The first draft of the apparatus of variant readings in the Book of Genesis which I have been compiling for the International Peshitta Project contained under chapter xxxii verse 32 the following entry:

\[10m3 \text{ 11m1.2 15a2c 17a1-5.10 17k5} \] 

In less technical language this means that after verse 32, which reads: "And the sun rose upon him just as he left Peniel, and he limped because of his thigh", the MSS enumerated above add the sentence: "and Jacob's thigh was dislocated".

On carefully reading chapter xxxii it cannot escape our notice that these words are part of verse 26. So the question which forces itself upon us concerns how this addition is to be explained. When classifying variants in the Peshitta text according to their faithfulness to the Hebrew original it appears that often words or sentences have been added in accordance with parallel passages in order to gain uniformity and completeness 2). Yet one hesitates to accept this explanation in the case of Gen. xxxii 32, because nothing but unwieldiness is gained by the addition.

Before trying to solve the problem of why words have been added to a text which is faithful to the Hebrew and reads smoothly, let us look at the attestation of this particular reading. There are no less than eleven witnesses. The variant reading for the first time appears in three massoretic MSS of the Xth and XIth centuries. Then it is introduced by a later hand in a XVth century MS. And finally it is attested by seven MSS, all of them dated from or assigned to the XVIIth century.

Now this is by no means an isolated phenomenon, neither in the Book of Genesis nor elsewhere in the Pentateuch. In a Communication of the Peshitta Institute dealing with the Book of Exodus 3),

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1) The sigla are quoted according to the List of Old Testament Peshitta Manuscripts, Leiden 1961.
it has been shown in a convincing way that this phenomenon is to be explained by the fact that 15a2 was corrected by a later hand which to that end used a massoretic MS, presumably 10m3, and that this corrected form of 15a2 underlies the XVIIth century MSS.

Although this reduction of eleven witnesses of an embarrassing reading to one may be reassuring, the question remains: What on earth prompted this one scribe of 10m3 or, eventually, the scribe of his “Vorlage” to produce a text which to all appearance is inferior to the text form as presented by all other MSS up to his time?

But let us first follow the further vicissitudes of our variant reading.

It is a well-known fact that Gabriel SIONITA, when preparing the Peshitta for the Paris Polyglot, used as basic text MS Syriacque No. 6 of the Bibliothèque royale 1). (Its siglum according to the List edited by the Peshitta Institute is 17a5.) This MS is one of the eleven witnesses of our reading. It has been shown that SIONITA used other MSS in order to correct its text. The variant which had been introduced by the corrector of 15a2 he left unaltered. Unaltered it passed into the London Polyglot. In the VIth Volume of this Polyglot THORNEDYKE, one of “the indefatigable associates of Walton” as he is called by LEE, records variant readings which are taken by him from three codices, vid. Uss. (now Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bod. Or. 121 = 12b1), Us. 2 (ibid., Bod. Or. 141 = 17a3) and Poc. (ibid., Poc. 391 = 17a4). On our reading THORNEDYKE remarks: “non legitur in Uss. ut nec in Hebr. etsi in Poc. & Us. 2”, and in a desperate effort to improve what he obviously considered a corrupted text he adds: “forte leg. [omitted]”. LEE who made the text of the London Polyglot the basis for his edition, expunged the addition in Gen. xxxii 32. Whether or not he was influenced in his decision by THORNEDYKE’s comment upon this verse we never shall know. After all, LEE who, as he himself states 2), was “guided in making choice of the readings” “by the rules that have been adopted by the best of critics”, may have rejected this reading on the evidence of the older MSS collated by him (such as 12a1, 12b1.2). In doing so he was convinced—in my opinion justly so—to correct one of

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2) Ad Biblia Sacra Polyglotta Appendix, London 1657, third treatise, under the title Variantes in Syriaca Versione Veteris Testamenti Lectiones . . . excerptae ab Herberto Thorndieci, p. 3.
3) “Professor Lee’s Remarks on the Collation of Syriac MSS”, The Classical Journal XXIII 1821, pp. 245-249. The quotations are to be found on p. 248.