

The Earliest Slavonic Pentateuch: Syriac through Slavonic  
Table 1: Syriac against All

Nr	Place	Peculiar East Slavic reading	Slavonic rendering of LXX	LXX	Hebrew Bible	Peshiṭta	Explainability via Syriac
1	Ex 8:15 (19)	(m) воля will	персть ( <i>pro</i> персть) (of God)	δάκτυλος	עצבן	ܥܒܝܢ his finger / ܥܒܝܢ finger	Syriac Error: ܥܒܝܢ his will / ܥܒܝܢ will <i>pro</i> (his) finger
2	Ex 16:31	имя его недѣля. манна же бѣаше... his name week. But the manna was...	имя тому манна. бѣаше...	τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ μαν ἦν δὲ ...	...תשמו מן יהוה...	ܡܢܐ ܡܢܐ ...ܡܢܐ.	Syriac ܡܢܐ <i>pro</i> ܡܢܐ <sup>1</sup>
3	Lev 2:12	даръ верхній upper gift	(m) начаток firstfruit	δῶρον ἀπαρχῆς	קרבן ראשית	ܡܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ	Syriac mistranslation possible in Syriac but not in Hebrew and Aramaic <sup>2</sup>
4	Num 23:9	вѣоплѣчают ся they set up camp	вселяется he dwells	κατοικήσει	יָשֹׁכֶן he shall dwell	ܕܡܝܢ ihabited, dwelled / set up camp	Syriac <sup>3</sup>
5	Num 24:22	въ Асуріи пленятъ тя. in Assyria one shall carry thee captive.	Асуріи плѣнятъ я. the Assyrians shall carry thee away captive.	ἄσσυριοὶ σε αἰχμαλωτεύσουσιν	עַד־מָה אֲשׁוּר תִּשָּׁבֶץ until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.	ܕܥܬܝܐ ܕܥܬܝܐ ܕܥܬܝܐ until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.	Syriac <sup>4</sup>
6	Deut 28:22	<i>add to the list of diseases (as compared to LXX)</i> ратию with the war	—	—	וּבַחֶרֶב with the sword	ܕܥܬܝܐ with the sword / metaph. war	Syriac

(m) = marginal gloss

Table 2: Non-Rabbinic Israelite against All

Nr	Place	Peculiar East Slavic reading	Slavonic rendering of LXX	LXX	Hebrew Bible	Peshiṭta	Explainability via Samaritan
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<sup>1</sup> Especially likely in the Serto Syriac script (used in the Western Syrian tradition, that is, “monophysite” one), where ܥܐ is similar to ܥܐܐ.

<sup>2</sup> The word ܡܠܚܝܬܐ “beginning / first fruits” has only in Syriac (not in Aramaic) the additional meaning “highest part”.

<sup>3</sup> The meaning of the Syriac verb encompasses the meanings of both Hebrew verbs יָשֹׁכֶן and יָהֹוּ.

<sup>4</sup> The reading въ Асуріи (“in Assyria”) instead of Асуріи (“Assyrians”) is a mistranslation from Syriac: the composite preposition -ܕܥܬܝܐ is understood as two different prepositions, ܥܬܝܐ and -ܕܥܬܝܐ, where the meaning of the first one is the same, whereas the second one would have the meaning “in the direction of / to”. There is no similar construction in the Aramaic targums.

1	Ex 4:25	разумъ	бритву	ψῆφον	צר knife; flint	כרס knife; flint. <i>Aramaic</i> <i>tgg</i> : ט[י]נרא	Samaritan tgg: נאר light; <i>metaph.</i> wisdom
2	Lev 18:21	(m) болваннико мъ	князю	ἄρχοντι	למלך to Moloch	לחבלה to make pregnant foreign (woman) / prostitute (long evolution through Tgg: foreign gods—foreign women...)	Some Jewish tradition attested to in Vulgate: <i>idolo Moloch</i>

Table 3: Targums and Syriac against All

Nr	Place	Peculiar East Slavic reading	Slavonic rendering of LXX	LXX	Hebrew Bible	Peshiṭta	Explainability <i>via</i> Syriac and Targums
1	Gen 6:2	сынове судны	сынове божіи	οἱ υἱοὶ [ <i>var</i> αγγελοι = <i>var</i> TgNeofiti] τοῦ θεοῦ	בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים	ܒܢܝ ܥܠܡܝܢ [= <i>var</i> TgNeofiti]	Variant readings in both Aramaic and Syriac <sup>5</sup>
2	Gen 32:31	(m) ангела	бога	θεόν	אֱלֹהִים	ܡܠܬܐ	Syriac closer than Aramaic <sup>6</sup>
3	Gen 49:6	сокрушили городъ	прерѣзаста жилы волowy	ἐνευρο-κόπησαν ταῦρον	עָקְרוּ־שׁוֹר	ܥܡܝܐ ܨܥܝܐ	Syriac, Aramaic, Lat. <sup>7</sup> שׁוֹר vocalised as שׁוֹר
4	Ex 19:11	(m) слава господня	господъ	κύριος	יְהוָה YHWH	ܡܠܬܐ Lord	Syriac exegesis <sup>8</sup> and Tg Neofiti <sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> With בְּנֵי רִבְרִבָּא “sons of chiefs” in the Babylonian Tg Onqelos and the Palestinian Tg Ps.-Jonathan. The variant of Tg Neofiti “sons of judges” represents an early Palestinian exegetic tradition (pre-Christian, according to its co-discoverer and editor A. Diez Macho, or 4<sup>th</sup>-century AD, according to M. McNamara); another variant of Tg Neofiti (“angels of God”) coincides with a variant of LXX. Gorsky (Горский, О славянском..., 141) quotes Rashi (1040–1105) who interprets the Hebrew phrase as “sons of chiefs and judges”. Thus, the peculiar reading in Slavonic represents an archaic Jewish exegesis, which was preserved among the variant readings of Peshiṭta and going against the mainstream of the mediaeval Jewish exegesis, even though not completely forgotten by the latter.

<sup>6</sup> The targumic readings differ from the Syriac one and are the following: מַלְאַךְא דִּי “angel of God” (Onqelos), מַלְאַכֵּי דִּי “angels of God” (Ps.-Jonathan), מַלְאַכֵּי מִן קֳדָם יי “angels from those before God” (Neofiti); Samaritan Tg follows MT.

<sup>7</sup> That is, not “ox” but “wall (of city)”. Gorsky (Горский, О славянском..., 143) noticed the same vocalisation as implied in Aquila, Symmachus, and Vulgate. One can add to this list the whole rabbinic targumic tradition: Onqelos, Ps.-Jonathan, and Neofiti use the word “wall” explicitly, whereas the two fragmentary targums imply the same understanding of the Hebrew text (only the Samaritan targum follows MT). Neither of these sources with exception of Vulgate is attested to as available in the Slavic world. This not an error of translation but a non-Masoretic tradition of vocalisation, different from the underlying LXX one either.

<sup>8</sup> Ex 19:11, 18; 20:20 deal with the divine presence on Mt Sinai. Aphrahat calls it *shekhina* (ܫܝܚܝܢܐ) in *Demonstrationes* 4:7 (“For his [Moses] prayer delivered him from the hands of Pharaoh, and it showed him the Shekhinah of his God...”), 18:4 (“Trembling seized him [Moses] because he had seen the Shekhinah of the Most High, which rests on the mountain, the great power of the throne of God”); tr. by Adam Lehto, *The Demonstrations of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage*, Georgias Eastern Christian Studies, 27; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010, 133, 401.

<sup>9</sup> Onqelos, Ps.-Jonathan, and Samaritan targum follow MT, the other four rabbinic targums have here “word of the Lord” ( מִימְרָא דִּי with spelling variants).

							איקר שכינתא דיי the great shekhina of the Lord
5	Ex 19:18	схоженія дѣля славы божія	схоженія дѣля божія	διὰ τὸ καταβεβηκέναι ἐπ' αὐτὸ τὸν θεὸν	אִשָּׁר יֵרֵד עָלָיו יְהוָה	ܡܠܟܐ ܘܡܨܝܚ ܠܡܠܟܐ, ܡܠܟܐ ܠܡܠܟܐ	Syriac exegesis and Targums <sup>10</sup> בגלל דאתגליית עלוי איקר שכינתא דיי because of revealing on it of the great shekhina of the Lord
6	Ex 20:20	слава божія	богъ	ὁ θεός	הָאֱלֹהִים	ܠܡܠܟܐ	Syriac exegesis and Targums <sup>11</sup> (א)יקר שכינתיה דיי
7	Ex 22:28 (27)	царю да не глаголеши зла, ни судьи thou shalt not say bad to the king, nor to the judge	богу да не глаголеши зла thou shalt not say bad to God	θεοὺς οὐ κακο- λογήσεις	אֱלֹהִים לֹא תְקַלֵּל thou shalt not revile the god(s)	ܠܡܠܟܐ ܠܐ ܐܬܝܬܝܐ thou shalt not revile the judge	Targums <sup>12</sup> and Syriac  Reading <b>царю</b> remains <b>unexplained</b> .

Table 4: Targums against All

Nr	Place	Peculiar East Slavic reading	Slavonic rendering of LXX	LXX	Hebrew Bible	Peshiṭta	Explainability <i>via</i> rabbinical Aramaic
1, 2, 3	Gen 41:45, 50; Ex 21:6	владыкы	жерьца	ἱερέως	כֹּהֵן priest / chieftain	ܡܠܟܐ pagan priest	רבה “chief” in the four rabbinic Tgg <sup>13</sup>
4	Ex 11:9	( <i>added after</i> жены еврѣяныня) мудры есть вельми	—	—	כִּי־חַיִּים Because (they are) lively (vigorous) ones	ܡܠܟܐ ܘܡܨܝܚ ܠܡܠܟܐ Because they (themselves) are midwives <sup>14</sup>	Only targumic parallels <sup>15</sup>
5	Ex 21:6	(m) до евеля until the	въ вѣкы	εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα	לְעֹלָם	ܠܠܡܐ	Targums <sup>16</sup> עד יובלא

<sup>10</sup> Tg Neofiti (repeated in margins) with three fragmentary targums against Onqelos, Ps.-Jonathan and Samaritan, which follow MT.

<sup>11</sup> Tg Neofiti with two fragmentary targums against Onqelos and Ps.-Jonathan (having here *magnalia Dei*) and Samaritan (having a quite different text).

<sup>12</sup> All the four rabbinic targums available for this verse—Onqelos, Ps.-Jonathan, Neofiti, and the fragmentary one—agree with Peshiṭta; all of them have here the reading “judge(s)”.

<sup>13</sup> Ex 21:6 PsJon has אֲדֹנָי “ruler”. SamTg follows MT.

<sup>14</sup> The word ܡܠܟܐ (meaning both “midwives” and “women in labour”) is an almost exact homograph of the Hebrew word חַיִּים.

<sup>15</sup> As it was first noticed by Gorsky who quoted (in Latin tr.) Onqelos: אֲרִי חַכְמָן אִינִין “because they are wise” (Горский, О славянскомъ..., 146). There is a parallel also in Ps.-Jonathan: אֲרוֹם וְרִיזִן וְחַכְמָן בְּדַעְתִּיהֶן הִינִין “because they are strong and wise in knowledge”. Neither of these two targums, however, provides the exact parallel to the Slavonic reading.

<sup>16</sup> Ps.-Jonathan and Neofiti (in marginalia only) against Onqelos and Samaritan following MT (and one fragmentary targum that does not contain the relevant part of the verse).

		jubilee					
6, 7	Ex 21:22- 23	v.22: he умеръ not dead v.23: смертенъ dead	v.22: необличень v.23: обличень	v.22: μὴ ἐξεικονισμένο ν v.23: ἐξεικονισμένο ν	וְלֹא יִהְיֶה אָסוֹן and there will be no mischief וְאִם־אָסוֹן יִהְיֶה and if there will be a mischief	ܐܠܐ ܡܡܝܬܐ ܡܠܚܘܬܐ and there will be no misfortune ܐܡܐ ܡܠܚܘܬܐ and if there will be a misfortune	Targums <sup>17</sup> וְלֹא יִהְיֶה מוֹתָא and there will be no death וְאִם מוֹתָא יִהְיֶה and if there will be the death
8	Ex 22:19	(m) бору	господину	κυρίῳ	לַיהוָה	ܠܡܠܟܐ	Targums <sup>18</sup> ܝܝ
9	Lev 4:3	старѣйшина жрецъ the eldest/presidi ng priest/sacrific er	(m) помазаныи anointed	ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ κεχειρισμένος	הַכֹּהֵן הַמְּשִׁיחַ	ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ	Onqelos <sup>19</sup> ܩܗܢܐ ܕܪܒܐ
10, 11	Num 12:1 twice	красная beautiful	муриня Ethiopian (woman)	αἰθιοπίσσης	כַּשִּׁית	ܠܡܫܬܐ	Onqelos: שפִּירָתָא “beautiful” Samaritan: כשירתה “skilled; most excellent, worthy” <sup>20</sup>

Table 5: Hebrew and Aramaic against All

Nr	Place	Peculiar East Slavic reading	Slavonic rendering of LXX	LXX	Hebrew Bible	Peshiṭta	Explainability <i>via</i> Hebrew and Aramaic
1	Gen 49:21	яко елень пущень	вѣя израсла	στέλεχος ἀνειμένον	אֵילָה שְׁלֵחָה	ܐܬܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ quick messenger <sup>21</sup>	MT = Sam: אילה שליחה
2	Ex 3:1	Етеръ	Ефоръ etc.	Ιοθορ	יְתֵרוֹ	ܝܬܪܐ	Neither MT; Tgg יתרו <sup>22</sup>
3	Ex 4:18	Етеръ	Ефоръ etc.	Ιοθορ	יְתֵר	ܝܬܪܐ	MT; Onq <sup>23</sup> יתֵר
4	Ex 18:1	Етеръ	Ефоръ etc.	Ιοθορ	יְתֵרוֹ	ܝܬܪܐ	Neither MT; Tgg יתרו <sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Onqelos and Ps.-Jonathan (with an almost the same wording; quoted in the table is Onqelos) against Neofiti, one fragmentary targum, and the Samaritan targum (which have אסכול “disaster” = Sam. אסקל).

<sup>18</sup> Tg Neofiti (quoted), Onqelos, Ps.-Jonathan, and one fragmentary targum (with a slightly different wording) against the Samaritan one (where the relevant part of the verse is omitted).

<sup>19</sup> Ps.-Jonathan has a close reading: כהנא רבא דמתרבי “the eldest priest anointed”; Tgg Neofiti and Samaritan follow MT.

<sup>20</sup> Other targums (Ps.-Jonathan, Neofiti, and two fragmentary ones) have כושיתה “Ethiopian” (with insignificant spelling variants). One can suppose a transformation of this word in the way כושיתה > כשירתה. The Samaritan witness is important for localisation of the tradition attested to in Onqelos not in Babylonia but in Palestine.

<sup>21</sup> The same reading (עוגד קליל) in Tgg Ps.-Jonathan, Neofiti, and the two fragmentary ones, that is, in the whole Palestinian targumic tradition (with a different reading in Onqelos).

<sup>22</sup> Onq, PsJon, Sam; lacuna in Neof Ex 3:1.

<sup>23</sup> Other targums have יתרו (PsJon, Neof, Sam).

5	Ex 3:2	(m) и неоубываетъ	и не сыгараше	οὐ κατεκαίετο	אֵינּוּ אָכַל not consumed	לֹא נִחַד = Tgg Onq, PsJon, Neof, FTV	Sam = MT ליתו מתאכל
6	Ex 4:26	и исцѣлися Моисей and Moses became healed	и отиде от него (sc., the angel from Moses)	καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ	וַיֵּרָךְ מִמֶּנּוּ and he left him alone	וְהוּא עִזָּב מִמֶּנּוּ and he left him alone = Tgg Neof, FTP, FTV, GT, Sam	25 רפה pro רפה PsJon: ופסק מלאך חבלא מיניה “and the angel took from him (lit. broke away from him) the damage”
7	Ex 10:13	(m) востокъ (m) кадимъ	вътрѣ югъ	ὁ ἄνεμος ὁ νότος	רוּחַ הַקִּדִּים Eastern wind	רוּחַ עִזָּב	MT = Tgg (Onq, PsJon, Neof, Sam), the spelling and vocalisation are the same in Neof only: רוּחַ דְּקִידִים
8	Ex 13:4	(add.) въ мѣсяцъ жить новыхъ in the month of new <i>grains</i>	въ мѣсяцъ новыхъ	ἐν μηνὶ τῶν νέων	בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאָבִיב in the month of new barley ears (Abib)	בְּחֹדֶשׁ גִּזְרֵי in the month of flowers (Abib)	MT = Tgg בְּיָרֵךְ אָבִיב in the month of rip barley ears (Onq, PsJon, Neof, Sam)
9	Ex 14:2	хивротъ	прямо придворію	ἀπέναντι τῆς ἐπαύλεως	פִּי הַיְּרֵיחַ	פִּי הַיְּרֵיחַ Tgg have similar spelling but with the consequence of yr (as in MT) and not ry.	MT; Tgg בְּיָרֵךְ (Onq, PsJon, Neof, FTP, FTV, Sam). A possible explanation for ב in <i>xuepomε</i> is a confusion between <i>yod</i> and <i>waw</i> that is equally frequent and Hebrew and Aramaic.
10	Num 33:12	(c) Дуфка	Рафакъ	Ραφακα	דָּפְקָה	דָּפְקָה	Tgg (Onq, PsJon, Neof, Sam) have דָּפְקָה Confusion between ד and ר.

Table 6: Rabbinic/Hebrew against All

Nr	Place	Peculiar East Slavic reading	Slavonic rendering of LXX	LXX	Hebrew Bible	Peshitta	Aramaic
1	Gen 41:45	(m) [to Цафънатъпа нея]	—	—	—	[after ܐܬܬܚܝܬܐ in the running	Not in MT either.  Cabbalistic or

<sup>24</sup> Onq, PsJon, Neof, Sam.

<sup>25</sup> As explained by Gorsky: Горскій, О славянскомъ..., 147. Such a confusion, however, is typical for Aramaic, and it is clear that PsJon's explanation is constructed on it. Onq has פָּנִי "and finished" (sc., to say to Moses).

		тайныхъ явитель, мегалле разин the revealer of the secrets, מגלה רזין <sup>26</sup>				text] גססגסגסג that is, revelation of the concealed <sup>27</sup>	pre-Cabbalistic Jewish tradition? Or an addition of a Cabbalistic term to the translation from Syriac?
2(?)	Ex 10:13	(m) кадимъ	вѣтръ югъ	ὁ ἀνεμος ὁ νότος	רוח הקדים Eastern wind	זססגסגסג	MT = Neof
3	Ex 16:31	(m) сѣмя гадово	яко мука like flour	ὡς σπέρμα κορίου as seed of coriander	כַּזְרַע גֹּד as seed of coriander	ססגסגסג גססגסגסג = Tgg PsJon, Neof, FTV	MT = Onq כבר זרע גידא like seed of coriander
4	Ex 16:36	ефа	трей мѣръ	τῶν τριῶν μέτρων	אַיפָה	ססגסג seah (a grain measure) = Tgg Onq, PsJon, Neof	Only MT. Sam מכלתה measure
5	Lev 5:15	шакалимъ	сиклей	σίκλων	שְׁקָלִים	ססגסג weights; shekels = Sam	Tgg (Onq, PsJon, Neof) have סילעין coins
6	Lev 8:8	(m) уримъ тумимъ	проповѣдан и истину	τὴν δῆλωσιν καὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν	אֶת־הָאוּרִים וְאֶת־הַתּוֹמִיִּם	גססגסג ססגסגסג	Tgg Onq, PsJon, Neof אֶת אֲוִרָא וְאֶת תּוֹמִיָא and Urim and Tummim (both loanwords are Aramaised); Sam ית באיריה וית שלמיה shining and peace
7	Num 4:6	кожею тагашевою	кожею синею	δέρμα ὑακίνθινον	עור תחש skins of goats	גססגסג זססגסגסג of skins of vermillion (or any shiny dark colour?) = Tgg Onq, PsJon, Neof	Sam משך עכום black skin

<sup>26</sup> This phrase is in Aramaic, but it is unknown to the targums, whereas seems to be coined by the *Zohar* (1270/1280) and frequent in later Kabbalistic works.

<sup>27</sup> The rabbinic targums, Rashi, and other rabbinic commentaries provide the same translation but in different wording. E.g., Onq = Neof גוברא דמטמון גלון "the man who penetrates the uncovered/revealed" (= Sam; very close to PsJon, GT E); . The exact wording מגלה רזין is unknown to me when applied to the Egyptian name of Josephus. The phrase is, nevertheless, quite common in the Cabbalistic literature, including several occurrences in the *Zohar*.