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## TRANSLATION FEATURES OF THE PESHITTA EPISTLE OF JAMES\*

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**Abstrakt.** While much has been written about the the nature of the Old Testament Peshitta vis-à-vis its Vorlage, little work has been done regarding the New Testament Peshitta as a translation. This study will examine the Peshitta Epistle of James as a translation. At the outset, renderings that reflect Greek textual variants will be identified since they do not reflect translation technique. Careful examination of the Syriac text in relation to its Vorlage reveals translation features that characterize this book. The evidence assembled here points to a reader oriented translation. The translator, while being faithful to the Greek, transformed the text into idiomatic Syriac.

**Keywords:** Epistle of James; translation technique; New Testament Peshitta; Syrian language; textual criticism of the New Testament; translation theory.

**Streszczenie. Peszitta – List Jakuba. Charakterystyka tłumaczenia.** Znajdujemy wiele opracowań dotyczących tłumaczenia Starego Testamentu w wersji Peszitta, niewiele zaś jest pozycji dotyczących tłumaczenia Nowego Testamentu w tejże wersji. Niniejsze studium pokazuje translatorski warsztat dotyczący tłumaczenia Listu

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Jakuba. Na początku, tłumaczenia odzwierciedlające greckie warianty tekstu, będą pokazane bez odniesienia do techniki translacyjnej. Następnie wskażemy charakterystyczne cechy tłumaczonej księgi, by ukazać technikę tłumaczenia. Tłumacz, będąc wiernym tekstowi greckiemu, dokonuje transformacji tekstu za pomocą syryjskich idiomów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** List Jakuba; technika translacyjna; Peszitta Nowy Testament; język syryjski; krytycyzm tekstualny Nowego Testamentu; teoria translacji.

While much has been written about the the nature of the Old Testament Peshitta vis-à-vis its *Vorlage*,<sup>1</sup> little work has been done regarding the New Testament Peshitta as a translation.<sup>2</sup> This study will examine the Peshitta Epistle of James as a translation. At the outset, one must sort out translation features from Greek textual variants. Only then can one examine the translation features and characterize the translation as a translation. Fortunately, the modern *editio maior* of the Greek New Testament<sup>3</sup> incorporates the critical edition of the Syriac Peshitta of James

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<sup>1</sup> Craig E. Morrison, *The Character of the Syriac Version of the First Book of Samuel* (Monographs of the Peshitta Institute 11; Leiden: Brill, 2001); Mirko Pozzobon, *La Peshitta del Secondo Libro di Samuele* (Analecta Biblica 214; Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2016); Claudio Balzaretti, *The Syriac Versions of Ezra-Nehemiah: Manuscripts and Editions, Translation Technique and Its Use in Textual Criticism* (translated by Michael Tait; Biblica et orientalia 51; Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2013); Ignacio Carbajosa, *The Character of the Syriac Version of Psalms, A Study of Psalms 90–150 in the Peshitta* (translated by Paul Stevenson; Monographs of the Peshitta Institute 17; Leiden: Brill, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Peter J. Williams, *Early Syriac Translation Technique and the Textual Criticism of the Greek Gospels* (Texts and Studies III, 2; Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> *Novum Testamentum Graecum, Editio Critica Maior*, IV: *Catholic Letters*, Part 1: Text and Part 2: Supplementary Material, edited by The Institute for New Testament Textual Research (2nd Revised Edition; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013). This publication replaces the *editio maior* of Constantinus Tischendorf (ed.), *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Vol. 2 (Editio octava critica maior; Leipzig: Giesecke & Devrient, 1872), 248–272.

published in 1986.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Bruce M. Metzger has provided a valuable textual commentary to the Greek text.<sup>5</sup> Further, the Accordance electronic modules of the Greek New Testament and Peshitta New Testament, based on the twenty-eighth revised edition of *Novum Testamentum Graece*<sup>6</sup> and the Peshitta text of the British and Foreign Bible Society<sup>7</sup> respectively, serve as valuable tools for researching this issue.

With regard to Greek *Vorlage*, it appears that the translator of the Peshitta used a text that was developed, yet not always the same as the so-called *textus receptus*. In Jas 1:12 ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ “which God promised” projects Greek ὁ ἐπηγγείλατο ὁ θεός “which God promised,” where the expressed subject ὁ θεός “God” reflects a developed Greek text. Other Greek text witnesses read the expressed subject as ὁ κύριος “Lord.” The primitive Greek text lacks the expressed subject.<sup>8</sup> In Jas 2:20 ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܡܪܬܐ “faith without works is dead” projects ἡ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων νεκρά ἐστίν “faith without works is dead,” the *textus receptus*. The primitive Greek text reads ἡ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων ἀργή ἐστίν “faith without works is useless.”<sup>9</sup> In Jas 2:25 the primitive Greek text reads Rahab the harlot welcomed the ἀγγέλους in the meaning “messengers.” To avoid confusion with the meaning “angels” a substitute entered the Greek textual stream from Heb 11:31, namely κατασκόπους “spies.” It is the developed reading κατασκόπους “spies” that stands back the Peshitta rendering ܡܨܝܚܐ “spies.” In Jas 3:9 the Peshitta reads ܠܗܘܐ ܐܝܬܐ “the Lord and Father” projecting τὸν κύριον καὶ πατέρα “the Lord and Father” against the reading

<sup>4</sup> *Das Neue Testament in syrischer Überlieferung, I: Die grossen katholischen Briefe*, in Verbindung mit A. Juckel, herausgegeben und untersucht von Barbara Aland (ANTT 7; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986). Citations of the Peshitta in this essay come from this edition.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, ed., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Second edition; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Barbara and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th revised edition; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> *The New Testament in Syriac* (London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, [1920]).

<sup>8</sup> So Metzger, 608.

<sup>9</sup> The replacement reading “dead” derives from Jas 2:17 or 26.

of the *textus receptus*, namely, τὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα “the God and Father.” In Jas 5:7 ܠܬܠܡܕܐ ܠܬܝܒܐ ܠܬܝܒܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ “until he receives the early rain and the latter (rain)” goes back to the developed text ἕως λάβῃ ὑετὸν πρόϊμον καὶ ὀψιμον “until he/it receives the early rain and the latter (rain).” The primitive text lacked the word ὑετὸν “rain.”

Some cases are not so straightforward. In Jas 4:4 the Peshitta reads the masculine ܐܕܘܠܬܪܐ “adulterers” against the feminine μοιχαλίδες “adulteresses.” Whereas no Greek manuscript reads the masculine μοιχοί in place of the feminine μοιχαλίδες – some read μοιχοί καὶ μοιχαλίδες “adulterers and adulteresses” –, the Peshitta’s rendering should be regarded as a reflex of feminine μοιχαλίδες.<sup>10</sup> In context, the term certainly includes men. Such a rendering points to the Peshitta of James being reader oriented rather than source text oriented.

Regarding citations of and allusions to the Old Testament, the translator of the Peshitta of James followed his Greek *Vorlage* rather than inserting the language of the OT Peshitta. Pesh-Jas 2:8, reading ܕܠܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ “you shall love your neighbor as yourself,” follows the NT text ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν, that cites Lev 19:18. By contrast the OT Peshitta reads ܕܠܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ “love your neighbor as yourself.” The prefix conjugation form ܕܠܥܝܪܐ of Pesh-James reflects the Greek future form ἀγαπήσεις, while the OT Peshitta text has the imperative form. Moreover, the word used for neighbor ܠܥܝܪܐ mirrors the Greek πλησίον and is different from the OT word ܠܥܝܪܐ. Jas 5:4 uses phraseology from Isa 5:9, reading ܐܝܬܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ “(and the cries of the reapers) have entered the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.” Pesh-James reads ܕܠܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ “(and the cry of the reapers) entered into the ears of the Lord Sabaoth,” clearly different from the OT Peshitta’s ܕܠܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ “it was heard in the ears of the mighty Lord.” In Jas 5:5 the translator rendered the NT text ἐν ἡμέρᾳ σφαγῆς “in a day of slaughter” by ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ “as for a day of slaughter” using a different lexeme than in Jer 12:3 (ܠܥܝܪܐ “for the day of killing”). Since the Peshitta of James reflects the practice of translating

<sup>10</sup> NRSV renders “Adulterers!”

the Greek of the New Testament instead of substituting the reading of the Peshitta Old Testament – the strategy found in the Old Syriac Gospel of the distinct evangelists –<sup>11</sup> it seems reasonable to date the translation of James to the fifth century.<sup>12</sup>

In this study, we will identify some notable translation features of the Peshitta Epistle of James. These will allow us to characterize the translation. How has the translator encoded the Greek in his translation? Is he guided rigidly by the source language or does he allow room for free expression in the target language? The example from Jas 4:4 indicates a reader oriented translation. Further examples will either confirm or modify this finding.

## LANGUAGE CODING IN THE TARGET LANGUAGE

### EXPRESSIONS OF THE GENITIVE RELATIONSHIP

The Peshitta of James renders Greek constructions expressing the genitive relationship between two nouns or a pronoun and a noun into idiomatic Syriac. The simple construct state syntagm is confined to the idioms ܠܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ “court” (Jas 2:6 κριτήριον) and ܠܡܝܬܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ “patience” (Jas 5:10 μακροθυμία), which have become independent lexemes with two constituents in Syriac. Often, the translator used the syntagm noun in the emphatic state + *dalath* + noun in the emphatic state as in ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ “the Father of lights” (Jas 1:17), ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ “word of truth” (Jas 1:18) – the genitive is attributive, “the true word” –, ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ ܕܠܝܬܐ “expounders<sup>13</sup> of evil thoughts” (Jas 2:4 < κριταὶ διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν), and

<sup>11</sup> Sebastian Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition* (Second Revised Edition; Gorgias Handbooks 7; Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2006), 33.

<sup>12</sup> Brock dates the Peshitta New Testament, which he views as a revision of the Old Syriac, to about 400. Brock believes that there was an Old Syriac translation of Acts and the epistles, though non extant in the Old Syriac form, in addition to the Old Syriac Gospel (Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 33).

<sup>13</sup> So Michael Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns and Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2009), 811.

ܠܗܘܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “the law of freedom” (Jas 2:12). The Greek adjective is expressed via the construct relationship in Jas 2:15, ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܗܘܝܬܐ “daily sustenance” (lit., “sustenance of a day”) representing τῆς ἐφημέρου τροφῆς “daily nourishment,” in Jas 3:7, ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “by the human species” (lit., “by the species of humanity”) rendering τῇ φύσει τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ “by the human species,” and in Jas 3:8, ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “a deadly drug” (lit., “a drug of death”) translating ἰοῦ θανατηφόρου “of deadly poison.” He also used the syntagm with the proleptic pronoun on the first noun as in ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “a hearer of the word” (Jas 1:23), ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jas 2:1), ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “the need of the body” (Jas 2:16), ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “the love of the world” (Jas 4:4), ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “the doer of the law” (Jas 4:11), ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “the ears of the Lord” (Jas 5:4), ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “the coming of the Lord” (Jas 5:7), ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “the patience of Job” (Jas 5:11), and ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “the power of prayer” (Jas 5:16). One should not confuse the anaphoric suffix with the proleptic pronoun in ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “someone with his rings of gold” (Jas 2:2), where the suffix on ܠܡܪܝܬܐ points back to the word ܠܡܪܝܬܐ in the context.

In characteristic Syriac the construct chain can be interrupted by a preposition as in ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ, ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “transgressors of the law” rendering παραβάται “transgressors” (Jas 2:9). The preposition ܠܡܪܝܬܐ intervenes between the *nomen regens*, ܠܡܪܝܬܐ, which is the masculine plural participle in construct state, and the *nomen rectum* ܠܡܪܝܬܐ.<sup>14</sup> The noun ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “hypocrisy” (προσωποληψία “partiality”; Jas 2:1) also demonstrates this, where the first constituent ܠܡܪܝܬܐ is in the construct state.<sup>15</sup>

## POSSESSIVE SUFFIXES

Possessive suffixes are attached directly to the noun, not introduced by the genitive particle ܠܡܪܝܬܐ, as in ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “my brethren” representing ἀδελφοί

<sup>14</sup> The singular ܠܡܪܝܬܐ ܠܡܪܝܬܐ “a transgressor of the law” (παραβάτης νόμου “a transgressor of the law”) appears in Jas 2:11.

<sup>15</sup> Theodor Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar* (transl. James A. Crichton; London: Williams & Norgate, 1904), § 206.

μου<sup>16</sup>; ܐܬܝܬܝܬܝܢ “your faith” translating τὴν πίστιν σου (Jas 2:18); ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ “his works” rendering τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ (Jas 3:13); ܡܝܢ “his son” standing for τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ (Jas 2:21); ܥܝܬܝܬܝܢ “your wealth” reflecting ὁ πλοῦτος ὑμῶν (Jas 5:2); ܡܝܢ “of our Lord” τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν (Jas 2:1); ܡܝܢ “among our members” mirroring ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν (Jas 3:6). Later Syriac translators of Greek literature regularly used ܡܝܢ as in ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ “my brethren” in such cases.

### EXPRESSING THE PARTITIVE

The translator expressed the partitive in good Syriac.<sup>17</sup> He rendered both the Greek τις ὑμῶν “any of you” (Jas 1:5) and τις ἐν ὑμῖν “any among you” (Jas 3:13 and 19) as ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ “any of you,” using the preposition ܡܝܢ (Jas 1:5). He rendered τις σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων ἐν ὑμῖν “who is wise and understanding among you” as ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ “who is it among you that is wise and learned” (Jas 3:13).

### WORD ORDER – APPPOSITION

The Syriac translator changed the compact structure of the Greek apposition Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος “Jacob, God’s and the Lord Jesus Christ’s servant,” where the appositive comes in final position, into good Syriac structure by rendering ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ “Jacob, the servant of God and of our Lord Jesus the Messiah,” in which the apposition immediately follows the head noun (Jas 1:1). In Syriac the appositive “servant” immediately follows the head noun “Jacob.”

<sup>16</sup> Jas 1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10, 12; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19.

<sup>17</sup> Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, § 249C, notes that the partitive use of ܡܝܢ is extensive.

## USE OF THE PRONOUN IN VERBAL RECTION

Unlike Greek, Syriac frequently uses a redundant pronoun, usually proleptic, as part of the government of the verb. Proleptic pronouns appear in ܠܚܫܐ ܠܠܗܝܬܐ “and (the sun) dries up it the grass” against the source text καὶ ἐξήρανεν τὸν χόρτον “and (the sun) dries up the grass” (Jas 1:11); ܠܠܗܝܬܐ ܠܠܗܝܬܐ “defiles it our whole body” against the source text ἡ σπιλοῦσα ὅλον τὸ σῶμα “staining the whole body” (Jas 3:6); ܠܠܗܝܬܐ ܠܠܗܝܬܐ “who are you that you judge him your neighbor” over against τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων τὸν πλησίον “who are you that judges the neighbor” (Jas 4:12); ܠܠܗܝܬܐ ܠܠܗܝܬܐ “and the prayer of faith will heal him the one that is sick” against καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα “and the prayer of faith will save the one that is sick” (Jas 5:15); ܠܠܗܝܬܐ ܠܠܗܝܬܐ “that it might save them your souls” against σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν “to save your souls” (Jas 1:21).

To express the concept of “have” Syriac uses the preposition *lamadh* as in ܠܠܗܝܬܐ ܠܠܗܝܬܐ “but let her patience have full effect” as against its source text ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον τέλειον ἔχέτω (Jas 1:4). The first ܠܠܗܝܬܐ “(let) her have” anticipates ܠܠܗܝܬܐ “(let) patience have”; the second ܠܠܗܝܬܐ points back to ܠܠܗܝܬܐ. This is good Syriac.

## RENDERINGS OF THE GREEK FUTURE TENSE

The Syriac translator rendered the Greek future tense (26 cases in 17 verses) with the participle 19 times,<sup>18</sup> with the prefix conjugation 5 times,<sup>19</sup> with the adjective once,<sup>20</sup> and with the construction ܠܠܗܝܬܐ (passive participle) + *dalath* + prefix conjugation once.<sup>21</sup> This pattern fits the profile of a reader oriented translation.

<sup>18</sup> Jas 1:5, 7, 10, 11, 12; 2:18 (2x); 4:7, 13 (4x), 15 (second case); 5:3 (first case; *eiṣl*), 15 (3x), 20 (2x).

<sup>19</sup> Jas 1:25 (*eiṣl*); 2:8 (OT citation); 4:8, 10, 15 (first case).

<sup>20</sup> Jas 3:1.

<sup>21</sup> Jas 5:3 (second case).



Contrast: ܡܚܒܐ ܟܥܡܐ ܠܒܪܐܠܐ ܠܥܡܐ “and this one will be blessed in his doing” (Jas 1:25 οὗτος μακάριος ἐν τῇ ποιήσει αὐτοῦ ἔσται), where the translator used the prefix conjugation, with ܠܡܚܒܐܡܠܐ ܠܥܡܐ ܐܡܪܬܡܢܐ ܠܚܒܐ “and their corrosion will be evidence against you” (Jas 5:3 καὶ ὁ ἰδὸς αὐτῶν εἰς μαρτύριον ὑμῖν ἔσται), where the translator used the active participle.

## REFLEXES OF THE GREEK IMPERATIVE

Negated imperatives are rendered into good Syriac as ܠ + prefix conjugation: ܠܡܢܚܒܐ ܠ < μὴ πλανᾶσθε “do not be deceived” (Jas 1:16); ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܚܒܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܚܒܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ “do not be puffed up against the truth and lie” < μὴ κατακαυχᾶσθε καὶ ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας “do not boast against and be false to the truth” (Jas 3:14); ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ “do not be speaking against each other” < μὴ καταλαλεῖτε ἀλλήλων “do not slander one another” (Jas 4:11); ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ “do not groan against one another” < μὴ στενάζετε ... κατ’ ἀλλήλων “do not groan against one another” (Jas 5:9). Once, this Greek syntagm is rendered by ܠ + the periphrastic construction consisting of ܟܥܡܐ in the suffix conjugation + participle: ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ “do not swear” < μὴ ὀμνύετε “do not swear” (Jas 5:12). This, too, is idiomatic Syriac.<sup>22</sup>

Positive imperatives are generally rendered by the Syriac imperative form. In two verses, however, the idiomatic construction consisting of ܟܥܡܐ in the suffix conjugation + participle appears: ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ “so be speaking and so be doing” < οὕτως λαλεῖτε καὶ οὕτως ποιεῖτε “so speak and so do” (Jas 2:12) and ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ ܠܡܠܝܬܐ “and confess your faults one to another and pray one for the other” < ἐξομολογεῖσθε ὁὖν<sup>23</sup> ἀλλήλοις τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν<sup>24</sup> καὶ εὐχεσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων “therefore

<sup>22</sup> Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, § 260.

<sup>23</sup> See also Jas 5:7 where ܡܠܝܬܐ renders οὖν.

<sup>24</sup> The Syriac read τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν “your transgressions” as over against τὰς ἁμαρτίας “(your) sins.”

confess your transgressions to one another and pray for one another” (Jas 5:16).

The idiomatic construction consisting of ܐܡܝܢ in the suffix conjugation + participle also conveys wish or advice as in ܐܡܝܢ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ “you should know that we (teachers) are subject to greater judgment” (Jas 3:1). This, too, is good Syriac, conveying the message of the text clearly to the reader in his own vernacular.

### RENDERINGS OF THE GREEK INFINITIVE

The Greek infinitive appears 26 times in James in 20 verses. The translator transferred the Greek infinitive into good Syriac using a variety of translation equivalents. He substituted the noun ܠܡ “Peace!” for the Greek infinitive *χαίρειν* “Greetings!” in his salutation (Jas 1:1), as per good Syriac.<sup>25</sup> In the purpose clause, he used *dalath* + the prefix conjugation as the equivalent of the Greek articular infinitive as in *εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς* “that we should be” rendered as ܕܐܡܝܢ “that we should be” (Jas 1:18). As a complement of the verb “be able” he rendered the Greek infinitive by the conjunction *dalath* + prefix conjugation as in ܕܠܡ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ “the word implanted in your nature, which is able that it (the word) might save your souls” rendering τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον τὸν δυνάμενον σῶσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν “the implanted word which is able to save your souls” (Jas 1:21) and ܕܠܡ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ “who is able that he might save and he might destroy” from Greek *ὁ δυνάμενος σῶσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι* “who is able to save and to destroy” (Jas 4:12) in accordance with Syriac idiom. He used a “that” clause containing the participle to convey the meaning of the infinitive clause in translating *Εἰ τις δοκεῖ θρησκὸς εἶναι* “if anyone thinks himself to be religious” by ܕܠܡ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ “and if anyone thinks that he serves God” translates (Jas 1:26). Yet, he retains the infinitive when used as a complement of a participle functioning as an adjective – ܕܠܡ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ

<sup>25</sup> For the Greek infinitive as a greeting in letters, see Acts 15:23 (the letter of the apostles and elders to the Gentile believers) and Acts 23:26 (the letter of Claudius Lysias to Felix). In both places the Syriac translator rendered it by the noun ܠܡ “Peace!” as here.

## RENDERING OF THE GREEK PARTICIPLE EXPRESSING ATTENDANT CIRCUMSTANCES

Often where the Greek participle expresses attendant circumstance, being subordinate to the main verb, the Peshitta renders it via coordination using a coordinating conjunction such as ܐ “and,” ܕܠ “but,” or ܠܢ “for,” instead of subordination. In Jas 1:14, the translation coordinates the verbal elements with conjunctive *waw*: ܠܥܠܝܬܐ ܐܡ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܐ ܒܐܝܢ ܒܐܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ “but each one by his own desire is tempted and lured and enticed” representing ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται ὑπὸ τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος “but each one is tempted by his own desire, being lured and enticed.” The same happens in Jas 1:22, where the participle becomes an imperative due to coordination: ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܠܐ “Be doers of the word and not hearers only and do not deceive yourselves” renders Γίνεσθε δὲ ποιηταί

λόγου καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀκροαταὶ παραλογιζόμενοι ἑαυτούς “Be doers of the word and not only hearers, deceiving yourselves.” Compare also:  $\text{כִּי־אִם־יִשְׁכַּח־לֵךְ־יִשְׁכַּח־לֵךְ}$  “And if you show favoritism you commit sin and you are reproved by the law” for εἰ δὲ προσωπολημπτεῖτε, ἁμαρτίαν ἐργάζεσθε ἐλεγχόμενοι ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου “And if you show favoritism you commit sin, being exposed by the law” (Jas 2:9);  $\text{וַיִּבְכּוּ}$  “wail and weep” for λαύσατε ὀλολύζοντες “weep, moaning” (Jas 5:1);  $\text{כְּחֹסֶה־הַצֶּמַח־לְפָנֵי־הָאֲדֹנָיִם}$  “like the farmer who waits for the precious fruits of his land and is patient for them” for ἰδοὺ ὁ γεωργὸς ἐκδέχεται τὸν τίμιον καρπὸν τῆς γῆς μακροθυμῶν ἐπ’ αὐτῷ “Behold the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the land, being patient for it” (Jas 5:7);  $\text{וַיְהִי־וַיִּבְרָא־וַיְהִי}$  “he willed and begat us” for βουληθεὶς ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς “having willed, he brought us forth” (Jas 1:18);  $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַח־וַיִּשְׂמַח־וַיִּשְׂמַח}$  “and they should pray for him and anoint him with oil” for καὶ προσευξάσθωσαν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἀλείψαντες αὐτὸν ἐλαίῳ “and they should pray for him, having anointed him with oil” (Jas 5:14).

The translator added  $\text{וְכִי}$  as the coordinating conjunction in Jas 1:2-3, “Let all joy be yours ... for you know ( $\text{וְכִי־יָדַעְתֶּם}$ ) that” representing “Count it all joy ..., knowing (γινώσκοντες) that.” Moreover, he added  $\text{כִּי}$  as the coordinating conjunction in Jas 3:1,  $\text{כִּי־יִשְׁכַּח־לֵךְ־יִשְׁכַּח־לֵךְ}$  “There should not be many teachers among you ..., but you should know that” standing for Μὴ πολλοὶ διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε ..., εἰδότες ὅτι “Not many of you should become teachers ..., knowing that.”

There are places where the translator used a subordinating conjunction instead. In Jas 1:13, for example, the source text μηδεὶς πειραζόμενος λεγέτω “let no one, being tempted, say” is realized as  $\text{וְכִי־יִשְׁכַּח־לֵךְ־יִשְׁכַּח־לֵךְ}$  “let no one say when he is tempted,” with the subordinating conjunction  $\text{כִּי}$  “when.” In Jas 1:15 the source text ἡ δὲ ἁμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον “and sin, having run its course, brings forth death” is rendered as  $\text{וְכִי־יִשְׁכַּח־לֵךְ־יִשְׁכַּח־לֵךְ}$  “and sin, after it has been brought to an end, brings forth death,” with the subordinating conjunction  $\text{כִּי}$  “after.” In Jas 2:21 the translator used  $\text{כִּי}$  as a temporal subordinator, rendering Ἀβραάμ ... οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη ἀνενέγκας Ἰσαὰκ ... ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον “Wasn't Abraham ... justified by works, having

offered Isaac ... upon the altar?” as ܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ ܐܬܝܒ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “Wasn't Abraham ... justified by works, when he offered Isaac ... upon the altar?”

## EXPRESSIONS IN IDIOMATIC SYRIAC

The translator used idiomatic Syriac expressions in his translation. Lexemes consisting of two words in Syriac are used: ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “hypocrisy” (προσωπολημψία “partiality”; Jas 2:1) and the related ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “show partiality” (προσωπολημπτέω “show partiality” Jas 2:9; ἀνυπόκριτος “without pretense” 3:17); ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “lawgiver” (νομοθέτης “lawgiver”; Jas 4:12 – the Syriac lexeme owes its origin to the Greek language); ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “be patient” (μακροθυμήσατε “be patient”; Jas 5:7-8); ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “(the farmer) is patient” (μακροθυμῶν “being patient”; Jas 5:7); ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “patience” (μακροθυμία “patience”; Jas 5:10). Moreover, the translator rendered “the same” expressed in Greek by the reflexive pronoun αὐτός into idiomatic Syriac, translating ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ στόματος “out of the same mouth” as ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “out of the same mouth” (Jas 3:10; preposition + proleptic pronoun – same preposition – determined noun) and ἡ πηγή ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς ὀπῆς “a spring from the same opening” as ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “from the same spring” (Jas 3:11; the numeral ܐܘܬܝܢܐ “one” fronted before its nominal head).

With regard to the verb, the translator added the dative of reference: ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ ܐܬܝܒ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “have you not made distinctions among yourselves” opposed to καὶ οὐ διεκρίθητε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς “have you not made distinctions among yourselves” (Jas 2:4). He also added the ethical dative, a “faded variety” of the dative of reference,<sup>26</sup> in ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ ܐܬܝܒ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “for the coming of our Lord has drawn near” rendering ὅτι ἡ παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου ἤγγικεν “for the coming of the Lord has drawn near” (Jas 5:8) and in ܐܘܬܝܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܬܐܪ “sit” translating κάθου “sit” (Jas 2:3).

<sup>26</sup> J. B. Greenough et al. (eds.), *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar for Schools and Colleges* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1903), 236, § 380.

## CLEAR INTERPRETIVE EXPRESSION IN THE TARGET LANGUAGE

The translator transferred certain Greek expressions into idiomatic Syriac by exegeting them for the benefit of the reader. In Jas 1:1 the rendering ܐܘܢܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ “those scattered among the nations” explains the Greek ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ “those who are in the dispersion.” In Jas 1:21 ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ “the word that is implanted in our nature” interprets the Greek τὸν ἔμφυτον λόγον “the implanted word.” In Jas 1:26 the words ܐܕܡܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ “and if anyone thinks that he serves God” translate εἴ τις δοκεῖ θρησκὸς εἶναι “if anyone thinks himself to be religious” (Jas 1:26), the adjective θρησκός “religious” being a *hapax legomenon* in the Greek New Testament. The translator renders the cognate noun θρησκεία “worship” in this context similarly, using ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ “service” (Jas 1:26-27). The verb θρησκειύω “worship” does not appear in the New Testament, but does in Wis 11:15, where the Syriac renders it with the verb ܡܬܬܬܝܢ “worship.”

In Jas 2:8 νόμον ... βασιλικὸν “the royal law” becomes ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ “the law of God,” making it clear that royal refers to the Deity. In Jas 2:4 the translator renders κριταὶ διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν “judges of [with] evil thoughts” as ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ “expounders<sup>27</sup> of evil thoughts.” In Jas 2:10 the translator crafts γέγονεν πάντων ἔνοχος “he has become guilty of all” into ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ “he has become guilty of the whole law” for clarity. The translator changed the second person plural of the verb ὁρᾶτε (“you see” that ...) of Jas 2:24 into the singular (ܐܕܡܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ), bringing the flow of the argument into line with the previous context (Jas 2:18-20). By adding prepositions in his translation of Jas 2:13 the translator brought clarity for his readers, rendering κατακαυχᾶσθε ἔλεος κρίσεως as ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ “you exalt yourselves over judgment through mercies.” Pesh follows the Greek variant κατακαυχᾶσθε, understanding the form ἔλεος, a neuter noun, to be in the accusative case, with the oblique object κρίσεως in the genitive case. The oblique object in the genitive means “against” as in Rom 11:18 μὴ κατακαυχῶ τῶν κλάδων “do not boast against the branches,” the Syriac translating ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ “do not boast

<sup>27</sup> Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, 811.

βασιλείας ἧς ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν; as כַּלְכַּל כְּפָחַל כֹּסֶם לְ  
כַמְלִיץ חֶלְכַּל, וְכִפְחַלְכַּל כֹּחֵי עֲשׂוּמַי כַּמְלִיץ כַּחַ כִּפְחַלְכַּח מַי כִּי־כַח  
לְכַסְחִי לְכַלְכַּל “Was it not the poor of the world, but rich in faith, that

man” as *καὶ οὗτος ὁ ἀνὴρ τέλει ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος* “Everyone who does not stumble in spoken word, this one is a perfect man.” In the same verse, he expresses *δυνατὸς χαλιναγωγῆσαι καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα* “able also to

verse. The first part then reads as follows:  $\kappa\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\varsigma\ \kappa\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\varsigma\ \alpha\mu\ \kappa\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \kappa\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\varsigma$   
 $\alpha\mu\ \kappa\alpha\ \gamma\alpha\rho$  “And the tongue is a fire and a world of sin like a forest.” In  
the second part of the verse, the Greek structure has the subject,  $\eta\ \gamma\lambda\omega\sigma\sigma\alpha$

subject (“the tongue”) followed by a temporal clause (“when it is among the members”) followed by the predicate (... **ܡܡܐ ... ܡܡܐܐ ... ܡܡܐܐ** “defiles ... and sets ablaze ... and burns ...”). In addition, the translator offers the interpretive rendering **ܕܠܗܝܢ ܬܪܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܬܐ** “the successions of our tribes which (successions) run like wheels” for τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως “the wheel (course) of the family line.” Moreover, he renders ὑπὸ τῆς γεέννης “by Gehenna” as **ܒܥܝܪܐ** “by fire” contextually, the context not having to do with eternal judgment. To sum up, the translator attempted to make sense of the Greek in a clear way for his readers and hence paraphrases the Greek in this verse.

In Jas 3:7 the translator changes the singular subject *πᾶσα φύσις* “every species” into the plural **ܕܡܠܬܐ ... ܕܡܠܬܐ** “all species,” explicates the terms *ἐρπετῶν τε καὶ ἐναλίων* “of reptiles and of sea creatures” as **ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ** “and creepers of the sea and of the dry land,” and condenses the verbs *δαμάζεται καὶ δεδάμασται* “can be tamed and has been tamed” into **ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ** “are subdued.” This translation communicates clearly to the readers.

In Jas 4:6 the translator offers a reader friendly translation of *ὁ θεὸς ὑπερηφάνοις ἀντιτάσσεται* “God opposes the proud” by rendering **ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ** “God humbles the proud.”

In Jas 5:13 the translator transforms the Greek into an easily understandable form by adding the conditional **ܕܡܠܬܐ** “and if” and expressing the jussive by the paraphrastic construction, namely **ܕܡܠܬܐ** as jussive plus the active participle. The translator reformulated *Κακοπαθεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν, προσευχέσθω· εὐθυμεῖ τις, ψαλλέτω* “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises.” into **ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ** “And if anyone among you should be in distress, let him pray. And if anyone rejoices, let him sing.” Jas 5:14 continues the thought, reading **ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ** “And if sick, he should summon the elders of the congregation,” reflecting *ἄσθενεῖ τις ἐν ὑμῖν, προσκαλεσάσθω τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας* “Is anyone among you sick? Let him summon the elders of the congregation.” The translator again inserts **ܕܡܠܬܐ** “and if,” making the first clause conditional, and eliminates *ἐν ὑμῖν* “among you” as redundant.



In Jas 5:15, the translator rendered “the prayer of faith will save (σώσει) the sick” as “the prayer of faith will make the sick well (ܡܠܝܬܐ),” clearly expressing the meaning of the Greek. In keeping with good Syriac style, he used the proleptic pronoun ܠ “to him,” pointing forward to ܡܠܝܬܐ “him that is sick.” Furthermore, he transformed the Greek καὶ ἂν ἁμαρτίας ἢ πεποιηκώς, ἀφεθήσονται<sup>28</sup> αὐτῷ “and if he be committing sins, they shall be forgiven him” into clear Syriac by rendering ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ ܡܠ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܡܠ ܡܠܝܬܐ “and if sins have been committed by him, they shall be forgiven him.”

In Jas 5:16, the translator reformulates πολὺ γὰρ ἰσχύει δέησις δικαίου ἐνεργουμένη “effective entreaty of a righteous person is very strong” for the sake of his readers, offering ܠ ܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ “for great is the power of the prayer that the righteous prays.”

In Jas 5:19 the translator adds the words “from his error” for perspecuity. The Peshitta reads ܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܬܐ “and someone return him from his error” against the Greek καὶ ἐπιστρέψῃ τις αὐτόν “and someone return him.”

## CONCLUSION

The translation features discussed above, found in the Peshitta Epistle of James, point clearly to a reader oriented translation. The translator uses idiomatic Syriac, transforming the Greek of his source text into clear Syriac expression. His was not a source text oriented translation.

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<sup>28</sup> The Syriac reflects the plural ἀφεθήσονται against the singular ἀφεθήσεται.

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