for "net").

The Peshitta, using a different word order from the MT, reads "a good man shall be satisfied by the fruit of his mouth" in the first clause of v. 14. This rendering is in exact agreement with the Peshitta reading of Prov. 13.2<sup>a</sup> (the verse contains a similar thought in the Hebrew as well). The LXX adds another verse to v. 14. The Targum definitely made use of the Peshitta text, but kept the Hebrew word order so that *טוֹב* is part of the object and not the subject.

The Peshitta translator may have interpreted his translation of the Hebrew (the Peshitta *Vorlage* probably read the same as the MT) according to the LXX in the second clause of v. 15, which reads "he who listens to advice is wise" - *εἰσακούει δὲ συμβουλίας σοφός*. The Targum follows the Peshitta.

In v. 16 *בְּיוֹם* is written as *בֵּי יוֹמֵי* in the Peshitta; this agrees with the LXX - *αὐθημερόν*. In the second clause, like the LXX, the Peshitta adds a suff. 3. masc. sing. to "insult". The Targum again follows the Peshitta text, reading *בֵּר יוֹמֵיָא* and *צַעְרִיָּא*.

The Peshitta translator added *חַסֵּד* after "deceitful" in the second clause of v. 17 to render it an adjective, because the Hebrew lacks a verb in this clause. This may have been added with reference to the LXX rendering of *δόλιος*. The Targum, initially following the MT, also adds *חַסֵּד* like the Peshitta.

<sup>7</sup> The verb *בָּחַ* is also used in other instances where rare and difficult words were misunderstood by the translator, i.e., 8.27 and 29 - *חוק*, 14.22 - *חרש*, 15.9 - *מרדף*, etc.



The word בִּזְיוֹן ("to chatter") in v. 18 is rendered simply as אִבְרַךְ ("to speak") in the Peshitta and likewise in the LXX (λέγοντες) and Targum (אמרין). This simplification is in keeping with the Peshitta translation technique, yet it may still be based on the LXX in this case.

In v. 19 the Peshitta exhibits a minus in comparison with the MT and the LXX (the latter also departs from the MT). The concept תִּקְוֵן לְעַד ("to endure forever") is shortened to וְעַד־עַד, which does not alter the meaning of the MT text at all. The Targum reading follows the MT, although עַד is rendered as עַלְמָא.

In v. 20 the MT reads מִרְמָה בְּלִב־תְּרָשִׁי רָע, in comparison with נִמְלֵא כִלְבָּתָא וְכִנְצָא עֲצֵב in the Peshitta. The translator did not see the connection<sup>8</sup> between תְּרָשִׁי and בְּלִב, so that he probably felt compelled to add וְכִנְצָא after "heart" in order to specify that it is not just "any" heart, but only the evil heart, that devises evil (cf. 6. 14 and 18, and 2. 11, where the same principle of specifying probably applies).

The Peshitta interprets v. 21 in the same way as the LXX: "No injustice is pleasing<sup>9</sup> to the righteous, but the ungodly is full of evil". The Targum concurs with the meaning conveyed in the Peshitta text, although it still uses words that are closer to the MT. For instance, the Targum has כֻּל before מַדְעָם (as in the MT), while the Peshitta reads only הִבְרִיךְ.

The Peshitta (followed by the Targum) follows the MT reading of v. 25 substantially, but nevertheless reveals some influence by the LXX - φοβερὸς λόγος (אֲנִיָּהּ וְכִלְבָּתָא) and ταρασσεί (וְלֵבָא).<sup>10</sup> The meaning of the word אֲנִיָּהּ ("anxiety") either may have been unclear to the Peshitta translator or he preferred the LXX interpretation, because it forms a better antithesis and clearer relationship with the second clause, which reads "a good word makes him glad".

The Peshitta translation of v. 26 is very difficult from the perspective of identifying the influences that may have played a role in its rendition. Firstly, the first clause in the MT is very problematic with regard to its proper meaning. Secondly, all the other versions differ from one another so that a reconstruction of the *Vorlage* is perhaps impossible. The Targum translator rendered the first clause of the Hebrew as it appears, without considering its intelligibility: "the righteous is better than his neighbour". The Peshitta text may be an

<sup>8</sup> The translator may have read: "The deceit in the heart devises evil".

<sup>9</sup> The verb אֲנִיָּהּ in the MT may have read נִאֲוָה in the Peshitta (and LXX) *Vorlage*. The Peshitta translator may not, however, have understood the meaning of this verb and thus he made use only of the LXX to clarify the reading, as he so often did.

<sup>10</sup> It should be stressed that the Peshitta translation was *influenced* by and not *copied* from the LXX, because the Syriac represents only the Hebrew words as they appear in the MT, omitting δικαίου, and following the Hebrew word choice closely in the rest of the verse.

interpretation of the LXX. The Syriac rendition, to some extent, does justice to the Hebrew wording and reads "the righteous is a good guide to his friend". The LXX has an addition to this verse in its text.

The Peshitta translator changed the Hebrew word order in the second clause of v. 27 to read (as does the LXX) "a pure man is a precious possession". The Targum follows the MT.

## Chapter 13

In this chapter v. 2 (and possibly v. 6) contains variants that are utilised for reasons of harmonisation with other verses in the book of Proverbs. Most of the rest of the deviations are based on the LXX in instances where the Hebrew seems difficult or corrupt. Some corrections in the Peshitta are done independently of any discernible external influence for ethical or moral reasons, e.g. vv. 3 and 17.

In v. 1 the Peshitta has a free rendering of the LXX reading, although it is still based on the Hebrew *Vorlage*. The verb is lacking in the first clause of the MT and the Peshitta translator changed **קִיֶּסֶר** to **תִּצְדֵּק הַבֶּן** and it is, in this instance, probably influenced by **ὑπήκοος** in the LXX. In the second clause, the Peshitta translator has inserted the equivalents of **υἱός** and **ἐν ἀπωλείᾳ** to read: "The bad son, that does not receive (**לֹא-שָׁמַע** = **נִמְכַּד**) rebuke (**לִץ**), will perish". This whole verse in the Peshitta reflects the thought of v. 8 and complements v. 24, where "son" was also inserted in the last clause. The Hebrew reading, lacking the verb and containing unique words<sup>1</sup> with difficult connections in them, was translated with the help of the LXX reading. The fact that the word **נִמְכַּד** in the second clause appears in both the clauses of the Targum reading of this verse,<sup>2</sup> coupled with the possibility that **ὑπήκοος** may be an equivalent for **קָבַל מוֹסֵר**, could indicate that **קָבַל** is indeed the missing verb in the MT and could have been in the *Vorlagen* of all three of the above-mentioned versions.<sup>3</sup>

The first clause of v. 2 in the Peshitta reads exactly like the first clause of 12. 14, whence it was copied (in 12.14 "good" is an adjective qualifying "man" and not the object). The LXX has a different text in the first clause and does not agree with the Peshitta reading in either verse. The Targum was influenced by the Peshitta, reading **נִסְבַּע** instead of **יֵאָכֵל** (in the MT), although it retains **טַבְחָא** as the object of **נִסְבַּע** to be closer to the MT. The Peshitta is probably influenced by the LXX in the second clause, where **הִקָּס** is simplified to read **נִבְכַּר** (**ὀλοθύνται** in the LXX), although the LXX reads **ἄωροι** (not represented in the MT) after **ὀλοθύνται** to form the concept "the evil fate" that befalls the wicked. The second clause in the Peshitta reads "The souls of the wicked will perish".

<sup>1</sup> In Prov. 9. 8 the word **לִץ** is also rendered as **בִּצְעָא** and its meaning was perhaps unclear to the translator.

<sup>2</sup> The Targum, which is usually close to the MT reading, is of special importance here; in the first clause it reads **בֵּר חֲכִימָא מִקְבֵּל מִרְדּוּתָא דֵּאֲבָא**.

<sup>3</sup> This would make **תִּצְדֵּק הַבֶּן** a compromise with the LXX reading and is consistent with the Peshitta translator's tendency to moralise whenever a word such as "receive" in this case seems too weak and neutral in any particular context.



V. 4<sup>a</sup> in the Peshitta is based upon an interpretation of the Greek text and the second clause follows the Greek text closely -  $\delta\upsilon\delta\rho\epsilon\lambda\omega\nu = \text{כִּי־עָד}$ . The Targum follows the MT. Thus the Hebrew may have been unclear to the translator of the Peshitta.

In v. 5 the Peshitta reading is a compromise between the LXX and the MT, although it is still closer to the MT. The Targum, following the MT word order in the first clause, follows the Peshitta text substantially.

The Peshitta translator, contrary to the MT and the LXX, added the 3. masc. sing. suff. to "sins" in the last clause of v. 6 to personalise the sin that destroys the sinner. The latter is ultimately responsible for his own demise - he is destroyed by his own sin. This principle echoes the thoughts of Prov. 5. 22 and 28. 23. The Targum follows the Peshitta in this instance.

The Peshitta adds  $\text{עָד}$  to both clauses of v. 7 and this is probably influenced by  $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  (twice) in the LXX. The only difference is that the Peshitta translator added the plural suffix in the first clause and the singular in the second clause. The Targum follows the Peshitta exactly.<sup>4</sup>

The Peshitta translator may have had some difficulty with the Hebrew reading, especially with the first two words, of v. 10<sup>a</sup>. His translation is simple and definitely based on the LXX reading - "an evil man does evil in dishonour". The second clause in the Peshitta, as opposed to the LXX, closely follows the MT.

The LXX has  $\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha} \delta\nu\omicron\mu\lambda\alpha\varsigma$  and  $\mu\epsilon\tau' \epsilon\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\beta\epsilon\lambda\alpha\varsigma$  added to its rendition of v. 11. The Peshitta has no additions in comparison with the MT, although it utilises equivalents of the above-mentioned additions in the LXX, i.e.  $\text{כִּי־עָד}$  and  $\text{וְנִפְתָּח־לָהֶם}$ , as the equivalents for  $\text{מִתְקַדֵּל}$  and  $\text{קִבֵּץ}$  in the MT instead. The Targum exhibits some influence by the Peshitta, for instance  $\text{עוֹלָא}$ , while the translator also added the phrase "and gives to the poor".

The Peshitta reading of v. 12 also substantially agrees with the Greek text (the LXX). However, both renderings are based on the MT. The Peshitta interpretation in particular can be inferred from the MT and thus no external influence other than perhaps the cursory consultation of the Greek text by the Peshitta translator need be suspected.

<sup>4</sup> This is a good example of how the Targum translator, when agreeing with the LXX and the Peshitta, rather made use of the latter for his own reading, while he still attempted to remain close to the MT -  $\epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  appears twice in the LXX, while the Peshitta has  $\text{כִּי־עָד}$  and  $\text{עָד}$ , respectively. The Targum similarly reads  $\text{נִפְשִׁיהּ}$  in the two clauses, retaining the singular of the Hebrew text.

There is a clear link in v. 13 between the Peshitta and the LXX.<sup>5</sup> The Peshitta retains the meaning of the Hebrew, which it has in common with the MT (as opposed to the LXX), but the translator inserted the addition that is found in the LXX as well, albeit with some alteration.<sup>6</sup> The Peshitta translator probably decided to insert this addition in his translation, because it is in keeping with the thoughts found throughout the book of Proverbs (cf. 17. 2, 12. 20, chapter 8, etc.). The Targum, following the MT, adds only סבתא after זלם.

The Peshitta gives a good translation of the MT in vv. 14 and 15, which does not agree with the rendering in the LXX. It also has an addition in v. 15.

The Peshitta translator rendered the verb שָׁרַף ("to display") in v. 16 with a simpler word, אָרַב, but this does not affect the sense of the MT. The LXX follows the MT.

The causative verbs in v. 17 are changed in the Peshitta to reflect what will happen to the messengers themselves as a consequence of their deeds, bad and good.

The Peshitta interprets the Hebrew of v. 20<sup>b</sup> differently, adding אַל after אֶבְרַח instead of עִיָּן, so that the verb reads "It will be bad for him who walks with fools". The meanings of the two versions do not really differ; in spite of the impersonal rendering in the Peshitta. The LXX reading of γνωσθήσεται ("to be known")<sup>7</sup> instead of עִיָּן may indicate a different *Vorlage* or a reading mistake, i.e. עִיָּן.

V. 23 has an addition in the Peshitta translation that is not found in the LXX. The reading is considerably different from the MT and LXX as well. The Hebrew text is corrupt and apparently beyond emendation (Toy, 1904, p. 278). The LXX reading cannot be reconciled with the MT at all, which means that the Peshitta translator could not rely on it very much. The Peshitta may be loosely based on its translator's own interpretation of the Greek, however.

In the second clause of v. 24 "his son" was inserted from the first clause, thereby maintaining a contextual link between the two.

<sup>5</sup> The LXX reads: υἱὸς δολίω οὐδὲν ἔσται ἀγαθόν, οἰκέτη δὲ σοφῶ εὐδοιοὶ ἔσονται πρᾶξεις, καὶ κατευσθηθήσεται ἡ ὁδὸς αὐτοῦ.

<sup>6</sup> The Peshitta reads כַּדְלַנְנָא כִּבְדָא and כַּנְנַנְנָא כִּבְדָא for υἱὸς δολίω and οἰκέτη δὲ σοφῶ, respectively. These alterations harmonise with the contents in the rest of this chapter.

<sup>7</sup> If this rendering is deliberate in the sense of being a Jewish exegetical rendition, it would suggest that anyone in the company of fools will be *recognised* as such by his fellow countrymen. There is a definite hint of this in the *Midrash Mishle* (p. 41): "Und so auch der, welcher mit einem Thoren umgeht, von dem sagt jeder, der ihn sieht: Wenn er nicht ein Thor wäre, so würde er nicht mit diesem Thoren umgehen; allein weil er eben ein Thor ist, so geht er mit einem Thoren um."

## Chapter 14

The Peshitta translator discarded the plural construct relation of **אִשָּׁה חֲכָמָה**, rendering it as "the wise woman" instead. This verse was perhaps altered with reference to Prov. 9. 1, where **אִשָּׁה** is also rendered as **אִשָּׁה**.<sup>1</sup>

The word **לֵךְ** in v. 6 is rendered as **בִּנְיָ**, as in the LXX (**κακοῖς**) and Prov. 13. 1 of the Peshitta. The translator could have used either or both instances as an example for the rendition in v. 6.

V. 7 in the Peshitta reads "For the foolish man, everything is an adversary, and a weapon of knowledge are the lips of the wise". There were some difficulties in the MT that were solved by the LXX translator who probably emended the Hebrew. The Peshitta follows the LXX reading. For instance, the verb **לָקַח** became **ἄ** (**πάντα** in the LXX) and **בָּל** is read as **אֲו** in the Peshitta (**δπλα** in the LXX). It is difficult to determine whether the Peshitta translator's utilisation of the LXX was the result of the same difficulties experienced by the LXX translator in the Hebrew *Vorlage*, or whether, in fact, the Peshitta *Vorlage* contained the equivalent of the Peshitta reading. However, it should be borne in mind that this verse contains some unique words in the Hebrew text, like **בָּל** in the second clause. It is probably more likely that the Peshitta is based on the LXX, as was often the case when the Peshitta translator encountered a difficult Hebrew reading. The Targum presents a free translation of the MT: "Withdraw onto another path from the presence of the fool, for there is no knowledge on his lips".

V. 8 in the Peshitta reads "The astute, in his wisdom, understands his way, and the way of the foolish is misleading (**אֲוֹרֵת**)". The Peshitta may have been slightly influenced by the LXX - **ἐν πλάνῃ** = "misleading". In the second clause the term **אֲוֹרֵת** ("way") is used for "folly". In fact, it may have been inserted from the first clause in order to establish a logical connection between the two clauses. As is clear from vv. 18 and 24 in this chapter, the Hebrew term for "folly" - **אֲוֹרֵת** - was definitely known to the Peshitta translator. In 5. 23 the Peshitta reads **אֲוֹרֵת** for **אֲוֹרֵת**.

The Peshitta follows the LXX to a large extent in v. 9 as well. In fact, the Peshitta has two sentences: the first, which agrees entirely with the LXX, and the second, which is a simplified interpretation of the MT. In the second sentence **לֵךְ** is rendered as **בִּנְיָ**,<sup>2</sup> and **בָּן** is rendered as **בִּנְיָ**. This sentence is clearly based on the translator's own interpretation of the Hebrew. The Hebrew reading in the Peshitta translator's *Vorlage* was

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also 9. 12 and 9. 18 and numerous other references to "woman". This rendition of 14. 1 should perhaps be considered a harmonisation with such occurrences.

<sup>2</sup> The Peshitta *Vorlage* may have contained some form of **עלל** instead, which justifies **בִּנְיָ**.



probably problematic and he subsequently decided to include both interpretations - his own and that of the LXX - in order to have the benefit of both renditions.

In v. 12 the Peshitta translator inserted **ܘܚܝܠ** after "way" from the LXX - **δοκεῖ**. The insertion is utilised by the Targum as well.

The Peshitta translator probably did not understand the meaning of the second clause in his *Vorlage*. The Peshitta follows the LXX in v. 14 (**ܘܠܘܢ ܘܠܘܢ = ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός**) and in the second clause the translator inserted **ܘܚܝܠ** from the first clause in order to harmonise both clauses with one another. In the Peshitta rendition of this parallelism, the second clause also forms a better antithesis to the first. The Targum follows the Peshitta exactly.

In v. 15 the Peshitta reading interprets **ܘܠܘܢ ܘܠܘܢ** as **ܘܠܘܢ ܘܠܘܢ**. The translator may have taken the root **ܘܠܘܢ** as "good fortune" in order to read "the astute discerns between good and bad", which in turn harmonises with v. 16. The Targum agrees with the Peshitta.

In v. 16 the Peshitta reads **ܘܠܘܢ ܘܠܘܢ** instead of **ܘܠܘܢ ܘܠܘܢ**, while the Targum agrees with the Peshitta reading of **ܘܠܘܢ ܘܠܘܢ**. The Peshitta is probably based on **πεποιθώς** in the LXX.

In v. 17 the Peshitta reading is based substantially on the LXX text. The problem is that in the second clause the Hebrew literally reads "but a man of discretion is hated" (**ܘܠܘܢ**). The Peshitta translator obviously regarded the Hebrew sense as inappropriate and unlikely, with the result that he decided to utilise the LXX rendition of this verse instead (the LXX reads **ἀνὴρ δὲ φρόνιμος πολλὰ ὑποφέρει**). The renditions of the Peshitta and the LXX also form better contrasts between their first and second clauses than the MT. The Targum follows the MT.

The verb **ܘܠܘܢ** in v. 20 (Nif.) was translated in the active by the Peshitta's translator, so that the subject and object in this phrase are altered to read "the poor hates his neighbour" (the **ܘܠܘܢ** before "neighbour" was obviously taken by the Peshitta translator as a sign of the accusative).

V. 22 has two renderings in the Peshitta, both of which are based on the general meaning of the MT, and its doublet agrees entirely with the LXX reading, whence it was translated. The translator probably did not want to miss an opportunity where he could translate a verse that has two meaningful renditions in a text as authoritative as the LXX's.

V. 23 in the Peshitta also has a long interpretation of the Hebrew but, in this instance, it has no equivalent in the LXX at all.<sup>3</sup> The Peshitta version sounds distinctly religious and the style of the Peshitta translation is in the manner of the Jewish Midrash<sup>4</sup> (however, it does not appear in the *Midrash Mishle* and the Targum was translated literally). The Peshitta translator may have used another Greek text, or he may have combined elements in the LXX with the Hebrew for this specific translation. Whatever the case may be, the Peshitta rendering complements and harmonises with the thoughts of vv. 21 and 22.

In v. 24 the Peshitta translator preferred the LXX rendering of  $\eta\lambda\theta\eta$  (i.e.  $\delta\iota\alpha\tau\rho\iota\beta\eta$ ) for his own reading -  $\text{ܠܟܘܢܐ}$ , meaning "way of life". The rest of this verse agrees with the MT, rather than with the LXX. The Targum shows some influence from the Peshitta.

The translation of the second clause of v. 25 in the MT is not clear and the Peshitta translator has (one suspects) possibly made use of certain concepts or elements in the LXX text to give an intelligible reading -  $\text{ܠܗܘܐ}$  is probably influenced by  $\delta\acute{o}\lambda\iota\omicron\varsigma$ . The LXX adds  $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\ \kappa\alpha\kappa\acute{\omega}\nu$  in the first clause, which has no equivalent in the MT or Peshitta and otherwise follows the MT text. It seems more probable that the translator based this verse on the second clause in v. 4 of this chapter and on the meanings portrayed in other verses like Prov. 6. 19 and 12. 17.

The last word in v. 28,  $\eta\eta\eta$ , is rendered as  $\text{ܠܕܠܐ}$  in the Peshitta (cf. 8. 15, where it is rendered as "leader"). This word may have been used to retain the connection with the first clause.

The term  $\text{ܠܗܘܐ}$  was added in the second clause of v. 31 in the Peshitta as the object of  $\text{ܚܘܢܐ}$  to read: "He who honours the Lord, has mercy on the poor". This is not the case with the Targum or the LXX. This term was probably added to harmonise and form a connection with "his Maker" ( $\text{ܗܝܘܒ}$ ) in the first clause.

Owing to the obscurity of the Hebrew sense of the text, the phrase  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \delta\acute{\epsilon}\ \kappa\alpha\rho\delta\iota\alpha\ \delta\phi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omega\nu\ \omicron\upsilon\ \delta\iota\alpha\gamma\iota\nu\acute{o}\varsigma\kappa\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$  influenced the phrase  $\text{ܕܠܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܐ}$  in v. 33 of the Peshitta text. As far as a source for the Syriac rendition is concerned, a different Peshitta *Vorlage*, although probable, is unlikely, since the Peshitta agrees entirely with the MT in the first clause of v. 33 as opposed to the LXX, which reads  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \kappa\alpha\rho\delta\iota\alpha\ \delta\gamma\alpha\theta\eta\ \delta\upsilon\delta\rho\acute{o}\varsigma\ \sigma\omicron\phi\iota\alpha$ .

<sup>3</sup> De Lagarde (1863, p. 48) believes that the LXX reading may have been longer, stating that it "...kam aus der jetzt verlorenen Übersetzung von 23b herein."

<sup>4</sup> De Lagarde (ibid.) says regarding the Syriac rendition: "Mir scheint unverkennbar die Hand eines Christen thätig gewesen zu sein, der an Lucas 16. 19-31 und 10. 42 dachte. Am deutlichsten wird dies durch den Syrer, der ohne zweifel die LXX vor Augen hatte."

The addition at the end of v. 35 of the Peshitta agrees with Prov. 15. 1<sup>a</sup> of the LXX, whence it was inserted. The phrase "wrath destroys even the wise" has the function of establishing a logical connection with, as well as progression to, the next chapter, which commences with "A soft word subdues anger". It is unlikely that the Peshitta *Vorlage* contained this extra clause.



## Chapter 15

From chapter 15 onwards the Peshitta seems to manifest fewer deviations than in the earlier chapters. Some variants are still harmonisations with other verses (eg. v. 4), while the majority are influenced by the LXX renditions for the purpose of clarification and simplification (eg. vv. 10 and 19). Logical connections between verses as perceived by the translator are also maintained (vv. 31-33).

The last word in v. 2 of the MT, אִלֵּהּ, reads ⲕⲃⲗⲁⲛ ("curse") in the Peshitta and may have been understood as such. Alternatively, it may have appeared in the Peshitta *Vorlage* as אִלֵּהּ. The synonym ⲕⲃⲗⲁⲛⲁ ("oath", "curse") is used for אִלֵּהּ in 29. 24. The LXX reads *κακῶς* instead of "curse", while the Targum follows the MT text.

V. 4 in the MT reads "A healing tongue is a tree of life, but violence therein (the tongue) is wounding the soul". V. 4<sup>b</sup> in the Peshitta (the first clause agreeing with the MT) reads "He who eats of its fruit, will be filled by it". The LXX has a different reading and only one word that concurs with the Syriac - *πλησθήσεται* = ⲛⲃⲃⲁ. The Peshitta translation may be based on other verses like 13. 2 in the Peshitta - "a good man will be filled by the fruit of his mouth" (cf. 18. 2 and 12. 14). The difficulties in the Hebrew text that were problematic to the translator, since he could not rely on the LXX, are thus solved by harmonisation with other readings in Proverbs, specifically the Peshitta's own translation of those verses.

The verb "scatter" in v. 7 is translated by the neutral word "speak" in the Peshitta in order to achieve a simpler reading. However, this may be an intentional harmonisation with other verses as well, primarily with 10. 31. This is also the case in v. 14, where "feeds" is rendered as "speak" by the Peshitta translator. There are many other examples of this kind in the Peshitta (cf. 15. 23 and 28).

In v. 9 "practising" is rendered simply as "doing" in the Peshitta (ⲕⲃⲁ). The LXX reads *διώκοντας*, which is the same as מְרַדְּףִים in the MT. There is no need to suspect any external influence on the Peshitta in this instance, for this is a case of simplification that is very characteristic of the translator's style.

The Peshitta reading is based on the LXX in v. 10<sup>a</sup> and reads "The correction of him who does not know evil, is evident (public)". The LXX text clearly influenced the above translation; it reads *παιδεία δικάκου γνωρίζεται ὑπὸ τῶν παριόντων*. The Targum text is equivalent to the MT.

In v. 12 the Peshitta translator simplified גִּלְגֵּל and rendered this noun as ⲕⲃⲁ. The Peshitta translator may not have understood the Hebrew term; alternatively he deliberately harmonised the term here with 9. 12, where "scoff" is also rendered as ⲕⲃⲁ.

Instead of "face" in v. 13 the Peshitta translator wrote ܟܘܢܐܘܬܐ, i.e. "body", in order to form a proper antithesis to ܟܘܢܐܘܬܐ in the second clause.

In v. 14 ܐܢܝܢܐ is rendered as ܕܢܘܨܐܘܬܐ (perhaps from the LXX, where it is *κακά*) to concur with the expressed tendency to ally the foolish with evil and deceit (cf. 10. 32).

The second clause of v. 15 in the MT reads ܘܫܘܒܘܢ ܠܒ ܡܫܬܚܐ ܩܡܝܕ. The Peshitta reads "And they will always dwell *cheerfully*". Thus the translator evidently interpreted ܫܘܒܘܢ ܠܒ as ܒܫܘܚܐ.

V. 18 in the Peshitta reads "A wrathful man stirs up strife, but a patient man extinguishes it, before it begins". The second clause in the LXX reads *μακρόθυμος δὲ καὶ τὴν μέλλουσαν ("impending") καταπραΰνει*. It is clear that the Peshitta reading was influenced by the LXX, where *μέλλουσαν* is interpreted as ܟܘܢܐܘܬܐ; the Peshitta adds ܡܢ, which is not found in the Greek text for the object ܩܝܒ. For this verse the LXX has two renditions, both of which substantially have the same meaning.

In v. 19 the Peshitta reads "full (ܩܘܠܐ) of thorns" instead of "like a hedge (ܩܘܠܐ) of thorns". The LXX reads *ἐστρωμένοι* ("strewn") instead. The simplification of the Syriac reading is perhaps achieved with reference to, and not copied from, the Greek text.

In v. 20<sup>b</sup> the Peshitta has "disgrace" (ܕܘܫܘܒܐ) instead of "scorn" (ܒܘܢܐ). The Peshitta reading in the second clause may be based on Prov. 10. 1, which reads "A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother". In this case the same verb, "disgrace" (ܕܘܫܘܒܐ), is also employed instead of ܒܘܢܐ with the purpose of describing the impression that the mother has of the foolish son's behaviour. This simplification of the two sentences may also be caused by the unfamiliarity of the verb ܒܘܢܐ. However, it is more probably a deliberate harmonisation between verses by the translator. Incidentally, the first clauses in both verses read exactly the same.

The Peshitta translation of v. 22<sup>a</sup> is also influenced by the LXX, perhaps due to the unintelligible wording of the Hebrew as perceived by the translator (assuming, of course, that the Peshitta *Vorlage* had the same text as the MT). The second clause, however, follows the MT reading: ܘܒܘܢܐ ܕܘܫܘܒܐ ܕܘܫܘܒܐ - "and by many counsellors it is established". The Targum also adds "counsel", but its text still reads closer to the MT than the other two versions.

The Peshitta adds ܡܢ in the second clause of v. 23 to connect it with the first, so that "a word in season is good *for him*". No external influence need be suspected here.

V. 27 in the Peshitta reads "He who accepts a bribe destroys his soul (נפשו), and he who hates to take a bribe, lives". The word "bribe" is repeated from the first clause to establish a connection with it, while נפשו is based on *ἐαυτὸν* in the LXX (instead of בָּיָתוֹ in the MT). The Targum follows the MT text.

The LXX has additions in vv. 27, 28 and 29 and differs from the Peshitta in v. 30 as well. The Peshitta follows the MT text. The LXX has no v. 31 either. The relation between לְעֵנֹת and יְהִיגָה in v. 28 was not clear to the Peshitta translator and he employed the LXX interpretation for his own rendition - *πιστεῖς* is the same as מ. נהנה וא.

In v. 30 the Peshitta translator inserted "heart" from the first clause as the equivalent for שְׂמֵרָה, because he may have been entirely unfamiliar with this Hebrew term.

In v. 32 the Peshitta reads מ. נהנה וא for לֵב, which harmonises the second clause with other verses in Proverbs, viz. 3. 13, 4. 7, 10. 23, etc. The Hebrew text reads "but he who heeds admonition gains a heart", which does not make much sense. The Peshitta reading gives a sound interpretation of the Hebrew.

The Peshitta reveals some influence by the LXX in v. 33<sup>b</sup> and adds מ. נהנה וא, which means "instruction of life", in the first clause. This serves to harmonise with v. 31 - "admonition of life". The MT reads מוֹסֵר חֵכְמָה in v. 33. This verse also harmonises with 16. 22, which reads "Wisdom is a fount of life to him who has it". Furthermore, the clause כְּבוֹד עֲנָנָה is rendered as "the honour of the humble", which can be deduced from the Hebrew and does not imply a different *Vorlage* or an external influence.



## Chapter 16

This chapter also reveals the influence of the LXX, although this is restricted mostly to the grammatical level where obscure or rare words are simplified (e.g. vv. 11 and 1). The thoughts in this chapter are sometimes harmonised with those in other verses by the translator (v. 15); this closely resembles the MT. Vv. 11 and 12 seem to express greater reverence to the Lord than the MT, although this may well be the sense in which the translator understood the Hebrew in the first place.

V. 1 is generally<sup>1</sup> lacking in the LXX text and the Peshitta reads slightly differently from the MT. The general sense of the MT is still retained in the Peshitta text, but the Peshitta translation is simplified. The Peshitta has rendered both **לֵאמֹר** and **מִיְהוָה** with **מֵאִלֹּהִים** to read "From man comes the meaning of the heart, but from the Lord comes the word of the tongue", thereby establishing a closer relation between the two clauses and forming a better antithesis between them. The word **מַעֲנָה** ("answer") is rendered more neutrally - **תַּגְּמֵל**.

In the second clause of v. 2 the Peshitta reads **מֵעַיְנָיו** instead of **רֵיחוֹתָיו**. This is perhaps inserted from the first clause to give what the Peshitta translator might have considered a more meaningful reading: "All man's ways are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord orders his way".

V. 4 in the Peshitta reads "All the works of the Lord are for them who obey Him, but iniquity is kept for the evil day". The verb **יִשְׁמְרוּ** in the second clause is inserted from the LXX (**φυλάσσεται**), where v. 4 is the same as v. 9. The Peshitta's translator took **לְמַעֲנָיו** to mean "them that obey him" (the LXX reads **δικαιοσύνης**). It seems that the Peshitta is influenced to some extent by the LXX, but still conveys the meaning of the Hebrew text. The Targum follows the Peshitta in the first clause and the MT in the second.

The first clause of v. 5 in the Peshitta seems to be based on the LXX reading - **ἀκάρτος** = **אֶבֶל**. The second clause in the Peshitta text, albeit influenced by the LXX in that **οὐκ ἀθωοθήσεται** is the same as **אֶבֶל לֹא יִשְׁמָר**, was also definitely harmonised with, or repeated from Prov. 11. 21 (in the Peshitta version itself), which has an equivalent reading. The second clause of v. 5 reads **וְהַיְהוָה לֹא יִשְׁמָר אֶבֶל**, while the MT reads "be assured, he will not go unpunished". The Targum's translator was influenced by the Peshitta (**דרם בלביה**) and simultaneously tried to translate the meaning of the MT text, i.e. **יָדָה לֹא יִשְׁמָר מִן בִּישְׁתָּא** for **לֹא נִדְכִי מִן בִּישְׁתָּא**.

<sup>1</sup> Those mss. that have v. 1 also have an addition that is probably copied from Ben Sira 3.18 according to Toy (1904, p. 326).

In the second clause of v. 6 the Peshitta translator altered the general meaning conveyed by the Hebrew *Vorlage* - *וּבְיָרֵאתָ יְהוָה סוּר מִרָע* - in order to render "the fear of the Lord" as the subject of the clause instead of an instrument with which one avoids evil. The Peshitta reads *ܩܪܒܘܬܐ ܕܝܗܘܘܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ*. The Peshitta text also expresses more respect for the Lord, i.e. He is ultimately the deliverer from evil.

V. 11 in the Peshitta exhibits some influence by the LXX, especially in the first clause. In the second clause *קִים* is rendered as *ܡܗ ܥܘܠܐ* and is probably based on the Greek equivalent *δικαία* (perhaps due to a limited understanding of the Hebrew term). However, the Peshitta *Vorlage* might have read *קִים* instead. The rest of the second clause follows the MT closely. In the first clause *ו* is omitted, as is the case in the LXX<sup>2</sup>, to read "the weight of the balance" instead of "the weight and balance". It is important to note that by a change of one preposition - the equivalent for *ל* (*para* in the LXX) is omitted and replaced by the status construct - *ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܝܗܘܘܐ* - the thoughts expressed in the two clauses thus harmonise properly. As a result, the Peshitta finally reads "A weight of the balance is justice of the Lord and all his work are true weights". It seems that the Peshitta translator generally relied on the interpretation of the LXX rather than his own *Vorlage*, which probably read very like the MT (with the possible exception of *קִים*). The Targum follows the MT, but uses some words in the Peshitta for its own rendition, e.g. *קושטע* and *עוברוי*. The change in the Peshitta reading may have been made for ethical reasons - the Lord's righteousness is really the subject of this verse - and no external influences need be suspected in this case.

The Syriac translation of v. 12 establishes another more logical and closer connection between the two clauses than the MT reading does: "Unclean are kings that do evil, because the throne is set in righteousness". The LXX follows the MT, except that "to do evil" (*עֲשׂוֹת רָשָׁע*) reads "evildoer" (*ὁ ποιῶν κακά*) and *θρόνος ἀρχῆς* reads *ܩܦܝܐ* (*ܦܝܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ* in the Peshitta). There is no apparent external influence on the Peshitta text in this verse. If there was any, the alteration may have been primarily caused by ethical considerations on the part of the translator in order to simplify the meaning of the verse by harmonising the two clauses.

The concept *עַב מִלְקוֹשׁ* ("the cloud of spring rain") in v. 15 reads *ܥܘܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ* ("the first cloud") in the Peshitta, while the LXX has *νέφος ὄψιμον* ("the latter cloud") in its version of it. The spring rain is of course also known as the "latter rain" and the first cloud that heralded its appearance is considered a sign of blessing (cf. Jer. 3. 3 and Zech. 10. 1). The Targum reads *עננא ܒܒܪܝܘܬܐ*, following the Peshitta. In the case of dubious readings or uncertainty the Peshitta usually makes use of the LXX. Alternatively, the translator utilised other verses within the Peshitta text that express similar thoughts. The Targum is usually close to the MT, although it may be influenced by the Peshitta. If the translator of the Targum did make use of the Syriac in this

<sup>2</sup> The whole LXX text reads: *ῥοπή ζυγοῦ δικαιοσύνης παρά κυρίῳ, τὰ δὲ ἔργα αὐτοῦ σπλάγνια δίκαια.*

instance, he probably would not have misspelt what should have been בכיריאתא.<sup>3</sup> It seems plausible that the Peshitta *Vorlage* may have read "first rain".

V. 16 is connected to v. 15 with מΔ (twice) and referring to the king it reads: "Wisdom is better *for him* than gold, and understanding is more desirable *to him* than silver". In the first clause מΔ is, in fact, the equivalent element for מדה, which seems grammatically out of place here. The Peshitta translator probably saw an opportunity here to exploit this article in his *Vorlage* to suit his own translation by rendering מΔ in its stead, thereby establishing a grammatical connection with the preceding verse. The Targum, following the Peshitta, has ליה in the first clause as the equivalent of מדה, but omits the second one to remain closer to the Hebrew (the LXX follows the MT).

V. 19 in the Peshitta reads "A humble spirit and humble eyes are better than to divide spoil with the proud". The main difference in comparison with the MT occurs in the first clause where טוב שפלה רוח את עיני is freely understood to mean "a humble spirit and eyes", and נבטה is accordingly repeated after "eyes".

In v. 21 the verb יקרא is rendered as נב in order to read: "The wise of heart knows discernment". This rendition by the Peshitta translator harmonises with v. 22: "Discernment is a fountain of life to those who know it".

In v. 22 בעליו is rendered as "those who know it" (*it* being "Wisdom"). This verse is thus logically connected to the preceding verse (and 15. 33) and it is also translated freely from the Hebrew with more neutral terms. The first clause of v. 21 has the same structure as the first clause of v. 23 as well, while their respective second clauses were also harmonised. "Sweet words" (MT) reads "words of the wise" in v. 24 of the Peshitta and it may therefore refer to the previous verses, on which it is probably based.

In v. 24 the Peshitta reads "speech of wisdom" (נלא נבא מ דעבנא) instead of "sweet words". This rendition was probably purposely made to harmonise with the rest of this chapter, particularly with v. 23, which reads "The heart of the wise (עבנא) knows the speech (נלא נבא) of his mouth".

In its overall sense, v. 25 agrees entirely with 14. 12 (as do both the Targum and the LXX).

V. 26 partly follows the LXX in the Peshitta text. Although all its elements are in agreement with the MT, which means that all the words of the MT are represented, the Peshitta reads them in a different order in the second clause. The Hebrew text does present some minor problems. In particular, the relation between the two clauses is not clearly established in the Hebrew text.

<sup>3</sup> בכיריאתא is corrected and spelt בכיריאתא in the *codex 1106* (A.D. 1238, in the Breslau Library).



## Chapter 17

In this chapter the Peshitta again reveals some influence by the LXX and, as is often the case, the influence is selective and is mostly a factor in cases of difficult or anomalous readings (i.e. in vv. 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 16). What is not always apparent, is that there are numerous cases where the Peshitta follows the Hebrew reading meticulously, whereas the LXX manifests clear differences (e.g. vv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8, etc.). Compared to the LXX rendering of Proverbs, the Peshitta can be described as very literal. The other differences in the Peshitta text are deliberate harmonisations and simplifications (vv. 14, 15, 19, 22, 24 and 28).

The Hebrew reading<sup>1</sup> of v. 4 may have been difficult to understand for the Peshitta translator. The fact is that he apparently based his translation on the LXX. The second clause in particular is clearly closer to the LXX than the MT reading and the translator's decision to utilise the LXX may have been made easier by the fact that it forms a good antithesis to the first clause. The Peshitta reads "the righteous does not listen to the tongue of the evil-speakers" (δικαιος δὲ οὐ προσέχει χεῖλεσιν ψευδέσιν in the LXX). The word "evil-speaking" (כְּחִנֵּי) is repeated from the first clause in the Peshitta in order to simplify and to connect the two clauses.

The Peshitta agrees with the LXX in the rendering of חֲתִיבֶנָּה in v. 7. The Syriac version reads ܟܬܝܒܢܗ ܟܬܘܒܢܗ and the LXX has χεῖλη πιστᾶ. Besides the influence of the LXX, there is a possibility that the Peshitta *Vorlage* read ܟܬܝܒ instead of ܟܬܝܒ.

V. 9 of the Peshitta (agreeing mostly with the MT) is based on the LXX text, which reads - ὃς κρύπτει ἀδικήματα, ζητεῖ φίλων· ὃς δὲ μισεῖ κρύπτειν, διίστησιν φίλους καὶ οἰκέλους. The Peshitta translates: "He who conceals evil, seeks friendship, but he who hates to hide from love, divides between friends and dwellers". It is possible that the translator did not understand the Hebrew word חֲתִיבֶנָּה correctly. The addition in the Peshitta, in comparison with the MT, is concerned primarily with the word חֲתִיבֶנָּה, which occurs in two other instances in Proverbs, namely 2. 17 and 16. 28. In these two cases the Peshitta has ܟܬܝܒܢܗ ("one who raises") and ܟܬܘܒܢܗ ܟܬܝܒܢܗ, which concurs with the LXX renditions, διδασκαλῶν and διαχωρίζει φίλους ("to separate friends"), respectively. It is thus plausible that the translator did not understand the word חֲתִיבֶנָּה at all and may imply that the Peshitta *Vorlage* did not really differ from the MT as far as this verse is concerned.

<sup>1</sup> Fichtner (*BH*, p. 1175) suggests that ܟܬܝܒܢܗ should read ܟܬܝܒܢܗ and that ܟܬܝܒܢܗ is the same as ܟܬܝܒܢܗ in 2 mss. from Kennicott.

V. 10 is also entirely based upon the LXX to read: "A rebuke harasses the heart of the wise, but instead of being rebuked, the fool is beaten, he does not perceive". The word **אָל** is not represented in the LXX.

The Peshitta is influenced by the LXX in v. 11 as well - **ἀνελεήμονα αὐτῷ** = **ܐܠ ܕܠ ܐܢܝܢܐ**<sup>2</sup>. The Peshitta reads **ܐܢܝܢܐ** in place of **ܐܢܝܢܐ**, while it is not translated in the LXX. The Targum follows the MT closely, except for **ܐܢܝܢܐ**, which is rendered as **ܐܢܝܢܐ** (from the Peshitta).

The Peshitta follows the LXX in the first clause of v. 12, but adds "and fear" to **ܐܠܐ**. This may be a paraphrase of **μέριμνα** to convey the sense of "anxious care". The adjective **νοήμονι** in the LXX probably influenced the insertion of **ܐܢܝܢܐ** after "man" as well. This insertion serves to form an antithesis to "fool" in the second clause. In the second clause the Peshitta is closer to the Hebrew than the Greek and instead of **διαλογιζονται κακά**, it reads "and for a fool in his folly" (cf. 6. 22). The Targum has a combination of the MT and Peshitta readings.

The free translation of v. 14 is not influenced by the LXX, which has an entirely different reading. The Peshitta translator interpreted the Hebrew text of v. 14 quite differently: "He who sheds blood, provokes strife before the ruler". The reason for this somewhat forced rendering of the Hebrew may be the result of an attempt by the translator to form a synthetic parallelism with the subsequent v. 15, which reads "He who justifies the wicked and condemns the poor, is tainted before the Lord" (MT). The Targum expands on the Peshitta, adding elements of the MT - "He who sheds blood like water....etc."

V. 15 in the Peshitta conveys the meaning of the MT text, although it does not translate **ܐܢܝܢܐ**. This is because the translator considered the one who "justifies the bad" and the one who "condemns the innocent" as one and the same. The LXX reads **ἀκάθαρτος καὶ βδελυκτὸς** instead of **ܐܢܝܢܐ**, while the Peshitta reads only **ܐܢܝܢܐ** instead. The Targum reading is equivalent to the MT.

V. 16 in the Peshitta reads "Why do possessions go to the fool? He has no heart to gain wisdom". The whole reading may be based on a Hebrew text akin to the MT. This means that there may be no outside influence, although the translator's own division of the clauses seemingly resembles that in the LXX. Moreover, all the Syriac words have equivalents in the Hebrew text and are not copied directly from the LXX.

The Peshitta has an addition in v. 19 that seems to have no relationship with the readings of the LXX and the Targum. V. 19<sup>a</sup> in the MT is the same as v. 19 in the LXX and the Targum is an exact copy of the MT. As far as the Peshitta is concerned, this verse may have been translated with the ideas expressed in 6. 16 to 18 or 8. 33

<sup>2</sup> This rendition is in exact agreement with Prov. 5. 9, 11. 17 and 12. 10, where the Peshitta is also substantially influenced by the LXX. This is possibly an indication that the translator may not have understood the concept in question.

to 36. The addition of "deceit" also serves the purpose of establishing a logical connection with the following verse and forms, as is the case with vv. 14 and 15, a synthetic parallelism with v. 20: "A false heart finds no good, and a lying tongue falls into calamity". The word "fool" is not repeated in the second clause of v. 21 and does not upset the meaning at all. The Peshitta rendition is probably a harmonisation.

The Peshitta and Targum read "body" instead of גִּתָּה in v. 22. It is plausible that the Peshitta *Vorlage* read גויה instead, but the Peshitta translator could have altered the text deliberately in order to harmonise the two clauses of the parallelism - the objects being "the body" and "the bones", while the subjects are "the heart" and "the spirit", respectively.

Harmonisation between two clauses is also evident in v. 24. The Peshitta reading not only forms a better parallelism, but it also enhances the contrast between the "wise" and the "foolish". Certain concepts, such as "depths of the earth" (ܕܠܝܘܬܝܗܘܝܢ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ), are reminiscent of another plus in Proverbs, namely 9. 18 (cf. also Prov. 8. 3), with which v. 24 is probably harmonised. The Syriac rendition of ܕܠܝܘܬܝܗܘܝܢ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ is the equivalent of בְּקִצְוֵי אֲרֶזֶץ in the MT (the LXX reads ἐπὶ ἄκρα γῆς). The whole phrase in the Peshitta reads "The face of the prudent beholds wisdom, but the eyes of the fool are on the depths of the earth". The Targum is also influenced by the Peshitta in this verse, while the LXX differs from both readings.

In v. 28b ܕܠܝܘܬܝܗܘܝܢ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ is repeated from the first clause in the Peshitta and is also followed by the Targum. Neither text agrees with the LXX in this regard.



## Chapter 18

Owing to the subjects found in this chapter, there are a number of harmonisations with 7. 28 (v. 1) and 9. 18 (vv. 3 and 8). There is some limited influence by the LXX as well (vv. 5, 6, 19 and 22). Generally speaking, this chapter is a literal rendering of the MT.

V. 1 in the Peshitta differs from the MT (which is difficult to translate), but does not follow the LXX either. Although it seems somewhat forced, the Peshitta translator probably reinterpreted the Hebrew text deliberately in order to achieve his own intended harmonisation of this sentence with the subsequent verse. The translation does not stand in isolation from the previous chapter either; the subject is still the "fool" (17. 28) and this is continued in 8.1 with the description of the actions of the "fool". In the first clause of v. 1 **ܡܕܒܚܐ** is probably inserted with reference to **ܡܕܒܚ** of 17. 28 in order to establish a connection with it. The translation of **ܕܩܘܠܘܬܐ** in the second clause of 18.1 is based on another root - **לעג** - to read **ܠܚܝܡܐ** ("to mock"). **ܠܝܢ** in v. 2 is also inserted from v. 1. Both verses read: "In his silence he attends to desire and mocks good learning. The fool has no pleasure in knowledge, for his heart attends to folly". Although the Peshitta translator probably did not understand the verb **ܕܩܘܠܘܬܐ** or its grammatical connection with **ܠܩܒܝ** in the second clause of verse 2, the Syriac translation does provide a more neutral reading and it reflects sentiments already expressed elsewhere in Proverbs - "the fool reflects folly in his heart" (cf. 12. 23, 15. 2, etc.). The term "folly" in the Peshitta may be influenced by **ἀφροσύνη** in the LXX, which has a different reading altogether.

V. 3 has **ܠܗܘܘܬܐ ܠܗܘܘܬܐ** inserted from the LXX, which reads **βάθος κακῶν**. But the LXX reads the verse differently from the MT and the Peshitta appears to be a blend of both the MT and the LXX texts. The insertion in the Peshitta may have been made for another reason altogether, namely that v. 3 is, appropriately, in close proximity to Prov. 17. 24, which reads **ܠܝܘܠܐ ܠܗܘܘܬܐ** instead of "end of the earth" in the MT (**ἄκρα γῆς** in the LXX). Both instances of "depth" or "valley" may be a harmonisation with Prov. 9. 18 and a close identification with Sheol, where the fool, who succumbs to the "foolish woman", not heeding to "wisdom", will eventually spend his days in punishment. V. 4, which reads "The words of a man's mouth are deep waters and a river flowing, and a source of wisdom", also forms a good contrast with v. 3. The Targum follows the MT, but **ܘ** may be from **ܘܘ**.

The Peshitta, in contrast with the MT and the LXX, changes the object and the subject in the second clause of verse 5 to read "and not to turn (pervert) the law for the innocent". The particle **ܠܐ** is perhaps taken from **οὐδὲ** in the LXX. Following the Peshitta, the Targum also reads **ܠܐ** in the second clause.

In verse 6 the MT reads "his (the fool's) mouth invites a flogging" (**וְפִי לְמַהֲלָמוֹת יִקְרָא**). The Peshitta reads - **ܠܗܘܘܬܐ ܠܗܘܘܬܐ ܠܗܘܘܬܐ**. This rendition may be based on the LXX reading - **τὸ δὲ στόμα**

αὐτοῦ τὸ θρασὺ θάνατον ἐπικαλεῖται- although ἐπικαλεῖται is not represented in the Syriac version. Apparently, the Peshitta translator used the LXX to solve the meaning of לַמְהֵלֵלִים, which perhaps may have read למה למה in his own *Vorlage*. This begs the question of whether the Peshitta translator did not simply translate his own *Vorlage*. This is quite probably the case, because the Syriac has equivalents for all the Hebrew elements in this clause and, as has been mentioned, it does not represent ἐπικαλεῖται.

V. 8 in the Peshitta reads "The words of the lazy cast him in evil, and they cast him into the inner chambers of Sheol". The verse is an interpretation of the Hebrew text and is definitely constructed with a view to harmonising it with the previous verses, especially vv. 3, 6, 7 and 9. In addition to this, it is consistent with the thoughts in Proverbs regarding the possible consequences resulting from what one says and it also forms a logical prelude to v. 9, which reads "He who is slack in his work, is the brother of the destroyer."<sup>1</sup>

This verse has exactly the same reading in Prov. 26. 22 in the MT, where it was correctly translated in the Peshitta in that instance. The Hebrew text of v. 8 is difficult to understand and it is, therefore, open to different interpretations. The translator of the Peshitta clearly attempted to redeem the Hebrew text as best he could. The idea of Sheol may perhaps form the background to numerous readings in this chapter and it pervades the translator's whole perspective on life. As a matter of fact, keeping the plus at Prov. 9.18 in mind, it forms part of the central concept in his world view. This is emphasised once more by his translation of Prov. 18. 6. The LXX has a variation of Prov. 19. 15 and may have been of no assistance to him at all.

In v. 9 the Peshitta reads א instead of אָ. In the MT this verse stands isolated from the previous verse in spite of אָ. However, in the Peshitta, thanks to its translator's rendition of v. 8, there is a logical connection between the two verses. In fact, an equivalent for אָ in the Peshitta would have been inappropriate in the present context, where v. 9 expands on v. 8.

V. 10 is simplified in the Peshitta by the repetition of "strong". The LXX is closer to the MT.

In v. 11 the Peshitta reads "The glory and the riches are the city of his strength, and on the strong wall is his dwelling". This interpretation differs from the Hebrew: הוֹן עֲשִׂיר קָרִית עִזּוֹ וְכַחֲמָה נִשְׁגָּבָה בְּמִשְׁכְּבֵיהוּ. The Peshitta translator established a connection with the previous verse whereby the subject of v. 11 is "the righteous man" of v. 10. The Peshitta translator accomplished this by simply inserting a א between the equivalents of the expression הוֹן עֲשִׂיר to read "the glory and the riches", instead of "a rich man's wealth".

The MT reads צָדִיק הָרֵאשִׁין בְּרִיבּוֹ in v. 17. The Peshitta translator wrote וְהוּא מְבֹרָא ("he is victorious") for צָדִיק. The Peshitta translator probably decided on this alteration in his own rendition in order to prevent the

<sup>1</sup> It is only a small step to take from "lazy" in v. 8<sup>a</sup> to "slack" in v. 9<sup>a</sup>, and from "Sheol" in v. 8<sup>b</sup> to "the destroyer" (perhaps an allusion to an inhabitant of "Sheol", i. e. Satan) in v. 9<sup>b</sup>.

clause from giving the impression that a man who states his case *first* is righteous. The Peshitta reading connects the first and the second clause with **ܟܘܢܐ** to read: "A man is victorious at his trial when his friend comes before him". The LXX has a different reading of this verse.

V. 19 is unclear in the MT and the Peshitta is based on the LXX reading instead. Naturally, however, the LXX is not slavishly copied by the Peshitta. Firstly, **καὶ ὑψηλή** is not represented in the Peshitta and, secondly, in the second clause the Peshitta differs from the LXX in the rendering of **τεθεμελιωμένον βασιλειον** ("a well-founded palace") to read closer to the Hebrew instead - "like a strong bolt".

The Peshitta has an addition in v. 22 that is probably based on the LXX as well. The addition in the LXX is longer and the Peshitta reads only the first clause of this extra verse in the LXX. Furthermore, the Peshitta translator has added **ܡܕܘܠܐ ܚܘܒܐ** at the end of the addition in order to put the verse in a social context for the sake of the reader. There is no equivalent for this clause in either the MT or the LXX. In the first clause of v. 22 the Peshitta reads "He who finds a good wife, finds good". The first "good" is perhaps repeated from the same clause, or otherwise it is copied from the LXX as well. The Targum follows the MT closely.



## Chapter 19

In this chapter there are no real significant changes to the text. The *Vorlage* of the Peshitta translator was close to the MT and the differences can easily be explained on the grounds of simplification, correction and harmonisation (vv. 20, 22 and 25). This explanation concurs with the translator's overall technique and intent. However, some of these alterations were done in consultation with the LXX, if only as an aid in the interpretation of the Hebrew (cf. vv. 3, 6, 14, 19 and 24).

V. 1 in the Peshitta differs from the MT in the second clause to read exactly like Prov. 28. 6. The MT reading of 19. 1 differs from 28. 6 only with regard to the words  $\text{שָׁפְתָיו}$  and  $\text{כְּסִיל}$ , which are rendered as  $\text{דְּרָכִים}$  and  $\text{עֲשִׂיר}$  in 28.6, respectively. The Targum (which usually follows the Hebrew closely) and some 50 mss. read  $\text{דְּרָכִים}$  in 19.1 as well. That means that the Peshitta *Vorlage* may have differed from the MT in at least the rendering of  $\text{שָׁפְתָיו}$ . The Peshitta translator based his rendition of 19. 1 on 28. 6, which presents a better antithesis between the two clauses of the sentence ("poor" and "walking" against "rich" and "ways"). This intertextual harmonisation is common to the Peshitta and occurs in 9. 12 as well. Furthermore, verse 3 of chapter 19 also contains  $\text{אֲנִי אֶחָדָה אֶחָדָה}$  and may have influenced the decision of the translator to utilise 28. 6. The Peshitta's translator probably did not use the LXX, which lacks the first two verses, although his own Greek text may have been complete.

V. 2 has  $\text{אֶל}$  added and a pronomen (3, masc. sing.) added to  $\text{אֶנֶן}$  in the first clause of the Peshitta text, which is not necessarily the result of some external influence. It could have been inserted from v. 1 to establish a connection between these two verses. These additions are mere clarifications of the Hebrew text and this reading can be deduced from the Hebrew to read: "One who does not know himself will not be happy and one who hastens his feet, sins". The Peshitta offers a logical and sensible synthesis between the two clauses. Since the alterations are implied in the Hebrew, they should perhaps not even be regarded as additions.

V. 3 was influenced by the LXX;  $\text{בְּלִבָּהּ} = \tau\eta\ \kappa\alpha\rho\delta\iota\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\sigma\theta$ . The translator's intention may have been to soften the impunity in the description of the rebellion of man, and to avoid sounding disrespectful towards God. The second clause reads "and he is angry with God in his heart", instead of the stronger MT reading "and he is angry with God".

The Peshitta gives a different interpretation of the Hebrew in v. 6. It seems to have been influenced by the LXX, although only in a limited sense -  $\kappa\alpha\kappa\omicron\varsigma$  influenced the Peshitta rendition of  $\text{עָרָב}$  to become  $\text{אֲבָרָה}$  (both translators may have deduced this meaning of the Hebrew morphology from their respective *Vorlagen*). However, the Syriac has equivalents for all the Hebrew words and the Targum follows the Peshitta reading closely (the Hebrew probably being unintelligible). The LXX has other concepts like  $\delta\upsilon\epsilon\iota\delta\omicron\varsigma$  in its text,

which are not represented in the other three versions. The Peshitta sentence gives a more logical parallelism between the two clauses, which the translator construed from the Hebrew with only marginal reference to the LXX.

V. 7 has three clauses of which the first two are in agreement in the Peshitta text. The third clause is difficult and probably corrupt, especially **לֹא הִמָּה** at the end of the sentence. The Peshitta translates the third clause thus: "One who is contentious with his words, is not true". A possible text from which this clause was translated may have read **מִרְדָּ בְאִמְרֵים לֹא-תַחַם**. This reading should be compared with the current MT text, which reads **מִרְדָּהּ אִמְרֵים לֹא הִמָּה**. It seems that the Peshitta *Vorlage* may have been clearer than the Hebrew and may have represented the original reading. The Targum represents the Peshitta rather than the MT. The LXX follows the MT, but has six clauses in v. 7.

The noun **לֵב** in v. 8 in the Peshitta was translated as **κτῶν** to read: "He who gains *wisdom* loves himself". This rendition is probably influenced by the LXX, which reads **ὁ κτῶμενος φρόνησιν ἀγαπᾷ ἑαυτόν**. For the Peshitta translator the Hebrew term probably did not have sufficient meaning within the context of the verse. Indeed, he utilised the LXX interpretation instead, which renders a more proper reading of the first clause. This insertion concurs with the general message in Proverbs and serves to form a more proper parallelism as well.

The word **כְּ** is inserted in the second clause of v. 13. The comparison is only implied in the Hebrew reading and the translator did not necessarily make use of an external source to insert it. The Targum follows the Peshitta text and "like" does not appear in the LXX.

**כְּבִרְתָּ** is inserted at the end of v. 14 for the sake of clarity and **תִּשְׁמַח** is translated **כְּבִרְתָּ** to read "A woman is betrothed to a man by the Lord". The Peshitta does not really convey the Hebrew meaning and the verb is perhaps translated from the LXX (it reads the same) in reference to Prov. 18. 22, with which it harmonises. The Peshitta translator may not have understood the Hebrew to begin with.

The Peshitta text of v. 19 reads "The angry man receives injury as long as the produce on account of his burden, increases". The MT, being partially corrupt, can hardly be given a satisfactory translation. The Peshitta reading shows some correlation with all the elements of the LXX and may be an interpretation of the Greek text which reads **κακόφρων ἀνήρ πολλά ζημιωθήσεται· ἐὰν δὲ λοιμεύηται, καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ προσθήσει**. The Targum concurs with the Peshitta text, even with regard to word choice.

The Peshitta reads "your ways" (**כְּדַרְכֵי**) as the equivalent of **דַּרְכֵי** at the end of v. 20. Although the Peshitta *Vorlage* may have read **דַּרְכֵי**, it must be borne in mind that other verses in Proverbs like Prov. 4. 11 and 12, which also contain a similar thought, and Prov. 19. 20 may be based on them. Of course, it could

have been deliberately altered, within the context of the whole paragraph to form a contrast with Prov. 19. 16 (it has  $\text{לְעוֹלָם}$  as well). The Targum and LXX follow the MT.

V. 22 in the Peshitta has one change from the MT text:  $\text{לֹגֵן}$  ("lying") reads  $\text{עָשִׁיר}$  ("rich") in the second clause - "a poor man is better than a rich man". This comparison also occurs in 19. 1, where the Peshitta reads "rich" instead of "fool". The Peshitta rendering of v. 22 may be a deliberate harmonisation with v. 1 and may be influenced by the LXX reading of v. 22; it reads "Better is a righteous poor man than a lying rich man". The LXX reading, of course, echoes the thought of the first verse in this chapter. The Peshitta *Vorlage* probably read the same as the MT and the translator has considered "lying" as inappropriate as a contrast with "the poor" in v. 22 and opted for "rich" instead. The Targum follows the MT reading.

In v. 24 "dish" reads "bosom" in the Peshitta (cf. 26. 15). This is taken from the LXX reading -  $\text{κόλπον}$  (the rest of the verse concurs with the MT), but the translator added a suff. 3. masc. sing -  $\text{בְּבִסְמוֹ}$ . The LXX may have made more sense to the translator and this change in the Peshitta results in a very good reading - "the sluggard buries his hands in *his bosom*".

V. 25 in the Peshitta reads "When you beat a fool, the wise takes care, and when you rebuke the wise, he understands knowledge."<sup>1</sup> The Peshitta translator may have consulted the LXX as well, since instead of "scoffer" the Peshitta reads  $\text{סַחֵר}$  ( $\text{ἀφρων}$  in the LXX). This verse should perhaps be considered together with v. 26, which concerns the shameful son.

In v. 27 the Peshitta translator used  $\text{נ}$  (as in  $\text{נִשְׁמַע}$ ) instead of  $\text{ל}$  (in  $\text{לִשְׁמָע}$ ) in order to render the first clause: "Wait, my son, *and* listen to instruction". This rendition in the Peshitta avoids reading the phrase as if the tutor requests the son to *cease* listening to instruction.

The Peshitta translation (and the Targum) connects vv. 28 and 29 logically by rendering  $\text{שְׁפָטִים}$  in v. 29 as  $\text{אֲנִי וְהַבָּצֵל וְהַגִּבּוֹר}$ ; this is from  $\text{אֲנִי וְהַבָּצֵל}$  in the first clause of v. 28. The LXX reads  $\text{μᾶστιγες}$ , i.e. "whipping". No external influence played a part in the Peshitta rendition of v. 29.

<sup>1</sup> This is reminiscent of the remarks of Isaac of Antioch against the copyists, whereby the copyist is told that the pupil, taking up the book, may be thrashed for a mistake caused by the copyist's negligence. Apparently the rod was not spared in the education of children in Edessa (Segal, 1970, p. 149).



## Chapter 20

This chapter is relatively literal compared to the MT and the most important deviations are found in vv. 4 and 5, which were harmonised with Prov. 9. 12 to 18 and Prov. 8. 14. The only clear addition is in v. 19 and this verse is comparable to 10. 14, whence the plus has been inserted.

ܩܘܪܝܢ is added at the end of v. 4 in the Peshitta. It was probably inserted from v. 5, where it is the first word of the sentence, to supply an object to ܕܠܐ - "and there is no water". The concept ܩܘܪܝܢ is treated similarly in 13. 4 and 7, where in the first instance the wording was changed, and in the second ܩܘܪܝܢ was added to ܕܠܐ. In addition to the provision of an object for ܕܠܐ, this replacement of the term "water" in the text disturbs neither the sense nor the connection between the two verses at all; it is indeed logical in the context of "harvesting". Apart from the general climate familiar to the Syriac reader, no external influence needs be suspected (cf. footnotes at Prov. 9. 12 to 18). The Targum and LXX follow the MT.

The variant in v. 5<sup>a</sup> of the Peshitta is difficult to explain. The MT text reads "The purpose (עצה) in a man (איש) is like deep water". As mentioned above, "water" is at the end of the previous verse as an object of ܕܠܐ. The first word in v. 5 is "deep" and with "water" it forms a metaphor meaning "profound". Even without "water", it still conveys the same idea and does not upset the meaning of the sentence. The real deviations in the Peshitta are "word" and "king" or "counsellor", which stand for עצה and איש, respectively. The LXX reads βουλή and δυνδρός. The Peshitta rendering is perhaps a mixture of simplification and reinterpretation. The translator saw a closer connection between עצה and the "heart of man" as referring to one and the same concept. In that sense, "council in the heart of man" is nothing other than "the word in the heart of the counsellor" (cf. vv. 18 and 18. 4).

V. 6<sup>a</sup> in the MT reads וְרַב־אֱוֹם יִקְרָא אִישׁ חֲסִדּוֹ and is translated as follows: "Many a man proclaims his own loyalty". The Peshitta reads ܩܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܘܡܐ ܕܥܘܡܐ ܕܥܘܡܐ - "Many men are called merciful". The Peshitta can be deduced from the Hebrew text by a different punctuation of the verb יִקְרָא, and discarding the ו after חֲסִדּוֹ. The Peshitta does not follow the LXX, but the Syriac did influence the Targum reading: סוגעא דבני נשא מתקרין גברא מרחמנא. No external influence need have been responsible for the Peshitta translation<sup>1</sup> and the translator may have considered the statement of the Hebrew text somewhat audacious - a true believer is humble and does not proclaim his own loyalty.

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that the great Aphrahat (or Aphraates), a bishop of considerable stature in Persian Christianity, quotes this verse in his demonstration on faith exactly as it stands in the Peshitta. Other passages, e.g. Ex. 17. 12, are also quoted from the Peshitta in this demonstration regarding faith. Even if Aphrahat did quote the Peshitta loosely, the phrase still differs considerably from the MT and LXX and

V. 14 is misinterpreted by the Peshitta translator to read: "A friend will say to his neighbour: I obtained, and he will be praised". Since the section from vv. 14 to 22 is lacking in the LXX, it cannot be compared with the Peshitta. This fact does not exclude the possibility that the translator had a Greek text containing these verses. This reading can be construed from the Hebrew text and it could be a reinterpretation of the Hebrew wording in the MT.

V. 15 is a continuation of v. 14, because **הגאגו** was inserted at the beginning of the verse from v. 14 to supply an object for what he obtained, i.e. gold, many precious stones, precious vessels and lips of knowledge (the translator inserted **ה** before "lips").

In v. 17 the spelling of **עָרַב** was retained in the Peshitta (**בֵּרַב**), although the two words have nothing else in common. The Hebrew term means "to be sweet", while the Syriac means "to be or give surety". The Peshitta translation was obviously influenced by the previous verse, where this verb **בֵּרַב** appears twice (there it reads "to give surety"). Thus its presence in v. 17 could probably be considered a harmonisation with v. 16.

The plus in v. 19 reads **הוֹדוּתְהוּהוּ הוֹדוּתְהוּ מִמָּה הַלְלוּא**. It was probably inserted from Prov. 10. 12 to 14, especially from v. 14, which reads "*The wise hides knowledge*, but a hasty (**הַכַּפְזוּ הַכַּ**) mouth meets ruin" (v. 12 reads "Hatred stirs up strife, but love *covers* all sins"). In vv. 11 to 14 the same principles as those expressed in Prov. 20. 19 are represented. It should be noted that v. 19 also contains **הַכַּפְזוּ הַכַּ** (i.e. "hasty", as in 10. 14) in the last clause of the verse as the equivalent of **לְפִתְהוּ**. However, most clauses inserted from the Peshitta itself are usually copied exactly and this insertion of v. 19 does not contain the precise wording of the Peshitta. Therefore it is perhaps also possible that the insertion comes from a Greek text that was more complete than current texts with regard to 10. 11 to 14 (cf. Prov. 6. 25, 8. 23, etc.). The Peshitta translator perhaps wanted to strengthen the conviction that it is futile to hide one's sins.

V. 30 has an unclear text in the MT and the Peshitta *Vorlage*, perhaps being similar, forced the translator once again to make use of the LXX to translate the verse: "Weariness and torture befall the wicked, and affliction his inner body". The only difference is "his", which connects the second clause with the first.

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may have been part of the Peshitta from an early stage of the Peshitta translation (Schaff, 1956, vol. XIII, p. 351; cf. also Owens, 1988, pp. 9-10.)

## Chapter 21

There are some signs of influence by the LXX in this chapter of the Peshitta, particularly in vv. 6, 10 and 16. The LXX is utilised with circumspection and only to clarify the Hebrew. There are mostly simplifications in the other cases discussed further on (cf. vv. 12, 13, etc.). However, v. 16 may be a deliberate alteration for ethical reasons, while vv. 5 and 9 are possible intertextual harmonisations.

The Peshitta translates the meaning of the Hebrew in the first clause of v. 1 in the MT. The MT does not contain the preposition "like" (כִּי) in its text, but it is implied in the reading and generally translated accordingly: "Like watercourses is the king's heart in the hands of the Lord."<sup>1</sup> However, the Peshitta does read  $\Psi\text{K}$  at the beginning of the verse and the question is whether this rendition is copied from, or influenced by, the LXX. The LXX makes the first clause a comparison and thus has  $\delta\sigma\pi\epsilon\rho$  and  $\sigma\upsilon\tau\omega\varsigma$  in its text.<sup>2</sup> This means that the Peshitta is a more punctilious rendition of the Hebrew than the LXX as far as meaning is concerned. The Peshitta may have been partially influenced by the LXX reading, although it is still based on its *Vorlage* which concurred with the MT. It is more likely that the Peshitta reading is merely reflective of the style of the translator and based on the translator's own interpretation of its *Vorlage*. The Targum follows the Peshitta text exactly (it does have  $\text{ךי}$  at the beginning of the verse).

The Peshitta supplies to the two participles in v. 3 with a subject -  $\text{כי}$  ("who") - and adds the particle of comparison  $\text{מאשר}$  ("than") in the second clause to read: "He who does righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice". As is the case with v. 1, this translation should not be considered as an addition to the MT, since it gives only what is conveyed in the MT reading ( $\text{תעשה}$  is understood as a participle and "than" is inferred by the translator). The LXX text differs from the Peshitta<sup>3</sup> and no external influence on the Peshitta need be suspected. The Targum, once again, is an exact representation of the Peshitta reading.

V. 5 in the Peshitta reads "The thoughts of the elect are trustworthy, but those of the wicked inflict loss". This idea is a reflection of 12. 5, 15, 22 and 25, 16. 3 and 20. 18, which may have served as a reference for this translation, which was consequently harmonised accordingly. The LXX does not include this verse, but the

<sup>1</sup> New International Version.

<sup>2</sup> The exposition in *Midrash Mishle* reads: "Sowie du dieses Wasser, wenn du es in ein Gefäss thust (sic), nach allen Seiten hin, wohin du nur willst, richten (neigen) kannst, so ist auch das Herz von Fleisch, zur Regierung gelangt, in der Gottes, des Allerhöchsten."

<sup>3</sup>  $\theta\upsilon\sigma\iota\omega\nu$   $\alpha\lambda\mu\alpha$  (instead of  $\text{תעשה}$  -  $\text{כבדו}$  in the Peshitta) is indicative of Jewish influence and concurs with the exegesis in *Midrash Mishle* (p. 57) as well: "Wer Recht und Gerechtigkeit liebt, den sieht die Schrift so an als wenn er Brand- und Schlachtopfer vor ihm (vor Gott) dargebracht hätte."



Peshitta translator could have possessed a more complete Greek text containing this verse, which influenced the Syriac. This is perhaps too speculative and the Peshitta reading may simply have been the result of harmonisation with the above-mentioned verses.

V. 6 in the Peshitta renders *אֲזַרְזוֹתַי פָּעַל* as *ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ*. The Syriac rendition reads "produce that is laid up" instead of "the getting of treasures". This is probably a simplification with reference to the LXX interpretation - *ὁ ἐνεργῶν θησαυρίσματα*. Furthermore, the noun *ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ* ("ruin") is perhaps translated from *μῦταια* ("foolish"). The Peshitta translation, however, differs from the LXX in the sense that the Peshitta translator made his own interpretation of the Hebrew text in the second clause: "to ruin (*ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ*) they will be overthrown,<sup>4</sup> them that are seeking death" (*παγιδᾶς θανάτου* in the LXX - "death trap"). The Syriac appears to be a blend of both readings; *ܡܒܩܫܝܢܐ* reads *διδῶκει* in the LXX, while the Peshitta is also based on the Hebrew - "they that seek death" - *ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ ܠܡܘܬܐ = ܡܒܩܫܝܢܐ*. In spite of the possibility that the translator did not comprehend the Hebrew meaning, this verse seems to be a deliberate harmonisation with Prov. 9. 12 and 18 and 18. 8 and Prov. 21. 12, 16, etc., particularly in the light of *ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ*.<sup>5</sup> The Targum follows the Peshitta word for word.

The noun *ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ* reads *ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ* in v. 8 of the Peshitta. The Hebrew term was understood as meaning "stranger" by the Peshitta translator. The LXX differs from both versions. The Targum rendition of this word follows the Peshitta, i.e. *ܢܘܚܪܐܐܐ*.

The Peshitta translator omitted *ܘܒܝܬ ܗܗܘܐ* at the end of v. 9. The Hebrew clause is translated as *ܢܘܚܪܐܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ* at the end of Prov. 25. 24, which is identical with Prov. 21. 9 in the MT. This omission in v. 9 of the Peshitta does not concur with either the LXX or the Targum. The LXX reads *ὁ αἰψὸς κοινῶς* as the equivalent for *ܘܒܝܬ ܗܗܘܐ* in the MT.<sup>6</sup> The Peshitta translator may have found the addition superfluous in the context of the chapter, especially of v. 19, where the quarrelsome woman is also mentioned and where these two sentences are complements of, and perhaps identified with, each other. He possibly did not understand the meaning or connection of *ܘܒܝܬ ܗܗܘܐ* within the sentences either. It should be noted that *ܢܘܚܪܐܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ* is an interpretation of *ὁ αἰψὸς κοινῶς* in 25. 24 (in the sense of "share") and it was thus correctly inserted within the context of that particular chapter as opposed to this chapter. The term *ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ* is rendered as

<sup>4</sup> *ܐܘܪܘܪܐܝܢܐ* in the Peshitta means *ܢܘܪܗ* (Pu'al) - "thrust down."

<sup>5</sup> This spelling also means *Abbadon* - perdition. The translator's world view, wherein "Sheol" always plays a considerable part, seems to pervade this rendition of v. 6. Life after death and the reward according to one's deeds in the hereafter were important to the translator and the peculiar rendition of this verse is easily understood if this is kept in mind.

<sup>6</sup> The LXX *Vorlage* may have read *ܘܒܝܬ ܦܬܘܚܝ*.

פּוּמָּ (with לָּ it means "it is better to"), which is perhaps also due to influence by κρείσσον + inf. in the LXX.

V. 10 in the Peshitta seems to be an interpretation of the LXX and reads "The soul of the wicked will not be considered in the eyes of his neighbours". The LXX text reads ψυχή ἀσεβοῦς οὐκ ἐλεηθήσεται ("to find mercy") ὑπ' οὐδενὸς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. In both clauses עָרַב was perhaps taken as "neighbour", thus making one of them superfluous, and the Peshitta translator based his own reading on the LXX text. Another possibility is that the translator simply did not understand עָרַב and decided to base his own version on an interpretation of this sentence in the Greek text. The Targum follows the MT reading.

In v. 11 the term עָרַב<sup>7</sup> is rendered with a more neutral term - כַּבֵּד - with a view to simplification, as is the case in 9. 7 and 8, 13. 1, 14. 6, 15. 12, 22. 10 and 24. 9.

The term לֵב in v. 12 is rendered as לֵב in the Peshitta in order to read: "The righteous observes the heart of the wicked". This rendering of "heart" instead of "house" in the Peshitta was probably influenced by the LXX (καρδίας), although the translator could have derived this interpretation from the *Vorlage*, as it is indeed suitable within the context of the sentence and the book as a whole.

The addition in v. 13 is אֶל־אֱלֹהִים after "call" in the second clause. The MT lacks an object for the verb in the second clause to give an antithesis to "the poor" in the first clause. The whole Peshitta sentence reads "He who closes his ears so that he will not hear the poor, he will also call to the Lord and will not be answered". The Peshitta reads אֶל־אֱלֹהִים instead of אֶל־יְהוָה and may have been influenced by the LXX - μη ἐπακοῦσαι - due to the misunderstanding of אֶל־יְהוָה. The plus does not occur in the LXX and the Targum follows the Peshitta wording to a fault. The possibility that the plus was in the Peshitta *Vorlage* is quite strong, as the Targum text usually represents the elements of the Hebrew and its comparison with the Peshitta concerns semantics and interpretation rather than the pluses, which rarely occur in the Targum of Proverbs.

V. 16 in the MT states that those who forsake the path of understanding will rest in the assembly of the dead. Here אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכְּבוּ בְּקִבְרֵי רְפָאִים reads אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכְּבוּ בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים ("sons of the earth") in the Peshitta, while the LXX reads συναγωγῆ γιγάντων in the LXX. In Prov. 9. 18 אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכְּבוּ is translated aptly to read אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכְּבוּ. However, here in 21. 16 the Peshitta translator has purposely avoided the translation of the word קִבְרֵי. The translator did not use the LXX rendition either. Perhaps the term συναγωγῆ - and קִבְרֵי for that matter - already had a fixed connotation as a place of worship at the time of translation. Therefore, the translator could have regarded its mention as offensive, or at least susceptible to being insulting to the reader; hence this neutral translation.

<sup>7</sup> The LXX reads ζημιουμένου ἀκολάστου πανουργότερος γίνεται ὁ ἀκακος in the first clause.

V. 17 of the Peshitta translator followed the word order of the MT and not that of the LXX, but the translator still added א instead of "love" before "wine", which makes one occurrence of אֶתְּבֵן (it appears twice in the MT) unnecessary in the Peshitta, which reads "The poor man that loves (וְאֵתְּבֵן) feasting and wine and oil, will not be rich". The translation is his own interpretation of the Hebrew and should be considered an internal simplification that does not corrupt the meaning of the MT. The Targum reads רחמים twice (like the MT) and it also reads חסר ליה (like the Peshitta).

The verb בנהו (lacking in the MT and LXX) in v. 19 was added from v. 9, where a similar comparison is made. It is implied in the Hebrew text and does not upset or add to the meaning of the sentence.

The second clause of v. 27 reads "because in wickedness they come to him". This rendering is probably based on an adapted rendition of this phrase in the LXX, which reads καὶ γὰρ παρανόμως προσφέρουσιν αὐτῶς ("because they offer them wickedly"). The Targum also follows the Peshitta.

In v. 29<sup>b</sup> the Peshitta adds אַפְּסֵי after אֶתְּבֵן to read "The upright man establishes the ways of his soul" (or simply "his ways" like the MT - דְּרָכָיו ). This qualifies the "ways" that the good man establishes. This reading of "ways" was understood as a metaphor by the translator and the addition may have been added to avoid confusion with a literal road. Although אַפְּסֵי may have been influenced by the LXX, these two texts differ from each other and the Peshitta addition can be deduced from the MT. The Peshitta is closer to the MT than to the LXX (the whole second clause in the LXX reads ὁ δὲ εὐθῆς αὐτὸς συντελεῖ τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ). The LXX reads συντελεῖ, which means that its *Vorlage* could have read יָבִין instead of יָבִין as is the case in the Peshitta and the Targum.



## Chapter 22

The most important deviations are found in vv. 1, 3, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 19 and 26. Vv. 1, 3, 16 and 26 are probably harmonisations, while vv. 10, 11, 13, 15 and 19 are clarifications of which vv. 10, 11 and 13 were influenced by the LXX. The rest of the chapter is a very simple, although literal, translation of the MT. Judging by the nature of these deviations it seems highly probable that the Peshitta *Vorlage* hardly differed from the MT.

The Peshitta version of the first verse of this chapter represents all the elements of the Hebrew, although the Syriac translation differs from the MT in that נִבְחַר is rendered as ܢܘܚܪܐ. The verb נִבְחַר is generally translated as "to be chosen", but the Peshitta translator may have taken the verb simply as "will choose" and, since there is no subject, he may have thought of "name" as the subject. In such a case the reading would be illogical, not making sense at all. Therefore, ܢܘܚܪܐ is probably an interpretation of נִבְחַר and was influenced by ἀρετώτερον in the LXX, which reads ἀρετώτερον ὄνομα καλὸν ἢ πλοῦτος πολὺς, as well as by other occurrences in Proverbs, e.g. 3. 14, 8. 19 and 16. 16 - these are all comparisons and explain the rendering of ܢܘܚܪܐ. The Peshitta rendition should thus perhaps be regarded as a harmonisation with these other verses in Proverbs (i.e. 3. 14, 8. 19, etc.). The word καλὸν<sup>1</sup> in the LXX represents a plus and ἀγαθή is the equivalent of טוֹב of the MT. The Peshitta has ܟܠܘܬܐ and the Targum reads ܫܦܝܪ. In the Peshitta, however, ܟܠܘܬܐ is added at the beginning of the second clause to read as a comparison, like the first, while the Targum follows the MT word order substantially. Taking all the above-mentioned into account, there is no reason to believe that "good" also appeared in the Peshitta *Vorlage*, while the translation seems to have been subtly influenced by the LXX.

The plus in the Peshitta translation of v. 3, when compared with the MT, is represented by the object phrase of the verb ܟܠܘܬܐ and agrees to some extent with the LXX. The Peshitta reads "The prudent sees the evil being hit and violently punished, but the simpleton goes further and suffers". There are some elements that are reminiscent of Prov. 21. 11, but there is no clear reason for its insertion other than its possible occurrence in the Peshitta *Vorlage* as well. Alternatively, the translator may have decided on a part of the LXX reading as a variation to harmonise with 27. 12. Prov. 27. 12 is equivalent to 22. 3 and the second clause of v. 3 in the Peshitta actually agrees to the letter with the second clause of 27. 12 (the LXX has different readings of the second clauses of these two verses).

<sup>1</sup> There is hardly better evidence of Jewish influence in the LXX than this little adjective, καλὸν, because the whole exegesis of this verse in the *Midrash Mishle* (p. 57) is centered around it: "Unter טוב, gut ist nicht anderes als die Thora zu verstehen."

V. 10 in the Peshitta has three clauses of which the first two agree with the MT, the third agreeing mostly with the second clause of the LXX (the LXX has only two clauses, the first agreeing with the MT). The MT reads "Drive out a scoffer (כַּזֵּב in the Peshitta; cf. 21. 11), and strife will go out, and quarrelling and abuse will cease". The Peshitta translator added "so that when he sits in the assembly (בְּכִנְיָהוּ) he does not dishonour (יִשְׁכַּח) you". This agrees with the LXX, which reads *ὅταν γὰρ καθίσῃ ἐν συνεδρίῳ, πάντας ἀτιμᾷζει*. It is clear that the Peshitta translator has added the third clause from the LXX for some specific purpose(s). Firstly, the reference to the assembly (בְּכִנְיָהוּ) may indicate that the reader of the Peshitta text is familiar with it.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the addition also implies that the reader must have had experiences of some contention (יִשְׁכַּח) in some of these assemblies (or gatherings) that he, the reader, may have attended. Thirdly, this addition may stem from a socio-religious background shared by the translator and the reader of the text. Lastly, the addition may be a harmonisation with another verse, i.e. Prov. 26. 26. For the verb יִשְׁכַּח the LXX text reads the verb ἀτιμᾷζει. In the final instance, this additional clause could have been added to give an alternative to the MT rendition of the second clause for the sake of clarity, as is the case in the addition of Prov. 14. 9.

V. 11 in the Peshitta has כְּמַלְאָכָה as a plus compared to the MT. The Targum, which is usually quite literal, in comparison with the MT, also contains this addition in its text. The LXX text has κύριος and its verse generally interprets the MT text. All three versions present deviations when compared with one another. However, the Peshitta and the Targum are the closest to the MT reading. The Hebrew text is corrupt and the differences in the Peshitta probably stem from the translator's own interpretation. As a matter of fact, all three versions are interpretations of the Hebrew reading. The Targum, for instance, has equivalents for all the Hebrew words in the same order, except for אֱלֹהִים, which has no equivalent in the MT text. There is a possibility that the Peshitta *Vorlage* did contain an equivalent of the word יְהוָה in its text. The only alternative is that the translator inserted the word as a subject from the LXX with reference to the next verse, where Yahweh is the subject as well.

The plus in v. 13 is represented by נֶאֱמַר וְהַכְּזָבִים to read: "The sluggard, when sent, says: 'There is a lion on the street and death in the open places'". The Peshitta rendition is clearly an attempt to give more sense to the sentence by formulating it in such a way that the character of the sluggard comes to the fore. The sluggard is the central character in the verse and his feeble attempt at excusing himself from any strenuous activity is illuminated and clearly illustrated by the Syriac reading. This plus may be an interpretation of the Greek verb προφασίζεται (from the LXX), which is translated with "plead" in the sense of "allege by way of excuse"

<sup>2</sup> That this noun כְּמַלְאָכָה was understood as a single entity is illustrated by the rendition of "assembled congregation" as כְּמַלְאָכָה וְכְמַלְאָכָה - "the assembly and the congregation."



or "plead in excuse" (cf. Liddell and Scott, 1974, p. 1538). The decision by the translator to insert this interpretation may also have been influenced by Prov. 10. 26.<sup>3</sup>

In v. 15 the verb קשורה ("to be bound") is rendered as נפרה, probably in the Aphel sense of "to make to flutter."<sup>4</sup> The whole first clause thus reads "Folly makes the heart of the child flutter" instead of "Folly is bound to the heart of the child". The translator probably changed this verb deliberately for ethical reasons. Throughout this book "folly" is identified with the lawless, the adulteress and generally all that is perceived as evil. To identify "folly" with an innocent child may have been unacceptable to the translator. He wished to separate "folly" from "child" and wanted to avoid making the heart of the child a source of "folly". Thus he put the emphasis on the *effect* that folly has on a child.

V. 16 in the Peshitta has a better parallelism than the MT and the LXX, neither of which agrees completely with it. This parallelism reads "He who restrains the poor adds to his evil, and he who gives to the rich damages himself". The Peshitta translator may have been influenced by other verses in Proverbs as well, especially 28. 3, where the verb נדם also appears (cf. verse 22 of chapter 22 as well).

In verse 19 אף-אף was not translated in the Peshitta. It seems awkward in the Hebrew reading after the phrase "I have made them known to you today". Since the indirect object is obvious, the Peshitta translator may have considered the translation of אף-אף as superfluous and unnecessary. The LXX reading differs from that of the Peshitta, while the Targum follows the MT.

In v. 21 of the Peshitta, the words "admonition and knowledge" were inserted from v. 22 and this reading does not upset the meaning of vv. 20 and 21, which are logically connected.

In v. 25 the Hebrew term אף-אף was rendered as נבטת ("his laws") in the Peshitta to read "lest you learn his laws". It is difficult to determine the reason behind this rendition. However, the Peshitta translator may have interpreted "his ways" in the sense of "custom".

V. 26 was definitely influenced by the LXX rendition to read "Do not give yourself as surety because you are revering a countenance" (the LXX reads μη δίδου σεαυτον εις εγγυητη αλσχυνομενος προσωπου). This alteration should perhaps also be judged in the light of other verses where surety is indeed

<sup>3</sup> Compare also 22. 13 with 26. 13, where the same addition occurs. The words בן העצל לשלחיו, which occur in 10. 26 in the MT, are translated differently by the Peshitta translator, who rather chose to follow the LXX text: "thus injures the lawlessness them who practise it."

<sup>4</sup> Another possibility is that the translator interpreted the verb קשורה as stemming from the root שור, which means "to break" or "to saw." The verb פיר (Pa'el.) means "to break up." The letter ק was then either rendered or understood as כ.



an issue, i.e. Prov. 6. 1, 11. 15, 17. 18, 20. 16 and 27. 13, and particularly where it is associated with baptism, which may have been in the mind of the translator.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The importance of carefully considering for whom one is standing sponsor at the baptism of a particular individual seems to be the motivation behind this verse.

## Chapter 23

Most of the deviations in this chapter are corrections of anomalous readings (v. 4); difficult Hebrew text (v. 7) and harmonisation (vv. 5 and 6). Vv. 6 and 25 are clarifications of the Hebrew to provide a simpler and clearer reading. V. 30 contains a plus, which is discussed further on in this chapter.

The second clause of the first verse of the Peshitta is perhaps based on the LXX reading; it reads "Consider what is placed before thee". The verb **מנח** was influenced by **παρατιθέμενά σοι**. The Peshitta reads **מנהכא**, which is closer to the MT's **לפניך** than to **σοι** in the LXX. The Targum follows the Peshitta - **קדמך**. V. 2<sup>a</sup> is introduced by **כי** in the Peshitta to connect it with the previous verse and serves as a causative clause - "so that you do not put a knife in your mouth". The second clause resumes: "If there is a man taking a breath (v. 3), do not desire his food, for his food is deceptive food". The Peshitta interpretation of the first three verses in the Hebrew seems to deal with ordinary table manners.

The Targum was influenced by the Peshitta in its version of v. 4 as well. The LXX agrees with the MT and the Peshitta differs from both readings: "But depart from *it* (i.e. "riches") with wisdom" instead of "Desist from *your* wisdom". The Hebrew meaning perhaps did not seem very sensible to the Peshitta translator, hence his own interpretation, which is clearly in complete agreement with the thoughts of Proverbs. Therefore, it can be regarded as a harmonisation. As a matter of fact, the MT reading may even be interpreted as being thoroughly contradictory to everything that Proverbs tries to convey and the Peshitta rendering is a clarification as well.

The first clause of v. 5 in the Peshitta is based on the LXX reading, with some deviation: "If you set your eye on it (wealth), it will not be clear to you" (**אבא דבא = φανεῖται** instead of **אבא**). The rest of the Peshitta rendering follows the Hebrew, while the Greek differs substantially, particularly in the third clause - **השמים = εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν τοῦ προεστηκότος αὐτοῦ**<sup>1</sup> (**אבא** in the Peshitta). Both versions may be interpretations of the MT text, which is not altogether clear in its relation with the next clause. The Peshitta translator made use of the LXX to solve this difficulty and his version reads "For if you set your eye on it, it will not be clear to you, because it will make wings for itself, like an eagle, and fly towards heaven". The Targum also follows the Peshitta text.

V. 6 in the MT reads "Do not eat the bread of the evil eye (**עַיִן רָעָה**), do not desire his delicacies". The term "evil eye" in this instance is generally considered by modern translators to be someone who is stingy. The LXX

<sup>1</sup> About this rendering De Lagarde (1863, p. 74) writes succinctly: "wem das die Midraschnatur der Übersetzung nicht klar macht, dem ist nicht zu helfen." This, of course, applies only to the LXX and not to the Peshitta reading.

interprets this to mean "a sorcerer"<sup>2</sup> (who can possess an evil eye) or slanderer. The Peshitta has **ܐܢܝܢܐ** (an envious or gluttonous person), which may be derived from the LXX text. In the second clause the Peshitta reads "food" (**βρωμάτων**) instead of "delicacies" as in the MT. The Peshitta translator rendered the sentence simpler than the Hebrew without sacrificing the general meaning of the MT text. He probably did not have any other religious motive for his rendition.

V. 7<sup>a</sup> of the Peshitta agrees entirely with the LXX as opposed to the MT, but departs from the LXX in the next two clauses, leaning towards the MT in the second and agreeing with the MT in the third, to read: "For in like manner is a man who swallows a bristle. Thus you eat and drink with him, but his heart is not with you". The first clause of the Hebrew was unintelligible to the Peshitta translator and he thus consulted the LXX instead.

V. 18 in the Peshitta was influenced by the LXX. The Hebrew clause in this verse, **כִּי אִם-יִשָּׁשׁ אֶת-רֵיחֵהּ**, reads **ܐܢܝܢܐ ܐܢܝܢܐ ܐܢܝܢܐ = ἔσται σοι ἔκγονα**. The LXX was employed in the Peshitta to clarify an uncomfortable, but perhaps not too intelligible, reading. The LXX has a plus at the beginning of v. 18 that does not appear in the Peshitta, which seems to indicate that the translator only consulted the LXX about these particular Hebrew words that appeared in his *Vorlage* as well.

V. 19 reads **דְּבַר־יְהוָה** ("my opinion") instead of **בְּדַרְכֵי** ("on the way") to harmonise with other occurrences of this type of exhortation where the teacher always admonishes the pupil to listen to his (the teacher's) words, understanding, teaching, etc., (e.g. Prov. 3. 1, 4. 4 to 11, 7.1, 2, etc.). This alteration was not caused by an external influence. The LXX and the Targum follow the MT.

In v. 21 the Peshitta translator has added **ܐܢܝܢܐ** after "drunkard" and **ܐܢܝܢܐ** after "glutton" from the previous verse simply to retain the connection with v. 20. There is no external influence involved in this case.

The subject "father" in the first clause of v. 24 is repeated in the second clause. The Peshitta text reads "The father of the righteous will rejoice and exult, and the wise will beget and his father will rejoice in him". This translation can be deduced from the Hebrew text, except for "father", which is repeated for the sake of clarity (cf. Prov. 6. 31). There is thus no reason to suspect any external influence as far as this particular verse is concerned and the LXX does not agree with the Peshitta either. This sentence should not be considered independently of v. 25, to which it is logically connected.

V. 25 in the Peshitta reads "Let your father and mother rejoice in you, and she who bore you will rejoice". The Peshitta added **ܐܢܝܢܐ** after "rejoice". It is clear that the whole moral tone of vv. 24 and 25 is set by the wish to urge the son to be wise. From the interdependence of the two verses it is equally clear that the wise son will be

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Urbach (1979, pp. 280, 281), where both are mentioned in connection with Providence and the sorcerer is also subjected to the decree of heaven. *Pirke Aboth* 5. 13 mentions four classes of the "evil-eyed."



rewarded with the approval of those who bore him, particularly when he himself becomes a father. V. 25, however, does reveal some influence by the LXX - ἐπὶ σοί = כַּב. The thoughts contained in the Peshitta reading are the translator's and the LXX is merely an aid in the interpretation of the Hebrew *Vorlage*.

The first clause of v. 28 was influenced by the LXX. The MT reading may have been difficult, thus motivating the Peshitta translator to make use of the LXX. The Peshitta is not a direct translation of the LXX, but appears to be some adaptation that is also reminiscent of other phrases in the book of Proverbs. The Peshitta rendition thus harmonises with other verses in the book that carry the same thoughts as v. 28. The Greek word συντόμως ("shortly") is rendered as כַּד עַל פֶּא ("suddenly") and this in turn is a reminder of Prov. 1. 26, where "destruction" is characterised as being "sudden". It represents a plus in this case.

In v. 29 the Peshitta reads כַּד עַל פֶּא לַדְּנִי for הַיֵּשׁ לְמִי לְנִי ("who has complaining?"), while the LXX reads τίνι ἀηδίαί. The root of הַיֵּשׁ means primarily "to ponder", which by implication means to meditate, pray, communicate, etc. Therefore, the Peshitta translator may have regarded this term as too positive, or at least neutral, within the context of this verse. Hence, the translator's own rendering of the word and, although it is probably too general as well, it aptly contains in its semantic field the concept of "misfortune". In summary, since the Peshitta text can be deduced from the MT, no external influence need be suspected in this case.

V. 30 in the Peshitta contains a plus, which has some similarities with the Greek text; particularly with the first two clauses of v. 31 in the LXX.<sup>3</sup> This, in turn, represents a plus in comparison with the MT (and the Peshitta for that matter). V. 30 in the Peshitta commences with the particle כַּד in order to connect the sentence with v. 29 as a reply to the questions put forward in that verse. The LXX introduces v. 30 with οὐ and repeats it in the second clause; the answer to the questions posed in v. 29 is thus given by rhetorical questions. The Peshitta rendering of the clauses is therefore closer to the MT in this regard.

The plus in v. 30 of the Peshitta reads "Do not be drunk with wine, but speak with righteous men, walking and discussing with them". The plus in this instance is reminiscent of Prov. 13. 20, which states that "he who walks with the wise will become wise" and of Prov. 20. 1 in the Peshitta, which says that "everyone who indulges in it (strong drink) will not be wise". Thus the translator may have been motivated to insert these clauses from the LXX, because their contents agree with the thoughts expressed elsewhere in the Peshitta. He thus afforded himself the licence on the grounds of their theological soundness, coupled with the perceived

<sup>3</sup> The LXX text of the first two clauses of v. 31 reads: μή μεθύσκεσθε οἶνω, ἀλλὰ ὁμιλεῖτε ἀνθρώποις δικαίοις καὶ ὁμιλεῖτε ἐν περιπάτοις. The addition in the Peshitta reads: כַּד עַל פֶּא לַדְּנִי כַּד עַל פֶּא לַדְּנִי. כַּד עַל פֶּא לַדְּנִי כַּד עַל פֶּא לַדְּנִי. כַּד עַל פֶּא לַדְּנִי כַּד עַל פֶּא לַדְּנִי.

authority of his other source, namely the LXX.<sup>4</sup> In the Targum only the elements of the MT are translated, although its translator's lexical choices agree with the Peshitta reading "house of wine" instead of  $\text{בֵּית־יַיִן}$  (the LXX reads  $\text{ποῦ πότοι γίνονται}$  - "where the drinking is"). In the last instance, the addition in the Peshitta serves to enhance the seriousness and the ethical considerations concerning the value of wisdom for the pupil as opposed to the pitfalls of overindulging.

The last phrase in the MT reads  $\text{בְּמִשְׁכָּבֵי־שֵׁנִים}$ . The Peshitta reads  $\text{כְּדֹלֵבִים}$ . The Peshitta translator probably understood the Hebrew term "to walk about" in one of the meanings included in the semantic field of the Greek verb  $\text{περιπατήσεις}$ , i.e. "to converse with during walking" (cf. Liddel and Scott, 1974, p. 551). The Hebrew noun in this phrase was probably understood by the translator as "upright" or "straight" ( $\text{יָשָׁר}$ ).

The insertion of  $\text{כִּי־יָשָׁר}$  in v. 32 serves to connect this verse with the previous one in order to maintain the subject within the context of the whole pericope (from vv. 29 to 35).

The Hebrew text of v. 34 is corrupt and the last word,  $\text{לִמָּסָה}$ , which is usually translated as "mast", is an uncertain reading. The Peshitta reads "like a sailor in a great storm". This rendition is influenced by the LXX reading -  $\text{καὶ ὡς περ κυβερνήτης ἐν πολλῷ κλύδωνι}$ .

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<sup>4</sup> Depending on the dating of the Peshitta text, a further motivation for this insertion is perhaps to be found in the strict code of discipline that existed in the schools of Nisibis and Edessa, where the students were forbidden to frequent taverns or outdoor wine parties. They were not allowed to read secular books and were even discouraged from crossing the frontiers into the Byzantine empire (Segal, 1970, pp. 150-151).

## Chapter 24

This chapter of Proverbs in the Peshitta contains very few deviations from the MT. Some verses do seem to have been influenced by the LXX, but only with regard to the meaning of the Hebrew, which the Peshitta translator apparently sometimes found difficult to grasp. In v. 4 the LXX was used to strengthen a comparison. In v. 10 the influence of the LXX was found necessary to clarify a corrupt Hebrew reading. In v. 11 one particle in the LXX offers a more meaningful alternative to the Hebrew. Vv. 12 and 14 also reveal some limited influence by the LXX.

For the term  $\text{רָצַח}$  ("violence") in v. 2 of the MT, the Peshitta translator used  $\text{ܩܘܘܠܘܢܐ}$ . Although the translator could have used  $\text{ψεῦδη}$  in the LXX, he probably decided to simplify the reading by his own interpretation.

The Peshitta translator added a  $\text{ܢ}$  before  $\text{ܩܘܘܠܘܢܐ}$  in v. 4 to read "and magnificence and delight" instead of "magnificent delights" ( $\text{ܩܘܘܠܘܢܐ ܩܘܘܠܘܢܐ}$  in the MT). He may have understood the Hebrew to mean just that or he may have done it on purpose to stress the beneficence of knowledge to a house. The deviation does not seem to be initiated by external influence (the LXX agrees with the MT).

V. 5 in the MT text perhaps had a dubious reading for the Peshitta translator, while the LXX gives a very good comparison between the wise and the strong. The LXX interpretation seems to have influenced the Syriac translation in this instance -  $\text{κρεῖσσων} = \text{ܩܘܘܠܘܢܐ}$ ,  $\text{ισχυροῦ} = \text{ܩܘܘܠܘܢܐ}$  (instead of  $\text{ܩܘܘܠܘܢܐ}$ ) and  $\text{γεωργίου μεγάλου} = \text{ܩܘܘܠܘܢܐ}$ . The Targum is also closer to the Peshitta (and LXX) than to the MT.

The rendition of  $\text{לֵךְ}$  in v. 9 should be compared with 21. 11 (cf. also 13. 1, 14. 6, 15. 12, etc.).

V. 10 in the Peshitta has, with the exception of "day of affliction" very little in common with the MT and the LXX texts. The LXX also has a different reading.<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew text is corrupt and the Peshitta translator, not agreeing with the Greek text, probably decided to emend the Hebrew *Vorlage* as best he could. Here, the only connection with the LXX as viewed from the Peshitta is the word  $\text{ܩܘܘܠܘܢܐ}$ , which has  $\text{κακῆ}$  in common with it, and "day of oppression". The Targum follows the MT. The Peshitta text reads "Evil will lead the unjust in the day of oppression."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The LXX reads from vv. 9<sup>b</sup> to 10: "Uncleanness will be stained for the man of plague in the evil day and in the day of sorrow until he leaves."

<sup>2</sup> The verse can also read: "Evil will lead the unjust in the day of distress." It may be a presumptuous claim, but the Peshitta translation may possibly be suggestive of the fate of the unjust upon going to Sheol. Evidence of this is found in the sayings of sages concerning the role of angels. R. Eleazar said: "...when a wicked man perishes from the world three groups of Destroying Angels go forth to meet him..." R.



The Peshitta shows some influence by the LXX in the second clause of v. 11. The particle  $\text{ܕܢ}$  reads  $\text{ܕܠ} = \mu\eta$ . The Targum has a lot in common with the Peshitta by way of word order and word choice, although  $\text{ܕܢ}$  is left untranslated. The Peshitta's translator rendered his interpretation more softly and moralistically than the MT (and the LXX) as well; "slaughter" is rendered as "those caught for slaughter" and "spare" ( $\text{φείσῃ}$  in the LXX as in the MT) reads "pity". He understood his Hebrew *Vorlage* to mean that those who committed "murder" should be saved as they (in the first clause) are led to death. The translator thus preferred the LXX interpretation and adapted this to state two opposites in the clauses of this verse. His translation implies that the innocent should be saved from death, but those guilty of murder should not be pitied. The role of the reader of the text in the second clause is also not one of judgement either, but rather more objectively that of a nonparticipating witness.

V. 12 in the Peshitta reads "If you say: 'I do not know', know that God searches the meaning of the heart. He who keeps your soul, He knows, He requites man according to his deeds". The Peshitta translation is based on the LXX in this instance. There are some deviations that tend to be closer to the Hebrew. However,  $\text{πᾶσιν}$  and  $\text{πάντα}$  in the third clause are not translated and the Peshitta actually contains every element of the MT. Generally, it seems that the Peshitta made use of the LXX rendering primarily for the sake of  $\text{κύριος}$  (the Peshitta interpreted it as  $\text{ܕܡܠܟ}$ ), which seems to be the subject that is lacking, although it is implied, in the MT text. The Targum has almost an exact replica of the Peshitta reading; only  $\text{ܕܐ}$  is omitted. Incidentally, the imperative  $\text{ܕܐ}$  in the Peshitta, which seems to be the equivalent element for  $\text{הַ$  in the MT, was probably influenced by  $\text{γλυωσκε}$  in the LXX in the second clause of this verse.

V. 14 in the Peshitta, introduced by  $\text{ܐܕܗܘܐ}$ , was not necessarily influenced by  $\text{οὕτως}$  of the LXX (the meaning of  $\text{כֵּן}$  is quite clear). The particle  $\text{ܐܕܗܘܐ}$  was added by the translator himself to connect this comparison with the previous verse (cf. also v. 24).

In v. 21 the noun  $\text{מֶלֶךְ}$  was changed to  $\text{ܕܡܠܟܐ}$  ("to rule"), because the translator did not want the king to be regarded as of equal stature with the Lord. The fear of the Lord is paramount, and if the Lord is revered, He alone will rule.

In v. 24  $\text{ܕܐܗܘܐ}$  is inserted by the Peshitta translator to establish a connection with the previous verse. This is in accordance with the style of translation.

In v. 29 the Peshitta translator reversed the clauses to read: "Do not say: 'I will do to him, as he has done unto me'". This rendition does not alter the meaning of the Hebrew and perhaps no external influence need be suspected. The Peshitta reading does form a better synthetic parallelism as well.

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Johanan said that the angels of indignation do the Lord's work when He sends them "to destroy the whole earth" (Is. xiii. 5) (Urbach, 1975, p. 161).

V. 34 is influenced by Prov. 6. 11 to harmonise with it and no external influence need to be suspected in this verse.

## Chapter 25

There are two significant pluses in this chapter in vv. 20 and 22, which both reveal influence by the LXX. The LXX also influenced lesser alterations (cf. vv. 4, 7, 12, 13, etc.), which all serves to simplify and enhance a Hebrew reading that is unintelligible at times. In general, this chapter is relatively literal.

V. 1 in the Peshitta seems like a blend of the LXX and the MT, with some simplification by the translator himself. Firstly, the Peshitta reads **וְהוֹדִיעַ אֶת הַמִּשְׁלֵי** instead of **וְהוֹדִיעַ אֶת הַמִּשְׁלֵי** in the MT. This is comparable with **παιδεῖται** ("teaching") in the LXX. Then the Peshitta adds an adjective, **בְּתוֹמָה** ("profound"), which is perhaps an interpretation of **διδάκτριτοι** ("undistinguishable") in the LXX. The verb **הִעֲתִיקוּ** (**ἔξεγραψαντο** in the LXX) means to "copy" or "transcribe". The Peshitta translator used a more neutral word, i.e. **כָּתַב** ("to write"), instead. The choice of "to write" may be due to a misunderstanding of its meaning in both the other texts, or the translator decided not to use the verb "to copy" so as not to put the authenticity of the book in doubt. In the final analysis, one can say that the Peshitta's translator consulted the LXX text for his own rendition of the *Vorlage*. The Targum follows the Peshitta text, except for "Solomon", which is left out altogether.

In v. 4 the MT reads **וְיָצָא לְצִרְיָה קֵלִי**, while the Peshitta has **וְיָצָא מִן הַכֵּל נָקִי** ("the vessel will come out clean"). This rendition in the Peshitta may have been slightly influenced by the LXX interpretation - **καὶ καθαρισθήσεται καθαρὸν ἅπαν** ("and it will be cleaned completely spotless"). The Peshitta reading is still based on its Hebrew *Vorlage*, since it reads more closely to the Hebrew than the Greek. It is only **לְצִרְיָה** that was not understood by the Peshitta translator.

At the end of v. 7 **וְהוֹדִיעַ** was inserted from the LXX. This insertion is consistent with the style of the translator whereby the verses are not isolated, but considered part of a larger context. In this case **וְהוֹדִיעַ** serves as a logical connection between vv. 7 and 8.

The second clause of v. 10 in the Peshitta differs from the MT and the LXX (which has an addition). The MT reads "and your indiscretion does not pass away". The whole sentence in the Peshitta reads "So that the one who hears does not put you to shame, and many will take heed of you". The Peshitta translation may be an interpretation of the Hebrew in order to establish a better connection with the preceding clause and v. 9. The whole intention of the Peshitta translator seems to be that, if one gives away a secret to a stranger, everybody will eventually take note of one's unreliability.

The term **עַל-אֶפְתָּיִי** at the end of v. 11 is not represented in the Peshitta. It is also lacking in the LXX, which reads **οὕτως ἐλεῖν λόγον**. Although the Greek text could have been influential in the rendering of the



Syriac translation, the Peshitta translator did not translate **οὕτως** at all. Perhaps he simply followed his *Vorlage*, which did not contain the equivalent of the omission in the Peshitta.

In v. 12 "carved ornament" is rendered as "good sardonius" (**ܟܘܕܝܢܝܘܨ**) in the Peshitta. The Hebrew may have been unclear to the translator, **סרדנין** being a rare combination. The LXX reads **σάρδιον πολυτελές** ("costly sardion stone") and definitely influenced the Peshitta rendition.

In v. 13 **ܟܘܘܢܐ** ("heat") was inserted from **καυμα** in the LXX as an object of **ܕܘܦܢܐ** ("cooling"), the whole of the Peshitta wording being a paraphrase of the rare Hebrew word **צנה**. The Targum follows the MT.

V. 20 has a long plus, which was influenced by the LXX text as well. The context of the MT text is not intelligible and the connection between the clauses is not clear: "He who takes away a garment on a cold day, vinegar on soda, he who sings songs to a troubled heart". The Peshitta translation reads "He who takes a garment away *from his friend* on a cold day, he is like one who pours vinegar on a string<sup>1</sup> and punishes an aching heart, like a maggot on a garment and a worm on wood, so is distress molesting the heart of man". The first clause of the Peshitta text agrees substantially with the MT, except for the phrase "from his friend". The rest of the verse is substantially copied from the Greek text (although "sympathise" is rendered as "punish" instead, perhaps interpreted from the Greek).

There may be some identification of the Peshitta reading of v. 20 with 12. 4, where a bad wife causes much pain and grief to her husband; she is also compared with "rot in his bones".<sup>2</sup> The noun **ܟܘܘܢܐ**, which appears in 14. 30 and which is mentioned in the discussion of 12. 4, should be noted.

V. 22 in the Peshitta reads "when you do this to him" as an introductory clause instead of **כִּי** in the MT. This insertion concurs largely with the LXX - **τοῦτο γὰρ ποιῶν ἀνθρακας**. It is clear that the Peshitta has **ܟܘܘܢܐ** in addition to the LXX reading in order to clarify the sentence further in the context of v. 21. This plus, as a conditional clause, serves to connect vv. 21 and 22 logically and prevents the possible literal interpretation by

<sup>1</sup> The word **ܟܘܕܝܢܝܘܨ** is either a "string" or a "sinew" (Payne Smith, 1967, p. 200). The LXX reads **ἔλακει** ("wound"), which is more apt in the context. The Hebrew **סודא** is a soda used for cleaning purposes and the mixing of vinegar with soda results in the effects of both being eliminated. Thus the portrayal of pain caused by this particular selfish conduct towards the neighbour or friend is not conveyed. The Peshitta *Vorlage* may have been unclear or may have read **יתר** instead (thus being taken in its Syriac meaning). The translator could have made a reading error as well; **ܟܘܕܝܢܝܘܨ** looks much like **ܟܘܕܝܢܝܘܨ** and means "nitre" (**νιτρον** in Greek). In the last instance the Peshitta translator may have settled for a compromisingly neutral rendering, which is also typical of his style of translating difficult readings in Proverbs (cf. Prov. 8. 19, 11. 27, 26. 3, etc.).

<sup>2</sup> This identification is linked with the references to "worm" and "garment", both of which are appropriate and illuminating as metaphors in the mind of the reader, who is naturally familiar with them (cf. the footnote to 12. 4).

the reader of the first clause of v. 22, as if the coals is another object to be given to the enemy, possibly as a kind of afterthought. There may be an avoidance of the justification of any vengeful inclination. Finally, with the above-mentioned in mind, this plus may have been motivated by reverence for the Lord. The Lord will not reward someone who pours burning coals on an enemy's head. In fact, this clause at the beginning of v. 22 prevents any such notion from entering the reader's mind.

The words כִּי וְכִי in v. 25 and כִּי־כִּי may have been influenced by ὡσπερ and οὕτως in the LXX. These additions render the sentence a comparison, which is implied in the Hebrew. The same argument applies to vv. 26 and 28. However, there are numerous comparisons from vv. 23 to 26. 3, many of which are implied in the Hebrew. The LXX does not contain comparisons in all the verses in which the Peshitta does, viz. in v. 23 the Peshitta reads וְכִי and כִּי־כִּי, which have no equivalent in the Peshitta; in 26. 3 the LXX reads ὡσπερ and οὕτως, but the Peshitta has no equivalent here. One has to concede that the Peshitta translator may have been influenced by the LXX, although he could have deduced these meanings from his Hebrew *Vorlage*.

## Chapter 26

The translator of the Peshitta had to contend with difficult, corrupt and rare Hebrew words and phrases in this chapter. The influence of the LXX in the correction of some of the readings is unmistakable, particularly in vv. 5, 7, 10, 19 and 28. There are some harmonisations as well - in vv. 18 and 22. In general the translator remained true to the Hebrew as far as was possible within his technical ability and the translation technique that he employed to give a simple and clear translation.

V. 2 altered to read: "Like a bird and a winged creature that flies in the air, thus is an empty curse wandering". Since the words usually translated as "sparrow" and "swallow" are not certain, the Peshitta seems to be giving a rather neutral translation. The word  $\text{למנו} (\text{למנו})$  ("wandering") at the end of the sentence may have been inserted from the first clause in the MT, where  $\text{לנו} (\text{לנו})$  is read instead of "flies". There seems to have been no external influence on the Peshitta reading; the whole sentence can be based on the Hebrew.

The Peshitta reads "Speak to a fool according to *your wisdom*, so that he does not think of himself as wise" in v. 5. The MT reads  $\text{כפולתו} (\text{כפולתו})$  ("according to his folly"), as is the case in v. 4. The Peshitta rendering of v. 5 establishes an antithesis with v. 4, which in turn reads "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you become like him". The translator may have considered it contrary to his ethics to tell the pupil in one instance not to answer the fool according to his folly and in the very next verse to propose the exact opposite. The LXX agrees with the MT in this regard. The Targum follows the Peshitta in vv. 4 and 5, even as regards the word choice -  $\text{בכמותך} = \text{עבדך} (\text{עבדך})$ .

Although the LXX reads  $\text{σῦνδωσ} (\text{σῦνδωσ})$  in v. 3,  $\text{מבט} (\text{מבט})$  may have been inserted from v. 2 where the Peshitta reads  $\text{מבט} (\text{מבט})$  for  $\text{בן} (\text{בן})$ . In fact, the translator may have derived it from the whole pericope starting with Prov. 25. 23 in order to harmonise the readings.

The interpretation of v.7 reveals hardly any influence by the LXX ( $\text{ק} = \text{εκ}$ ). The Peshitta reads "If you give walking to the lame, you will accept the word from the mouth of a fool". The two verbs "give" and "take" establish an antithesis in the sentence to form a logical comparison between the two clauses. The parallelism has a connection with v. 6 as well, i.e. the "cutting off the foot" and the "sending off the fool with a message".

The Hebrew text of v. 10 is difficult -  $\text{רב מחולל לכל ושקר קטיל ושקר עבדים} (\text{רב מחולל לכל ושקר קטיל ושקר עבדים})$ . The Peshitta translator utilised the LXX to interpret the first clause, while the second clause in the MT is simplified to read: "The flesh of a fool suffers much and the drunkard breaks an oath". This reading puts v. 10 well into the general context of the preceding verses, whereas the MT sentence stands isolated from the rest of the paragraph. This connection between verses and chapters is always considered by the Peshitta translator.



V. 13 in the Peshitta has "when he is sent" after "the sluggard says". This insertion should be compared with 22: 13, which has a similar reading. The word "lion" was repeated to simplify the reading (the MT has "roaring beast" and "lion"). This verse, like 22. 13, is based on Prov. 10.26. Although the LXX reads **ἀποστελλόμενος** here in v. 13, it lacks "when he is sent" in 10.26 and the Peshitta rendition of v. 13 should perhaps be regarded primarily as a harmonisation with 10. 26.

Although the Peshitta translator may have consulted the Greek in his rendition of **κῆρ** and **κῶπ** in v. 14, he did not insert the equivalent of **ὥσπερ** in v. 17. This may also be due to the translator's own interpretation in this case, since the comparison is implied in the MT.

The Peshitta was influenced by the LXX in v. 15, where "in the dish" (**תַּחֲזִצָּב**) reads "in his bosom" (**תַּחֲזִצָּב**) = **ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ αὐτοῦ**. The Hebrew may have been unclear to the translator of the Peshitta and the LXX has a sensible reading, which the Peshitta translator obviously followed.

V. 18 is connected with v. 19 and reads "Like the boastful kind who shoots words, and like a sharp, deadly arrow" and then it continues "thus..." in v. 19. This may be the translator's own interpretation, because **ὥσπερ** appears only in the first clause of the LXX. Although "words" may have been influenced by **λόγους** in the LXX, in the Peshitta **τῷ λόγῳ** is lacking in the second clause.

V. 19 has "when he understands him" as an insertion after "deceives his brother". This plus is definitely based on the LXX, which has the same reading in the second clause - **ὅταν δὲ φωραθῶσιν, λέγουσιν ὅτι Παύλων ἔπραξα**. The Targum follows the MT text.

V. 22 reads "The words of a contentious person cause strife and go down to the inner parts of the heart". The verse differs slightly from the Hebrew. The first clause harmonises and concurs with v. 21<sup>b</sup> and the second reads "inner chambers of the heart" instead of **לְבָבוֹת הַלֵּב** to concur with "evil heart" in v. 23. In the MT Prov. 26. 22 corresponds with 18. 8, while in the Peshitta both renderings are altered to suit their own particular contexts.

V. 28 is also influenced by the LXX - **μισεῖ ἀλήθειαν** = **κῶπ** **κῶπ**. The MT reads "A false tongue hates its afflicted ones". The meaning of this is unclear and the translator preferred the LXX reading, which makes more sense.

## Chapter 27

The Peshitta has simplifications in this chapter that were influenced by the LXX (vv. 11, 14, 16, 19 and 24). Some difficult Hebrew readings were also resolved with the utilisation of the LXX (cf. vv. 21 and 22), although the LXX is reinterpreted to suit the context. There are some harmonisations as well (vv. 6 and 9).

In the first verse of this chapter, the second occurrence of  $\text{וְיָ}$  is not translated by the Peshitta translator. The translator may have found it superfluous to repeat the word from the first clause. The LXX reads  $\alpha\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\nu$  and  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\omicron\theta\sigma\alpha$  in the two clauses, respectively.

In v. 6 the Hebrew word  $\text{וְנִתְּרוֹן}$  is unclear and is mostly translated as "profuse", "many", "deceitful", "bad", etc. The LXX reads  $\eta$   $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$  ("than willingness"), turning the whole verse into a comparison. The Peshitta's translator simplified the sentence by excluding  $\text{וְנִתְּרוֹן}$  and harmonised it with the previous verse. Together they read: "Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Better are the blows of a friend than the kisses of an enemy". It may be that the LXX influenced the Peshitta in as much as its rendition is also a comparison, but it is more reasonable to assume that the Peshitta translator simply solved the difficulty by resorting to the context of the text and rendering the Syriac more simply, connecting it logically with v. 5.

V. 9 is also a comparison and the same argument may apply here as is the case in v. 6. The second clause of this verse has a dubious reading and the translator solved this problem by reinterpreting the Hebrew so that the comparison is logical and in context. The second clause in the MT reads  $\text{וַיִּתֵּן קָרְטָם וְרִיחַן מְעַצְתֵּן נַפְשָׁם}$ , which the Peshitta translator followed so that the whole verse reads: "As oil and perfume gladden the heart, so is one who sweetens his friend with his advice". This is a sensible comparison as opposed to the isolated reading in the MT - and no external influence played any part in it (the LXX has a different reading).

V. 11 in the Peshitta reads "and the reproach of the one who scorns me will cease". The Peshitta was influenced by the LXX -  $\kappa\alpha\iota$   $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\rho\epsilon\psi\omicron\nu$   $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron$   $\sigma\omicron\upsilon$   $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\nu\epsilon\iota\delta\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$   $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  ("and the reproachful word will turn back from you"). The Peshitta reads more closely to the MT still. It is possible that the translator did not understand the word  $\text{וְרִיחַן}$  (the occurrences in 14. 31 and 17. 5 also have alternative readings). The Peshitta translator changed the LXX interpretation to what he considered more appropriate in the social context of this sentence. The son should obey and become wise so that the father should not be an object of scorn any longer. In other words, the extent to which a son reveals wisdom is a reflection on the parental responsibility and ability of the father and any reproach will come to the father and not to the son (as the LXX has it) if he fails to teach the son. The translator understood this sentence to mean that the son is very wise and that the father exhorts him to become prudent; his prudence will assuage his father's concern and will make his father happy, because the scorning will cease.

The second clause of v. 14 in the LXX may have influenced the Peshitta translation. The Peshitta text of v. 14 reads "One who blesses his friend with flattery in a loud voice, will not be separated from one who curses". In the first clause "with flattery" stands in the place of "in the early morning" of the MT text, which is a unique reading, while the LXX reads only τὸ πρῶτῳ instead. The second clause in the LXX reads καταρωμένου οὐδὲν διαφέρειν δόξει.

The Peshitta translator also made use of the LXX in v. 16. The MT text is difficult and there is an improbable connection between the two clauses. The Peshitta reads "The north wind is severe, and is called by the name of the right". The LXX text has: βορέας σκληρὸς ἀνεμος, ὀνόματι δὲ ἐπιδέξιος καλεῖται. The Peshitta does not read ἐπιδέξιος as "to the right" or "auspiciously", but only as "right".

The Peshitta reads the whole of v. 19 in the negative, as does the LXX, but in contrast with the MT and the LXX, repeats "hearts" instead of "man" ("man" is lacking in the Peshitta) in the second clause (the LXX reads καρδίαι τῶν ἀνθρώπων) to coincide with the repetition of "face" in the first clause. The Syriac establishes a logical comparison between the phrases - "like a face does not resemble a (another) face, so a heart does not resemble a heart". This rendition also harmonises with v. 17, where ܠܥܘܕܝܢ also appears. The Peshitta translator may have found the Hebrew meaning difficult to comprehend,<sup>1</sup> hence the influence of the LXX.

At the end of v. 21, which agrees with the MT rather than with the LXX, the Peshitta has a long plus that is an exact translation of v. 21a in the LXX. It is doubtful whether this addition appeared in the *Vorlage* of the Peshitta and was probably inserted on the grounds that it contains the ideas portrayed in Proverbs: "The heart of the godless seeks evil, and the heart of the upright seeks knowledge".

V. 22 in the Peshitta is an interpretation of the Hebrew that is partially based on the LXX. The Peshitta reads "If you crush a fool in the midst of the congregation, you will add nothing to him and you will not remove his folly". The phrase "you will add nothing to him" is an interpretation of ܠܥܘܕܝܢ (the LXX reads οὐ μὴ περιέλῃς) and it is logically connected with the next phrase. The Hebrew is unclear and the Peshitta translator probably decided to simplify the reading for the sake of the reader.

V. 23 in the Peshitta reads "When you tend (ܠܥܘܕܝܢ), know the faces of your flock (ܠܥܘܕܝܢ), and set your heart on your flock (ܠܥܘܕܝܢ<sup>2</sup> ܕܢܐܘܡܐ)". The only difference from the MT is that ܠܥܘܕܝܢ, which is generally translated as "to know well", is rendered with two different verbs. It is likely that the Peshitta *Vorlage* differed from the MT

<sup>1</sup> The first clause in the MT actually reads: "As water face to face."

<sup>2</sup> The Syriac term ܠܥܘܕܝܢ means "sheepfold", but it is apparently also a metaphor for "monastery" (Payne Smith, 1967, p. 68).



regarding the first word - perhaps it was דרע (an extended י can also be confused with ר). The Peshitta translator may not have understood the inf. absolutus. The Targum copied the Syriac text, even in its choice of words - מה דרעי אנת.

In v. 24 the Peshitta follows the LXX in the rendering of וָאֵם - אֵסֹס. For וָאֵר the Peshitta reads כַּצְּבֹק (παράδεδωσεν in the LXX). The Targum follows the Peshitta.

The clause וְהַיִּים לְעֵרוֹתֶיךָ is not represented in v. 27 of the Peshitta. It may have been lacking in the Peshitta *Vorlage*. Alternatively, the translator may have considered it to be superfluous, since the term "your household" does include the servants as well.

## Chapter 28

Verses 6 and 8 can be considered as harmonisations with the preceding verses. V. 20 contains some simplifications (based on the LXX), while vv. 4 and 21 are influenced by the LXX to clarify the readings.

The second clause of v. 4 in the Peshitta reads "Those who keep the law strengthen themselves". The MT text has **בָּמִן יִתְגַּדְּרוּ וְהוֹיָה יְהוֹרֵי הַתּוֹרָה יִתְגַּדְּרוּ** ("the law-abiding contend with them"). The LXX has **οἱ δὲ ἀγαπῶντες τὸν νόμον περιβάλλουσιν ἑαυτοῖς τειχος**. The verb **יִתְגַּדְּרוּ** was unclear to the Peshitta translator, especially since **בָּמִן** refers to the law-abiding. The LXX concept of the law-abiding who "build a wall around them" is an interpretation of the Hebrew, but it is still reflected in the Peshitta reading. The Peshitta translator also inserted **ܩܡܚܘܢ** from **ἑαυτοῖς**. The Peshitta keeps closer to the MT than the LXX and the translator may primarily have needed to interpret **περιβάλλουσιν**.

Equivalents for the word **בֹּיֹז** and the **ו** before **עֲקֵב** are lacking in the Peshitta at the beginning of v. 6. The Peshitta reads simply: "A poor man walks in innocence, and the rich pervert their ways". The translator did not want to make the sentence a comparison, because vv. 4, 5 and 7 are not comparisons. To have a comparison among simple statements may have seemed somewhat illogical and, for the Peshitta translator of Proverbs, no sentence is considered isolated from the larger context.

The second clause of v. 11 may have been difficult to translate. It reads **וְדַל מְבִין יִתְקַרְנוּ - יְהוֹרֵי הַתּוֹרָה**. The translator relied on the LXX to give a better reading: "The intelligent poor man condemns him" (**πένυης δὲ νοήμων καταγνώσεται αὐτοῦ**). This reading is more fitting in the context. The first clause of this verse in the Peshitta is closer to the Hebrew than to the LXX.

At the end of v. 13 in the Peshitta **ܐܠܗܐ** is added as the subject of **ܢܘܕܝܐ ܥܒܪܐ** (in the MT). The translator may have considered it necessary to have this addition, since in the context of this sentence it is indeed the Lord who forgives sins. It avoids any heretical view concerning whose mercy matters ultimately. The word could have been deliberately inserted by the translator from v. 14 (where it is lacking) for the same reason given above, i.e. thinking that the subject of v. 13 is more important than that of v. 14. The Targum also has this plus and was probably based on the Peshitta - **ܐܠܗܐ = ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ**. The LXX follows the MT.

The term **ܩܚܘܢܝܐ** ("in a pit") at the end of v. 18 in the Peshitta, was based on v. 10. The MT has **בְּשׁוֹחַתוֹ** in v. 10 and **בְּאֶחָת** ("in one") in v. 18. Both verses compare the result of the work of "evil" with the labour of the "honest" ones. Although the Peshitta translator may have afforded himself the licence to change **בְּאֶחָת**, the noun may well have read **בְּשׁוֹחַת** in the Peshitta *Vorlage*. However, that this instance is another intertextual

harmonisation seems more likely than it being based on a different *Vorlage* - the Peshitta translator quite rightly did not make sense of the Hebrew. Hence the harmonisation.

The Peshitta translator did not understand the combination of אָן לְהַשְׁמִיר in the second clause of v. 20 and employed the neutral words כְּבִדָּה בְּצִד instead. The LXX may have been consulted. It reads ὁ δὲ κακὸς οὐκ ἀτιμώρητος ἔσται and thus agrees only partially with the Syriac.

In v. 21 עָשָׂה was rendered as "to finish" (cf. Payne Smith, 1967, p. 582). This is the meaning of כִּי־בִצֵּל; the Peshitta was influenced by ἀποδῶσεται ("to give up", "surrender") in the LXX. The Syriac has a subtle interpretation of the Hebrew, which reads "A man who puts on a false appearance<sup>1</sup> is no good, because he will hand over a man for a piece of bread". The MT and the LXX refer to corruption in the process of law, while the Peshitta translator used the LXX to say something entirely different.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Payne Smith, 1967, p. 342; this is the meaning of כִּי־בִצֵּל.



## Chapter 29

In v. 2<sup>a</sup> the verb **צָדִיק** is repeated to read: "When the righteous increase, the people increase". The MT, followed by the LXX and the Targum, reads **תִּשְׂמְחוּ** ("rejoice") instead. This rendition of the Peshitta is perhaps intended as a complement of, or antithesis to, v. 16<sup>a</sup>, which reads: "With a multitude of wicked men, iniquity increases".

In v. 4 the Greek term **παράνομος** probably influenced the Peshitta rendition of **רָשָׁע**, which also serves to harmonise this verse with v. 2.

The verb **יִבְקֹשׁוּ** in v. 10 is interpreted in the Peshitta to read **רָשָׁע** instead. This serves to clarify the Hebrew and provides a sensible reading: "Bloodthirsty men hate one who is blameless, but the righteous like him". The LXX and the Targum follow the MT. This interpretation by the Peshitta translator serves to clarify the phrase and to prevent it from being understood by the reader in a negative, metaphorical sense, i.e. that the righteous "seeks his soul" with the intention of killing him perhaps.

The only extensive addition in this chapter is at the beginning of v. 18, where **בְּאֵין תְּהוֹן** ("lack of vision") is rendered as **בְּהִסְתָּר אֱוִילִים**. These words were inserted from the beginning of v. 16 and complement the ideas put forward in v. 16. The first clause reads "With a multitude of wicked men, iniquity increases". V. 18<sup>a</sup> follows logically and reads "With an increase of iniquity, the nation is rent". Both these verses harmonise with v. 2. The LXX reading of v. 18 is closer to the MT text, while the Targum follows the Peshitta.

There is a different rendition of the last word **מִפְעֻלָּה** of v. 19 in the MT as well. The Peshitta reads **כַּדָּב** and interprets the sentence thus: "The slave is not instructed by words, because he knows that he does not get beaten". The Targum reads exactly the same as the Peshitta, but the Peshitta and Targum *Vorlage* may have had a slightly different orthography in their respective *Vorlagen*. In Prov. 10.13, 19.29, 26.3 and 23.13 the *rod* is suggested as a means of punishment for fools and as an instrument of correction for the disobeying youth. The interpretation of v. 19 does not necessarily coincide with the above-mentioned instances in Proverbs. It rather appears to be an everyday observation by the translator (provided that slaves existed at the time of translation). The LXX follows the MT.

V. 20 in the Peshitta was influenced by the LXX interpretation to some extent - **רָשָׁע = ἔδεν** and **רָשָׁע = γλυσασκε** (both words are lacking in the MT). The rest of the verse was simplified. The translator may have found the Hebrew unintelligible, particularly the second clause, which reads: **תִּקְנֶה לְכִסִּיל מִמֶּנּוּ**.

The Peshitta follows the LXX interpretation in v. 21. In the first clause the Peshitta reads "If someone is pampered from his childhood, he will be a slave", which was surely influenced by the LXX text, which reads:  $\delta\varsigma$  κατασπαταλᾷ ἐκ παιδός, οἰκέτης ἔσται. The Hebrew has one unclear word in the second clause,  $\text{וְיִגָּד}$ , which is rendered as  $\text{ܘܕܝܕܘܐ}$  in the Peshitta - this was copied from  $\text{ὀδυνηθήσεται}$  in the LXX.

The first clause of v. 25 in the Peshitta agrees with the LXX, while the second is perhaps closer to the MT -  $\text{וְיִהְיֶה}$  reads  $\text{ܘܝܗܝܗܘܐ}$  in the Peshitta and  $\text{ܘܝܕܘܐ}$  is the equivalent of  $\text{וְיִשָּׁב}$  in the MT. The LXX, however, although reading  $\text{κύριον}$  in the first clause, has an addition that is not shared by the Peshitta and that is actually closer to the MT than the first phrase; it reads  $\text{δεσπότη}$  for  $\text{וְיִהְיֶה}$ . The Peshitta translator probably did not understand the Hebrew entirely in the first clause of this verse and decided to use the LXX rendition instead, which does suit the context well. It reads: "The iniquity of man is a stumbling block to him, but he who trusts in the Lord shall prevail".

## Chapter 30.

This chapter is a surprisingly literal translation compared to the previous chapters. Some of the most difficult Hebrew words are not simplified at all (cf. vv. 14, 15, 17, etc.) and the translator hardly made any attempt to force a connection between the verses - perhaps he did not even consider the possibility that the relations between them may be important.

There is such painstaking attention to detail in most renderings of sentences in this chapter, as well as chapter 31, that it almost seems doubtful whether these two chapters were translated by the same man that translated the preceding chapters of the book of Proverbs into Syriac. In fact, if the work was indeed done by the same person, his knowledge of Hebrew had improved considerably. However, there are some corrupt readings and some influence by the LXX, which is to be expected, as is the case in vv. 30 and 31 (v. 19 is an exception). Another striking feature, compared to the rest of Proverbs, is the meticulous adherence to translating the elements of the Hebrew only.

Another feature of this chapter is that there is generally not nearly the same liberal use of particles, prepositions and conjunctives, viz. **ו**, **וְ**, etc. as is the case in the previous chapters. For instance, in the second clause of v. 27, instead of the Hebrew reading **וַיִּצְאָה הַצִּיץ כְּלֵךְ**, the Peshitta text is rendered as "and they all assemble as one" (**ܐܘܢܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܘܢܐ ܕܝܗܘܢܐ ܕܝܗܘܢܐ ܕܝܗܘܢܐ**) after the first clause, which reads "The locusts have no king" (the LXX reads "they march in order at one command"). The Syriac coincides with the Hebrew, reading all the words in the phrase as a unit, and does not add conjunctions to interpret the difficult words that, at a glance, have unintelligible connections between them. The Syriac almost retains the brevity of the Hebrew diction.

The Hebrew in v. 1 of the MT reads: **וַיִּבְרַח אַגּוּר בֶּן־יָכֶחַ הַמְּשָׁא נָאִם הַנְּבִיא לְאֵתִיאל לְאֵתִיאל וְאָמַר**. The Peshitta translation is: "The words of Agur son of Jakeh, who received (**ܕܝܡܒܪܐ**) a prophecy (**ܕܝܡܒܪܐ**) and found (**ܕܝܡܒܪܐ**) strength (**ܕܝܡܒܪܐ**), and says to Ethiel". The general reading of the Peshitta translation was not influenced by the LXX, which as a matter of fact, contains quite a different reading. The Syriac is probably a reinterpretation of the Hebrew as understood by the Peshitta translator. It is difficult to distinguish between the elements that resulted in the unique rendition found in the Peshitta. The Hebrew text itself presents difficulties and a satisfactory translation of the MT text is probably unattainable. The Syriac clause "(he) who received a prophecy" is perhaps some unique combination of **ܕܝܡܒܪܐ**. The Peshitta *Vorlage* may also have been different, which seems to be another possible explanation for the Syriac rendition.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the second

<sup>1</sup> For instance, the noun **ܕܝܡܒܪܐ** may read some form of the root of **ܡܫܠ** in the Peshitta *Vorlage*.



occurrence of the term לְאִתִּיּאֵל may have been left out deliberately by the translator, because he may have considered it tautological.

Hardly any of the rare or difficult words were simplified. Indeed, the translator shows remarkable skill in rendering a very precise reading of the MT. The rare word שְׁפָנִים in v. 26, which is generally rendered as "badgers", reads כְּסֻמֵּא ("coney") in the Peshitta. It should be considered as one of many examples that illustrate how well the translator understood the Hebrew text and how scrupulously he followed his *Vorlage*. Some words are given even more specific meaning where more neutral words would have sufficed. For instance, in v. 14 מְאֻקְלָוֹת reads מְסַבְּתָא ("knives", "daggers"), חַרְבֹּת reads מְסַבְּתָא ("sword") and אֲבִיּוֹנִים reads כְּנַעַר ("the unfortunate").<sup>2</sup>

In verse 8 the Peshitta translator, contrary to the usual translation technique that he employed in his rendition of the previous chapters, complicated rather than simplified an ordinary and quite frequently used Hebrew word - לֶחֶם ("bread"). V. 8 in the MT reads "Remove me far from falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food (לֶחֶם) that is needful for me". Instead of לֶחֶם קַי ("sufficient bread") the Peshitta reads , כְּסֻמֵּא דְכֻלֵּי יוֹמֵי ("a sufficient daily life"). The LXX has τὰ ἀπαραρκη - "what is needful". The Peshitta has a good reading, doing justice to the obvious metaphor in the MT within this context.

The milieu of the translation may have played a part in the rendering of "garment" (שִׁמְלֵה) in v. 4<sup>c</sup>, which reads "Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?" The Peshitta reads כְּסֻמֵּא instead of the usual (and suitable) terms כְּסֻמֵּא דְכֻלֵּי יוֹמֵי ("covering" or cloak") found in 20. 16 and 27. 13 and כְּסֻמֵּא ("dress") in 25. 20. The word כְּסֻמֵּא primarily means "veil" and not clothing as such. The second meaning of כְּסֻמֵּא is "napkin" or "towel" and the word can specifically refer to the towel in which the baptised are held (Payne Smith,

<sup>2</sup> In Prov. 31. 9 and 20 אֲבִיּוֹנִים is also rendered as כְּנַעַר. In 14. 31 אֲבִיּוֹנִים reads כְּסֻמֵּא, which is the usual term for "poor." Incidentally, the term לֶחֶם in the first clause of 14. 31 is also rendered as כְּסֻמֵּא. This was probably done to simplify the translation, which is in keeping with the style of the translator. However, in 30. 14 the translator rendered אֲבִיּוֹנִים and עֲנִיִּים each with its own particular word, i.e. כְּנַעַר and כְּסֻמֵּא, respectively. The Hebrew word אֲבִיּוֹנִים is also the spelling for a Jewish-Christian sect called the Ebionites. The Peshitta translation may have avoided any reference to them by rendering the Hebrew with a more nondescript word like "unfortunate." One of the characteristics of this sect was its insistence on being poor and its very antimaterialistic stance.

The word כְּנַעַר is commonly associated with "bad" in Proverbs, since it appears regularly in the book, and this particular rendering of the term "poor" may reveal a subtle bias against the Ebionites. All of the above-mentioned hypotheses depend on the dating of the Peshitta and the importance of the Ebionites in Edessa - if this is the place of origin of the Peshitta, as is commonly assumed. Schoeps (1969, p. 37) mentions that the Ebionites probably actually merged with the Elkesaites in the last stages. These two sects had a lot in common right from the start and the Elkesaites were active in Edessa. All of the above is perhaps highly speculative, but the important point is that the Peshitta translation of Proverbs, even in a small and rare case like this, shows no leaning towards the Christians or Jews; both groups considered the Ebionites to be heretical.

1967, p. 569). The Peshitta translator's choice of this word is especially appropriate in the context of the word "water" next to "garment" in this phrase and can perhaps serve as a reminder of a particular kind of cloth and not just any garment.

In v. 15 **הַבְּרֵב אֶת הַבְּרֵב** (usually translated as imperatives - "give, give") reads **סִבְתֵּךְ** ("beloved"). This reading may have been influenced by the LXX, although not necessarily. The LXX reads **ἀγαπήσει ἀγαπώμεναι**. The Peshitta *Vorlage* may have read **הַבְּרֵב** and may have been interpreted accordingly (the first clause in the Hebrew text is probably corrupt).

The last phrase in v. 19 of the Peshitta reads "the way of a man *in his youth*" instead of "the way of a man *with a maiden*". The LXX has the same reading. The Peshitta translator altered the reading deliberately, because of the unacceptable ethics expressed in this clause. The Targum follows the MT instead.<sup>3</sup>

The rendition of chapter 30 generally agrees with the MT as opposed to the LXX, but the influence of the LXX on the Peshitta is perhaps not entirely absent. In v. 30 the word **שִׁלְיָא** ("lion") is rendered as **לִיִּא לִיִּא** ("lion's whelp") - **σκύμνος λέοντος**. The Hebrew word is rare, but the translator understood the other rare words in this chapter quite well.

The Peshitta also adds "does not fear" (from **οὐκ ἀποστρέφεται**) in the second clause. Generally speaking, the Peshitta follows the word order of the MT, reading: "The lion's whelp is stronger than all animals and fears not, and does not turn away from any animal".

V. 30 may have been influenced by the LXX merely to clarify the Hebrew but, in the light of the other verses discussed above, there may be a religious reason for this rendition of "lion". The term "lion's whelp" is used metaphorically of Christ in allusion to Gen. xlix. 9 (Payne Smith, 1967, p. 66).<sup>4</sup>

V. 31 in the Peshitta also follows the LXX. This influence by the LXX is perhaps caused by the fact that the translator found the Hebrew somewhat incomplete and the meaning of **אֲלֵקִים** uncertain. The Peshitta *Vorlage*, like the MT, may have been corrupt. The LXX reading offered a good comparison in the context of the verse.

<sup>3</sup> In view of the metaphor in v. 30, one may speculate whether there is not an added consideration for the deviation in v. 19, namely the possible association of this verse with the Nativity of Christ (together with the possible negative reaction that it may have evoked should the Hebrew text have been translated literally).

<sup>4</sup> This could indicate that the Peshitta translator was indeed a Christian, unless, as a Jew, he was unaware of this metaphor and used the LXX merely as clarification of the MT.

V. 32 is also corrupt, but here the Peshitta follows the word order of the MT and the influence of the LXX is much less. It reads: "Do not desire so that you are dishonoured, and do not stretch out your hand to your mouth in a quarrel".



## Chapter 31

Many features discussed in chapter 30 can be found in this chapter as well. The translator did not really simplify the text as often as in the previous chapters and the Syriac reads very like the Hebrew. For instance, in v. 11 the Peshitta reads ܟܘܢܝܢܐ ("provisions", "storing up") instead of ܟܘܢܝܢܐ ("gain") and this is a good rendering. In v. 19 the LXX has a different reading from the MT, while the Peshitta translated from the Hebrew - ܟܘܢܝܢܐ = ܟܘܢܝܢܐ. Sometimes the Hebrew did pose problems for the translator and the translator then rectified the reading as best he could; in v. 8 "open your mouth for the dumb" (ܟܘܢܝܢܐ) reads "open your mouth with upright words" (ܟܘܢܝܢܐ ܟܘܢܝܢܐ); the LXX reads "word of God". This rendition may, of course, be a harmonisation with v. 9<sup>a</sup> - "open your mouth, judge rightly". In general, the translator did not make a particular effort to harmonise or at least establish a connection between the verses and he was not too dependent on the LXX when the *Vorlage* confronted him with difficult readings.

In v. 3 the Peshitta reads ܟܘܢܝܢܐ for "destroy". The Peshitta *Vorlage* may have read ܟܘܢܝܢܐ instead of ܟܘܢܝܢܐ. The LXX has an entirely different reading of this verse.

In v. 5 the Peshitta *Vorlage* may have read ܟܘܢܝܢܐ (ܟܘܢܝܢܐ) instead of ܟܘܢܝܢܐ. The two verbs look alike and can be confused with one another. The Peshitta translator may also have inserted the verb from the first clause in order to harmonise the two clauses with each other, i.e. in the first clause the son should not forget "what is decreed" and in the second he should not forget "the rights" of the afflicted.

In vv. 9 and 20 ܟܘܢܝܢܐ reads ܟܘܢܝܢܐ. The same argument put forward in Prov. 30. 14 could perhaps apply here as well (cf. particularly the footnote to v. 14).

In v. 10 ܟܘܢܝܢܐ ("her worth") is interpreted as "nothing compares with them" (cf. 3. 15, which has a slightly different reading and is probably not a harmonisation). The MT reads "Her value is more than precious stones", while the Peshitta has "For she is worth more than precious stones with which nothing compares". The translator probably understood ܟܘܢܝܢܐ as an adjective qualifying "stones".

In v. 11 the Peshitta translator rendered ܟܘܢܝܢܐ as ܟܘܢܝܢܐ. The Syriac noun means "provision", which is more suitable in the context of this verse than the Hebrew term, which means "spoil" or "prey".

For the Hebrew term ܟܘܢܝܢܐ in v. 14 the Peshitta text reads ܟܘܢܝܢܐ. The Syriac word may have been influenced by the LXX, which reads τὸν βλοῦ.

In v. 15 ܟܘܢܝܢܐ is rendered with a more neutral term, ܟܘܢܝܢܐ, in the Peshitta translation, which may have been influenced by the LXX, which reads ἔργα. The Syriac word is a suitable equivalent of "task" and cannot be

considered a deviation. There is some possibility that the translator may have mistaken the Hebrew term for another that has the same consonants, i.e. "bosom" or "lap".

The rest of the chapter reveals no external influence and is remarkably literal, even in word choice.

## Conclusions

The Peshitta translation of the book of Proverbs is undoubtedly a remarkable translation, exhibiting many characteristics generally associated with modern translations. The translator was very allusive in his treatment of the text. It is difficult to ascertain the religious and/or philosophical background of the translation. In a few places it reveals probable antiheretical tendencies, but in general the Peshitta is true to its ideal; it is a translation for the ordinary man. Syriac was the primary language of the province of Osroene (even some of the monks were not very literate), making the translation of the Bible almost indispensable in keeping the faith (Segal, 1970, p. 151).

The threat of apostatising was ever-present in a world where many pagan cults and numerous sects flourished. Edessa was the centre of Eastern Syriac Christianity and many times referred to as the bride or "beloved of the Lord" (ibid., p. 171), while nearby Hierapolis was regarded as the centre of paganism<sup>1</sup> (ibid., pp. 51-52). Christianity in Mesopotamia had the added disadvantage of being cut off from Western Christianity as well. Fortunately, many able men in Edessa and Nisibis, mostly attached to schools and monasteries (ibid., pp. 150-151), translated numerous theological and philosophical works from Greek into Syriac (and Syriac into Greek). The learned were generally fluent, and sought to be educated in Greek (ibid., p. 150).

The Jews played no small part in the development of Christianity in the East either. Their lives were to varying degrees generally happier than those of Jews in the Roman world and they represented a source of stability, theological schooling and a ready expertise in Greek and Hebrew to the Edessans.<sup>2</sup> At times, the Jews were necessary as traders and as political confederates of Christians and both groups were fiercely antipagan. Not a few of the Jews were even converted to Christianity and Edessa, in fact, had a large Jewish Christian community (Segal, 1970, pp. 100-101).

Thus it would not be surprising to find some Jewish influence in the translation of the Bible (McCullough, 1982, p. 86).<sup>3</sup> There may be some cross-pollination in the rendering of Proverbs as well. For instance, it has

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<sup>1</sup> In Northwestern Mesopotamia, Harran was the great centre of paganism (Segal, 1970, p. 104).

<sup>2</sup> Wand (1937, p. 246) states that Edessa "was the center in which Semitic thought fought its battle with Hellenism for the honour of providing a mould for the development of Christian doctrine."

<sup>3</sup> McCullough (1982, p. 86) mentions that a Syriac translation of the OT was made available quite early in the history of the Syriac church and was probably the work of various hands, some of whom may have been Jewish Christians. Then later, Jacob, the former bishop of Edessa, is said to have revised the current OT text with the help of the Greek texts at hand and with the occasional assistance of Jewish scholars. Segal (1970, p. 100) states: "The influence of Jewish learning and tradition upon the early Christianity of Northern Mesopotamia is apparent from the writings of Aphraates, who lived near Mosul in the first half



been remarked that Proverbs reveals Jewish exegetical or midrashic characteristics. The assumption was that the addition of some paraphrases and the name of the Lord in the translation means that the Peshitta is "Jewish". But why should such anti-anthropomorphic tendencies be the exclusive privilege of Judaism? Moreover, why should Christianity in the East be compared with the Christianity of Byzantium, when it is a known fact that these two despised each other to no small degree?<sup>4</sup> Is it not natural that Eastern Christianity may intellectually have had more in common with the East<sup>5</sup> than with the abundance of philosophical works and the rational way of thinking in the West? The East was known as a place of mysticism and one might imagine that the translator of the Peshitta, not having full access to the works of the Western Church and having to contend with many sects and cults, would have done anything to avoid any ambiguity in the translation of the text, even if this meant that he should put some interpolations in his translation.

In any event, Proverbs agrees substantially with the ethics of both Jew and Christian and any lack of sentiment in the text, for or against one or the other, should not be surprising, since both groups were committed to much the same principles reflected in Proverbs. Both religions are against any form of adultery (religious or otherwise), which is a major theme in Proverbs, and ethical characteristics such as faithfulness, responsibility towards family, prudence, industriousness and integrity are almost universal. As far as the pluses and some variants are concerned, there are some that do tend to be rather reflective of Christian dogmas (e.g. 11. 31 = 1 Peter 4. 18). In many cases the Peshitta reads a sentence in its ordinary social context, whereas for Judaism there may be an underlying meaning, reflected in its own exegesis of these verses (e.g. Prov. 6. 1, 10. 1, 13. 20, 21. 3 and 22. 1). In none of these cases can it be said that they are against Jews or Judaism *de jure*, but rather that they are against other sects in general.<sup>6</sup> If anything, the main polemic was between Monophysitism and the Nestorians.<sup>7</sup> The term "in general" is used, because the surrounding cults were attacked on general grounds,

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of the fourth century. Aphrahat was acquainted with the Targum and the Talmud, although his acquaintance with them was not necessarily first-hand. He employs a Jewish chronology, and even his metaphors in a few passages are Jewish."

<sup>4</sup> Especially after the alienation that the African and Eastern churches suffered after the council of Chalcedon.

<sup>5</sup> At the beginning of the fourth century Christians even maintained some Jewish practices like eating unleavened bread at Passover and avoiding eating meat before the blood had been removed (Segal, 1970, p. 100). The Eastern churches also maintained some other Jewish practices (Meyer, 1964, p. 176). Furthermore, McCullough (1982, pp. 68, 69) mentions the similarity between asceticism and the Qumran community.

<sup>6</sup> Paganism in Edessa itself apparently incorporated many of the beliefs and practices of neighbouring cult centres, notably those of Hierapolis (Segal, 1970, p. 56).

<sup>7</sup> It is interesting that Nestorian doctrine was even regarded as being (or rather accused of being) close to Jewish doctrine. Segal (1970, pp. 102-103) writes: "We cannot wonder, then, that the Monophysites of provincial Edessa in their execrations against the 'Nestorian' bishop Hiba should have exclaimed, 'No one wants the enemy of Christ.....No one wants a Jew as bishop!...No one wants the friend of the Jews! No one wants the enemy of God!'"

rather than on account of their misguided practices, some of which they evidently had in common with Christianity. It has already been remarked in the discussion of chapter 9 that baptism played a prominent role in Edessa, the city of "leaping waters" (cf. Prov. 9. 18). So much so that, when the fortunes of the Jews took a turn for the worse in the seventh century, the Jews were given a choice by the authorities: they had to either join the Persians, or had to be *baptised* (ibid., p. 104).

The historical milieu of the Peshitta translation may have had some influence on pluses like Prov. 9. 12 and 18 as well. In the fourth century, St Ephraim declared: "Thy waters are bitter and thy children harsh; O Harran, make thyself sweet with the Cross....My treasure, O Harran, is in thy vicinity, the famed and beautiful Edessa. O daughter, be like thy mother who is the salt of the earth, and with her doctrine season thy mind...." (Segal, 1970, p. 105). This quote is a good example of the kind of Christian perspective of the surrounding world prevalent in Edessa and other examples exist in literature that are of a similar vein. Edessa was indeed the bride of Christ, a jewel in a pagan world. The pluses in chapter 9 could have served to strengthen this particular world-view and would, in the end, create familiar images to the reader of the Peshitta.

The main characteristics of the deviations in the Peshitta can be summarised as follows:

- (1) A substantial number of these deviations and pluses are for the sake of *clarity* on the grounds that the Peshitta *Vorlage* is unintelligible (e.g. Prov. 27. 21).
- (2) The pluses are *minimalistic* in most cases (Cook, 1985a, p. iv.). The translator avoided adding long sentences. Compared to the LXX, for instance, the Peshitta is quite literal, while in comparison with the Targum it has a noticeable number of deviations. It is important to note that the Peshitta (Proverbs) concurs with the Pentateuch in this regard.<sup>8</sup>
- (3) Because of the fact that the Targum reveals so few haggadic additions and that it contains certain similarities with the Peshitta - even in cases where the Targum translates only the MT readings - it seems plausible that *the Targum made use of the Peshitta* in its rendition of Proverbs. In numerous cases, the character of the Targum translation is of such a nature that it coincides with the Peshitta rather than the MT. In a sense the Peshitta looks more like a Targum than the Targum itself. However, this is not necessarily the case, because closer scrutiny reveals that the additions are not independent exegetical material, but rather appropriate in their

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<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact, Koster came to a similar conclusion in his study of the Peshitta version of Exodus (Koster, 1977, p. 190). Should this minimalistic tendency and other characteristics of translation like harmonisation and simplification apply to other books of the OT, it would open up new possibilities for the identification of the Peshitta translator (cf. Van Wyk, 1977, pp. 183-185 where many features in the Peshitta translation Song of songs are quite similar to Proverbs). It could mean that the Peshitta translation belongs to a "school" or "tradition" of translation (cf. Segal concerning schools in Edessa; ibid.



contexts, with the clear intention of offering a simple, intelligible translation. This, in turn, emphasises once more the difficulty in identifying clear evidence of a particular religious influence that can be attached to any particular reading.<sup>9</sup> It is perhaps more accurate to say that the Peshitta translation is Targumic, not in character, but in *style*, brought about by the influence of Jewish Christians in particular - since most interpolations are from the Greek text.

(4) In conjunction with the above-mentioned, the pluses are inserted to explain the text. The translator did not want to say *something different* in those instances where the deviations occur (12. 4, 18, 22, 19 and 22), although there may be allusions, or concepts familiar to the reader. In short, the deviations are bound by their context.<sup>10</sup>

(5) Concerning the large number of coinciding readings where the Peshitta agrees with the LXX, the general impression that the LXX was considered *authoritative* by the translator is warranted. He liberally made use of the LXX in cases where he did not agree with the MT, whether it was for ethical or other reasons (6. 25, 14. 35 and 22. 13), and in cases where unintelligible words and phrases occurred. Although it is a strong argument, the utilisation of the LXX *per se* does not *prove* Christian influence in the Peshitta (Cook, 1985a, p. 134). The LXX is a Jewish document and, although the pluses agree with the LXX, they are not necessarily based on the same tradition; they may be associated with another Jewish tradition. This will depend on the dating, of course, because the LXX did eventually become a Christian document, although equally important is the fact that, in Edessa, the Jews left a substantial mark on the Christian translations as mentioned above (cf. Segal, 1970, pp. 101-102; McCullough, 1982, pp. 85-86).

(6) The translation technique is quite literal wherever the Peshitta agrees with the MT. Common, familiar terms are translated regularly. This fact concurs with the Peshitta translator's intention to give a *verbum e verbo* translation.

(7) To make the translation read fluently, the translator readily made use of particles and conjunctions, which he did not always get from the LXX text. He inserted them whenever he found it necessary. He rendered the sentences not only in the context of their own paragraphs, but even in the context of the whole book of Proverbs. He hardly ever considered each verse in isolation.

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pp. 150-151). A more detailed study of the translation among more books of the OT could assist research in identifying the translators and probably the location of the translation of the Peshitta version.

<sup>9</sup> The influence of Jewish learning on Christianity is apparent in the writings of Aphrahat where even some of the metaphors are Jewish (Segal, 1970, p. 100). Cf. Owens (1988, pp. 1-48) for a more critical examination of Jewish influence in the quotations of Leviticus by Aphrahat.

<sup>10</sup> Koster (1977, p. 191) says of Exodus (Peshitta) that some of the longer additions came into existence under the influence of the nearby or parallel verses. This concurs with the discussion of Prov. 9. 12 and 9. 18 (cf. footnote 5 above).



(8) This *harmonisation* is a major feature of Proverbs. The translator had a holistic view of Proverbs and therefore inserted elements of the text into other verses that contained the same reading and had to be harmonised (e.g. 3, 19 and 20, 19) intertextually.

(9) The possibility that the Peshitta *Vorlage* had *some* elements in agreement with the LXX *Vorlage* should be considered, especially in those cases where the Hebrew is admittedly corrupt (cf. Prov. 30. 31 and 32).

(10) Some pluses were inserted to bring out the *contrast* between opposite ideas, e.g. the wise as opposed to the foolish, the good man or woman as opposed to the bad man or woman and the evil as opposed to the righteous. Antithetic parallelisms are also enhanced by these deviations, especially regarding comparisons (cf. 19. 22 and 20. 19). It should be added that contrast is part of the composition found in numerous ethical phrases in Proverbs; this did not escape the Peshitta translator either. Prov. 6. 30 and 9. 6 serve as good examples of how, with the aid of pluses, dubious and confusing ethics were strengthened and enhanced by the translator in order to render a clearer reading in the Peshitta.

(11) Although the Peshitta has almost nothing in common with the *Midrash Mishle*, it should be borne in mind that many midrashim are lost and some unknown traditions may have influenced the text history of the Peshitta (cf. Maori, 1975, p. VII). This should be regarded in the light of the influence that Jews had on Christianity in Edessa.

(12) In the final analysis it should be concluded that the Peshitta text of Proverbs is of relatively limited text-critical value, particularly because of its extensive dependence on the LXX text for the translation of the Syriac text.

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