

STUDIES IN THE SYNTAX OF THE PESHITTA OF 1 KINGS¹

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The Peshitta (Syriac version) of the book of 1 Kings has until recently suffered neglect. The only monograph examining it to date was published in 1897. This thesis uses the corpus of 1 Kings as a basis for what is only the second detailed study of the syntax of the Peshitta of the Old Testament. It seeks to examine both those constructions in Syriac that contrast in form with their Hebrew *Vorlage*, and those constructions that contain variations within the Syriac language as yet unexplained by researchers. For each construction the contribution of previous studies such as those by Nöldeke, Duval, Avinery, Muraoka, and Joosten is summarised.

Chapter 2 examines the genitive. Whereas in Hebrew the genitive is usually expressed by the construct-genitive relationship, in Syriac the genitive is commonly expressed by one of three constructions: the construct-genitive relationship (construction *a*) is one, another construction employs the relative particle *dalath* between the nouns (construction *b*), and a third employs both the relative particle and a pronominal suffix on the first noun agreeing in number and gender with the second noun (construction *c*). Construction *a* occurs mainly with a few very frequently occurring first nouns, *e.g.*, 'house' and 'son'. Construction *b* is the most common construction, being particularly used when the second noun is the name of a material. Construction *c* occurs most when both nouns are masculine singular, especially when the second noun is a personal proper noun. The most important pairs of nouns for examination are those pairs that occur together in more than one construction. For example, in the case

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of the combination ‘prophet of God’ it was found that construction *b* was used to express the indefinite ‘a prophet of God’, while construction *c* was used to express the definite ‘the prophet of God’. In this way Syriac compensates for its lack of a definite article.

Similarly, the employment of a suffix on the word *kul* (‘all’) often marks the definiteness of the noun it precedes (chapter 3). The suffix is never used with the word *kul* when the noun it precedes is clearly indefinite.

As with the genitive construction there are three main ways of governing a direct object in Syriac (chapter 4): without an object marker (construction *d*), with the object marker *lamadh* (construction *e*), and with both the object marker and a verbal suffix agreeing with the noun (construction *f*). Construction *d* tends to occur with inanimates and indefinites and is the most common construction; construction *e* tends to occur with proper nouns, definite animate nouns and with objects associated with the temple; construction *f* does not occur with compound objects, and tends not to occur with plural ones. Construction *f* may be used rather than constructions *d* or *e* to express that an action is the culmination of previous events, or it may be used because a previous mention of the object is referred back to. The discovery that objects of cult furniture frequently receive construction *f* demands a reassessment of Avinery’s conclusion that the Peshitta of Exodus was translated by a different person from the rest of the Pentateuch. The presence or absence of the object marker in Syriac is an issue solely internal to that language and has nothing to do with the presence or absence of the object marker *’eth* in Hebrew.

Chapter 5 contrasts the way Hebrew and Syriac use the particle *waw* (‘and’). The Peshitta tends to add *waw* more frequently (13 types of construction) than it omits *waw* (4 types of construction). There is a special study of when co-ordinated verbs omit *waw*, *i.e.*, of asyndeton. Asyndeton in Syriac occurs only very rarely when the first verb is not a verb of motion, and occurs most frequently when the two verbs are imperatives. The *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (*BHS*) frequently misinterprets the contrast between the two languages concerning construction with *waw* as evidence for textual variants. Chapter 6 contrasts Hebrew and Syriac use of verbal tenses, focusing

on unusual renderings in Syriac. It is found that the Hebrew *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* forms may be understood as presenting durative action, and that *wayyiqtol* and *yiqtol* forms are not understood as opposites by the Peshitta. Chapter 7 examines formulae introducing speech. The employment of a number of paraphrases and the choice of the tense of verb employed are found to be issues mainly internal to Syriac and to the way it presents protagonists in a conversation. In cases where there is a nominal subject following the verb a pronoun referring to the addressee is often placed immediately after the verb. A pronoun referring to the addressee is added particularly often when a participle introduces speech. Participles may be used to represent speech as a response, but a contrastive response may be introduced by a verb in the perfect tense preceded by *waw*.

The infinitive (chapter 8) in Syriac is more restricted in use than both the infinitive absolute and the infinitive construct in Hebrew. Syriac frequently translates an infinitive construct using a finite verb in the same tense as the preceding verb. Hebrew and Syriac prepositions show considerable contrast (chapter 9). The Syriac preposition *lamadh* corresponds to a variety of Hebrew constructions. The preposition *qdam* ('before') preceding a noun or pronoun that denotes God can be shown at times to be used as an anti-anthropomorphism. The Syriac demonstrative (chapter 10) generally follows the noun it modifies, though the demonstrative receives more prominence (often to mark contrast) if it precedes the noun. The demonstrative may be added to compensate for the lack of a definite article in Syriac. The Syriac word for 'behold' (chapter 11) follows different rules from that of its Hebrew counterpart. In particular, the Peshitta employs paraphrase or the omission of the word 'behold' in order to prevent the word being used by someone when their addressee cannot see the thing to which attention is drawn.

When the Peshitta of 1 Kings is considered as a whole (chapter 12) it is found to be very consistent in preferring its own idiom to a literal representation of the Masoretic Text. The Peshitta is also found to employ a number of means to represent definiteness even though Syriac has no definite article. When the tendency to

follow its own idioms is recognised, a considerable number of textual variants attributed to the Peshitta in *BHS* are found to be illusory.