

STUDIES IN ARAMAIC INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

SAIS 12

*Paul V. M. Flesher and
Bruce Chilton*

The Targums

A Critical Introduction

BRILL



The Targums

Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture

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The Targums

A Critical Introduction

By

Paul V.M. Flesher

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For
Jacob Neusner,
whose intellectual energy and insight has shaped
the study of ancient Judaism in the modern world,
and
Martin McNamara,
who helped bring the study of the Targumim
into the modern world and establish a foundation for their
understanding.

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PREFACE

The Jewish Targums constitute the largest body of sustained Scripture translation and interpretation from the ancient world. Unfortunately, they are also the least well known. In comparison to the (mostly fragmentary) works of biblical exegesis from the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Targums lack the enthusiasm of recent discovery and decipherment. In comparison to the Septuagint, scholars have thought they lacked dedication to exacting translation. And, over the two millennia of rabbinic Judaism, they have received ambiguous and inconsistent treatment. While Babylonian Judaism ultimately received Targum Onqelos to the Pentateuch and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets as authoritative, the Palestinian works of **hal-akhah** treated Targums as suspect and untrustworthy during their early centuries. The large number of Pentateuchal Targums attributed to Palestine, however, suggests they were once quite popular. Within a few centuries, though, they were forgotten. When asked for further information, one learned medieval rabbi admitted to knowing nothing about them. While some Targums were preserved and published by Jews, a surprisingly large amount of our present knowledge of them comes from Jewish waste heaps (**genizahs**) and from recently discovered “lost” manuscripts in Christian libraries. In comparison to the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds, and even to the **midrashim**, the learned circles of Judaism treated Targums as decidedly secondary.

That does not mean that the Targums were ignored. Targums belonged more to the liturgy than the academy. The public performance of Aramaic translation formed part of the **bet knesset**, the synagogue, rather than the **bet midrash**, the study house. As such, they provide a window into the beliefs and theology of ordinary Jews rather than the highly educated. And we should keep in mind that educated people who were skilled in reading and writing were much more rare within the

ancient Jewish community than they are today, given the low literacy rates in the ancient world.

Although we do not know who wrote the Targums—were some of them composed within rabbinic circles or not?—they clearly participate in the same interpretive world evidenced by the rabbinic **halakhic** and haggadic writings. Despite this, Targums do not always have the same approach to a given interpretation. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, for example, contains the rendering of Leviticus 18:21 explicitly forbidden by Mishnah Megillah 4:9. And although many parallel exegeses can be identified between individual Targums and rabbinic works, these rarely constitute systematic borrowing or slavish copying.

Some Targums also contain understandings of Scripture and Judaism known from the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books. Others evidence interpretations underlying the earliest Christian writings. Indeed, these links to Christian understandings have inspired a great deal of research into ways in which the Targums reveal aspects of Judaism relevant to nascent Christianity. The points of contact between the Targums and early Christian works are comparatively fewer than those the Targums have with rabbinic literature, but they are significant.

Timewise, the Aramaic Targums as texts generally belong to the rabbinic period, with the exception of the Aramaic version of Job found at Qumran. Their dates range between the first or second century CE for the earliest to the seventh or eighth century for the latest, although some scholars have argued for later dates for specific translations. They were composed in three different Aramaic dialects, two of which are native to the Land of Israel. While this suggests they were composed in this geographical location, further research is needed before this conclusion can be taken as a certainty.

As with many ancient Jewish texts, care must be taken when distinguishing between the Targum text and the interpretations (and the translation) which they contain. Isolated interpretations or beliefs may be known to be quite early, but that does not mean that the text which contains them is from the same time. Conversely, just because a text is late does not mean that biblical exegeses it contains were unknown prior to its composition. The scholarly conundrum lies in determining how to move beyond that general observation to specific cases and drawing conclusions from the evidence provided by the Targums. What do the Targums, their translations, and their interpretations help us learn about rabbinic (and pre-rabbinic?) Judaism and about early Christianity? How do we as scholars and students of ancient Judaism approach them and discover what they can tell us?

The goal of this book is to answer these questions to the best of our ability. This book does not constitute a comprehensive description of the “state of the field” of Targum studies. Instead, it lays out an understanding of the many Targums and their different characters. It identifies the internal nature of the Targums and discusses the external religious and social contexts within which they were known and used. It describes questions scholars have investigated in the past, specifies some that currently occupy their interest, and suggests areas of inquiry for future exploration. And finally, it unpacks different methods and approaches for exploring these questions.

The Targums: A Critical Introduction devotes the first half of the book to the internal character of the many Targums and then essentially divides the second half into discussing aspects of the Targums’ place in ancient Judaism and their place in early Christianity. The book’s two authors are well-paired for this organization. Paul Flesher’s areas of expertise emphasize the Pentateuchal Targums and rabbinic Judaism, while Bruce Chilton is widely recognized as an expert in the Prophetic Targums and even more so in Christian origins. Given the breadth of targumic study and the diverse contexts to which they are relevant, we hope to bring together our areas of expertise to provide a reliable grounding in targumic study to anyone interested the Targums, whether out of general interest, guided education, or further research.

We have tried to keep footnotes to a minimum by providing bibliographical discussions at the end of most chapters and an extensive bibliography at the end.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the friends and colleagues who encouraged us over the years to undertake and complete the writing of this introduction. Many scholars knowledgeable in the study of the Targums and the Aramaic language, in Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity, made themselves available for conversation and discussion, to answer questions, and to give advice and guidance. Their assistance helped make this work the best we could make it.

We would like to thank Baylor University Press for publishing this book. In particular, we want to thank editor Carey Newman for helping to bring the manuscript to publication. Sara Scott, formerly of Hendrickson Press, and Allan Emery of Hendrickson Publishers were also instrumental in moving this project forward. Several people read chapters of this work and responded to them during its composition. In particular, we would like to thank Beverly P. Mortensen, Kent Richards, Dale Walker, and Seth Ward.

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The authors would like to thank personally their wives, Caroline McCracken-Flesher and Odile Sevault Chilton, who have been supportive, inspiring, and patient over the years this project has taken.

This book is dedicated to two pioneers in the study of ancient Judaism. Jacob Neusner has served as teacher and friend to both of us. His transformation of the study of Rabbinic Judaism has had a profound impact on associated fields, including the study of the Targumim. This transformation has shaped the character of this Introduction. Martin McNamara has been a leader in the study of the Targums. His project, “The Aramaic Bible” (cited frequently herein), arose from his uncommon combination of critical acumen and pastoral elegance. It permitted a generation of scholars to frame a sound working understanding of the Targumim generally. By bringing together the work of different scholars, Professor McNamara advanced the field exponentially in a remarkably brief period of time. That advance provides a foundation for the present work, and if we have expanded the field of Targum Studies in any way, we also acknowledge the contributions of our predecessors and collaborators.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	The Aramaic Bible series
<i>Ag. Ap.</i>	Philo Judaeus, <i>Against Apion</i>
<i>Ant.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
Arak.	Arakhim
ARN	Avot de Rabbi Nathan
<i>AS</i>	<i>Aramaic Studies</i>
A.Z.	Avodah Zarah
b.	Bavli, Babylonian Talmud
B.B.	Baba Batra
Ber.	Berakhot
Bik.	Bikkurim
B.M.	British Museum
B.Q.	Baba Qamma
BTA	Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic
<i>CAL</i>	<i>Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon</i>
CG	Cairo Geniza, or more specifically, a manuscript of a Palestinian Targum found at the Cairo Geniza
CPA	Christian Palestinian Aramaic
<i>DfD</i>	<i>Discoveries in the Judean Desert</i> , Oxford University Press
ET	English Translation
FT	Fragment Targum, Fragmentary Targum
Gen. Rab.	Genesis Rabbah
Hag.	Hagigah
HT	Hebrew Text
<i>JAB</i>	<i>Journal of the Aramaic Bible</i>
JBA	Jewish Babylonian Aramaic
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i> ^{xv}

JLA	Jewish Literary Aramaic
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JPA	Jewish Palestinian Aramaic
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JStJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha, Supplement Series
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTA	Jewish Targumic Aramaic
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>J.W.</i>	Josephus, <i>Jewish War</i>
L	Leipzig manuscript
LJLA	Late Jewish Literary Aramaic
LXX	Septuagint
m.	Mishnah
Meg.	Megillah
Men.	Menahim
M.Q.	Moed Qatan
MT	Masoretic Text
N	Nürnberg manuscript
Ned.	Nedarim
NIV	New International Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTCS	Newsletter for Targumic and Cognate Studies
P	Paris manuscript
Pesah.	Pesahim
PJ	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
PJu	Pseudo-Jonathan unique source
<i>PRE</i>	<i>Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer</i>
Proto-PT	Proto-Palestinian Targum source
Proto-TO	Proto-Targum Onqelos
PT	Palestinian Targum
QA	Qumran Aramaic
QAJ	Qumran Aramaic Job
Qidd.	Qiddushim
Rab.	Rabbah
RSV	Revised Standard Version
Sanh.	Sanhedrin
Shab.	Shabbat
SLA	Standard Literary Aramaic
SP	Samaritan Pentateuch

ST	Samaritan Targum
t.	Tosefta
Tg.	Targum
Tg. Jon.	Targum Jonathan to the Prophets
Tg. Song	Targum Song of Songs, Targum Canticles
TI	Targum Isaiah
TJ	Targum Jonathan to the Prophets
TL	Targum of Lamentations
TN	Targum Neofiti
TNu	Targum Neofiti unique
TO	Targum Onqelos
TY1, TJ1	“Targum Yerushalmi 1” = Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
TY2, TJ2	“Targum Yerushalmi 2” = Fragment Targums, usually as FT(N)
V	Vatican manuscript
y.	Yerushalmi, Palestinian Talmud
Yad.	Yadayim

SECTION I

Getting Started

INTRODUCTION

The origins of the Jewish synagogue remain shrouded in mystery, despite extensive research and considerable progress.¹ Archaeologists have identified dedicatory inscriptions from a synagogue in Egypt dating to the third century BCE, while in Palestine the earliest finds stem from the first century BCE.² Both sets of evidence suggest an already mature institution with a developed history and do not indicate the synagogue's founding moment. Literary evidence for the synagogue and its practices begins to appear in the first century CE, with descriptions in the Gospels of Jesus' synagogue visits and Philo's comments in his *On the Life of Moses*.³ The principal activities sited in this institution included public Scripture reading and prayer. Synagogues also served as spaces for public meetings and schools; they provided primitive banking services, lodging for travelers, and were associated with ritual immersion pools.

At the end of the first century CE, the Jewish historian Josephus observes it is the reading of the **Torah**—in Greek, *nomos* or the “Law”—that is particularly vital for meetings in synagogue, because Moses “our leader made the Law the standard and rule, that we might live under it as

¹ In this chapter, unless otherwise indicated, English translations of the Bible will be from the NRSV; English translations of the Targums will be from the Aramaic Bible series edited by Martin McNamara; English translations of rabbinic texts will be from the publications of Jacob Neusner. Complete bibliographic information can be found in the bibliography at the back of the book.

² Griffiths, “Egypt and Rise of the Synagogue,” 4–8. See also Grabbe, “Synagogues in Pre-70 Palestine”; Flesher, “Palestinian Synagogues before 70 C.E.”; Chilton and Yamachi, “Synagogues.”

³ See, e.g., Matt 13:53–38 and Luke 4:14–30, and for Stephen, Acts 6:9; Philo, *Life of Moses* 2:216; Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 156. Some scholars see the earlier Ben Sira 51:23 as an observation about the synagogue. See the bibliography discussion at this chapter's end for references to helpful works about early synagogues. Z. Safrai provides a broad analysis of the different functions linked to synagogues in antiquity; Safrai, “Communal Functions.”

under a father and master, and be guilty of no sin through willfulness or ignorance.”⁴ Josephus goes on to observe:

For ignorance [Moses] left no pretext. He appointed the Law to be the most excellent and necessary form of instruction, ordaining, not that it should be heard [just] once for all or twice or on several occasions, but that every week men should desert their other occupations and assemble to listen to the Law and to obtain a thorough and accurate knowledge of it.⁵

Reading the Torah and the Prophets aloud and listening to them continued to form a central element of the synagogue service throughout the ancient period. Even as Judaism underwent the traumatic events of the destruction of Jerusalem and of its Temple in 70 CE, followed by the loss of the Bar Kokhba Revolution and the forced expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem in 135 CE, Torah reading in the synagogue continued. In **Mishnah**, the first rabbinic text (published about 200 CE) contains clear indications of the continuing vitality of the synagogue and its emergence as a central institution of Judaism’s survival.

A new concern had risen by that time, however, because the Mishnah’s rabbis had to contend with the lack of knowledge of Hebrew among Jews. Generally speaking, most Jews around the eastern Mediterranean spoke Greek, the language of the Roman Empire, while in Galilee and its surroundings, as well as in cities and regions settled under Persian hegemony, the Jewish vernacular was Aramaic. The rabbis faced the question, if the Torah was given in Hebrew, what is the religious standing of translations of Scripture into other languages? In the Mishnah tractate Megillah, the rabbis permitted Greek translations to be used in place of the Hebrew—perhaps because the Septuagint had already been in use in Egypt and other countries for several centuries.

But Aramaic translations proved a different matter; the Galilean rabbis did not want Aramaic-speaking Jews to replace the Hebrew text of the Scriptures with an Aramaic version as had been done with the Septuagint. Even as Jews used a *targum* (the Aramaic word for “translation”) in their worship services, the rabbis wanted them to read the Hebrew text aloud as well. The Mishnah’s authorities expected worship to feature the reading of the Hebrew text; the participants could also listen to an oral Aramaic rendering if they wished (m. Meg. 2:1), and most of them would *need* to if they wished to understand the reading.⁶ (See our discussion of this point in chapter 14.)

⁴ Josephus, *Ag Ap.* 2:174.

⁵ Josephus, *Ag Ap.* 2:175. Brackets ours. See H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus: The Life, Against Apion*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926 (1976).

⁶ See also t. Meg. 2:6.

This mishnaic ruling requiring only the reading of the Hebrew text makes an odd contrast with Josephus' earlier comment that Jews gathered in the synagogue every week to "listen to the Law and to obtain thorough and accurate knowledge of it." If they merely had to "listen" to the reading, then the original Hebrew text of the Torah had only to be read aloud. But if the hearers were to have "thorough and accurate knowledge," then there had to have been an Aramaic translation as well; it could not truly be optional.

Whatever the Mishnah's authorities considered required or optional for synagogue services, it is clear that the services included hearing both the Hebrew Scriptures *and* their translation during this time. With the publication of the Palestinian Talmud in the fourth century, the rabbinic authorities showed that they had taken steps to distinguish the status of the Hebrew and Aramaic versions formally in their synagogue presentation. In particular, rabbinic figures specify several ways in which the Hebrew text should be treated with greater respect and honor than the translation.⁷ Indeed the written form of the *translation* should not even be in evidence according to this teaching: Aramaic renderings were to be given from memory. These rules are prescriptive—they specify the practices that *should* take place—but they do so in reaction to practices observed by rabbis. Thus some synagogues may have followed the rabbinic prescriptions, but it seems clear that many did not.

This introductory chapter is not the place for a detailed analysis of the rabbinic rules for reading Scripture and its targumic translation (see chapters 14 and 15), but it is important to have an idea of how Targums were probably used in the synagogue liturgy. To accomplish that aim, let us imagine Scripture reading in two services. The first imagined service will follow a format that the Mishnah's and Palestinian Talmud's rules about Torah and Targum presentation aim to *discourage*, while the second will follow the format *expected* by those same rules. The differences in the status of Scripture will stand out, while the role of the Targum in conveying meaning remains quite similar.

In the first example, a procedure not receiving rabbinic approval, two men stand before the synagogue congregation, each with a scroll before them. One reads aloud from his scroll in Hebrew. This is the Torah scroll, the holy book. Unfortunately, few people among the congregation know Hebrew very well; although they hear some familiar words, the terms are interspersed with unfamiliar ones so the audience understands few whole sentences. When the first man pauses, the second reads out loud from his scroll in Aramaic, a Targum. The congregation pays attention more

⁷ Palestinian Talmud Meg. 74d.

closely. At least they can understand this reading and learn from it what the sacred Scripture says. For this congregation, the Targum *is* Scripture. The presentation involves the Hebrew and the Aramaic texts in the same format and with the same respect, but only the meaning of the Aramaic is understood.

Now imagine a second synagogue service. Again two men stand in front, one behind a podium on which is spread a large scroll. The other stands to the side with nothing in front of him. The first man reads from the scroll in Hebrew, of which the audience again understands only a little. The man speaks smoothly and with confidence as he reads the passage. When the first man stops, the second one gives his translation in Aramaic. He seems to have memorized it, but when he forgets a phrase of the passage his voice falters. Realizing he cannot recall what he memorized, from time to time he instead tries to give an extemporaneous translation, hesitating several times as he struggles to recall the Hebrew text just read. At least he understands Hebrew and can translate on the fly. Most members of the congregation cannot; that is why the Aramaic translation is provided. The second man's translation has enabled the service's participants to understand the Hebrew's meaning, at least to the extent you can trust his memory, translation abilities, and the accuracy of the Aramaic version he was trying to convey.

The first scene presents a situation in which the translation appears before the synagogue attendees in the same status as the Hebrew text. The readers are positioned equally before the audience, they both have scrolls, and they both read from them. The Aramaic translation is presented as equivalent to Scripture. Its status and treatment are the same as the Hebrew text. But although the Hebrew is the original, the Aramaic provides what is understood. Since the *targum* appears identical to the original Scripture, there is no hesitation in the minds of those in the service that the translation is equivalent to the original. Thus the *targum's* meaning gives the actual content of Scripture according to its ritual presentation, even when it is manifest that the Aramaic and Hebrew version are not literally equivalent.⁸ Indeed, occasionally it is obvious that the Aramaic rendering is significantly longer than the Hebrew.

The second imagined scene takes place according to the rules for reading and translating Scripture laid out in the Palestinian halakhic

⁸ The idea that the translation might replace the original should not seem unusual, for that is the way modern Christian churches treat Scripture. They read the text in the vernacular. Indeed, the translation replaces the original without question, for the original Hebrew (or Greek if New Testament) does not even appear at the service. Some Christian groups even treat the King James Version as inspired.

writings. The Torah scroll clearly has a higher status and importance than the translation. The scroll's presence indicates the Hebrew's permanence, while the translation's oral delivery suggests its temporary—even ephemeral—nature. Indeed, the character of that delivery—with pauses, hesitations, and other signs of struggle to provide a spoken translation—contrasts strongly with the smooth presentation of the Torah reader. Further, the translator's task is ritually less important, because he stands to the side; he is a secondary figure on the margins. His translation is not the same as the original; indeed it clearly is not even fixed.

The translator in the second scene is somewhat comparable to a modern sign-language interpreter at a graduation ceremony or other large event. Signers stand to one side and provide a running translation of the activities, but at no time are they confused with the speaker. They only relate what is being said on the main stage. While they provide the sole means for the deaf to understand what is taking place, that understanding is filtered through sign language. Perhaps the synagogue translator provided a comparable function, at least in some settings.

The lower status of the orally delivered Aramaic translation in the second example prevents the audience from equating its importance with that of the Hebrew Torah, but in the end it fails to distinguish the Aramaic rendering's meaning from the original. For those whose Hebrew is not fluent, the Aramaic still provides the best and even only access to Scripture's meaning. The translation's meaning *is* Scripture's meaning under those circumstances. If modern scholars want to know what Jews of this period considered the Torah to say, they need to study the Targums. For whether they were literally read out loud in the synagogue service or used to prepare an oral translation given from memory, it is their words rather than those of the Hebrew text that most Jewish congregants understood.

WHAT IS A “TARGUM”?

The basic meaning of the Aramaic word *targum* (often used in its Hebrew plural form, *targumim*) is “translation.” During the early rabbinic period in Palestine, the term designated written translations in any language, usually translations of biblical books.⁹ Later the word came to refer more specifically to biblical translations in Aramaic—its primary meaning in Babylonia and in the Babylonian Talmud. It can also refer to the Aramaic portions of the biblical books of Ezra and Daniel that were composed in Aramaic. In addition, rabbinic texts use *targum* and various verbal

⁹ See m. Meg. 2:1. Modern Israeli Hebrew uses the word *targum* to mean simply “translation.”

analogues to indicate the Aramaic translation delivered orally in the synagogue service.¹⁰

This book will use the word “Targum” to designate Aramaic translations of books of the **Hebrew Bible** done by Jews during the rabbinic period. This *description* is based upon four basic elements of the Targums’ character: (1) Aramaic translations of (2) books of the Hebrew Bible (3) done by Jews (4) during the rabbinic period. To qualify as a Targum in this description, the text must meet all four criteria. While this may seem somewhat arbitrary, the description deliberately includes the translations that rabbinic Judaism has traditionally recognized as Targums and excludes other translations. As we shall see in chapter 2, these targumic translations share particular qualities that differentiate them from other translations in antiquity. These qualities will be the basis for this book’s *definition* of Targum specified in chapter 2.

This description is more restrictive than some that scholars have experimented with in recent decades. There have been a number of attempts to apply the term Targum to works that meet just three of the criteria. In this way, there were some early attempts to label the Septuagint a Targum, since supposedly the only difference there was the use of Greek rather than Aramaic.¹¹ Christian translations into Aramaic have occasionally been designated as Targums. At times, both the Peshitta, used by Christians in the Syrian city of Edessa and composed in the Aramaic dialect of Syriac, and books of the so-called Christian Palestinian Aramaic Old Testament, composed by the Christian Aramaic community in Judea, have been so designated. Finally, when fragments of an Aramaic version of Job were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, they were named the “Targum of Job,” despite their being composed several centuries prior to the rabbinic-era Targums.¹² In the end, these attempts to broaden the category of Targum have simply muddled the critical understanding of its character.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE TARGUMS

There are Targums to all books of the Hebrew Bible except for Ezra and Daniel, the biblical books which include Aramaic portions. The most straightforward way to provide an overview of the Targum texts we now

¹⁰ For examples of these different meanings of the term *targum*, see y. Meg. 74d and m. Yad. 4:5; The act of translating in the synagogue is often referred to by the verbal form *tirgem*. For further discussion, see chap. 15.

¹¹ See, e.g., Le Déaut, “La Septante, un Targum?”

¹² David Shepherd has shown that the Qumran Aramaic Job has a different translational character from the rabbinic-era Targums. See Shepherd, *Targum and Translation*.

possess is by classifying them according to their dialects. This identifies three main groups of Targums. (A more thorough discussion of Aramaic dialects appears in chapter 13.)

The first Jewish dialect of Aramaic relevant to the Targums is Jewish Literary Aramaic (JLA), a dialect used in and around Judea from approximately 200 BCE to about 200 CE. This is the form of the Aramaic portions of the book of Daniel, of the Aramaic texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and of some later texts such as *Megillat Taanit* and the Aramaic Bar Kokhba letters.¹³

Two important Targums were composed in JLA, Targum Onqelos to the Pentateuch and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets. Targum Onqelos has a reputation of being extremely literal—that is, it contains a relatively small amount of additions.¹⁴ Targum Jonathan shares this reputation but many of its books contain more additional material than Onqelos. Although apparently composed in Judea, both Targums found favor in Babylonia, where some elements of eastern Aramaic entered their texts. The Babylonian Talmud cites passages from both a number of times and Rabbi Judah even calls Onqelos, “our Targum.” The medieval commentators and *responsa* writers raised these two Targums to an official status, declaring them to be holy—a status denied other translations and Targums.¹⁵ They were widely copied and distributed. Today we have hundreds of manuscripts of these two Targums, although most are incomplete or even fragmentary. Since the advent of publishing, Onqelos and Jonathan have regularly appeared in rabbinic Bibles.

The acceptance of these two Targums was accompanied by the desire to fix and preserve the exact wording of their text and not let it change. The texts of these two Targums remained remarkably stable across the centuries—although by no means were all mistakes kept out. Rabbis even created a **masorah** (a set of codes to ensure accurate copying of the text) to help prevent copyists from making mistakes and false “corrections.”¹⁶

¹³ The Aramaic in the book of Ezra does not belong to this dialect, but rather to the Imperial Aramaic dialect used in the Persian Empire. Thus the term “Biblical Aramaic” that treats the Aramaic of Ezra and Daniel the same is a misnomer.

¹⁴ See Vermes, “Haggadah in the Onkelos Targum”; and Bowker, “Haggadah in the Targum Onkelos.”

¹⁵ After the completion of the Babylonian Talmud, a genre of responses to questions about Jewish law and lore arose, beginning in the Geonic period (i.e., the Middle Ages). This is called the *responsa* literature. Concerning TO, Bacher cites the Gaon Sar Shalom in the ninth century as saying, “[This Targum] is the one which we now have in our hands; no sanctity attaches to the other Targumim” (“Kritische Untersuchungen zum Propheten Targum,” 59).

¹⁶ See Klein, *Masorah to Targum Onkelos*.

The second Aramaic dialect used in the Targums begins to appear in the late second or early third century CE, roughly a century after Jerusalem's destruction in Galilee and its environs. This dialect is called Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA), and for the next several centuries it comprised the Aramaic of northern Palestine, being used in rabbinic literature and in inscriptions. It has also been termed Galilean Aramaic.

The Palestinian Targums to the Pentateuch were composed in this general form of language. These include Targum Neofiti's complete rendering of the entire Pentateuch, the fragmentary remains of some thirty-eight Palestinian Targums found in the Cairo Geniza, and the so-called Fragment Targums.

These Targums combine literal translations of the Hebrew text with a great deal of additional and sometimes highly creative material. At the verses where the different Targum remains are extant, the Palestinian Targums usually share the additions. Over five hundred separate shared additions have been identified. The Targums also share a common translation of the Hebrew text. Despite these connections, there was no attempt to stabilize the text in antiquity and maintain a single "Palestinian Targum." This history results in a variety of textual differences that require us to see the Palestinian Targums as a family of related texts rather than a single Targum with different textual witnesses, like Targum Onqelos.

The Palestinian Targums found little approval among the rabbis. The Palestinian rabbis never made their peace with an Aramaic rendering of the Hebrew Bible, while the Babylonian rabbis and their successors favored Targum Onqelos. As a result, we have only a single manuscript of each of the Palestinian Targums. Interest in knowing and preserving them waned during the Middle Ages.

The third dialect that supported the creation of Targums is a recently recognized dialect called Late Jewish Literary Aramaic (LJLA). This dialect was used in the composition of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch and in the composition of most of the books of the Writings (*ketubim*). Although scholars have yet to arrive at a consensus concerning the people who used this dialect, its character is clear. It combines aspects of JLA and JPA to form the dialect's base, while absorbing further lexical items from Syriac and Babylonian Aramaic. It also uses archaic forms, both actual and invented. Until LJLA was identified as a specific dialect, documents composed in it were often described as being written in a "mixed" dialect or having a mixed character.

At first glance, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan looks like one of the Palestinian Targums, because it contains nearly all of the additional material found in those Targums. But instead of using the translation common to the Palestinian Targums, Pseudo-Jonathan derives its translation from

Targum Onqelos. Furthermore, it incorporates more than fifteen hundred of its own additions into the translation to become quite a different document from either of the other two Targum types.

The Targums to the different books of the Writings were composed individually; they were not considered a group like the Pentateuchal or Prophetic Targums. Like Pseudo-Jonathan, they were composed later in, or sometimes even after, the rabbinic period. Indeed, the Palestinian Talmud makes no mention of them and the Babylonian Talmud specifically denies that any exist—although elsewhere they refer to Targums of both Esther and Job.¹⁷ Some of the Targums, such as those of Lamentations, Ruth and **Qohelet**, begin their translation with large amounts of additional material, and then provide a rather literal translation for the remainder of the book. Other Targums, such as Psalms, Chronicles, and Job, are more even-handed in their mix of literal and additional material.

The only Targum that falls outside this three-fold scheme is the Targum of Proverbs, which seems to be based on the Peshitta version of Proverbs. Indeed, it is composed in a dialect that mixes Syriac and Jewish Palestinian Aramaic.

WHY STUDY THE TARGUMS?

Targums provide a window into the religious, mythic, and theological world of the Targums' composers and the audiences who read and listened to them. The material added into the translation reveals the attitudes, beliefs, and practices important to the Jews who regularly used these texts within their worship. Unlike other genres of rabbinic literature, the Targums were used primarily by ordinary Jews and did not require extensive education to learn them or gain access to their debates and issues. Targums thus provide modern scholars and students of ancient Judaism a way to view a different stratum of Jewish religious society that is not readily accessible through the talmuds and the midrashim.

The key to opening this window into the world of ancient Jewry lies in the additions and changes that the Targums introduce into a literal translation of the biblical text. This combination of materials often strikes students and newcomers to the field as odd. Why would a literal rendering programmatically add so much non-literal material? Part of the answer is common to all translations; when translating from one language to another, many wordings or ideas from the original or donor language simply do not work in the receiving language. Idioms are often difficult to

¹⁷ An example of this disapproval apparently appears in the story of the first-century Rabbi Gamaliel, who buried a Tg. Job in a wall of the temple (t. Shab. 13:2-3; Bavli Shab. 155a). Of course, an Aramaic translation of Job was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

translate; to call a remark “tongue-in-cheek,” for instance, is to indicate that it was humorous and has nothing to do with someone’s mouth. Or, while Indo-European languages generally divide their tenses into past, present, and future, writings in ancient Hebrew deal only with completed and uncompleted action. Other times, words that combine into a sentence in one language simply make no sense in another. Language differences such as these require a translation to move away from the literal to be comprehensible.

Another reason for Targum additions is interpretation. That is, the rendering with its additions is not a linguistic exercise but an exegetical one that aims to reveal the import of the passage that lies beyond the words on the page. Scripture stories are usually quite short and sometimes leave out key information needed for clear understanding of the passage. Similarly, a story’s brevity may give the wrong impression about the actions or intentions of a biblical hero. These problems require an interpretive solution rather than a linguistic one.

The word “interpretation” suggests a broad range of material that could possibly be added into a Targum—a range that seems without definable limits. However, we can refine this perspective somewhat by realizing that Targums mediate between the sacred text and the religious and social character of the current society. Let us explain.

Sacred texts last for long periods of time. Depending on when one thinks the books of the Old Testament originated, they have been around in one form or another (whether oral or written) anywhere from two to three thousand years or more. During that time, the texts of the biblical books have by and large remained generally stable.¹⁸ However, the characteristics of the society and religious group to which and about which they speak have undergone extensive changes. By the end of the second century CE—approximately when the Palestinian Targums were composed—the people Israel had lost their kings along with their self-governance. They had been conquered by several empires and were then under the thumb of Rome. More catastrophic, however, their religious and civil capital Jerusalem had been razed and the temple that stood at the center of their religious life for a thousand years had been destroyed. Without the Jerusalem temple, Jews could not offer sacrifices to God, even though that is the main mode of worship described in the Torah; most tasks required of the priests could not be performed; and the people Israel could not purify themselves or atone for their sins in key ways laid down in the Torah.

¹⁸ For discussion of this question, see Chilton, *Cambridge Companion to the Bible*.

A powerful disjunction emerged between the world imagined for Israel in the biblical texts and the world that the people who interpreted the texts actually confronted. If the Scriptures were to remain relevant, then those differences needed to be mediated and overcome. There are many ways in which that task might have been accomplished. Sermons delivered during worship and teaching during school continue to be practiced in Judaism to this day as ways of negotiating the difference between text and the present world—a practice taken up and pursued widely by Christianity as well. For those who read and study, midrashim and other types of commentaries were composed to guide people through these difficulties.

Targums also serve this purpose, and the additions in them helped the ancient scriptural text fit into Jewish society and religion as it was known at the time of the Targum's composition. That is, Targums with their additions mediate between the biblical text and the society of the Targum's composition. Changes that would never be contemplated for the text itself found ready acceptance in the translation. The differences between the text and "modern society" are overcome, where relevant, by the reshaping of the material.

Sometimes the additional material addresses changes and events from a time after the original text was written. The Targum of Lamentations, for example, addresses the question of why Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed in 70 CE, even as the biblical text of Lamentations addressed the circumstances following the temple's destruction in 586 BCE. Targums sometimes simply deal with differences between notions suggested in Scripture and normative practice, as when Targum Neofiti places an expansion in Genesis 3:28 to clarify that having Adam "eat the plants of the field" does not mean that humans should graze like animals, but instead that they should tend and harvest the crops.

To give the reader a sense of what kinds of questions Targums and their creators address, let us look briefly at examples of five different types. They are not exhaustive by any means, but they provide a sense of the variety of purposes behind additional material.

First, biblical stories and passages are often short and leave out details that may be important to a story. These details range from issues of setting, location, and dress, to questions of motivation, actions, and even a story's message. The story of Cain and Abel, for instance, has Cain rise up and kill Abel following a comment by Cain. Scripture never reveals what exactly Cain said, however. Genesis 4:8 in the Masoretic Text (MT) indicates that Cain is about to speak, and then fails to give his remarks.¹⁹

¹⁹ See Vermes, "Targumic Version of Genesis 4:3-16," 114; and Chilton, "Comparative Study of Synoptic Development."

Here is the Hebrew text of Genesis 4:8, followed by a literal translation.

וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל-הָבֶל אָחִיו וַיְהִי בִהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה וַיִּקֶּם קַיִן אֶל-הָבֶל אָחִיו
וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ

And Cain said to his brother Abel, . . . and it was when they were in the field and Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him.

The Hebrew construction of this verse “And Cain said . . .” conforms to the standard way of introducing direct speech. Yet no quotation follows here. The Palestinian Targums follow the Septuagint’s alternate text, where Cain says, “Let us go into the field.” But even this was not enough for the Aramaic interpreters, for they decided that Cain needs a *motive* to murder his brother beyond his anger at God. So, they created an argument between the two brothers about the character of divine justice and whether a heavenly judge even existed and placed it here. Here is Targum Neofiti’s rendering of Genesis 4:8, with the targumic additions indicated by italics:

Then Cain said to Abel his brother, *“Come and let the two of us go out to the surface of the field.”* And it came about when *the two of them had gone out to the field,* Cain answered and said to Abel, *“I see that the world was not created by mercy, and it is not guided by the fruits of good works, and there is partiality in judgment. Why was your offering accepted with favor and my offering from me was not accepted with favor?”* Abel answered and said to Cain, *“I see that the world was created by mercy and that it is guided by the fruits of good works, and because my deeds were better than yours, my offering was accepted from me with favor. Your offering was not accepted from you with favor.”* Cain answered and said to Abel, *“There is no judgment and no judge, and there is no other world, and no giving of good reward to the righteous, and there is no punishment of the wicked.”* Abel answered and said to Cain, *“There is judgment and there is a judge, and there is another world, and there is giving of good reward to the righteous, and there is punishment of the wicked in the world to come.”* *The two of them were disputing over this matter on the surface of the field when Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.*²⁰

Second, some biblical stories put a biblical hero in a bad light. Numbers 12, for instance, shows God punishing Miriam for speaking against Moses. The Targum recasts the passage slightly to indicate that despite the punishment, she still retains God’s favor and should be seen as a model for Israel. Targum Neofiti gives an addition in Numbers 12:16 which indicates that as Miriam undergoes her punishment, *“The clouds of the glory and (the) well did not move nor journey from their places until such time as the prophetess Miriam was healed of her leprosy.”* Despite her error, the Targum makes clear,

²⁰ Translation by Clem, with our italics added.

God in heaven retained so much respect for her that the camp did not move until she was ready to resume her normal role as a prophetess.

Third, as religious practices change and develop, they often move beyond the plain meaning of the passage from which they derived. That passage then requires updating in order to be consistent with the practice. The biblical prohibition found in Exodus 34:26, for example, seems to forbid only a particular, almost incestuous, cruelty: “You shall not boil a kid in its mother milk”; the stricture is against cooking the meat in the mother’s milk. It says nothing about the milk of a different animal. As the dietary rules of **kashrut** develop, however, this passage becomes the basis for consuming *all* milk and meat products at separate meals, not just that of a individual mother and her offspring. Targum Neofiti recasts its rendering of this passage to reflect this new practice: “*you shall not boil, and you shall not eat flesh with milk, mixed together.*”²¹

Fourth, sometimes the plain meaning of Scripture no longer addresses current circumstances, but seems to be stuck in out-of-date or even untenable wording, styles, actions, and ideas. Many geographical terms found in Scripture were no longer used at the time the Targums were written, so the Targums updated them. Similarly, the theology of God’s nature had changed over the centuries. During the rabbinic period, Judaism did not like to speak about God in anthropomorphic terms in the biblical fashion, as if God had a human body, emotions, or even presence. To avoid this, nearly all Targums make extensive use of **anti-anthropomorphisms**—terms that enable them to avoid the association of God with human limitations. Passages are recast to avoid mentioning God using his arm, becoming angry, and the like. In Targum Neofiti, God rarely speaks directly, instead it is his *memra* (i.e., “word” or “utterance,” referring to the intent with which speech occurs) that speaks (see Genesis 1). In Genesis 2:3, it is not God, but “the Glory of the Lord” that blesses the Sabbath day, and in Exodus 24:10, it is the “Glory of the **Shekinah** of the Lord” which the seventy elders see, rather than God himself. Similarly, when Moses persuades God from punishing the Israelites with total annihilation over the golden calf, Targum Neofiti Exodus 32:14 reads, “And *there was regret before* the Lord concerning the evil which he had planned *to bring* upon the people.” God here did not actively change his mind, as the Hebrew text indicates, but the emotion “regret” appeared “before” him. These are just some of the ways that Targums avoid anthropomorphizing God.

²¹ Italics indicate the added words, or words that depart from the practice of a formally correspondent translation. This practice will be followed throughout this book, as has become standard since the publication of The Aramaic Bible series, edited by Martin McNamara.

Fifth, sometimes the principal contribution of a Targum's theology comes not from the text but from developments in the Targum's society. For example, rabbinic Judaism developed the idea of Torah from the name of Scripture's first five books into a comprehensive, multifaceted theology of learning Torah, believing Torah, and practicing Torah. In this theology, Torah was given a variety of specific meanings, but the important thing was to know and practice it. Since one cannot "do" a text, Torah became a universal theological concept, rather than only a tradition or collection of books, including matters of morality, ethics and religious observance that governed all aspects of life. To carry out the expectations of Torah made one righteous; failing to do so made one wicked.

Many Targums adopted aspects of this Torah theology and reworked the translation text in many places so that this theology appeared to be a natural part of the text. Bruce Chilton showed in his 1982 book *The Glory of Israel* that Torah was a key concept that guided the targumic recasting of the Targum of Isaiah, while in a recent article Paul Flesher showed that the Targum of Qohelet transformed that biblical book's idea of "wisdom" into the concept of Torah.²² Similarly, Torah provided the dominant constellation of concepts that underlay the Palestinian Targums' rewriting of the Adam and Eve story. Beverly Mortensen showed the widespread character of the Torah notion when she compared the additional material in the Palestinian Targums to the new additions found in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. The former emphasized Torah while the latter in Pseudo-Jonathan emphasized the importance of the temple and its priests.²³

By means of such interpretations the Targums provide a window into the religious world of their audience. They show how those who needed the Targum because they could not understand the Hebrew of the Hebrew Bible looked at their religious heritage. Targums provide their "Jewish" knowledge and the understanding of their past, providing not just the history of the people Israel, but even defining the essence of the social group to which Jews belonged. Judaism of the rabbinic period, particularly the Judaism of the masses who lacked a rabbinic education, can be understood only through the investigation of the Targums that made their Scripture accessible to them and taught them how to behave.

²² Chilton, *Glory of Israel*; Flesher, "Wisdom of the Sages."

²³ Mortensen, *Priesthood in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*.

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Translations of all the rabbinic period Targums are provided by the Aramaic Bible series, edited by Martin McNamara, published initially by Michael Glazier and then by Liturgical Press (1987 to 2008). These volumes contain introductions to each work and extensive footnotes, in some cases amounting to a running commentary. Eldon Clem has provided a new translation of most of the Targums that is available as part of the Accordance computer Bible software. Unless otherwise noted, the English translations of the Targums in this book will be taken from the Aramaic Bible series or from Clem's translations in Accordance, sometimes with slight adjustments for the sake of accuracy or clarity.

Texts for all targumic material can be found on the website of the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* (<http://call.cn.huc.edu>), often referred to as *CAL*. *CAL* also has a searchable bibliography. Most of the *CAL* texts can be found in commercial Bible software programs, such as Bibleworks, Logos, and Accordance. The Accordance product has been corrected and provided with lexical tags by Edward Cook, and most of the Targums have received a new translation by Eldon Clem. Alexander Sperber's five-volume *Bible in Aramaic* provides a scholarly edition of Targum Onqelos to the Pentateuch, Targum Jonathan to the Prophets, as well as manuscript transcriptions of many of the Writings Targums.

Sources for bibliography in addition to *CAL* include the three volumes of Grossfeld, *Bibliography*; the *Newsletter for Targumic and Cognate Studies*; and the bibliographic appendices in the *Journal of the Aramaic Bible* and *Aramaic Studies*.

The only general dictionary for the study of all these Targums, although nearly a century old, is Marcus Jastrow's *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*; although that work may be supplemented by Gustaf Dalman, *Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch*; Cook, *Glossary*; and Michael Sokoloff, *Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*.

Although this book holds that ancient synagogues constitute the primary liturgical, religious, and social context for the use of Targums, with the schoolhouse and private study providing secondary locations, it will not discuss or describe synagogues and research them in any great detail. Most discussion of them will take place in chapters 14 and 15. For further information, there are a number of excellent works available. See, for example, Chilton and Yamauchi, "Synagogues"; Urman and Flesher, *Ancient Synagogues*; Olsson and Zetterholm, *The Ancient Synagogue from its Origins until 200 C.E.*; Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue*; Avery-Peck and Neusner, *Special Problem of the Synagogue*; and Fine, *Sacred Realm*.

DEFINING TARGUM

In Hebrew and Aramaic, the word *targum* appears as a general term meaning “translation,” and may refer to the rendering of any text into any language, although translation into Aramaic is usually the focus. General usage of the term continues today in modern Israeli Hebrew. But when we use the term to designate a group of Aramaic translations of Scripture done in late antiquity, then something much more specific is meant.

When we looked at the character of the translations in chapter 1 described as “(1) Aramaic translations of (2) books of the Hebrew Bible (3) done by Jews (4) during the rabbinic period,” we discovered something important. The approach to translation in the Targums is distinctive, differing from other translations, including those produced in the ancient Mediterranean world. The word Targum is not simply a way of designating ancient Jewish Scripture translations. Instead, it identifies a specific approach to rendering a text from one language to another. By identifying and elucidating the distinctive character of these targumic translations, we can fashion a definition that enables us to distinguish translations that are targumic from other sorts of translations. If a new translation was discovered today—whether excavated in an archaeological site or found among the uncatalogued holdings of a manuscript library—the definition could help us determine whether or not it is a Targum. This means that we could identify a Targum on its internal characteristics, not on arbitrary external characteristics; for example, whether it was composed by Jews or Christians, or in the rabbinic period or the Second Temple period. Crafting such a definition is the goal of this chapter.

Today, we tend to think of translations in two different ways. On the one hand, translations are literal—sometimes called “word for word.” Modern translators often term this approach, “formally correspondent.” Here, the translator tries to equate the meaning of each word or expression

of the source text with a word in the language of the translated text, sometimes called the target text. On the other hand, translations may be paraphrastic—which could be called “sense for sense.” Modern translators call this method, “dynamic equivalence.” This approach attempts to render the sense of each phrase or sentence in the source text into a phrase or sentence with the same meaning in the target language. The distinction between the two kinds of translation goes back to the ancient Romans.¹ In practice, translations rarely fit completely into one of these classifications. Rather, the classifications represent two ends of a continuum on which most translations may be placed.

But having characterized basic approaches to translation, we immediately encounter a paradox. Targums do not fit easily this way of thinking about translation. If literal and paraphrastic comprise two ends of a sliding scale, then Targums actually do not belong on that scale at all. To provide a sense of how Targums translate, let us compare Targum Neofiti's rendering of Genesis 1:2 with its Hebrew original. We provide the Hebrew and Aramaic texts, and a straight translation of each into English. (The italics in the English translation of the Targum indicates the added material. “HT” refers to the Hebrew text, “TN” refers to Targum Neofiti.)

Genesis 1:2

		וְבֵהוּ	תֵהוּ	הַיְתָה	וְהָאָרֶץ	HT-1
מִן	וּצְדִי	וּבֵהִיא	תֵהִיא	הוּת	וָאֲרֵעָא	TN-1
מִן	וּרִיקְנָא	בְעִיר	וּמִן	נֶשׁ	בְר־	TN-2
	וְחֻשְׁךְ					HT-3
פְּרִיס	וּחֻשׁבָא	אֵילָנִין	וּמִן	צִמְחִין	כָּל פְּלָחִין	TN-3
		וְרוּחַ	תְּהוּם	פְּנִי	עַל-	HT-4
מִן-	דְּרַחְמִין	וְרוּחַ	תְּהוּמָא	אִפִּי	עַל	TN-4
הַמִּים	פְּנִי	עַל-	מְרַחֶפֶת		אֱלֹהִים	HT-5
מִיָּא	אִפִּי	עַל	מְנַשְׁבָּא	הוּה	יִי	קִדְם
					קִדְם	TN-5

¹ See Sebastian Brock's influential essay “Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity.”

HT: And the earth was formless and void, and darkness upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God hovered upon the face of the water.²

TN: And the earth was formless and void, *and desolate of man and beast and empty from all work of plants and from trees*, and darkness *spread* upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit *of mercy from before* God *was* blowing upon the face of the water.

In the Hebrew/Targum parallel above, all words of the Hebrew text and its Aramaic rendering in Targum Neofiti are shown. The words of the Hebrew text are spaced so as to parallel the longer text of the Targum. In the first three lines of parallel texts, it is plain that the Targum adds words that do not appear in the Hebrew text. These are indicated by the italics in the English translation of Targum Neofiti. There is a second, single-word insertion at the end of line 3 and a third addition of words in the translation in lines 4–5.

The first addition unpacks the two Hebrew words, תהו ובהו, “formless and void.” These are vague terms, even in English translation, and provide no specific description or understanding about what exactly is “formless and void.” In addition, the words which translate them are rare in Aramaic; this is the only time they occur in Targum Neofiti. In fact, they may even have been *created*, as neologisms, to copy the form of the Hebrew, with the first two letters of each word the same and the Aramaic providing a *yod* as a substitute for the third Hebrew letter *waw*. To give some detail to the Hebrew Text’s rather unclear comment about the earth, Targum Neofiti inserts a thirteen-word addition that specifies what is missing: humans, animals, and plants.

The second addition is a single verb at the end of line 3 that provides an explicit verb for a Hebrew expression without a verb: a noun-clause, which by definition lacks a verbal component.

The third addition is a common type of alteration in the Targums. The targumic composers are uncomfortable with anthropomorphizing God, that is, giving God human attributes like voice, feelings, limbs, and, in this case, a spirit. They even avoid the impression that God engages in direct action, in the way a person would, and designed a variety of ways to recast passages in the Hebrew text that do this. In reaction to the Hebrew phrase “Spirit of God,” Neofiti avoids the anthropomorphism by adding three words. The first added word combines with a translated word to provide the rendering “Spirit of mercy.” This gives the spirit a character independent of God; it is the “Spirit of mercy,” not directly the “Spirit of God,” in the same way that a human being may be said to have spirit. The

² All translations in the chapter are ours unless otherwise noted.

next two words distance this spirit from God even further. It is not God's own Spirit of mercy but a spirit that was "before" him, that is, in front of him (perhaps in a heavenly court, such as that populated by angels and the "powers" of the universe), and it goes out from before him and blows upon the water. The last word of this addition is a common Aramaic periphrastic participle construction, in which an auxiliary use of the verb "to be" joins with the participle "blowing," to give "was blowing."

These two larger additions are not truly paraphrase because paraphrase presents the meaning of the original text, whereas a Targum's additions brings into the translation meanings not present in the original. Sometimes it seems as if the new material expands on the original, so these additions are often called "expansions," although it must be kept in mind that the Targums often create substantially new meanings with their additions (and, for that matter, their subtractions). Expansions can range in size from a word or two, to a phrase, sentence, or even several paragraphs.

The distinctive character of Targums come not just from this habit of adding material into the translation, but also from the translations themselves. Here we encounter paradox again. targumic translations are, for the most part, highly literal. In the parallel versions of Genesis 1:2 above, every word of the Hebrew is represented (or we might say re-presented) in the Aramaic text below it. The Aramaic translation reproduces all the linguistic information of the Hebrew original.

These added expansions combined with a word-for-word translation of the source text give Targums their distinctive character, a character that strikes modern readers as odd, since we are used to thinking about translation in terms of the continuum between literal rendering and paraphrase.³ It seems disconcerting that someone would carefully create an extremely literal translation and then add in material that represents nothing at all in the original text.

Given the Targums' difference from other forms of ancient translation, we must craft a definition that captures their distinctive character.⁴ Here is the definition of Targum:

A Targum is a translation that combines a highly literal rendering of the original text with material added into the translation in a seamless manner.

³ Philip Alexander made a similar distinction already in 1985; see Alexander, "Targumim and the Rabbinic Rules," 15. Unfortunately, he backs away from it later in "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures." Both essays trip over themselves by misusing the term, "paraphrase."

⁴ The Aramaic versions of biblical books found at Qumran, such as the Genesis Apocryphon and the so-called Targum of Job, do not follow this definition of Targum.

The English translation of Targum Neofiti above makes it clear that the words added into the translation do not disrupt the translation, but are designed to fit smoothly into its flow. Indeed, the second addition actually makes the translation clearer than the original by adding in a verb. To explain this definition in greater detail, and to provide further examples, let us look at each of its elements in greater depth.

TARGUMS PROVIDE HIGHLY LITERAL RENDERINGS

It may come as a surprise to students who are familiar with dictionary or encyclopedia definitions of Targums, which frequently call them paraphrastic or “free” translations, to hear targumic translation described as highly literal. But that is indeed the case. In the vast majority of their passages, Targums present a translation that recreates anywhere from 85 to 100 percent of the original’s linguistic information—in particular, its grammatical information. There are three indicators of literalness that can immediately help us see just how closely a Targum translation follows the Hebrew text.

The first indicator is one-to-one, formal correspondence. This gauges the extent to which the linguistic elements of the original are reproduced in the translation. The more elements a translation replicates, the more literal it is.

The second indicator is that of word order or syntax. This criterion looks at the extent to which one-to-one correspondence is reproduced in the same order as the original. The closer the translation is to the original’s order, the more literal it is considered. Here is where Aramaic has the advantage over an Indo-European language such as Greek. Aramaic generally follows or can follow the same word order as Hebrew, whereas Greek’s natural syntax differs significantly at times from that of Semitic languages. If a Greek translation follows the Hebrew order too closely, the sentence may make little sense to native Greek-speakers.

The third indicator is the consistency of correspondence from the point of view of overall, semantic meaning. The goal in this measure is to determine how often a translation uses a single term in the target text for the same word in the original text. For instance, when translating a French story into English, does the translator use “hat” every time the word *chapeau* appears in the story? Or does she or he alternate “hat” with “cap” or “bowler,” or introduce innovations in what is done with the hat? The more the translation sticks with single-word equivalence, the more literal it is.

To illustrate the Targum's literal character, let us see how some examples measure up against these criteria.⁵ Here are the first three verses of the Balaam story, Numbers 22:1-3, for the Hebrew text and for Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, which is often described as the most "paraphrastic" of the Pentateuchal Targums.

Numbers 22:1

מֹאָב	בְּעֶרְבוֹת	וַיַּחֲנוּ	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	וַיִּסְעוּ	HT
דמואב	במישריא	ושרון	ישראל	בני	ונטלו	PJ
			יֶרֶחוֹ	לְיֶרֶדְוֹ	מֵעֵבֶר	HT
			דיריחו	לירדנא	מעיברא	PJ

And the sons of Israel journeyed and they camped in the plains of Moab, over the Jordan from Jericho.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan parallels the Hebrew text so closely here at Numbers 22:1 that a single English translation provides a literal rendering of both texts. The Targum is grammatically, syntactically, and semantically parallel. Pseudo-Jonathan follows the first five words of the verse exactly, and in the same order. The fifth and sixth words of the Hebrew are in a genitive construction, "plains of Moab." The Aramaic has both words exactly but adds a *dalet* before the second word to indicate the dependent relationship of the first noun to the second. The Aramaic has the last three words exactly but adds a prefixed particle (another *dalet*) to the last one, "Jericho," to indicate its link to מעיברא, "over . . . from . . .," as in "over the Jordan from Jericho." So although there are a few prefixed additions in the Aramaic (all conforming with standard Aramaic usage), every term and item of grammatical information in the Hebrew appears also in the Targum in the same order. The Targum translates all the Hebrew.

Numbers 22:2

כָּל-	אֵת	צָפוֹר	בֶּן-	בֶּלֶק	וַיָּרָא	HT
כל	ית	צפור	בר	בלק	וחמא	PJ

⁵ For further examples of these criteria, as applied to Targumim, rabbinic literature, and the Synoptic Gospels, see Chilton, *Profiles of a Rabbi* and *Targumic Approaches to the Gospels*.

לְאִמְרֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	עָשָׂה	אֲשֶׁר-	HT
לִאֲמֹרָא	יִשְׂרָאֵל		דַּעֲבַד	PJ
			מָה	

And Balaq son of Zippor saw everything which Israel did to the Amorites.

Again Pseudo-Jonathan parallels the Hebrew text closely, replicating all grammatical information in the Hebrew as well as its meaning. Note the prefixed *dalet* before the third word from the end. This time the prefixed *dalet* functions as a relative pronoun, the equivalent of the Hebrew term אֲשֶׁר, “which.” This is good Aramaic form and formally correspondent in translation. The one addition in this verse is the preceding word מָה, “what,” which functions as a correlative to the subsequent relative pronoun. Otherwise, the translation provides a one-to-one correspondence to all words in the source text and in the same order.

Numbers 22:3

מָאֵד	הָעָם	מִפְנֵי	מוֹאָב	וַיִּגַּר	HT
לְחָדָא	עַמָּא	קִדְם	מוֹאֲבָא	וּדְחִילוֹ	PJ
	מוֹאָב	וַיִּקַּץ	הוּא	רַב-	כִּי
בַּחֲיִיהוֹן	מוֹאֲבָא	וְאֶתִיעֻקּוֹ	הוּא	סָגִי	אֲרוּם
		יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי		מִפְנֵי
		יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	קִדְם	מִן-

HT: And Moab was very afraid before the people, for it [the people] was many, and Moab dreaded before the sons of Israel.

PJ: And the Moabites were very afraid before the people, for it was many, and the Moabites were distressed *for* [*lit.* “*in*”] *their lives* before the sons of Israel.

Pseudo-Jonathan’s rendering here provides the first opportunity we have to see something other than straight, formally correspondent translation. First, the Targum adds one word to its translation, בַּחֲיִיהוֹן, “[were distressed] for their lives,” a noun with a prefixed preposition and a suffixed pronoun. It fits smoothly into the translation and helps indicate the impact of the Moabites’ fear.

Second, the subject is changed from the singular in the Hebrew, “Moab,” to the plural in Aramaic, “Moabites.” To go along with this, the verbs are changed to the plural, as well. This alteration does not change

the meaning of the original; it simply shifts from using the singular, collective name of the nation to symbolize all its people (or at least the people assembled) to a direct designation of the inhabitants.

Other than these two changes, the translation is exact. The Hebrew **הָעָם**, “the people,” in which the beginning *heh* indicates the definite article (i.e., “the”) is rendered in the Aramaic as **עמא**, in which the final *aleph* serves to indicate the determined form of the noun, the nearest equivalent in Aramaic to the usage of the definitive article in Hebrew. The Aramaic two words **מן־קדם** function as a preposition meaning “before,” or more exactly “from before,” like the Hebrew term **מִפְּנֵי**, which is a contraction beginning with **מִן**. So Numbers 22:3 here provides an indication of how Targum Pseudo-Jonathan retains a highly literal rendering—a one-to-one correspondence in the same order as the source text—even as it makes a couple of small alterations.

This verse also provides an opportunity to evaluate the third criteria, that of semantic consistency of translational equivalents. In its translation, Pseudo-Jonathan makes **ארום** its equivalent of the Hebrew conjunction **כִּי**, while **לחדא** serves as its equivalent for the Hebrew adverb **מֵאֵד**. If we look at all the instances of the two Hebrew terms in the Pentateuch and compare them to Pseudo-Jonathan’s rendering of them, we can evaluate the extent to which Pseudo-Jonathan treats them consistently. Hebrew **כִּי** appears 927 times in the Pentateuch, and 129 times in the first thirty chapters of Genesis. **ארום** is Pseudo-Jonathan’s equivalent term in 89 percent of the latter cases (115). That is a fairly high level of consistency. Similarly, **מֵאֵד** appears 68 times in the Pentateuch, and Pseudo-Jonathan gives **לחדא** as its equivalent 91 percent of the time (62). The results of these quick analyses of these two terms suggests that PJ provides a consistent as well as a literal translation. Of course, this is just a suggestive sample and not a definitive study, but it indicates such an analysis can be done and the results point to the literal character of Pseudo-Jonathan’s translation.⁶

In terms of these three criteria of literalness, these verses indicate that Targums score high on one-to-one correspondence and on word order. Aramaic Targums tend to represent nearly every linguistic element of the Hebrew text in the same order as they appear there. Our initial analysis of two terms for translation consistency also showed a high degree of literalness. If these examples are representative of all Targums, then we can conclude that when a Targum translates, it does so literally.

⁶ In this day of computer-assisted text analysis, this type of translation analysis is quite easy. It can be done on the website of the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* or on any “Computer Bible” software that includes the Targums in a parsed form. In this paragraph we used Accordance Bible Software, whose Targums have been parsed by E. M. Cook.

There are two main reasons for this high degree of formal correspondence. First, this correspondence is possible because the Hebrew of the source text and the Aramaic of the target text are both Semitic languages. They use the same basic processes to form words, and put those words together into sentences according to similar grammatical and syntactical principles. So when a Hebrew word has a suffix representing the object of the verb with a pronoun, its Aramaic counterpart can easily have a suffix performing the same task. When a Hebrew word has an added prefix that is a preposition, the Aramaic can do the same thing. This is quite different from a translation that renders Hebrew into an Indo-European language such as Greek or English. Neither Greek nor English form their words or sentences in the same way as Hebrew and therefore cannot represent Hebrew in such a one-to-one fashion.

Second, the Targums emphasize *formal* correspondence without necessarily implying *semantic* correspondence. This means that the translation aims primarily to reproduce the form of the original, and only secondarily its original meaning. That meaning is important—if only because the **meturgeman** (“translator”) wants the sentences to make sense, although sometimes his own sense more than that of the Hebrew text—but it is more important that the grammatical form and structure of the original be reproduced. The result is that if a Hebrew pronoun appears in a sentence being translated, the Targum will put in a pronoun. But if the Hebrew pronoun was singular, the Aramaic one might be plural. Or, to take another instance, if a Hebrew verb was past tense, the Targum might render it as a present participle. Or if a preposition is needed, the Aramaic might use a different preposition. In this way the grammatical—indeed specifically morphological—character of the original text is preserved in the translation, even as innovations in meaning are achieved.

This approach to Scripture translation should not be seen as surprising, although it involves a reversal in contemporary attitudes. Our modern culture has largely privileged original meaning over form in deciding the primary goal of biblical translation. In part this made a virtue out of necessity, since English cannot easily replicate many of Hebrew’s formal constructions. But the Jews of late antiquity saw Scripture’s form as important, as well as its meaning. After all, if God inspired the Hebrew Bible, then the way those words were put together, as well as their relationship to each other, was as important as the words’ meaning. They knew that grammar as well as semantics could determine correct interpretation and understanding. So they worked to preserve it.

TARGUMS ADD MATERIAL IN A SEAMLESS MANNER

The definition of Targum we gave above has three key components: the literal translation, the additions, and the relationship between them. This section will address the second and third of these, for studying the additional material by necessity involves studying its connection to the translation as well. Additions range from a few words to a phrase or sentence to a whole paragraph or more. A Targum's composers usually locate the addition within the text in a way that maintains the text's flow and that provides no obvious indication that an addition has been made.⁷ With small additions, that means a sentence or phrase continues to be grammatical and to make sense. Additions of a sentence or two usually fit into the paragraph or story in which they appear, while large expansions link themselves into the translation.

The Targum of Lamentations provides a range of good examples, from small expansions within literal renderings to large blocks of additional text. The biblical book of Lamentations focused on the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE. The Targum of Lamentations recasts the book to reflect the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE by the Romans even as it retains the appearance of speaking of the First Temple. As Christian Brady demonstrates in his study of the Targum, this recasting aims to show that the Jews had been faithless to God, and hence that the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple was a just and divine punishment. The Targum describes the Jews' sins, God's reaction, and the Jews' treatment at the hand of their enemies in a way that carries out divine punishment, all the while treating Scripture as inherently prophetic.

Lamentations 4:16 provides the first example. It begins by describing God's actions and then the impact on the Jews. We give parallels of the Hebrew text ("HT") and the Targum of Lamentations ("TL"), followed by an English translation of each.⁸

לֹא	חֲלָקָם	יְהוָה	פָּנֵי			HT-1
לֹא	אֶתְפַּלִּיגוּ	”	אִפִּי	קִדְמָה	מִן־	TL-1
				לְהִבְטִיטָם	יוֹסִיף	HT-2
רְשִׁיעִיָּא	אוּמִיָּא	כֵּן	בְּגִין	בְּהוּם	לְאַסְתַּכְלָא	יוֹסִיף TL-2

⁷ Tg. Prov. constitutes the primary exception to this observation.

⁸ Text of Targum Lamentations in this chapter is Codex Vaticanus Urbinus Hebr. 1, as given in Brady, *Targum Lamentations*.

נְשָׂאוּ	לֹא	כְּהֲנִים	פָּנֵי	HT-3
סִבְרוּ	לֹא	כְּהִנְיָא	אִפִּי	TL-3
חָנְנוּ	לֹא	זְקֵנִים		HT-4
חֲסוּ	לֹא	סִבִּיא	וְעֵלּוּי	TL-4

HT: The face of the Lord has scattered them,
 he will not again see them;
 they did not lift the face of the priests.
 They will not favor the elders.

TL: *From before* the face of the Lord they *were* scattered,
 He will not again see them,
Because of this, the wicked peoples do not show respect in the presence of the
 priests [literally, “do not understand the faces of the priests”],
And upon the elders, they have no compassion.

As you can see from the way the Hebrew text lines up with the Targum, the Targum provides a literal translation representing all words of the Hebrew in the same order. It also makes readily apparent where the meturgeman added material. The first addition occurs at the verse’s beginning, the insertion of the two-word preposition, מִן־קֹדֶם, “before.” This is actually a “double translation,” as it is called in the field. This constitutes a common targumic translation technique, in which a single word of the Hebrew produces two translations in the Aramaic. The second translation here is the word אִפִּי, “face.” Both translate the Hebrew term, פָּנֵי, which can mean both “face” and “before, in front of.” Rather than choose which rendering to use, the Targum uses both. Note that the two translations fit together in the sentence.

The use of the double translation technique represents a choice the translator made. When the Hebrew word פָּנֵי shows up again in line 3, the translator made a different decision and gave a single translation, “face of the priests.”

In line 2 of the parallel texts, the Targum of Lamentations adds four words. Let us look at them two at a time, beginning with the second two words, אֹמְיָא רְשִׁיעִיא, “wicked peoples.” This addition supplies a specific subject for the next two phrases. In each one, the Hebrew verb lacks a subject, since the nouns constitute objects instead. By supplying a subject, the Targum’s added words not only fit the sentence’s flow, but also enhance its clarity. This observation applies both to line 3’s comment about the priests, and line 4’s remark about the elders. This latter is clarified by

the last added word, **ועלוי**, “and upon.” This added word makes clear that the elders are the verb’s object, not its subject: that is, they are lacking favor, not the ones failing to show favor.

Finally, the first two added words of line 2, **בגין כן**, “because of this,” also serve to clarify the verse’s meaning. By linking the two halves of the verse in this causal manner, it posits that the treatment which the priests and elders receive results from God’s punishment of scattering the Israelites.

In the following verse, Lamentations Targum 4:17, the Targum’s composer recasts the text to refer to the Jews’ bad assessment of the Romans and their intentions.

אֶל־עֵזְרָתֵנוּ	עֵינֵינוּ	תְּכַלִּינָה	עוֹדִינָה	HT		
דהוינא	עייננא	ספאן	עוד	TL		
בְּצַפִּיתָנוּ	הָכֵל			HT		
בסכיתנא	להבלו	לנא	דאתהפיד	לרומאי	מתין	TL
יושע	לא	גזי	אֶל־	צפינו	HT	
יפרוק	דלא	עמא	דאינון	לאדומאי	דאסתכיתנא	TL

HT: Our eyes failed, ever watching
vainly for help;
we were watching eagerly
for a nation that could not save.⁹

TL: Our eyes yet have been ruined/ended by *looking for* our help,
which we were [expecting] to be given by the Romans,
for it was overturned for us into vanity in our watching with which we were
watching for the Edomites,
*for they are a nation that does not redeem.*¹⁰

Again, note that every element of the Hebrew text appears in the targumic translation. The Targum continues to maintain its literal approach to the Hebrew. Within this literal rendering, however, there are three points of additional material. The first added word is **לאסתכלא**, “to look for.” This supplies the implied verb of the Hebrew phrase and makes the translation clearer than the original.

The second addition consists of five words. The first three, **דהוינא** **מתין** **לרומאי**, “*which we were [expecting] to be given by the Romans,*” link to the

⁹ Translation from NRSV.

¹⁰ Our translation.

previous phrase and specifies the type of help the Israelites were looking for. It adds information to the passage and is explicitly linked to the previous phrase by the relative pronoun דַּ, “which.” The last two words, דַּאֲתַהֲפִיךְ לָנָא, “for it was overturned for us [into vanity],” finishes the added phrase and links it back into the translation. It accomplishes this by joining the addition to the word “vanity,” לַהֲבִלוֹ, with the preposition “into,” לִּ-. In this way, the addition and the translation become the single phrase.

The third addition comprises two words, לַאֲדוּמַי דַּאֲיִנּוֹן, “for the Edomites, for they [are a people]. . . .” The meturgeman inserted the two words into the translation of a single Hebrew phrase and in so doing created two phrases in the Aramaic. The first added word completes the first phrase which is now, דַּאֲתַהֲפִיךְ לָנָא לַהֲבִלוֹ בְּסִכִּיתָנָא דַּאֲסַתְכִּיתָנָא לַאֲדוּ-, מאי, “and it was overturned for us into vanity in our watching with which we were watching for the Edomites.” The second word, דַּאֲיִנּוֹן, “for they,” now begins a subordinate clause that describes the Edomites—namely, דַּאֲיִנּוֹן עֲמָא דְּלֹא יִפְרוּק, “for they are a nation that does not redeem/save.” The added words here change the structure of the sentence, but they do so in a straightforward and non-intrusive manner. The integrity of the literal translation remains, even as the additions have altered its character.

Let us now turn to a somewhat larger addition, this one from Lamentations 4:2. This addition transforms a verse presenting a symbolized devaluation of Israelite sons—precious sons being treated like clay pots—into a specific mistreatment with sexual overtones.

בְּפִזָּ	הַמְסָלָאִים	הַיְקָרִים	צִיּוֹן	בְּנֵי	HT
לְדַהֲבָ	דְּמַתִּילִין	יְקִרִין	צִיּוֹן	בְּנֵי	TL
				אֵיכָה	HT
יְתוּסָ	מַחְתִּין	עַמְמִין	הוּוּ	הַיְכָדִין	TL
	וּמַסְתַּכְלִין	עַרְסִיהוֹן	קְבִיל	כָּל	TL
כְּשׁוֹפְרָהוֹן	שְׁפִירִיא	בְּנִין	נְשִׁיהוֹן	דִּילְדוֹן	TL
יוֹצֵר	יְדִי	מַעֲשָׂה	חֶרֶשׁ	לְגַבְלִי-	HT
פַּחְרָא	יְדִי	עוֹבְדִי	דַּחְסָף	וּאֲתַחְשִׁיבוֹ	TL

HT: The precious children [sons] of Zion,
worth their weight in fine gold—

how they are reckoned as earthen pots,
the work of a potter's hands!

TL: The precious sons of Zion, which were comparable *in their appearance to that of fine gold*, how the unclean people brought them down near to their beds and stare at them, so that their wives might bear sons as beautiful as they and they are considered as clay vessels which were made by the hands of the potter.¹¹

This Targum again replicates every word in the Hebrew text. But then it makes two additions. The first is an interwoven addition of two words that appears from the first to the second line, דמתילין איקוניהון לדהב טב, “[The precious sons of Zion], which were comparable *in their appearance to that of fine gold*.” The expansion links into the opening words of the verse, making up a phrase that, with two translated words, provides a subordinate clause that describes the precious sons.

The second expansion inserts a block addition of sixteen words into the verse's second sentence, following the first Hebrew word. The sentence thus begins with the translated word, “how,” which serves the same purpose for the new Aramaic sentence as it did for the Hebrew sentence—namely, to begin a statement of incredulity at how the sons were treated, forced to observe sexual practices that allegedly influenced the progeny. In the Targum, the general remark about being treated apart from their will becomes a specific description about their mistreatment. The added description of how “unclean people” brought them to their beds and stared at them ends with a *waw*, “and,” that connects the insertion to the closing phrase about being treated as a clay pot. Thus each end of the addition is tied into the translation; a translated word begins the addition and then the “and” links it back into the sentence's finish. There is no obvious break or other indication to suggest the presence of non-translated material. Thus even though this is a significant addition with no textual basis, it fits into the Targum's translation.

To complete this illustration of how Targums incorporate expansions into their translations, let us look at two large additions. The first comes from Genesis 38 in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, the source of our examples of literal translation, and the second then returns to Lamentations.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Genesis 38:24-26 contains a large addition that expands the climactic moment in the story of Judah and his daughter Tamar. The addition contains 179 Aramaic words. It begins by heightening the tension of the story by making it look as if Tamar will be burned for her actions and then at the last moment having God himself direct the angel Michael to save her. Despite the size of this expansion, it

¹¹ HT is NRSV. Translation from Brady, *Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*.

links into the translated text in the same manner as the smaller expansion we just studied, the Targum of Lamentations 4:2. This can be seen from the English translation.

Now, after *a period of three months it became known that she was pregnant*; and Judah was told, as follows: “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot: and moreover, behold, she is pregnant because of (her) harlotry.” And Judah said, “*Is she not the daughter of a priest?*” Bring her out and let her be burned.”

So Tamar was brought out to be burned, and she looked for the three pledges but did not find them.

She lifted up her eyes to the heavens on high and said thus: “I beseech by the mercies before you, O Lord, answer me in this hour of my distress, and enlighten my eyes that I may find my three witnesses. And I will raise up for you from my loins three holy ones who will sanctify your name by going down to the furnace of the fire in the valley of Dura.”

That hour, the Holy One, blessed be he, beckoned to Michael, and he enlightened her eyes so that she found them. She took them and threw them at the feet of the judges and said, The man to whom these pledges belong, by him I am pregnant. Yet even if I were burned I would not make him known. But the Lord of the world will put it in his heart to recognize them, and he will deliver me from this great judgment.”

And when Judah saw them he recognized them. Then he said in his heart, “It is better for me to be ashamed in this world, which is a passing world, than to be ashamed in the presence of my fathers, the righteous ones, in the world to come; it is better for me to be burned in this life in extinguishable fire than to burn in the world to come in inextinguishable fire. For this is measure for measure, according to what I said to my father Jacob: ‘Identify, I pray, your son’s cloak.’ Because of that I must hear in the courthouse: ‘(Identify, I pray) whose are these, the signet-right, the fringes, and the staff?’” Then Judah acknowledged (them) and said, “Tamar is innocent; she is pregnant by me.”

Then a heavenly voice came down from heaven and said, “The matter has come from before me.” So both of them were delivered from the judgment. And he (Judah) said, “Because I did not give her to my son Shelah this has happened to me.” And he did not know her again in sexual intercourse.¹²

This expansion is clearly a literary creation. Tamar cannot find the three pledges/witnesses and so it looks as if she will be burned. In her prayer she asks for them so that she will not be burned in the fire and offers the progeny of three “holy ones”—a reference to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in Daniel 3—who will go into the fire later. God then sends the angel Michael to give her the pledges. She sets them before the judges and asks for someone to “recognize them.” Even though Judah did not recognize Tamar earlier, he recognizes the pledges, and therefore her. In his heart, he links the fire in which Tamar was to burn with the fire

¹² Translation from Aramaic Bible.

of **Gehenna**, and comes forth to admit his sins. In the end, to avoid any lasting moral stain, a heavenly voice exonerates them.

This expansion goes far beyond the story and makes references to other events and even brings in concerns about eternal punishment for sin. There is no direct connection for most of the addition to the passage into which it was inserted. If we look closely, however, it becomes clear that it is linked to the translation text at both the beginning (in v. 24 and the start of 25) and the end (at v. 26), just as we saw with smaller additions. As we can see from the following English translation of the Hebrew text, the remainder of verse 25 appears in the middle of the expansion, although in the Hebrew text she gives the witnesses to Judah rather than the judges.

About three months later Judah was told, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the whore; moreover she is pregnant as a result of whoredom.” And Judah said, “Bring her out, and let her be burned.”

As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, “It was the owner of these who made me pregnant.” And she said, “Identify, I pray, whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff.”

Then Judah acknowledged them and said, “She is more in the right than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not lie with her again.¹³

So even in this large intrusion into the literal translation, the Targum’s composer takes pains to make sure it fits into the translation—indeed the term “splice” might be appropriate here—so there are no obvious seams to indicate the division between translation and addition. Furthermore, nearly all the words of the Hebrew text’s translation appear in the explanation. While it is not a literal translation by any stretch of the imagination, the emphasis on one-to-one correspondence nonetheless continues.

For our last example, we turn to the large expansion placed at Targum of Lamentations 1:1. This sizable addition is typical for many of the books of the Writings Targums; they often begin a book’s translation with several large expansions and then become more literal for the book’s remainder. The Targum of Lamentations 1:1 treats the Hebrew text in a different fashion from Pseudo-Jonathan’s expansion in Genesis 38:24-26, but which is common to how Targums often handle poetic passages. To begin, the addition is more apparent, for it begins directly with the addition, not with an attempt to link to a translation of the Hebrew text. Despite this, the one-to-one correspondence with the Hebrew text appears within the addition. The English of the Targum’s verse reads as follows:

¹³ NRSV, with slight modification by us.

Jeremiah the Prophet and High Priest told how it was decreed that Jerusalem and her people should be punished with banishment and that they should be mourned with “Eikah.” Just as when Adam and Eve were punished and expelled from the Garden of Eden and the Master of the Universe mourned them with Eikah.”

The Attribute of Justice spoke and said, “Because of the greatness of her rebellious sin which was within her, thus she will dwell alone as a man plagued with leprosy upon his skin who sits alone.”

And the city which was full of crowds and many peoples has been emptied of them and she has become like a widow. She who was great among the nations and a ruler over provinces which had brought her tribute has become lowly again and gives head tax to them from thereafter.¹⁴

This is a far cry from the Hebrew text, for which we give the Hebrew text and the English translation:

אֵיכָה יִשְׁבָּה בְּדָד הָעִיר רַבְתִּי עַם הָיְתָה
כְּאַלְמָנָה רַבְתִּי בְּגוֹיִם שְׂרָתִי בְּמַדְיָנוֹת הָיְתָה לְמַסַּ

How (אֵיכָה) lonely sits the city
that once was full of people!
How like a widow she has become,
she that was great among the nations!
She that was a princess among the provinces
has become a vassal.¹⁵

It is plain to see that the first of the Targum's paragraphs forms an exegesis of the Hebrew text's opening word, “how,” *eikah*. The Targum's second paragraph incorporates words two and three, where the Targum translation is not italicized. In the third paragraph of the translation, we find the fourth and following words, beginning with “city” and ending with “provinces.” This last word leaves two words of the Hebrew text untranslated. But even though two words are missing, clearly the principle of reproducing the words of the Hebrew text has generally been followed. Despite this formal adherence to that principle, the first two paragraphs make no attempt to replicate the meaning of those terms found in the Hebrew text. It is only in the last paragraph that some semantic relationship between the Hebrew and its targumic reproduction returns, and even that is not exact. This treatment of the words of the Hebrew text within a large expansion that plays loosely with their meaning is common in targumic treatment of many poetic passages.

¹⁴ Translation from Brady, *Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, slightly modified by us.

¹⁵ NRSV.

This section of the present chapter has shown how targumic translators add material—words and meanings—into their translations of the biblical text. These examples illustrate how Targums incorporate additions ranging in size from just a few words to nearly two hundred words. Most importantly, we discovered different techniques Targums use to blend the addition with the translation in a seamless manner. No one who did not know the underlying Hebrew text would have any indication that material foreign to the scriptural text had been added to it, although even non-Hebrew speakers would have noticed the discrepancy in the size of a Targum as compared to its putative Hebrew original.

CONCLUSION

The key goal of this chapter was to lay out a definition of Targum that emphasized the distinctive, internal characteristics of its approach to translation. These internal features set Targums apart from other kinds of translation, both during antiquity and later. The definition will enable the evaluation of other translations, perhaps even newly discovered ones (should scholars be so lucky), to determine whether or not they fit the category of Targum. So the definition of Targum that this book will feature is:

A Targum is a translation that combines a highly literal rendering of the original text with material added into the translation in a seamless manner.

The ramifications of this definition is that it identifies the rabbinic-period Aramaic translations as Targums. That is, the texts that have been identified by Jewish tradition and scholarship as Targums fit the definition. However, it does not apply to most other translations and Aramaic renderings of scriptural stories from antiquity and late antiquity. The Aramaic writings from Qumran, for instance, do not meet this definition, as we shall show in a later chapter. Not only is this true for a “rewritten Bible” text, but it is also true for the so-called “Targum of Job” found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

At the other end of the spectrum, when more research has been done, our definition will perhaps apply to many non-Aramaic renderings of biblical books during the medieval period. Philip Alexander discusses the variety of translations—Targums—of the book of the Song of Songs into languages such as Ladino, Jewish-Arabic, Judeo-Persian, Yiddish, and Judeo-Italian. He sees these as belonging to the continuing practice of writing Targums, or, as he calls it, “targumization.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

If you want to learn more about the distinction between literal and paraphrastic translation, two good essays to consult would be Sebastian Brock's article "Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity" and James Barr's "The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations." Philip Alexander's essay "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures" provides an influential attempt at defining Targums. See also his "The Targumim and the Rabbinic Rules for the Delivery of the Targum." Alexander's distinction between Targum types A and B is quite useful, although he uses the term *paraphrase* in an unhelpful manner. Alexander's formulations have been critiqued by David Shepherd in "Translating and Supplementing," and Moshe Bernstein in "Translation Technique in the Targum of Psalms. Two Test Cases: Psalms 2 and 137," and Willem Smeik in "Translation and Commentary in One: The Interplay of Pluses and Substitutions in the Targum of the Prophets." Descriptions of Targums as paraphrase can be found in Alexander (above), Bruce Chilton, "Targums," and Bernard Grossfeld, "Aramaic: The Targumim." For a more theoretical approach that treats expansion as interpretation and tries to place it into other forms of biblical interpretation, see Alexander Samely's essay, "Scripture's Segments and Topicality in Rabbinic Discourse and the Pentateuch Targum."

Study of the targumic treatment of the Balaam story appears in Geza Vermes' essay "The Story of Balaam."

The Targum of Lamentations has been the object of scholarly publication recently. Christian Brady published a book, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, which grew out of the commentary in his D.Phil. dissertation "Targum Lamentations' Reading of the book of Lamentations." The latter is available online. In the meantime, Philip Alexander published *The Targum of Lamentations* in the Aramaic Bible series. He provides an in-depth introduction to the work and an extensive footnote commentary to the text.

To learn more about the targumic treatment of Genesis 38, see Paul Flesher's study "Translation and Exegetical Augmentation in the Targums to the Pentateuch."

For Alexander's discussion of the ongoing targumization of the Song of Songs, see his *The Targum of Canticles* and "Notes on Some Targums of the Targum of the Song of Songs."

THE SEVEN RULES OF TARGUM

In the previous chapter, we defined the Targums. A good definition identifies the category to which an item belongs—in this case, translation—and then identifies what makes it distinctive within that category. For the Targums it is their smooth combination of highly literal translation with additional material. But a definition is not a description.

A description lays out the common features of an item, whether distinctive to it or shared with similar items. Targums share some characteristics with other kinds of translation, and the most common of these should be noted. For example, Targums often change the nuances of words they are translating, and even the words themselves—just as other translations do. Moreover, some translation practices appear as standard in the Targums but are not necessary to them—and so do not belong in a definition.

The best way to describe key targumic features is to spell out what we shall call the “Rules of Targum.” There are seven of them, and together they provide solid grounding in the most common translation practices that occur in the Targums. Some of these appear in all Targums, while others appear in most of them. Some occur most often in a particular genre of writing, such as poetry rather than narrative or legal codes. The rules are composed generally, which means that they are designed to describe a range of translation and compositional activities. Different rules will apply more frequently and more aptly to some Targums than others. By formulating these features as rules, we can encapsulate them in cogent descriptions, which can then be explained and provided with examples so that you can then apply them in your studies.

The first two rules capture the key points of our definition of Targums in the previous chapter. We consider them to be Primary Rules, since they are characteristic of all Targums.

- Rule 1: When a Targum translates or presents the original text, it does so literally.
- Rule 2: When a Targum adds material into the translation, it integrates the addition smoothly so as not to interrupt its flow.

The remaining five rules are Secondary Rules, because they apply frequently throughout the Targums, but they are neither constitutive nor necessary. That is, their occurrence is a matter of style or choice on the part of a Targum’s composer(s). Those choices influence the interpretation or presentation of the particular passage in which they appear, but they do not alter the overall character of the Targum itself.

All seven rules are given in the following table, and the remainder of the chapter will explain the five secondary rules, since the previous chapter deals with the primary rules.

<p><i>Rules of Targum</i></p> <p><i>Primary Rules</i></p> <p>Rule 1: When a Targum translates or presents the original text, it does so literally.</p> <p>Rule 2: When a Targum adds material into the translation, it integrates the addition smoothly so as not to interrupt its flow.</p> <p><i>Secondary Rules</i></p> <p>Rule 3: A word or phrase may be substituted for one in the original without disturbing the form of the surrounding translation.</p> <p>Rule 4: An addition may be drawn from, imitate, or relate to material elsewhere in the work.</p> <p>Rule 5: A large addition may be placed near the beginning or end of a narrative to emphasize its message.</p> <p>Rule 6: Poetic passages are often expanded rather than translated.</p> <p>Rule 7: Occasionally some words of the original text may be ignored or left out. The targumic rendering smoothly adapts to this loss.</p>

RULE 3

A word or phrase may be substituted for one in the original without disturbing the form of the surrounding translation.

Substitutions of one word for another, as opposed to additions, are quite common in translations of all kinds and languages. Sometimes the substitution is rather slight, perhaps shading a nuance but not affecting the basic meaning of a sentence. Other times a substitution changes the meaning

directly and may even provide an interpretive shift. Frequently a substitution takes a Hebrew sentence that contains a metaphor and makes that metaphor concrete.

The first example of substitution comes from Isaiah 2:4. Here the changes are obvious but not meaningful. Some words are made more specific, while others more general. The Hebrew reads:

He shall judge between the nations (הַגּוֹיִם),
 and shall arbitrate for many peoples (עַמִּים);
 they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
 and their spears into pruning hooks;
 nation (גּוֹי) shall not lift up sword (חֶרֶב) against nation (גּוֹי),
 neither shall they learn war any more.¹

The Targum of Isaiah provides an almost exact translation.

He shall judge between the *kingdoms* (מַלְכוּתָא),
 and shall arbitrate for many peoples (עַמִּמִּין);
 they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
 and their spears into pruning hooks;
people (עַם) shall not lift up *weapon* (זִין) against *people* (עַם),
 neither shall they learn war any more.²

The Hebrew text uses the word for “nation,” גּוֹי, three times. Its appearance in the first line, in plural form, is paralleled in the second line by the term “peoples,” עַמִּים. This guides the manner in which the Isaiah Targum treats the Hebrew term גּוֹי, a singular form, the two times it appears in line five. Rather than speak of a “nation,” the Targum shifts the term to “people,” עַם, and thus makes the parallel with line two rather than line one. This transfers the peaceful actions of lines three, four and five to the people themselves rather than the political entity.

In the meantime, that political entity is made slightly more specific by another substitution. In line one, the Targum shifts from “nations” to “kingdoms,” a shift whose nuance may suggest that those being judged are now the kings of the kingdoms rather than the people.

Finally, the term “sword,” חֶרֶב, in line 5 is made more general in the Targum, which renders it as “weapon,” זִין. Thus peace will come through the refashioning of all weapons, not just the swords.

¹ In this chapter, unless otherwise noted, translations of the biblical Hebrew text into English are from the NRSV. Translations of Targums are from the Aramaic Bible series. Translations of rabbinic literature are by Jacob Neusner.

² Our translation.

The second example of substitution, from Isaiah 3:4, provides a more clear-cut shift in meaning. The first three verses of Isaiah 3 list the classes of leaders of Israel which God will remove in order to punish Israel: warriors, judges, prophets, counselors, and so on. In verse 4, the Hebrew text informs the reader that instead God will “make boys their princes (שָׂרִיָּהֶם).” So the youngsters become leaders. The Isaiah Targum transforms this last phrase with a substitution, “And I will make boys their *guardians* (פְּרִנְסִיָּהוֹן).” The change keeps with the Hebrew’s notion of the young ruling the old, but rather putting a few boys in high position as princes, the change to “guardian” enables all boys to play this role, and thus makes the punishment more immediate and widespread among all families.

The third example of substitution moves from simple word changes to reifying a metaphor. Jeremiah 4:7 appears in the middle of a prophetic oracle about the future of Israel. The prophet speaks largely in allusive terms and consciously uses metaphors to lay out the future predications. The Targum of Jeremiah takes one of these metaphors and identifies its precise terms.³ The Hebrew text’s “A lion (אַרְיֵה) has gone up from his thicket (מִסְבָּכוֹ)” becomes the Targum’s “A king (מֶלֶךְ) has *gone away* from his *fortified city* (מִכְרֵיָּה).” Here the image of a lion rousing up and becoming dangerous is applied to a king. This requires a second word substitution of “fortified city” for “thicket,” recasting both sides of the metaphor.

The next set of examples adds further steps. They focus on the non-metaphorical use of a word in the Hebrew text, which the meturgeman then treats as a metaphor and concretizes. In addition, this happens not just once, but, as Geza Vermes showed in his classic essay, “Lebanon,” numerous times across a variety of Targums.⁴ Vermes identified more than a dozen passages where different Targums reinterpreted “Lebanon” as the Jerusalem temple.

Here are three examples: (1) Moses prays to God in Deuteronomy 3:25 asking, “Let me cross over to see the good land beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and the Lebanon (וְהַלְבָּנוֹן).” Targum Onqelos renders this passage as, “Let me cross over to see the good land beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and the Temple (אֲעִיבֵר כְּעֵן וְאִיחוֹזִי יְת אֲרַעָא טְבָתָא דְּבַעִיבְרָא דִּירְדְנָא טְבָא הָדִין וְבֵית־מִקְדָּשָׁא);” (2) the Targum of Jeremiah 22:20 gives “Go up to the *Temple* (בֵּית מִקְדָּשָׁא) and cry out” for the Masoretic Text’s “Go up to Lebanon and cry out”;⁵ (3) a few verses later, the Targum provides this rendering of

³ Vermes, “Lion—Damascus,” 41.

⁴ Vermes, “Lebanon.”

⁵ Vermes, “Lebanon,” 28–30.

Jeremiah 22:23: “You who dwelt in *the Temple* (בֵּית מִקְדָּשָׁא), among the *kings* (מַלְכֵּי־אֲרָם)” for the Hebrew text: “O inhabitant of Lebanon, nested among the cedars.” In this example the substitution of “Temple” for “Lebanon” brings about an additional substitution, that of “kings” for “cedars.” As we can see from these examples, often substitution provides the most economical way of resolving a metaphor into a clear statement—even when the original text was not metaphorical.

The most frequent use of word substitution is not on its own within a literal translation, however, but in coordination with additional material. The targumic interpretations of Genesis 25:27 provide an apt illustration of this, as pointed out by Vermes.⁶ Targum Onqelos provides an interpretive rendering that just makes substitutions:

	אֱהָלִים	יָשָׁב	תָּם	אִישׁ	וַיַּעֲקֹב	HT
אוֹלְפָנָא	בֵּית	מְשָׁמִישׁ	שְׁלָמִים	גִּבּוֹר	וַיַּעֲקֹב	TO

HT: And Jacob was a perfect (תָּם) man, sitting [in] tents.

TO: And Jacob was a perfect (שְׁלָמִים) man, *serving in the house of instruction* (בֵּית אוֹלְפָנָא).

The first three words of the Aramaic translation match the Hebrew exactly. The third word, שְׁלָמִים, even though it is usually given the meaning “peace,” also means “complete, perfect” and thus is a literal translation of תָּם, “perfect,” albeit a literal translation with a fresh nuance. The last two words of the Hebrew text are replaced in the Targum. “Sitting” gives rise to the substitution of “serving,” while the final word, “tents,” is replaced by *bet ulpana*, “house of instruction.” Targum Onqelos thus manages its recasting simply through the use of substitution, and in overall meaning presents a far from literal rendering by changing just a few words.

Targum Neofiti provides a different reading of the same phrase, one that combines substitution with addition.

		תָּם	אִישׁ		וַיַּעֲקֹב	HT
טבא	בעבדא	שלם	גבר	הוה	ויעקב	TN
				אֱהָלִים	יָשָׁב	HT
			מדרשא	בבתי-	יתיב	TN

⁶ Vermes, “Haggadah in the Onkelos Targum,” 135.

HT: And Jacob was a perfect (תָּם) man, sitting [in] tents.

TN: And Jacob *was* a perfect (שָׁלֵם) man *with good work*, sitting in the houses of midrash.”

Neofiti’s rendering provides a literal translation of the last verb, “sitting.” It gives a slightly different rendering of the last word. Instead of the HT’s “tents” or TO’s “house of instruction,” it gives the plural of *bet midrash*. It renders the first three words just as does TO, exactly, but with an added “to be” verb, הוּהוּ, to make the implicit copula explicit. TN also adds two words to modify the description “perfect man.” It indicates this means “with good work.” So here substitution and addition go together. The first following Rule 3 and the second following Rule 2.

Targums are well known for featuring a particular type of substitution, that of translation techniques. There are many identified translation techniques in the Targums and most appear in the majority of the Targums of biblical books. Each translation technique constitutes a frequently applied approach to rendering a particular word or phrase of the Hebrew into Aramaic. They are not direct translations, but serve to alter the original’s meaning, often in accord with a theological perspective. In some translation techniques, a single Aramaic word is regularly substituted for the same Hebrew word. In others, the Hebrew term is replaced by a short Aramaic phrase.

Some of these translation techniques are simply word-for-word substitutions. Leviticus 4:10 represents many similar cases in that book when Targum Neofiti changes the Hebrew “burn [the pieces of a sacrifice]” (וְהִקְטִירָם) to “arrange [the pieces of a sacrifice]” (יִסְדֵּר). When speaking about the population of the people Israel increasing, Neofiti regularly changes the verb “be fruitful” (פִּרָּה) to “become strong” (תִּקְרָה); for example, in Exodus 1:7 Neofiti replaces the Hebrew “The people Israel were fruitful” (פָּרְוּ) with “The people Israel grew strong” (תִּקְפּוּ). Other examples appear at Genesis 1:22, 1:28, and 8:17. When the word “seed” (זֶרַע) is used in reference to human progeny, Neofiti renders it as “sons” (בְּנֵי). This occurs in Genesis 3:15 and Numbers 14:24, for example, as well as in Targum Onqelos.

More often a Targum replaces Hebrew words or short phrases with short Aramaic phrases. Targums Neofiti and Onqelos regularly render the one-word Hebrew designation “peace offerings” (שְׁלָמִים) as “sacrifices of holy things” (נִבְסַת קֹדֶשִׁין, נִבְסַת קֹדֶשִׁיא) in a number of passages, including Leviticus 3:1, 4:35, and Numbers 15:8. The two-word Hebrew phrase translated into English as “soothing smell” or “sweet-smelling savor” (רֵיחַ-נִיחֹחַ) is recast in Targum Neofiti as “which is accepted as a pleasing odor before the Lord” (דַּמְתִּקְבַּל לְרִיחַ דְּרַעוּא קִדְם יי) in Leviticus 1:9. Targum

Onqelos and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan take a similar approach, “which is accepted with pleasure before the Lord” (דַּמְתְּקַבֵּל בְּרַעְוָא קֳדָם יוֹי).

In a few types of translation techniques, the replacement phrase *includes* a rendering of the original term. These cases straddle the line between addition and substitution and are more common among the Palestinian Targums than the other Pentateuchal Targums. For example, Targum Neofiti commonly renders the Hebrew remark “it will be forgiven” (נָסַח) with a double translation, “it will be remitted and forgiven” (וְשִׁתְּבַק) (וְשִׁתְּבַק), as in Leviticus 4:20, 5:18, and Numbers 14:20. Another example features the common pentateuchal legal phrase, “This is the Torah” (זֹאת תּוֹרָה). Targum Neofiti regularly renders this by a phrase with an added word, “This is *the decree of* the Torah” (דָּא גִזִּירַת אֹרִיתָה). See Leviticus 6:2 and 11:46.

A special class of translation techniques deals with the name of God; specialists commonly speak of this as “anti-anthropomorphisms.” An anthropomorphism is a reference to God that presents him with human attributes. The biblical text often speaks of God as having human emotions like anger or sorrow or performing actions such as walking or planting (e.g., Gen 2:8); it may give him human body parts like hands, arms, or eyes; a passage may simply speak of God’s presence as if he were a man “hanging out” with the Israelites. Anti-anthropomorphisms provide circumlocutions in which the translation removes the impression that God has human characteristics.

Four anti-anthropomorphic techniques are common. The first comprises the use of the term “Shekinah” (שְׁכִינָה, שְׁכִינָא) which is usually used to speak of God’s presence in Israel’s worship. The Hebrew text of Exodus 34:9, for instance, has Moses pray, “let the Lord go among us” which Targum Onqelos renders as “let the *Shekinah of* (שְׁכִינָתָא) the Lord go among us.” The Hebrew of Leviticus 26:12 has God say, “I will walk in your midst,” which Onqelos translates as “I will cause *my Shekinah* (שְׁכִינָתִי) to dwell among you.”

The second common anti-anthropomorphism is the term *memra* (מִמְרָא, מִימְרָא) which is used in the phrase, “the *memra* of the Lord.” This word comes from the verb “to speak” and is often translated into English as “word,” although more strictly it means “command.” This may be the most common circumlocution for God in all the Targums. To take two examples from Hosea: in Hosea 14:1, the Hebrew phrase “[Samaria] rebelled against her God” (בָּאֱלֹהֶיהָ) becomes “Samaria has rebelled against the *word of her God*” (עַל מִימְרָא אֱלֹהֶיהָ) in the Targum. Hosea 14:5(6) replaces the Hebrew where God says, “I will be like dew” with the Targum’s “my *word* (מִימְרִי) will be like dew.”

The third frequent circumlocution is God's "glory" (יקר). In Targum Neofiti, it can be used on its own or in conjunction with Shekinah. Neofiti replaces the Hebrew "God (אֱלֹהִים) blessed them" in Genesis 1:28 with the Aramaic "*the glory of the Lord* (אִיקְרִיה דִּי) blessed them." At Neofiti Exodus 3:6 renders the Hebrew comment "[Moses] feared to look at God" with "[Moses] feared to look at *the glory of the Shekinah of God*" (אִיקְר שְׁכִינַתָּה דִּי).

The fourth anti-anthropomorphism we shall discuss is not a noun but a preposition, "before" (קדם).⁷ This substitution is used, often accompanied by other alterations to the sentence, to change actions of God which the Hebrew text presents in human terms to actions or states that do not describe God directly. An anthropomorphism that appears in Genesis 3:5 (the Hebrew) says, "And God knew," implying that God's thought processes are like those of human beings. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan renders the phrase by adding "before" and changing the verb, "And *it was revealed before* (קדם) God." The result says that information appeared in God's presence, but attributes no active, human-like activity to God. Similarly, Pseudo-Jonathan to Genesis 1:2 replaces the Hebrew phrase "spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters" with "a spirit *of mercy from before* (קדם) God was blowing over the face of the waters." Whereas the Hebrew text indicates that the hovering spirit *is* God, the Targum indicates that it is a spirit that comes from God's presence.

RULE 4

An addition may be drawn from or imitate related material elsewhere in the work.

The people who composed the Targums were broadly familiar with the whole range of Israel's Scripture. They often demonstrate this knowledge by bringing biblical passages from elsewhere into their expansions. Sometimes they quote other passages directly within these additions. Other times they may just refer to a passage, or they may refer to it and then provide an interpretation of it. These additions follow the other Rules of Targum, especially Rule 2.

The large expansion that Targum Neofiti places at Deuteronomy 32:1 provides an example of a Targum explicitly citing a passage from another biblical book. In this case the citation comes from the book of Isaiah:

When the appointed time of Moses the prophet arrived to be gathered in peace from the midst of the world, Moses thought in his heart and said: "Woe now is me, since I am

⁷ Michael Klein terms this a false anti-anthropomorphism. See Klein, "Preposition קדם."

being gathered from the midst of the world and I have not borne witness against the children of the Lord. If I bear witness against them before the sons of man who die and taste the cup of death, the people dies and their decrees are void. However, I shall bear witness against them before the heavens and before the earth, who never die and who do not taste the cup of death. However, they will ultimately wear out in the world to come.” And thus did Isaiah the prophet explain and say: “Lift up your eyes to the heavens and gaze on the earth beneath for the heavens shall melt away like smoke and the earth shall be consumed like a garment.” [Isa 56:1] “However, the Lord is to create new heavens and a new earth.” [Isa 65:17] For two prophets arose to bear witness against Israel—Moses the prophet and Isaiah the prophet. Moses, since he was near the heavens and far from the earth, said to the heavens: “give heed,” and to the earth “listen” [Deut 32:1]; Isaiah, the prophet, however, who arose after him, since he was near the earth and far from the heavens, said to the earth: “give heed,” and to the heavens, “listen.” [Isa 1:2] And both of them, because they feared the Holy Name, arose to bear witness against Israel. For this reason Moses, the prophet of the Lord, arose and took courage and said: “Give heed, O heavens, and I will speak, and listen, O earth, to the word of my mouth.”

The citations of Isaiah are quite literal. They are present to interpret the phrase “[heaven and earth] will ultimately wear out in the world to come.” They have no direct bearing on the main focus of the expansion, which is to introduce Moses’ bearing witness in regard to Israel’s sins. Following the Isaiah citations, the meturgeman continues the expansion with a midrashic-style interpretation of the verse, juxtaposing Isaiah’s opening words in chapter 1 verse 2 with Moses’ opening words here.⁸ The point of the midrash is to show how Moses and Isaiah were constrained by their fear of God to tell the truth about Israel and not to present them in a too-positive light. The end of the midrash sets up the translation of the verse Deuteronomy 32:1 as a climactic citation.

Targums usually do not go to the trouble to quote a passage verbatim. Often they refer or allude to the stories in just a few words, depending upon the memories of the readers or listeners to supply more detail. Sometimes the meturgeman even puts together a list of such references to other scriptural events. Here is an example from Targum Neofiti Deuteronomy 32:10, where the Hebrew text’s reference to one specific activity becomes a list of six items.

He [God] met them *dwelling* in a desert land, and in the voice of the lamentations of the wilderness. *He led them forty years in the wilderness; he made manna come down for them from the heavens; he made the well come up for them from the abyss, and he brought quails for them from the sea. He made them dwell round about the Glory*

⁸ See McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Deuteronomy*, 147–48. Compare the passage at Sifré Deut 306.

of his Shekinah. He taught them the Ten Words; he watched them and guarded them as the eyelid guards the pupil of the eye.

In comparison to the Hebrew verse, the Aramaic rendering here adds a list of six caring actions that God did for the Israelites when they were “dwelling in a desert land.” He (1) led them for forty years, (2) gave them manna, (3) gave them the well, (4) fed them quails, (5) gathered them around his Shekinah, and (6) gave them the Ten Commandments. The insertion of these items is placed between a relatively literal translation of the verse’s two parts. While a plain listing is a common way to handle references to other places in Scripture, sometimes a collection of such references is presented in a more formal list with a title and enumeration of each item in the list.⁹ This is the case, for example, in the list of ten famines inserted at Targum of Ruth 1:1 and in the list of five miracles performed for Jacob on his way to Haran found in Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 28:10.

RULE 5

A large addition may be placed near the beginning or end of a narrative to emphasize its message.

So far the characteristics described in the Rules of Targum have focused primarily on compositional behavior at the level of a word or sentence. Rule 5 addresses a targumic feature that belongs to a story or other narrative. Stories, even more than words or sentences, are subject to multiple interpretations. To ensure that readers or listeners understand the story in the manner the Targum’s composer intends, the writer will often place a large addition near the tale’s beginning or end.

A good example of this appears in Genesis 22, the story of Abraham’s near sacrifice of his son Isaac.¹⁰ The controversial and even upsetting story deals with Abraham’s steps to carry out God’s command to sacrifice Isaac. The biblical tale focuses on Abraham’s desire to obey God’s will. Targum Neofiti has a number of additions, including a large one at Genesis 22:10, that feature Isaac’s knowledge of his impending death and his willingness to play that role. But at the end of the story, at Genesis 22:14, Neofiti inserts a large expansion that returns the focus to Abraham. Here Abraham prays:

And Abraham worshiped and prayed in the name of the Memra of the Lord and said, “I beseech by the mercy that is before you O Lord:—everything is manifest and known before you—that there was no division in my heart the first time that you said to me to offer my son Isaac, to make him dust and ashes before you; but I immediately arose

⁹ See Towner, *The Rabbinic “Enumeration of Scriptural Examples.”*

¹⁰ We shall investigate this story further in chap. 20.

early in the morning and diligently put your words into practice with gladness and fulfilled your decree. And now, when his sons are in the hour of distress you shall remember the Binding of their father Isaac, and listen to the voice of their supplication, and answer them and deliver them from all distress, so that the generations to arise after him may say: 'On the mountain of the sanctuary of the Lord, Abraham sacrificed his son Isaac, and on this mountain the glory of the Shekinah of the Lord was revealed to him.'"

In the addition, Abraham emphasizes his willingness to carry out God's will and asks that a boon be granted because of his actions—namely, that Israel be delivered by God from tribulation. The addition of this large expansion at the end of the story emphasizes the biblical focus on Abraham and describes the boon that Israel will enjoy because of Abraham's act.

RULE 6

Poetic passages are often expanded rather than translated.

Poetic passages, especially those presented as speech, constitute a genre in which a Targum often does not attempt to apply Rule 1, with the result that they are expanded rather than translated.¹¹

There is only one genre of biblical literature that seems regularly to avoid the two primary rules of Targum, and that is poetry. More often than not, it seems, Targums treat poetry by replacing any attempt at literal translation with a large addition lacking direct linkage to the meaning of the Hebrew text. This is the case for Jacob's blessing of his twelve sons in Genesis 49, for Moses' blessing of the twelve tribes of Israel in Deuteronomy 32–33, for Hannah's song of praise in 1 Samuel 2, and for David's song of praise and subsequent oracle in 2 Samuel 22–23.

At the first reading of a verse from these sections, it seems as if the entire Hebrew text has been ignored. A closer look will often reveal that the words, if not in their original meaning, have been incorporated into the larger expansion. Although nowhere near as complete as the Targum's literal translation, these additions show an interest in providing a one-to-one correspondence with the form of the Hebrew text, often in the same order. Semantic correspondence is another matter altogether. Frequently the words are buried within added material that bears little relation to Scripture's original context. Occasionally it is possible to identify an exegetical link from the Targum back to the Hebrew text. Here is an example from 2 Samuel 22:3, where David praises God. In the Hebrew text, David says:

¹¹ This is Alexander's Type B; see Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures," 234–37.

my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
 my shield and the horn of my salvation,
 my stronghold and my refuge,
 my savior; you save me from violence.

Targum Jonathan to this passage provides an expansion that leaves out some of the Hebrew, but actually renders a great number of its words within it. Here is Clem's translation, with added underlines to indicate the translated Hebrew words:

My God who is pleased with me, who brought me near to the fear of him; my strength from before whom is given me strength and deliverance to overpower my enemies, my trust on account of whose Word I trust in time of distress, a shield about me from my enemies. Then he said to lift up my horn in his deliverance, my support whose Word supported me when I was fleeing from before my pursuers, who delivered me from my enemies, and also he saved me from the hand of all robbers.

Only the second line of the Hebrew text seems complete in the expansion, although it is spread over two sentences. Each of the other lines is represented by at least one word in the addition. The general tone of the expansion follows the Hebrew, but the wording is quite different, referring to robbers instead of violence, flight rather than refuge.

Similar observations describe the addition at 2 Samuel 23:4. To set the stage, we begin the Hebrew sentence with the previous verse.

- (3) One who rules over people justly,
 ruling in the fear of God,
 (4) is like the light of morning,
 like the sun rising on a cloudless morning,
 gleaming from the rain on the grassy land.

Targum Jonathan to this passage treats the elements of the sentence that are in verse 3 as a separate sentence. Its expansion begins in verse 4 and it replicates words only from verse 4. Again, here is Clem's translation with the words that echo the Hebrew text underlined.

Blessed are you, O righteous ones. You have done good deeds for yourselves, who are ready to shine in the brightness of your glory like the light of the morning that becomes continually stronger like the sun that will shine in the brightness of its glory over three hundred forty three times stronger [= 7 x 7 x 7], in the light of seven days. More than this, you will be made great and it will be well for you, for you were longing for the years of consolation that will come, like a farmer who hopes in the years of drought, that rain will come down on the earth.

The two Hebrew words of the verse's first line appear in the expansion; some of the words from the Hebrew's second line are missing, but all of the third line appears as well. The meaning that the Targum puts to those words brings them far beyond the semantic context of the Hebrew text. It seems important to the interpreters, however, that the expansion represent those words. The numerology based on the number seven seems to have little connection with the verse, however, and the "righteous ones" are created as the new subject once the Hebrew's subject from verse 3 is ignored.

RULE 7

Occasionally some words of the original text may be ignored or left out.
The targumic rendering smoothly adapts to this loss.

Targums usually find difficult passages just so much grist for their mill; the difficulties provide a fruitful locus for an explanatory expansion. But sometimes the Targums avoid problematic renderings simply by dropping them out of the translation. This is the case for Targum Neofiti at Genesis 31:27. The opening five words of the Hebrew to this verse are problematic. Literally, they should be translated as, "Why did you hide to flee and steal me (וְהִגַּב אֶתִּי)?" The last word is actually a pronominal suffix attached to the indicator of the direct object, אֶת. The direct object marker should probably be understood with a force meaning of "from," so the translation would be "steal from me."¹² Since that is not what it says, however, translators have for millennia struggled with this passage. Even today, the NRSV gives, "Why did you flee secretly and deceive me . . .?" while the NIV has, "Why did you run off secretly and deceive me?" Neither wants to deal with the direct accusation that Jacob is a thief. Similarly, Targum Onqelos avoids the suggestion of theft by translating it as, "Why . . . did you conceal [your leaving] from me." The Targum avoids the idea of theft but actually translates the direct object marker as "from." Pseudo-Jonathan has the enigmatic, "Why . . . did you steal my knowledge (וְהִגַּבֶּת דַּעְתִּי)?"—imputing theft, but not of a physical possession. Neofiti in the end avoids the whole problem by leaving out the passage entirely. This way nothing is said that would reflect negatively on Jacob.

Similarly, Neofiti drops a single word at Genesis 32:20/21 that would subordinate Jacob to Esau. In the HT Jacob instructs his followers to tell Esau that "Jacob, your slave" is coming. Neofiti's rendering leaves out "your slave." This may perhaps be due to similar reasoning as the

¹² Skinner, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary of Genesis*, 47.

previous verse we discussed. That is, the meturgeman dropped the word that would subordinate Jacob to Esau in a servile manner.

It is also possible the translator, or perhaps a later copyist, simply forgot to put some words in the rendering. There are several instances where words are left out of the translation without any apparent reason. In describing where God put the Cherubim “east of the garden of Eden” in Genesis 3:24, Pseudo-Jonathan leaves out the two words “garden of Eden.” Similarly, in Genesis 10:4 the HT lists four peoples who are the “sons of Yavan.” Pseudo-Jonathan reproduces the four peoples that are in the Hebrew but accidentally (or not) leaves out the two-word title indicating who they are.

In other passages, Aramaic equivalents of Hebrew words are left out of the Targums at places where the Targums place an addition. Sometimes the addition replaces the missing words, other times it seems to cause a mistake that leaves out the words. A good example of the first rationale appears in 1 Samuel 2:16, where a man in the middle of a sacrifice says to a priest’s assistant, “Surely let them burn the fat now and [then] take for yourself . . .” (קֶטֶר יִקְטִירוּ בַּיּוֹם הַחֲלָב). The Targum of Samuel renders the phrase by dropping two of the Hebrew words and then recasting the phrase as, “*Wait until* they burn the fat and [then] take for yourself . . .” (אֲוֹרִיךְ עַד דִּיתִסקון תִּרְבִּיָא).¹³

An example of where an addition seems to cause words to be left out accidentally can be found at Neofiti Genesis 1:14. The Hebrew text reads, in English:

And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years.”

Targum Neofiti begins its rendering of the last phrase as, “let them be for signs and for seasons.” This exact rendering of the Hebrew is then followed by an addition, “. . . and to sanctify in them the intercalation of the moons [and] months.” This short addition ends the verse and the last two words of the Hebrew, “and for days and years,” are left out.

CONCLUSION

The seven Rules of Targum encapsulate key approaches by which Targums deal with the source text and design their presentation of it. By understanding how each rule applies, both alone and in conjunction with other rules, most targumic constructions can be understood.

¹³ See Van Staaldune-Sulman’s analysis of this verse in her *Targum of Samuel*.

Of course, the rules are formulated in formal terms, but we seek to describe the shape of the targumic text and the manner in which it was constructed without claiming that the translators literally followed such rules. The key to applying the rules is to see how the formal structure shapes, changes, and influences each Targum on the semantic level. For ultimately it is the text's meaning that the rules shape. Indeed, the rules can be seen as "empty vessels" into which the "wine" of meaning can be poured.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For other descriptions of targumic approaches to translation and works that address some of the issues raised by our notion of the Rules of Targum, see Philip Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures" and Willem Smelik, "Translation and Commentary in One."

Smelik's study is also useful for understanding the interplay of substitution and addition. For the symbolic or metaphorical interpretation of the word "lion," see Geza Vermes' study "Lion—Damascus." And for the symbolism of "Lebanon," see his study of the same name.

The sacrifice of Isaac has received several scholarly studies. See Davies and Chilton, "The Aqedah"; Davies, "Passover and the Dating of the Aqedah"; Chilton, "Isaac and the Second Night"; Chilton, "Recent Discussion of the Aqedah"; Chilton, *Abraham's Curse*; Kessler, *Bound by the Bible*; Kundert, *Die Opferung*. See our own study in chapter 22.

Bruce Chilton's work on the Isaiah Targum is useful for those who want to understand that Targum better. See his *The Glory of Israel and A Galilean Rabbi and His Bible*.

For further analysis of passages from the Targum of Samuel, see Eveline van-Staalduine-Sulman's extensive commentary in *The Targum of Samuel*. Poetic passages from Genesis 49 have been analyzed by Bernard Grossfeld and M. Aberbach in their *Targum Onqelos to Genesis 49* and in Grossfeld and Shiffman, *Targum Neofiti I*. Roger Syrén's *Blessings in the Targums* on Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33 is quite useful, too. For Deuteronomy 32, see Moshe Bernstein's "Aramaic Versions of Deuteronomy 32."

The field of Targum studies has produced a large number of studies of translation techniques. The simplest way to begin studying this topic is to read the introductions to the different volumes of the Aramaic Bible series, especially those of Targum Neofiti and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. In McNamara, *Genesis*, for instance, see pp. 29–39; in McNamara, Hayward and Maher, *Leviticus*, see pp. 6–11, 115–19. Important essays on different types of translation techniques include Klein, "Converse Translation" and Klein, "Associative and Complementary Translation."

The targumic avoidance of anthropomorphisms has also spawned a significant amount of literature. In addition to our discussion of *memra* in Chapter 19, see Klein, “Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopathisms”; Hayward, *Divine Name*; Hayward, “*Memra*”; Aufrecht, “Surrogates for the Divine Name”; Chester, “Divine Revelation and Divine Titles”; McCarthy, “Biblical Anthropomorphisms”; Moore, “Intermediaries.” Spanish scholars have investigated this phenomenon as well: Muñoz León, *Dios-Palabra*; Muñoz León, *Gloria de la Shekina*; and Díez Macho, “El Logos.”

RABBINIC LITERATURE

The Targums should generally be seen against the backdrop of the rabbinic period, which lasted from circa 70 to circa 600 CE. This was certainly the time during which Targums were widely used and most of the extant Targumim were composed. Because of this setting, it is impossible to progress very far in targumic study without understanding something about the rabbinic period, its historical, social, and religious character, and its writings.

In this chapter, then, we will step aside momentarily from our interest in the Targums to lay out some of the basic information about the rabbinic period that will be assumed in this book and drawn upon in our descriptions of the Targums and their chronological development. This discussion begins with a brief overview of the history of the rabbinic period and then moves to introduce the major texts written during these centuries—first, describing the legal writings (*halakhah*) from the Mishnah to the Babylonian Talmud and second, characterizing the exegetical works (*midrashim*) based upon the Hebrew Bible.

OVERVIEW OF THE RABBINIC PERIOD

The rabbinic period began in Palestine following the First Revolt of 66–73 which was essentially lost when the Roman legions destroyed Jerusalem and its temple in 70 CE. Just sixty years later, the rebel Bar Kokhba attempted to restore independence and liberate Jerusalem. After his defeat in 135, the Romans banned Jews from Jerusalem and its territories; many Jewish teachers moved north into Galilee and the nearby Golan.¹ This refugee problem had economic and social ramifications for over a century.

¹ Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 1:553.

Not until the third century did the Jews in northern Palestine begin to experience an economic and social revitalization.

These events cost Jews their political and religious leadership. From 70 onwards Jews were no longer allowed to govern territory; their lines of kings, governors, and **tetrarchs** came to an end; the priests lost the religious institution through which they had guided their worship for a thousand years.

Religious activity among the Jews shifted to the synagogues—a term meaning “assembly” in both its Hebrew (*bet kneset*) and Greek (*sunagoge*) terminology—which existed in Jewish villages, towns, and cities. As the wealth and stability of Jewish communities increased, it was possible for them to erect buildings for their synagogues, but meetings could occur in any suitable space, including outdoors. This institution served a variety of functions, from meeting hall to place of worship to bank and even to hotel.² To the extent leadership of synagogues was formalized, it was apparently egalitarian and made up of local community members. There are some hints that those remaining of the priestly class may have played a role in synagogue leadership and worship.³

Toward the end of the second century, the Romans began to authorize a Jewish “patriarch” (Hebrew: *nasi*) to wield some political and judicial power over the Jews in Galilee.⁴ This position granted the holder a standing within the Roman senatorial class and gave him governing authority over Jews but not over non-Jews or over territory. This patriarchate lasted into the fifth century, when the Roman emperor ended it sometime between 415 and 429.

A new form of Jewish religious leadership also began to emerge after 70. This was a class of educated men, known by their title “rabbi,” which probably developed from an amalgamation of pre-70 Pharisees, teachers, and scribes.⁵ At first their interests focused primarily on religious matters, mostly to do with the temple. But by the late second century, they had become the lawyers and judges serving in the Jewish courts, probably in

² See Urman and Flesher, *Ancient Synagogues*, for an number of important essays on this question.

³ For an attempt to bring together the information about priestly involvement in the synagogues, see Flesher, “Literary Legacy of the Priests?” Since the rabbis “won” the competition for Jewish leadership, there is little evidence remaining—and almost none in the rabbinic literature itself—concerning their rivals, of which the priests were certainly key players. For an archaeological perspective and bibliography, see Jodi Magness, “Heaven on Earth: Helios and the Zodiac Cycle in Ancient Palestinian Synagogues,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 59 (2005):1–52.

⁴ See Stemberger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, 230–68.

⁵ Or as Neusner argues, of Pharisees, scribes, and householders. See Neusner, *Judaism: Evidence*, 230–56.

alliance with the patriarch who had authority over this institution. To help guide them in this task, the rabbis developed a system of laws in the latter half of the second century.⁶ This was first published in a work called the *Mishnah*. The rabbis' alliance with the patriarch provided the impetus that by the end of the rabbinic period gained the rabbinate predominant religious leadership of the Jewish community—but as legal authorities rather than as synagogue officials.

The rabbis trained their students for the rabbinate in the institution of the *bet midrash*, usually translated as “school, schoolhouse.” These were law schools usually run by a single rabbinic master who taught a number of disciples. There may have been one or two academies among the Galilean rabbis—schools containing more than one master—but this mode of teaching prominent in Babylonia was never widespread in Palestine.

Judaism credits the rabbis with finalizing the canon of the Hebrew Bible and with reformulating Judaism for worship without a temple. They did this through their writings, especially the *Mishnah*, the Palestinian Talmud, the *midrashim*, and most importantly, the Babylonian Talmud.

Highly educated in religious and civil law, which they called “Torah,” the rabbis were never a large percentage of the Jewish population. The *Mishnah* gives the names of just 112 rabbis living in the 130 years between 70 and 200, for instance.⁷ These rabbis were known as the *Tannaim* (sg. *Tanna*), and the period between these dates is referred to as the Tannaitic period. From 200 to the end of the patriarchate (ca. 425), the rabbis were designated *Amoraim* (sg. *Amora*), and this era was known as the Amoraic period. The key difference between the two periods is that the Tannaim by and large constitute the rabbis cited in the *Mishnah*, while the Amoraim consist of those who read and used the *Mishnah* but were cited only in later rabbinic writings.

From 425 to the Persian invasion in 614 and then the Islamic conquest beginning in 634, history knows little about Jewish leadership in Palestine in general or Galilee in particular. Despite this lack of information, it is clear that Jewish society was economically fairly prosperous and politically stable. Archaeology provides evidence of long-term occupation of cities, towns, and villages without interruption, as well as the (re-)construction of numerous synagogues. Many of these have mosaic floors, a sure sign of prosperity and social stability.

It was a period of vigorous religious activity and production, with the writing of the Palestinian Talmud and a number of Scripture

⁶ Neusner has shown this in his extensive analysis of the *Mishnah*, which he summarizes in Neusner, *Judaism: Evidence*. See esp. 95–97 and 143–50.

⁷ See appendix III in Danby's translation of the *Mishnah*, 799–800.

commentaries, as well as a time when Jewish liturgy was developed and regularized.⁸ The use of *piyyutim* (sg. *piyyut*), religious poems, became part of the synagogue worship service as well. Many of these are preserved in Targum manuscripts.

During the rabbinic period, the Jewish community of the diaspora in Babylonia gradually rose to prominence and ultimately eclipsed that of Galilee. Although little is known about Babylonian Jewry in the Tannaic period, its rabbinic class was quite active in the Amoraic period, which lasted until 499. During this time the rabbis were based in academies along the Euphrates River, in Sura and Nehardea at first and then later in Sura and Pumbedita.

The Babylonian Jewish community existed within the realm of the Persian Empire during this period. Its secular head was the Exilarch, who belonged to a family claiming descent from King David.

There were numerous contacts between Palestine and Babylonia at this time and the Babylonian rabbis were familiar with the rabbinic literature of Palestine. However, the Babylonian authorities apparently composed no major writings until the Babylonian Talmud appeared around 600. This massive commentary on the Mishnah incorporated a wealth of information about Scripture as well. The Babylonian Amoraim, along with the Palestinian Tannaim, are the main tradents cited in the Talmud, but it was compiled in a later period of Jewish leaders known as the *Saboraim* (sometimes referred to as the *Stammaim*).

In the decades following the Talmud's publication, the heads of the two academies—having the title of *gaon*, “excellency”—became the primary religious authorities of Judaism. The centuries from the end of the Saboraic period into the early medieval period, approximately 657 to 1038, became known as the Geonic period. After the Islamic Abbasid Caliphate established its capital in Baghdad in 762, the academies of Sura and Pumbedita relocated there as well. They provided religious leadership for the Jewish community from this center of power. This authority complemented the secular leadership provided by Exilarch, a post reestablished by the Muslims and which lasted throughout this period. During this time the Babylonian Talmud and the formulation of Judaism it presented became the dominant type of Jewish worship from Yemen in the East across the Muslim world to Spain in the West and north to the Jews of Christian Europe. This was not without a long struggle with Palestinian Judaism, and many of the Babylonian remarks about things relating to Palestine Judaism (including Targums) should be understood in light of this ongoing rivalry.

⁸ See, e.g., the discussion of the *Amidah* (Eighteen Benedictions or *Shemoneh Esreh*) in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, 2:454–63. and Instone-Brewer, “Eighteen Benedictions.”

THE RABBIS AND THE COMPOSITION OF RABBINIC LITERATURE

In the Talmuds and rabbinic literature generally, the rabbis present themselves as the primary religious authorities. This stands in stark contrast to the centuries preceding the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70, when Levitical priests supplied the leadership expected by Scripture. Indeed, in the Jewish writings prior to 70, both biblical and non-biblical, the *social* category of “rabbi” does not exist; it is known only as a title of respect meaning “my teacher.” The rabbis as a class come to the fore only in the centuries following 70, although by the end of the rabbinic period they have become Judaism’s religious leaders.

Citations from rabbinic figures dominate the Mishnah, the Talmuds, and the Scripture commentaries known as *midrashim*. Named rabbis appear throughout these works, and in many the sayings attributed to them dominate the content. This constant presence of rabbinic authorities belies the fact that the texts themselves are anonymous. No individual or group of individuals ever claims authorship of a rabbinic work, and no direct evidence exists that would help identify a work’s creator. Where books are attributed to particular individuals—such as R. Judah being named as the compiler of the Mishnah or R. Ishmael’s prominence in the title of the *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael*—the designations are traditional and come long after the work’s composition but without historical support.

As we observed above, rabbis who lived and pursued their profession prior to 200 CE are called *Tannaim* and rabbis who were active after 200 and prior to 500 (425 in Palestine) are called *Amoraim*. Scholars call writings that feature only Tannaim “Tannaitic literature,” while those that include Amoraim are called “Amoraic literature.”⁹

Within these broader periods, it is usually possible to identify the approximate stage of activity of most named rabbis. This ability stems from two characteristics common to most rabbinic literature. First, in debates, individual rabbis are paired with rabbis of the same generation. They rarely are pitted against figures from another generation or time period. Second, later rabbis will often cite earlier ones, frequently masters with whom they studied. Indeed, the master-disciple relationships for most prominent figures are well known. These two features enable the identification of generations as well as their chronological sequencing.

These traits are helpful in trying to ascertain a document’s date, but can also be misleading. On the one hand, the date of the cited rabbinic tradents provides a *terminus a quo* before which a work could not have been

⁹ For a more detailed discussion of these periods, see Rubenstein, “Social and Institutional Settings.”

compiled. On the other hand, the date of composition must also be taken into account, for although it has to be after the last named authority, there is no requirement that it be immediately after. Most Tannaitic writings contain citations across the entire period, and the same goes for Amoraic works. Thus Tannaitic works such as the *Mekhila* and the *Sifra* are compiled by the last of the Tannaim or by later Amoraim. Similarly, works that cite a wide swath of Amoraim, such as the two Talmuds, are composed at the end of the Amoraic period or even later. With these caveats it is possible to make the generalization that the so-called Tannaitic writings were composed during the Amoraic period—or, in Roman terms, prior to Constantine—while the so-called Amoraic texts were compiled after Constantine, probably even after 400.

The activity of each text's compilers in creating rabbinic documents is one factor complicating the use of rabbinic literature for historical research. Rabbinic opinions always take their meaning from the context in which they appear. Each compiler (or group of compilers) took comments from various rabbis out of their original settings and juxtaposed them within a text where they serve the document's goals; their original meaning is no longer accessible with any certainty. In addition to the problem of context, the statements themselves are problematic, for they are formulaic and often abbreviated. They do not represent *ipsissima verba*—the actual words spoken—of the person to whom they are attributed. Finally, there is no way to verify the historical character of these statements, or whether they were even uttered by the rabbis to whom they are attributed. Thus, no individual statement can be used as a historical “fact”; the primary context of a remark is the text in which it appears.

Despite this inability to access the original character of individual rabbinic statements, these remarks and their organization within specific rabbinic works remain useful for studying the theological, interpretive, and legal (*halakhic*) development of rabbinic Judaism. They enable the identification of issues and questions that were important at particular moments in time. The primary distinction is between the Tannaitic corpus and the Amoraic corpus. In the Talmuds, furthermore, it is possible to distinguish between the later Amoraic layer and the earlier Tannaitic layer (at least as filtered through the later material). Occasionally, major historical events influenced how the interests of rabbis from a particular generation were preserved and presented in the documents in which they were later included. In the Mishnah, for example, the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 and the defeat of Bar Kokhba in 135 provide key moments of change. The time and the cited figures before each event appear different from those following it. Debates between such pre-70 figures such as Hillel and Shammai, for instance, were preserved and form

the basis for later rabbinic discussions, even though neither one is ever called “rabbi” themselves.

THE LITERATURE OF THE DUAL TORAH

Christian writers have often described Judaism as a “religion of the book,” by which they mean that Judaism is a scriptural religion that follows the text of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. This is true in part, but the comment actually misses the central characteristic of Judaism, for it implies that Judaism has changed little since the closing of the biblical canon. Whereas Christianity updated the Old Testament with the New Testament, this view implies, Judaism carried on with only the Hebrew Bible as its sacred text. This is not the case.

The rabbinic period unfolds during the same centuries in which Christianity broke from its Jewish roots by first writing and then canonizing the books of the New Testament. Rabbinic Judaism accomplished the same thing when it created a number of works propounding the notion of an **Oral Torah**. This was not new, they believed, but had been given to Moses on Mt. Sinai and handed down through the generations.¹⁰ The wisdom and practices based on the Oral Torah were recorded at about 600 CE in Rabbinism’s crowning work, the massive Babylonian Talmud. Thus Judaism in the last millennium and a half has been, to put it in terms parallel to Christianity, a religion of two books. Just as Christianity is the religion of the Old Testament and the New Testament, Judaism is the religion of the Hebrew Bible and the Babylonian Talmud.

The Babylonian Talmud provides the capstone of the rabbinic period and the foundation for the next millennium and more of Jewish worship because it combines the Oral Torah with the **Written Torah** (the Hebrew Bible) to create the Dual Torah. The texts composed during the rabbinic period record the development of the concept of the Oral Torah, and ultimately, of the Dual Torah. By the rabbinic period’s end the Oral Torah had become identified with the first rabbinic text, the Mishnah; its meaning was then explicated by the rabbis and preserved in the two Talmuds.¹¹

The Dual Torah as a broad, theological description of Judaism is much too extensive to describe in more detail here. However, it points to a useful way of understanding the texts of rabbinic Judaism, for these

¹⁰ In Hebrew the *torah she be’al peh* (“torah which is in the mouth”) means more appropriately, the “memorized Torah.” The line of transmission is laid out in the opening chapter of the Mishnah tractate *Avot*, which seems to have been composed in the half century following the Mishnah. See, e.g., Neusner, *Oral Torah*, 45–65, as well as his *Memorized Torah*. For a discussion of this notion in the context of orality studies, see Alexander, “Orality of Rabbinic Writing.”

¹¹ See the synopsis in Neusner, *Oral Torah*, 144–49.

documents divide into two types of commentaries, those on the Mishnah, the foundation of the Oral Torah, and those on Scripture.

FROM MISHNAH TO THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

The Mishnah constitutes the earliest rabbinic text, compiled in the early third century—often just cited as 200 CE. It was composed in Hebrew and consists of sixty-three tractates (“books”) on a variety of topics grouped together into six divisions called **seders**. Each seder focuses on a different topic. These are:

1. **Zeraim** — “Seeds.” These tractates focus primarily on the tithes Israelites are supposed to bring to the temple or give to the poor. It begins with a tractate on prayer (*Berakhot*).
2. **Moed** — “Appointed Times.” These tractates focus on religious festivals and other moments of sacred time.
3. **Nashim** — “Women.” These tractates address matters concerning women, which from the perspective of the Mishnah’s compilers means aspects of betrothal, marriage, and divorce, as well as the status of women and the status of their offspring.
4. **Nezikim** — “Damages.” Most of these tractates deal with aspects of civil law.
5. **Qodashim** — “Holy Things.” These tractates focus on sacrifices and offerings to be brought to the temple.
6. **Tohorot** — “Purities.” The tractates address aspects of purity in ritual and the home.

The important point about these divisions is that their primary interest centers on the Jerusalem temple and its associated concerns, even though the temple had been destroyed in 70. Four divisions of the six emphasize the temple directly: *Zeraim* is primarily about tithing at the temple, *Qodashim* deals with temple sacrifices and offerings, *Tohorot* focuses on matters of ritual purity necessary for participation in temple worship, while the tractates in *Moed* largely address the festivals from the angle of temple worship or secondarily from home or synagogue practice. *Pesachim*, the tractate about Passover, for example, devotes nine chapters to aspects of the Passover sacrifice in the temple and only the tenth chapter to the observance of the Passover meal in the home. And although the Division of Damages features primarily aspects of civil law, the Division of Women addresses aspects of marriage and divorce—as pointed out by

J. R. Wegner—in order to ensure the pure lineage of the priests who officiate in temple worship.¹²

The Mishnah's interest in the Jerusalem temple flies in the face of that institution's physical absence for over a century. However, it provides an important focus of study and organizes the presentation of study and debate concerning it for the entire rabbinic period. Judaism could more accurately be termed the religion of the book and the temple.

If the Mishnah was published at the start of the third century, then the middle of the third century provides the most probable moment for the appearance of a second major rabbinic work called the **Tosefta**. The Tosefta follows the Mishnah's general organization, with the same tractates arranged into the same divisions, although each tractate's internal chapters only loosely follow that of the Mishnah. The Tosefta contains few direct references to Mishnaic material, although all its tradents are Tannaim. The Tosefta is composed in Hebrew. It is also worth noting that the Mishnah tractate known as **Abot** is clearly composed later than the Mishnah itself, since it provides a justification for the Mishnah. Scholars usually date it to the same time as the Tosefta.

The Palestinian Talmud, also known as the **Yerushalmi** or Jerusalem Talmud, is usually dated to the first half of the fifth century, although some scholars place it into the late fourth century. Both groups will often just give its date as 400. The Yerushalmi is based upon the first four divisions of the Mishnah, with all their tractates, plus one tractate from the last division, *Niddah*. The Yerushalmi's compilers organized each tractate as a commentary on the Mishnah. Each tractate begins by citing the opening passage of the corresponding Mishnah tractate, and then gives a series of interpretations, termed the *gemara*. The tractate then moves to the next Mishnah passage and follows the same pattern, replicating this model consecutively throughout. Unfortunately, the interpretations are not carefully edited and sometimes their meanings are rather opaque. The language of the Palestinian Talmud is mostly Hebrew, but many passages appear in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (Galilean Aramaic). The cited passages contain both Tannaim and Amoraim.

Pride of place in rabbinic Judaism goes to the Babylonian Talmud, published at the start of the seventh century. It is also known as the **Bavli**. Drawing upon the Yerushalmi, but producing much of its own exegesis, it too is organized like the Mishnah, consecutively alternating between citing Mishnah and then providing an interpretive *gemara*. It deals with only four of the Mishnah's divisions—Appointed Times, Women, Damages,

¹² See Wegner, *Chattel or Person?*

and Holy Things—with two tractates from the missing divisions: Berakhot (Prayer) from the first and Niddah from the last. It is primarily composed in Hebrew, but contains a significant number of passages in Aramaic—more than the Yerushalmi. The Aramaic used is an eastern dialect known as Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (JBA). The main tradents are Babylonian Amoraim, with a good selection of Palestinian Tannaim.

The Babylonian Talmud reflects Jewish life in Babylonia, rather than in Palestine. Its publication in 600 brought the rabbinic period to a close, and marked the shift of Jewish religious leadership from Palestine to Babylonia that took place during the fifth and sixth centuries. Babylonian Jewry produced no authoritative religious texts prior to the Bavli that have been preserved. The Bavli's appearance ushered in the start of the Middle Ages for Judaism.

Although the Mishnah was a new document for Judaism in 200, it then became the basis for the Tosefta and the two Talmuds during the rabbinic period. The last of these long texts, the Babylonian Talmud, in turn became the guiding religious text for medieval Judaism. Despite the Bavli's prominence, however, its status was always overshadowed by that of Scripture—that is, the Written Torah—which maintained a level of sacrality the Talmud never achieved.

THE HEBREW BIBLE AND ITS COMMENTARIES

The canon of the Hebrew Bible, traditionally known in Judaism as the **Tanakh**, was finalized in the early rabbinic period. Its books were divided into the three divisions of Torah ("Law"), **Neviim** ("Prophets"), and Ketubim ("Writings"), which gives it the acronym of "**TaNaK**." The most important of these was the Torah, the books from Genesis to Deuteronomy. Its weekly reading in the synagogue took its listeners consecutively through the entire text of the Torah.¹³ The other two divisions were not treated as completely.

Books of the Torah received commentaries during the rabbinic period called *midrashim* (sg. *midrash*). These works organized themselves on the biblical text, similar to the way the Talmuds structured themselves on the Mishnah, by alternating citation with comment.¹⁴ Many books of the Writings also received a midrash, but not those of the Prophets.

¹³ For an introduction to the Annual and Triennial reading cycles, see Heinemann, "Triennial Lectionary Cycle" and Mann, *Bible as Read*. These cycles had an impact on organization of different Targum types, see, e.g., Campbell, "Fragment Targum without a Purpose."

¹⁴ In the period following the Yerushalmi's publication, other ways of organizing midrashim were developed.

The earliest of these works are known collectively as the *halakhic midrashim*. These include *Mekhilla de Rabbi Ishmael* to Exodus, the *Sifra* to Leviticus, *Sifré Numbers*, and *Sifré Deuteronomy*; there is no early midrash to Genesis. The rabbinic figures cited in them are all Tannaim, but the texts were composed during the mid-third century. Each Tannaitic midrash knows the Mishnah and makes use of it. *Sifré Zutta* (to Numbers) is usually attributed to this period as well.

A second group of midrashic works belongs to the Amoraic period. They cite rabbis who lived during the Amoraic period as well as Tannaim, although they were compiled at different times over the next several centuries. These midrashim were later brought together under the title of *Midrash Rabbah*, and are based on the books of the Pentateuch and the **Five Megillot** (“scrolls”)—Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes (Qohelet). The earliest of these are probably Leviticus Rabbah, Genesis Rabbah, and Lamentations Rabbah, which were compiled in the early part of the fifth century, at roughly the same time as the Palestinian Talmud. The other books of *Midrash Rabbah* were compiled later.¹⁵ The midrashim of Ruth, Song of Songs and the first part of Esther are generally seen as sixth century; Deuteronomy Rabbah may be as early as the sixth century but possibly as late as the end of the eighth century. The eighth century was also probably the period in which Qohelet Rabbah was created, while Numbers Rabbah is usually put into the ninth century. Finally, only part of Exodus Rabbah may be as old as the tenth century; the rest of it may stem from the twelfth.

Two midrashim took the genre as a whole in a different direction. While still basing their exegesis on Scripture, these works were organized on the yearly liturgy. They provided exegeses and homilies on readings for festivals and special Sabbaths. *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana* was probably composed in fifth century, drawing in part from Leviticus Rabbah, while *Pesiqta Rabbati* is usually assigned to the sixth or early seventh century. Also important in some targumic studies is *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer*, an eighth-century midrash whose structure echoes the rewritten Bible genre. Finally, there is *Abot de Rabbi Nathan*, the “Fathers of Rabbi Nathan,” which is organized around the sayings of different rabbinic figures. Based on the Mishnah tractate Abot, this work exists in two recensions (A and B), whose suggested dates range from the third century to the early eighth century.

There are many other works of rabbinic midrashim, but these appear most frequently in studies of the Targumim.

¹⁵ See the bibliographic discussion at the end of the chapter, esp. Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*.

CONCLUSION

Apart from the Targums, rabbinic literature provides the only written materials of any size from the rabbinic period. This literature thus constitutes the primary standard by which we can measure the development of the targumic writings. But we must keep in mind the limitations of using these texts. Rabbinic literature is only one source of evidence about Judaism(s) of this period. Other evidence comes from archaeological excavations of synagogues, residential buildings, and burials; it also derives from liturgy, Roman law and history, magic amulets and bowls, inscriptions, and Christian writings—not to forget the Targums themselves. The data provided by these sources does not always confirm, and often contradicts, that provided in rabbinic literature. Rabbinic literature thus provides information for understanding the Targums but does not constitute a rigid standard by which they can be evaluated.

It also should be kept in mind that following the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70, and the expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem and Judea in 70 and 135, neither the rise of the rabbis to the position of religious leaders nor even the survival of Judaism should be taken for granted—no other Mediterranean religion that existed in 1 CE still existed in 600 CE. The rabbinic movement not only had to provide an answer to the question of how Judaism could continue, but they had to persuade Jews that they provided the correct answer. Their rivals among priests and other groups tried to accomplish the same goal. That rabbinic Judaism succeeded by the time of the Babylonian Talmud is clear; that it was going to succeed in the century following 70 was much less apparent.

As the victor, the rabbinic movement “wrote the history” of their triumph. But we must be careful about accepting at face value the pervasiveness of its influence at different stages in its development.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDE

The “modern” study of Judaism began in nineteenth-century Germany with the rise of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the “Science of Judaism.” Drawing largely upon the canons of historical analysis as they were then developing, *Wissenschaft* laid the foundations for the academic study of rabbinic Judaism into the late twentieth century. It was not until the work of Jacob Neusner, beginning in the late 1960s, that any serious questioning of this approach occurred. Neusner’s work into the 1970s and early 1980s had a massive impact on the study of rabbinic Judaism, bringing many of its investigative assumptions and approaches up to date. Today, nearly all scholarship on rabbinic Judaism has taken on board Neusner’s insights

from that period and incorporated them. It is truly post-Neusnerian. While Neusner has remained enormously prolific (over 800 published volumes to date), and continues to be so in 2010, unfortunately much current scholarship has taken a detour around his later work; it will need to be studied and absorbed in succeeding decades.

Much of Neusner's work has been to study rabbinic Judaism document by document. He has translated nearly every text of the rabbinic period, including the Mishnah, the Tosefta, both Talmuds, and most midrashim. These have led to studies of each text, both by themselves and in comparison to other rabbinic works. Sizable portions of his writings have been published by the University of Chicago Press (Chicago), Brill (Leiden), and Scholars Press (Atlanta).

It is difficult to select just a few of Neusner's important works to suggest, but we will focus here on those most helpful for this chapter's discussion. For general overviews of rabbinic Judaism, see his *Oral Torah* and *From Testament to Torah*. His *Judaism and Christianity in the Age of Constantine* provides a more in-depth analysis. For a survey of the meaning of the term *Torah*, see his *Torah: From Scroll to Symbol*. Works focusing on the midrashim include *Invitation to Midrash*, *Writing with Scripture*, *Midrash as Literature*, and *The Midrash: An Introduction*. For the Mishnah, Neusner's *The Mishnah: An Introduction* works well, as does his more advanced *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah*. The most published of his Babylonian Talmud introductions is *Invitation to the Talmud*; a different approach appears in *The Talmud: A Close Encounter*. For an overview of all the rabbinic documents Neusner has studied, see his *Scriptures of the Oral Torah*, *Classics of Judaism*, and *Rabbinic Judaism*. Translations include *Mishnah*, *Tosefta*, *Talmud of the Land of Israel*, and *Talmud of Babylonia*. Most of Neusner's translations of midrashim are published by Scholars Press, such as *Mekhilta* and *Genesis Rabbah*, but see *Judaism and Scripture* for Leviticus Rabbah.

Other helpful works concerning rabbinic Judaism and its history, literature, and society include H. L. Strack and G. Stemmerger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, which provides descriptions of the texts and their manuscripts as well as bibliography. This is a good source for information about dating individual rabbinic texts. Another survey of rabbinic literature appears in the two volumes of S. Safrai, *The Literature of the Sages*. C. E. Fonrobert and M. S. Jaffee's *Cambridge Companion to the Talmud* provides some useful introductory essays, although others are somewhat advanced. For introductions to several midrashim, see G. Porton, *Understanding Rabbinic Midrash*.

For issues of historical, social, and religious development, see works such as Horbury, et al., *Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 3; Katz, *Cambridge*

History of Judaism, vol. 4; the new Schürer, for the early decades; Stemberger, *Holy Land*; and Safrai, *Missing Century*. For the scholarly study of synagogues in antiquity, see Urman and Flesher, *Ancient Synagogues*; Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*; Fine, *Holy Place*; and Olsson and Zetterholm, *Ancient Synagogue*.

SECTION II

The Pentateuchal Targums

PENTATEUCHAL TARGUMS

The Basics

The foundation of the modern study of the Targums was laid in Germany during the nineteenth century. The first scholarly editions of the texts, the first major linguistic studies, early literary and historical studies, as well as attempts to understand the Targums' role in worship and study were created at this time. Scholars such as Isaac Berliner, Theodore Nöldeke, and Gustav Dalman, along with many others, set the stage for much of the twentieth-century study of these translations.

Wilhelm Bacher's entry on Targums in the 1906 *Jewish Encyclopedia* provides a snapshot of the scholarly assessment of the Targums to the pentateuchal books known at that time.¹ Three Targums to the Pentateuch were known. On the one hand, there was a Babylonian Targum, known as Targum Onqelos. The Babylonian Talmud had cited Onqelos approvingly several times and post-talmudic Judaism had given this Targum a quasi-official status, even according it a place in some synagogue liturgies until this day. During the medieval period, this position of respect attracted to the Targum a consistent history of study. Not only was it copied regularly and used in worship from Yemen and Babylonia in the east to Spain in the west, but it was also given a *Masorah*, a systematic compilation of critical notes to help ensure it was accurately copied.

On the other hand, there were also two Targums, usually called Palestinian, that had no official standing. Although these Targums originated during the rabbinic period, by the Middle Ages few rabbinic authorities knew them first-hand, and they were not widely respected. In Hebrew, these Targums had the label "Targum Yerushalmi," which literally meant "Jerusalem Targum." This name, like that of the Talmud written in Palestine, Talmud Yerushalmi, connected these two Targums to Palestine and

¹ See also Bacher, "Kritische Untersuchungen zum Propheten Targum."

to Galilee in particular. This is the basis for the English term “Palestinian Targums.”

In medieval rabbinic writings, each of the two manuscripts was usually designated by the abbreviation, T.Y. (ת״י), rather than by the full name Targum Yerushalmi. Later in the academic literature, this gave rise to the abbreviations TY1 (in German, TJ1) and TY2 (in German, TJ2). TY1 covered the entire Pentateuch, while TY2 contained only selected passages from across the five books. TY2 therefore became known as the “Fragment Targum.”

By the end of the medieval period, the understanding that T.Y. was short for Targum Yerushalmi had apparently been forgotten. During the fourteenth century, the abbreviation was reinterpreted as “Targum Yonatan” or in English, “Targum Jonathan,” after Jonathan ben Uzziel, the person to whom b. Meg. 3a attributes the composition of the Targums to the *prophetic* books. Influenced by this nomenclature, many scholars now call TY1 “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan”; although the convention is widespread and we will use it ourselves, it is grounded in an error.

A century after Bacher’s encyclopedia entry, the study of the Pentateuchal Targums has changed almost beyond recognition. More than three dozen new manuscripts of the Palestinian Targums have come to light. One of these, Targum Neofiti, is a complete Targum from Genesis 1:1 to the end of Deuteronomy, while the rest are in fragmentary condition. Many of these constitute the remains of complete Targum manuscripts that had deteriorated over the centuries, while others comprise liturgical collections or collections of selections, like the Fragment Targum. These are known as the Cairo Geniza Fragments because they were taken from a geniza (a “treasure room” for worn-out writings) in the Ibn Ezra Synagogue in Cairo, Egypt. These were collected by Solomon Schechter and other scholars at the end of the nineteenth century.

Study of these new targumic finds has led to the reclassification of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.² It is no longer considered a Palestinian Targum, despite its moniker of T.Y., because its translation clearly derives from Targum Onqelos and it is written in a dialect later than those of both Onqelos and the Palestinian Targums.

Given these significant developments, it is important for us to introduce our readers to the *modern* study of the Targums, with reference to the past of course, so as to provide a solid understanding of the present state of scholarly analysis. Today we have three *types* of Pentateuchal Targums, rather than three Targums. *Type one* comprises the group of different manuscripts of the Palestinian Targums, containing over forty versions

² See Kaufman, “Dating the Language.”

in various conditions: (1) continuous manuscripts of the entire Pentateuch; (2) Fragment Targums, which contain passages selected out of the Pentateuch; and (3) fragmentary remains of continuous manuscripts and manuscripts of collections of selected passages. *Type two* consists of only Targum Onqelos—a one-Targum type eventually accepted as authoritative and evidenced by hundreds of whole and fragmentary manuscripts. *Type three* is represented only by Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, known by a single manuscript and a slightly different printed edition.

These Targum types are differentiated by three criteria: dialect, translation, and expansions. The Palestinian Targums were all composed in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, stem from a common translation, and share a defined collection of additions called for convenience the Proto-Palestinian Targum source (Proto-PT). Targum Onqelos was written in Jewish Literary Aramaic, has its own distinctive translation, and a comparatively few, mostly small—although sometime crucial—additions. Pseudo-Jonathan was composed in Late Jewish Literary Aramaic, its translation comprises a recasting of Onqelos' rendering, and while it contains the collection of additions found in the Palestinian Targums, it brings in nearly three times as many expansions of its own.

While the three categories of Pentateuchal Targums are distinct, they also have connections to each other. These links appear primarily in the additional material but can also be seen in their translations. Because the connections among these Targums add a layer of complexity, we will divide our description into four parts. This chapter will describe the texts and text types of the three classifications of Pentateuchal Targums. The next chapter will study the sources of the Palestinian Targums in particular, while chapter 7 will analyze the shared sources of expansions and translations among all three Targum types. Chapter 8 will attempt to place these Targums in the context of rabbinic literature. And finally, chapter 9 will discuss questions of their dating, since this can only be understood on the basis of the source connections. In the present chapter, we will begin by describing the Palestinian Targums and then move to Targum Onqelos and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.

THE PALESTINIAN TARGUMS

The discoveries of new Palestinian Targum texts during the twentieth century brought a sea change to the field of Targum studies, a change the field has yet to absorb fully. Although the Cairo Geniza materials were discovered just prior to the start of the twentieth century, their full impact made itself felt slowly and gradually, interrupted by two world wars and a lack of time, funds, and personnel needed to sort through the many boxes

of fragments. Indeed, the full impact was not felt until after the identification of Targum Neofiti in 1957 and its publication in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This in turn gave rise to renewed energy and activity in all areas of Targum studies. Because of its role as a catalyst, we begin our description with Targum Neofiti.

Targum Neofiti

In 1949 Professor Alejandro Díez Macho of Spain's University of Barcelona was investigating manuscripts of Targum Onqelos in the Vatican Library. One day, a manuscript known as Codex Neophyti 1—because it came from a part of the library called *Neophytorum* (“of the neophytes”)—was delivered to his desk.³ Despite its having been catalogued as Targum Onqelos, Díez Macho quickly realized that the text he was looking at was not Onqelos and indeed was not even written in the same dialect as Onqelos. By 1956 Díez Macho's study of the manuscript had revealed that it contained a previously unknown, yet amazingly complete, text of a Palestinian Targum. Indeed, this manuscript of the entire Pentateuch lacks only a few phrases erased by censors or accidentally skipped by copyists.

Codex Neophyti 1 was a hand-written copy, executed around the start of the sixteenth century, of a much earlier text. The manuscript's colophon dates it to either 1499 or 1504.⁴ So although the original Targum is quite old, the copy we have in Codex Neophyti 1 cannot be assumed to be the same as the original. Rather, it has been altered by several stages of scribal copying and includes both scribes' mistakes and their “improvements.” Since there is no textual history of previous manuscripts that scholars can access for textual criticism, we can only deal with its text as it stands—and remain cautious. This means that studies of grammar and lexicography must be undertaken with great care, in reference to the other witnesses to the Palestinian Targums and our knowledge of its dialect, Jewish Palestinian Aramaic.

The Neophyti manuscript presents a Targum in a continuous fashion, although it gives a few words of the Hebrew text (a **lemma**) at the beginning of each verse to help readers identify the verse. The manuscript also contains a variety of alternative readings written in the margins or between the lines; they are referred to as “Neofiti margin(s)” or

³ A note about terminology: when the manuscript is discussed qua manuscript, it should be called Codex Neophyti 1; when the text found in the manuscript is analyzed as a Targum, it is called Targum Neofiti, although early on some scholars confused the two in their terminology.

⁴ Le Déaut, “Jalons pour un histoire d'un manuscrit,” 510; and McNamara, “Colophon to Codex Neofiti,” 149.

“Neofiti interlinear.” These are short, ranging in size from a single word to a phrase. Although some readings are only known from this source, many appear in Pseudo-Jonathan, the Fragment Targums, and/or the Cairo Geniza fragments.

Targum Neofiti illustrates the definition of Targum we put forward in chapter 2. This Targum provides a painstakingly literal translation of the Hebrew text combined with additional material placed into the translation so as to maintain the Targum’s flow. These additions constitute Targum Neofiti’s most striking feature: they parallel almost all those known from the Fragment Targums, and approximately 85 percent of them appear in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, although in the latter text they have often been revised. Nearly all the expansions in the extant sections of the Cairo Geniza Palestinian Targum fragments also appear in Targum Neofiti. These are all part of the Proto-PT source, which we shall describe in the next chapter. The remaining 15 percent of Targum Neofiti’s expansions are unique to it. These additions have recently been designated as the TN-unique source, or TNu.

The Cairo Geniza

During the late nineteenth century, a number of European travelers and scholars touring Cairo heard about and then visited the Ben Ezra Synagogue, known in Arabic as the “Ibn Ezra Synagogue.” It had a genizah—a room where old religious texts were left to deteriorate naturally, rather than being destroyed, a practice intended to avoid any desecration of the divine name that was written in them. Some of the visitors acquired fragments of old texts stored in the genizah, which they brought back to Europe and showed to scholars or donated to university libraries. Two Scottish ladies, Dr. Mrs. Agnes Lewis and Dr. Mrs. Margaret Gibson—both of whom later helped establish and endow Westminster College, Cambridge—aroused interest in the Ben Ezra genizah—now usually referred to as the “Cairo Genizah”—when they showed a fragment of a Hebrew text of the book of Ben Sira to Solomon Schechter at Cambridge University. Personally financed by the master of Cambridge’s St. John’s College, Dr. Charles Taylor, Schechter spent several months in Cairo in 1896 and 1897. He persuaded Cairo’s grand rabbi, Aaron Bensimon, to grant him permission to send all the material he wished from the genizah back to Cambridge. In the end, Schechter selected and shipped some 140,000 items to Cambridge, fragments of manuscripts totaling more than 800,000 folios. These are now housed in the Taylor-Schechter Geniza Collection at the Cambridge University Library.⁵ Other items from the

⁵ See Reif, “Cairo Genizah and Its Treasures.” For further information, see the

collection found their way to libraries in New York, St. Petersburg (Leningrad), Paris, Oxford, London, and elsewhere. In all, over 200,000 pieces were moved from the Cairo Genizah to western libraries. The cataloguing of these finds has been slow, with the Cambridge collection being completed only in the 1980s.

Interference from World War I meant that the first fragments of Palestinian Targums from the Genizah were not published until 1930, when Paul Kahle presented material from seven different manuscripts. After that, new finds were published periodically until Michael Klein's exhaustive search identified the remains of thirty-eight Palestinian Targum manuscripts. Klein published them in 1986 in his *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*.⁶ These fragments constitute the oldest known manuscript remains of the Palestinian Targums. According to the examination by codicologist Malachi Beit Arié, none of the manuscripts was written later than the fourteenth century, while several date to the eighth or ninth century, or perhaps somewhat earlier. They contain far fewer scribal errors and emendations than Targum Neofiti, and for that reason provide a surer foundation upon which to understand the linguistics of JPA.

The Genizah's remains contained two main kinds of Palestinian Targums. The first comprises fragments of what appear once to have been seven continuous manuscripts of Palestinian Targums to the entire Pentateuch. Five manuscripts are known only from fragments of Genesis (Klein numbers: B, C, E, H, Z), one only for Exodus (Klein, A), and one is evidenced by fragments from Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy (Klein, D). Comparison of these texts with Targum Neofiti shows that their translations stem from the same root as that of Neofiti, while their additions similarly parallel those appearing in that Targum.

The second kind of Palestinian Targum found among the Cairo Geniza remains constitutes what Klein terms "Festival-Liturgical Collections." These ten manuscripts (Klein: F, F₂, J, S, U, W, Y, AA, BB, HH) contain targumic passages selected because of their use during the festivals of Shavuot (Weeks or Pentecost), Passover, Purim, Rosh Hashshannah (New Year), as well as the Sabbaths leading up to them. These passages were apparently selected from continuous or at least fuller Targums to create a smaller and more manageable scroll for use during these times. The

Taylor-Schechter website: <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/> and its newsletter, *Geniza Fragments*.

⁶ Klein, *Geniza Manuscripts*. For earlier essays, see his bibliography in 1:xxxix–xliii. A volume of his collected essays appears in the Brill series, *Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture*, titled *Michael Klein On the Targums: Collected Essays 1972–2002*.

translations and additions are essentially the same as those known from Neofiti and other extant Targums to these verses.

A few fragments that reveal other forms of Targums, such as Fragment Targums and Targumic Toseftot (additions) were found in the Genizah collections. We shall discuss them in the appropriate section below. It should also be noted that these Targum manuscripts often contained *piyyutim*, liturgical poetry composed in Aramaic or Hebrew.

Klein's publication of the Cairo Geniza materials was complete at the time of its publication. Indeed, it has become the definitive basis for all research into the Palestinian Targums from the Cairo Geniza. However, a few fragmentary pages of Palestinian Targums have been discovered and published since the work appeared, some even by Klein himself.

In modern scholarly study, these Targum fragments are usually referred to individually, identified first as a Cairo Geniza fragment and then followed by a designation of the manuscript, often in an abbreviated form. This volume will cite them as "CG" with the manuscript designation in parentheses, for example, CG(D) and CG(HH).

Fragment Targums

The designation "Fragment Targum" or "Fragmentary Targum" is a misnomer that has become conventional. These Targums do not contain *fragments* of Targums but rather *selections* of Targums. They do not stem from deteriorating manuscripts in fragmentary condition but rather comprise collections of verses, additions, phrases, and words purposely picked from a complete, continuous Targum of the Pentateuch and arranged in pentateuchal order. Even though they do not have the entire Pentateuch, they are "complete" manuscripts in that they were intentionally created in their present form.

Modern scholars do not have a feel for how widely known the Fragment Targums were during the medieval period. Although the texts were designated Targum Yerushalmi—and remain the only Targums of that designation still belonging to the category of Palestinian Targums—most medieval references to TY are not sufficiently detailed to distinguish among the Fragment Targums, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, and any other Palestinian Targums, such as Neofiti. The first—indeed only—Fragment Targum to be published prior to 1899 was the Nürnberg manuscript (= N), which was included as an appendix to the *Biblia Rabbinica* (Rabbinic Bible) edited by Felix Pratensis and printed by Bomberg in Venice in 1517–1518. It was printed in the form of a continuous text and all later rabbinic Bibles are based on it. When Targum Pseudo-Jonathan was first printed in 1591, this Fragment Targum was reprinted as extracts within Pseudo-Jonathan's text.

In 1899 M. Ginsburger published the text of a second Fragment Targum manuscript, Codex Paris Hebr. 110, from the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris (= P), along with variants from manuscripts in the Vatican (= V) and in Leipzig (= L). Significantly, the text of the Paris Fragment Targum differed from Nürnberg. Other pieces of Fragment Targum manuscripts were occasionally published during the twentieth century. In 1962 Malcolm C. Doubles completed his Ph.D. dissertation examining the relationship of the known manuscripts of the Fragment Targums, showing most importantly that V, N, and L were taken from the same complete Targum manuscript, while P represented a different recension.

In 1980 Michael L. Klein published his edition of the Fragment Targums, *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch*, providing the scholarly world with reliable editions of the all the Fragment Targums and with a wide-ranging introduction to the history of research on these texts. Klein presents the two complete Fragment Targums as P, an independent text, and V, a composite text with N and L. The work also includes two pieces of Fragment Targums of different textual traditions: Br, a Cairo Geniza manuscript fragment in the British Library; and J, a Cairo Geniza fragment of a Fragment Targum now in the library of New York's Jewish Theological Seminary.

In scholarly literature these Targums are usually designated by indicating that it is a Fragment Targum, and then providing a designation of the manuscript, often in an abbreviated form. The present work will cite them as "FT" with the manuscript designation in parentheses, for example, FT(P) and FT(V).

FT(V) is the longest Fragment Targum manuscript, containing selections from 908 verses, while FT(N) has 833 and FT(L) has 293. However, between FT(N) and FT(L) there are only ten verses that do not appear in FT(V). Furthermore, they are all the same text type—i.e., based on the same manuscript—so Klein essentially used them to create a single Targum text. He calls this a "*maximal composite text*."⁷ The field now cites Klein's composite text as FT(V); FT(N) and FT(L) are rarely cited separately.

The key question concerning the Fragment Targums is, why did someone extract portions of verses from a complete Palestinian Targum? One possible answer is that a Fragment Targum constitutes a response to the increasingly widespread use of Targum Onqelos during the early Middle Ages. While Onqelos provided the accepted translation of the Hebrew text, rather than the translation found in the Palestinian Targums, there was a desire to preserve the additional interpretive material

⁷ Klein, *Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch*, 1:37.

found in the PTs. Ron Campbell's characterization of the material found in FT(V) supports this; he shows that most of its material differs from a straight translation of the Hebrew text.⁸ Indeed, the largest number of passages included in the Fragment Targums are the additions known from the Proto-PT source and shared with other Palestinian Targums. Most of the other material included also indicates a change of some sort from a literal translation. This may include the updating of a geographical name, the addition of an anti-anthropomorphism to avoid the personification of God, or small explanatory alterations in the translation. Each selection is usually indicated by a lemma giving the first few words of the verse in Hebrew. Oddly, sometimes a lemma appears without any Aramaic text following it.

Another explanation for the Fragment Targum genre may be a link to synagogue liturgy. While the Fragment Targums rarely preserve consecutive verses except where the Targums to those verses contain additional material, FT(P) contains three continuous passages: Genesis 1:1–2:3, Exodus 13:17–15:26, and Exodus 19:1–20:15; 20:22–23. These are synagogue readings for the holidays of Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot, respectively. In some ways FT(P) could be seen as a forerunner of the medieval **Mahzorim**, which are festival prayer books that contain similar selected readings from the Palestinian Targums. Indeed *Mahzor Vitry* has some of the same readings as FT(P), along with readings from the Targums to the prophetic books.⁹

While the phenomenon of Fragment Targum is usually considered an aspect of the Palestinian Targums, there is one manuscript that constitutes a Fragment Targum taken out of Targum Onqelos. Klein has published a few fragments of this work in "A Fragment-Targum of *Onqelos* from the Cairo Geniza."

Targumic Toseftot

One more targumic form should be considered a response to the ascendancy of Targum Onqelos. Many manuscripts of Targum Onqelos contain a few expansions originating in the Palestinian Targums that have been recast into a dialect similar to that of Targum Onqelos. Some of these have been placed together at the end of a biblical book or the end of all pentateuchal books, while others are positioned in the relevant verse. These are not presented consistently as part of Onqelos but appear almost

⁸ See Campbell, "Parashiyot and Their Implications for Dating the Fragment-Targums" and his Ph.D. diss., "A Fragment Targum without a Purpose."

⁹ See Kaufman and Maori, "Targums of Exodus 20"; and Klein, *Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch*, 1:19–22.

at random in different manuscripts. They have also been found among the fragments from the Cairo Geniza.

Palestinian Targums or Palestinian Targum?

The key question for this variety of Targum translations composed in the dialect of JPA concerns the extent to which they are connected. Although these Targums do not represent the same actual text, they appear linked by knowledge of a common tradition of translation and their shared collection of additions. The question is usually posed in this form: Is there a single “Palestinian Targum” or should we speak in the plural of “Palestinian Targums”? While the similarities are tantalizing, it is clear that today we possess manuscripts of different Targums. But the similarities suggest that perhaps there once was a single Palestinian Targum, although there is no direct access to it.

The most obvious connections among the Palestinian Targums lie in their expansions. As we shall explain in the next chapter, the Palestinian Targums share a collection of over five hundred additions to the literal translation of the Hebrew text. We call this collection the “Proto-PT source” using the qualifier “proto-” to indicate that, at its point of origin, the hypothesized collection was not, as far as we know, identical with any extant Targum, and the collection may or may not have already been in the form of a Targum. Yet whenever one of the manuscripts of the Palestinian Targums is extant at a verse which contains an expansion, that Targum—whether Targum Neofiti, a Cairo Geniza fragment, or a Fragment Targum—usually contains a version of the expansion. Sometimes the expansions are the same, word for word; at other times they have been revised. Some of these revisions are just alterations in wording, while in other places they contain “piggyback additions,” where the expansion itself is expanded. To be sure, there are some exceptions to this consistent parallelism. In a few verses, an individual Palestinian Targum may insert an addition of its own. These are most common in Neofiti, but they also appear occasionally in the other Targums.

The Palestinian Targums seem to share a common translation, for in the vast majority of translated verses, the translation appears to derive from the same base text. In many verses the translation is the same among the Palestinian Targums, but not all variation is eliminated. Sometimes one Targum will bring a translation closer to the Hebrew than the base rendering in the other Targums of the Palestinian type. At other times a Targum will reword or add a few words to a translation. Frequently, two Targums may share changes from the base translation. Furthermore, this may change from verse to verse. If Neofiti and a Fragment Targum line

up against the others in one verse, in the next Neofiti may be linked to a Cairo Geniza fragment against that Fragment Targum. The point is that the different Palestinian Targums share a tradition of common translation, either as their base translation or as a starting point for their own rendering of a fairly literal translation.

The common additions and the commonality among the translations of the different Palestinian Targums indicates they share a close relationship. This relationship has been described as “**synoptic**,” as in the case of the Synoptic Gospels.¹⁰

None of the existing Targums seems to be closer to a supposed “ur-Targum” than any of the others, for they all contain renderings and additions that do not occur in the others. It is perhaps inevitable that Targum Neofiti usually takes center stage in targumic comparisons, but this is due to its completeness rather than it being earlier than the other Targums.

In recent decades Targum scholars have tended to doubt the notion that there may once have been a single Palestinian Targum upon which the Targums we now have are based. This has been due largely to the wide variety of differences among the members of the Palestinian Targum family. But two studies have shown a possible way to identify or at least conceive of that Targum. The first is the identification of the Proto-PT source of expansions and the delineation of the material belonging to it. The second is the study by S. Kaufman and Y. Maori of the Palestinian Targums to Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments. They have shown that despite the large number of exemplars of this passage, or rather because of them, it is possible to reconstruct a single, original text—both in the translation and the additions—from which the known Targums derived. Further study will show whether this argument may be applied to other passages as well.

Whether or not scholars will ever agree on the shape and wording of an original Palestinian Targum, for now we must work with the variety of texts that fall into this category, and so this Introduction will use the term “Palestinian Targums,” in the plural.

Dating of the Palestinian Targums

The Palestinian Targums seem to have been created originally sometime between the late second century and the early third century CE. This conclusion stems in part from the general dating for the dialect Jewish

¹⁰ See Chilton, *Profiles of a Rabbi*; and Flesher, “Exploring the Sources of the Synoptic Targums to the Pentateuch” and “Mapping the Synoptic Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch.”

Palestinian Aramaic, which is not attested to outside the Targums prior to the third century. The expansions of the Proto-PT source generally engage interpretive issues known in the rabbinic literature recorded in the third century. In addition, Philip Alexander's study of Targum Neofiti's treatment of geographical names indicates that the Targum uses terms that would have been current in the second century.¹¹

Of course, there has been a great deal of debate about the date of the Palestinian Targums in general and specific Targums, like Neofiti in particular, with claims ranging from the first century or earlier into the medieval period. We shall deal with this question more fully in chapter 8.

RESOURCES FOR STUDYING THE PALESTINIAN TARGUMS

The text of Targum Neofiti and translations into several languages was published by A. Díez Macho, as *Neophyti 1: Targum Palestinense Ms de La Biblioteca Vaticana*. The best resource for the Cairo Geniza fragments of Palestinian Targums was published by Michael L. Klein in two volumes as *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*. The first volume contains the transcribed Targum text with facing English translation. His introductory remarks provide an important overview to these Targums. This contains all Geniza manuscripts of Palestinian Targums known in 1986, but a few manuscripts have been discovered and published since then. See, for example, Klein, "New Fragments of Palestinian Targum from the Cairo Geniza" and "A Fragment-Targum of *Onqelos* from the Cairo Geniza"; both are reprinted in *Michael Klein On the Targums*. Michael Klein is also responsible for the modern edition of the Fragment Targums in two volumes, which contains an extensive introductory discussion as well. Volume 1 of *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch* contains the text, while volume 2 contains an English translation. Both of Klein's works constitute the definitive editions of the texts. Texts of the targumic Toseftot of the Pentateuchal Targum are more widely spread. Those found in the Cairo Geniza appear in Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts*, while A. Sperber published several in his *Bible in Aramaic*. All of these texts appear at the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* website. BibleWorks Software has all of the *CAL* material except the targumic Toseftot, while Edward Cook has produced a corrected and grammatically tagged version of the texts for Accordance Software. Targum Neofiti, Cairo Genizah fragments, and the two Fragment Targums appear in Díez Macho's *Polyglotta* as well.

English translations of all these texts appear in Martin McNamara's translations of Targum Neofiti in the Aramaic Bible series. The pages are

¹¹ See Alexander, "Toponymy of the Targumim."

organized by a translation, with the relevant renderings of the Fragment Targums and the Cairo Geniza material appearing below. Furthermore, these volumes contain a commentary in their extensive footnotes. Klein's texts are also accompanied by English translations, while McNamara and Michael Maher provide the English translations for Díez Macho's volumes, and R. Le Déaut giving the French, while Díez Macho did the Spanish.

The best dictionary for the Palestinian Targums is Michael Sokoloff's *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, now in its second edition. Jastrow's *Dictionary* is always useful for studying the Targums, while the second volume of Klein's edition of the Cairo Geniza fragments contains a helpful glossary. There are no teaching grammars available for the Palestinian Targums at present. The usual approach to studying is to learn the paradigms and declensions from Stevenson's *Grammar of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic*, which is also available in an updated version by E. Cook. The best analytic grammar is probably Steven Fassberg's *Grammar of the Palestinian Targum Fragments from the Cairo Geniza*. David Golomb's *Grammar of Targum Neofiti* is also useful.

For the *piyyutim* that appear in some Targum manuscripts, see Rodrigues Pereira, *Studies in Aramaic Poetry*; Sokoloff and Yahalom, *Jewish Palestinian Aramaic Poetry*; Lieber, "Piyyut"; and Lieber, *Yannai*.

TARGUM ONQELOS

Targum Onqelos provides a complete translation of the entire Pentateuch. In direct contrast to the Palestinian Targums, Jewish scribes and scholars attempted to preserve it as a single text with no variation in its wording or even spelling. Its acceptance by the same Jews who promoted the Babylonian Talmud caused the manuscript to be copied frequently and used widely. So although it was a single text, it is known from hundreds of manuscripts, most of them in a fragmentary state.

Onqelos has the widespread reputation of being the most literal of all the Targums from the rabbinic period. And that reputation is accurate if we understand the word "literal" to mean it is the Targum that contains the fewest expansions or additional words. Yet while Onqelos clearly follows Rule 1 closely, it may not be the most literal Targum in terms of how accurately it replicates the Hebrew text. Targum Neofiti, for example, often provides a more direct rendering of the original Hebrew. Nonetheless, Targum Onqelos has fewer additions than the other Pentateuchal Targums and those additions tend to be shorter. Rule 2 applies, then, but just not as extensively. Instead, Onqelos often resorts to Rule 3, substituting new words during translation without altering or adding to the surrounding translation.

Although Targum Onqelos was used among the rabbis in Babylonia and endorsed by the later *geonim* (sg. *gaon*), it was not composed in the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic used in the Babylonian Talmud, but in a dialect of Aramaic native to Palestine and the western range of Aramaic. That dialect, known as Jewish Literary Aramaic, has a history of development in Palestine going back several centuries. It differs significantly from the later eastern dialects of Babylonia. This is the same dialect in which Targum Jonathan to the Prophets was composed, a Targum also associated primarily with Babylonia.

As we will describe in the chapter about Aramaic, chapter 13, JLA develops from Imperial Aramaic, or, as it was once formulated, from the literary dialect related to Imperial Aramaic known as Standard Literary Aramaic (SLA). Jewish Literary Aramaic appears in Daniel, the Qumran Aramaic version of Job, the Genesis Apocryphon, and other Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls. Interestingly, as JLA developed from the second century BCE into the first century CE, it generated a wide variety of forms, with few texts showing consistency among them. Targum Onqelos, along with Targum Jonathan, suddenly shows a consistent, structured version of the dialect, one that remains coherent across the translations of the two sets of biblical books.

Despite its heavily western character, Targum Onqelos contains some eastern dialectal elements, as has been recognized for more than a century by scholars such as T. Nöldeke, G. Dalman, P. Kahle, and E. Y. Kutscher. Edward Cook discussed sixteen grammatical elements that have been seen as eastern in his 1992 presentation at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin.¹² Later, in his *Glossary of Targum Onkelos*, he identified twenty-nine eastern lexical terms known, among the Pentateuchal Targums, only to Onqelos.¹³

Since the nineteenth century, there have been two different solutions to this apparently self-contradictory inclusion of western and eastern linguistic elements. While one explanation dominates the scholarship, it has not been able to eliminate the other. The most widely held solution argues that Targum Onqelos was composed in two stages. In the first stage, a “proto-Onqelos” Targum was composed in Palestine in a regularized dialect of JLA. This took place sometime during the first two centuries CE. and would explain the predominately western character of its language. In the second stage, the Targum was taken to Babylonia, and revised, perhaps in the third or fourth century. During this revision

¹² Now published as E. M. Cook, “A New Perspective on the Language of Onkelos and Jonathan.”

¹³ E. M. Cook, *Glossary of Targum Onkelos*, xiii.

some eastern dialectal elements entered the text. Babylonia is the “end-point” of the Targum’s travels because this is where the Targum gained its reputation. This two-stage view was held in the nineteenth century by Theodore Nöldeke and Gustav Dalman, and in the twentieth century by E. Y. Kutscher, J. Greenfield, and S. A. Kaufman.

While this explanation is widely held among scholars, it has not achieved a consensus, largely because scholars have identified no *local* evidence that Targum Onqelos or Proto-Onqelos—sometimes called the Old Palestinian Targum—was ever in Palestine.¹⁴ This shortcoming was recognized even during the nineteenth century, and an alternative was proposed. The argument works like this: Jewish Literary Aramaic existed in Babylonia in the first half of the first millennium CE, either because it developed there on its own or was brought by Jews migrating from Palestine after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the defeat of Bar Kokhba in 135. The Jews using this dialect composed Targum Onqelos sometime prior to the end of the fourth century. The western character of the dialect was brought with the immigrants from Israel, and the eastern elements had entered the dialect after their arrival. The problem with this proposal is that there is little evidence that JLA existed for any length of time in Babylonia or became a regular part of the linguistic character of Babylonia’s Jewish community. The position was held by Abraham Geiger in the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth century by P. Kahle, F. Rosenthal, and H. L. Ginsberg.

A third option was proposed by Edward Cook in the 1990s.¹⁵ He argued that Targum Onqelos arose in a geographical area of “Central Aramaic” between Israel and Babylonia. Basing his proposal on the wave model of linguistic propagation, he argued that the upper Mesopotamian valley or the environs of Edessa comprised the place where elements of western *and* eastern Aramaic dialects met and merged. The primary problem with this suggestion is that there were no known communities of Jews in this region who could have accomplished the tasks of writing and distributing Targum Onqelos (and Targum Jonathan).

In chapter 7, we will discuss evidence that a Proto-Onqelos was known in Palestine and had a textual relationship to the Palestinian Targums. This data supports the two-stage model as most accurately describing Targum Onqelos’ historical course of composition.

¹⁴ Recent studies by Paul Flesher have argued that such evidence does exist. See Flesher, “Is *Targum Onqelos* A Palestinian Targum?” and “The Translations of Proto-Onqelos and the Palestinian Targums.”

¹⁵ See E. M. Cook, “A New Perspective on the Language of Onkelos and Jonathan.”

Targum Onqelos was preserved and transmitted by techniques similar to those developed by the **Masoretes** for preserving the text of the Hebrew text of the Bible. First, it was copied and preserved in numerous manuscripts. The scribal tradition was to copy the text exactly and to take no liberties with it—in contrast to the Palestinian Targums. Second, the scholarly community in Jewish Babylonia established a masorah for Targum Onqelos. Like the two masorahs attached to the Hebrew text, the aim was to preserve the unusual readings in the Targum and to ensure that they were not eliminated as mistakes. The production of the masorah shows that there was among the Babylonian Jewish community a clear belief that Targum Onqelos' text was fixed and that it should be preserved and transmitted in that single, fixed form.

Over a dozen complete or nearly complete manuscripts of Targum Onqelos are now known to modern scholarship.¹⁶ These are divided into texts with Babylonian vocalization (used mostly in the Middle East) and those with Tiberian vocalization (used primarily in Europe). The Babylonian is considered closer to the original text and hence superior. A. Sperber's scholarly edition of Targum Onqelos is the best critical text of Targum Onqelos available today.¹⁷ Based on the Babylonian Ms. Or. 2363 of the British Museum, this diplomatic edition brings together seven different manuscripts and the earliest printed editions. Unfortunately, it left out the oldest known manuscript, Vatican Ebr. 448, which was copied in 1048 CE. While Sperber claims technical reasons for this decision, Vat. Ebr. 448 is also missing approximately nine chapters. Grossfeld's translation of Targum Onqelos is based on this manuscript.¹⁸

Some manuscripts of Targum Onqelos contain larger additions to the usual text. These are known as *Toseftot* (sg. *Tosefta*) or Targumic *Toseftot*, and there are a few dozen of them in total. They are usually written in a dialect similar to that of Onqelos itself and may be placed at the end of a book or within the Targum text itself. In Onqelos, these Toseftot usually recast an expansion found in the Palestinian Targums. There are a few dozen of these. There are also a few fragments of manuscripts that preserve a Fragment Targum version of Onqelos.¹⁹

¹⁶ The best lists of these are found in Sperber, *Bible in Aramaic*, 1:xvi–xvii; Grossfeld, *Targum Onqelos to Genesis*, 6–8; and Díez Merino, “El Targum Onqelos en tradición Sefardí.” Many other manuscripts are known from fragments or in part. The Cairo Geniza, e.g., contains fragments from more than a 1000 different TO manuscripts; see Klein, *Targumic Manuscripts*.

¹⁷ Sperber, *Bible in Aramaic*, vol 1. *CAL* uses the Bar Ilan text, noting variations from Sperber.

¹⁸ It is available in a facsimile edition in *The Pentateuch: With the Masorah Parva and the Masorah Magna and with Targum Onqelos. Ms. Vat. Heb. 448*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem: Makor, 1977).

¹⁹ See Klein, “A Fragment-Targum of Onqelos from the Cairo Geniza.”

RESOURCES FOR STUDYING TARGUM ONQELOS

The best text of Targum Onqelos, done according to modern scholarly principles, is that of Alexander Sperber in volume one of his *Bible in Aramaic*. He presents a diplomatic edition of the British Museum's Ms. Or. 2363, collated with seven other reliable manuscripts and a number of printed editions. This is published with Babylonian vocalization rather than the more widely known Tiberian. For a guide to Babylonian pointing, see Appendix B. The other text version widely available is Sabioneta V.J. 1557, which was printed in the *Biblia Rabbinica* of 1557 and since has become the traditional text. It also seems to have been used in the Bar Ilan Judaic Library, then at CAL, and in the computer Bibles that use the CAL Targum texts, such as Accordance and Bibleworks.

There are three readily available translations of Targum Onqelos into English. First, Bernard Grossfeld provided the translation and introduction for the Aramaic Bible series, which contain extensive footnotes, often amounting to a commentary. See Grossfeld, *Targum Onqelos to Genesis*, *Targum Onqelos to Exodus*, etc. He translates the manuscript Vatican Ebr. 448. Second, the Accordance Bible for computers retained Eldon Clem to compose a new translation of Targum Onqelos. Third, Etheridge's translation from 1862 is still available. You can find it online at: <http://www.targum.info>. The last two translate the traditional text found in the rabbinic Bibles, which probably comes from the Sabioneta manuscript.

For dictionaries appropriate for Targum Onqelos, there is always the old standby of Jastrow. Recently, Edward Cook has published his *Glossary of Targum Onqelos*, which will be a great help for the study of this Targum. With regard to grammars, Douglas Gropp's teaching grammar, *The Aramaic of Targums Onkelos and Jonathan: An Introduction*, forthcoming with Oxford University Press, is far and away the best. Stevenson's *Grammar of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic*, second edition, is still used widely for learning the forms and conjugations. The printed version is long out of date, but Edward Cook has updated it for Accordance Software. Y. Frank's *Grammar for Gemara and Targum Onkelos* provides a large collection of paradigms and conjugations.

The most complete publication of Targum Onqelos' masorah is Klein, *Masorah to Targum Onqelos*.

TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHAN

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is a complete manuscript to the entire Pentateuch, although it is missing a few verses, as its most recent editor, Ernest

Clark, notes.²⁰ This is known from a single manuscript in the British Museum designated as Brit. Mus. add. 27031, and from the printed text found in the *Biblia Rabbinica* of 1591. The latter differs enough from the British Museum manuscript that scholars presume it came from a manuscript now lost.

Like Targum Onqelos and the Palestinian Targums, Pseudo-Jonathan conforms to the first two Rules of Targum, mixing literal translation with expansions. It has the reputation of accomplishing this mix somewhat less elegantly than the other Targums, with some segues between translation and addition being rather abrupt and other passages abbreviated, as in Numbers 7.

Pseudo-Jonathan's dialect is Late Jewish Literary Aramaic, which combines elements of both Onqelos' JLA and the Palestinian Targums' JPA. As a text it combines a recasting of TO's translation (or perhaps Proto-Onqelos' translation) into LJLA with most of the additions of the Palestinian Targums' Proto-PT source, sometimes recast. It overwhelms both the translation and Proto-PT, however, by bringing in more than fifteen hundred additions of its own, not found elsewhere in other extant Targums. Although parallels to this material are sometimes found among the rabbinic writings, the material is unique among the targumic texts. Beverly Mortensen, who has identified this material, calls this source "PJ unique."²¹

Since its first publication in the rabbinic Bible of 1590, Pseudo-Jonathan has been identified as Targum Yerushalmi. Since it was complete, it was later given the abbreviation TY1 (or TJ1). Because Pseudo-Jonathan is composed in LJLA rather than JPA and it follows its own translation (based on TO), it is clear that Pseudo-Jonathan is a distinctive Targum. Hence, scholars no longer consider it to be a Palestinian Targum (i.e., a Targum Yerushalmi, and that designation is no longer serviceable).

Dating Pseudo-Jonathan is difficult. On the one hand, there is a passage that is clearly post-Islamic: Genesis 21:21 contains an addition in which Ishmael marries women with the names of Muhammad's wife and daughter, Qadisha and Fatima. This could not have been composed prior to the seventh century. The main question is whether this passage represents the date of all Pseudo-Jonathan's new additions and, presumably, the moment at which PJ was redacted from its sources into its present form, or whether it is simply a late insertion. On the other hand, many of

²⁰ Clark, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch*, xiii–xvi.

²¹ Mortensen, *Priesthood in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*.

the expansions seem to be early. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many scholars argued that this Targum contained material stemming from the first century or earlier. This is no longer credibly argued.

At the present, the debate over dating PJ seems to be between a group of scholars who see PJ as coming from the fourth century (Hayward, Mortensen, and Flesher) and those who see it as medieval, or at least post-seventh century (Shinan, Splansky, etc.). The dating of Pseudo-Jonathan will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 8.

RESOURCES FOR STUDYING TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHAN

The best text for studying Targum Pseudo-Jonathan as based on the British Museum manuscript is that of Ernest Clarke et al., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, which also contains a concordance. Earlier editions of the manuscript by Ginsburger and Rieder contain a significant number of errors. Díez Macho's *Biblia Polyglotta Matritensia* contains a transcription of the manuscript as well, with variances in the printed text noted in the footnotes. Michael Maher provided the English translation in the Aramaic Bible series; Eldon Clem composed a new translation for the Accordance Bible Software, and Etheridge's century-old translation is still being printed and is available on the IOTS website, www.Targum.info. Pseudo-Jonathan is underserved by scholarly tools. The only dictionary that contains all of Pseudo-Jonathan's lexicon is Jastrow, although many of the words appear in Michael Sokoloff's *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* or Edward Cook's *Glossary of Targum Onkelos*. There is no published grammar for Pseudo-Jonathan. Stevenson's *Grammar* is the best in print, while Cook's 1986 Ph.D. dissertation, "Rewriting the Bible," addresses many key grammatical topics. The text is also available online at *CAL* and in the Bible software programs Accordance and Bible Works, as well as the Bar Ilan Judaic Library.

SOURCES OF THE PALESTINIAN TARGUMS

For centuries scholars have realized that many of the expansions added into the Palestinian Targums were similar across the different Targums. This was even recognized when the extant versions of what was then thought of as Targum Yerushalmi comprised only Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (which we now know is not a Palestinian Targum) and a single Fragment Targum. When Pseudo-Jonathan was first printed in 1591, the Fragment Targum was inserted into its text, so that similar additions would be next to each for more convenient reading, a practice that was carried over into the first English translation by Etheridge. As more manuscripts of the Palestinian Targums were discovered and published in the twentieth century, this observation continued to hold true. It is now possible to find the same or similar expansions appearing in five or six different Targums.

Sometimes these expansions are quite close in wording. Take Genesis 41:43, for instance. In this verse Pharaoh honors Joseph by putting him in Pharaoh's private chariot before a large crowd people. The people shout a word that is a *hapax legomenon*, אַבְרֵךְ (ABRK). This is probably an Egyptian word, but the Targum translators do not know what it means. To resolve this dilemma, the Palestinian Targums divide this word into two parts, AB and RK, and then provide an etymological interpretation for each. The obvious understanding of AB is "father," אב, while RK moves from רך to רכִּיךְ, an adjective meaning "soft, tender." This forms the basis of the rendering found in FT(V), FT(P), and CG(E), which have the same wording: "May the father (אב) of the king live! For he is great in wisdom and tender (רכִּיךְ) in years."¹ Targum Neofiti also includes this interpretation, and expands upon it slightly, "May the father (אב) of the

¹ Translations of the HT and Targums in this chapter are our own.

king live! For he is great in wisdom and dainty in beauty and tender (רכיך) in years.” Pseudo-Jonathan also has a version of this addition: “This is the father (אב) of the king! Great in wisdom and tender (רכיך) in years.” The appearance of the same interpretation and the closeness of the wording in these five versions of the passage clearly suggests that they share a common source.

There are other parallel expansions where the similarities appear less strong, although they are undeniably present. Exodus 14:20 provides an example of this when it talks about the placement of God’s pillar of cloud as it separated the Israelites from the Egyptians the night before the parting of the Reed Sea. The Hebrew text describes the cloud between the two camps as “And there was the cloud and the darkness and it [i.e., the cloud] lit the night (וַיְהִי הָעֲנָן וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֹּאֲרֶה אֶת־הַלַּיְלָה).”

Targum Neofiti renders this as:

והוה עננא חשוך ופלגא נהורא חשוכא מחשך
ומצרייה ונהורא לישראל כל לילי

And the cloud was darkness and half light. The darkness cast dark upon the Egyptians and light was upon the Israelites all the night.

This expansion divides the Hebrew phrase into two parts. In the second part, darkness and light are balanced, one for the Egyptians and one for the Israelites. But the additional material in the first part lacks that balance; the light is designated as “half light” but a second half is not indicated.

Pseudo-Jonathan presents a longer addition here that corrects the imbalance, while reversing the order of light and darkness in the first sentence.

והוה עננא פלגיה נהורא ופלגיה חשוכא מסיטריה חד
מחשך על מצראי ומסיטריה חד אנהר על ישראל כל לילי

And the cloud was half light and half darkness. From one side, it cast darkness upon Egypt and from one side it cast light upon Israel all the night.

The second sentence of this targumic interpretation indicates that the cloud constitutes the actor. It casts both the light and the darkness. This differs from Targum Neofiti, where the darkness itself casts the darkness upon the Egyptians, and the light is merely present.

Two Fragment Targums, FT(V) and FT(P), are closely parallel, and they both build on Pseudo-Jonathan’s reversal of light and darkness in the

first sentence to reorder light and darkness in the second as well. Here is FT(V)'s version:

הוה ענא פלגה נהור ופלגה חשוד נהורה מנהר על ישר'
 חשוכה מחשוד על מצראי

And the cloud was half light and half darkness. The light cast light upon Israel and the darkness cast darkness upon Egypt.

Even though both Targums continue translating the verse, they leave out the phrase “all the night” found in the other Targums and found in the Hebrew text. The reversal in the second sentence is obvious, but again the causative actor changes. In FT(V) and FT(P) the darkness causes darkness and light causes light, rather than the cloud being the agent.

Our overall point here is that, despite the different ways each of these four Targums word the additional material to this verse, they all present versions of the same basic expansion. While this is not the moment to offer a detailed tradition history of this verse, it is clear that the different versions are related to each other and work to make the same larger point even though there are differences in details and presentation.²

These two passages are presented not for their own sake, but as examples of the larger question of how the Palestinian Targums are related. These Targums contain hundreds of expansions comparable to the examples cited. The first question these extensive parallels raise is: How can all these similarities be explained? Immediately upon addressing the first question, a second must be investigated as well: How can the differences within the similarities be explained? To produce an explanation for each individual expansion is not the goal, but instead the aim is to identify their commonalities and shared interests and forms; to work out an explanation for why there are hundreds of them rather than just a few; and what are their relationships?

The best way forward is suggested by another group of texts that have similar characteristics, that is, the New Testament Gospels. The first three books—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are known as the Synoptic Gospels. The word synoptic comes from the Greek and it means “to view together.” The term Synoptic Gospels indicates that the three

² Tradition history is an approach to the study of Jewish traditions and interpretations pioneered by R. Bloch and developed by G. Vermes and his students. See, e.g., Bloch, “Methodological Note”; Vermes, “Redemption and Genesis xxii” and “Lebanon”; and Hayward, “Abraham as Proselytizer.” Another scholarly inspiration for this approach comes from the biblical scholar Hermann Gunkel; see *Legends of Genesis*. Many of the essays in Hayward, *Targums and the Transmission of Scripture* use this method and this book draws upon it in our analysis of the Binding of Isaac in chap. 20.

books can be “viewed together” because they share much material in common, with items appearing sometimes in all three gospels and sometimes in only two.³

There are three key points here. The three Synoptic Gospels (1) share a large number of individual stories and sayings that (2) tend to be placed into the same narrative order at the same locations. (3) These stories and sayings are often couched in the same or similar wording, although often one version may be more elaborate than the others, or may express a different meaning from the other(s).

Our interest lies in how scholars analyze such relationships. First, they begin by identifying each individual passage, often called a **pericope**. They then work to group individual pericopae together by a single criterion by asking the question, in which books do they appear? These groups become the basis for identifying the sources of these expansions—namely, the written or oral collections of material from which the gospels under analysis drew. This approach is called *source criticism*. Second, the order of the pericopae in each book is determined and an analysis ensues to determine the primary order of the passages, especially for pericopae which do not follow the same order in all books.

Third, these activities lay the foundation for the last step which is to determine how the author treated his or her source material. For instance, did they copy it more or less exactly, or did they alter it to make a point or to convey a message different from the original one? This is known as *redaction criticism*. The reason for delineating how authors treat their underlying source is, of course, to work out the message they want to convey in the pericope. Once this is done for a number of passages, then a scholar can work to understand the author’s theme. What is the overall message the author is trying to convey?

On the basis of the opening two examples, it is clear that “synoptic” describes the character of expansions as found in the Palestinian Targums and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. Targum scholars have clearly understood this characteristic of these Targums and have taken steps to ensure that the Targums are “viewed together.” R. Le Déaut published his French

³ Flesher and Chilton have independently explored synopticity as a way of understanding targumic relationships. Chilton’s work appears in “Targumic Transmission and Dominical Tradition,” “Sennacherib,” and “A Comparative Study of Synoptic Development.” For further studies, see Chilton, *Profiles of a Rabbi, Targumic Approaches to the Gospels*; and *Judaic Approaches to the Gospels*. See also Flesher, “Mapping the Synoptic Palestinian Targums” and “Exploring the Sources of the Synoptic Targums.” The study of the synoptic character of the Targumim remains in its infancy, but it appears possible that, once it is better understood, we will find that we will also conceive of the literary relationship among the Gospels in a more complete way. All translations in this chapter are ours unless otherwise noted.

translation of Targum Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan on facing pages so that each chapter could be viewed at the same time in both Targums.⁴ A. Díez Macho organized his polyglot Bible so that each verse was displayed at the same time as the Pentateuchal Targums he considered to be Palestinian, and Martin McNamara has proposed this same technique be done for English translations of the Pentateuchal Targums.⁵

Since the Palestinian Targums and Pseudo-Jonathan are synoptic, they can be analyzed by methods similar to those used for the Synoptic Gospels. First, intensive research has been underway for over two decades to identify the individual expansions, to work out how they are shared (or not) across the different Targums, and to translate this understanding into a delineation of specific sources.

Second, expansions are nearly always attached to the same verses, and those verses appear in the same order because they follow the underlying Hebrew text. This means that, unlike the Gospels, the expansions themselves do not dictate the narrative structure; that comes instead from the underlying Hebrew text. So there is little need to study the order of the expansions to understand their synoptical character.

Third, the search for overall themes among the sources has been going on for as long as the attempts to identify the sources themselves.

The remainder of this chapter will lay out in brief how these relationships work. It will spell out how the expansions of the Palestinian Targums and Pseudo-Jonathan are related and will identify their sources. It will then move to a discussion of the themes that characterize the main sources.

THE SOURCES OF THE PALESTINIAN TARGUMS AND TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHAN

Although the parallels among additional material in the Palestinian Targums have been recognized since the dawn of modern Targum scholarship during the nineteenth century, there have been few attempts systematically to develop a large-scale understanding of those parallels, even though individual expansions—by themselves or within a single chapter or story—have frequently received comparative investigation. In fact, the study of verses or short passages may be the most common analysis applied to the Targums. Despite this, there has been a surprising lack of interest in creating an overall picture of the relationships among the material.

During the last part of the twentieth century, however, two scholars made exploratory forays in this direction. In 1979 Avigdor Shinan

⁴ Le Déaut and Robert, *Targum du Pentateuque*.

⁵ Díez Macho, *Biblia Polyglotta Matritensis*; and McNamara, "Towards an English Synoptic Presentation."

published a version of his doctoral thesis entitled in Hebrew, *Aggadot shel HaMeturgeman* (*The Aggadah in the Aramaic Targums to the Pentateuch*). In it, he identified 122 expansions in Genesis that appeared in all or most of the Palestinian Targums and Pseudo-Jonathan. He argued that these expansions represented the interpretations (or **aggadah**) of the translator, and could be used to investigate the Targums' theology. In 1982 Paul V. M. Flesher wrote a master's thesis on the paralleled expansions in Targum Neofiti, providing a list of verses that were analogous to other Palestinian Targums and Pseudo-Jonathan. This was published in 1987 as "Translation and Exegetical Augmentation in the Targums to the Pentateuch."

In 1990 Flesher decided to move beyond these attempts and organized a Targum Sources Project with three of his doctoral students at that time—Beverly Patton Mortensen, Ronald M. Campbell, and Leslie Simon. This project examined the parallel expansions in Targum Neofiti, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Fragment Targum ms. Vatican, and Fragment Targum ms. Paris—the latter two being defined as complete as their composers' intended. The project looked at all the expansions found in these Targums, identified the parallels, and developed a proposal for the sources underlying them. The project never received publication as such but produced two doctoral dissertations and several articles.⁶ Since that time Beverly Mortensen has revised her work on Pseudo-Jonathan and it has now been published as *The Priesthood in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. Flesher's work on Targum Neofiti and the primary sources of the Palestinian Targums, which has expanded to include the Cairo Genizah fragments, should be published in the near future.

Since the research and publication of this source investigation is still in process, it is difficult to provide a single overall picture. Different scholars approach the material in slightly different ways, and so there are different views of the source material. Despite the differences in detail, the overall picture is emerging. We will look briefly at two published studies to get a sense of the relationships among the Palestinian Targums. First, we shall review a study Paul Flesher published in 1999 on the expansions of Genesis 28–50. It looks at all the extant Palestinian Targums, as well as Pseudo-Jonathan, using the approach of the earlier project. Second, we shall survey the results of Beverly Mortensen's two-volume work on Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and its sources, a study that covers the entire Pentateuch, but does not include the Cairo Genizah fragments.

⁶ Mortensen, "Targum Pseudo-Jonathan" and "Pseudo-Jonathan's Temple"; Campbell, "*Parashiyot*" and "A Fragment Targum without a Purpose"; Flesher, "Mapping the Synoptic Palestinian Targums", "Exploring the Sources of the Synoptic Targums," and *Targums of Israel*.

The Expansions and Sources of Genesis 28–50

When the Targum Sources Project examined the additions in the four Targums of its study, it found a total of 2,431 individual expansions. Taking into account those that were parallel across the Targums, there were 1,373 different expansions. To manage the analysis of this large number and the even larger number of passages that were examined to discover them, the project made a decision to limit its study to expansions consisting of seven words or more. This decision, admittedly arbitrary, helped make the study more manageable and one that could be accomplished within its time constraints. It also ensured that the analysis looked only at expansions and not at translations.⁷

Paul Flesher's study of the expansions and sources of Genesis 28–50 used the same approach as the Targum Sources Project, including the minimum size of seven words.⁸ Its primary accomplishment was to bring into the analysis the Cairo Genizah fragments of Palestinian Targums. So it examined the expansions in Targum Neofiti, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, the two Fragment Targums, and the four Targums extant to these chapters whose fragments were found in the Cairo Genizah (mss. C, D, E, Z). Indeed, these twenty-three chapters were chosen specifically because they included so much Cairo Genizah material.

This study produced clear results. The eight versions of the Targums concerned contained a total of 183 different expansions. All but four expansions readily fell into one of two groups. The first group comprises eighty-five expansions shared by Targum Neofiti and other Targums. These are termed the Proto-PT source. With regard to the Cairo Genizah fragments or a Fragment Targum, if a manuscript is extant at a verse that contains an expansion in Neofiti, then it too had that expansion. Conversely, the only expansions these Targums lacked were those appearing in verses where they were not extant. With regard to Pseudo-Jonathan, in the majority of verses where Neofiti had an expansion, PJ had the same expansion. In some verses, however, Pseudo-Jonathan either had a different expansion or was simply translated. All of these parallel expansions are called the Proto-PT source. The second group consists of ninety-seven expansions that appear only in the single Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan. These expansions are called the PJ-unique source.⁹

⁷ Much of Mortensen's and Flesher's work on this question since that time has been to incorporate smaller expansions, yet distinguish them from mere translation.

⁸ See Flesher, "Exploring the Sources of the Synoptic Targums" and "Is Targum Onqelos A Palestinian Targum?"

⁹ One expansion appears only in TN, Gen 29:23. PJ, the only other Targum extant at that verse, contains a different expansion. See appendix A for the complete list of these expansions.

The expansions of the Proto-PT source give an immediate sense of how they are related simply from the number of Targums that contain each expansion, as we can see in Table 6.1. Three expansions appear in six different Targums, for example, while fifteen expansions appear in five. In fact, more than half of all the Proto-PT expansions here, i.e., forty-eight, appear in four or more Targums. This is made more remarkable when we realize that only Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan are continuous; the other six Targums are either in fragments or consist of selected passages. For the latter, they contain the shared expansions where they are extant. At verses where they do not exhibit an expansion known from Neofiti, they lack the verse completely. The list identifying expansions in specific Targums appears in the table in Appendix A.

Table 6.1: Number of Targums Paralleling Each Different Expansion

# of Extant Targums	# of Expansions
6	3
5	15
4	30
3	20
2	14
Total	82

Table 6.2 provides a second perspective on the Proto-PT expansions in these Targums. The first column indicates the number of expansions in each Targum, while the second one shows the number of those expansions that belong to the Proto-PT source. With the exception of Pseudo-Jonathan, all the Targums have the vast majority of their expansions in Proto-PT, as the second column reveals. Indeed, the last column shows that the expansions from these Targums come from the Proto-PT source 96 percent of the time or more.

Table 6.2: Percentage of Proto-PT Expansions in Each Targum

	Total Expansions	Total Proto-PT	% of Proto-PT	% of Targum
TN	83	82	99%	99%
FT(V)	54	52	63%	96%
FT(P)	56	54	65%	96%
CGs	51	49	59%	96%
PJ	162	63	76%	39%

Pseudo-Jonathan has the highest number of expansions that belong to the Proto-PT source apart from Targum Neofiti. It contains sixty-three of the eighty-two Proto-PT expansions, some 76 percent. Despite the high alignment with Proto-PT, however, these expansions make up only 39 percent of PJ's total. This is because so many of its expansions are unique to Pseudo-Jonathan—a total of ninety-seven, even more than the expansions of Proto-PT—at least in comparison to the Palestinian Targums. The substantial independence of Pseudo-Jonathan in so many of its additions constitutes one of the reasons PJ is no longer considered a Palestinian Targum.

Diagram 6.1 illustrates the synoptic relationship of the Proto-PT source and the PJ-unique source to the Targums we now have in our possession. The Proto-PT source feeds directly into the complete and continuous Palestinian Targums such as Targum Neofiti and the fragments of complete Targums we have from the Cairo Genizah. From these Targums, the creators of the Fragment Targums, the Festival-Liturgical collections, and the Targumic Toseftot later drew their selected items to create those Targums.¹⁰ Pseudo-Jonathan by contrast combines the expansions of the Proto-PT source—probably drawn from a version of an Palestinian Targum we no longer possess—with those of the PJ-unique source to create its distinctive targumic character.

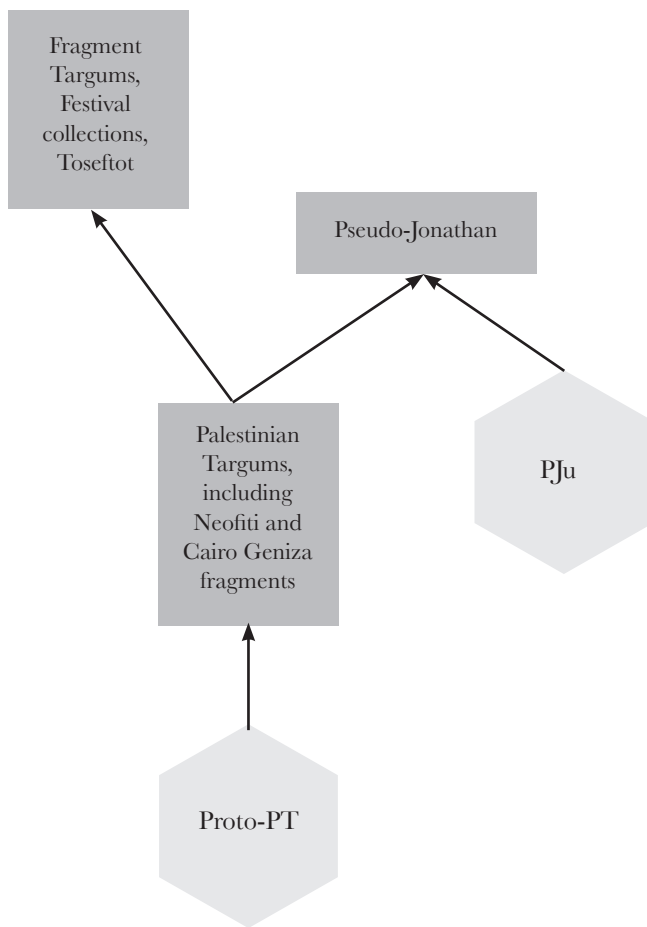
Finally, let us turn to four expansions that did not fall directly into either of the two large sources. These appear at Genesis 33:4, 37:33, 39:23, and 48:20. The expansion at Genesis 39:23 appears only in Targum Neofiti, and hence suggests a TN-unique source. The expansion at Genesis 48:20 appears in two of the Cairo Genizah Targums, while the other two expansions appear in all extant Targums except Neofiti. Should these be classified as belonging to the Proto-PT source, or do they represent other sources? Clearly, these instances are too few to draw any conclusions, but Beverly Mortensen's large-scale analysis of the sources of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan provides a sound context for understanding them.

The Expansions of the Pentateuch

Beverly Mortensen continued her labors beyond the Targum Sources Project and in 2006 published a two-volume work on Pseudo-Jonathan and its sources, *The Priesthood in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*. Investigating the entire Pentateuch, Mortensen identified 1,801 expansions that belonged

¹⁰ It does not seem that any of the later Targum collections depend directly on any of the earlier Targums we now possess. However, Kaufman and Maori, "The Targums of Exodus 20" identified a link between FT(P) and the later *Mahzor Vitry*.

Diagram 6.1: Illustration of the Synoptic Relationship of the Proto-PT Source and the PJ-unique Source to the Targums



to the PJ-unique source and 641 expansions belonging to the Proto-PT source. Although the work focused primarily on the PJ-unique material, it also addressed Proto-PT and other sources, including the expansions unique to other Targums. This will enable us to examine some other possible sources.¹¹

Mortensen's work differs in three key ways from the previously discussed study of Genesis 28–50. First, like the original project, it does not include the Cairo Genizah Targum fragments. This means that some

¹¹ See Mortensen, *Priesthood*, 18–20, 507–8, and appendices A and C.

expansions may be classified as unique to particular Targums even though parallels appear in the CG fragments. Second, rather than stick with the artificial minimum expansion size of seven, Mortensen attempted to identify smaller expansions as well. Third, Mortensen looked at parallel expansions in greater detail and identified material that a particular Targum added to the common core of an expansion. Such added material she termed a “piggyback,” for it rode upon the preexisting expansion, depending on the earlier material.

It becomes clear from Mortensen’s numbers that every Targum has expansions that are unique to it, although these are smaller in number (see Table 6.3). There is not only a PJ-unique source, but also a TN-unique source, as was hinted at by the one unparalleled expansion in TN Genesis 39:23. TN-unique contains 128 expansions. It is likewise clear that both FT(V) and FT(P) have expansions not found in other Targums, although significantly fewer than the continuous Targums, five and nineteen respectively.

Table 6.3: Mortensen’s Targum Sources for the Entire Pentateuch

Source	# of Expansions
Proto-PT	641
PJ-unique	1801
TN-unique	128
V-unique	5
P-unique	19
Source A	80
Source B	35
Source C	14

In the study of the Synoptic Gospels, passages that appeared in all three gospels were placed into one source, while passages that occurred only in the two gospels of Matthew and Luke were placed into a different source. The analytic principle is clear. Passages that appear in different sets of texts are assigned to different sources. Mortensen follows this principle. She classifies expansions that occur in TN and a Fragment Targum, but not in PJ, as Source A. Expansions that appear in PJ and a Fragment Targum, but not TN, are categorized as Source B, while expansions that occur only in the two Fragment Targums belong to Source C.

Mortensen's identification of Source A and Source B reinforces her definition of the Proto-PT source, drawn from the earlier project, as expansions that appear in both TN and PJ, and perhaps in either or both of the Fragment Targums.¹² In other words, expansions must belong to both continuous Targums to be considered part of Proto-PT. Since the Fragment Targums are selections from a continuous Targum, leaving most of it out, they are not required to identify an expansion as belonging to Proto-PT.

Here Flesher's work differs from Mortensen's. He considers Source A to be part of Proto-PT. The definition of Proto-PT is the parallel expansions that include TN. This is because Pseudo-Jonathan contains an enormous number of expansions in the PJ-unique source. These expansions often appear in place of a Proto-PT expansion. In Genesis 28–50, PJ has eight PJu expansions opposite expansions in other Targums, six of which were Proto-PT. Furthermore, as we shall see later in this chapter, PJ does not use the translation common to the Palestinian Targums but instead recasts Targum Onqelos' translation. In doing so, it often ignores Proto-PT material. This seems to indicate that although PJ is an important witness to Proto-PT, indeed the most important after TN, it is not dependable as an independent witness because of the obvious ways that it places other interests in competition with Proto-PT.

The differences between Flesher and Mortensen are not major and should not obscure the extensive agreement about the nature of the source of these Targums. The overall point of both source studies is that Proto-PT provides the vast majority of the additions that are common to the Palestinian Targums and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, and that one of Pseudo-Jonathan's defining features is that it adds in almost three times as many expansions from a second source, that of PJ-unique. Between the two of them, these two sources account for 2,442 expansions of the 2,723 different expansions in these Targums, some 90 percent.

In comparison to the total of 2,723 expansions, the disagreement about how to classify some eighty Source A expansions concerns fewer than 3 percent of the expansions. Even smaller than this are the number of expansions for Source B, thirty-five, and Source C, fourteen. Despite this small number, Flesher agrees with Mortensen that these probably represent identifiable sources. And it is Source B that accounts for two of the expansions not paralleled by TN in the latter part of Genesis. The fourth expansion, that in Genesis 48:20, may point to the possible creation of another source, that of Source D, which would be defined as expansions shared only among the Cairo Genizah fragments.

¹² Mortensen, *Priesthood*, 18.

WHAT'S THE POINT? THE THEMES OF PROTO-PT AND PJ-UNIQUE

If we were studying a modern Bible translation, we would look at three types of evidence to assess it. We would examine the translation text itself, the people responsible for creating the translation and the process by which they did so, and the people who use the translation and how they understand it. Bible translations such as the NIV and the NRSV have been composed by experts trained in ancient languages and history from what is considered the best manuscript evidence, defined according to strict guidelines and with extensive consultation. Those translations are used by experts and even more by non-experts for a variety of purposes: public reading in churches, private study and devotion, as well as the study of ancient history in university classrooms.

People who believe in the inspired character of Scripture tend to imbue the translation with authority and reliability, and go to it for knowledge and wisdom. One popular form of the Bible in America is the Scofield Reference Bible—an edition of the King James Version that includes extensive notes, cross-references, and subtitles, all designed to promote the theology of Premillennial Dispensationalism, that is, the belief that Christ in his second coming will inaugurate a thousand-year rule of believers (see Rev 20:1-6). Believers who read and study the Scofield Bible extensively frequently become devout believers in premillennialist eschatology. For these religious adherents, there is a link between the Bible they read and what they believe. This link helps us understand the people who read that Bible, their beliefs, and the actions those beliefs inspire.

When we seek to understand Targums, we have similar goals to the modern study of Bible translations. We want to understand the translated text, the people who created it, and the people who use it. Unfortunately, given the temporal difference between our time and the time of the Targums, we no longer have independent access to either group of people involved with the Targums. We have only the text itself as a means of knowing them.

The ultimate goal of studying the Targums and the sources from which they are constructed is to learn about the people who wrote them, used them, and conveyed a distinctive understanding of the biblical text. Identifying sources is not undertaken as a stale exercise in reducing interesting interpretations to numbers and statistics. It is instead a means for elucidating the characteristic themes and theological emphases of the work. That in turn provides a basis for understanding the “take-away point” for the audience. We can learn what the audience thinks Scripture says by investigating the Targums.

In recent decades three scholars have published studies of the themes or theological emphases in the two main sources of expansions in the Pentateuchal Targums: the Proto-PT and PJ-unique sources. Avigdor Shinan's 1987 study of the *Aggadat HaMeturgeman* contrasted a subset of what Flesher and Mortensen would later identify as the Proto-PT expansions with expansions found only in Pseudo-Jonathan, i.e., some that belonged to PJ-unique. He found that the PJ-unique expansions he studied contained a large number of what he considered "folk elements," whereas the material from the Palestinian Targums contained few. These elements included magic and sorcery, wonders and miracles, beliefs in folk remedies, interest in angels (including Satan), and even vulgar sexual references.

The *Aggadat HaMeturgeman* of the Palestinian Targums instead contained a didactic and homiletical presentation of a rather simple—Shinan uses the term "simplistic"—theology. This theology was intended to reassure Jews of their favored status before God while at the same time emphasizing that God's favor depended on their following his commandments. This means that Torah study and practice takes pride of place, accompanied by the doctrine of reward and punishment, the contrast of this world and the world-to-come, and the approval of the righteous who do "good works" and the disapproval of the wicked ones who do "evil works." Added to this, we find belief in the efficacy and importance of prayer, the notion of ancestral merit (*zekhut*) that helps the people Israel in this time, and the honor of the people Israel as a whole and the righteousness of the patriarchs and prophets.

In 1999 Flesher published two essays on the theology of the afterlife in the Palestinian Targums and Pseudo-Jonathan; they developed an understanding of the Targums' theology out of the Adam and Eve story and then explored how the elements of that theology showed up elsewhere.¹³ We would characterize this as the theology of "Torah" which articulates the links between this life's beliefs and behavior and an individual's treatment in the world to come. The Proto-PT version of the theology contained six main elements, many of which echo theological points identified by Shinan. These six are (1) a distinction between this world and the world to come, (2) the world to come contains the Garden of Eden and Gehenna, (3) people should govern their actions in this world by the Torah, and (4) those actions will determine whether one enters Eden or Gehenna in the world to come, (5) God judges in both worlds, and (6) the dead will be resurrected in the world to come for judgment.

PJ-unique's version keeps this theology, but adds a notion of the messianic period which takes place in this world and provides a location for

¹³ See Flesher, "Resurrection of the Dead" and "The Theology of the Afterlife."

the resurrection of the dead in this world rather than in the world to come. The messianic period provides a battleground for the eschatological conflict with Gog and the ensuing Judgment Day.

So Flesher's analysis, which looked at only a few passages out of the entire Pentateuch, independently identified a distinction between the themes of the two sources. The six-point theology of the afterlife contains several elements in common with the theological emphases that Shinan laid out for the *Aggadat HaMeturgeman*. The two analyses emphasized the same elements, they just cast that emphasis differently. With regard to the material unique to Pseudo-Jonathan, Flesher's study emphasized the importance of eschatology, while Shinan's broader perspective led him to discuss it as folk elements.

It is the work of Beverly Mortensen, *The Priesthood in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, that has made the greatest advance in understanding the themes of these two sources. Her analysis of the entire Pentateuch for both sources gives her study the ability to lay out all the material and to draw conclusions for entire Targums and their sources, not just those of a few passages or "just" a whole book. Mortensen sees Proto-PT's emphasis as the "Preaching of Morality." This is divided into three parts: "Awe for the Lord," "Live a Good Life," and "Blessings and Curses." The last category aligns completely with the characterization of Torah theology outlined by Flesher in his article, with Reward and Punishment comprising the largest number of expansions of any subcategory except for anti-anthropomorphisms. In the "Live a Good Life" category, the central element is Torah practice, with examples from the lives of the patriarchs and emphasis on the importance of prayer. These also echo some of Shinan's observations, as does her category of "merit" in the "Awe for the Lord" section.

So in the end, the three studies of the Proto-PT source show a great deal of agreement concerning its theological emphases. Although the amount of data analysis, as well as its organization and presentation, varies from study to study, in the end they see a common set of themes that are presented across the source.

Mortensen's work on PJ-unique, however, comes to quite a different conclusion from that of Shinan. Taking all 1,801 expansions into account, Mortensen argues that the additions found only in Pseudo-Jonathan are "priest centered." These expansions focus on everything from obviously priestly matters such as temple ritual, purity, and the (secondary) role of the Levites to less direct interests such as idol worship, religious leaders, priestly clothing, and the identification of priests as the (only) appropriate judges. Pseudo-Jonathan presents a set of expansions that emphasizes the roles, tasks, rights, and duties of the priests. This is quite different from

Shinan's portrayal of PJ's folk elements. To be sure, many of the matters Shinan mentions appear in Mortensen's study—such as magic and angels—are seen as reflecting the other end of the social spectrum.

CONCLUSION

The studies surveyed in this chapter show that there are two sources that provide the basis for approximately 90 percent of the 2,723 different expansions in the Palestinian Targums and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. The first is the Proto-PT source while the second is the PJ-unique source, the former being shared among many Targums while the latter is distinctive to PJ. Shinan's work constitutes an independent forerunner to the later work of Flesher, Mortensen, and their colleagues. At the time of this book's publication, Mortensen's work comprises the largest and most complete document of these investigations. Her work details the specific verses across the entire Pentateuch that derive from either Proto-PT or PJ-unique, as well as the possible smaller sources.

What is most interesting is the way the three researchers featured in our discussion independently identified similar themes in the two sources, despite their differences in method. The various subthemes they analyzed and discussed had a great deal of overlap, even though they built the subthemes into different overall structures. Proto-PT features emphasis on practicing Torah, which leads to righteousness and assignment to the Garden of Eden in the world to come. PJ-unique, according to Mortensen, focuses on priests. By contrast, Shinan saw it in almost opposite terms—that of folk religion. Perhaps the difference stems in part from Shinan's concentration on Genesis, while Mortensen looked at the entire Pentateuch. Most of the explicitly priestly expansions occurred in books more associated with priests, such as Leviticus.

The source model of targumic development assumes that all elements of the sources belong together, not just in a literary sense but also in a generative sense—they come in a single package. The strongest critique of a source model comes from scholars who see the Targums as gaining additions by accretion, that is, item-by-item as a manuscript is copied and recopied. Their model is that each copyist adds a few expansions each time a new manuscript is transcribed from an old one; there is no one-time source underlying large numbers of expansions.¹⁴ As a model for the development of the Targums overall, accretion no longer works.

¹⁴ For an example of this approach, see Aufrecht, "Some Observations."

However, it may provide the explanation for exceptions to the two-Source scheme. For example, it may be the reason for the existence of expansions classed as Source C, that is, those that appear only in the Fragment Targums. It is quite likely that these appear only in the Fragment Targums because they are related to the point of time at which they were extracted from complete Targums, i.e., sometime near the beginning of the second millennium. It also may explain the few PJ-unique expansions that must be dated later than the sixth century, such as the references to Muhammad's wife and daughter.

TARGUM ONQELOS AND THE TARGUMS OF ISRAEL

At the beginning of the previous chapter, Genesis 41:43 and Exodus 14:20 illustrated the common character of the Palestinian Targums. It was clear that the expansions for each verse appear in several different Targums, and were similar in size, structure, and language, although each one had variations the others lacked. The Proto-PT source, our hypothesis for the origin of these coherent additions, contains hundreds of parallel expansions like these.

Targum Onqelos' comparatively literal character, by contrast, means that it lacks the larger expansions that would have signaled its membership in this class of Targums. Despite this fact, Targum Onqelos sometimes reveals material in common with Proto-PT on a scale too small to suggest a source, and yet in too close agreement to be dismissed as mere coincidence. For many of the Proto-PT expansions, Targum Onqelos contains a few words added into the translation that constitute a subset of a Proto-PT expansion.

At Genesis 41:43, for example, Targum Onqelos follows the interpretation found in a Cairo Geniza fragment and the Fragment Targums, but seems to possess only half of it. CG(E) divides the Hebrew hapax legomenon אֲבִי־רַךְ into two parts, we recall, and interprets both of them, "May the father (אב) of the king live! For he is great in wisdom and tender (רַכִּיךְ) in years."¹ Targum Onqelos contains the same division but provides only half the interpretation, "This is the father of the king (אב)!" It seems clear that Onqelos knows the interpretation found in the other Targums, even

¹ See Vermes, "Haggadah in the Onqelos Targum," 129–30. This passage is also dealt with in Lee, "*Hapax legomena*," 258–59. For an analysis of the Hebrew, see Skinner, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary of Genesis*, 47, who shows the term does not come from Hebrew בֵּרַךְ "to bless." Other Onqelos additions were addressed in Bowker, "Haggadah in the Targum Onkelos."

though it is incomplete. Did the rendering in Onqelos inspire the more complete interpretation found in the Palestinian Targums and Pseudo-Jonathan, or does Onqelos comprise a cut-down version of the longer expansions found there?

Targum Onqelos to Exodus 14:20 also possesses added material related to the Palestinian addition.² Targum Neofiti's version of the Proto-PT expansion is:

והוה עננא חשוך ופלגא נהורא חשוכא מחשך
למצרייה ונהורא לישראל כל ליליא

And the cloud was darkness and half light. The darkness cast dark upon the Egyptians and light was upon the Israelites all the night.

Targum Onqelos' treatment of this verse begins with a literal translation of the Hebrew text but adds in three words found in the Proto-PT rendering.

והוה עננא וקבלא למצראי ולישראל נהר כל ליליא

And there was a cloud and darkness on Egypt and on Israel it shone light all the night.

Targum Onqelos adds "on Egypt" and "on Israel" to identify clearly which group receives the darkness and the light, while it also inserts "all" to indicate that the situation lasts the entire night. While these three added words do not actually require the interpretation found in the Palestinian Targums to make sense, they can be seen as providing the inspiration for the more complex Palestinian expansion.

The key question is whether links such as these between Onqelos and Proto-PT are frequent and deep enough to indicate a relationship between the two or whether these are simply random. The first part of this chapter will explore this question and draw upon earlier research to show that there is a small but significant link between Onqelos and the Proto-PT source of expansions.

If the *added words* in Targum Onqelos' otherwise literal translation require an investigation of possible links between Onqelos and the Palestinian Targums, then Onqelos' *translation* itself deserves an exploration of whether it possesses links to the other Pentateuchal Targums, especially the Palestinian Targums. Since Onqelos' translation comprises a very

² B. S. Childs indicates the difficulties of this verse in Hebrew. See Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 218.

high percentage of the text in comparison to its added material, it would be significant to discover whether or not that translation provides a basis for the translations of the other Targums. This chapter's second section will explore that question.

TARGUM ONQELOS AND THE PROTO-PT SOURCE

The central question here is whether or not material in Targum Onqelos served as a source for Proto-PT expansions. A quick comparison between Onqelos and Proto-PT makes two points immediately clear. First, this question applies only to some expansions. At many of the verses where Proto-PT expands, Onqelos simply translates the Hebrew text. Second, the material in the original source of Onqelos—if there is one prior to the production of the translation as we know it—was unlike the Proto-PT source. It is nowhere near as extensive or elaborate, as is clear in this chapter's initial examples. In most cases Onqelos' reputation for being "literal" stems from its tendency to remain close to the Hebrew text—at least in regard to the number of words—in comparison to the more expansive Palestinian Targums. So this section seeks to discover whether there are smaller items of *non-translational* material in Targum Onqelos that show or suggest a link to the larger expansions in the Proto-PT source.

Again we will turn to Paul Flesher's study of Genesis 28–50, his essay "Is Targum Onqelos a Palestinian Targum?," and examine the answer given there. That study indicates that some of the Proto-PT expansions draw upon additions and changes found in Targum Onqelos. This leads to a second question that is harder to answer: Is it possible to show whether the link is directly between Targum Onqelos and Proto-PT, or whether they draw from a common source? The former would indicate that Proto-PT knew TO directly while the latter would provide further evidence for the two-stage theory for the development of Targum Onqelos, which would suggest that its growth is similar to that of Targum Jonathan to the Prophets. This section will only be suggestive in regard to this latter question.

There are two questions that an examination of possible links between Proto-PT and Targum Onqelos needs to answer. First, is there any sign of a relationship at all? In other words, if we look at the verses in Targum Onqelos corresponding to the ones in the Palestinian Targums containing Proto-PT expansions, do they contain variances from literal translation? Furthermore, do those variances connect with the Proto-PT expansions? In particular, are those connections close enough that they reveal literary dependence with the additional material? The similarities between the two Targums need to be greater than parallels in linguistic or exegetical

features, either of which may have arisen independently. Actual connections can only be maintained on the basis of demonstrable literary dependence.³ Second, if there are passages where literary dependence between Targum Onqelos and expansions in the Proto-PT is clear, do these links appear substantial as compared to the remainder of the Targum text? That is, do links with TO appear more frequently in the Proto-PT verses than verses that convey simple translation or PJ-unique expansions?

Table 7.1 provides that data. Out of the eighty-two verses that contain Proto-PT expansions in Genesis 28–50, Targum Onqelos has evidence that thirty of them may have direct literary dependence, in one way or another, with that verse’s Proto-PT addition. Fully 37 percent of the verses with Proto-PT expansions in the Palestinian Targums have corresponding material in Targum Onqelos. The comparable percentage in verses with just translation in the Palestinian Targums and verses in Pseudo-Jonathan with PJ-unique expansions is 14 percent and 17 percent, respectively. This comparative data reveals that the Proto-PT verses have more than twice as many links to Targum Onqelos as other kinds of verses. So not only does Proto-PT link to Targum Onqelos, it does so in a way that indicates the distinctive character of Proto-PT, albeit at a rate of less than 50 percent.

Table 7.1:⁴ Verses in Which TO Contains Additional Material upon Which Later Targums Show Dependence, by Source Type

	<i>Total Verses</i>	<i>Literarily Dependent</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Proto-PT</i>	82	30	37%
<i>Translation</i>	582	84	14%
<i>P̄ju</i>	97	17	17%

The nature of expansive material appearing in Targum Onqelos is quite limited. It consists primarily of additions or changes involving between one and four words in a phrase or verse. That alteration is nonetheless sufficient to suggest an interpretive direction that also appears in the Proto-PT expansion.⁵ The two verses discussed at the beginning of this chapter provide examples of how this works.

³ Flesher, “Exploring the Sources” and “Is Targum Onqelos a Palestinian Targum?”

⁴ See Flesher, “Is Targum Onqelos a Palestinian Targum?” esp. 44–45.

⁵ At this stage of the research, it is not clear which direction the interpretation went, i.e., whether the non-translational material in TO was built upon by Proto-PT or cut down from what appears there.

For thirty of the eighty-two Proto-PT expansions in Genesis 28–50, Targum Onqelos contains added words that directly relate to a Proto-PT expansion in the same verse. This means that 37 percent, or more than a third, of the Proto-PT expansions find their meaning echoed in material appearing in TO. Two possible ways suggest themselves to interpret that information, as we have indicated. The first possibility is that Proto-PT is based on TO, essentially in the form we now know it. This would indicate that TO remained in Palestine, and specifically in Galilee, to influence the development of the Palestinian Targums. The second possibility is that Proto-PT is based not on TO directly, but on the first-stage of the two-part development of TO discussed in chapter 4. We will refer to this stage as the Proto-Onqelos source. This two-stage explanation of TO's creation derives primarily from linguistic analyses; literary support would strengthen its viability.

To get a fuller sense of how the Onqelos material is related to Proto-PT expansions, let us examine three further examples. At Genesis 42:1, the Hebrew text refers to grain being available in Egypt. Targum Onqelos adds a single word into its translation to help set up the story. While the HT reads, “And Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt” (וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב כִּי יֵשׁ-שָׁבֶר בְּמִצְרַיִם), Targum Onqelos renders this as, “And Jacob saw that grain *was being sold* in Egypt” (וּחֲזָא יַעֲקֹב אֲרִי עִיבּוּר מְזַדְבֵּן בְּמִצְרַיִם).

Targum Neofiti builds on the word added in TO here by including the same term in its larger expansion:

וחמא יעקב ברוח קודשא ארום אית עיבור מזדבן במצרים

And Jacob saw *in the Holy Spirit* that grain *was being sold* in Egypt.

Targum Neofiti knows the interpretation appearing in Targum Onqelos and builds upon it by adding another two words into the sentence. Targum Onqelos addresses the question of explaining why Jacob thought that grain could be purchased in Egypt by indicating the presence of economic transactions. By contrast, Targum Neofiti builds upon Targum Onqelos' added word and answers the question of how Jacob could have seen what was happening in Egypt with an additional, theological dimension.

A second example comes from Genesis 31:39. Here Jacob and Laban argue over Laban's treatment of Jacob, in particular how Laban required Jacob to make up the value of any missing animals. The Hebrew text has Jacob utter three phrases, “(1) Animals killed by wild beasts I did not bring to you. (2) I bore the loss (אֲנֹכִי אֶחֱטָא). (3) From my hand you required it (מִיָּדִי תִבְקָשָׁה).” Targum Onqelos renders these as:

דַּתְבִּירָא לֹא אֵיתִיתִי לְךָ דְּהוּת שְׂגִיָּא מִמְּנִיָּא מְנִי

(1) *For animals killed by wild beasts I did not bring to you.* (2) *For what was missing from the count,* (3) *from me you required it.*

In biblical Hebrew, the word חטא has the primary meaning of “to miss,” with only a secondary meaning of “to sin.” In western Jewish forms of Hebrew and Aramaic, it later came to mean almost exclusively “to sin, err.” So in phrase 2, Targum Onqelos emphasizes the earlier meaning by translating it as “what was missing (שְׂגִיָּא) from the count (מִמְּנִיָּא).” Also in phrase 2, Targum Onqelos removes Jacob’s reference to himself and adds the notion of a set number of sheep being expected.

Targum Onqelos renders the first Hebrew phrase almost exactly, while expanding the third phrase from two to four words. This change keeps the same meaning as the HT but eliminates the anthropomorphic reference to “hand,” as well as unpacks the pronominal suffix and prefix from the verb.

Targum Neofiti builds on Onqelos’ additional material and translation:

קְטִילָא לֹא אֵיתִיתִי לוֹוֹתְךָ כָּל חֲדָא מִנְהוֹן דְּהוּת עֲרָקָה מִן מְנִיָּה
אִנָּה הוּינָא מְשַׁלֵּם יָתָה מְנִי אַתְּ תִּבְעָ יָתָה

(1) *An animal killed by wild beasts I did not bring to you.* (2) *Every one of them which fled from the count, I paid it in full.* (3) *From me you required it.*

Neofiti has Onqelos’ rendering of phrase 3 almost exactly, even though it alters phrase 1 slightly. The main change comes in phrase 2. Keeping Onqelos’ notion of the “count” (מְנִיָּה) of live sheep, Neofiti shifts Onqelos’ interpretation to suggest the idea that sheep may have fled from the wild animals rather than being killed. Clearly Targum Neofiti built upon the wording that appears in Targum Onqelos.

Our third and final example comes from Genesis 49:3. In the Hebrew text, Jacob’s poetic blessing of Reuben is repetitive and somewhat awkward.

רְאוּבֵן בְּכֹרִי אֶתָּה כָּחִי וְרֵאשִׁית אוֹנִי יִתֵּר שְׂאֵת וְיִתֵּר עֹז

Reuben, my first-born are you. My strength and the beginning of my vigor, great in majesty and great in strength.

Targum Onqelos ignores the last four words in the Hebrew, following Targum Rule 7, and adds material that reflects the tragedy of Reuben’s biography rather than the wording of the verse.

רַאוּבֵן בּוֹכְרִי אֶת חִילִי וְרִישׁ תּוֹקְפִי לְךָ הָיָה חֲזִי לְמַסָּב
תְּלָתָהּ חוֹלְקִין בְּכִירוּתָא כְּהוֹנָתָא וּמַלְכוּתָא

Reuben, my first-born are you. My strength and the beginning of my power. *To you it was fitting to take three portions, the birthright, the priesthood, and the kingship.*

Onqelos' addition sets up the notion that Reuben should have received three types of inheritance. Oddly, it then goes no further, leaving it to the knowledge of the audience to add the conclusion that in the end he received none of them.

TN's rendering of Genesis 49:3 fills out the concept more fully by indicating that the punishment for Reuben's adultery with Jacob's concubines cost him all three parts of his inheritance.

רַאוּבֵן בּוֹכְרִי אֶת חִילִי וְשְׂרׁוֹי צַעְרִי חֲמֵי הוּיִית מַסָּב תְּלָתָהּ חוֹלְקִין
יֵתֵר עַל אֶחָד בְּכוֹרוֹתָא דִּידָךְ הִיא וּמַלְכוּתָא וְכֹהֲנָתָא רַבְתָּא לְךָ
הוּוּיִין חֲמִיִּין עַל דַּחְסִית רַאוּבֵן בְּרִי אֲתִיהִיבַת בְּכוֹרָתָא לְיוֹסֵף בְּרִי
וּמַלְכוּתָא לְיְהוּדָה וְכֹהֲנָתָא רַבְתָּא לְשִׁבְטֵי דְלוֹי

Reuben, my first-born are you. My strength and the beginning of my *pain*. *It was fitting for you to take three portions more than your brothers. The birthright, it was yours. And the kingship and the high priesthood were fitting for you. Because of your sin Reuben my son, the birthright was given to Joseph my son, and the kingship to Judah and the high-priesthood to the tribe of Levi.*

The important point for this discussion is that Neofiti clearly builds on the additional material in Onqelos. The italics in the translation indicate, as usual, additions to a literal translation. The underlining indicates where Targum Neofiti added to Targum Onqelos' rendering. The italicized material without underlining reveals that Neofiti adopted Onqelos' additional wording in toto. TN knew and used the same addition that occurs in Targum Onqelos. Onqelos and the Proto-PT source appear to be interdependent.

The first two of these passages, Genesis 42:1 and 31:39, lead most easily to the conclusion that Proto-PT built upon the material found in Targum Onqelos. In both cases Onqelos' material seems complete in and of itself, and then is incorporated into Neofiti. That fits nicely with the idea that Onqelos is composed in a dialect, Jewish Literary Aramaic, known to be earlier than that of the Palestinian Targums, that is, Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. This last passage, however, suggests that the changes went

the other direction. In Genesis 49:3, TO seems to contain only half of the idea—the notion that he deserved the three portions—while the Proto-PT wording contains the whole idea that he deserved the three portions but they were given to others because he sinned. This is similar to Genesis 41:43 which we examined at the opening of the chapter. Both Onqelos and Neofiti were based on breaking the unknown Hebrew word ABRK in two. But Neofiti interpreted both halves while Onqelos only did the first one. Here again Onqelos seems incomplete. Is it possible that the full interpretation was originally in a source of Onqelos but that Onqelos cut it shorter by leaving out half? If so, then that would suggest that TO was based on a previous source, as argued by those who hold to the two-stage development explanation for the creation of Targum Onqelos.

This would also imply that Proto-PT and Targum Onqelos knew the same source but that Onqelos developed in one direction from it and the Palestinian Targums developed in another. On this understanding there should be passages and expansions in Onqelos that do not appear in Proto-PT because they developed after the two Targums moved away from this early source. Given both Proto-PT's and Pseudo-Jonathan's proclivities for acquiring additional material, they would certainly take up any known expansion—as they do with the rest of Onqelos' additional material. But are there significant amounts of additional material found in Onqelos that are missing from the other Targums?

In general, Proto-PT scatters its expansions across the Pentateuch in a fairly even way. Most chapters have between one and five expansions per chapter, depending on the meturgeman's interest in the story or topic. There are a few chapters, however, that attract a large number of expansions; many of these chapters contain poetry and/or blessings. In Proto-PT, chapters with a large number of expansions include Genesis 49, Exodus 20, and Deuteronomy 32 and 33. Genesis 49, which appears in the section of Genesis we have been looking at in this chapter, contains twenty-six Proto-PT expansions in its thirty-three verses. Targum Onqelos has extratranslational material in over twenty of them. Most of these verses fit the characterization of the relationship between Onqelos and Proto-PT discussed; that is, they are shorter than the Proto-PT expansions but contain added words that are included in the expansion and may even have formed the basis for the later expansion.

Jan-Wim Wesseliuss has drawn attention to a five-verse section in Genesis 49 in which Targum Onqelos provides an interpretation that does not link to Proto-PT or to PJ-unique.⁶ This is Jacob's blessing for Judah

⁶ See Wesseliuss, "Biblical Poetry through Targum Eyes."

in Genesis 49:8-12. Let us examine one of its verses, Genesis 49:11. This expansion is well known within the Palestinian Targums for presenting the Messiah as a warrior who becomes covered in the blood of his enemies, even though the meaning of the Hebrew verse is not violent.

אֶסְרִי לַגֶּפֶן עֵירָה וְלַשָּׂרָקָה בְּנֵי אֶתְנֹו כֶּבֶס בֵּינֹו לְבָשׁוּ
וּבְדָם-עֲנָבִים סוּתָהּ

Binding his foal to the vine
and his donkey's colt to the choice vine,
he washes his garments in wine
and his robe in the blood of grapes;⁷

The Hebrew here portrays Judah as extravagantly wealthy. He can tie his beasts of burden to vines, which might result in the destruction of "choice vines" and cause him to lose the animals. He will have so much wine that he can wash his clothes in it. Proto-PT, as it appears in all the manuscripts, takes this peaceful scene as symbolic of the victories of the war-like King Messiah from the tribe of Judah. Here is TN's rendering of Genesis 49:11:

מָה יָאִי הוּא מַלְכָּא מְשִׁיחָא דְעֵתִיד לְמִיקָם מְדִבִּית יְהוּדָה אֶסֶר
חֲרָצִיָּה וְנָפֵק לְקֶרְבָּא עַל שְׁנָאוֹי וּמִקְטֵל מַלְכִּין עִם שְׁלִטוֹנִין מִסַּמְךָ
טוֹרִיָּא מְדָם קִטְלִיהוֹן וּמַחוּוֹר גְּלִמְתָּא מִתְרַבִּי גּוֹבְרִיהוֹן לְבוֹשׁוּי
מִעֲגֻגִין בְּדָמָא מְדָמִי לְרֶפּוֹס עֲנָבִים

*How beautiful is King Messiah who will rise up from the house of Judah. He will bind his loins and go out to battle against his enemies, and he will slaughter kings with the rulers; he will redden the mountains from the blood of their slain, and he will whiten hills from the fat of their men. His clothing is soiled from blood, resembling a treader of grapes.*⁸

In TN the wine becomes the blood of those who are slain in war—blood that will cover the mountains and the messianic warrior himself. Israel need not worry about their enemies, the King Messiah will conquer all, the passage says. PJ's rendering is quite similar.

Targum Onqelos gives a much more pacifistic rendering of the same verse.

⁷ NRSV.

⁸ Translation by Clem, italics ours.

יִסְתַּר יִשְׂרָאֵל לְקִרְתָּיהָ עִמָּא יִבְנוּן הִיכְלָהָ יְהוֹן צְדִיקָא סְחוּר-סְחוּר
 לִיה וְעַבְדֵי אֲזִרְתָּא בְּאוּלְפָן עִמָּיה יְהִי אֲרָגָן טָב לְבוּשִׁיהָ וּכְסוּתָהָ
 מִלָּא מִלָּא צָבַע זְהוּרִי וְצַבְעָנִין

*Israel will go around his city; the people will build his temple; the righteous ones shall be all around him, and the doers of the Torah are in instruction with him; his clothing will be fine purple, and his covering of fine wool, fine scarlet wool and dyed material.*⁹

Rather than talking about fighting and killing, Targum Onqelos presents a passage here about building the temple. The king from Judah will be surrounded by righteous men and those who practice the Torah's commandments. His clothing will be fine, not bloody.

Genesis 49:11 represents the five verses here where TO clearly takes a different approach to the Hebrew text from the Palestinian Targums. The question is: Why? Proto-PT and PJ-unique seem to borrow interpretive material wherever they can find it. If they are using TO for inspiration, which they do throughout the Pentateuch and in Genesis 49 especially, then why would they not incorporate some of Targum Onqelos' expansive material here? It might be possible to overlook a single expansion in a single verse, but as Wesselius has shown, this verse belongs to a larger five-verse unit—all of which is lacking in the Proto-PT and PJ-unique. The likely answer is that these expansions were placed here in TO during the second stage of Onqelos' composition. Proto-PT and PJ-unique lack the expansions because they were familiar with the first stage of Targum Onqelos but not the second.

Thus in the end, an examination of the relationship between Targum Onqelos as we now have it and the Proto-PT expansions suggests that they both drew from a common source. Many scholars have suggested this possibility before, but scholarship is now at the stage where it is possible to investigate this claim in detail, and perhaps even indicate what that source looked like in specific verses. This source has been called different things at different times: the Old Palestinian Targum, Proto-Onqelos, etc. We prefer the term "Proto-Onqelos" because the source was probably written in the JLA dialect of Targum Onqelos. The use of "Old Palestinian Targum" would mistakenly suggest that its composition took place in JPA.

If TO and Proto-PT drew from a common source, then a key question for future exploration is whether this source was essentially a sub-set of Targum Onqelos, except where the second stage added in new material,

⁹ Translation by Clem, italics ours.

or whether Targum Onqelos shortened a more expansive Targum. The principle of Occam's razor would suggest the first option, but two passages we examined above indicate the latter approach might have been used.

TRANSLATION SOURCES

Another way to evaluate the relationships among the Pentateuchal Targums is to study how their translations interrelate. If comparing Targum Onqelos with the Palestinian Targums' Proto-PT source shows that the source has a strong link to Targum Onqelos, or to Proto-Onqelos, what does a study of Targum Onqelos' translation reveal? Interestingly, such an analysis does not show a link to the Palestinian Targums but rather to Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. That is because Pseudo-Jonathan creates its translation from Targum Onqelos (or Proto-TO) by frequently copying it closely. While Pseudo-Jonathan is not reluctant to provide alternate translations—drawing either from the Palestinian Targums or from its own creativity—Pseudo-Jonathan follows much of Onqelos' translation.

If the Palestinian Targums fail to follow Onqelos' rendering, that does not mean they do not share another translation. Indeed, the Palestinian Targums—TN, the FTs, and the CGs—seem to be built upon a common translation. There is regular and consistent evidence that the translations in these Targums come from the same source, even though they may change, add to, or otherwise treat it creatively.

This introductory book is too short to demonstrate these conclusions fully, but an examination of two verses will illustrate them. These are from Exodus 19:5 and 19:8. These verses are chosen because of the number of Targums which are extant for them. Exodus 19:5 appears in TO, PJ, TN, and the two FTs, as well as three Cairo Genizah Targum fragments [CG(F), CG(J), and CG(NN)]. A fragment of CG(Y) also has some of this verse. Exodus 19:8 appears in all the same Targums except CG(NN), but also shows up in CG(U) and more fully in CG(Y). This chapter takes place with the people of Israel in the wilderness, just before Moses receives the Ten Commandments. In verse 5, God tells Moses that the people should keep his commandments, while in verse 8 the people agree to do so. Here are the parallel Targums for Exodus 19:5 along with our own English translations of the Hebrew Text and representative Targums:

HT: And now, if you will indeed hear my voice and keep my covenant, and you will be to me a possession from all the peoples; for all the earth is mine.

TO: And now if you will indeed accept my *Word (memra)* and keep my covenant, and you will be before me *beloved ones* from all the peoples; for all the earth is mine.

PJ: And now if you will indeed accept my *Word* and keep my covenant, and you will be before me *beloved ones* from all the peoples *who are upon the face of the earth*.

TN: And now if you will indeed hear the *voice of my Word* and keep my covenant, and you will be *to my name a beloved people as a possession* from all the peoples; for all the earth, *it is mine*.

	בְּקִלִּי	תִּשְׁמָעוּ	שְׁמוֹעַ	אִם-	וְעַתָּה	HT
לְמִימְרֵי		תִּקְבְּלוּן	קִבְּלָא	אִם	וּבְעֵן	TO
לְמִימְרֵי		תִּקְבְּלוּן	קִבְּלָא	אִין	וּכְדוֹן	PJ
מִמְרֵי	בִּקְל	תִּשְׁמָעוֹן	מִשְׁמַע	אִין	וּכְדוֹן	TN
מִימְרֵי	בִּקְל	תִּשְׁמָעוֹן	מִשְׁמַע	אִם	וּכְדוֹן	FT(P)
מִימְרֵיהּ	בִּקּוֹל	תִּשְׁמָעוֹן	מִשְׁמוֹעַ	אִין	וּכְדוֹ	FT(V)
מִימְרֵי	בִּקְל	תִּשְׁמָעוֹן	מִשְׁמוֹעַ	אִם	וּכְדוֹן	CG(F)
מִמְרֵי	בִּקְל	תִּשְׁמָעוֹן	מִשְׁמַע	אִין	וּכְדוֹן	CG(J)
						CG(Y)
מִמְרֵי	בִּקְל	תִּשְׁמָעוֹן	מִשְׁמַע	אִין	וּכְדוֹן	CG(NN)

לִי	וְהִיִּיתֶם	בְּרִיתִי	אֶת-	וְשִׁמְרֶתֶם	HT
קִדְמִי	וְתִהְיוּן	קִנְיִי	יְת	וְתִיטְרוּן	TO
קִדְמִי	וְתִהְיוּן	קִימִי	יְת	וְתִינְטְרוּן	PJ
לְשִׁמִּי	וְתִהְיוּן	קִימִי	יְת	וְתִטְרוּן	TN
לְשִׁמִּי	וְתִהְיוּן	קִימִי	יְת	וְתִטְרוּן	FT(P)
לְשִׁמִּי	וְתִהְיוּן	קִימִי	יְת	וְתִטְרוּן	FT(V)
לְשִׁמִּי	וְתִהְיוּן	קִימִי	יְת	וְתִטְרוּן	CG(F)
לְשִׁמִּי	וְתִהְיוּן	קִימִי	יְת	וְתִטְרוּן	CG(J)
	וְתִהְיוּן	קִימִי	יְת		CG(Y)
לְשִׁמִּי	וְתִהְיוּן	קִימִי	יְת		CG(NN)

הָעַמִּים	מְכָל-	סְגֻלָּה	HT
עַמְּמָא	מְכָל	חֲבִיבִין	TO
עַמְּמִיא	מְכָל	חֲבִיבִין	PJ

אמיה	כל	מן	סגלה	היד	חביבין	לעם	TN
אומיא		מכל	סגלה	היד	חביבין	עם	FT(P)
אומיא	כל	מן	סגולא	היד	וחביבין	לעם	FT(V)
אומי		מכל	סגולה	היד	חביבין	לעם	CG(F)
אומי	כל	מן	סגולה	היד	חביבין	עם	CG(J)
אומי	כל						CG(Y)
אומיא	כל	מן	סגולא	היד	[. . .]	עם	CG(NN)
הארץ	כל-			לי		כי-	HT
ארעא	כל			דילי		ארי	TO
ארעא	אפי					דעל	PJ
ארעא	כל		היא	דידי		ארום	TN
ארעא	כל		היא	דיי		ארום	FT(P)
ארעא	כל		הוא	דה'	לשמיה	ארום	FT(V)
ארעה	כל		[היא]	[די]	לשמיה	ארום	CG(F)
ארעא	כל		היא	דאדני		ארום	CG(J)
			היא		[לשמ]	ארום	CG(Y)
ארעא	כל		היא	דיי		ארום	CG(NN)

The Targums divide readily into two groups here: TO and PJ on the one hand and the Palestinian Targums on the other. TO and PJ provide a highly literal translation with the same number of words as the HT. Variations from exact rendering come in single word changes rather than additions. By contrast, the PTs are not afraid to use added words to assist their straight rendering.

First, where the HT has “[obey] my voice” (בְּקוֹלִי), TO and PJ use an anti-anthropomorphism, “[obey] my *memra*” (לְמִמְרִי). TN and the other five PTs combine the two, “[obey] the voice of my *memra*” (בְּקוֹל מִמְרִי). Second, TO and PJ render the HT “you will be to me a possession” (וְהִיְתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה) as “you will be before me beloved ones” (וְתִהְיוּ קִדְמֵי חֲבִיבִין), rendering “possession” into the plural of “beloved.” The PTs build on that rendering with “You will be to my name a beloved people” (וְתִהְיוּ לְשֵׁם לְעָם חֲבִיבִין)—treating “people” as the translation of “possession” rather than “beloved.” They then proceed to give a second translation of the same Hebrew term (הֵיד סְגֻלָּה). Third, while the PTs all

use the same trilateral root as the Hebrew to render the Hebrew infinitival construction, שְׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ, “[If you] will indeed hear,” TO and PJ give it as קבלא תקבלון “[If you] will indeed accept.”

Fourth, the odd four-word Hebrew phrase at the verse’s end could be read in at least two ways. All of the Palestinian Targums add the pronoun הִיא to ensure that the object being possessed by God is the earth, which makes this an independent clause, “for all the earth, *it* belongs to me.” By contrast, TO renders it exactly so that either interpretation remains open, and PJ gives the alternative interpretation by linking it to the previous sentence and ignoring the wording. It renders, “among all the peoples *who are upon the face of the earth*” (מכל עממיא דעל אפי ארעא).

Finally, the Targums all give an anti-anthropomorphic rendering of “to me” to avoid the implication that God can physically possess things. TO and PJ render it as “before me,” indicating that Israel will be in God’s presence, while TN and the other Palestinian Targums use the phrase “to my name,” removing one more step from God.

What is clear from these comparative points is that the six different versions of the Palestinian Targums have essentially the same translation, with a few minor differences that do not rise to the level of different roots. This translation differs from that of TO and PJ. The translations of the latter two are quite close, showing that the later PJ Targum drew upon Targum Onqelos or Proto-Onqelos.

The targumic renderings of Exodus 19:8 reveal an even more exacting approach, as indicated by the parallel texts and our English translation of representative Targums.

HT: And all the people answered together and they said, “All which the Lord spoke we will do.” And Moses returned the words of the people to the Lord.

TO: And all the people *replied* together and they said, “All which the Lord spoke we will do.” And Moses returned the words of the people to *before* the Lord.

PJ: And all the people *replied* together and they said, “All which the Lord spoke we will do.” And Moses returned the words of the people *before* the Lord.

TN: And all the people answered together *with a peaceful heart* and they said, “All *that* which the Lord spoke we will do.” And Moses returned *in prayer* the words of the people *before* the Lord.

Exodus 19:8

		יְחִדּוּ	הָעָם	כָּל-	וַיַּעֲנוּ	HT
		כַּחֲדָא	עָמָא	כל	וְאַתִּיבּוּ	TO
		כחדא	עמא	כל	ואתיבו	PJ
שלמא	בלבא	כחדא	עמא	כל	וענון	TN
		כחדא	עמא	כל	ועניין	FT(P)
שלימה	בלבא	כחדא	עמא	כל	וענון	FT(V)
שלָמָא	בלבה	כח[דָּה				CG(F)
		כחדא	עמא	כל	וענון	CG(J)
		כחדה	עמה	כל	וענון	CG(Y)
		כַּחֲדָא	עָמָא	כָּל	וַעֲנוֹן	CG(U)
	דְּבַר	אֲשֶׁר-		כל	וַיֹּאמְרוּ	HT
		דְּמַלִּיל		כל	וְאַמְרוּ	TO
		דמליל		כל	ואמרו	PJ
		דמלל	מה	כל	ואמרי'	TN
מימרא		דמליל		כל	ואמרו	FT(P)
מימרא	מליל	די	מה	כל	ואמרין	FT(V)
ממְרָה	מלל	די	מה	כל	ואמרין	CG(F)
מימריה	מליל	די	מה	כל	ואמרין	CG(J)
ממריה	מלל	די	מָה	כָּל	וְאִמְרִין	CG(Y)
מִימְרָא		דְּמַלִּיל	מָה	כָּל	וְאִמְרִין	CG(U)
דְּבַרִּי	אֶת-	מֹשֶׁה	וַיָּשֶׁב	נַעֲשֶׂה	יְהוָה	HT
פְּתִגְמִי	יָת	מֹשֶׁה	וְאַתִּיב	נַעֲבִיד	יוי	TO
פיתגמי	ית	משה	ואתיב	נעביד	יִי	PJ
מליהון	ית	משה	וחזר	נעבד	יִי	TN
מליהון	ית	משה	וחזר	נעביד	דיִי	FT(P)
פיתגמי	ית	משה	וחזר	נעביד	דָּה'	FT(V)
פתגמי	יָת	[נ[עבד	דיִי	CG(F)

פתגמי	ית	משה	וחזר	נעבִיד	דיוי	CG(J)
פתגמי	ית	משה	וחזֹר	נעֲבִיד	דה'	CG(Y)
מִלִּיהוֹן	ית	מִשֶּׁה	וחזֹר	נעֲבִיד	דִּי	CG(U)
		הָהוּא	אֶל־		הָעַם	HT
		יוי	לְקִדָּם		עֲמָא	TO
		יִי	קִדָּם		עמא	PJ
		יִי	קִדָּם	בצלו	דעמא	TN
		יִי	קִדָּם	בצלו	דעמא	FT(P)
		ה'	קודם	בצלו	עמא	FT(V)
		יִי	קודם	בצלו	עמא	CG(F)
		י[י]	קִדָּם	בצלו	עמא	CG(J)
		יִי	קודם	בצלו	עמה	CG(Y)
		יִי	קִדָּם	בְּצִלוֹ	דְּעֲמָא	CG(U)

Again there are two groups of Targums, according to their translations: TO and PJ on the one hand and the PTs on the other hand. There are four sets of distinctions in the translations that demonstrate this. First, for the first verb of the Hebrew text, וַיַּעֲנוּ (“and they answered”), TO and PJ give וַאֲתִיב, while the PTs all follow the HT with וַעֲנוֹן. While it might be objected here that a couple of the PTs are simply following the Hebrew text independently of each other, when six different Targums have this rendering, coincidence is not an adequate explanation. Second, for the verse’s last verb, וַיָּשֻׁב (“and they returned”), TO and PJ repeat their translation, וַאֲתִיב, while the PTs provide a different verb, וחזר. Third, to make the meaning of this reply to God clear, the PTs, but not TO or PJ, all add a single word, בצלו, “in prayer.” Fourth, for the HT phrase כָּל אֲשֶׁר (“all which”), TO and PJ render it as כָּל ד, while the PTs have כָּל מַה ד.

Exodus 19:5 and 8 illustrate, first, how PJ bases its translation on TO (or Proto-TO). It is not wed to TO slavishly, sometimes providing its own rendering or following the translation in the Palestinian Targums. This has been confirmed by Geza Vermes, in his 1963 study of translation in Genesis 4, where he came up with figures indicating that for the verses he studied, PJ’s translation followed TO for 73 out of 128 words, or 57 percent of the time.¹⁰ For the remaining words, PJ was independent of

¹⁰ Vermes, “Targum Versions of Genesis 4:3-16.” See esp. 105–111.

any Targum 29 percent of the time while following a PT translation 14 percent of the time.

The examination of these two verses also shows how the Palestinian Targums all share a common rendering. Our analysis of the passages emphasized the similarities among them, but of course there are also a few differences. Some of these take the form of short additions into the translation, while others are changes. A second look at Exodus 19:8 will show this. First, all the Palestinian Targums except Neofiti add *memra* (מִמְרָא) before God's name in the second line. Here Neofiti is more like Onqelos and Pseudo-Jonathan than the Palestinian Targums. Second, Neofiti, FT(V), and CG(F) add two words after the translation of "all the people as one" (כַּחַדָּא). They read, "all the people as one *with a peaceful heart*" (כַּחַדָּא בִלְבָא שְׁלִימָה). This echoes the treatment of Neofiti and FT(P) of "as one" in Genesis 22:6 and 8, where Abraham and Isaac go to Isaac's sacrifice "as one *with a peaceful heart*." Third, TO and PJ translate the HT's דְּבָרֵי ("words") with פִּיתְגְּמִי. In contrast, TN, FT(P), and CG(U) render it with מְלִיהוֹן ("their words"). But FT(V) and the rest of the CGs use the TO/PJ translation, פִּיתְגְּמִי.

In the end, the first two items here can be explained as later additions into an earlier version of the translation text, but the third item suggests cross-influence from TO, PJ, or Proto-Onqelos. So although the two main tendencies are clear—of PJ to base its translation on TO even while recasting it, and of the Palestinian Targums to share a different translation—they are complicated by individual Targums' tendencies to incorporate material outside their predictable patterns of usage.¹¹

We must be cautious about such one-sided results, however, for they may not be indicative of the relationship of the translations in general but instead stem more from the selection of which verse to study. Other passages may reveal different relationships. Indeed, a recent study suggested that the PTs' translation was *closer* to TO's translation than Pseudo-Jonathan's and closer than mere chance would allow.¹² By examining the translations from a single verse used in this study, Genesis 28:12, we can see that different conclusions may be indicated by different passages.¹³

¹¹ See the parallel translation texts at Gen 38:17-24 in Flesher, "Translation and Exegetical Augmentation," esp. 42-46. I did not ask the questions important to this chapter, but a quick study of the parallel texts shows again there are two main groups: PTs and TO/PJ. The PTs here are TN and two CGs: CG(D) and CG(E). The results are similar in Kaufman and Maori, "Targums of Exodus 20."

¹² Flesher, "Proto-Onqelos and the Palestinian Targums."

¹³ Gen 28:12 contains a Proto-PT expansion. That expansion separates easily from the translation, thus enabling us to analyze the remaining translation.

The lines marked “ST” are from the Samaritan Targum, a Targum that shows no indication of links to the Jewish Targums.

אֲרָצָה	מָצַב	סָלַם	וְהָנָה	וַיַּחְלֹם	HT
בִּארְעָא	נָעִיץ	סוּלְמָא	וְהָא	וַחְלֹם	TO
בִּארְעָא	קִבַּע	סֶלֶם	וְהָא	וַחְלֹם	TN
בִּארְעָא	קִבִּיעַ	סוּלְמָא	וְהָא	וַחְלֹם	PJ
אֶרְעָה	קַעַם	סֶלֶם	וְאֵה	וַחְלֹם	ST
הַשְׁמִימָהּ			מִגִּיעַ	וְרָאֵשׁוּ	HT
שְׁמִיָּא	צִית	עַד	מְטִי	וְרִישִׁיָּה	TO
שְׁמִיָּא	צִית	עַד	מְטִי	וְרִישִׁיָּה	TN
שְׁמִיָּא	צִית	עַד-	מְטִי	וְרִישִׁיָּה	PJ
לְשׁוּמִיָּה			מְטִי	וְרִישִׁיָּה	ST
אֱלֹהִים		מְלָאכִי		וְהָנָה	HT
דְּיוֹי		מְלָאכִיָּא		וְהָא	TO
יִי	מִן־קֶדֶם	מְלָאכִין		וְהָא	TN
דִּיִּי	קִדִּישִׁיָּא	מְלָאכִיָּא	שָׂאֵר	בְּכִין	PJ
אֱלֹהִים		מְלָאכִי		וְאֵה	ST
בּוּ			וַיִּרְדּוּם	עֲלִים	HT
בִּיה			וַנְחִתִּין	סְלָקִין	TO
בֵּה	וּמִסְתַּכְלִין		וּנְחִתִּין	סְלָקִין	TN
בִּיה	לְמִסְתַּכְלָא		נְחִתִּין		PJ
בֵּה			וְנִעְתִּין	סְלָקִים	ST

Targum Neofiti’s translation differs from that of Targum Onqelos in only a single word, Targum Neofiti’s rendering of קִבַּע for Targum Onqelos’s נָעִיץ. Otherwise Neofiti repeats Onqelos’ entire verse—some sixteen words—with only minor adjustments of spelling and word form. For example, instead of Onqelos’ סוּלְמָא, Neofiti has סָלַם—the base word for the dialects of both Targums being סוּלֶם. Instead of spelling the masculine possessive suffix in a *mele* form (וְרִישִׁיָּה, בִּיה) as does Targum Onqelos,

Targum Neofiti spells it in a *plene* form (בה, וראשה), a standard practice for Neofiti. Neofiti even copies Onqelos' two additional words, עד צית, which render the locative suffix the HT places on שמים. To be sure, Neofiti adds one word in the fourth line, ומסתכלין, but that word is not a replacement, but is instead fitted carefully into the translation modeled by Onqelos.

But perhaps someone might argue that the parallel of Neofiti's translation with Onqelos' is merely accidental, the happenstance of two texts translating the same Hebrew sentence into the same language, i.e., Aramaic. The possibility that the similarity represents the coincidences occasioned by a common language is contradicted by the Samaritan Targum's rendering. This Targum has no known links to any of the Jewish Targums, and its rendering contains several places where it does not follow the Onqelos or Neofiti. There are two main word differences: קעם instead of קבע or נָעִיץ, and ונעתין instead of ונחתין. Furthermore, the Samaritan Targum follows the Hebrew text more closely than than the other Targums in its use of small particles linking words or phrases. For instance, the *bet* which the other Targums insert before ארעא does not appear in Samaritan Targum; the two words עד צית found in the Jewish Targums inserted before "the heavens" are missing. Similarly, the Samaritan Targum lacks the *dalet* before God's name. In all of these, the Samaritan Targum follows the Hebrew text. So the proposition that pure chance and a common language could explain a parallel translation by Neofiti and Onqelos is not convincing.

Indeed, when we turn to Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, we see not only that its translation follows that of Targum Neofiti at times but that Targum Neofiti's translation is actually closer to Onqelos' than Pseudo-Jonathan's, the opposite conclusion from the two verses in Genesis. Pseudo-Jonathan follows Targum Neofiti's rendering in the verse's first line where it deviates from Targum Onqelos, with only minor differences in orthography. At the end of the second line, Pseudo-Jonathan contains Neofiti's added word in the form of מסתכלא. But the early part of Pseudo-Jonathan's second line contains several differences from Onqelos and Neofiti. Here, Pseudo-Jonathan drops one of Onqelos's words, סלקין, and makes a change with two others, בבין שאר, and alters some prefixed particles.

The study of these three verses points in two directions. The two verses from Exodus 19 indicate that the Palestinian Targums composed their own translation without too much influence by Targum Onqelos, while Pseudo-Jonathan drew heavily on Onqelos' rendering. The opposite result obtained from a verse in Genesis 28, where Targum Neofiti, representing the Palestinian Targums, was clearly much closer to Onqelos than was Pseudo-Jonathan. Three other verses from Flesher's study of Genesis

28 show a similar result. Plainly, a great deal of further study is needed; perhaps we may discover that the relationships of targumic translations differ from passage to passage.

CONCLUSION

The comparison of Targum Onqelos and the Proto-PT source of expansions reveals that there was a link between TO and the expansions of the Palestinian Targums. Since the link seems to be to an earlier version of TO rather than its current form, we termed that earlier version Proto-Onqelos. While more extensive exploration is needed on this question, we can conclude this early version of Onqelos played a role in the formation of the additional material in the Palestinian Targums.

The exploration of links between the translations of the two types of Targums, TO and PTs, had a more complicated result. Sample verses from Exodus 19 indicated that the PTs seem to draw from the same base Targum translation, but that translation could be differentiated from the translation in Targum Onqelos. This would indicate that the PTs and TO had distinctly different approaches to or sources for their translation of the Hebrew text, even as their link to the expansions shows that the PTs, or more specifically their common foundational version, worked with Proto-Onqelos when it developed them. By comparison, verses from Genesis 28 indicated the opposite—namely, that the PTs' translation follows Onqelos' translation more closely than does PJ's.

There are a few hints that this latter formulation may be indicated even in Exodus 19. Explorations of double translations in TN, also called conflation, indicate that these often contain TO's rendering of a word from the HT and then a second translation that follows the HT more closely. There are two examples of this in Exodus 19:5. TO translated the HT בָּקָלִי as לְמִימְרִי, while the PTs added a more faithful rendering of the HT to the TO version and gave both בָּקָל מִמְרִי. Similarly, when TO rendered HT סְגֻלָּה "possession" as חֲבִיבִין "beloved," the PTs gave a second and third rendering to bring them more into line with the HT. TO's חֲבִיבִין became PT's עַם חֲבִיבִין "beloved people," while to ensure that there was a clear rendering of the HT, the PTs added סְגֻלָּה as well.

Despite these complications, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan's translation shows a consistent link to Targum Onqelos. It clearly follows TO's translation and bases its own upon it, although at times it seems free to depart from it. However, TO's additional material does not seem to inspire its large collections of expansions in the PJ-unique source. Is it possible that

PJ's translation could be drawing from Proto-Onqelos rather than TO itself? Comprehensive studies of this question remain to be undertaken.

Finally, it is clear that all three types of Pentateuchal Targums—Targum Onqelos, the Palestinian Targums, and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan—are related by lines of dependence. They are not isolated from each other, but each of the later Targums depends on the earlier one(s). That connection should not go unnamed, and so we suggest that these Targums be called the “Targums of Israel.”

THE PENTATEUCHAL TARGUMS IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

One of the odd features of the Pentateuchal Targums, at least when we consider them in comparison to rabbinic literature, is that they contain no attributions. Although in the Mishnah, the Tosefta, the two Talmuds and the Midrashim, acknowledged quotations from named rabbinic figures is a salient feature, nothing like this shows up in the Targums. The Targums consequently contain no direct evidence that links them to people and the countries in which they live. Dialect remains the only internal targumic feature that helps scholars identify the geographical origins of the Targums.

External evidence may reveal additional information about the location of each Targum's origin. If the rabbinic literature of the Land of Israel or the Land of Babylonia contains explicit references to targumic texts, or contains citations of specific Targums, then that may give further evidence of origins, or at least usage.

Why divide our search through rabbinic literature for information about specific Targums into evidence from Galilee and evidence from Babylonia? The primary reason is that Galilee and Babylonia formed centers of separate Jewish communities, which in turn developed under different empires, Rome and Persia, and under two different dominant languages, Greek and Aramaic. Although there was some movement between the two, evidenced by a few rabbis and by the Babylonian Talmud's use of the Palestinian Talmud, there was not enough back-and-forth contact to permit them to develop completely in tandem.

We should not then be surprised that the profile of external evidence about the Pentateuchal Targums in these two regions differs significantly. In Palestine rabbinic literature reveals no remarks about specific Targum texts. The few passages that cite Aramaic renderings from biblical verses indicate that all three main types of Pentateuchal Targums were known

in Palestine: the Palestinian Targums, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, and Targum Onqelos (or Proto-Onqelos). In Babylonia the evidence points to the conclusion that only a single Targum was known, Targum Onqelos. However, the foundation for that conclusion is less secure than it was a century ago.

It is widely acknowledged that some rabbinic texts are difficult to date, especially the later ones. To accommodate this difficulty, we will restrict our study to the better-known texts whose dating is more certain. In Palestine we will examine the rabbinic documents written prior to the end of the fifth century. These include the Mishnah (published around 200 CE), the Tosefta (generally dated to about 250), and the Yerushalmi (i.e., Palestinian Talmud, which was completed sometime between 400 and 450). In addition, we will look at the earlier midrashim (composed in Palestine prior to the end of the 5th century). These include the halakhic midrashim of the late second or third century, such as the *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael* to Exodus, the *Sifra* to Leviticus, the *Sifré* to Numbers, and the *Sifré* to Deuteronomy. We will also consider the aggadic midrashim composed in the early fifth century, the same time as the Yerushalmi—specifically, the Midrash Rabbah to Genesis, to Leviticus, and to Lamentations. It turns out, however, that the midrashim seem rather uninterested in discussing specific Targums or their translations. For Babylonia, the only text we will examine will be the Babylonian Talmud, since none of the earlier midrashim were composed there.

TARGUMS IN THE RABBINIC LITERATURE OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL

When we examine the books of the rabbis of the Land of Israel written prior to the end of the fifth century, we discover surprisingly little evidence about specific Targums or their readings. There is some discussion of the use of Targums in the synagogue liturgy, as we have seen, and a few remarks about the use of Targums in study, both of which we shall examine in chapter 14. But the Palestinian rabbinic texts mention no named Aramaic Targums, nor do they discuss creating or translating Targums (even to mention the original translator), nor do they indicate knowledge of any history of any known Targum texts.

One passage in the Palestinian Talmud might be understood as addressing the composition of a Torah Targum, but close examination makes clear that, although the passage deals with Torah translation, it refers to a Greek translation rather than an Aramaic one. The passage appears in y. Meg. 71c, and is based upon m. Meg. 1:8/9, which debates whether Scripture may be translated into any language, or only into Greek. While the main opinion holds that Scripture may be translated

into any language, Shimon ben Gamliel believes that Greek is the only language, other than Hebrew, in which Scripture may be presented. The Yerushalmi passage picks up with Shimon's remark.

תני רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר אף בספרים לא התירו שיכתבו
אלא יוונית בדקו ומצאו שאין התורה יכולה להיתרגם כל צורכה
אלא יוונית

...

רבי ירמיה בשם רבי חייא בר בא תירגם עקילס הגר התורה
לפני רבי אליעזר ולפני רבי יהושע וקילסו אותו
ואמרו יפית מבני אדם

- A. It has been taught. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says, "Also, scrolls [of sacred texts], they allow that they be written only in Greek [in addition to the Hebrew]." [m. Meg 1:8]
- B. They investigated and they found that the Torah may not be translated into any language except Greek.
- C. ...
- D. Rabbi Jeremiah in the name of Rabbi Hiyya bar Ba. "Aquila the Proselyte translated the Torah before Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua.
- E. "And they praised him, saying, 'You are the most handsome among the sons of Adam, [grace is poured upon your lips. Therefore God will bless you forever.]'" [Ps. 45:3]¹

Line B validates what was Shimon's minority position in the Mishnah as an important position in the Yerushalmi. That is, Scripture should be translated only into Greek. To provide support for this position, the Yerushalmi's editors bring an illustration of the importance of Greek translation. Line D briefly relates how two rabbis approved a Torah translation into Greek. These were the important tannaitic rabbis, Eliezer and Joshua. In line E, they praised the translator with a Psalm suggesting his lips—those that did the translating—were full of grace and that God would bless him forever because of this translation.

The name of the translator, Aquilas, refers to the proselyte to Judaism who created a revised and extended translation of the Old Greek translation of the Septuagint. Aquilas, also referred to as Aquila, composed this translation around 130 CE, and it became widely used among

¹ In this chapter, the translation of rabbinic texts are our own, done in conversation with the translations of Jacob Neusner. Scripture translations are from the NRSV. Targum translations are our own.

Mediterranean Jews until the sixth century. The remaining fragments and quotations indicate that it was a highly literal translation that emphasized rigid correspondence—even identity—between each word in the Hebrew and a single word in the Greek. This often made the resulting Greek translation undecipherable without the aid of knowledge of the underlying Hebrew.

In the end, this Yerushalmi passage refers to the creation of a known Greek translation, yet reveals nothing about the translation of a Targum. The passage also suggests why no positive references to Aramaic Targums appear in the Yerushalmi: Palestinian rabbis denied the validity of translating biblical books into Aramaic, restricting that activity to Greek.²

CITATIONS OF TARGUMS IN PALESTINIAN RABBINIC LITERATURE

A survey of Palestinian rabbinic literature reveals only a few citations of Aramaic translations that also match targumic renderings we possess. There is material from five biblical verses cited in these texts; four in the Yerushalmi and one in Lamentations Rabbah, which was composed about the same time as the Yerushalmi. The size of these citations range from a word or phrase to an entire verse.

These passages indicate in aggregate that all three Targum types were known in the Land of Israel during the period of the Palestinian Talmud's composition, that is, the early fifth century. While the paucity of their number and the brevity of some of the passages prevents us from drawing conclusions as strong as we might like, it is clear that Palestinian rabbis knew translations shared by the Palestinian Targums, as well as some found only in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and in Targum Onqelos. Let us look at the passages.

The first passage comes from y. Meg. 71b in a short discussion of the genealogy found in Genesis 10, which delineates the ancestors of peoples who live near the Israelites and their territories. Genesis 10:19 lists the cities comprising the boundaries of the Canaanites. In the east the Canaanite territory extends “up to Lesha.” In the Yerushalmi passage, Rabbi Eleazar identifies the present name of this city.

עד לשע. ר לעזר אמר. עד קלרה
ר יודן בר שלום אמר. מיכן לתרגום

- A. “[The territory of the Canaanites extended from Sidon . . . in the direction of Sodom . . .] up to Lesha.” [Gen 10:19]

² See Smelik, “Rabbinic Reception of Early Bible Translations.”

- B. Rabbi Eleazar said, “Up to Callirrhoe (קלרה).”³
 C. Rabbi Yudan bar Shalom said, “[We know] from this the Targum.”⁴

The name Callirrhoe is an Aramaic rendering of a Greek place name. It is located on the eastern side of the Jordan River, near the Dead Sea. In the Targums to this verse, it appears in Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan.⁵ Targum Onqelos simply gives the Hebrew name, Leshah. This indicates that the Talmud Yerushalmi was familiar with the Palestinian Targums’ interpretation. It reveals nothing about Pseudo-Jonathan, however, since the latter Targum drew heavily upon the Palestinian Targums in its composition.

The second talmudic passage, found at y. Bik. 65d (3:8), discusses the translation of two different biblical verses, Exodus 12:8 and Deuteronomy 26:2. It again demonstrates that the Yerushalmi knows of translations contained in the Palestinian Targums. The passage is placed here because of a tangential link to m. Bik. 3:8, which says that the rich brought their offerings of first fruits in “baskets of silver and gold.” Although the first phrase of the passage asks a question concerning that topic, the rest of the Yerushalmi passage focuses on accurate translation of two biblical passages in the public reading of the Targum in the synagogue.

רבי יונה בעי. מהו להביאן בתמחויין של כסף. רבי יונה ורבי ירמיה
 חד אמר מחזור מנא וחרנה אמר מחזור פטירין עם ירקונין. דאת אמר
 פטירין עם מרורין. ולא ידעינן מאן אמר דא ומאן אמר דא.
 מן מה דאמר ר יונה מחו להביאן בתמחויין של כסף. הוי הוא
 דאמ דמחזור מנא. די אמר כלה

- A. Rabbi Jonah asked, “What [is the basis for allowing the wealthy] to bring [their first fruits] in a basket of silver?”
 B. [Concerning the positions of] Rabbi Jonah and Rabbi Jeremiah:
 C. One said, “[When translating Deut 26:2, a translator in the synagogue service] goes back [and corrects his translation if he said] ‘utensil’ (מנא) [instead of ‘basket’ (סלה).]”
 D. The other said, “[When translating Ex 12:8, a translator in the synagogue service] goes back [and corrects his translation if he said] ‘unleavened bread with herbs’ (ירקונין).”

³ Callirrhoe is an Aramaic rendering of the Greek place name, καλλιρροη.

⁴ This passage is to Mishnah 1:8 in the Leiden text, 1:9 in the Neusner translation (p. 49), and 1:11 in the printed edition.

⁵ Neither the Fragment Targums nor the Cairo Genizah fragments are extant at this verse.

- E. For you should say, “‘unleavened bread with bitter herbs’ (מרורין).”
- F. And we do not know who said this and who said that.
- G. From what Rabbi Jonah said[—namely,] “What [is the basis for allowing the wealthy] to bring [their first fruits] in a basket of silver?”—
- H. [It stands to reason that] it was he who said, “[When translating Deut 26:2, a translator in the synagogue service] goes back [and corrects his translation if he said] ‘utensil’ (מנא).”
- I. For [the translator] should have said, “basket” [i.e., *solah*.]⁶

Line A just serves to identify the proper place for this passage in the Yerushalmi. Line B sets up the problem at hand. The Yerushalmi's authorities know incorrect translations of two biblical verses (C–F) and they know that Rabbi Jonah identified one of them and Rabbi Jeremiah the other (B). But they do not know which identification goes with which rabbi (F). So they work it out logically by comparing one of the identifications with a known remark by Jonah (G–I).

In working out this problem, the Yerushalmi cites both the correct and the incorrect translations of the two verses concerned, Deuteronomy 26:2 and Exodus 12:8. In both verses Targum Neofiti has the correct translation. None of the Targums have the wording indicated as the wrong translation. In Deuteronomy 26:2, the correct translation, “basket” סלה, appears in both TN and in Cairo Geniza (AA) among the Palestinian Targums, and also in Onqelos and Pseudo-Jonathan, although with the *aleph* ending. The correct rendering of Exodus 12:8 appears exactly in TN and CG(AA), פטירין עם מרורין. TO's translation is similar, but follows the form of the Hebrew text more closely. TO has פטיר על מררין, while the HT has מצות על-מררים. PJ follows TO more closely but with a different term for bitter herbs, פטיר על תמכה.

In both passages then, the Palestinian Talmud knows the version found in the Palestinian Targums, and the wording of the texts are exactly the same. Although TO and PJ parallel the Yerushalmi for one passage and not the other, this has no bearing on our conclusions since the Yerushalmi cannot function as an independent witness for either, because it already is known to be parallel with the PTs.

The last passage we will study from the Yerushalmi is Berakhot 9c. Here Pseudo-Jonathan's rendering of Leviticus 22:28 becomes the main focal point. This biblical verse focuses on the matter of sacrificing young animals, saying “[Y]ou shall not slaughter, from the herd or the flock,

⁶ The best text of the Yerushalmi text is corrupt in several places in this passage. The last word reads בלה, “bride,” which makes no sense in context and should be understood as a corruption of סלה, “basket.”

an animal with its young on the same day.” Rabbi Yose again raises the issue of incorrect translations in this Yerushalmi passage by focusing on the theological implications of a targumic rendering of this biblical verse.

אמר ר יוסי ביר בון לא עבדין טבות שעושין למדותיו שלהקבה רחמים
ואילין דמתרגמין עמי בני ישראל כמה דאנא רחמן בשמיא כך תהוון
רחמנין בארעא תורתא או רחילה יתה וית ברה לא תיכסון תרויהון
ביומא חד לא עבדין טבאות שהן עושין מדותיו שלהקבה רחמים

- A. Rabbi Yose b. Rabbi Bun said, “Those who make mercy [equivalent] to the nature of the Holy One, Blessed be He, are not doing good.
- B. “These are those who translate [Lev 22:28 as follows]:
- C. “(1) My People, Sons of Israel. (2) Just as I am merciful in the heavens, so you should be merciful on earth. (3) [Concerning] a cow or ewe, it and its offspring you shall not slaughter both of them [for sacrifice] in one day.’
- D. “They do not do good, for they make mercy [equivalent] to the nature of the Holy One, Blessed be He.”

Rabbi Yose’s rendering of the verse takes up all of line C. It includes parts 1 and 2 as well as the translation of the verse in part 3. The translation of the verse is exact, but it adds a single word, “both of them.”

Only Pseudo-Jonathan provides a complete rendering of all three parts of the verse as given by Yose. Targum Onqelos only translates the verse (C.3), and its translation differs in key ways from that in C.3. A fragment of the Palestinian Targum from the Cairo Genizah, CG(F), has a rendering that includes C.1, lacks C.2, but follows C.3 until it breaks off three words from the end. Neofiti’s version seems to contain a scribal error, but it has C.1 while lacking C.2—like CG(F). However, its C.3 drops out a couple words and then stops.

Pseudo-Jonathan, by contrast, contains the entire verse cited by Yose. It reads:

עמי בני ישראל היכמא דאנא רחמן בשמיא כן תהוון רחמנין
בארעא תורתא או רחלא יתה וית ברה לא תיכסון ביומא חד

(1) *My People, Sons of Israel.* (2) *Just as I am merciful in the heavens, so you should be merciful on earth.* (3) [Concerning] a cow or ewe, it and its offspring you shall not slaughter [for sacrifice] in one day.

Pseudo-Jonathan’s translation of Leviticus 22:28 lacks the Yerushalmi’s added word in the translation, “both of them.” Otherwise, the difference

lies only in the spelling of a couple of words. This makes it clear that the Yerushalmi knows Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and its expansive translation here.

Furthermore, the formulaic opening of this verse—"My People, Sons of Israel"—is typical of Pseudo-Jonathan. Although it shares the use of this formula with the Palestinian Targums and the Proto-PT source, as can be readily seen in their common rendering of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, PJ goes beyond Proto-PT in this mode of addressing the audience. There are at least ten verses where PJ adds in this attention-getting device where it does not appear in Proto-PT.⁷ So it is clear here that the Yerushalmi is citing a known Pseudo-Jonathan rendition of this verse.

The final citation of a Pentateuchal Targum quotation in the Palestinian rabbinic texts prior to the end of the fifth century comes from Lamentations Rab. 79. In interpreting Lamentations 3:1, the midrash turns to Proverbs 22:20, which it discusses in light of Exodus 14:7. The Proverbs verse is problematic because one word is a *Ketiv* and the other a *Qere*. The *Ketiv*, שְׁלִישִׁים, is of course corrupt, but the *Qere* makes little sense in context. It reads שְׁלִישִׁים, which means "[military] officers." The NRSV, by contrast, ignores both of them and translates the word as "thirty," שלשים. "Have I not written for you thirty sayings of admonition and knowledge . . . ?" And there is the obvious interpretation of the consonants of the *Ketiv*-word as שלשום, "three days ago," which would give the translation as, "Have I not written for you the day before yesterday sayings of admonition and knowledge . . . ?" Lamentations Rabbah takes the *Qere* as a serious possibility, looks at a Targum of the word in Exodus 14:7 and then decides it does not apply to Proverbs. Here is the portion of the passage relevant to our interests.

רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר. מהו שלשים. גבורים. כדא
ושלשים על כלו ומתרגמינן וגיברין ממנן על כולהון

- A. Rabbi Samuel bar Nahmani said, "What is SHALISHIM (שלשים)? [It means] mighty warriors (גבורים).
- B. "This is in line with the [Hebrew] verse [of Ex 14:7], "And officers (ושלשים) over all of them,"
- C. "which we translate [into Aramaic] as, 'And mighty warriors (וגיברין) were appointed over all of them.'"

Line C translates the three-word phrase from the Hebrew text with four words, adding in a pael passive participle for "to be appointed," ממנן.

⁷ Exod 20:22, 23; 22:17, 18; 23:1, 6, 18; Lev 19:12; 25:15, 37.

The matching of this with the interpretation of “mighty warriors” appears in Targum Onqelos, **וְגִבָּרִין מְמַנִּין עַל כּוֹלְהוֹן**. This is the exact phrase given in the midrash at line C. Targum Neofiti emphasizes the passive character of the participle by adding a subordinate “to be” verb, but it uses “leaders” (**וּרְבִרְבָּנִין הוּן מְמַנִּין עַל כּוֹלְהוֹן**) instead of “mighty warriors.” PJ has an addition here that goes in a completely different direction.

The two Fragment Targums handle this phrase in different ways. FT(V) uses the Hebrew word in its Aramaic phrase rather than translate it, **וּשְׁלִישִׁים מְמַנִּין עַל כּוֹלְהוֹן**. FT(P) seems to be based on Onqelos here, but it adds in an interpretation that understands the *Ketiv/Qere* as based on the root’s meaning of “three.” It reads:

וְגִבָּרִין מְתַלְתִּין בְּזֵינָא הוּן מְמַנִּין עַל כּוֹלְהוֹן

And mighty warriors [with] triple the [usual] weapons were appointed over all of them.

So in the end, this Lamentations Rabbah passage from the early fifth century provides a quotation from Targum Onqelos in Palestinian rabbinic literature. All three Targum types—Palestinian, Onqelos, and Pseudo-Jonathan—are thus known and used in Palestine by the time of the composition of the Jerusalem Talmud in the mid-fifth century.

THE TARGUMS IN BABYLONIA

The primary evidence for rabbinic Judaism in Babylonia is the Babylonian Talmud, known also by its Hebrew name, the Bavli. It was composed slightly later than the Palestinian Talmud, probably at the end of the sixth century, and in many places draws from it. There are no extant midrashim of Babylonian origin prior to its composition. The Babylonian Talmud became the crowning document of rabbinic Judaism, providing the foundation for Judaism for the next millennium and more, accepted by Jewry not only in the east but by the Middle Ages also in the Land of Israel, northern Africa, and Europe.

As the primary textual source of religious authority, second only to the Hebrew Bible itself, the Bavli became the foundation for many beliefs and truths of medieval Judaism. This was certainly true for the evaluation of the Targums. The geonim and other medieval authorities reached back to the Talmud to support their views about the importance of Targum Onqelos over the other Pentateuchal Targums, which they designated as Targum Yerushalmi.

ONQELOS THE PROSELYTE AND “OUR TARGUM”

One of the stories to which the geonim reached back was the designation of Onqelos the Proselyte as the translator of a Pentateuchal Targum. As we shall see, however, the passage conveys less information than is usually attributed to it, although what it implies in regard to the usage of Onqelos in the east is profound. This passage appears only once, in b. Meg. 3a.

ואמר רבי ירמיה ואיתימא רבי חייא בר אבא

תרגום של תורה אונקלוס הגר אמרו מפי רבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע

- A. And Rabbi Jeremiah said, and some say Rabbi Hiyya bar Abbah,
- B. “Targum of the Torah—Onqelos the Proselyte said it before Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua.”

Line B here attributes the translation of an Aramaic Torah Targum to a disciple known as Onqelos the proselyte. He does this in public, before two witnesses—the Tannaim Eliezer and Joshua. These are the same rabbis before whom the Palestinian Talmud said Aquilas translated the Torah into Greek. Further comparison of the remarks in the two Talmuds makes it clear that this passage from the Bavli is a misunderstanding or a revision of the passage in the earlier Yerushalmi. First, the comments in both Talmuds are attributed to Rabbi Jeremiah. Second, Rabbi Hiyya bar Ba (בא), whom the Bavli calls Rabbi Hiyya bar Aba (אבא), is also involved, either in the line of memory (the Yerushalmi’s “in the name of”) or as an alternate tradent (the Bavli’s “and some say”). Third, the public recitation takes place before Eliezer and Joshua, as we described. Fourth, the identification of the translator as a proselyte. Fifth, the consonantal forms of the two names are quite similar. If we exclude the two *waw*s and the *yod* used as *matres lexiones*, both Aquilas (עקילס) and Onqelos (אונקלוס) end in the same three letters *qof*, *lamed*, and *samekh* (קלס), while the first letters of the two names can be confused for each other in speech, *aleph* and *ayin*, particularly across dialects. This suggests that “Onqelos” is a Babylonian attempt to render to the unfamiliar Greek name of “Aquila.” Thus, the passage in b. Meg. 3a constitutes a Babylonian attempt to reproduce part of a Palestinian pericope.⁸ It revises a Palestinian passage about the importance of Greek translations, which are unimportant to the Babylonians, into a passage about Aramaic translations, which are important to them.

⁸ Grossfeld reviews the positions on this question on pp. 4–6 of the introduction to his Aramaic Bible translation. See Grossfeld, *Targum Onqelos to Genesis*. See also Silverstone, *Aquila and Onkelos*; Friedmann, *Onkelos und Akylas*; and Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d’Aquila*, 148–56.

Oddly, the reshaping of this attribution of the origin of the Torah Targum brings it into conflict with a tradition the Babylonian rabbis already possess about that Targum's origin. This interpretation gives Ezra and his associates the credit for creating the Targum in the sixth century BCE.

תרגום של תורה אונקלוס הגר אמרו והא אמר רב איקא בר אבין
אמר רב חננאל אמר רב. מאי דכתיב ויקראו בספר תורת האלהים
מפרש ושום שכל ויבינו בקרא ויקראו בספר תורת האלהים
זה מקרא. מפרש זה תרגום ושום שכל אלו הפסוקין
ויבינו במקרא אלו פיסקי טעמים
ואמרי לה. אלו המסורת שבהם וחזרו ויסדום

- A. "Targum of the Torah—Onqelos the Proselyte said it. . . ."
- B. And in fact [has the following not been taught]? Said Rab Iqa bar Abbin, said Rab Hananel, said Rav.
- C. "What is [the meaning of that which is] written [in Nehemiah 8:8]? 'And they read in the scroll of the Torah of God,'⁹ explaining and giving the sense, and [the people] understood the reading."
- D. "'And they read in the scroll of the Torah of God'—this is Scripture.
- E. "'explaining'—this is the Targum.
- F. "'and giving the sense'—these are the verses.
- G. "'and [the people] understood the reading'—these are the decided exegeses."
- H. And some say, these are the traditions (המסורת).
- I. [This is not a contradiction. Past generations] forgot them and [now] they returned and [through Onqelos] reestablished them.

This passage appears a few sentences later in b. Meg. 3a, and puts in question the attribution of the first Aramaic Targum of Onqelos the Proselyte. It brings a second tradition in which the biblical verse Nehemiah 8:8 is interpreted to indicate that Ezra and his associates made the original Pentateuchal Targum translation. According to Rav, the word "explaining" (מפרש) in the biblical verse indicates that the teachers and leaders at this gathering were speaking the Targum translation to the people assembled there (Line E). Thus it was Ezra who originally translated the Torah, and he did this more than 600 years before Onqelos.

Line I resolves the contradiction—both are correct. Ezra made the original translation, but it was later forgotten. Onqelos was later responsible for restoring knowledge of the Targum translation to the Torah.

⁹ The MT contains a *bet* before the *tav* of "Torah" that is missing in the Babylonian Talmud.

It is important to note here that neither of these passages mentions a specific Targum to the Torah. Neither the Targum that later became known as Targum Onqelos, nor the Palestinian Targums, nor Targum Pseudo-Jonathan are specified. Nor are there any sample passages or translations provided that would enable us to work it out. The identification of a particular Targum with the translator Onqelos is made later in the Geonic period.

A second passage indicates knowledge of a fixed Targum translation, but similarly fails to give any indication of what exactly it is. This passage from the Babylonian Talmud, b. Qiddushin 49a, indicates there is a translation so well known it can be referred to as “our Targum.” The case concerns a young man who wishes to be betrothed to a young woman. For some reason, perhaps in response to the woman’s desire to have a husband who is religiously observant and competent, he makes the betrothal conditional on his ability to read the Torah in synagogue worship. The rabbis debate the meaning of that stated condition and what actions he needs to perform in order for it to take effect.

תני רבנן על מנת שאני קריינא כיון שקרא שלשה פסוקים בבית הכנסת

הרי זו מקודשת ר יהודה אומר עד שיקרא ויתרגם ויתרגם מדעתיה

... [לא] ...

אלא מאי תרגום דידן

- A. Our rabbis taught [on Tannaitic authority]:
- B. “[A man who swears to a woman that she will be betrothed to him] on the condition that ‘I read [Torah in the synagogue.]’
- C. “When he reads three verses in the synagogue, behold, she is betrothed.”
- D. Rabbi Judah says, “[She is not betrothed] until he reads and translates.”
- E. [Does this mean that he may] translate according to his own opinion?
- F. ... [No] ...
- G. But how should he translate?
- H. [According to] our Targum.

Line B lays out the condition that the betrothal takes effect when the man shows that he can read Torah in the synagogue service. The tradent in line C thinks that reading refers only to the Hebrew text and that when he has successfully read a standard minimum passage—here indicated as “three verses”—the man and the woman become betrothed. At line D, Judah argues that the criterion of reading includes translating—that is, reading or reciting an Aramaic rendering. This requires the further specification of the kind of translation. Can it be just any fairly accurate Aramaic version? Line H clarifies the matter by stating that the translation

can be only “our Targum.” This implies that there is an agreed-upon targumic text in which the individual must be trained. He must be sufficiently knowledgeable of rabbinic religious norms that he knows what “our Targum” consists of and he knows the specific Aramaic rendering of the passage in question found there.

Again, however, the Bavli provides no indication of the specific Targum named as “our Targum.” Despite this—or perhaps because of it—there is an assumption that all readers know it. Therefore, no specific statement appears that would identify it nor any citations associated with this pericope that would enable us to identify it indirectly. So in the end, we can only turn to citations of Aramaic Targum found elsewhere in the Babylonian Talmud to determine what Targum or Targums were used by the Babylonian rabbis.

CITATIONS OF TARGUM TRANSLATIONS IN THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

The discovery of new Palestinian Targums (Targum Yerushalmi) in the last century, including the complete manuscript of the Pentateuch found in Targum Neofiti, prompts us to return to the Babylonian Talmud and reevaluate the evidence for Targums in Babylonia at that time. No complete Targums were known at the start of the twentieth century that we would now classify as Palestinian Targums. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan was once known as Targum Yerushalmi 1, even though it is now no longer considered a Palestinian—i.e., Yerushalmi—Targum. Furthermore, it is now clear that Pseudo-Jonathan based its translation on Targum Onqelos and so cannot function as an independent witness except in its additional material. The Fragment Targums, which were also known a century ago as Targum Yerushalmi 2, provide only incomplete evidence of the Palestinian Targums given their selected character. Today, however, Targum Neofiti’s complete text of the Pentateuch provides the same coverage as Targum Onqelos. Its independent Palestinian character enables the testing of passages from a source not closely linked to Onqelos.

Ten passages in the Babylonian Talmud cite Aramaic translations of words or phrases to indicate the meaning of a pentateuchal passage. Translations that were once thought to derive from Targum Onqelos can now be seen to be representative of the Palestinian Targums as well. Of the ten passages, six of them occur in verses where Targum Onqelos and Targum Neofiti give the same translation. It is only by examining the remaining four passages that it becomes apparent that the Babylonian rabbis used Onqelos rather than the Palestinian Targums.

Let us look first at the six passages in which Neofiti and Onqelos are parallel and match the citation in the Bavli. In the first four of these, TN and TO are exactly the same for the BT citation.

(1) Leviticus 25:23

The Babylonian Talmud's citation of a word from Leviticus 25:23 appears twice, in b. Sanh. 106b and in b. Arakin 15b. In Arakin the passage appears as follows:

וכתיב התם. לצמיתות. ומתרגמינן. לחלוטין

- A. And it is written there [in Lev 25:23]: “For ever” (לצמיתות),
 B. Which we translate as, “Entirely” (לחלוטין).

Neofiti and Onqelos both have this word, spelled exactly as it is given in the Bavli, at Leviticus 25:23. Pseudo-Jonathan has it as well. So the cited translation could have been known from any Targum.

(2) Leviticus 11:19

The Targums translate a single word from Leviticus 11:19 with two words, and this two-word phrase is cited in b. Gittin 68b. The Leviticus passage lists flying animals that are unclean and should not be eaten. It mentions the hoopoe specifically (הדוכיפת). TN and TO, as well as PJ, translate this name as נגר טורא. While this is clearly meant as the name of a bird, the two words can be interpreted to mean “sawer of the mountain”—since טורא means “mountain” and נגר is a verb invoking the carpentry actions “to saw or plane.”

The passage from b. Gittin presents this as a side remark in a long story about the Shamir-worm, a small worm that allegedly has the power to eat through rock and glass. According to the story, there is a type of bird that uses the worm as a tool to dig into the rocky side of a mountain and plant seeds. The side remark says simply:

והיינו דמתרגמינן. נגר טורא

And this is what we translate [the bird's name into Aramaic as], “Sawer of the mountain” (נגר טורא).

(3) Exodus 27:8

Tractate Baba Batra 12b in the Bavli provides an Aramaic citation of two words from Exodus 27:8. It reads:

וכתיב. נבוב לוחות. ומתרגמינן. חליל לוחין

- A. And it is written [at Ex 27:8 in Hebrew], “[You shall make it] hollow [with] planks (נבוב לוחות).”

- B. And we translate [into Aramaic], “[You shall make it] hollow [with] planks (חליל לוחין).”

Neofiti, Onqelos and Pseudo-Jonathan all have the two words exactly as they are given in the Bavli.

(4) *Genesis 25:23*

The Babylonian Talmud at Avodah Zarah 2b has a discussion about interpreting Isaiah 43:9. To explicate one of the words, Rabbi Hanina turns to the Aramaic translation of that word in Genesis 25:23. The A.Z. passage reads:

וַיֵּאסְפוּ לְאוֹמִים. וְאִין לְאוֹם אֵלָא מַלְכוּת.
שְׁנֵאמַר. וְלְאוֹם מִלְּאוֹם יֵאמָץ

- A. “And the peoples (לְאוֹמִים) gathered together (Isa 43:9).”
B. And there is nothing “people” (לְאוֹם) [can mean here] except [in Aramaic] “kingdom” (מַלְכוּת).
C. As it is written [in Gen 25:23, in Hebrew], “and one people (לְאוֹם) will be stronger than the other people (לְאוֹם).”

Line C cites the Hebrew text of Genesis 25:23, וְלְאוֹם מִלְּאוֹם יֵאמָץ, “and one people will be stronger than the other people.” When we examine the Targums to this passage, we discover that Neofiti and Onqelos both have the same translation, וּמִלְכוּ מִמְּלָכוֹ תִתְקַף, “and one nation will be stronger than the other nation.” Both Targums use the word מִלְכוּ, “kingdom,” as a translation of the Hebrew לְאוֹם, as indicated in the Bavli. PJ has מִלְכוּ but renders the rest of the phrase differently.

For these four Scripture verses, Targum Neofiti and Targum Onqelos are the same, giving an exact parallel to the word or phrase cited in the Babylonian Talmud as the Aramaic translation of a Hebrew word from the Torah. So far then, there is no indication whether the Bavli’s rabbis were reading the Palestinian Targum or Targum Onqelos.

(5) *Leviticus 14:52*

B. Niddah 31b provides a rendering of a three-word phrase found in Leviticus 14:52. The Hebrew verb used in the Leviticus verse is חָטָא, which usually means “to sin,” but here it is understood to mean “to purify.”

דְּכַתִּיב וְחָטָא אֶת הַבַּיִת. וּמִתְרַגְּמִין. וַיְדַכֵּי יֵת בֵּיתָא

- A. For it is written, “And he purified (וְחָטָא) the house,”
B. “Which we translate as, “And he purified (וַיְדַכֵּי) the house.”

The Aramaic rendering found here at b. Niddah 31b appears also in Targum Onqelos and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. It appears in Targum Neofiti with a single letter difference, a *heh* instead of an *aleph* at the end of “house,” i.e., ביתה instead of ביתא. This is the same dialect-related difference we saw above for “basket” (סלה סלא) at Deuteronomy 26:2, as cited in y. Bik. 65d. It is close enough that the citation could have come from either Onqelos or the Palestinian Targums.

6) *Leviticus 11:21*

B. Baba Qamma 38a cites a four-word Aramaic rendering from Leviticus 11:21. It reads:

וכתיב התם לנתר בהן על הארץ
ומתרגם לקפצא בהון על ארעא

- A. And it is written there [in the HT of Lev 11:21], “[You may eat winged insects . . . that have jointed legs above their feet] to jump with them upon the ground.”
- B. And it is translated [into Aramaic] as, “to jump with them upon the ground.”

The four-word Aramaic rendering appears in TO spelled exactly as in the Talmud. TN differs only in two letters, למקפצה בהון על ארע. The first is the exchange of the *heh* for the *aleph* at the end of the first word. The second is the missing *aleph* at the end of the fourth word. This was purposely left out by Neofiti’s copyist at the end of a line, and he signaled that a letter was missing by a slash. So again, there is really only a single letter difference, not enough to indicate that TN could not have been the source for Baba Qamma’s quotation.

So far, we have found six of the ten citations that could have originated with either TO or TN. There is no indication in these of a clear preference for one Targum over another. However, there are four further citations of Aramaic renderings that could only have come from Onqelos. They are as follows.

(7) *Deuteronomy 7:9*

Two words from Deuteronomy 7:9 are cited in b. Shabbat 10b. They appear in a discussion concerning whether one may speak about God in the privy. The point is that one should not say God’s name as it appears in Deuteronomy 7:9, not even in its Aramaic translation. We give just the rendering of the biblical material.

דכתיב האל הנאמן הכי דמתרגמינן אלהא מהימנא

- A. For it is written, “The faithful (הנאמן) God.” . . .
- B. As we translate, “The trustworthy God” (אלהא מהימנא).

Of the three Targums to this verse, only Targum Onqelos follows the Aramaic words exactly, אלהא מהימנא. TN has אלה היימנה, while PJ adds a four-word phrase by recasting it to read הוא דיינא תקיפא ומהימנא, “He is a strong and trustworthy judge.” The Aramaic quotation in b. Shab., then, originated in Targum Onqelos and not in a Palestinian Targum or Pseudo-Jonathan.

(8) Deuteronomy 25:18

B. Moed Qatan 2a gives a literal Aramaic translation of three words from Deuteronomy 25:18. Targum Onqelos’ literal rendering of the same passage matches that found in the Talmud. The Palestinian Targums expand the passage and so provide no match. M.Q. 2a reads:

דכתיב. ואתה עיף ויגע. ומתרגמינן. ואת משלהי ולא

- A. For it is written [in Hebrew in Deut 25:18], “[And when] you were weary and worn out (ואתה עיף ויגע).”
- B. And we translate [into Aramaic] as, “[And when] you were shaky and weary (ואת משלהי ולא).”

Only TO renders this passage as it appears in M.Q., ואת משלהי ולא. TN expands this passage into ואתון עמי בני ישראל הווייתון לעיין ומשלהיין, “And you my people children of Israel were weary and shaky.” PJ is similar to TN, as are both Fragment Targums.

(9) Numbers 29:1

Again the Palestinian Targums and Pseudo-Jonathan have an expansion at this verse, so TO is the only literal Targum available that can parallel the four-word Aramaic phrase in b. Rosh Hashshanah 33b. The Bavli uses the same form we have seen above.

דכתיב יום תרועה יהיה לכם ומתרגמינן יום יבבא יהא לכון

- A. For it is written, “A day of shouting it will be for you.”¹⁰
- B. And we translate [into Aramaic] as, “A day of shouting it will be for you.”

¹⁰ We have used the translation “shouting” here for תרועה; it can also mean “blowing the shofar.”

Only TO renders the four words in an unembellished fashion as they appear in the Talmud, **יום יבבא יהא לכון**. Pseudo-Jonathan expands on this passage while keeping TO's rendering: **יום יבבא יהי לכון למערבבא סטנא**, "A day of shouting it will be for you to confound Satan who comes to accuse you with a loud voice." Inside PJ's addition, however, it preserves the literal rendering of the Hebrew text found in TO. Targum Neofiti adds to the passage to include the Shofar, **יום תקועה דשופר ויבבו יהווי לכון**, "A day of blowing the shofar and shouting it will be for you."

(10) *Deuteronomy 33:12*

Deuteronomy 33:12 appears in b. Zebahim 54a. This talmudic passage interprets the biblical phrase, **וַיֵּבֶן כְּתִיפָיו שֶׁכֶן**, "and he [God] dwells between his [Benjamin's] shoulders." Two rabbis, Rav and Levi, translate the passage:

רב מתרגם באחסנתיה יתבני מדבחא

לוי מתרגם באחסנתיה יתבני מקדשא מקום מקודש לדמים

- A. Rav translated [into Aramaic], 'In his [i.e., Benjamin's] inheritance, he [God] will build the altar.'
- B. Levi translated [into Aramaic], 'In his inheritance, he will build the sanctuary—[in Hebrew:] a place sanctified for blood.'

None of the Targums translate literally at Deuteronomy 33:12. TO renders the passage as, "And in his land the Shekhinah will dwell," **ובארעיה ובארעיה תשרי שכינתא**. PJ follows this rather closely with, "And in the midst of his territory, the Shekinah will dwell."¹¹ Neither of these follow Rav's or Levi's renderings, however.

Targum Neofiti has an expansion here, and it appears that Levi has based his remarks on this Targum's interpretation. TN Deuteronomy 33:12 has:

ובתחומיה יתבני בית מוקדשה

ובאחסנתיה תשרי איקר שכינתיה דיי

And in his territory, he will build the house of the sanctuary.
And in his inheritance, the glory of the Shekinah of the Lord will dwell.

¹¹ FT(V) has a rendering similar to PJ's.

In this two-phrase expansion, TN has all of the words that appear in Levi's interpretive rendering. Indeed, the second and third clauses are Levi's comment, just reversed in order, (3) "And in his inheritance" (2) "he will build the house of his sanctuary."

Although TN has the closest rendering at Deuteronomy 33:12 to the phrase cited by Levi in the Bavli, it actually turns out that the exact phrase appears in a parallel biblical verse, Genesis 49:27. Here Targum Onqelos has a double translation, repeating its translation from Deuteronomy 33:12 and then giving the one cited in b. Zebahim 54a.

בְּאַרְעִיָּה תֵּשְׁכֵּנִי וּבְאַחֲסָנִיָּה יִתְבְּנֶי מִקְדָּשָׁא

In his land, the Shekinah will dwell and in his inheritance the sanctuary will be built.

So in the end, this constitutes a fourth passage in which the Bavli's citation of an Aramaic translation agrees exactly with Targum Onqelos but not with Targum Neofiti or other Palestinian Targums.

The four passages in which Targum Onqelos provides a parallel to the Aramaic translation found in the Bavli that is missing from the Palestinian Targum of Neofiti indicates that Targum Onqelos was most likely the Targum used in Babylonia. While the discussions of Onqelos the Proselyte and the designation of "our Targum" provide no evidence of the Targum in question, and the six passages where Onqelos and Neofiti are the same suggest either Targum could have been used, it is on the strength of these four passages we must conclude Targum Onqelos was the Targum known and used in Babylonia. Any other conclusion would create more questions than it answers, given this evidence.

It is interesting to note that the six passages where Targum Onqelos and Targum Neofiti give the same rendering are both highly literal. The passages where we see a distinction between them occur in places where Neofiti includes additional material in its translation. Even though Neofiti's literal translations do not always follow those of Onqelos, it is notable that in the six passages cited they do. It is only when the PT moves away from a literal character that the difference between them becomes clear.

CONCLUSION

The examination of the Palestinian Talmud citations of Targums indicates that by the mid-fifth century Palestinian rabbis knew all three of the major Targum types: Onqelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, and the Palestinian

Targums. They did not apparently approve of the use of Aramaic translations, allowing instead of the Hebrew text, only Greek translations to be used.¹²

Babylonia is a different case. All the evidence can be explained as attesting only the text of a single Targum, which we now call Targum Onqelos. However, passages citing “our Targum” and Onqelos as the translator of a Torah Targum do not actually provide direct evidence that can be connected to any specific Targum. So while it seems apparent that Targum Onqelos was known and used in Babylonia, that conclusion is much less categorical than it was a century ago.

¹² See Smelik, “Rabbinic Reception of Early Bible Translations.”

DATING THE TARGUMS OF ISRAEL

Paul Kahle's 1930 publication of fragmentary manuscripts of Palestinian Targums from the Cairo Genizah inaugurated a new era in the study of the Pentateuchal Targums. In part, this was because the fragments were the earliest known examples of the Palestinian Targums and revealed important similarities to, as well as differences from, already accessible exemplars of the Palestinian Targums. Kahle argued that these manuscripts were important not only for studying ancient Judaism but because they revealed the language which Jesus spoke. He contended further that the interpretative traditions contained in these Targums provided some of the foundations of biblical exegesis for the early Christian church. From this perspective, the Palestinian Targums—and the Cairo Genizah fragments in particular—preserved interpretations of the Hebrew Bible from the first century and before. These would have been known to the Christian converts who allegedly wove them into earliest Christian theology. In Kahle's view, it was necessary to analyze the Targums in order to understand the genesis of this new religion.

This view was taken up by Kahle's students and other members of what came to be known as the "Kahle School"—influential scholars such as Alejandro Díez Macho, Martin McNamara, Roger Le Déaut, Matthew Black, Michael Maher, and Pierre Grelot. When Alejandro Díez Macho announced the discovery of a complete manuscript of the Palestinian Targum—Targum Neofiti—in 1956, the few accidentally preserved expansions of the Palestinian Targums known from the Cairo Genizah fragments suddenly became an entire Pentateuch's worth of expansions. Kahle also laid the foundation for understanding their importance. For the next two decades, Díez Macho and his colleagues argued that all the Palestinian Targums—at that time including Targum Pseudo-Jonathan as well as Targum Neofiti—were¹⁵¹ pre-Christian and on that basis used

them to explicate the foundation of Christian biblical interpretation and theology.

Yet cracks in the edifice of the Targums' early dating quickly appeared. In 1962 P. Wernberg-Møller demonstrated the unreliability of the "text-critical method" for determining the pre-Christian character of Neofiti and the other Palestinian Targums, which Díez Macho had termed the "surest way" of demonstrating TN's early character. A few years later in 1974, Anthony D. York published his pivotal essay "The Dating of Targumic Literature."¹ This piece looked at each of the nine main arguments for the early dating of the Palestinian Targums propounded by Díez Macho, Le Déaut, and others. York conclusively showed that none of the arguments successfully supported the early nature of these Targums, either alone or in association with others. We will discuss some of these later in this chapter.

Although the implications of York's essay took some time to be absorbed by the field, it effectively knocked the legs out from under those wishing to date the Palestinian Targums to the first century or earlier. In the aftermath, the tide of scholarly opinion shifted from viewing Pseudo-Jonathan as containing some of the earliest interpretations—Kahle and others had interpreted Deuteronomy 33:11 not only as referring to the Hasmonean King John Hyrcanus (143–104 BCE) but as formulated during his reign—to understanding it as containing some of the latest.² In line with the position of the nineteenth-century scholar Leopold Zunz, Avigdor Shinan held that Pseudo-Jonathan was created in the seventh or eighth century CE, while D. J. Splansky held out for a late ninth-century date.³ While there is little agreement on specifics, as M. Maher points out in his introduction in the Aramaic Bible series, most scholars focused on the Islamic period.⁴ Robert Hayward, Paul Flesher, and Beverly Mortensen remain some of the few scholars who continue to understand Pseudo-Jonathan as deriving from the rabbinic period, arguing for a late fourth or early fifth-century date.⁵ By contrast, little attention has

¹ See Wernberg-Møller, "Prolegomena to a Re-Examination"; "Inquiry into the Validity"; and "Some Observations on the Relationship."

² York, "Dating of Targumic Literature," 53. Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*, 202.

³ Avigdor Shinan took this position in the published version of his doctoral dissertation and has argued it in several articles since that time. See Shinan, *Aggadah in the Aramaic Targums*, 1:119–46; Shinan, "The 'Palestinian' Targums," "Live Translation," and "Dating Targum Pseudo-Jonathan." For Donald Splansky's arguments, see "Targum Pseudo-Jonathan," 99–105.

⁴ Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 1B:11–12.

⁵ Hayward, "Red Heifer," 31–32. See the bibliography listed at the article's beginning. The key essays have been collected in Hayward, *Targums and the Transmission of Scripture*. Flesher and Mortensen also see Pseudo-Jonathan as stemming from the rabbinic period,

been paid in the most recent phase of research to dating Targum Onqelos, Targum Neofiti, and the Palestinian Targums. B. Grossfeld discusses the dating of Targum Onqelos in his introduction to the Aramaic Bible translation, and M. McNamara does the same for Targum Neofiti in his introduction—although McNamara’s dating of Targum Neofiti is based on a single word in Jerome.⁶ The most ambitious study is that by Roger Syrén, *The Blessings in the Targums*, in which he tries to bolster G. Vermes’ view that TO *derives from* the Palestinian Targums—an attractive position in many ways but one which is deflated by our recent understanding of the development of the Aramaic dialects.⁷

In light of this unsatisfactory situation, it is time to start over. We need to establish a solid base on which to build a foundation for accurate dating of the Pentateuchal Targums. This introductory book has already begun that effort by laying out three important characteristics of these texts: the place of the Targums’ dialects with the history of Aramaic in Judaism, their relationships as determined by studies of their sources, and citations of them in rabbinic literature. This chapter will apply that knowledge as the first step toward accurately dating the Pentateuchal Targums. These investigations will enable us to propose a solid chronological range during which each Targum and its sources were written.

Bringing together these three characteristics—dialect, source relationships, and rabbinic citations—constitutes an advance in our ability to date the Targums. When York wrote, only one of the criteria was available, that of comparison with rabbinic literature—and that measure has since changed. In 1974 the chronology and character of Jewish Aramaic dialects were not understood as fully as they are today, and the source study of the Pentateuchal Targums had not yet even begun. Furthermore, in 1974 the “Neusner revolution” in the study of rabbinic literature was only just beginning.⁸ The earliest impact of that transformation was the

with Mortensen arguing for a late fourth-century date. See Mortensen, *Priesthood in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, 445–49.

⁶ McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, 43–45. Citing Jerome’s *Hebraicae quaestiones in Genesis* to 8:6, McNamara derives a fourth-century date. See also Hayward on Jerome, who identifies several interpretations that Jerome shares with the Pentateuchal Targums in his “St. Jerome’s *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*.” Jerome also seems to know some Prophetic Targums, as Hayward shows in “Jewish Traditions in Jerome’s Commentary on Jeremiah” and “Saint Jerome and the Aramaic Targumim.” For Grossfeld’s case, see *Targum Onqelos to Genesis*, 30–35.

⁷ Syrén, *Blessings in the Targums*, 195–99. Vermes, “Targumic Versions of Genesis 4:3–16.”

⁸ Neusner has hundreds of published works to his credit and it is difficult to single out even the most important ones. For the reenvisioning of the historical character of rabbinic literature, the more seminal works include Neusner, *History of the Mishnaic Law of Purities*, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah*, and *Judaism and Scripture*. Neusner, *Oral Torah*, contains

recognition that the date of a cited rabbi could not be the date of the interpretation imputed to him. Instead, the relevant date was more likely to be either the date of the document's composition—or perhaps the date of a literary layer within a text, if that could be discerned.

The next step is to narrow down this range by proposing more specific dates based upon demonstrable links between the Targums and external texts or historical circumstances. This is where the lack of scholarship in recent years becomes most clear. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan has received the bulk of serious attention on the question of dating. So although we can readily discuss specific, proposed dates for that Targum, our ability to do so for either Onqelos or the Palestinian Targums is significantly less.

Rather than simply relating the positions different scholars have worked out for Pseudo-Jonathan, however, we will organize our discussion of this text by laying out and illustrating the key considerations for mounting a credible case for dating a Targum as a whole. Through the application to PJ, we will be able to make clear how these criteria need to be applied to other Targums as well.

THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE PENTATEUCHAL TARGUMS

The analysis of the sources of the Pentateuchal Targums in chapters 6 and 7 laid out the relationships among them. These relationships reveal the relative dating of the Targums, enabling us to determine which came first, second, and so on. First, we discovered that they shared among themselves (and with Pseudo-Jonathan) a single primary source for the expansions they had in common—namely, the Proto-PT source. The Palestinian Targums furthermore shared a common translation. Both of these shared elements were treated synoptically. This synoptic character meant that sometimes different versions of the PTs were identical in wording and sometimes they made their own minor—and occasionally major—revisions or additions to the common source. So there was a core Palestinian Targum—which we have called the Proto-PT source—upon which the Targum versions we now possess were built.

Second, Targum Onqelos contains evidence indicating it has connections with the Proto-PT source or at least a subset of it. It contains added material that links up to about 30 percent of the Proto-PT expansions. We do not know the exact nature of this connection, although two scenarios seem possible. On the one hand, Proto-PT could have been composed in

bibliography on his work on a number of rabbinic texts. For further suggestions, see the citations in the bibliography and bibliographical note at the end of chapter 4.

response to Onqelos or to its Proto-Onqelos first stage. On the other hand, it could be that both Targums—Onqelos and the original Palestinian Targum—drew upon a common source but developed independently.⁹ Onqelos' links to Proto-PT's expansions finds reinforcement in the presence of occasional, and in places regular, links between the translations of TO and the PTs, as we saw in chapter 7.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan reveals relationships to both the earlier Targum types. PJ clearly knows TO's translation and updates and modifies it, even as PJ uses it for its foundational translation. Yet PJ also knows of the Proto-PT expansions, using them broadly even as it occasionally modifies them. PJ's own source of expansions, PJ-unique, is placed in the Targum on top of and sometimes in place of the Proto-PT material. Similarly, it repeatedly draws upon the translation shared among the PTs to modify its TO-based rendering.

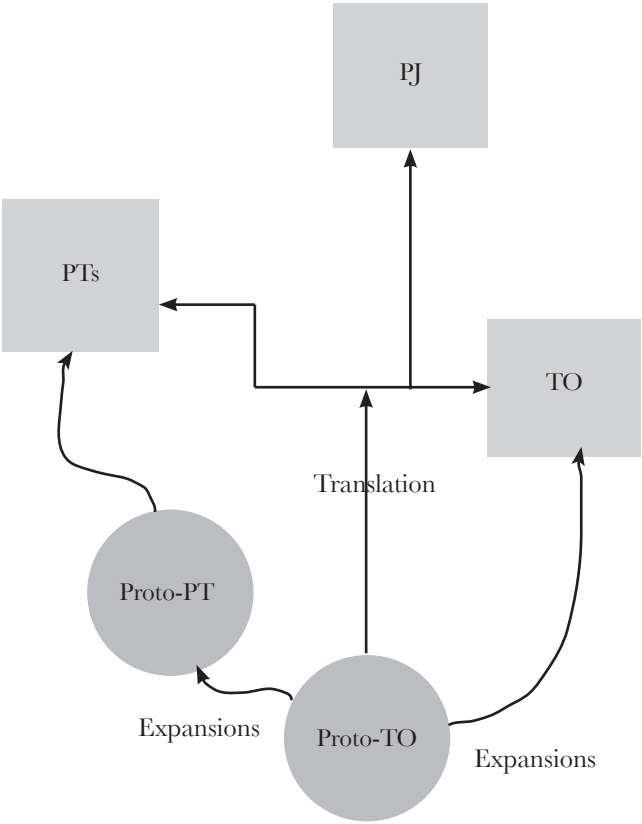
So the sources underlying the translations and the expansions reveal the same relationships among the three Targum types and their order of creation. Diagram 9.1 illustrates the relationships among these Targums and their order: Targum Onqelos, Palestinian Targums, and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.

FROM RELATIONSHIPS TO A CHRONOLOGICAL RANGE

Our understanding of the development of Aramaic dialects within Judaism and among Jews and their neighbors reveals the order in which Jewish dialects of Aramaic arose and thus the chronology of the Targums that were written in them. Our discussion in chapter 1 (greatly elaborated in chapter 13) explains that Jewish Literary Aramaic (JLA) comprises the earliest dialect relevant to the Targums, developing through the period of Middle Aramaic from the early second century BCE down through the second century CE. JLA undergoes normal linguistic change during this period, but the morphology of Targum Onqelos fits with the status of the dialect in the mid- to late first century CE. Thus 50 CE serves as an approximate *terminus a quo* for Onqelos; it was probably not composed before this time. Yet within Palestine there is no evidence that JLA is a dialect capable of producing texts or even inscriptions after about 150 CE. This provides a *terminus ad quem* for the creation of Proto-Onqelos in that region. Palestinian writers would not have composed Proto-Onqelos after this time. Unfortunately, we know little about the history of JLA in Babylonia or elsewhere, so we cannot fix a *terminus ad quem* for areas outside

⁹ The most extensive, recent attempts to identify a common source for TO and the Palestinian Targums are Syrén, *Blessings in the Targums*, 195–99, and Flesher, “Is *Targum Onqelos* a Palestinian Targum?”

Diagram 9.1: Relationships among the Pentateuchal Targums and Their Shared Sources



the Land of Israel. Since Targum Onqelos is known primarily from the Babylonian Talmud, this allows a much broader period of time (up to the start of the 6th century) for the editing of its second stage.

Second, the earliest evidence for Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA) comes from the early third century CE, essentially the year 200, which comprises the start of the Late Aramaic Period. This is the dialect of Targum Neofiti and the other Palestinian Targums. Some of the Cairo Genizah Targum fragments are considered to be the best exemplars of this dialect. The third century date comes from archaeological finds and inscriptions of that time as well as from the use of Aramaic in rabbinic documents. While this evidence provides the *terminus a quo* for the widespread use of this dialect, most linguists of Aramaic see the second century as the time during which this dialect developed, so documents written in it could have been composed earlier than the third century. The period

during which JPA was used extensively stretches from the third century to the end of the fifth century, at least for literary works. Despite this, JPA possesses no clear *terminus ad quem*; it continued to be used in inscriptions and legal documents after this time. Even following the Islamic conquest of Jerusalem and Palestine in 637, there is a burial inscription from Baalbek in Lebanon dated to 837 and a **ketubah** from around 1000 that preserves JPA legal formulations.¹⁰

Third, the dialect of Late Jewish Literary Aramaic (LJLA) developed from these earlier two dialects, combining and building upon them. This is the dialect of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. We know little about this dialect's dates at present, and remain without a solid fix on its beginning, its end, and even its period of widest use.

The history of Aramaic dialects in Judaism fits with the general order provided by the Targums' source relationships. In doing so, it provides some rough dates for the Targumim. The range for the first stage of Targum Onqelos (i.e., Proto-TO) is fairly narrow, from roughly 50 to 150 CE. Any second stage would obviously have followed afterwards. Following the linguistic evidence, the Palestinian Targums were probably not composed before the late second century, and most likely by the end of the fifth century. But since JPA seems to have remained a productive dialect for several more centuries, dialect chronology cannot rule out a later date. The dating of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan receives little help from our knowledge of Aramaic dialects, since we know so little about its dialect. The only conclusion we can draw is that this dialect comes after the other two, which fits the relationships Pseudo-Jonathan has with the other two types of Targums.

Chapter 8's examination of Aramaic quotations of Scripture in rabbinic literature can partially resolve the inability of dialect history to provide a *terminus ad quem* for the Targums. Palestinian rabbinic texts from the first half of the fifth century had citations in common with all three Targum types. The Palestinian Talmud contained citations from both the Palestinian Targums and from Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, while Lamentations Rabbah revealed a citation from Targum Onqelos. The Babylonian Talmud provides solid evidence of TO, although it comes nearly two centuries later, at the start of the seventh century.

The Palestinian Talmud's citation of an elaborated expansion from Pseudo-Jonathan indicates that the Targum was at the latest composed by 400 CE or so, the time frame of the Yerushalmi's creation. This is

¹⁰ See Flesher, "When?"; Naccach, "Ninth Century A.D. Judeo-Aramaic Epitaph"; and Friedman, *Jewish Marriage in Palestine*, 1–34.

significant, for it shows that this Targum was part of the rabbinic period and not a late, post-rabbinic afterthought.

The Palestinian Targums receive the same *terminus ad quem* from the Palestinian Talmud as Pseudo-Jonathan. However, our understanding of the source relationship between the Palestinian Targums and Pseudo-Jonathan suggest that the Palestinian Targums began their existence many decades earlier, perhaps even a century or more. If Pseudo-Jonathan came into being by the end of the fourth century, then the Palestinian Targums would have been created by the end of the third century. This would put the *terminus ad quem* after the Tosefta, but significantly before the Yerushalmi.

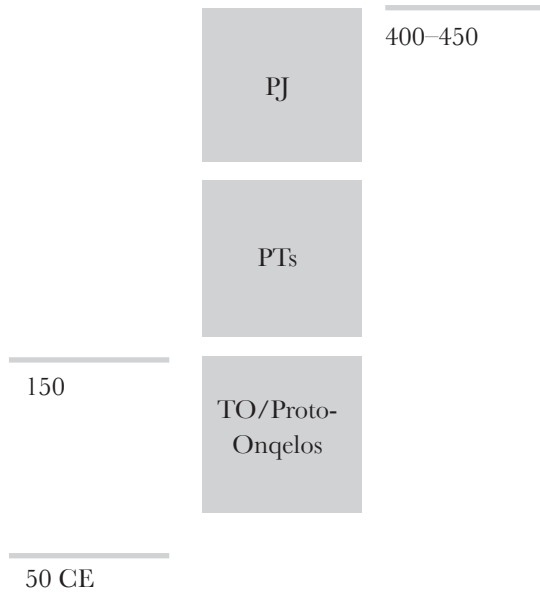
Rabbinic literature is not as helpful with Targum Onqelos. While the Bavli's citations give a *terminus ad quem* of the early seventh century, Lamentations Rabbah places it into the start of the fifth century. By contrast, the development of dialects suggests that Targum Onqelos' first stage was composed before 150 CE and our understanding of its relationships with Proto-PT makes it the earliest of the Pentateuchal Targums, perhaps second or even first century.

One last observation reinforces the place of all three Targum types as belonging to the first five centuries in Palestine. Most languages borrow words from those around them. The Aramaic of the Targums is no exception to this rule. All three Targums contain loan words from both Greek and Latin, the primary languages used by the Roman Empire in their centuries-long governing of Palestine. By contrast, none of the Pentateuchal Targums—not even Pseudo-Jonathan, the latest one—show evidence of linguistic borrowing from the next dominant empire over Palestine—namely, Arabic. While this does not change any ranges of dates mentioned above, it does cement the conclusion that all these Targums are pre-Islamic. Diagram 9.2 shows the chronological ranges of these Targums as we have explicated them.

NARROWING THE DATES OF THE PENTATEUCHAL TARGUMS

Moving from such broad chronological ranges for the composition of each Targum toward more narrowly defined dates has always been difficult. The degree of certainty associated with the broader frames reduces as the range of dates becomes more specific. The problem comes from relying on relative dating. Even if we knew for certain that TO was composed in 150 and that Pseudo-Jonathan was written in 400, for instance, that would still leave a 250-year span for the creation of the Palestinian Targums. That period spans both the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods of the rabbinic era, from the formative time before the composition of the Mishnah, the first

Diagram 9.2: Fixed Dates for the Pentateuchal Targums



rabbinic text, to its final work, the Palestinian Talmud. This breadth is not very helpful in locating a social or religious background, or a historical moment, for the origin of the first Palestinian Targum.

York's 1974 essay has encouraged caution among Targum scholars, and perhaps even discouraged interest, in determining the dates of Pentateuchal Targums. There have been no large-scale attempts to date the Palestinian Targums since then and nearly all the dates proposed for Pseudo-Jonathan have been post-Islamic. Indeed, of the three Targum types, only Pseudo-Jonathan has received any serious scholarly analysis and debate concerning its dating since 1974.

So Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is the only one of the three Targum types for which we can discuss recent scholarly attempts to narrow the chronological range toward a more limited date. We could just discuss the dates proposed for PJ and leave the matter there. However, since it is clear that more work will be done on dating these Targums, it would be more helpful to use the proposals for Pseudo-Jonathan to bring out the methodological considerations that need to be addressed when trying to ascertain a Targum's date.

Dating is usually determined by showing connections between subjects within the targumic texts to events, people, documents, or ideas

external to the text. When these connections are simple and straightforward then dating is clear. When the connections are more complex—as they often are with regard to the Targumim—conclusions concerning dating become less certain. For all the Targums, the same complexities usually arise in scholarly analysis. These are best understood in a specific context. So let us turn to a discussion of the date of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, the latest of the three Targum types, and begin the analysis by addressing the methodological difficulties faced by PJ as an example of those faced in most attempts to date Targums.

Methodological Principles of Dating Targums: Preliminary Considerations

The first principle is that the goal is to date a Targum text, not the manuscript in which it appears. Targums, like all ancient texts, were transmitted by the painstaking, hand-copying of manuscripts, one by one. Most of the ancient Jewish texts we have today come from manuscripts copied during the Middle Ages or later. The main exception to this comes from the Dead Sea Scrolls, of course. Even the Babylonian Talmud, the most holy work of Judaism after the Bible, is only poorly evidenced by its manuscripts. A manuscript may reveal some information relevant to dating, of course, but the date of a manuscript is rarely the date of the original text.

The second principle for dating a Targum can be stated quite simply: find passages within a Targum that mention historical events, writings, interpretations, or ideas external to the Targum. This usually happens ad hoc. Targums focus consistently on the biblical narrative and references to current events occur in the additional material without any systematic plan.

When targumic references to external events, activities, people, or places appear, they establish a *terminus a quo* indicating a date before which that passage could not have been written. Pseudo-Jonathan's mention of the six orders of the Mishnah in Exodus 26:9, for instance, could not have happened until after 200 CE, the date of the Mishnah's publication. Similarly, the reference to Constantinople in Numbers 24:19 and 24 could not have occurred until after Constantine built that city in 324–330. While the reference to the Mishnah gives a *terminus a quo* of the third century for Pseudo-Jonathan, the remark about Constantinople pushes the date back to the middle of the fourth century.

The third principle addresses a complication in applying this simple approach to dating Targums by matching passages with external historical events or personages. Linking a particular passage within a Targum to an external event does not necessarily provide a date for the Targum as a whole. This is because the passage in question may or may not represent

a Targum as a whole; it may comprise an interpretation that circulated a long time before being included in the text. Or it might have been added by an enthusiastic copyist decades or even centuries later. So a careful researcher should determine whether a passage being dated represents the larger Targum. Let us look at this principle more closely.

On the one hand, this problem can arise for claims of early composition. There are two aspects to this issue. First, does a passage that can be dated early represent its Targum as a whole? This would suggest that the Targum was written at that early date. Second, most passages that are in a sense “early” usually establish a *terminus a quo*, a date after which the text in question could have been written. By definition, that means any time after that moment, up until a *terminus ad quem* determines the upper limit, even if it is several centuries later. It does not tie the passage (or the Targum in which it appears) to the early date.

Paul Kahle recognized both elements of this problem in his claim that Pseudo-Jonathan’s interpretation of Deuteronomy 33:11 could be dated to the end of the second century BCE.¹¹ He held that the verse referred approvingly to the historical personage of the Maccabean High Priest and King John Hyrcanus. The approving comment, argued Kahle, must have come from Hyrcanus’ own time because, upon his death, he came to be regarded widely as wicked. Hyrcanus’ death thus addresses the second aspect of early dating by establishing a *terminus ad quem* for creation of the interpretation. Kahle further argued that it must have been incorporated into an existing Targum Pseudo-Jonathan at that time because his later infamy would have prevented it. This argument constitutes a claim that the interpretation addresses the first aspect of early dating—that the passage belongs to the Targum as a whole (although it does not indicate why the interpretation remained in the Targum for centuries). Of course, this analysis of Pseudo-Jonathan Deuteronomy 33:11’s use of “Jonathan” has now been refuted, as well as the claims for dating built upon it.¹²

On the other hand, the problem of whether or not a passage represents the whole Targum applies at the other end of the historical spectrum as well. Does a passage that refers to a late historical event or person indicate a late date for the Targum itself? Here, the primary issue is whether a passage with a historical reference represents the Targum as a whole or whether it was added (by a copyist?) after the Targum’s composition. This can be exemplified by the debate over PJ’s rendering of Genesis 21:21, which reads as follows concerning Ishmael:

¹¹ Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*, 202.

¹² See York, “Dating of Targumic Literature.” But see also Syren, *Blessings*, 173–76.

ויתב במדברא דפארן ונסיב איתא ית עדישא ותרצה

ונסיבת ליה אימיה ית פטימא אתתא מארעא דמצרים

Then he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, and he took as a wife Adisha, but drove her out. Then his mother took *Fatima* as a wife for him from the land of Egypt.¹³

Adisha here refers to Khadijah, Muhammad's first wife, and Fatima refers to their daughter. Pseudo-Jonathan uses this (imagined) serial marriage to associate Muhammad with the sin of Ishmael who married a woman and her daughter, thus violating the taboo laid out in Leviticus 18:17. This clearly makes Ishmael inferior to Isaac and mounts a polemic against Islam, represented by Ishmael. The interpretation can only stem from a time after the Islamic conquest of Palestine in 637 CE. If this passage represents Pseudo-Jonathan as a whole, then the Targum must be dated to the mid-seventh century at the earliest.¹⁴

Yet if this expansion was added after Pseudo-Jonathan's original composition, then it indicates nothing about the date of the work as a whole. It would indicate information about the activities of a later scribe rather than the composition of the work. Indeed, it turns out that this is the only overt reference to Islam in Pseudo-Jonathan and one of only three or four passages that can be interpreted as references to Islam.¹⁵ Given that the majority of the 1,801 additions that Mortensen has assigned to the PJ-unique source address priestly matters, this is more likely a later addition rather than part of the Targum's core.

When trying to work out a date by comparison with a historical *event*, as we have seen, it is clear that the Targum interpretation or reference comes after the event. When comparing *interpretations* of biblical stories between a Targum and another text, such as a rabbinic midrash or a Talmud, that obviously no longer holds. The Targum may have borrowed from the rabbinic text or the rabbinic text may have borrowed from the Targum. The researcher must mount an argument and cannot just assume influence one way or the other. In the past, many scholars simply assumed that Targums were secondary to "proper" rabbinic literature; Targums drew their interpretations from the rabbinic texts and

¹³ Translation by Clem with our italics.

¹⁴ Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 11–12. The post-Islamic date of Pseudo-Jonathan is accepted in recent times in A. Shinan, *Aggadah in the Aramaic Targums of the Pentateuch*, 1:52 and 2:348–49; Le Déaut and Robert, *Targum du Pentateuque*, 1:89; Splan-sky, "Targum Pseudo-Jonathan," 94–99, 100–105; M. Ohana, "La polémique judéo-islamique"; and E. M. Cook, "Rewriting the Bible," 278.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Gen 16:12, 25:13, 35:22, and Num 7:87, as they have been understood by scholars in the previous note. See Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 11–12.

so were written afterwards. This presupposition is now understood as simply untenable. A second problem with comparing interpretations or stories from two texts is known as **parallelomania**. This is the notion that because two texts interpret the same biblical passage or mention the same concept they are related. Let us look at how these have functioned in the discussion of dating Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.

Since the 1970s, scholars such as A. Shinan and M. Ohana have argued that PJ is late because it depends on a number of exegeses found in the rabbinic work *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer* (*PRE*), generally thought to have been composed in the eighth or ninth century.¹⁶ M. Pérez Fernández, who translated the work into Spanish in 1984, sees a strong relationship between the two but suggests that they come from a common, roughly contemporary source or a common milieu. He provides a list of thirty-nine instances where he sees Pseudo-Jonathan and *PRE* linked.¹⁷ Pérez Fernández argues that these show *PRE* and Pseudo-Jonathan to be contemporary, while Ohana and Shinan would argue that they show Pseudo-Jonathan to come after *PRE*.

Robert Hayward reevaluated the examples of parallels cited by Pérez Fernández and found that the supposed links between the two texts were overstated.¹⁸ An example from Genesis 1:21, concerning the fifth day of creation, illustrates the unfounded character of these asserted ties. While the Hebrew text says only that God created the “sea monsters” on this day (in the plural), Pseudo-Jonathan adds “Leviathan and his partner,” Behemoth, were created then. *PRE* 9:3 likewise indicates that Leviathan was created on the fifth day. Looks like a parallel, right? Not quite, for *PRE* goes on to state in 11:1 that Behemoth was created on the *sixth* day. So no true parallel between PJ and *PRE* exists; *PRE* does not even follow the clear implication of the biblical text that more than one monster was created on the fifth day. Furthermore, Genesis Rabbah, written several centuries earlier in the fifth century, does parallel Pseudo-Jonathan in designating the two monsters created on the fifth day (Gen. Rab. 7:4). So Pseudo-Jonathan here does not depend on *PRE*, but is linked more closely to Genesis Rabbah. This example is typical of many of the so-called parallels by which *PRE* supposedly demonstrates Pseudo-Jonathan’s late character; the claimed parallel interpretations simply do not exist. Rather, an analogy among three texts—Pseudo-Jonathan, Genesis Rabbah, and *PRE*—invites consideration but does not by itself prove the influence of

¹⁶ See Ohana, “La Polémique judéo-islamique,” and Shinan, “Dating Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.”

¹⁷ Pérez Fernández, *Los capítulos de Rabbi Eliezer*.

¹⁸ Hayward, “Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” 219.

one text on another, which is often mistakenly assumed in the assertion of “parallels.”¹⁹

A better case for contact between *PRE* and Pseudo-Jonathan appears at Genesis 2:15. Here Pseudo-Jonathan says that Adam is put in the Garden of Eden “to toil *in the Torah* and to keep *its commandments*.” *PRE* 12 says concerning this verse, “[The text] does not say ‘to dress it and to keep it’ except [in the sense of] being occupied with the words of the Torah and keeping all its commandments.” *PRE* and Pseudo-Jonathan are clearly analogous here even though they share little wording; it seems the structure of the two passages is so close that clearly one depends on the other. It turns out however that the additional material in Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis 2:15 constitutes a Proto-PT expansion that Pseudo-Jonathan shares with Targum Neofiti and the other Palestinian Targums. Pseudo-Jonathan drew from the Proto-PT source here and not from *PRE*. Rather than indicating that Pseudo-Jonathan depends on *PRE* in the verse, it must be that *PRE* drew from either Pseudo-Jonathan or one of the Palestinian Targums.²⁰

So clearly one must be careful about the treatment of “parallel” passages between the Targums and other texts, investigating analogies thoroughly rather treating them superficially. Despite the apparent ease with which we just showed that *PRE* depended on Pseudo-Jonathan (or a PT) at Genesis 2:15, it is often difficult to show with parallel texts which one borrowed from the other.

A Methodology for Dating Targums: The Case of Pseudo-Jonathan

Finally, let us look at a method developed by Robert Hayward for comparing Targums with rabbinic and other texts that addresses these shortcomings. The approach’s key principle is to select a biblical passage of a number of verses (rather than a single targumic insertion or a single verse) and to compare all the interpretations and additions found in that passage in a Targum and in the texts to which it is being compared. The method has three steps. First, the passage for analysis is chosen carefully. In the Targum, the passage should have a comparatively large number of detailed expansions and, similarly, the passage should attract significant analysis in one, or preferably several, other texts. Second, a close reading

¹⁹ This issue is discussed in Chilton, Bock, and Gurtner, *A Comparative Handbook to the Gospel of Mark*, vii–xii.

²⁰ Flesher, “Theology of the Afterlife,” 46. It is also clear that one of *PRE*’s principles is to bring together interpretations from other texts. The list of rabbinic works from which *PRE* borrows is fairly long. PJ seems simply to be one of the texts from which it borrows material.

of the Targum (in light of the biblical text) and a comparison of each of the Targums' details with all relevant texts should then take place. If possible, attempts to determine whether the Targum's material seems to be earlier or later than material in the other texts should be undertaken whenever possible. Third, the results of the analysis of each interpretive detail are then brought together, and the relationships between targumic information and the external texts are triangulated, along with those texts' dates.

Hayward demonstrated this method in his study of Pseudo-Jonathan's version of Numbers 19:1-10, the description of the Red Heifer ceremony.²¹ In these ten verses, he finds thirty-four separate items that Pseudo-Jonathan adds into its rendering of the Hebrew text. Twenty of these find agreement in rabbinic literature, usually with the Mishnah, Tosefta, Sifré Numbers, or Sifré Zutta. There is no literary indication in the material itself of one text being earlier or later than another, although clearly the Mishnah is earlier than the Tosefta. The texts share ideas, concerns, and interpretations with the Targum but not wording. There is no indication of copying in one direction or the other. Another nine interpretive details appear in Pseudo-Jonathan only and not in any rabbinic text, so there is no opportunity for comparison.

That leaves five items in which Pseudo-Jonathan's position on a question or issue disagrees with a statement in the rabbinic literature. In three of them, Sifré Numbers cites the position found in Pseudo-Jonathan in order explicitly to disqualify it. In all three, Pseudo-Jonathan is the only known text advocating the invalidated position. In a fourth, Pseudo-Jonathan sides with the Tosefta against the Mishnah, and in the fifth, it sides with R. Judah against R. Ishmael in a debate contained in the Sifré.

How does Hayward interpret these results? He argues that the agreement of twenty items suggests that Pseudo-Jonathan was written during the time these interpretive debates were underway. That would make it roughly contemporary with Sifré Numbers and the Tosefta—late third century or early fourth century—especially after Pseudo-Jonathan sides with the Tosefta against the Mishnah. For the three positions found in Pseudo-Jonathan that Sifré explicitly argues against, this would suggest that they preceded the Sifré—a position which would place Pseudo-Jonathan slightly earlier. In the end, this would indicate that Pseudo-Jonathan, or at least this section of it, was composed in the early part of the fourth.

If the results of Hayward's analysis are born out by applying the method to further passages, then a date of Pseudo-Jonathan for the fourth century will become more reliable. This method can also be used for

²¹ See Hayward, "Red Heifer," who draws his method from earlier analysis of Tg. Jon. (see chap. 10) pioneered by Bruce Chilton.

dating the Palestinian Targums and their Proto-PT source as well. It may work for Targum Onqelos, although there will be fewer passages where the necessary wealth of additions and details can be found.

CONCLUSION

The chapter's first half brought together the topics of the previous three chapters to address the question of how to date the Pentateuchal Targums. The source studies reveal for the first time a clear picture of the relationships among the three classes of Pentateuchal Targums, a set of relationships that also provides a chronology for their composition: with Proto-Onqelos coming first, followed by the development of the Palestinian Targums with their Proto-PT source, and then Targum Pseudo-Jonathan with its PJ-unique source. Triangulating this picture with the understanding of Jewish Aramaic dialect history developed in recent decades and with Targum citations in Palestinian rabbinic literature, we find a chronological range for all the Targums of approximately four centuries, with the initial composition of Targum Onqelos coming at the beginning of that period, by the middle of the second century, and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan coming toward the end, before the composition of the Palestinian Talmud. The origins of the Palestinian Targums lie somewhere in the centuries between.

Narrowing the wider chronological ranges established in the chapter's first half into more limited dates for the Targums will take a significant amount of research, most of which is yet to be done. That research will need to follow the method laid out by Robert Hayward or a similarly exacting approach. However it is accomplished, it is necessary to deal directly with the internal features of each Targum, most likely at the level of individual passages and interpretations, not by themselves, but as a group in which the differing results may be woven into a single explanation that accounts for all of them.

In a recent study Paul Flesher argued on the basis of principles of historical linguistics that Proto-Onqelos must have been written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.²² This is a good hypothesis, but it exemplifies ideas that need to be tested and solidified by close analysis of specific targumic passages in light of external evidence. In other words, it and other proposals should be subjected to critical scrutiny following Hayward's principles to see whether they will stand.

²² Flesher, "The Literary Legacy of the Priests?"

SECTION III

The Targums of the Prophets and the Writings

TARGUM JONATHAN OF THE PROPHETS

Its Development as Revealed by the Targum of Isaiah

The books of the Prophets—both Former and Latter—are extant in Aramaic in a single collection known as Targum Jonathan. The date and character of each Targum within the collection needs to be assessed individually. As we will see in this chapter and the next, analysis identifies definite patterns that associate some of these Targumim with definable periods and schools of thought. Although Targum Jonathan is not the work of a single translator, neither is it simply a random anthology of unrelated works.

Because the Targumim were composed during the rabbinic period and in conversation with the interpretations found in rabbinic documents, it is natural to suppose that rabbinic tradition might be a reliable guide in investigating the history of targumic development. But when the Babylonian Talmud addresses the rabbinic relationship to the Targums, it does so in a way that is manifestly ahistorical. At Megillah 3a, the Bavli ascribes the entire corpus of Targum Jonathan to Jonathan ben Uzziel, a disciple of Hillel, who was a famous contemporary of Jesus. There are compelling reasons not to accept that attribution at face value, because rabbinic texts tend to identify people as rabbis for ideological reasons. Naming an authority for an opinion might give it weight, or it might suggest that it was a purely individual judgment which should be superseded by others. The principal point of an attribution was that an opinion should be considered, not that it should be accepted; issues of historical accuracy and careful chronology were not in play.¹

In this light, the passage in b. Meg. 3a intimates *both* that Jonathan rendered the Targum for noble reasons *and* that he exceeded his authority by what he said. The actions attributed to him evoke a sense of the

¹ For a lucid discussion, see Neusner, “Evaluating the Attributions of Sayings.”

controversy surrounding the formal production of a Targum of the Prophets:

- A. Rabbi Jeremiah—or some say Rabbi Hiyya b. Abba—also said:
- B. The Targum of the Pentateuch was composed by Onqelos the Proselyte under the guidance of Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Joshua.
- C. The Targum of the Prophets was composed by Jonathan ben Uzziel under the guidance of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi,
- D. and the land of Israel quaked over an area of four hundred parasangs,² and a *bat qol* came forth and cried: Who is this that has revealed my secrets to men?
- E. Jonathan ben Uzziel arose and said, I have revealed your secrets to mankind. But it is known to you that I have not done this for my own honor or the honor of my father's house, but for your honor—that divisions might not increase in Israel.
- F. He also sought to reveal the Writings by a Targum, but a *bat qol* came forth and said: Enough! For this reason—that the end of the Messiah is told in it.³

Line A intimates that the memory even of the person who attributed the Targum Jonathan was uncertain. Whether it was Jeremiah or Hiyya, the fact remains that it was only in the fourth century CE that it was “remembered” that Jonathan had composed the Targum in the first century.

But anachronism is something this haggadah concerning Jonathan delights in. The biblical prophets named cannot have been actual contemporaries of Jonathan, who lived centuries after the prophets named. Indeed, because Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are taken within rabbinic discussion to have been active near the time of the restoration of the temple (around 515 BCE), the chronology of the statement is as outlandish in moving backward to those prophets as it is in moving forward to the time of Rabbis Jeremiah and Hiyya.

² It has been suggested on the basis of a traditional calculation that the area was the total size of the land of Israel; see Zlotowitz and Goldwurm, *Tractate Megillah*. The editors cite Rashi's comment on Num 13:25 by way of precedent. But Herodotus gives the length of the Persian royal road from Sardis to Susa as 450 parasangs (see *Histories* 5.52–53), which would make the area described here larger than most estimates of territorial Israel. In any case, a parasang came to nearly 6 km; see Astour, “Overland Trade Routes in Ancient Western Asia,” 1417–20.

³ Our translation.

This haggadah was not intended to be taken literally, but should instead be understood in relation to Jeremiah/Hiyya's next statement in b. Meg. 3a. In it, the tradent identifies the companions of Daniel in Daniel 10:7 as Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. According to the verse, Daniel had a vision. Jeremiah/Hiyya points out that even though his three companions were prophets, they saw nothing. Jeremiah/Hiyya in this way set up Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi as transitional between the two figures of Daniel and Jonathan ben Uzziel. In both cases the three prophets are tied to the disclosure of mysteries, whether Daniel's visions or Jonathan's "secrets" of lines D and F.

Moreover, this passage in the Talmud goes on to portray Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi as the connection between the secrets known and related by Jonathan in the Writings, particularly in the book of Daniel. In his discussion of Daniel 10:7, Jeremiah/Hiyya wonders why Daniel's companions—in his interpretation, the three prophets named—fled if they saw no vision, which is what Daniel 10:7 reports. The answer is that their "stars" or spirits (*mazaloth*) saw the vision, although their physical selves did not. At the time of Jeremiah/Hiyya, there was a rabbinic anthropology current in which one's spiritual self and one's physical self were held to be distinct. This anthropology permits communication between the three last biblical prophets and Daniel, and between the same three and Jonathan ben Uzziel—whatever their chronologies might have been. Jonathan is therefore in a position, as this haggadah would have it, to reveal what is not to be revealed until the appointed time. The haggadah in Megillah 3a, then, is no bland assertion of authorship, but an evaluation of the kind of supernatural knowledge which Targum Jonathan is believed to convey.

In fact, the Targum of Isaiah itself claims such eschatological knowledge in Targum Isaiah 24:16.

*From the sanctuary, whence joy is about to go forth to all the inhabitants of the earth, we hear a song for the righteous. The prophet said, "The mystery of the reward for the righteous is visible to me, the mystery of the retribution for the wicked is revealed to me! Woe to the robbers, who are robbed, and to the plunder of the plunderers, which is now plundered."*⁴

The revelation to the prophet in the Targum corresponds to the definitive revelation of "the kingdom of the Lord of hosts" on Mount Zion (Tg. Isa. 24:23), when the Messiah builds the temple there (Tg. Isa. 53:5). Prophecy, the kingdom, and the Messiah are interwoven themes through Targum

⁴ All Targum translations in this chapter are from The Aramaic Bible series, edited by McNamara. Translations of Tg. Isa. in particular are from Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*. Translations of Scripture are from the NRSV.

Jonathan as a whole, and the tradition in Megillah 3a is better taken as an index of targumic ideology than as a historical reference.

Even though attributions should not be taken at face value, it seems as unwise to dismiss the Talmudic attribution completely as it is to accept it uncritically. The focus on the immediate rebuilding of the temple is most sensibly dated to the years soon after the Roman destruction in 70 CE, and there are several cases in which Jesus' citations of Scripture correspond better to Targum Jonathan than to any other ancient version (see discussion in chapter 17). Moreover, Jonathan's stated purpose (line E), the avoidance of divisions in Israel, is precisely the problem that is held in the Palestinian Talmud (see Hag. 77d) to have increased after the time of Hillel and Shammai in the early first century. So too, the place of the *bat qol* in b. Meg. 3a is pivotal; the claim attributed to a slightly later time (that of Eliezer ben Hyracanus after 70 CE) would make such phenomena less authoritative than the rule of a majority of the sages. In b. Baba Metzia 59a&b (a famous haggadah concerning the purity of a stove), Eliezer aims to prove he is correct against a majority of sages by miraculous signs, and he is supported by a *bat qol*, which disputes even the propriety of arguing with Eliezer. But the majority persists, and Elijah himself warrants that they are right to do so in God's eyes (and jokingly remarks, "My sons have overturned me").

Taken in aggregate, such considerations suggest that it would be ill-advised to dismiss altogether the possibility of "Jonathan's" involvement in the development of the Targum. Instead, we should take his name as standing for a contribution during the first century. The growing awareness among scholars that rabbinic traditions are not on the whole reliable in historical terms has resulted in a tendency among some to ignore what such aggadot have to say. That is unfortunate, because sometimes—as in the present case—aggadot may be as ideologically informative as they are historically approximate.

We also know from other passages in the Talmud that Jonathan was not considered to be the sole author of the Targum. There are passages of the Prophets' Targum which accord precisely with renderings given in the name of Joseph bar Hiyya, a rabbi of the fourth century. In b. Pesahim 68a, for example, Joseph renders Isaiah 5:17 as "and the righteous shall possess the possessions of the wicked." The interpretation attributed to him agrees exactly (and the precise form of words almost exactly) with that of Targum Jonathan (see Tg. Isa. 5:17b), and the sense of both versions is quite different from the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint, where the image is of animals grazing among ruins.⁵ Once the decision

⁵ See also Joseph's citation of Zech 12:11 in its form in Tg. Jon. within b. Meg. 3a itself; see also Gordon, "Historical Allusions in Tg Twelve Prophets," 55–56.

was made to spell out the significance of the metaphor, which is typical of Targum Jonathan, the particular application to the righteous and their ultimate wealth is perhaps not surprising. Still, there is nothing inevitable about that application.

Joseph bar Hiyya stands out as the authority recognized by the Babylonian Talmud for the translation of prophetic books into Aramaic. The Talmud cites the Prophets in Aramaic fifteen times, attributing the translation to Joseph.⁶ In every case his translation parallels that actually found in Targum Jonathan. No other rabbinic tradent is linked to the Prophetic Targum in this specific way. Joseph thus has a unique identification with Targum Jonathan that should not be ignored. At the very least, it signals a fourth-century redaction of this Targum, whatever earlier sources might be involved.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TARGUM OF ISAIAH

The Isaiah Targum has been subjected to more study than any of the Targumim to the Prophets (both Former and Latter); it shows signs of a nationalistic eschatology which was current just after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE as well as of the more settled perspective of the rabbis in Babylon some three centuries later. That finding of critical exegesis comports well with periods of the two rabbis identified in Talmud, Jonathan ben Uzziel from the period of the Tannaitic period and Joseph bar Hiyya from the period of the Amoraim. Targum Jonathan as a whole results from these two major periods of collecting and editing traditions of rendering the Prophets—namely, the Tannaitic and the Amoraic.⁷

The Prophets' Targum, both to the Former and the Latter prophets, has received renewed attention as the best source for the explication

⁶ The passages in the Bavli linked to Joseph bar Hiyya are: Ber. 28a, Pesah. 65a, Yoma 32b, Yoma 77b, M.Q. 26a, M.Q. 28b, Ned. 38a, Qidd. 13a, Qidd. 72b, B.Q. 3b, A.Z. 44a, Men. 110a, 'Arak. 33b, Meg. 3a, Sanh. 94b.

⁷ In addition, long after Tg. Jon. was composed, probably near the same time the Fragment Targums to the Pentateuch were assembled, targumic addenda were appended in certain of its manuscripts. These additions appear, e.g., in the Codex Reuchlinianus from the twelfth century and in a manuscript from the Bibliothèque Nationale (#75 in the current catalog) from the fourteenth century. The topic of the targumic addenda will not immediately occupy us in the present chapter, because they assume the existence of an established targumic tradition, to which the medieval additions amount to creative extensions. But they are witnesses of the continuing consciousness that the production of Targumim was not simply a matter of translating, but of conveying the sense of Scripture in its theological fullness. Although Reuchlinianus and Bibliothèque Nationale 75 do not represent the development of Tg. Jon. as such in its formative period, they do reflect the kind of interpretative enterprise which went into the development of the Targumim.

of Scripture in synagogues during periods of early Judaism and rabbinic Judaism. The current phase of discussion is predicated upon the fundamental work of Pinkhos Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, who located Targum Jonathan in the intersection between worship in synagogues and rabbinic discussion. Today, it may seem obvious that the principal Targumim are the result of the dynamics between synagogues and schools,⁸ but there have been times when an almost entirely folk origin has been proposed.⁹ Churgin held that Targum Jonathan emerged during the formative period of rabbinic influence, between the second century BCE and the seventh century CE. Linguistic discussion, primarily the work of A. Tal, E. Y. Kutscher, and M. Goshen-Gottstein, focused attention particularly on the second century CE, just subsequent to the Aramaic of Qumran and transitional to the language of the Amoraim, as the likely period of formation.¹⁰ But one of the features noted has been the stable, one might say standard, quality of the Jewish Literary Aramaic employed in Targum Jonathan, which makes the assessment of the date predicated upon linguistic considerations alone appear inadequate, because the dialect survived in writing even after its period of oral currency had faded.¹¹

Thirty years ago, Bruce Chilton took up a method of comparative analysis which was designed to substantiate or to qualify the work of linguists. The exegeses incorporated in the Isaiah Targum were compared systematically with departures from the Hebrew text evidenced in the Septuagint, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, the scrolls of Qumran, the New Testament, and the rabbinic writings discussed in chapter 4. The conclusion was that targumic traditions were incorporated within an exegetical framework, a version—perhaps incomplete—of Isaiah in Aramaic composed by a meturgeman (identified in the Babylonian Talmud as Jonathan ben Uzziel) who flourished between 70 and 135 CE.¹² That

⁸ York, “The Dating of Targumic Literature” and “The Targum in the Synagogue and the School”; Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, xxv–xxviii.

⁹ Le Déaut, *Introduction à la littérature Targumique*; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*; McNamara, *Targum and Testament*.

¹⁰ Tal, *Language of the Targum of the Former Prophets*; Kutscher, “Das zur Zeit Jesu gesprochene Aramäische” and *Studies in Galilean Aramaic*; Goshen-Gottstein, “Language of Targum Onqelos.” Although the discussion cannot now detain us, mention should also be made here of two articles which appeared in 1973: Delcor, “Le Targum de Job et l’araméen du temps de Jésus” and Kaufman, “Job Targum from Qumran.”

¹¹ Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, xi–xii, 6–12. Since then discussion of the development of the Aramaic language has tended to offer further support of the position; see Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, xxi.

¹² Within that early framework, materials were incorporated which appear to reflect the interpretations of earlier periods, including the period of Jesus. See Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi and His Bible*.

work was completed by another meturgeman, identified in the Talmud as Rabbi Joseph bar Hiyya of Pumbeditha, who died in 333.¹³ Throughout the process, the communal nature of the interpretative work of the meturgeman was acknowledged; insofar as individuals were involved, they spoke with the voices of synagogues and of schools. The production of the Isaiah Targum through the stages of two exegetical frameworks, one Tannaitic and one Amoraic, has been widely accepted and applied with adjustments to the understanding of Targum Jonathan as a whole. Although the geographical aspect of these frameworks has not featured as prominently as the chronological in critical discussion, it should also be noted that the Tannaitic framework comes from Israel/Palestine while the Amoraic one comes from Babylonia.

Given the current state of our knowledge of the Targum Jonathan, and of how our knowledge has developed, we will use the Isaiah Targum as a focus of our consideration. Once we have more clearly understood that document (in this chapter), we will then use the results (beginning in the next chapter) to understand the other documents within Targum Jonathan. The targumic themes of prophecy, messiah, and Shekhinah will prove especially informative of the purpose and origin of each of the documents.

PROPHECY IN THE TARGUM OF ISAIAH

The theme of a characteristically prophetic message of repentance is represented in both frameworks, and there is a tragic recognition that the departure of the Shekhinah spells the end of prophecy (see Tg. Isa. 5:5, 6; 8:16, 17).¹⁴ Within both frameworks, the elucidation, “The prophet said . . .” is frequently added. It has been suggested that the innovation is merely a liturgical help, as in many modern Christian lectionaries.¹⁵ In the Christian liturgical usage, “Jesus” replaces “he” at the beginning of

¹³ Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 2, 3 and *Isaiah Targum*, xxi. For the sections of the Targum most representative of each meturgeman, see Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, xxiv.

¹⁴ See Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 54–55. For the latter theologoumenon, see (for Isa 5:5, 6) Eccl. Rab. 11.3, and (for 8:16, 17) Gen. Rab. 43.3.2. The first statement is attributed to Aquila and second is anonymous. See Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist*, 75, 135, 136, 139, 140, 143; Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 48–52; Smolar and Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 11; and Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 199 n. 5, with its citation of b. B.B. 12a.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 150. More recently, see Gordon, “An Incipit Formula in Tg Prophets.” In that article, Gordon concedes that in the Targumim, “the prophets speak as contemporaries” of the meturgemanin (82). He misses the basic point that an innovative statement in such a context represents an implicit claim of prophetic authority.

many readings. But it is difficult to imagine that an actual meturgeman delivering a rendering orally would need written warrant from a Targum to replace “he” with “the prophet said” as compared to other changes instanced in Targum Jonathan. Such conservative adjustments do not represent substantive transformations.

The suggestion constitutes an example of how modern scholarship has not adequately allowed for the difference between ancient and modern usage of Scripture. By its very nature, performing an interpretation orally and in a different language involves the acknowledgment that one is not completely tied down to the text that is at the base of the performance. As envisioned in rabbinic writings from the Mishnah onwards (see chapter 14), the meturgeman would provide his rendering after some verses of Scripture had been read out in Hebrew. Because even someone who did not know Hebrew would realize that the targumic interpretation was frequently much longer than the biblical text, there was a built-in recognition that a creative activity was involved. What the suggestion particularly ignores is the most obvious and crucial factor: within both exegetical frameworks, the Targum’s meturgeman in preface *some of their most innovative and creative renderings* with the introductory formula.¹⁶ In aggregate, the Aramaic interpreters implicitly claim to speak with quasi-prophetic authority in the wake of the departed Shekhinah. Two such cases in the Isaiah Targum permit us to see the work of the meturgeman in the two frameworks, virtually side by side, in chapters 21 and 22.

Chapter 21 of Targum Isaiah points toward the military power of the Sassanids and the nascent threat of Arabians and indulges in proleptic glee at “Babylon’s” demise.¹⁷ As the meturgeman states in Targum Isaiah 21:9, “Fallen, *and also about to fall*, is Babylon.”¹⁸ The Amoraic setting of the

¹⁶ Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 52–53, 55 and *Isaiah Targum*, xiii, xiv. The observation is confirmed in respect of Tg. Jon. more generally in Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 32. Cathcart and Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, themselves translate an instance in which the targumic incipit prefaces an expansive rendering at Habakkuk 2:1f. (150).

¹⁷ Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, 40–43. In his recent monograph, Gordon has made additional arguments in the same direction, 142–46.

¹⁸ The significance of this interpretation was brilliantly explained by Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 28–29, and further pursued in Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, 41–43 (see also Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 5, 3, 45, 121). Gordon has tried to dispute the finding in “The Redaction of Tg. Prophets,” on the grounds that the phrase “and is about to fall” is—in his words—“as much an exegetical matter as an expression of a particular historical perspective” (140). That, of course, may be said of any targumic rendering. But even exegetes say things when they decide to employ “exegetical matter,” and in the present case a meturgeman is speaking of the *future* demise of Babylon. Gordon himself concludes that he can offer no “decisive argument against Churgin’s Sassanid explanation,” although he also cautions that it is not “demanded by the evidence.”

meturgeman is also reflected in a particularly revealing theological statement (Tg. Isa. 21:12), introduced by the signal phrase “*The prophet said*”:

The prophet said, “There is reward for the righteous and retribution for the wicked. If you are penitent, repent while you are able to repent.”

The meturgeman here addresses those individuals who are prepared to listen (as also at Tg. Isa. 33:13; 57:19)—the righteous of Israel who may repent—while the usual assumption of this Targum is that Israel is obdurate.¹⁹

This Amoraic innovation contrasts with the more typical complaint found within the earlier, Tannaitic framework (Tg. Isa. 28:10a), which takes up a more negative view of Israel that is also expressed within the biblical canon (see Mal 2:10-11):

They were commanded to perform the law, and what they were commanded they did not wish to do. The prophets prophesied concerning them, that if they repented . . . and they did not listen to the sayings of the prophets.

This Tannaitic concern lacks the opening phrase, “*The prophet said*.” In theological terms, a shift from the claim that repentance has been globally rejected to one in which individuals might be found who are penitent is considerable. Just that shift is involved as one moves from the Tannaitic framework to the Amoraic framework.

Repentance in Targum Isaiah 21:12 is also associated more with the eschatological judgment of individuals than with the restoration of the temple and the people, Israel’s intended end in the earlier framework. The usage of the phrase “*The prophet said*” here is Amoraic, as it is at Targum Isaiah 21:8, 9, where reference is innovatively made to the imminent fall of Babylon, the ruling force with which the Amoraim in Babylon needed to reckon. Perhaps the closest approximation to the reading is to be found in Numbers Rab. 16:23, which cites Isaiah 21:12 and observes (with particular reference to the term “morning” in the Hebrew), “when the time of the world to come arrives, which is called morning, we shall know in whom he delights.”²⁰

The emphasis is quite different in chapter 22 of the Isaiah Targum, which focuses on the depredations of Jerusalem, the victories of the Romans, and the fate of the sanctuary,²¹ which are characteristic interests

¹⁹ Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 37–46.

²⁰ The passage also connects Mal 3:18 with Isa 21:12, which is reminiscent of the Isaian passage in Tg. Jon.. For a further discussion, including references to other analogies; see Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 43, 44.

²¹ See Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, 42–45 and “Shebna, Eliakim, and the Promise to Peter.”

of the Tannaitic meturgeman. A particular threat is directed against those who feast in a time when the prophet calls for fasting (Tg. Isa. 22:12, 13), and the threat, articulated at Targum Isaiah 22:14, is couched in language also found in the Revelation of John:

The prophet said, With my ears I was hearing when this was decreed before the Lord God of hosts: "Surely this sin will not be forgiven until you die the second death," says the Lord God of hosts.

The fact that the same **Theologoumenon** appears in Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8, of course, does not alone settle the questions of the chronology and meaning of the phrase. Charles Perrot and Pierre-Maurice Bogaert cite the usage in various Targumim and in *PRE* (34).²² But at Isaiah 22:14 in particular, the rabbis from the second century onward regularly refer to death in the straightforward sense (see *Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael* Bahodesh 7.24-25; b. Yoma 86a),²³ so that the earlier, communal eschatology of the Tannaitic meturgeman appears to be reflected here.

THE ISSUE OF PROPHECY AND THE PHASAL DEVELOPMENT OF TARGUM JONATHAN

The idea of a phasal development within Targum Jonathan, resulting in two exegetical frameworks, the one developed prior to 135 CE, and the other of Amoraic provenience, has been generalized from the Isaiah Targum to other books within Targum Jonathan in a way which could only be intimated nearly thirty years ago.²⁴ In his commentary on the Targum of Jeremiah, Robert Hayward advances an argument based upon the treatment of prophecy to suggest that an earlier, Tannaitic framework was especially influential in that targumic text as it can be read today. He observes that the "translation of 'prophet' in certain cases as 'scribe' produces the association of priests with scribes" in the Jeremiah Targum, an association also made in Josephus and the New Testament.²⁵

²² *Les Antiquités bibliques II: Sources Chrétiennes*, 230 (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1976), 56 n. 3.

²³ See Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 56.

²⁴ Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 117. The same paradigm is applied in Harrington and Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*, 3; Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*, 38; Levey, *The Targum of Ezekiel*, 3, 4; and in Cathcart and Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 12-14. Levey's acceptance of the paradigm is especially noteworthy, in that he had earlier argued that Tg. Jon. (esp. Isaiah) should be placed within the period of the ascendancy of Islam; see Levey, "The Date of Targum Jonathan to the Prophets." Although the model has been applied, the editions cited do not, in fact, test it by consistent comparative reference to Rabbinica and early Christian literature, which is the method recommended in Chilton, *Glory of Israel*.

²⁵ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah* 36, 37. He cites Tg. Jer. 8:10; 14:18; 23:11, 33, 34; 26:7,

Scribes, on this reading, are “a *powerful and influential group*” during the time of the Targum’s composition.²⁶ Care should be taken, however, not to apply Hayward’s suggestion globally without due attention to the usage found in each Targum. There are instances in which the association is *not* operative in the Jeremiah Targum,²⁷ and the “prophets” of the Masoretic Text often become “prophets of falsehood” as well as “scribes” in the Targum.²⁸ Meturgemanin of Jeremiah, as those of Isaiah, evidently wished to insulate the unqualified usage of “prophet” as such from any charge of deception.²⁹ That results in referring to prophets who betray their intended purpose by lying, and in the grouping of other classes of leaders in criticisms from which prophets are protected.³⁰ That is quite a different matter from the presentation of the Gospels, in which priestly and scribal leaders are particularly in view as a result of their alleged responsibility in the execution of Jesus.³¹

Hayward’s comparison of the Jeremiah Targum with the Gospels illustrates a difficulty in the assessment of the Targumim in respect to more ancient documents. Words and phrases are more easily shared than are meanings, especially among speakers who commonly—and independently—refer to an authoritative collection of Scriptures. The meturgemanin of Jeremiah sometimes referred to “scribes” in order to protect “prophets” from criticism; the Gospels’ framers attack “scribes” in order to discredit an alternative view of religion. Unless the sense of references is evaluated, observations of brute similarities of usage are pointless, and may prove misleading.³²

Hayward also notes a tendency to introduce the term *prophet* in the Targum Jeremiah, as at 35:4 (in reference to Hanan, the son of Yigdaliah). He does not observe, however, that the usage cited is part of a pattern within Jonathan generally, in which prophecy is associated with the temple (which also appears in Tg. Isa. 8:2, in respect to Uriah the priest); that positive assessment of a priestly charism emerges only sporadically, and

8, 11, 16; 29:11 and Josephus, *Ant.* 12.3.3 §142; as well as Mark 11:27; Matt 2:4; 16:21; 20:18; and Acts 4:5, 6.

²⁶ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 33. His argument was earlier developed in “Some Notes on Scribes and Priests in the *Targum of the Prophets*.”

²⁷ See Tg. Jer. 6:13; 18:18, from Hayward’s own lists (pp. 32, 36, 37).

²⁸ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 32; as he notes, and as is the case elsewhere in the Tg. Jon., “teacher” is a possible surrogate for “prophet” in the MT.

²⁹ See Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 54, citing 9:14; 28:7.

³⁰ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 33, helpfully corrects the surmise of Churgin that idolatrous prophets are particularly in view when the phrase “prophets of falsehood” appears.

³¹ M. J. Cook, *Mark’s Treatment of the Jewish Leaders*.

³² See the method of exegetical comparison recommended in Chilton, *Targumic Approaches to the Gospels*.

likely rests upon an ancient claim, much in the manner of Josephus.³³ Generally speaking, the whole of Jonathan represents a tendency to portray “prophecy as a unified phenomenon which is understood as true contact with God involving revelatory significance,” and to introduce characterizations designed to protect the perceived integrity of prophecy.³⁴ That is the conclusion of Harrington and Saldarini in respect of the Targum of the Former Prophets, and it is sufficiently unexceptionable to be applied to the corpus of Jonathan as a whole.

From the second century, the rabbis taught that prophecy was a phenomenon proper to the land promised by God to his people (see *Mekhilta*, *Pisha* 1.42-44). Such an understanding was at apparent odds with the experience of Ezekiel, which is explicitly set in Babylon (see Ezek 1:1-3); that problem needed to be confronted in the Aramaic rendering of the book. As Samson H. Levey points out, the meturgemanin resolved the difficulty by having Ezekiel’s revelation in 1:3 *begin* in Jerusalem, and then *renewed* in the land of the Chaldeans.³⁵

Cathcart and Gordon similarly associate the presentation of the prophets within the Targum of the Minor Prophets with the theology of the Amoraim. Unlike Hayward, they locate the usage of “scribe” in that latter phase of the Targum’s development on the theological grounds that the rabbis held that prophecy had passed from the prophets to the sages.³⁶ Obviously, that analysis fails to take account of the negative sense that sometimes accompanies use of the term “scribe” in Jonathan; if they are more correct than Hayward in their chronology, they are equally approximate in their exegesis. Moreover, they do not call attention to the connection of priesthood and prophecy at Hosea 4:4, nor to the repeated theme of Israel’s rejection of the prophetic message (see Hos 6:5; 9:7; Zeph 3:2); both of those features are important links to the Tannaitic phase of Targum Jonathan.³⁷ Finally, they do not observe the vital link between their Minor Prophets’ Targum and the rest of Jonathan in its received form: the tendency to present the message of all the prophets as consonant. That is particularly accomplished by identifying the biblical prophets as such, despite the impression of redundancy that sometimes results (see Nah 1:1;

³³ See Blenkinsopp, “Prophecy and Priesthood in Josephus.”

³⁴ So Harrington and Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*, 11, 12. See also Saldarini, “Is Saul Also among the Scribes?”

³⁵ Levey, *Targum of Ezekiel*, 13.

³⁶ Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 3, 199 n. 5, citing b. B.B. 12a. See also Gordon, “Targum as Midrash.”

³⁷ A reference to priesthood at the close of the verse in the MT occasions the statement, “*For they say, ‘The scribe shall not teach, and the prophet shall not admonish.’ So your people argue with their teachers.*” See also the link between false prophets and priests in Zeph 3:4.

Hab 1:1; Hag 2:1; Zech 1:1). Their distinction from the false prophets—see Hosea 4:5; Micah 3:5; Zephaniah 3:4; Zechariah 13:2, 4—is another link to the normal pattern of Jonathan Targum.

THE PHASES OF TARGUM JONATHAN

The two-phase theory of the formation of the Isaiah Targum is not predicated simply on the distinction between the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods, but on specific moments within them delineated by identifiable events. The first exegetical framework of the Isaiah Targum was produced prior to the revolt of Simeon bar Kosiba (bar Kokhba) in 132 CE. This exegetical framework organized then current Aramaic translations of the Hebrew text into a powerful vehicle of opposition to the Romans and propaganda for the restoration of the temple. During the fourth century, following the rise of the Babylonian rabbinic movement, the second exegetical framework of the Isaiah Targum was completed. With its completion, the whole of the Hebrew text was rendered, and the perspective of the translation as a whole was coordinated with the concerns of the Babylonian academies (perhaps especially Pumbeditha's, where the work may have been encouraged under Joseph bar Hiyya).

Since 1982, when the theory of two exegetical frameworks was developed for the Isaiah Targum, it has been applied (as we have seen) to the Targum of the Former Prophets, the Targums of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and the Targum of the Minor Prophets. Today, then, the phasal development of Targum Jonathan as a whole appears to be a matter of consensus.

Even claims to offer radical departures from the consensus wind up confirming it. For example, it has recently been asserted that Targum Jonathan was not intended for popular usage in synagogues but for academic reflection.³⁸ In fact, the original theory of two frameworks already called attention to the disparity between the rabbinic experts who produced the Targumim and the synagogue audiences that were the targets of the operation. As we shall discuss in chapter 15, knowledge of the Hebrew text of the Scriptures among the Targums' composers greatly exceeded that of its usual audience of listeners—which provided the impetus for targumic translation in the first place. Moreover, the difference between the interpretation of the first framework and the interpretation of the second

³⁸ See Smelik, *Targum of Judges*. In fact, Smelik proposes for the Tg. Judg. (642, 656) a history of composition remarkably close to that proposed for the Tg. Isa. He criticizes Chilton, because an exegetical framework "may denote documents, schools, oral traditions, fragmentary Targums or some of these in any combination" (63). This is an accurate enough statement, provided translations, midrashim, and glosses are also added to the mix, because such sources appear standard within the development of rabbinic literature.

framework is manifest. Propaganda for revolt and homilies for settled accommodation to the Sassanids are obviously not the same thing and serve different interests as well as disparate situations.

The consensus, then, is faring well in its third decade, although continuing historical work would be welcome. The challenge that most pressingly remains to be faced, however, is of a different order. While differences in the interpretative strategies of the distinct frameworks within Targum Jonathan have been widely recognized, little analysis of the particular characteristics of the frameworks *as readings of Isaiah* has been offered. Just as the ultimate goal of identifying the sources of the Pentateuchal Targums was to study their interpretations of the Torah, so too the purpose of identifying Targum Isaiah's exegetical frameworks is to understand the meaning with which they shaped the Prophetic Targum.

To some extent, no doubt, relative neglect of literary questions has been a consequence of conventional attitudes among Targum scholars. Since 1949, interest in the Targumim has been greatest among those concerned with the New Testament and Christian origins. Such scholars have been concerned with issues of dating and historical development first of all in order to determine whether targumic readings predate the New Testament. But even Targumists who claim that no such application is in their minds often display the traits of historicists of the old style. They proceed as if questions of the purpose and theme and character of a Targum will take care of themselves, if only the Targumist will focus exclusively on how individual passages are to be dated.³⁹ Since historical allusions must always involve a strong element of inference, the circularity of the old historicism remains evident.

The analysis of exegetical frameworks was intended as a defense against circularity. The focus was not merely on this or that particular passage (which might be older or younger than the substantial interpretation which produced a Targum), but on characteristic terms and phrases that link up within a framework and reflect a coherent interpretative project.⁴⁰ Characteristic interpretations within the framework were then compared with those presented within rabbinic literature. The resolution of that analysis into two frameworks, one Tannaitic and one Amoraic, emerged out of that extended work of comparison. Obviously, inference remains a vital part of such an approach, but the inference proceeds on

³⁹ Gordon concludes his monograph with a statement of that program (153).

⁴⁰ In this way the two-framework approach to the Prophetic Targums serves the same purpose as the source analysis of the Pentateuchal Targums—namely, to identify a way to bring together multiple interpretive additions in the translations for joint analysis. At one abstract level, Prophetic Targum frameworks are like Pentateuchal Targum sources.

the basis of elements within each framework that are shown to be central, not on the problematic supposition that references to events from the past directly tell us the date of the Targum.

It is worth a brief digression to mention the similarity between the two-framework understanding of Targum Jonathan to the Prophets as laid out by Chilton and the two main sources of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Torah as identified by Flesher and Mortensen. Both analyses understand the Targum in question as being created in two main stages, with the latter stage using and essentially bringing forward the former stage rather than eliminating it. In the case of Pseudo-Jonathan, the Palestinian Targums enable the certain identification of the interpretations of the first stage through comparison. The Prophetic Targums lack such comparators. In this, Targum Jonathan is more like Targum Onqelos, where a two-stage creation has been posited by most scholars. Perhaps these stages could more accurately be labelled frameworks. In this comparison, however, the scholarly analysis of Targum Jonathan is more advanced, since little work has been done to separate Targum Onqelos' two frameworks.

While the theory of two frameworks has done its work within the study of the literary history of Targum Jonathan, in another respect analysis is only beginning to be pursued. Globally, the differences of interpretative strategy from exegetical framework to exegetical framework are evident to Targum scholars, which is why the theory of frameworks has been well accepted in the first place. The next step, engaging the deeper literary issue, has started to address the more significant question, "What is the purpose and procedure of interpretation, such that a distinctive reading of the book of Isaiah (or of whatever book is at issue) results?"

So with this question in mind, let us turn to the object of the next stage of this chapter's inquiry, the concepts of "messiah." We shall investigate the purpose and theory of the Messiah and the circumstances of his time as laid out by the meturgeman of the Tannaitic framework and by the meturgeman of the Amoraic framework.⁴¹ Our access to two such frameworks, each evolved in association with the same base text (Isaiah in Hebrew), makes possible comparative characterization of the messianic ideal from the two layers of Targum Isaiah.

THE MESSIAH IN THE TANNAITIC FRAMEWORK

The messianic perspective of the Tannaitic meturgeman comes to expression at Isaiah 4:2-3, early in the Isaiah Targum:

⁴¹ In this regard, see De Moor, "Multiple Renderings in the Targum of Isaiah."

HT: On that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel. Whoever is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem.

TI: In that *time the messiah* of the LORD shall be for *joy* and for glory, and *those who perform the law* for pride and for praise to the survivors of Israel. And it shall come to pass that he who is left *will return* to Zion and he who *has performed the law will be established* in Jerusalem; he will be called holy. Every one who has been recorded for *eternal life will see the consolations of Jerusalem*.

From the point of view of its content, the Targum's rendering is straightforward. The Messiah is associated with the performance of the law (i.e., the Torah, and therefore its correct interpretation), and those who actually perform the Torah anticipate eternal life in a consoled Jerusalem.⁴²

The messianic rendering of this passage occurs through the application of formal techniques we identified in chapter 3 as the Rules of Targum, such as Rule 2: Addition and Rule 3: Substitution. But we wish to focus on how the meturgeman arrived at the meaning of his rendering from the Hebrew text then available, in order to understand the interpretative method involved. This enables us to move from the technical characteristics of the Targum's layout to the meaning brought into it. In Isaiah 4:2-3, the Targum's rendering begins with the Hebrew term "branch," which has a rich messianic association within the biblical tradition itself (see Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12). The meturgeman simply reads that association as if it were the text. That is, the Hebrew text's contents are replaced in Aramaic by what it is held to mean. Although this method is straightforward, it is also daring.

The dominance of the association between "branch" and "Messiah" is such that further transformations of the Hebrew text occur. "Fruit of the land" in Isaiah 4:2b of the Masoretic Text becomes "*those who perform the law*" in the Targum because the Messiah will inspire that fruitful performance of Torah. That is what will enable him to realize the promise of returning Israel to Israel's land. The eschatological perspective of this hope is articulated in the expressions "*eternal life*" and "*consolations of Jerusalem*," both of which recur in the Targum.

The idea of the Messiah then, invoked by the term "branch" in Hebrew, is what the text conveys in the rendering of the meturgeman. That meaning brings about not only interpretive additions to the text, but also exegetical subtractions: "branch" and "fruit of the land" simply disappear, or at least seem to. While the technique can be described as Rule

⁴² The likely social context of that anticipation and its development is not the particular concern here. That work is available in Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 86–96.

3: Substitution, the point here focuses on meaning rather than form. The Masoretic Text's metaphor of a fruit tree disappears in the Targum, its meaning and associations no longer act on the text's readers and listeners.

In the Isaiah Targum, the Tannaitic meturgeman takes the occasion of an exegetical trigger in the Hebrew text ("branch") to develop a messianic transformation of the whole by addition and substitution. The transformation which is the agency of the interpretation, once it begins, affects the whole of the text. But because a verbal trigger is involved, the substitution has essentially a one-to-one correspondance: "branch" becomes "messiah"; "fruit" becomes "law" (i.e., Torah); "life" becomes "eternal life." The pervasive quality of the transformation involved is even clearer in the original languages. For example, both the Masoretic Text and the Targum refer to the survivors of Israel by means of a collective construction (*peleytav* in Hebrew, *sheyzavat* in Aramaic); the Aramaic stem carries with it a strong association of deliverance.

Interpreting the text by verbal transformation, the meturgeman underscores his rendering by what is omitted as well as by what is added. That is, the Targum is better understood if one knows that "branch" is now Messiah and that "fruit" is now Torah. Those promises are still present, and vivified by the eschatological dimension of messianic meaning.

In formal terms we may contrast this technique with the interpretative approach of **peshar** at Qumran, where the Hebrew text is preserved in actual quotations and then interpreted.⁴³ This commentary form permits close fidelity to the Hebrew original while also indulging some famously speculative developments of meaning. Despite this difference in form, however, the *pesharim* also work from a verbal trigger. A single term in the Hebrew text inspires a verbal identification, which in turn transforms the meaning of the remainder of the verse. In response to the Masoretic Text's "But the righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:4), the Habakkuk Peshar gives, "Interpreted, this concerns all those who observe the Law in the House of Judah, whom God will deliver from the House of Judgement."⁴⁴ Scripture's "righteous" serves as a trigger to be exegeted as "those who observe the Law in the House of Judah," an apocalyptic-style description of the Qumran sectaries themselves. Having established that identification, the interpreter then understands the Hebrew text reference to those who "live by faith" as God saving them from attack by those known as the "House of Judgement." The difference between the Targum and the peshar is more one of form than interpretative treatment.

⁴³ See Chilton, "Commenting on the Old Testament." Note that the HT cited in the pesharim sometimes follow variant readings of the text.

⁴⁴ Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls*, 482.

The verbal transformation accomplished by the Tannaitic meturgeman may also be compared and contrasted with the transformations typical of the Synoptic Gospels. There, transformation can occur on the basis not of the text but of the supposed meaning of a passage. For example, the parable of the man, the seed, and the earth in Mark 4:26-29 does not appear in the Gospel according to Matthew, but Matthew does present a fuller parable of a man who planted seed only to have his enemy introduce weeds (13:24-30). The Matthean commitment to the fuller parable as the meaning of the image is represented by the detailed interpretation which is attributed to Jesus in Matthew 13:36-43.

Matthew actually instances two sorts of interpretation here. The easier sort is the careful explanation found in chapter 13:36-43. No transformation is involved, only a point by point explication (of what may be considered obvious). Even here, however, it is notable that the explanation proceeds more on the basis of the meaning of each image than with a view to verbal interpretation. For that reason there is no precise analogy to the technique of pesher.

Rather, the approach better corresponds to the apocalyptic interpretation that influenced the Synoptic Gospels quite deeply. Within Matthew 13 itself, the interpretation of the parable of the sower presents another example of the same technique (see 13:18-23). Matthew's version takes a more explicitly apocalyptic cast than its synoptic counterparts (see Mark 4:13-20 and Luke 8:11-15), but in each case the decipherment of images in terms of their meaning for the end of the world is evident. Ultimately derived from the sort of apocalyptic explanation instanced in Daniel 7, although far less elaborate (and therefore probably not originally literary), synoptic interpretations of this type present a consistent character. Matthew extends the technique somewhat in the present case.

The second type of synoptic interpretation that Matthew instances here (i.e., 13:24-30) is of greater interest to our investigation of the Tannaitic meturgeman. The parable of the man who had to deal with his enemy's weeds is only distantly similar to the parable of the man, the seed, and the earth in Mark 4:26-29. Scholars have been divided over the issue of whether they are in fact related.⁴⁵ But whether Matthew represents a version of the Markan parable itself or a cognate use of imagery, there is consensus that the Matthean form is irreducibly Matthean, a characteristic development of an earlier usage. The transformation that Matthew's

⁴⁵ But see the bold analysis of Gundry, *Matthew*, 261-65, which attempts to resolve the issue in favor of Matthean reference to the Markan parable. Compare Davies and Allison, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, 406-15, 426-32, for a more cautious assessment that nonetheless moves in the same direction.

parable represents, then, is so dramatic that the issue of its antecedents becomes difficult to assess.

Matthew's transformation here is conceptual, rather than verbal (as in the targumic example we have considered). In describing the technique of the Tannaitic meturgeman of Isaiah as transformative, therefore, no implication of disregard for the Hebrew text should be taken as implied. Indeed, the fact is that knowing what is *not* included from the Hebrew text—what the substitution replaced—actually enhances one's appreciation of the targumic rendering. This suggests that, although targeted for usage in synagogues, the Targum was also enjoyed where it was produced: in academies. That insight will prove to be important for an assessment of the character of Targum Jonathan generally.

The technique of verbal transformation is easily instanced in other examples of the messianic interpretation of the meturgeman. The theological problem posed by the Hebrew text of Isaiah 9:5 (9:6 in English versions) is neatly sorted out. How can the "son" described there be called "wonderful, counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace"? The meturgeman solves the difficulty by having the son called "*the messiah in whose days peace will increase upon us*." He is so named "*before the wonderful counselor, the mighty God*." An extra phrase and a preposition clarify the situation, along with the assumption that the "son" is the Messiah, who is to be distinguished from God himself.

That assumption is explicitly flagged by this verse's innovative introduction in the Targum, "*The prophet said to the house of David. . .*." With this preface the meturgeman asserts that the true meaning of the prophet, whatever his words, was messianic, and messianic in a manner which did not compromise monotheism. Everything is dependent, then, on knowing whose "son" is at issue: David's progeny is the topic, specified so as to avoid the difficulty that the general imagery of the Masoretic Text might occasion. Once the precise topic is established, the other changes already mentioned become explicable: the Messiah is there so that "*peace will increase upon us*," and he is named "*before the wonderful counselor, the mighty God*." Similarly, the "dominion" which rests on his shoulder in the Hebrew text becomes his agreement to accept and keep the law in the Targum. Anyone who knew that would know that the secret of the Davidic Messiah's rule was fidelity to the Torah.

The messianic interpretation of Isaiah 11:1 comes as no surprise in the context of what we have already seen and calls for little comment here. The Targum simply pursues the interpretation of the "branch" referred to in the Masoretic Text (*netzer*, in the second half of the verse, where "*Messiah*" appears in the Targum) in messianic terms:

HT: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

TI: And a *king* shall come forth from the *sons* of Jesse, and *the Messiah* shall *be exalted* from *the sons* of his *sons*.

Just as “branch” in Hebrew occasions reference to the Messiah in the second part of the verse, so the “stump” (*gezaʿ*) of Jesse becomes the “*sons* of Jesse” and the “shoot” become a “king” in the first part of the verse.

In contrast the rendering involved in Targum Isaiah 14:29 is striking for its innovation:

HT: Do not rejoice, all you Philistines,
 that the rod that struck you is broken,
 for from the root of the snake will come forth an adder,
 and its fruit will be a flying fiery serpent.

TI: Rejoice not, all you *Philistines*, because *the ruler* who was *subjugating* you is broken, for *from the sons of the sons of Jesse the Messiah* will come forth, and his *deeds* will be *among you* as a *wounding* serpent.

Because the imagery of the Hebrew text speaks of an adder coming from a snake, and of a flying serpent, the transformation of meaning involved here seems more extreme than what we have considered so far.

But the precise phrasing of the meturgeman’s Hebrew text in fact helps explain the innovative rendering: “from the root (*mishores*) of the snake will come forth an adder.” The “root” is taken by the meturgeman to be akin to Jesse’s “stump” in Isaiah 11:1, which is already (and straightforwardly) taken to be messianic. Once that has occurred, it is a simple and consistent transformation—again, along literal lines—to make the “rod” of Philistia into the ruler of the Philistines, set in antithesis to the victorious Messiah.

The Messiah, then, is to supplant every ruler. So the “ruler of the earth” in the Hebrew of Isaiah 16:1 (set out here) must be the Messiah:

HT: Send a lamb to the ruler of the earth, from Sela, by the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Zion.

The Targum’s initial change is straightforward, but what follows demands some explanation:

TI: *They will offer tribute to the Messiah of Israel, who prevailed over the one as the desert, to the mount of the congregation of Zion.*

The phrase “from Sela (*misela*) by the desert” becomes a reference to the Messiah “*who prevailed (detageyf) over the one as the desert.*” The verb

taqeyf occurs frequently in the Targum, and is the preferred usage for the exertion of strength. It is occasioned here by taking *misela*⁶ as if it were a participle, preformative *m* with *sela*⁶, taking the latter root in its etymological meaning of “split.” (Because the Messiah has displayed such strength, he is to receive “tribute,” not just the “lamb” of the MT.) Once again, the meturgeman’s playfulness involves a verbal transformation, and one’s enjoyment is enriched by recollecting the Hebrew counterpart of his rendering.

By comparison, the associations of Messiah with the “throne” in Isaiah 16:5 and with the “crown” in Isaiah 28:5 are quite easily explained along the lines of the verbal transformation that is the model proposed here:

MT (16:5): and a throne will be established. . .

TI (16:5): *then the throne of the Messiah of Israel* will be established . . .

MT (28:5): In that day the Lord of hosts will be a garland of glory and a diadem of beauty . . .

TI (28:5): In that *time the Messiah of the Lord* will be a *diadem of joy* and a *crown of praise*. . .

Both those references have been identified as the work of the Tannaitic meturgeman, in view of their clear preoccupation with the theme of the imminent vindication of Israel over its enemies.

The motif of imminent vindication, in turn, becomes the principle underlying the famous targumic rendering of Isaiah 52:13–53:12, often taken in Christian interpretation as the classic expression of “the Suffering Servant” in Isaiah. The issue that has consumed the secondary literature has been whether that interpretation is pre-Christian, and whether it might have influenced the tradents of the New Testament. In view of the statement of Targum Isaiah 53:12 that the Messiah “*handed over* his soul to death,” it seems unlikely that this passage of the Targum was composed with a view to the challenges of Christian theology. On the other hand, the assumption that Jerusalem and the sanctuary have been desolated is evident throughout, so that a dating prior to 70 CE seems implausible. The rendering of Isaiah 53:5 is telling:

MT: And he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement that makes us whole was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

TI: And he *will build the sanctuary which was profaned for our sins, handed over* for our iniquities; *and by his teaching his peace will increase upon us, and in that we attach ourselves to his words our sins will be forgiven us.*

Attribution to the Tannaitic meturgeman(in) between 70 and 132 commends itself because vindication is eagerly and pragmatically awaited. The Messiah might well risk his life (“hand over his soul to death,” Tg. Isa. 53:12), but the aim of that heroism is triumph on behalf of Israel.⁴⁶

But if the dating of the passage is not all that complicated a matter, an innovation in the interpretative technique it manifests must be observed. The term “servant” is enough to invoke the messianic theme in Isaiah 52:13, but in 53:10 the development of the theme is a little more complicated:

MT: he will see his seed

TI: *they will see the kingdom of their Messiah.*

The Targum’s composer understands “seed,” by the verbal transformation we have already observed, as the “seed of David.” From there, it is only a step to the Davidic kingship and then to the Messiah.

But on what basis do the Targum’s “they” see, instead of “he” of the Hebrew text? In addition to the principle of verbal transformation, another transformation is at work here. It was first (although incompletely) identified by R. A. Aytoun: going on ninety years ago, he commented that “the exaltation of the Servant is applied to the Messiah, but his sufferings fall in part upon Israel, in part upon the Gentiles.”⁴⁷ The present case shows that “exaltation” can fall to Israel, as well as to the Messiah, because the verse continues in the Targum, “*they shall increase sons and daughters, they shall prolong days; those who perform the law of the LORD shall prosper in his pleasure.*” Israel’s prosperity is all the more marked in that, as we have already seen, in the Targum the Messiah also can become vulnerable to death. The Gentiles, Israel, and the Messiah indeed constitute three distinct foci within the interpretation, but their relationship to one another is spelled out dynamically within the eschatological vindication that is anticipated.

In the end, therefore, the verbal transformation which is at the base of the meturgeman’s interpretive technique within the Tannaitic framework is radically supplemented. Once the messianic rendering is achieved by verbal means, there is a cumulative effect, so that the entire theme may be invoked by a single, verbal trigger within the Hebrew text. In addition, the theme of the Messiah itself carries with it the distinction between those to whom the Messiah is a promise and those to whom the Messiah

⁴⁶ For a full discussion, see Ådna, “Der Gottesknecht als triumphierender und interzessorischer Messias”; and Chilton, “John XII 34.”

⁴⁷ Aytoun, “Servant of the Lord in the Targum,” 178. He also observed “that though it seems to have departed far from the original Hebrew, yet actually the Targum has stuck remarkably close to the letter of the Hebrew.” The present discussion will fill out his insight.

is a threat. And that conceptual transformation—applied to the messianic motif and whatever triggers it in the Hebrew text—is also a principle of interpretation that characterizes the Tannaitic framework. The limitation of that more global transformation to verbal triggers related to the Messiah makes the principle more predictable than the sorts of transformation that we find among the Synoptic Gospels. That limitation justifies the characterization of “verbal transformation” overall as the hermeneutic of the Tannaitic framework. But that sort of transformation is pointing ahead to another kind, more clearly evidenced within the Amoraic framework.

ETERNAL MESSIAH, ETERNAL SHEKHINAH IN THE AMORAIC FRAMEWORK

The Messiah is in no sense absent from the Amoraic framework of the Isaiah Targum: the hope of messianic vindication continued to be a governing concern at that later stage. But that messianic hope is now expressed in a different key. The reference to “my servant” in the Hebrew text of Isaiah 43:10 is enough to occasion mention of “my Messiah with whom I am pleased” in the Targum with a vigorous expression of Amoraic theology:

MT: “You are my witnesses,” says the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen . . .”

TI: “You are witnesses *before me*,” says the LORD, “and my servant *the Messiah with whom I am pleased*. . .”

The point of the rendering in its present targumic setting is that the Messiah is an eternal witness before God, testifying to God’s power in creation, his revelation to Abraham,⁴⁸ his salvation at the exodus, and his giving of the Law at Sinai, all of which feature explicitly within the surrounding context in the Targum. As the Targum innovatively has God say within the same verse, “*I am he that was from the beginning, even the ages of the ages are mine . . .*”: God’s eternity and the eternal witness of his Messiah go hand in hand.

The situation addressed by that targumic witnessing is one of exile: “For your *sins*’ sake *you were exiled* to Babylon . . .” (Tg. Isa. 43:14). The exiled condition of the Babylonian Amoraim comes to expression here. Those Amoraim see themselves as a new community of exiles and their messianic hope as more transcendent than eschatological. The modulation of their theology, from the immediate eschatology of the earlier period to an emphasis upon eternity and transcendence, becomes apparent. Part of that modulation is an interpretative matter. Verbal transformation (from

⁴⁸ See Houtman, “Role of Abraham in Targum Isaiah.”

“servant” in Hebrew to “Messiah” in Aramaic, as in 43:10 and elsewhere) remains the occasion of the rendering, but it assumes that the reference to the servant alone justifies messianic reference. That is, the Amoraic meturgeman shows himself more programmatic than the Tannaitic meturgeman.

The contrast between the two frameworks becomes plain in a comparison of chapter 42 and chapter 43 in the Isaiah Targum. Chapter 42, where the concerns of the Tannaitic meturgeman are evident, refers simply to the servant (Tg. Isa. 42:1) without explicitly messianic specification. Nonetheless, immediate vindication comes into view, when the purpose of that servant’s commission is portrayed (Tg. Isa. 42:7):

MT: to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out the prisoner from the dungeon, from jail those who dwell in darkness.

TI: to open the eyes of *the house of Israel who are as blind to the law*, to bring out *their exiles, who resemble prisoners*, from *among the Gentiles*, to deliver from the slavery of the kingdoms those who are jailed as prisoners of darkness.

Within the Tannaitic framework, the connection between the servant and the Messiah is not made until Isaiah Targum 52, as we have already seen. Here, in Isaiah Targum 42, the identification of the servant is different: the role of Israel as such is in view. In Isaiah Targum 42:8, God does not only say “my glory I will not give,” but: “my glory—that *I am revealed upon you*—I will not give to another *people*.” The servant in the Tannaitic framework may refer to Israel, as in Isaiah 49:3 (which remains unchanged in the Targum): “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.” But Targum Isaiah 43 where we have already found the contribution of the Amoraic meturgeman assumes a global transformation of “servant” into “Messiah,” and on that basis the Messiah becomes an eternal witness of divine power and vindication in Targum Isaiah 43:10.

A cognate shift in the key of hope is evident in the handling of the term “Shekhinah,” which refers to the presence of God in association with the cult. Within the Tannaitic framework, the association is quite direct. In response to his people’s injustice, God removes his Shekhinah from the priests when they pray (Tg. Isa. 1:15), although its proper location is Mount Zion (see Tg. Isa. 8:18; 17:11; 26:21). When the Messiah reestablishes the temple (Tg. Isa. 4:5), the Shekinah will return there:

And then the LORD will create over the whole *sanctuary of the Mount of Zion and over the place of the house of the Shekhinah* a cloud of glory—it will be covering it by day, and *the dense cloud will be as a flaming fire* by night; for *it shall have glory greater than was promised he would bring upon it, the Shekhinah will be sheltering it as a canopy*.

The expectation of the Shekhinah's return is physically conceived, along the lines of the cloud of the period of the Exodus. Vindication and God's tangible presence in the sanctuary are inextricably linked. That is what drives the powerful conviction of the Tannaitic meturgeman that the book of Isaiah turns on the restoration of Israel, a restoration that makes Israel greater than it ever was before.

The realism of the eschatological hope of the Tannaitic meturgeman is different, in respect of reference to the Shekhinah, from the conception common among the Amoraim. They held that the Shekhinah had in some sense gone into exile *with* Israel and was accessible within their academies in Babylonia. And there was a famous rabbinic discussion of which synagogue (at that time) had the best claim of access to the Shekhinah (b. Meg. 29a).⁴⁹ In the same discussion, the statement in Ezekiel, "I have been to them as a little sanctuary" (11:16), is applied to synagogues and academies, which is just the application in the Targum Ezekiel 11:16:⁵⁰

Because I removed them far among the Gentiles, and because I scattered them among the countries, therefore I have *given them synagogues, second to my sanctuary, because they are as little in the countries to which they have been exiled.*

The Amoraic conception of divine transcendence made the Shekhinah both more ambient and more focused on the individual whose *halakhah* was correct than was the case in the theology of the Tannaitic meturgeman.

Similarly, b. Qiddushin 31a attributes to Rabbi Isaac the opinion that anyone who transgresses in secret steps on the toes of the Shekhinah. (By the same logic, the passage goes on to relate Rabbi Huna's habit of covering his head, since the Shekhinah was above him.) Once such a conception of the Shekhinah is applied to the book of Isaiah, it can only produce a contradiction of what the Targum, as framed by a Tannaitic meturgeman with a very different understanding, emphatically says. Isaiah 1:15 is said by Rabbi Yohanan b. Nappaha and Rabbi Eleazar to be pointed at individual priests, not to the removal of the Shekhinah generally (see b. Ber. 32b and Niddah 13b), which is the reference in the Targum as it stands (Tg. Isa. 1:15):

⁴⁹ A. Oppenheimer, "Babylonian Synagogues with Historical Associations," in Urman and Flesher, *Ancient Synagogues*, 1:40–50.

⁵⁰ In this case we have departed from Levey's translation in the interests of accuracy and in order to restore a lacuna in his rendering. It should also be mentioned that the principal manuscript, B. M. 2211, reads "you scattered." The Targumim, the Peshitta (so here also), and the Old Syriac Versions of the Gospels (see Luke 4:18) all occasionally engage in a play of changing pronouns in which divine discourse is internalized, as if God were speaking to or about himself.

And when *the priests spread forth their hands to pray for you*, I take up *the face of my Shekhinah* from you.

Just as the withdrawal of the Shekhinah from the temple in the Tannaitic framework could later be portrayed more individually, so a possible implication of an individually threatening removal of the Shekhinah is an individually efficacious return. That implication becomes explicit in Rabbi Rabba's promise that Isaiah 4:5 means that "the Holy One, blessed be He, will make for everyone a canopy corresponding to his rank" (b. B.B. 75a). The communal canopy of the early framework of the Targum is here made into a series of tents.

Indeed, once the Amoraic theology of the Shekhinah is appreciated, the fact that the Tannaitic meturgeman's work was preserved becomes all the more impressive. Evidently, a measure of authority was accorded the work as representing the meaning of what Isaiah the prophet said. On the other hand, the Amoraic meturgeman who supplemented the earlier framework was confronted with the question of how to bridge the Tannaitic conception with his own.

That challenge was met in a brilliant rendering of Isaiah's inaugural vision in chapter 6. We here cite Targum Isaiah 6:1-6:

In the year that King Uzziah *was struck with it* [i.e., leprosy], *the prophet said*, I saw *the glory of the LORD resting upon a throne, high and lifted up in the heavens of the height*; and the Temple *was filled by the brilliance of his glory*. *Holy attendants were in the height before him*; each had six wings; with two he covered his face, *that he might not see*, and with two he covered his body, *that he might not be seen*, and with two he ministered. And one *was crying to another and saying*: Holy *in the heavens of the height, his sanctuary, holy upon the earth, the work of his might, holy in the age of the ages* is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is filled with the *brilliance of his glory*. And the posts of the *Temple thresholds quaked from the sound of the speech*, and the *sanctuary was filled with the dense cloud*. And I said: Woe is me! For I *have sinned*; for I am a man *liable to chastisement*, and I dwell in the midst of people *that are defiled with sins*; for my eyes have seen *the glory of the Shekhinah of the king of the ages, the LORD of hosts*! Then *there was given to me one of the attendants and in his mouth there was a speech which he took before him whose Shekhinah is upon the throne of glory in the heavens of the height, above the altar*.

The passage is interesting from several points of view, but its desire to avoid any disharmony with an Amoraic conception of God is evident. The vision concerns the time of Uzziah's diagnosis with "leprosy," not the time of his death. Isaiah sees God's "glory"—the "glory of the Shekinah" (Tg. Isa. 6:5)—not God himself, and the vision is not of seraphic angels, but of attendants whose wings are only for the purpose of service.

Given all that restraint in the rendering of the vision, the bold new reference to the Shekhinah by the Amoraic meturgeman appears all the more striking. By tracing each reference through the passage, a cosmology of the Shekhinah—of the divine presence in relation to the world—emerges explicitly. The old, Tannaitic association between the sanctuary and the Shekhinah is preserved, but the location of that sanctuary is here changed. The first “holy” is glossed to refer to God “*in the heavens of the height*,” which is identified as “*his sanctuary*.” Mount Zion as such is not at issue nor any other place on earth. It is the second cry of “holy” which refers to the earth as being “*the work of his might*” as a whole. Heaven is now the place of the sanctuary and therefore the place of the Shekhinah. Every place on earth attests God’s might, but none is identified with the Shekhinah.

The essential duality of heaven and earth is underscored by the third cry of “holy.” Here the issue is God’s eternity, which is a particular emphasis of the Amoraic meturgeman (cf. the wording of Tg. Isa. 43:10, with its emphasis on the eternal witness of the Messiah). That which always is, which can never be changed, is a vital aspect of divine transcendence, which is why (as we saw earlier) the Messiah is an eternal witness to the efficacy of God. As the same verse which refers to the witness of the Messiah innovatively says in the Targum (43:10), “*I am he that was from the beginning, even the ages of the ages are mine, and there is no God besides me*.” On such an understanding of eternity as an irreducibly important dimension of God, only heaven can feature as a possible place of his Shekhinah.

What the prophet sees in the sanctuary on earth, therefore, is not the Shekhinah itself but “*the glory of the Shekhinah of the eternal king*” (Tg. Isa. 6:5). “Glory” is regularly used in the Targumim to speak of how God himself might be known, but here it serves to insist that even the Shekhinah may not be directly perceived on earth, not even in the sanctuary, and not even by the prophet Isaiah. From the point of view of the interpretative strategy of the Amoraic meturgeman, this constitutes a considerable advance over the sort of verbal transformation we have seen at the Tannaitic level. The term “king” is not merely identified as that to which the meturgeman believes the text refers; rather, the passage introduces a systematic understanding of how reference to God is possible at all. Isaiah cannot see God, and he cannot even see God’s glory. The glory he sees is of the Shekhinah of God’s eternity, which is in heaven.

The greater elaboration of the Amoraic meturgeman as compared to his Tannaitic predecessor is also evident in the next verse. Targum Isaiah 6:5 localizes this as precisely as could be desired. The attendant takes the “*speech*” (the “burning coal” of the Hebrew) from “*before him whose Shekhinah is upon the throne of glory in the heavens of the height*.” What is implied by

the rendering of the previous verse is spelled out in the present case: the “Shekhinah” is installed on the ultimate throne, in heaven. The phrase which closes the verse, “above the altar,” simply represents the Hebrew text “from upon the altar” (*me‘al hamizbeah*), but in suppressing the locational sense of “from” and in its new language of “*the heavens of the height*,” the Amoraic meturgeman specifies that the Shekhinah is enthroned far “above” the altar.⁵¹

The transformation which comprises the interpretative technique of the Amoraic meturgeman is systematic in two senses. First, the theology of transcendence is introduced, not only on the occasion of verbal triggers, but also when the conceptual need arises to explain how God is related to the prophet’s vision. Second, the Amoraic theology of transcendence is itself systematic, representing a way of thinking about God which is consistent with Amoraic theology but also linked to the text of Isaiah in its traditionally Tannaitic, targumic form.

TANNAITIC ESCHATOLOGY, AMORAIC TRANSCENDENCE

The two interpretative frameworks of Isaiah, the Tannaitic and Amoraic, provide insight into the methods of transformation of meaning from the Hebrew text into the Aramaic Targum. In both cases, transformation is the appropriate terminology, because there is no question of simple translation. The Tannaitic meturgeman transforms the Hebrew of Isaiah literally into a messianic theology of the eschatological vindication of Israel. The Amoraic meturgeman transforms both the work of his predecessor and those parts of the Hebrew text that had not already been rendered into Aramaic by means of systematic indications of God’s messianic transcendence.

The distinct idioms of transformation explain how the Tannaitic framework and the Amoraic framework can coexist without the latter simply swallowing up the former.⁵² The eschatology of messianic vindication can remain, because the Shekhinah whose presence is the pivot of all that the Tannaitic meturgeman says is understood by the Amoraic meturgeman to reside in the heavens of the height, eternal and unchanging. Just as the two frameworks are complementary in terms of interpretative

⁵¹ The Aramaic reads *‘yyl min*, so that the governing sense of the compound is “above,” rather than “from upon.” Here is another case in which conscious engagement with the text in Hebrew is evident, and part of the intended enjoyment of the translation.

⁵² The translational techniques involved are described in De Moor, “Multiple Renderings in the Targum of Isaiah.”

technique, so they convey vivid and distinct perspectives of the character of the book of Isaiah. What is for the first level of interpretation a program of urgently anticipated messianic vindication is at the second level a hymn of eternal praise for an eternal, transcendent God who nonetheless desires to be revealed upon the earth, the work of his might. The traditional Tannaitic eschatological language is not swallowed up by the Amoraic meturgeman, but instead the emphasis upon transcendence puts what is anticipated in a new place, ever secure in heaven.

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The discussion of the two frameworks found in the Isaiah Targum in this chapter draws heavily from the work of Bruce Chilton. See especially his *Glory of Israel* and *A Galilean Rabbi and His Bible. Jesus' Use of the Interpreted Scripture of His Time*, as well as the translation, introduction, and commentary in *The Isaiah Targum* (vol. 11 of the Aramaic Bible).

Other important studies of Targum Jonathan to the Prophets, sometimes focusing on Targum Isaiah, include Smolar and Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*; Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*; Aberbach, "Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets"; Bacher, "Kritische Untersuchungen zum Propheten Targum"; Barnes, "The Targum on the Later Prophets"; Brierre-Narbonne, *Exégèse Targumique des prophéties messianiques*; Cornhill, "Das Targum zu den Propheten"; Dimant, "Targum Jonathan to Isa. XVI.6 and Jer. XLVIII.29f."; Frankel, *Zu dem Targum der Propheten*; Grelot, "L'interprétation messianique d'Isaïe 9,5 dans le Targoum des prophètes"; Houtman and Sysling, *Alternative Targum Traditions*; Humbert, "Le Messie dans le Targoum des Prophètes"; Joosten, "Targumic Aramaic מְרוּעָא: "Oppression" (Isa. LXVII 2, Hos. XI 7, Mic. VI, 3)"; Kim, "Targum Isaiah 53 and the New Testament Concept of Atonement"; Koch, "Messias und Sündenvergebung in Jesaja 53—Targum. Ein Beitrag zu der Praxis der aramäische Bibelübersetzung"; Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches*; Ribera Florit, "Elementos communes del Targum del Targum a lost Profetas y del Targum Palestinense"; Seidelin, "Der Ebed Jahwe und die Messiasgestalt im JesajaTargum"; Van Zijl, "The Root *prq* in Targum Isaiah."

Studies of other Targums where the two frameworks are also identified can be found in Harrington and Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*; Cathcart and Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*; Hayward, *The Targum of Jeremiah*; Levey, *The Targum of Ezekiel*. Levey's acceptance of the paradigm is especially noteworthy in that he had earlier argued

that Targum Jonathan (esp. Isaiah) should be placed within the period of the ascendancy of Islam; see Levey, "The Date of Targum Jonathan to the Prophets." Although the model has been applied, the editions cited do not, in fact, test it by consistent comparative reference to Rabbinica and early Christian literature, which is the method recommended in *The Glory of Israel*.

TARGUM JONATHAN

Former and Latter Prophets

As we move beyond the Targum of Isaiah to the Targums of the other prophetic books, we find that these contributions both reinforce and build upon the two exegetical frameworks so far identified. The Targums of the large books (Jeremiah and Ezekiel), as well as of the minor prophet Zechariah, provide solid evidence of these two major exegetical layers, one identified with the Tannaim and one identified with the Amoraim. In general, the Tannaitic framework is temporally located in the decades prior to the Bar Kokhba revolt and the Amoraic framework during the third and fourth centuries CE.

The two frameworks distinguish themselves by their different approaches to the central concept of prophecy as well as their anticipations of the Messiah and the coming Kingdom of God. The Tannaitic framework reacts to the sudden exile after Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE with an eschatological program of the immediate restoration of Israel by the Messiah and the accompanying elimination of Rome. The Amoraic framework takes a longer—properly speaking transcendent—view, accepting the present state of Israel's exile and looking for messianic redemption on a cosmic scale, while tempering anticipation with cautions about the proper Jewish life during exile.

In the Targums of the Former Prophets, and of Malachi and Haggai, only one framework appears clearly, that belonging to the Amoraic period of the third and fourth century. As we shall explain, however, that may be because simple translation, without added interpretation, rendered these prophetic works useful within the Tannaitic period. The composition of Targum Jonathan involved a process of aggregation, so that the absorption of the earlier framework by the later is a possibility that cannot be excluded.

The Tannaitic framework also *appears* to be missing from the remaining Targums of the Minor Prophets, although occasionally there are scattered interpretations that could be seen as stemming from this period. More importantly for these Targums, they evidence two later interpretative layers that build upon the Amoraic one common throughout Targum Jonathan. The fifth century saw a development of the exilic theology beyond its character in the Amoraic framework in the Targums of Hosea, Amos, Nahum, Obadiah, Micah, and Zephaniah. Following this, a fourth level of interpretation personalized those notions of Israel in exile to the individual in the Targums of Joel, Jonah, and Habakkuk.

This chapter constitutes the first point in this Introduction where we as authors move outside the areas of our primary research. To support our discussion, we therefore rely upon key scholars who have worked primarily on these targums: Willem Smelik on Judges, Eveline van Staaldoune-Sulman on Samuel, Daniel Harrington and Anthony Saldarini on the Former Prophets, Robert Hayward on Jeremiah, Samson Levey on Ezekiel, and Kevin Cathcart and Robert Gordon on the Minor Prophets. We acknowledge their work with gratitude.

THE TARGUM OF THE FORMER PROPHETS

In some ways Targum Jonathan to the Former Prophets is the most mysterious within Targum Jonathan as a whole. As a translation it stays programmatically close to the Hebrew text, somewhat in the manner of Targum Onqelos to the Pentateuch. Indeed, the Targum of Joshua's rendering adheres to a straightforward policy of translating the Hebrew text and includes few additions. The little additional material is so sparse that it provides few clues to its exegetical character, although it is consistent with the process of editing during the Amoraic period. Linguistically, Targum Jonathan to the Former Prophets is also the closest of the Targums to Onqelos. Both of them have been dated prior to 135 CE on the grounds that they are written in Jewish Literary Aramaic and show no influence of the Jewish Palestinian Aramaic that emerged after 200.¹ As we shall see, however, JLA continued as a targumic idiom after 135, so that a dating somewhat later during the second century or even into the third is also entirely possible on linguistic grounds, and there is good reason to conclude on the basis of literary evidence that the Targum of the Former Prophets emerged in its present form during the third century.

¹ See Tal, *Language of the Targum of the Former Prophets and its Position within the Aramaic Dialects*; Harrington and Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*, 3. Van Staaldoune-Sulman agrees with this dating in her history of discussion and analysis; see *Targum of Samuel*, 47, 711.

The innovative character of the Targum of the Former Prophets becomes clear, however, when expansive developments beyond the original text—involving examples of substantial addition rather than the usual program of close correspondence to the Hebrew—are considered. When viewed together, they develop an outlook on prophecy and on the Messiah that comports well with Targum Isaiah, as described in the previous chapter. We take these examples as representative of the complexion of Targum Jonathan to the Former Prophets as a whole, without detailing here all of the books within that section of the Targum, or characterizing all of the innovative material presented.

The Targum of Judges

The first of these expansive developments appears in Judges 5, within the song of Deborah.² The target of her prophecy, in a setting of hardship, is specified in the Targum of Judges 5:9:

*I was sent to give praise to the scribes of Israel who, when that affliction happened, did not cease from studying the Law; and who, whenever it was proper for them, were sitting in the synagogues at the head of the exiles and were teaching the people the words of the Law and blessing and giving thanks before the Lord.*³

The Targum directs Deborah's words to the specific situation of Israel after the destruction of the *second* temple in 70 CE, when exile was a persistent condition, and rabbis—here addressed as “scribes”—were the principal authorities.⁴ Their role in the operation of synagogues—teaching and blessing and praising God—is Deborah's particular concern within the Targum, even though the Masoretic Text developed a different, military application.

Given the way in which prophecy is emphasized and articulated within Targum Jonathan, it is not surprising that Deborah's own role as a prophet is underlined (see Tg. Judg. 5:3, 7).⁵ But the exalted status of the prophetic vocation is also indicated by other means. Deborah herself is depicted as a woman of wealth (Tg. Judg. 4:5), so that no question of any financial motive for her prophetic activity can arise. Moreover, on several

² See Harrington, “Prophecy of Deborah,” 432–42.

³ This translation combines elements of Harrington and Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*, 67, and Smelik, *Targum of Judges*, 443. Unless otherwise noted, translations of Targums in this chapter will come from the Aramaic Bible series, which we will occasionally modify.

⁴ See Smelik, *Targum of Judges*, 443–45.

⁵ After all, even Othniel is associated specifically with the “spirit of prophecy” (Judg 3:10).

occasions in the Targum, “prophet” takes the place of the word “angel” in the Masoretic Text (Tg. Judg. 2:1, 4; 5:23): communication revealed from the heavenly realm is held to occur by prophetic means.⁶

The term *mal'akh* (“angel”) in fact means “messenger” in Hebrew, so that the shift to a prophetic reference is not in any sense arbitrary. Nonetheless, Judges envisions these figures with unusual powers and attributes, which then, in the Targum, are associated with the prophetic voice. Just that prophetic voice, in the case of Deborah, is commissioned in Judges 5:9 (as we have seen) to praise the rabbinic teachers who guide Israel in exile.

The close connection between the heavenly court and the kind of authority that stands behind Targum Jonathan itself is intimated in another scene, when the angel appears to Manoah, the father of Samson (Judges 13). The angel in this case remains an angel (instead of being replaced by a prophet), but when Manoah asks his name, he calls himself “interpreter” (מְפָרֵשׁ) in the Targum (13:18).⁷ When this supernatural figure replies evasively in the Masoretic Text that his name is “my wonder,” it is evident that Targum Jonathan elevates the functions of both prophecy and interpretation—both involved in targumic activity—within its rendering.

Just as the notion of prophecy is introduced on some occasions in order to stress the heavenly nature of communication, so care is taken to differentiate the spirit of prophecy from other manifestations of the spirit, especially when a figure’s behavior stands in obvious contradiction to God’s commandments in the Torah. So Samson (from Tg. Judg. 13:25 and onward) is endowed with a spirit “*of power*,” and no attribution of prophetic insight comes into question.

“Power” is also attributed in this way to Jephthah (Tg. Judg. 11:29), and he is explicitly criticized for sacrificing his daughter. Had he only consulted Phinehas, according to the Targum, that priest would simply have required redemption (the life of an animal in exchange for the life of a human being), in a manner consistent with the Torah (so Tg. Judg. 11:39).

The heroic stature of Phinehas is well attested within rabbinic literature, in consequence of his killing the Israelite who took a Midianite wife in Numbers 25. The assumption that he ran great risk in doing so made

⁶ See Smelik, *Targum of Judges*, 349–52. As he correctly points out (387), the introduction of the term *angel* in place of God in Judg 4:14 is “relatively old,” by which he apparently means pre-Tannaitic.

⁷ We here follow the rendering of Harrington and Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*, 86, against that of Smelik, *Targum of Judges*, 566, on the grounds of the basic meaning of the Aramaic root.

him a favorite model of martyrdom; he was willing to “hand over his life to death,” and in doing so purified Israel (see *Sifré Numbers* §131).⁸ Whether or not his role as martyr is in the background of Targum Judges 11:39, it is plain that both priestly and prophetic authority is attributed to him.⁹

The Targums of 1 & 2 Samuel

The association of priesthood and prophecy is a feature of Josephus’ theology, and it is developed skillfully in Targum Jonathan to the Former Prophets.¹⁰ Hannah, the mother of Samuel, prays “*in a spirit of prophecy*” (Tg. 1 Sam. 2:1), near the site of the sanctuary, and represents both the Tannaitic and Amoraic eschatology of Targum Jonathan.¹¹ Samuel himself is said to sleep in the court of the Levites (Tg. 1 Sam. 3:3), since the meturgeman cannot imagine him doing so in the sanctuary itself, as a straightforward reading of the Masoretic Text could imagine the setting.¹² In that safer haven, the “*glory*” of the Lord is revealed to Samuel (Tg. 1 Sam. 3:10); that is the particular source of his word of prophecy (Tg. 1 Sam. 3:7).

Samuel is a good paradigm of the prophetic vocation. His prophecy against idolatry is accepted, and the people of Israel “poured out their heart in repentance like water” (Tg. 1 Sam. 7:6). He succeeds in turning Israel back from their rebellion against “*the service of the LORD*” in the temple (Tg. 1 Sam. 7:2-3; cf. Tg. Judg. 2:13; 1 Kgs 14:8, 9), which is the particular sin that occasions exile in Targum Jonathan as a whole.¹³ The sanctuary is the precise place where “the living God *has chosen to make his Shekhinah reside*” (Tg. Josh. 3:10), and for that reason it is the only appropriate repository of Israel’s sacred wealth (see Tg. Josh. 6:19, concerning the spoil of Jericho). Prophecy and temple are linked inextricably in Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets, as they are in Targum Jonathan as a whole.

In view of the paradigmatic role of Samuel, the considerable expansion of the song of Hannah is all the more striking. Her prediction, within a recitation of the history of Israel’s salvation, places the social context of the interpretation quite precisely in the Targum of 1 Samuel 2:5:

⁸ The same expression appears in Tg. Isa. 53:12, see Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, 105 and *Glory of Israel*, 105.

⁹ An early version of this claim, as Smelik, *Targum of Judges*, 555–57, points out.

¹⁰ See Blenkinsopp, “Prophecy and Priesthood in Josephus.”

¹¹ See Van Staaldoune-Sulman, *Targum of Samuel*, 197–219. She explicitly accepts the analysis of Tg. Jon. as stemming from two exegetical frameworks (711).

¹² See Van Staaldoune-Sulman, *Targum to Samuel*, 229–30.

¹³ See Dray, *Translation and Interpretation in the Targum to the Book of Kings*, 63–64.

So Jerusalem, which was like a barren woman, is to be filled with her exiled people. And Rome, which was filled with many peoples—her armies will cease to be; she will be desolate and destroyed.

In language and imagery, as in its application to the difference in fortunes between Jerusalem and Rome, the passage builds upon the similar prediction of Isaiah 54:1 in the Isaiah Targum.¹⁴ Moreover, it makes the state of “exiles” the particular focus, in conformity with the song of Deborah in Judges 5.

The songs of Deborah and of Hannah both demonstrate a consuming interest in the prophetic vocation of insistence on Israel’s devotion to the law and the sanctuary, and Israel’s avoidance of the dangers of idolatry, which apparently became severe in the period after the destruction of the temple. The assumption of a *continuing* exile as the condition of Israel comports with the period after 135 CE, when Jewish settlement in Jerusalem was prohibited by the Romans. Targum Jonathan to the Former Prophets responds to that situation by building a bridge between the heavenly communication of the classical prophets and what can be heard in synagogues from teachers who attend to the Torah.

Saul becomes a particular example of the necessity of faithfulness on the part of someone who is more a “teacher” than a “prophet.” Although “the spirit of *prophecy*” may rest upon him (Tg. 1 Sam. 10:10), he is referred to essentially as a “scribe,” rather than as a prophet (so MT; see 1 Sam 10:5, 11-12 both there and in the Targum). In that regard, Saul can function best as the negative example he undoubtedly is in Targum 1 Samuel (15:23):

For like the guilt of men who inquire of the diviner, so is the guilt of every man who rebels against the words of the Torah; and like the sins of the people who go astray after idols, so is the sin of every man who takes away or adds to the words of the prophets. Because you rejected the service of the LORD, he has removed you from being the king.

Saul has not yet visited the medium at Endor (see 1 Sam 28), but the present passage makes it quite clear that all of Saul’s sins, including that visit, amount to idolatry, rebellion against the words of the Torah, distortion of the teaching of the prophets, and a rejection of the service of the Lord in his temple.

The figure of Saul is not simply tragic in the Targum; he is an example of how a teacher can go wrong despite his proximity to authentic and direct prophecy (instanced by Samuel). David therefore becomes the counterpart model to Saul. David, Samuel, and Saul appear together in

¹⁴ So Van Staaldvine-Sulman, *Targum to Samuel*, 212.

the scene at Ramah, a place of prophecy, in what explicitly becomes a house of study, a *beth 'ulpana'* (Tg. 1 Sam. 19:18, 19, 22, 23). Because people may go there to learn, it is a place of *scribes* (Tg. 1 Sam. 19:20), not simply of prophets, and the final question of the passage is emblematic, "Is Saul among the *scribes*?" (Tg. 1 Sam. 19:24), rather than among the "prophets," as in the Masoretic Text. The answer to that rhetorical question is obviously "yes," owing to Saul's proximity to Samuel (and the earlier appearance of the same rhetorical question in Tg. 1 Sam. 10:11-12). But scribes and teachers are liable to error, as we have seen in the previous chapter; Targum Jonathan presents rejection of idolatry, faithfulness to the law, and attentiveness to the prophets as the hallmarks of true teaching.

David has a particular place in the theology of Targum Jonathan, because he is the object of prophetic prediction. What is said by the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 7, commonly known as the Davidic covenant, amounts to a promise not simply of enduring prosperity but also involves "*the age that is coming*" (Tg. 2 Sam. 7:19). Because the Davidic house is the object of that vision, David himself emerges as an instrument of prophecy (Tg. 2 Sam. 22:1), and he announces the salvation of the house of Israel despite their apparently poor fortunes "*in this world*" (Tg. 2 Sam. 22:28).

At the close of 2 Samuel, David expands the litany of salvation that Hannah had already initiated, but with particular reference to the vindication which is to come (Tg. 2 Sam. 22:32):

Therefore on account of the sign and the redemption that you do for your Messiah and for the remnant of your people who are left, all the nations, peoples, and languages will give thanks and say, "There is no God except the Lord."

Just as the targumic Hannah invoked a characteristic element of the Isaiah Targum, in the comparison of barren Jerusalem and maternal Rome, so the targumic David invokes an insistence dear to the Targum Jonathan, that there is no God but the Lord.¹⁵ At the same time, the theme of the universal recognition of messianic vindication comes to open expression. David's "*words of prophecy*" are said to be "*for the end of the world, for the days of consolation that are to come,*" days that will see "*the Messiah to come who will arise and rule*" (Tg. 1 Sam. 23:1, 3).

Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets presents a full, well articulated hope of messianic vindication, involving the Messiah in the destruction of Rome, renewed dedication to the service of the Lord in his temple, and faithfulness to the Torah. Moreover, a theory of authority is intimated, in which true prophecy represents the claims of heaven upon the earth and may in turn be represented away from Jerusalem, under conditions

¹⁵ See Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 6-7.

of exile, by the voice of faithful teachers and interpreters. Any number of handbooks and articles refer to Targum Jonathan as being a literal translation, and to some extent that reputation is justified. It is remarkably economical compared to the Targums of the Latter Prophets. But the innovative matter included, above all in the songs of Deborah, Hannah, and David, makes it clear beyond any reasonable contradiction that the Targum is a literary translation of the corpus as a whole, targeted on the issue of messianic vindication as attested by the prophets and warranted by the authority of rabbinic teachers in synagogues and schools.¹⁶

The emphasis on the condition of exile (see the discussion of Tg. Judg. 5:9 above) suggests that the framework of Targum Jonathan to the Former Prophets was essentially Amoraic. Unlike the Isaiah Targum, the immediate hope of a rebuilt temple and a return from exile is not a programmatic feature. Even the Messiah is present more as a symbol and seal of ultimate triumph than as a personal instrument of victory. These indications, together with the probable allusion to the tradition of the Isaiah Targum at 1 Samuel 2:5 in the song of Hannah, suggest that Targum Jonathan to the Former Prophets emerged during the third century in Babylonia. It no doubt was composed on the basis of earlier materials, and the reference to prophets and teachers and scribes is comparable with, albeit on the whole more favorable than, both the Isaiah Targum and the Jeremiah Targum (both of which manifest a Tannaitic phase of development), but it is the economy of the Targum of the Former Prophets that is most striking in comparison to Targumim that evidence a Tannaitic phase of composition.

That economy, however, only makes the expansions of the Targum all the more important as indices of its intent and setting. Deborah, Hannah, and David together attest—with the prophetic authority of God's own spirit—that the Messiah is to come from the house of David as the seal of Israel's consolation. That rigorously developed theme makes little sense as a guiding principle prior to 135 CE within the school of Aqiba, an association that has been claimed in an influential volume of scholarship.¹⁷ After all, the leader of the revolt of 132–135, Simeon bar Kosiba, could not claim Davidic descent. Instead, he had to rely on Balaam's oracle that a star would arise from Jacob to strike the enemies of Israel (Num 24:17). Aqiba's apparent support for Simeon led to the rebuke in the Yerushalmi, "Aqiba, grass will grow from your jaw before the son of David comes" (m. Ta'anit 4:8). That is, Aqiba is put in the wrong for the immediacy of his hope and for his identification of a non-David figure as the Messiah.

¹⁶ This is also the conclusion of Van Staaldvine-Sulman in *Targum of Samuel*, 701–17.

¹⁷ See Smolar and Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*.

The Former Prophets Targum joins this rabbinic critique of the Aqiban eschatology in a particularly telling manner. Aqiba had been widely reputed as the most careful of biblical exegetes: each particle of the Hebrew language was to be given its full weight in interpretation.¹⁸ This Targum normally represents its Hebrew text very faithfully, yet departs in a systematic way to insist upon the Davidic identity of the Messiah who is to come in God's own scheme of salvation, warranted by the prophets. So the methods of Aqiba, both scrupulous grammatical care and an inspired application of the biblical text to contemporary circumstances, are deployed in this Targum to *refute* the Aqiban eschatology.

The language of the Targum, finally, attests its purpose. It has long caused perplexity that, although Targum Jonathan as a whole is composed in the western dialect of JLA, a stage of the language which disappeared from current usage before 200 CE, it is attested only in Babylonian sources from centuries later, whose eastern Aramaic dialect was the later Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (JBA). Stephen A. Kaufman has rightly suggested that such phenomena would seem to indicate that a literary usage of interpretation was associated with Middle Aramaic, and it is evident—although he does not make the observation—that the interpretative association of JLA continued into a much later period.¹⁹ He has not suggested why that might have been the case, but our analysis of the Former Prophets Targum now suggests a reason. The very language of the period of the revolt of Simeon bar Kosiba, whose correspondence in Aramaic has been discovered—the interpretative language of support for the revolt—was now used to articulate the rabbinic expectation of the continuing care of God for his people in exile, even as they awaited the *Davidic* Messiah. The expression of open hostility to Rome underscores that this Targum is a Babylonian product from the period of the third century, when a certain stability reigned in the academies there.

THE LATTER PROPHETS APART FROM THE ISAIAH TARGUM

The Targum of Jeremiah

The usage of Targum Jonathan during the Amoraic period is attested by an inscription discovered at Nippur.²⁰ The pottery find, dated between 350 and 500 CE, presents readings from Jeremiah 2:1 and Ezekiel 21:21-23 in a form consistent with the Targum Jonathan as we can read it today. That confirmation of the usage of Targum Jonathan within the Amoraic

¹⁸ See H. Freedman, "Akiva."

¹⁹ See Kaufman, "Job Targum from Qumran."

²⁰ See Kaufman, "Unique Magic Bowl from Nippur."

period underlines the critical importance of certain questions: What is the relationship between the Amoraic framework of that time and the earlier Tannaitic framework? Why was the Aramaic dialect of an earlier time used long after its common usage had been eclipsed by JBA? How was the assertive theology of messianic vindication of the first Tannaitic framework understood once it was incorporated within the second Amoraic framework?

That there was such an incorporation is manifest, not only in the fact that Targum Jonathan is passed on as a whole within rabbinic tradition, but also in the fact that the various renderings of Targum Jonathan, whatever the biblical book rendered and whatever the framework concerned, share their school dialect of a revived or continued JLA. But now, the magic bowl from Nippur shows us that the Jeremiah Targum and the Ezekiel Targum could be applied in a context far from a school environment, in the quest of individuals for restoration. The bowl speaks of Jerusalem both positively (by means of Jeremiah) and negatively (by means of Ezekiel) in order to locate Israel within the spectrum between exile and restoration. So alongside the rabbinic program of a discipline of the interpretative application of the text of the prophets (to avoid such excesses as Aqiba's), we also have to reckon with a looser, non-programmatic—and yet persistent and popular—association of the prophetic text with the experience of Israel in exile and the hope for vindication. The continuing conviction that the Targum attested Israel's return to glory helps to explain why the Tannaitic framework can have survived, complete with its realistic eschatology, even as the more conservative Amoraic framework emerged.

Following earlier analysis of the Isaiah Targum (described in the previous chapter), Robert Hayward has suggested that the Jeremiah Targum evolved in two stages, principally during the first century and then the third and fourth centuries.²¹ (During the discussion that follows, we will see that both these chronological phases need to be broadened somewhat.) The Messiah is characterized as “messiah of righteousness” in a way consistent with the Scrolls of Qumran;²² such links support Hayward's finding that “[t]he general tone of the Messianic hope in this Tg. is simple, straightforward, and uncomplicated; and there is the likelihood that it is of very ancient lineage.”²³

²¹ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 38. His observations of coherence with the biblical interpretation of Jerome (340–420 CE; p. 35, as well as the index, p. 203) are especially interesting.

²² See Tg. Jer. 23:5 with 4QPatr 3-4; see also the reference to prophecy in Tg. Jer. 1:2 with 11QPs DavComp 27.1; Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 27.

²³ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 33.

Hayward did not have access to Harrington and Saldarini's volume on the Former Prophets, which was published in the same year as his own. So he was not in a position to see that the Messiah in the Jeremiah Targum aligns himself more with the providential figure of the Former Prophets Targum than with the triumphant rebuilder of the temple anticipated in the earliest stages of the Isaiah Targum. As son of David, the Messiah is keenly anticipated because his revelation among the people means their redemption, safety, and their recognition of God as the source of their vindication (Tg. Jer. 23:5-6; 30:9, 21; 33:13, 15-17, 26), not because he triumphantly rebuilds the temple. This Messiah, as in the Amoraic phase (rather than the Tannaitic phase) of the Isaiah Targum, is a teacher in the manner of the rabbis: "the *people* shall yet *eagerly pursue the words of the Messiah*" (Tg. Jer. 33:13).

There is no question, however, of the Messiah within the Jeremiah Targum *simply* reflecting the more settled expectation of the Amoraic period. He is also, as in the Isaiah Targum's early phase, associated quite closely with the priesthood (Tg. Jer. 33:20-22) and with worship in the temple (Tg. Jer. 30:9, 21). The rebuilding of the sanctuary is in fact an object of faith in this Targum (Tg. Jer. 31:12); it is just that the messianic means of its rebuilding is not articulated with the degree of emphasis that it is in the Isaiah Targum. By comparison, then, a certain attenuation of a vigorous hope of restoration seems apparent.

The later dating of the Jeremiah Targum as compared to the Isaiah Targum prepares us to understand how it is that, in Jeremiah Targum 2:21, the phrase "*as a plant of a choice vine*" is imported from Isaiah Targum 5:2 and applied to the people of Jerusalem. The point in the Isaiah Targum is to speak of Israel's identity as centered in the sanctuary,²⁴ but by the time of the Jeremiah Targum the phrase is more like a slogan, and is applied in a less specific way. It speaks of Israel without specifying the need to rebuild the temple.

Likewise, in Jeremiah Targum 8:16 the theme of a rejection of the cult in the sanctuary is present, but entirely historicized into the distant past, the exile of the northern kingdom of Israel at the time of the Assyrians in 722 BCE:

Because they worshipped the calves which were in Dan, a king with his troops shall go up against them and shall take them into exile.

Where it is more typical of the Isaiah Targum to speak in terms of the contemporary defect of worship in the temple, the Jeremiah Targum is

²⁴ Hayward cites the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 23:12; 28:4; 39:7 by way of comparison. Unfortunately, he follows an unconvincing dating of this text exclusively within the first century.

inclined to speak of the punishment of idolatry by means of the destruction of the temple as occurring long ago, during the time of the first temple.

Still, the threat of idolatry is ever present, especially within the Sassanid regime in Babylon, which proffered an astral aspect.²⁵ The worship of Venus was an especial concern. That planet is specifically mentioned in Jeremiah Targum 7:18 as “the *star* of heaven” in the context of idolatry, where the Masoretic Text reads “the queen of heaven.” A return from that Babylon, from a region that might eventually lead to a loss of Israel’s identity, is therefore a dominant concern, and Jeremiah is just the prophet to give occasion to emphasize that concern (see Tg. Jer. 16:14, 15, and the MT). Yet although the concern for an end of exile is paradigmatic, it is not immediate. The meturgeman must look to the ministry of teachers to follow in the testimony of the prophets, much as in the Former Prophets Targum.

But the Jeremiah Targum was an especially good occasion (given the themes of the biblical book) to dilate on the disastrous consequences of the failure to listen to such teachers, as we see in Targum Jeremiah 6:29:²⁶

Behold, like bellows which blow what is burnt in the midst of the fire, so the voice of their prophets is silent, who prophesy to them: Return to the Law! But they have not returned. And like lead which is melted in the smelting pot, so the words of the prophets who prophesy to them are void in their eyes. Their teachers have taught them without profit, and they have not forsaken their evil deeds.

In a condition of persistent exile, attention to the echo of the prophet’s voice under the authority of the rabbis becomes a matter of survival. But the fact that obedience is vital is no guarantee that it will be achieved.

As Robert Hayward remarks, the Jeremiah Targum emphasizes that the hermeneutic of prophecy and authoritative teaching requires a clear distinction between true prophecy, such as Jeremiah’s (Tg. Jer. 2:1, 2) and that of Haman the son of Yigdaliah (Tg. Jer. 35:4), and the message of those described as “prophets of falsehood” (Tg. Jer. 4:9, 10, 13; 5:13, 31; 7:8; 23:13-22; 28:1, 12, 15).²⁷ Hayward is inclined to hold that the latter figures deliberately “tell lies,” where I have maintained that they simply say things that are wrong, intentionally or not.²⁸ In their error, they may

²⁵ See the imagery of the eagle in 18:1 and the discussion of both the eagle and the winged solar disk in Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, 37; Porada, *Iran ancien*, 226, and 139–54. In Tg. Isa. 44:13, the innovative reference to a woman in a house fits the Sassanid period quite well; see Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*, 87–89; and Porada, *Iran ancien*, 62.

²⁶ The passage is especially innovative in comparison to the MT. Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 69, explains the logic of the rendering very well.

²⁷ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 32–33.

²⁸ See Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 54. We both depart from the view of Pinkhos Churgin in

also be described as “scribes” (Tg. Jer. 6:13; 8:10; 14:18; 18:18; 23:11, 33, 34; 26:7, 8, 11, 16; 29:1) or “teachers” (Tg. Jer. 29:15). But it would be hasty to conclude that “scribe” or “teacher” is inherently pejorative, although Hayward (*Targum of Jeremiah*, 33) cites Jeremiah Targum 18:18 (with Tg. Hos. 4:4) and 29:15 to this effect.²⁹ The overall pattern of usage associated prophets, scribes, and teachers (in their proper function, as well as in their failure) in much the manner as in Targum of the Former Prophets.

Still, the usually negative characterization of the scribes is striking, and leads to the impression that in the mind of the meturgeman they are, Hayward says, “a powerful and influential group of his own day, who like the priests, have failed in their duties.”³⁰ Passages such as Jeremiah Targum 2:12 (which refers innovatively to the destruction of the sanctuary) and especially 13:27—which refers to a “respite” of “many days” granted to Jerusalem—hold out the hope that repentance might yet permit Jerusalem to survive and prosper. These citations most likely stem from the period prior to 135 CE, when Hadrian prohibited Jewish settlement in the city.³¹

As in the case of the Targum Isaiah, but unlike the Former Prophets Targum, the Targum Jeremiah presents us with evidence of a Tannaitic framework, fashioned prior to the end of the second major revolt against Rome. Two related questions emerge out of this observation. First, why do some Targumim represent such a framework, while others do not? Second, how should we characterize the first framework in its relationship to the second Amoraic framework?

In answer to the first question, Targum of the Former Prophets provides us, in its key innovations within the songs of Deborah, Hannah, and David, with a clear index of how the Amoraic meturgemanin of Targum Jonathan generally perceived the Scriptures. Right interpretation should continue the testimony of the prophets and promote repentance and adherence to the Torah; its goal and seal is the Messiah, son of David, who is to restore righteousness in Jerusalem. Earlier material

his *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, who sees a constant connection with the issue of idolatry. He was obviously correct in maintaining that is a programmatic concern in the Tg. Jer., as in Tg. Jon. generally, but prophecy in the imagination of the meturgemanin may be false without being idolatrous.

²⁹ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 33.

³⁰ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 33, citing Tg. Jer. 23:31-33. Other key passages include Tg. Jer. 8:10; 14:18; 18:18; 23:11, 33, 34; 26:7, 8, 11, 16; 29:1; see Hayward, 36-37.

³¹ Hayward would even suggest a date prior to 70, which leads to his hypothesis of a first-century framework. But the reference to the imminent destruction of the Temple in Tg. Jer. 2:12 is better taken as a prediction after the event. For a brief but useful description of Roman policy under Hadrian, see Leaney, *Jewish and Christian World 200 BC to AD 200*, 122-25.

(in the Tannaitic framework) associated with the rendering of the latter prophets that coordinated well with this theme—including the prophecy of Rome’s demise and Jerusalem’s prosperity, an attack on idolatry, criticism of priests, scribes, and teachers who were slack or in error, and the triumph of the Messiah—might well be incorporated.

Indeed, to the extent that the Tannaitic framework was already in use in some synagogues, inclusion of its interpretation would promote the acceptance of the Jeremiah Targum. As it was, those who framed Targum Jonathan already accepted the fact that the appropriate language of the Targum was Jewish Literary Aramaic, a somewhat archaic form of the language by the Amoraic period. When, however, those responsible for Targum Jonathan at the stage of the Amoraic framework did not accept an earlier interpretation, they could simply employ the general policy of straightforward translation.³²

So as Hayward points out, no reference to the **Aqedah** (the “binding of Isaac,” which had become the “death of Isaac” by the second century) is found in the Jeremiah Targum, although the rabbis had made such a connection by the Amoraic period.³³ In some perplexity, Hayward suggests that the Targum was composed before the connection had been made, although he himself is well aware of the influence of much later developments in the liturgical pattern of scriptural readings. It is much easier to suppose that in composing Targum Jonathan, as in Targum Onqelos, the meturgemanin were aware that the Aqedah was a recent innovation still subject to speculative developments,³⁴ and that they accordingly did not represent it within their translations.³⁵

That brings us to answering the second question posed above. Because the Amoraic meturgemanin were in a position to censor the work of their predecessors, the extent of the Tannaitic framework within any Targum must remain a matter of conjecture. Still, the Isaiah Targum shows us how crucial a place the temple played in that early framework, and the Jeremiah Targum confirms that the severe criticism of the priesthood in Jerusalem and of the scribes was involved in the Tannaitic framework. Fundamentally, the Tannaitic framework, which probably grew up out of the usage of synagogues in sympathy with one another, focused on the messianic vindication of Israel, a vindication that was necessarily to include the defeat of Rome. Insofar as the Amoraic meturgemanin

³² This superficially inconsistent, but as it turns out sensible, policy was already observed by Henry Preserved Smith in his article, “Targum to Jeremiah.”

³³ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 3–4.

³⁴ See Chilton, *Abraham’s Curse*.

³⁵ For further discussion of the issue, see Chilton, “Recent Discussion of the Aqedah.”

could use that tradition in their exilic attempt to maintain and enhance the identity of Israel during the indeterminate number of days prior to the Messiah, they did so. In origin, however, the targumic tradition, of which Targum Jonathan was the final, literary outcome, is a monument of the popular and the rabbinic resistance to the presence of the Romans. The Jerusalem which was lost on the ground in 135 CE was preserved in the liturgy of synagogues, insofar as the usage of Targum Jonathan could be promulgated.

The Targum of Ezekiel

In his treatment of the Targum of Ezekiel, Samson H. Levey has argued for an even earlier date of the founding framework than Hayward has suggested. Levey agrees that the received product that can be read today is Amoraic but attempts to specify the foundation of the tradition with the school of Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, who survived after the siege which culminated in the burning of the city in 70 CE.³⁶

The book of Ezekiel itself presents the image of the Merkabah, the chariot propelled by supernatural creatures that serves as the throne of God (chap. 1), and involves the vision of God (1:26-28). That was the basis of a discipline of contemplation which evolved during the rabbinic period, well into the Middle Ages and beyond.³⁷ But Yohanan himself taught that the passage containing Merkabah was not to be repeated to the uninstructed (b. Hag. 13a), while the Targum Jonathan is quite forthcoming in rendering the most sensitive passages.³⁸ An exception to that rule is the rendering of Ezekiel 1:6, which assigns sixteen faces and sixty-four wings to each of the creatures; but that only provides a contrast to the usual, straightforward correspondence with the Masoretic Text. Moreover, the probable reason for that multiplication of faces and hands is given in 1:8, where the Targum innovatively has the creatures perform the additional service of removing coals of fire from the firmament in order to destroy sinners. The Targum seems more eschatological than speculative in its innovations.

In that connection it is worth recalling that Rabbi Joseph in Pumbeditha also taught that the reference to the Merkabah should be kept

³⁶ See Levey, *Targum of Ezekiel*, 2–5. For his earlier views, see “Date of Targum Jonathan to the Prophets.”

³⁷ See Bavli Hag. 2:1; Shab. 80b; Menahoth 43b; Hag. 13a-14a; Meg. 4:10, and the still indispensable study of Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*.

³⁸ Levey’s claim that Yohanan’s program was one of “substituting Merkabah Mysticism for Messianic activism” (*Targum of Ezekiel*, 4) cannot be sustained on the basis of any statement attributable to Yohanan.

“under your tongue,” as were the honey and milk in the Song of Songs 4:11 (b. Hag. 13a). Indeed, Targum Ezekiel may be said to conform to the conventional reticence of the rabbis when it innovatively refers in 1:27 to a “*glory which the eye is unable to see. . .*” That is a far cry from the elaborate visionary descriptions often involved in contemplation of the Merkabah.

Despite its generally direct approach, the Ezekiel Targum represents a related esoteric interpretation, which may be associated—somewhat as Samson Levey has suggested—with the school of Yohanan. Although Yohanan was reported to be wary about whom he spoke to regarding the exegesis of Scripture, one of his most famous disciples admitted to a lapse in that regard. Eliezer ben Hyracanus, the most celebrated traditionalist of his time, was once denounced as a rebel to a Roman judge. He was able to walk away from the tribunal, but he said he deserved being denounced, because he had once discussed the interpretation of Scripture with a heretic (probably a Christian) in Sepphoris (see b. A.Z. 16b–17a). Eliezer is said to have connected a key verse in the book of Zechariah, “In that day the Lord will be one and his name one” (14:9), with the eschatological expectation of the kingdom of God (see *Mekhilla* Amalek 2.155–59).³⁹

The kingdom of God features in the Ezekiel Targum, as well as in the Isaiah Targum. The treatment in Ezekiel Targum 7:6–7a makes the eschatological reference unmistakable:

The end has come. The *retribution of the end which was to come upon you*, behold, it comes. *The kingdom has been revealed to you*, inhabitant of the land!

Levey himself cites Targum Isaiah 28:5—and David Kimhi—by way of comparison, in that the term “diadem” in the Hebrew is also rendered eschatologically there, as here in Targum Ezekiel 7:7.⁴⁰ The “diadem” of Isaiah 28:5 refers to the crown of “the Messiah” in the Isaiah Targum, while the “diadem” of Ezekiel 7:7 becomes the “kingdom” in the Ezekiel Targum. That would suggest that we are dealing with the Tannaitic framework and a consistent theology of messianic and eschatological judgment.

Within the teaching of Jesus, the anticipation of the eschatological kingdom of God involved the claim that God could already be perceived to be at work within the world.⁴¹ The Ezekiel Targum presents the context of such a vision as similar to the contemplation of the Merkabah, and

³⁹ For further discussion, see Chilton, “Regnum Dei Deus Est”; Lorein, “*mlkut*’ in the Targum of the Prophets”; Wolters, “Targumic KRWB (Zechariah 14:20) = Greek *korymbaia*.”

⁴⁰ Levey, *Targum of Ezekiel*, 33.

⁴¹ See Chilton, *Pure Kingdom*.

to that extent Levey's suggestion may be endorsed in a qualified way. By contrast, his contention that the Ezekiel Targum is too early to show an interest in the Messiah seems strained. From the *Psalms of Solomon* in the Pseudepigrapha to the *Manual of Discipline* that purported to regulate life at Qumran, a messianic aspect is evident within early Judaism. The absence of such reference within the Ezekiel Targum, even within passages which refer to David, is more likely the result of restraint on the part of the Amoraic meturgemanin than the consequence of a date of composition as early as Levey suggests.

In any case, the restraint of the meturgemanin of Ezekiel only extends to explicit use of the noun "messiah." The *figure* of the Messiah is keenly anticipated, as is evident in Ezekiel Targum 17:22-23:

I myself will bring near *from the kingdom of the house of David which is likened to the lofty cedar, and I will establish him, a child among his sons' sons; I will anoint and establish him by my Memra . . . and he shall gather together armies and build fortresses and become a mighty king; and all the righteous shall rely on him, and all the humble shall dwell in the shade of his kingdom.*

Given that the verb "anoint" is used here, and used innovatively in respect of the Hebrew text, it seems pedantic to deny that this is an explicitly messianic expectation. Similarly, "son of David" is not used word for word here; but to deny that the interpretation serves the rabbinic expectation of such a figure would be ill-advised. The Davidic Messiah is to be king, and the righteous are therefore to be vindicated, just as in Isaiah Targum 16.⁴²

Once it has been appreciated that the Ezekiel Targum does in fact reflect the theology of messianic vindication which is more evident in the Isaiah Targum, its relative reserve is readily explained as a result of a more recent date, nearer to the time of composition to the Targum of the Former Prophets than to the Tannaitic framework of the Isaiah Targum. Such an explanation would also correspond to a fact which Levey's theory does not accommodate, that is, the greater stringency of the translation in the Ezekiel Targum is similar to the "literal" character of Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets.

Finally, Levey himself points out that the interpretation of the Merkhabah in Ezekiel 1 was proscribed as a **haftarah** (m. Meg. 4:10), and he cites the view that "Were it not for Hananiah b. Hezekiah, the book of Ezekiel would have been withdrawn, because its words contradict the words of the

⁴² In an earlier work, Levey himself remarked, "Everything points to a targumic Messiah innuendo, but the Messiah's designation as such is absent." See *The Messiah*, 79. Here, the alleged connection is to Hillel (see b. San. 99a), rather than Yohanan. The interpretation strikes me as being quite straightforward and most unlike an "innuendo."

Torah" (b. Hag. 13a).⁴³ Now the key point of the contradiction is Ezekiel 1:26-27, the vision of the throne and the human form above it. How can that vision be reconciled with the insistence that "man shall not see me and live" (Exod 33:20)? The problem is resolved in the Targum of Ezekiel, because what appears is "*glory which the eye is unable to see.*" That resolution by recourse to the motif of "glory" agrees with the rendering to Targum Onqelos at Exodus 24:10, where there is a similar problem in the reference to a vision of God. At the same time, the reference to what the eye cannot see alludes to Isaiah 64:3, which is taken of the eschatological reward of God's people in the Targum Isaiah (see also b. Shab. 63a, Exodus Rab. 30:24, and 1 Cor 2:9).

Such links with the book of Isaiah, even in targumic form, permit us to return to the question of the number of the faces and wings of the creatures in Ezekiel Targum 1:6. Altogether, there are 64 faces and 256 wings according to the Targum. At first sight such speculation may seem baffling, and Levey suggests the **gematria** "they sang" (*ranu*).⁴⁴ In addition to that possibility, account needs to be taken of collation with the vision in Isaiah 6. In the interests of presenting a consistent view of the heavenly court, the "coals" of Isaiah 6 are mentioned in Targum Ezekiel 1:8, but associated with the cherubim and seraphim:

Hands like the hands of a man were fashioned for them from beneath their wings on their four sides, *with which to take out burning coals of fire from among the cherubim underneath the firmament which was over their heads, giving them into the hands of the seraphim to sprinkle on the place of the wicked, to destroy the sinners who transgress his Memra.*

In this way, the seraphim in Targum Isaiah 6, who are called *attendants* in the Targum are associated with, but made distinct from, the creatures of Ezekiel 1.

That opens the way for the creatures in "the likeness of a man" (Ezek 1:5) to be treated in a way analogous to the treatment of the seraphim of Isaiah 6. There, the multiple wings of the attendants enable them to serve, rather than to fly. The creatures of the Targum Ezekiel appear with hands under their wings in verse 8, in order to hand coals over to the seraphim. Even the cubing of the number four (producing 64) makes sense in the light of the Isaiah Targum 6:3, because the attendants cry out "holy" three times, and each usage refers to a different dimension of sanctity (in heaven, on earth, in eternity). And, of course, once the faces are multiplied, the number of the wings must follow. The Ezekiel Targum

⁴³ Levey, *Targum of Ezekiel*, 2.

⁴⁴ Levey, *Targum of Ezekiel*, 21.

therefore makes out the vision of the prophet to be consistent with the vision of Isaiah 6. That tendency seems to be stronger than any desire to reveal the secrets of the Merkhabah.

Ezekiel is emphatically identified as a *prophet* in the Targum (Tg. Ezek. 1:1 and 3:1-6, 14, 16, 22); his vision is of the Shekhinah (Tg. Ezek. 1:2) which has been removed (Tg. Ezek. 39:29), although it is from there (Tg. Ezekiel 1:14) that the coals are to be poured out on the wicked in Ezekiel Targum 1:8. The definitive return of the Shekinah (Tg. Ezek. 48:35) corresponds to the punishment of the wicked, and “*the slain of Rome*” are to be flung into the valley of Gog (Tg. Ezek. 39:15-16). Those are themes which we have seen connected in the Amoraic framework of the Isaiah Targum; in the Ezekiel Targum, they are explicitly connected to the promise that freedom from oppression will follow if Israel will “*perform the [Law]*” (Tg. Ezek. 2:10).

Just as that theme is more didactic in the Ezekiel Targum than it is in the Isaiah Targum, so the conception of prophetic inspiration is spelled out in greater detail (Tg. Ezek. 1:25):

And at such time when it was his will to make the *Dibbur heard to his servants the prophets of Israel*, there was a voice *which was heard* from above the firmament.

The usage of **dibbur** (God’s “utterance”) makes its appearance rather late in the development of rabbinic theology (perhaps during the third century) and is usually associated with the temple and the giving of the Law. That suits the present usage (after all, the vision of Isaiah 6—which echoes through this section of the Ezekiel Targum—is explicitly situated in the temple) but it also suggests that the Ezekiel Targum was crafted well into the Amoraic period, say during the fourth and fifth centuries. Among the other Targumim, Pseudo-Jonathan represents the usage of *dibbur* frequently, and that would tend to confirm the dating suggested here.⁴⁵

That setting explains why the meturgemanin, explicitly claiming to speak “prophecy” (Tg. Ezek. 11:14) have God say, “Because I removed them far among the Gentiles, and because I scattered them among the countries, therefore I *have given them synagogues, second to my sanctuary, because they are as little in the countries to which they have been exiled*” (Tg. Ezek. 11:16). The theology of exile is a theology which makes sense of defeat in terms of punishment and redemption, and which appeals to God’s faithfulness to his covenant as mediated by the prophets. Just that history of salvation is interwoven with the Hebrew text; as Levey remarks

⁴⁵ For further discussion of the usage, and its absence from the Tg. Isa., see Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 67.

in reference to chapter 16 of the Ezekiel Targum, it “is a remarkable exposition . . . designed to counteract the prophetic denunciation of Israel as a worthless piece of brush by its very nature (Ezek. 15:5).”⁴⁶

The Targum’s purpose at that particular point is related to the theme of the entire work, which can be positively expressed by means of the model of Israel in Egypt (see chapter 16). But because the pivot of redemption is obedience, the negative implication is also plainly articulated, as in Ezekiel Targum 20:25:

Moreover, *since they had rebelled against my Memra, and did not wish to listen to my prophets, I removed them and delivered them into the hands of their foolish inclination; they went after and obeyed statutes which were not proper and ordinances by which they could not be established.*

But the positive expression is no less emphatic, as is clear in Ezekiel Targum 29:21:

At that *time I will raise up redemption* for the house of Israel, and to you I will give the opening of the mouth *in prophecy* among them.

Exile and redemption are the two poles of the definition of Israel’s experience among the meturgemanin of Ezekiel.

True prophets therefore have painful things to say: “It is a *prophecy*, but it shall become a lamentation” (Tg. Ezek. 19:14). The imperative of the meturgemanin is not only to avoid those who “*have prophesied* falsehood,” but those who “*have taught lies*” (Tg. Ezek. 13:8, see also vv. 14-16). It may ultimately be the case that it is God who has misled such deceived deceivers (Tg. Ezek. 14:9), but the fact remains that (Tg. Ezek. 14:10):

The guilt of *the one who comes to learn but does not learn*, shall be as the guilt of the *false* prophet.

The reference to scribes who kill and to priests who defile (22:25, 26) may well be aligned with the early lament that “*the prophets prophesied to them, but they did not repent*” (Tg. Ezek. 21:18).⁴⁷

But the assumption of the Ezekiel Targum is also that well-instructed people are in Babylon (Tg. Ezek. 21:8, see also v. 9):

I will *exile your righteous* from you, *in order to destroy your sinners.*

Ezekiel is commanded, “*Let your phylacteries be on your head*” (Tg. Ezek. 24:17), and the assumption of this Targum, substantially Amoraic with

⁴⁶ Levey, *Targum of Ezekiel*, 51.

⁴⁷ The failure to repent, despite more than ample warning, is a theme within the Tg. Isa.: see 5:25; 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4; 26:10; 50:2; 66:4, esp. the last two passages.

earlier elements, is that faithful learning, linked to liturgical practice in synagogues, will occasion the promise of salvation.

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi in Targum Jonathan

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are grouped within the haggadah concerning the origin of Targum Jonathan, where it is claimed that Jonathan ben Uzziel composed the Targum on the basis of them (“from the mouth of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi” [Meg. 3a] discussed in the last chapter). That assertion invites a consideration of the Targumim so named as a group.

Of the three, only Zechariah offers considerable expansions on the Hebrew text of the prophet. But that is not surprising: after all, Haggai—virtually however translated—turns on the issue of the restoration of the temple (which becomes the “*sanctuary*,” as is usual in Targum Jonathan). For the concerns of the meturgemanin to be met, there is need only to underscore that what is said is stated as “a word of *prophecy*” (Tg. Hag. 1:1, 3; 2:1, 10) for the purpose of restoring the Shekhinah—a term the meturgeman introduces innovatively—to its proper place (1:8), and to insist that what was intended for the Judean nation is also valid for the “*congregation*” (2:14) in exile.⁴⁸ Similarly, Malachi already speaks in Hebrew of the return of Elijah to restore appropriate worship in Jerusalem (Mal 3:23-24), and it is scarcely taking a liberty with the Masoretic Text to speak of service in the “*sanctuary*” (Tg. Mal. 1:10; 2:12; 3:7, 10) and the return of the Shekhinah in response to repentance (3:12), as the Targum does. So directly does Malachi address the concerns of the meturgemanin, the term “*prophecy*” is not even added to the introduction, unlike every other book of the Latter Prophets in Targum Jonathan.

Yet even as restoration is imagined in these tangible and cultic terms, the Targum of Malachi attests the Amoraic conviction that prayer as such takes the place of sacrifice (1:11b):

[A]nd at every time that you do my will I receive your prayer and my great name is sanctified because of you, and your prayer is like a pure offering before me; for my name is great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.

Churgin correctly observed that the replacement of sacrifice, as distinct from its restoration, is typically an Amoraic theme within Targum

⁴⁸ Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 180, refer the usage to “the Judean community,” but the usage of Tg. Jon. is clearly more inclusive than that. For discussion of the later usage of “*congregation*,” rather than “*house of Israel*,” see Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 33–37.

Jonathan.⁴⁹ Moreover, the present rendering makes the worship purely Israel's, while an earlier expectation envisaged the inclusion of non-Jews (see below).

Similarly, the emphasis on a single covenant whose interpretation does not change (Tg. Mal. 3:6) manifests the interests of those who insisted upon authoritative teaching in adherence to the prophets:

For I the Lord have not *changed my covenant which is from of old*; but you, *house of Israel*, you think that *whoever dies in this world, his judgment has ceased*.

It has been argued that this statement must come from the period of the Sadducees and that after that time “the doctrines of resurrection and accountability were no longer issues of dispute.”⁵⁰ Neither assertion is fully convincing. The Sadducees’ position is attributed to them only by unsympathetic observers—Josephus (*J.W.* 2.165–66) and various Christians (Mark 12:18–27; Matt 22:23–33; Luke 20:27–38; Acts 23:6–8). And targumic texts as late as the Middle Ages continue to refer to the denial of resurrection within the dispute between Cain and Abel which is developed at Genesis 4:8.⁵¹ As a whole the Malachi Targum appears to reflect the Amoraic framework of meturgemanin.

The themes of both Tannaitic and Amoraic meturgemanin are more in evidence within the Targum of Zechariah, which Rabbi Joseph cited as an already extant source (see b. Meg. 3a and M.Q. 28b). At Zechariah Targum 3:8, the identification of the “branch” with the Messiah is made explicit, as at Isaiah Targum 4:2, and the Messiah is also portrayed as being “revealed,” a locution reminiscent of 4 Ezra 7:28. Martin McNamara has argued that this usage is characteristic of the first century, and it is repeated in 6:12–13 of the Zechariah Targum, where the Messiah (for “branch” in the MT) is to build the temple and be at peace with a “high priest.”⁵²

Reference to the “Kingdom of the Lord” at Zechariah Targum 14:9 may—as we have already mentioned and will discuss further in a later

⁴⁹ Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 231, are equally correct when they point out that Philo and the Scrolls attest an “occasional spiritualizing of sacrifices.” They also cite “the existence of the synagogue long before A.D. 70,” but that is beside the point: the history of the synagogue in Palestine is a fraught issue, and the notion that the synagogue replaces the temple, as in the Tg. Ezek., is a late notion. See Urman and Flesher, *Ancient Synagogues*. But those sources do not attest the motif of God’s general acceptance of prayer in the place of sacrifice; that was Churgin’s point (*Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 28), and it still stands.

⁵⁰ See Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 236.

⁵¹ See Chilton, “A Comparative Study of Synoptic Development.”

⁵² McNamara, *New Testament and the Palestinian Targum*, 249.

chapter—reasonably be dated within the first century. Similarly, in Zechariah Targum 4:7-9, where the Hebrew text speaks of Zerubbabel building the temple, in the Targum he merely starts to build it and prepares the way for the “*Messiah whose name is told from of old, and he shall rule over all kingdoms.*” The relationship between Zerubbabel in the sixth century BCE and the Messiah at the end of time is not spelled out here, but the role of the Messiah in restoring the temple (as in Tg. Isa.) is implicit. The status of the Messiah—as superior to Zerubbabel or any other Davidic king—is even plainer in Zechariah Targum 10:4: “*Messiah*” appears for “tent peg” in the Masoretic Text and is associated with “*king*” and “*strength in war.*” These examples of realistic eschatology instance Tannaitic conceptions.

By comparison, the precise designation of the Messiah as him whose “*name is told from of old*” seems to be an Amoraic motif (see Tg. Mic. 5:1; Tg. Ps. 72:17; *PRE* 3; b. Pesah. 54a).⁵³ This hint of Amoraic interest is borne out by the typical themes of false prophecy (Tg. Zech. 10:2; 13:4), paired with the teaching of lies (Tg. Zech. 13:4). The form of the promise to Joshua in Zechariah Targum 3:7 coincides with the vision of Ezekiel, as well as with that of Isaiah, as discussed above:

If you walk in ways *which are good before me*, and if you keep the charge of my *Memra*, then you shall judge *those who minister in my sanctuary* and you shall have charge of my courts, *and at the resurrection of the dead I will raise you to life* and will give you *feet to walk* among those *seraphim*.

The collation of the sanctuary and the heavenly court is assumed, as in Isaiah 6, and the reference to attendants who “*minister*” agrees with the language of the Isaiah Targum. That occasions the introduction of the theme of resurrection here, which is a thematic interest in the Isaiah Targum (see 22:14; 65:6, 15), but quite separate from the vision in the temple. That new element marks a later development (as does the unveiled language of resurrection), along with the particular reference to the “*feet to walk among those seraphim,*” which is a contribution from Ezekiel Targum 1.

The exilic theology of the Amoraic meturgemanin is also evident in the rather full midrash of the two women in Zechariah Targum 5:9 as two “*provinces going into exile*”: the equation of women and states is also made in Isaiah Targum 32:9, and here the prophecy concerning Oholoah and Oholibah in Ezekiel 23—which the Ezekiel Targum also relates to “*provinces*” (23:2)—is being used to speak of the punishments of Israel and Judah. The extent of the midrash in the Zechariah Targum (5:5-11), suggests the importance of the theme to the meturgemanin. But a strong

⁵³ See Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 122, 194, and their citation of Moore’s reading; and Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 114.

typology of the exodus is also introduced (10:11) to insist on the positive pole of the history of salvation as well.

The Bad and the Good of Exile: Hosea, Amos, Nahum, Obadiah, Micah, and Zephaniah

The full midrash on exile just mentioned, which appears over a short run of material in Zechariah (Tg. Zech. 5:5-11), is pursued much more consistently in the Targum of Hosea, owing to the nature of the material involved. The “*prophecy*” was designed to warn the “*inhabitants of the idolatrous city,*” that “*if they repent, it will be forgiven them; but if not, they will fall as the leaves of a fig-tree fall*” (Tg. Hos. 1:1-3, see also 11:2, and the phrasing of Tg. Isa. 6:10). There are several such fulsome attacks on idolatry, a particular worry in Sassanian Babylon, and the problem of wooden images is an especial concern (Tg. Hos. 4:12; 8:6). The reference to the Messiah can be as oblique as in the Ezekiel Targum and with virtually the same wording, as when Judah and Israel “*shall appoint themselves one head from those of the house of David*” (Tg. Hos. 2:2).

But “*messiah*” is used explicitly in Hosea Targum 3:5 in association with the restoration of worship in the temple by the Davidic king. This aspect of the Hosea Targum cannot be denied: to some extent, it is concerned with the cultic abuses of the Tannaitic period and even earlier, when “*they made the non-priest like the priest to desecrate my holy properties*” (4:9). Then, the problem was not the ambient idolatry of the Sassanids, but the predations of the priesthood and the threat of the coming of the Romans, whose king would “*destroy their treasure-house and lay waste their royal city*” (13:15), was not only a vivid threat, but a matter of history. Such punishments pale in comparison of the judgment in Gehinnam that is to come, depicted in the final sentence of the Hosea Targum in a way which echoes the close of the Isaiah Targum.

Still, such glimpses of earlier interpretations are rather sporadic in the Hosea Targum. They are not easily arranged into the sort of exegetical frameworks evident in the Isaiah Targum and the Zechariah Targum. More typically the Hosea Targum focuses on the history of salvation in its negative aspect, against those who would say, “*The scribe shall not teach, and the prophet shall not admonish*” (Tg. Hos. 4:4). When the positive side comes to expression, it is in the wistful remembrance of when “*those of the house of Judah were fervent in worship until the people of God were exiled from their land, and they who worshipped before me in the sanctuary were called the holy people*” (12:1). To imagine a restoration of such a condition involves anticipating “*the resurrection of the dead*” (6:2).

Idolatry is also a particular concern in the Targum of Amos (2:8), as is the emphasis on prophecy (1:1; 3:8) and the rule of the “*kingdom of the house of David*” (9:11). There is also a signal interpretation, which represents the visionary language already discussed in connection with the Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah Targums, appearing in Amos Targum 9:1:

The prophet said, “I saw the glory of the Lord; it ascended by the cherub and dwelled on the altar, and he said, ‘If my people Israel are not repentant to the Law, overturn the lamp; king Josiah shall be slain, the house shall be laid waste, and the courts shall be broken up; and the vessels of the sanctuary shall go into captivity.’”

Here, vision and temple are combined, as before, but in addition the negative side of the history of salvation is spelled out. Moreover, the language used had become traditional of omens of the destruction of the temple (see b. Yoma 39b and Gittin 56a&b).⁵⁴

The books of Obadiah and Nahum provided excellent opportunities to speak of the vindication of God’s people. Esau was a well-established symbol for Rome (e.g., see b. B.B. 123b) and is used as such in the rendering of Obadiah. The prediction is made that Jacob and Joseph will “*have dominion over them and slaughter them*” (Tg. Obad. 1:18); this reversal of fortune, allowing Israel “to judge the *fortress* of Esau,” was relished as the substance of “*the kingdom of the Lord*” (Tg. Obad. 1:21).

Nahum is also made to have “*prophesied*,” and the direction of the prophecy toward Nineveh is contrasted with Jonah’s, as becomes clear in Targum of Nahum 1:1:

Beforehand Jonah, the son of Amitai, prophet from Gath-Hephar, prophesied against her, and she repented from her sins. And when she proceeded to sin again, Nahum from Beth Koshi prophesied against her, as is written in this book.

By means of reference to Jonah in a sequence, Nahum’s prophecy of doom is vindicated and is presented as the last word against those who “*completely destroyed the sanctuary*” (Tg. Nah. 1:8).⁵⁵ Not only does that reference apply most naturally to the Romans, it applies most accurately to them after 135 CE. Israel are described as already “*trusting in his Memra*” (Tg. Nah. 1:7), as if repentance were accomplished and not an unfulfilled condition. That sense that heaven has already turned in Israel’s favor, that repentance has been offered and accepted, is typical of the Amoraic period.

⁵⁴ Discussed in Chilton, *A Feast of Meanings*, 77–79.

⁵⁵ See already Adler, “A Specimen of a Commentary and Collated Text of the Targum to the Prophets. Nahum”; and Bacher, “Notes on the Critique of the Text of the Targum of the Prophets.”

The glories of return from exile from Babylon are anticipated in the Targums of Micah and Zephaniah. The former remains concerned with the problem of false prophecy and bad teaching as the cause of exile (see Tg. Mic. 2:11), and the old theology of restoration remains in the interpretation of the mountain of chapter 4 in terms of the sanctuary, as in the Isaiah Targum (chapter 2). Moreover, the Micah Targum associates this with messianic rule in 2:13:

The delivered shall go up as at the beginning, and a king shall go up, leading at their head, and he shall break the enemy who oppresses them, tread down strong fortresses; they shall inherit the cities of the gentiles and their king shall be at their head and the Memra of the Lord will be their help.

The kingdom and the Messiah are associated in Micah Targum 4:7-8. But they are associated more closely than in the earlier Targumim, and the Messiah is described as hidden because of Zion's sins, and as having a name from of old: all of those are probably Amoraic developments.⁵⁶

Such references reach their climax in a prediction of return from Diaspora as then known, as articulated in Micah Targum 7:12:

At that time the exiles shall gather together from Assyria and the mighty cities, from Greater Armenia and the besieged cities, as far as the Euphrates and the Western Sea and the mountain ranges.

Clearly, the social context envisioned implies more than rebuilding the temple. God is to remember and return all of his people. Furthermore, God does so because he remembers the Aqedah, the binding of Isaac upon the altar and his sacrifice there, as the meturgeman specifically mentions in Micah Targum 7:20:⁵⁷

You will show (your) faithfulness to Jacob to his sons, as you swore to him in Bethel, your kindness to Abraham to his seed after him, as you swore to him between the pieces; you will remember for us the binding of Isaac who was bound upon the altar before you. You will perform kind deeds with us as you swore to our fathers in days of old.

What was not mentioned earlier, even in the Jeremiah Targum at a point where its mention would have been natural, is now invoked without warrant from the Hebrew text. The Aqedah has become, by the fifth century, the surety of Israel's acceptance before God.

⁵⁶ See the discussion in Moore, *Judaism*, 2:343–45, 350–53; Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 37, 79–81, 114.

⁵⁷ See Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 128, citing Chilton, "Isaac and the Second Night: a Consideration."

The Zephaniah Targum extends the range of the return even further, “beyond the rivers of *India*” (3:10, for “Ethiopia” in the MT⁵⁸) and further emphasizes the threat of idolatry (1:4, 5, 8-9).⁵⁹ The issues of prophecy—whether true or false—and of teaching remain strong (3:2, 4), but there are also some interesting new elements. A return to the primordial “*one chosen* speech” as a consequence of the return is specified (3:9), and the end of the exile also means the end of “all those who *enslave* you” (3:19). But to be removed as well are “the *mighty ones* of your *celebrity*” (3:11) and “the *judges of deceit*” (3:15) who need to be purged to make way for “a lowly people and *accepting mortification*” (3:12). This is a most skillful application of the theology of exile to the exiles themselves, and makes way for the next, and last, development in Targum Jonathan.

JOEL, JONAH, AND HABAKKUK IN TARGUM JONATHAN: THE PENITENT RETURN

Although there is little new in the Targum of Joel, what it offers, in emphatic terms, the possibility of repentance and forgiveness to the penitent individual, as in Joel Targum 2:14:

Whoever knows that he has sins on his hands, let him turn back from them, and he will have compassion on him; and whoever repents, his sins shall be forgiven, and he will receive blessings and consolations, and his prayer will be like that of a man who presents offerings and libations in the sanctuary of the Lord your God.

The startling feature here is not simply the individual focus on repentance and forgiveness but also the direct comparison between personal penitence and cultic sacrifice, a development that occurs near the end of the development of Targum Jonathan.

Such a comparison is all but assumed in the Targum of Jonah, when the prophet (1:1) says that “I with the voice of *the praise* of thanksgiving will offer *my sacrifice before* you” (2:10). That statement is very close to the Masoretic Text, in which Jonah says, “I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you.” But what in the Masoretic Text is an accompanying action—singing while sacrificing—becomes understandable in the Targum as a replacement of sacrifice: the song reified as the offering.

Moreover, there is recourse to the direct statement of the underlying theology in the Jonah Targum, as is instanced in 3:9:

Whoever knows that there are sins on his hands, let him repent of them and he will have compassion on us . . .

⁵⁸ See Ahuva Ho, *Targum of Zephaniah*, 359–60.

⁵⁹ India also features innovatively in the Amoraic framework of the Tg. Isa. (see 18:1).

The power of individual penitence is so great, it effects a change in the disposition of God toward the community.

This confidence reaches its climax in the Targum of Habakkuk at 3:1:

The prayer which Habakkuk the prophet *prayed when it was revealed to him concerning the extension of time which he gives to the wicked, that if they return to the law with a perfect heart it shall be forgiven them, and all their sins which they have sinned before him shall be as inadvertent error.*

Here is the theology of the later Amoraim, as Cathcart and Gordon observe (citing b. Yoma 86b),⁶⁰ which enables even those denounced as wicked to join the movement of repentance. The same Targum refers to the Roman practice of burning incense to **standards** in Habakkuk Targum 1:16 (see the Habakkuk Peshet, 1QpHab 6:3-6; and Josephus' *Jewish War* 6.316),⁶¹ so that the whole cannot be read as a simple statement of Amoraic theology, but the emphasis on repentance in an individual mode is evident.

CONCLUSION

Targum Jonathan to the Prophets grew up in stages that may be characterized by means of the types and styles of interpretation utilized. The earliest stage, associated with synagogal practice up to the revolt of Simeon bar Kosiba in 132 CE, is reflected in the incomplete exegetical frameworks of the Tannaim found in the Isaiah and Zechariah Targums, as well as the Targums of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These early frameworks center on the immediate restoration of worship in the temple as the kingdom of God and the Messiah arrive to restore Israel following the devastation of 70 CE. During the late third and fourth centuries the prophetic targums were revised, following a messianic theme of a return from exile within the entire salvation history of Israel. This resulted in the Amoraic framework within the Targums of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. This exegetical framework dominates Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets as well as the Targums of Malachi and Haggai.

Our survey of the remaining Targums of the Latter Prophets identified two additional levels of exegetical interpretation among the books of

⁶⁰ Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 156.

⁶¹ See Wieder, "The Habakkuk Scroll and the Targum." Robert Gordon developed a treatment which opposes the influence of the Targum on the Peshet, "Tg Habakkuk and the Habakkuk Peshet." We argue for influence in the opposite direction, following Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 123 n. 30.

the Minor Prophets. The fifth century saw the completion of the creation of Targum Jonathan, with Hosea, Amos, Nahum, Obadiah, Micah, and Zephaniah in Targum Jonathan containing a further development of the exilic theology, and then Joel, Jonah, and Habakkuk in Targum Jonathan moving that theology in an individualistic direction.⁶² Although some of these targums showed possible evidence of earlier frameworks, the evidence was too scattered for certainty.

Effectively, then, Targum Jonathan is a monument of rabbinic activity, but of rabbinic activity as it attempted to influence interpretation in synagogues. For that reason, at its earliest stages especially, it represents traditional renderings not of its own making, even as it strives to present Scripture as the voice of the eternal *memra*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Pinkhos Churgin is rightly credited with putting the study of Targum Jonathan on a firm critical footing in his detailed but accessible monograph, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*. Critical work did precede him, and some of that has been cited in this chapter, but Churgin's study remains the point of departure. After his work, contributions to the study of the language of Targum Jonathan proved pivotal, and in this field the classic work is Abraham Tal, *The Language of the Targum of the Former Prophets and Its Position within the Aramaic Dialects* (in Hebrew).

A period of keen interpretative and literary historical interest was signaled by contributions such as Harrington, "The Prophecy of Deborah"; Levey, *The Messiah*; Smolar and Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan*.

That interest in turn served as a stimulus to the now standard commentaries of the 1980s, notably Harrington and Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*; Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*; Levey, *Targum of Ezekiel*; Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*.

More philologically engaged and focused studies have appeared recently, including Willem F. Smelik, *The Targum of Judges*; Eveline van Staalduine-Sulman, *The Targum of Samuel*; Carol A. Dray, *Translation and*

⁶² This individualistic emphasis does not represent the final stage of development. Subsequent to it, the development of targumic exegesis continued in the emergence of alternative and supplementary readings; see Kasher, "Eschatological Ideas in the Toseftot Targum to the Prophets" and "Different Approaches to Mythical Descriptions in the Targums to the Prophets"; Houtman and Sysling, *Alternative Targum Traditions*; Mitchell, "Messiah bar Ephraim in the Targums"; Chilton, "Sennacherib: a Synoptic Relationship among Targumim of Isaiah," and "'HEBR. 75' in the Bibliothèque Nationale." See also Smelik, "Trouble in the Trees!"

Interpretation in the Targum to the Book of Kings; Alberdina Houtman and Harry Sysling, *Alternative Targum Traditions: The Use of Variant Readings for the Study in Origin and History of Targum Jonathan*; Ahuva Ho, *The Targum of Zephaniah*. This work has been considerably expedited and targeted as a result of the series begun under the editorship of Johannes C. de Moor, *A Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets*.

TARGUMS TO THE WRITINGS

All biblical books known as the Writings received Targums except for two: Ezra-Nehemiah and Daniel.¹ The usual explanation for the lack of Targums to these books is that they contained long passages in Aramaic and so did not require translation.

The Writings Targums were composed individually at different times and by different people; they lack any overall composition scheme or approach that would unite them, like the Targums Onqelos and Jonathan. Scholars have therefore had to analyze them individually. In comparison to the other Targums, the Writings Targums attracted relatively little interest during the twentieth century. Although matters have improved recently, modern research knows less about these Targums than the others.

The Babylonian rabbis apparently did not approve of Writings Targums and invoked a heavenly confirmation of their disapproval. B. Megillah 3a discusses all three categories of Targums and gives a reason for this disapproval in line F.²

- A. Rabbi Jeremiah—or some say Rabbi Hiyya b. Abba—also said:
- B. The Targum of the Pentateuch was composed by Onqelos the Proselyte under the guidance of Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Joshua.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of rabbinic literature in this chapter are by the authors, and all Targum translations are from the Aramaic Bible series. Biblical translations are from the NRSV.

² See chap. 8 for a discussion of the passage in relationship to the Pentateuchal Targums and chap. 10 for our analysis in terms of the Prophetic Targums.

- C. The Targum of the Prophets was composed by Jonathan ben Uzziel under the guidance of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi,
- D. and the land of Israel quaked over an area of four hundred parasangs, and a *bat qol* came forth and cried: Who is this that has revealed my secrets to men?
- E. Jonathan ben Uzziel arose and said, I have revealed your secrets to mankind. But it is known to you that I have not done this for my own honor or the honor of my father's house, but for your honor—that divisions might not increase in Israel.
- F. He also sought to reveal the Writings by a Targum, but a *bat qol* came forth and Said: Enough! For this reason—that the end of the Messiah is told in it.

Lines C–E indicate that heaven—represented by the *bat qol*—is anxious about the Targums to the Prophets. Apparently they reveal divine secrets to humanity. In line E, Jonathan manages to avoid punishment by indicating that he did the translations for God's honor. In line F, however, Jonathan is prevented by the *bat qol* from translating the books of the Writings before he does it. The reason given is that they contain information about the Messiah and the apocalyptic end of time.

If this were our only evidence, we might conclude that there were no Writings Targums during the rabbinic period, but that is patently not the case. From the Tosefta onwards there are discussions of the proper way to use the Aramaic translation of the book of Esther at Purim, and these are presented in such a way as to indicate that it is a written translation they are discussing. (See the discussion of t. Meg. 4:20 [3:20] in chapter 14.) Similarly, the Tosefta tells a story of a Targum of Job that was discovered and brought to Rabban Gamaliel the Elder, who promptly had it buried. (See the discussion of t. Sabb. 13:2-3 in chapter 14.) And of course, we know of an Aramaic translation of Job among the Dead Sea Scrolls, probably from the second century BCE. This indicates that the b. Meg. 3a passage can be taken as a sign of general rabbinic disapproval of Writings Targums, not as an indication that there were no such Targums. In fact, even the Babylonian rabbis apparently *approved* of the use of the Esther Targum at Purim, as the analysis in chapter 14 indicates, as well as a Targum of Psalms (or at least the Hallel, see b. Meg. 21b).

Most of the Writings Targums were composed rather late. The time spectra for the majority of these Targums proposed by modern analysts range from the fifth century to the seventh century, or alternatively from the seventh century to the ninth century. Many of these Targums were composed in Late Jewish Literary Aramaic, the latest Aramaic dialect

of the Late Aramaic period (see chapter 13). The dating of this dialect roughly conforms to the dating proposed for these Targums, although some scholars have argued that the dialect may have emerged during the fourth century.

Five of the Writings Targums have circulated together on liturgical manuscripts from medieval times and later. These are the Five Megillot (“five scrolls”): Esther, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes (Qohelet), and Song of Songs. These biblical books were read in full at different annual religious festivals and observances: Esther was read at Purim, Ruth on Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks), Lamentations on the Ninth of Ab (the day for remembering the Jerusalem temple’s destruction), Ecclesiastes (Qohelet) on the Sabbath of Sukkot (the Feast of Booths), and the Song of Songs is read on the Sabbath of Passover. The Targums themselves were not required to be read until the Geonic period, but they have become part of the relevant liturgical collections.

In the remainder of this chapter, we will discuss some general questions that apply to all the Writings Targums, and then we will give a brief characterization of each, beginning with the Targums of the Five Megillot.

TARGUM AS MIDRASH? THE RULES OF TARGUM

In chapter 2, we defined a Targum as a translation that combines a highly literal rendering of the original text with material seamlessly added into the translation. Some of the Writings Targums bend this definition almost to the breaking point, mostly by the frequent use of large expansions that can obscure the literal rendering for the unwary reader. Indeed, Alexander Sperber even gave this characteristic as a reason for not creating critical editions of the Writings Targums: “These texts are not Targum-texts but Midrash-texts in the disguise of Targum.”³ Sperber did not explain his position at length, and his decision not to produce a critical text has inspired much misunderstanding of the nature of Writings Targums. These Targums are not midrash or even midrash “in the disguise of Targum”—as anyone familiar with the character of midrash can readily tell. Indeed, the classic midrashic texts of the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods are in their own way just as careful about the clarity of the replication of the biblical text as the early Targums. For any reader of a midrash who knows the passage being interpreted, the difference between the Hebrew text and the interpretation is always clear.

³ Sperber, *Bible in Aramaic*, 4:viii. Even the subtitle of vol. 4 trumpets this idea, “The Hagiographa: Transition from Translation to Midrash.”

The notion that the Writings Targums may not be Targums at all—that they no longer meet the definition—comes from a failure to appreciate the Rules of Targum we laid out in chapter 3 (which, it must be said in fairness, had not been formulated as such when Sperber worked). The Writings Targums simply make greater use of Rules that enable the rendering in Aramaic to overshadow the Hebrew text. For example, the Targums of Ruth, Lamentations, and Song of Songs open their renderings with substantial additions. Lamentations places one large addition in each of the first four verses. But the Targums nonetheless continue to translate the Hebrew text, and this placement of additions is typical of much targumic practice. It follows Targum Rule 5, which states that large additions may be placed near the beginning of a passage for emphasis.

The Second Targum of Esther (Tg. Shenī) and the Targum of Song of Songs perhaps present the most formidable challenge to the definition of Targum. Both incorporate large additions throughout their renderings so that the rendering of the Hebrew text becomes difficult to identify. It is unclear whether the Second Targum Esther's extensive use of additions remains within the bounds of the definition. There is so much additional material that it is often unclear whether a translation still remains. Bernard Grossfeld's English translation of the Targum differentiates the translation and addition by the use of italics, and sometimes uninterrupted italicized prose goes on for pages. The Song of Songs Targum is likewise difficult to classify. Philip Alexander, in his translation for the Aramaic Bible, decided that he could not consistently identify the rendering of the Hebrew text within the additional material, so he translated the Hebrew separately from the Targum, juxtaposing them in the English presentation. Both these Targums require further research, problematize the boundaries of our definition, and illustrate the problems of genres with which Alexander Sperber grappled.

Perhaps the tendency of some Writings Targums to interpret some verses twice, sometimes marking the second interpretation with a term such as *targum aher*, “another targum” (תרגום אחר), made Sperber think in terms of a shift from the genre of targum to that of midrash. This happens several times in the Targum of Qohelet, for example, at 2:20, 5:8, and 7:7.⁴ It is also a feature of Targum Job and Targum Psalms. The *targum aher* designation is similar to a feature often found in some midrashic works, the *devar aher* (דבר אחר). This phrase signals multiple midrashic interpretations of the same word or phrase. But this apparent similarity to

⁴ In C. Mangan's translation for the Aramaic Bible (Mangan, *Targum of Job*), these are indicated as “VAR.”

midrashic format does not violate our definition of Targum, for both the first and the second interpretation nonetheless follow the Rules of Targum.

MANUSCRIPTS AND SCHOLARLY TEXTS

The Targums to the Writings all probably originated in a Jewish community in the Middle East, but many now fall into two manuscript families, neither of which are associated with Palestine (and the remaining Targums belong to just one of the families). These families are generally termed Western and Eastern, but more specifically they represent European and Yemenite textual traditions. For most books the Western text tradition is superior to the Eastern. Philip Alexander has indicated that the Yemenite manuscripts can be incomprehensible at times, especially in comparison to the Western. Similarly Derek Beattie has shown that of the thirty Targum Ruth manuscripts, the nine Yemenite manuscripts are quite late and depend on the European tradition. By contrast, the two manuscript traditions of the Targum of Ecclesiastes are essentially identical, with the exception of just a few verses.

The remaining manuscripts of the Targums come from a single region, that of Europe. The First Esther Targum apparently exists only in Western manuscripts, and a similar situation exists for the manuscripts of the Targums of Psalms, Job, Chronicles, and Proverbs. David Stec has shown that there are four manuscript subfamilies for the Job Targum, two with Sephardic roots and two loosely termed Ashkenazic. The Targum of Chronicles only has three manuscripts in total, all European.

Although text critical studies have been done on the manuscripts of most of these books, only recently have solid scholarly editions been published for any of these. These are diplomatic editions, where the base text comprises a single manuscript (if possible) and variants in other manuscripts are noted in the apparatus. David Stec has produced an excellent edition of Job; Derek Beattie has published an edition of the Targum of Ruth; and the three known manuscripts of Chronicles have been collated by R. Le Déaut and J. Robert.⁵

THE LANGUAGE OF THE WRITINGS TARGUMS

Our ability to describe accurately the language of the Writings Targums is seriously hampered by the lack of a clear understanding of the changes made to the manuscripts over the centuries of copying. Speaking of Targum of Lamentations, E. Levine writes:

⁵ For more information about the best editions of each of the Writings Targums, consult the bibliographical essay at this chapter's end.

Each of the *mss.* is a mixed text: a sub-stratum of the original Palestinian Aramaic within a text which in transmission was recurrently altered in conformity with the Aramaic known to the scribes, [i.e., that of Targum Onqelos and the Babylonian Talmud].⁶

Levine sees elements of three different dialects—what we would call Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, Jewish Literary Aramaic, and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic—with JPA being the dialect of the original text and elements from other dialects being introduced by scribes as they copied and altered the text. Derek Beattie makes a similar comment about Targum Ruth:

The language of the Targum is a mixture of Palestinian Aramaic and “official” or Babylonian forms such as are characteristic of the Targum of Onqelos.⁷

Bernard Grossfeld says that the Aramaic of the Esther Targums is “essentially Galilean,” and then goes on to discuss differences that show influence by Onqelos’ JLA. Peter Knobel provides a similar assessment of the Targum of Qohelet.⁸ There seems to be clear agreement that the base dialect of these Targums is JPA, but that this has been skewed over the centuries by copyists introducing forms and terms from other Aramaic dialects. While the writers agree that the original Targums were composed in JPA, they are now “mixed.” Philip Alexander even spends three pages laying out how this mixing may have taken place, admitting all the while that the entire process is speculative. Along the way, he lays the blame squarely on the manuscript copyists, for he observes that the European manuscripts have far fewer Eastern elements than the Yemenite manuscripts.⁹

What these descriptions share is the notion of a mixture of dialects. This mixture sounds to a large extent like a dialect recently identified by Stephen Kaufman and Edward Cook called Late Jewish Literary Aramaic. It is defined as a mixture of several dialects, combining linguistic features from JPA and JLA along with lexical items from other Aramaic dialects, primarily JBA and Syriac, as well as Hebrew and some archaic Aramaic forms, both real and imagined (see chapter 13).

The *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* (CAL) classifies all Writings Targums as composed in the dialect of LJLA, along with Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch.¹⁰ Elsewhere, Kaufman and Cook have identified the

⁶ Levine, *Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 20.

⁷ Beattie, *Targum of Ruth*, 10.

⁸ Knobel, *Targum of Qohelet*, 9–10. Grossfeld, *Two Targums of Esther*, 7.

⁹ Alexander, *Lamentations*, 13–15, esp. 13.

¹⁰ Philip Alexander makes an argument that the Tg. Song may have been composed

Targums of Psalms, Job and Chronicles as composed in this dialect. A brief survey of key terms from the seven linguistic sources (different Aramaic dialects, Hebrew, and Archaic forms) identified by Kaufman as making up IJLA reveals that all Writings Targums except Proverbs have terms from each of them. The Targums of Psalms, Job, and Chronicles are most like Pseudo-Jonathan's model of IJLA, with the Targums of the Five Megillot containing slightly less variety.

The dialectal similarities between these Writings Targums and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan may explain the classification of some of them as Targum Yerushalmi; the medieval word list known as the *Aruk* uses this term for the Targum of Song of Songs (at פלטיא), while Rashi refers to the Second Targum of Esther in this manner in his comments at Deuteronomy 3:4. This is not an indication of provenience—as some modern scholars suggest by identifying these Targums as originating in Palestine—but an indication that they are like Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, which was then the very model of a Targum Yerushalmi.

The Targum of Proverbs differs from the rest in frequently lacking several elements of the IJLA linguistic variety and in having more elements linked to Syriac. This may be due to this Targum's strong connection to the Peshitta of Job, which we shall discuss below.

RABBINIC LITERATURE AND THE DATING OF THE WRITINGS TARGUMS

The understanding that the Targums of the Writings are composed in Late Jewish Literary Aramaic provides a general position for dating. They stem from the latter part of the Late Aramaic period. At the earliest, these are from the time of the Palestinian Talmud, approximately the fifth century CE. Since scholars have not yet dated the use of IJLA precisely, this still involves a window of several centuries.

In the last century and a half, scholars attempted to date these Targums by comparing their interpretations to parallels found in rabbinic literature. Unfortunately, these analysts have tended to consider the targumic literature as a secondary to the Talmuds and the midrashim. When parallels are found between the Targums and midrash, it is almost inevitably accepted that the former depends on the latter. This approach views the midrashim and the Talmudim as fixed texts widely known by all and treats the Targums simply as a mosaic of interpretive traditions drawn from them and joined together with little rhyme or reason.

in IJLA, apparently without awareness of its classification as such on *CAL*'s website. See Alexander, *Canticles*, 10.

This static conception of rabbinic literature is challenged by the reality of a fluid rabbinical tradition without a fixed text. Until the advent of printing, rabbinic writings were quite fluid—much more so than the Targums. Investigation of the manuscripts of these texts reveal a great deal of shift and change in the details of their contents. As Philip Alexander has argued, many Targums—and for Alexander the Targum of Song of Songs in particular—show greater manuscript stability than the midrashim themselves. The Targums often reveal signs of coherence and unity lacking in even the most well-known and well-written midrashim.¹¹ This suggests that the dependence may go the other way, or that both types of texts should be seen as taking part in the same, essentially contemporary, debate. Indeed, that is the basic assumption of Bruce Chilton's developmental argument for the Prophetic Targum, applied in the previous two chapters, and the manner in which Robert Hayward's method, described in chapter 9, also approached matters.

When we look at the Targums of the Pentateuch and the Prophets, most of the rabbinic parallels we identified or discussed are to writings composed in the Tannaitic or Amoraic periods, that is, prior to 500 CE. When we look at the rabbinic texts that contain parallels to the Writings Targums, they tend to be later. In the Targum of Song of Songs, due to the large number of allegorical interpretations given to the Hebrew since ancient times by Judaism, we can find parallels, apart from the Midrash Rabbah to Canticles, in several passages of Talmud Bavli and Talmud Yerushalmi.¹² It is also interesting to see several passages inspired by Targum Onqelos.¹³ The parallels of the Ecclesiastes Targum are various: apart from references to biblical passages, many parallels stem from the Talmudic sources—Babylonian and Palestinian—as well as from Midrash Qohelet Rabbah.¹⁴ In the parallels to Targum Lamentations, two works stand out: Lamentations Rabbah (5th century) and Leqah Tob (early 12th century), as well as parallels with the Talmuds and earlier rabbinic literature.¹⁵ Finally, the Esther Targums have parallel material with

¹¹ See Alexander "Tradition and Originality in the Targum of the Song of Songs," 321–22. A classical work on the study of the rabbinical parallels of the Megillot was written by P. Churgin, *Targum Ketuvim*.

¹² On the exact parallel references in the Targum and the rabbinical literature, see Fontela, *El Targum al Cantar de los Cantares*, 5–22.

¹³ See Fontela, *El Targum al Cantar de los Cantares*, 117–18.

¹⁴ Detailed references from each one of the biblical and rabbinical sources can be found in Díez Merino, *Targum de Qohelet*, 112–66.

¹⁵ There is an exhaustive work about the parallel sources on Tg. Lam. in E. Levine, *Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, 75–195. Also see Alarcón, *Edición crítica del Targum de Lamentaciones según la tradición textual occidental*, 74–77.

Esther Rabbah (ca. 500), the Bavli tractate of Megillah (ca. 600) and *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* (8th century), as well as later works.¹⁶ Furthermore, the Second Esther Targum (at 3:1) is quoted in *Massekhet Soferim* (an 8th century work whose name means “Tractate of the Scribes”) 13:6 and credits Rav Joseph with the rendering—the same Rav Joseph who was regularly linked by the Bavli to Targum Jonathan.

These parallels indicate that the Writings Targums are more frequently in conversation with later rabbinic works, from the Talmuds and midrashim of their time (5th–7th centuries) to later Geonic writings (7th–9th centuries), rather than earlier ones. This has often caused scholars to place the Writings Targums in the latter time frame seventh through the ninth centuries because they assumed that a Targum drew upon the supposedly earlier rabbinic literature. However, it could be as easily argued that the rabbinic texts of the latter period drew upon the Targums of the former period (5th–7th centuries), or that the Targumim as well as midrashic and Geonic literature drew upon a common stock of tradition. In general, the Writings Targums seem to be later than those of the Pentateuch and the Prophets, but further research clearly remains to be done. Specific remarks on the dating of individual targums appear below.

THE INDIVIDUAL TARGUMS OF THE FIVE MEGILLOT

During the Geonic period that followed the completion of the Babylonian Talmud, interest in the biblical books of the Writings arose. The geonim assigned all Five of the Megillot books—Esther, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Song of Songs—to separate religious festivals and required them to be read. In some cases this apparently led to the composition of Targums to these books. In other cases Targums seem already to have existed. Whichever was the case, the Targums joined their Hebrew partners in being used and transmitted together. We now provide a brief description of each.

Targum of Lamentations

The biblical book of Lamentations is a series of laments following the first destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 586 BCE. The Targum of Lamentations targumically recreates this work to respond to the second destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 CE. As Christian Brady lays it out in his book, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, the biblical book and

¹⁶ A complete study of the parallels of Tg. Esth. Rishon is found in the commentary of Grossfeld, *The First Targum to Esther*, 75–190; see also Grossfeld, *The Two Targums of Esther*, 13–14 and notes to translation.

the first destruction becomes a symbol for the Targum and the second destruction. The latter in turn becomes a model for Israel in Exile. As Brady puts it:

[A]t the center of [the Targum of Lamentations] stands the call to the congregation to repent and return to God so that they might be received perfected in the world to come.¹⁷

In other words, if Jerusalem's residents had turned from their wayward direction and asked God for forgiveness, then Jerusalem would have continued as God intended. So too in the present situation, the people Israel will continue in God's favor only if they repent of their sins and return to God, obeying his Torah in prayer and humility. He will then protect them until the Messiah's coming.

Of course, the main question for the Jews after 70 is why did the destruction happen? The Lamentations Targum minces no words. It was Israel's own fault. The Targum introduces the hypostatic figure of the "Attribute of Justice" (מדת דנא), who personifies God's righteous justice. Drawing upon the rabbinic concept here, the Targum gives it the specific role of proclaiming "the punishment that God has already decided to mete out."¹⁸ It "announces the reasons for [Jerusalem's] downfall" and pronounces God's judgment and indicating the reasons for it.

Horrible as Jerusalem's destruction was and as bad as the human cost was—and Targum Lamentations does not leave that to the imagination—the Targum does not blame God.

[Targum Lamentations] not only defends the justice of God's action by asserting the culpability of Israel it also demonstrates that the form of Israel's punishment is directly related to her sin. This further emphasizes the equity of God's treatment of Israel since the punishment is directly related to the crime.¹⁹

To make this explicit to its readers/hearers, Targum Lamentations inserts the notion of "measure for measure" (מדה כנגד מדה) into the Targum's discussion. This concept becomes a yardstick for measuring both Israel's sins and God's punishment of Israel because of those sins. In short, God treated Jerusalem and Israel in the manner deserved.

Having made the case clear, Targum Lamentations introduces hope in the form of repentance, forgiveness, and mercy. God will not go beyond "measure for measure" and so the destruction of Jerusalem for its past sins

¹⁷ Brady, *Rabbinic Targum*, 140.

¹⁸ Brady, *Rabbinic Targum*, 54.

¹⁹ Brady, *Rabbinic Targum*, 60.

is now finished. God is now once again an ally of Israel and seeks its well-being. As a response to the book of Lamentations, the Targum emphasizes the message to the audience—"the Congregation of Israel dwelling in exile" (2:19)—is to study Mishnah and Torah because the Lord's Shekinah now dwells among them. They should now "fear" the Lord, and thus receive his salvation, which comes with the "yoke" of God's commandments and from prayer in general and from praying the **Shema** in particular. The future of such action will bring hope in the end of days: the King Messiah will arrive, and Israel will gather together from exile (Tg. Lam. 4:22):

*And after this your iniquity will be finished, O Congregation of Zion. But you will be freed by the hands of the King Messiah and Elijah the High Priest and the Lord will no longer exile you.*²⁰

That the Targum addresses the "congregation" (the people Israel seated before the reader) should not be surprising. As late as the Babylonian Talmud, there was no fixed liturgy for the Ninth of Ab. Lamentations could be read if the congregation wished, but it was not required. By the time *Massekhet Soferim* was composed in the seventh or eighth century, matters had changed. Not only was Lamentations required to be read, but it had to be read with an accompanying translation (*Soferim* 18:4). Although it does not explicitly require the *reading* of a targumic text, it seems that Targum Lamentations has designed its message to the congregation for just this situation. It is unlikely that a translation would be given spontaneously, especially in such an emotionally charged context, so the text of the Targum would have been delivered by memory.

The immediately preceding verse in the Targum, Lamentations 4:21, provides a relatively rare set of contemporary references which may be useful in working out its date.

*Rejoice and be of good cheer Constantinople, city of wicked Edom, which is built in the land of Armenia with crowds from the people of Edom. Retribution is about to come upon even you, and the Parkevi will destroy you and the accursed cup shall pass to you and you shall become drunk and exposed.*²¹

Although Rome and Parthia fought over Armenia during the third century CE, the reference to "Constantinople" makes it evident that the Targum reflects a later period; military conflict with Sassanian Persia broke out again during the seventh century. Because a messianic reference follows, Yehuda Komlosch has argued that the Targum dates to between

²⁰ Brady, *Rabbinic Targum*, 131.

²¹ Brady, *Rabbinic Targum*, 165–66.

600 and 629 CE, a period of extensive warfare between the Byzantine Empire based in Constantinople and the Sassanid Empire of Persia, during which Jerusalem was conquered by the Sassanids in 619 and then taken back by the Byzantines a few years later.²² That is perhaps a more precise dating than the text supports, but it seems wise to place the Targum during the first half of the seventh century, given that it contains no allusion to the rise of Islam (following 632), and to acknowledge its midrashic character.²³

Targum of Song of Songs (Canticles)

Philip Alexander's introduction to his translation of the Targum of the Song of Songs (Canticles) is one of the best in the Aramaic Bible series. Alexander has identified a systematic schema designed by the Targumist in his recasting of the book. The Targum was apparently composed after the biblical book was attached to the Passover Festival for the schema of the rendering is imbued with Passover symbolism.

The Song of Songs Targum transforms the biblical book, which constitutes a poetic work about the romantic play of a man and a woman into a historical interpretation of the relationship—a love affair, if you will—between God and Israel. The writer divides the biblical book into three sections, each representing a period of history. Each period begins with Israel in exile and ends with them in the land under a worthy king. Targum Song 1:3–5:1 begins with Israel in Egyptian exile and ends with the kingship of Solomon. Targum Song 5:2–7:11 starts with Israel in Babylonian exile and ends with the Hasmonean monarchy, while Targum Song 7:12–8:12 begins with the current exile—the exile of Edom under the Romans/Christians—which will end with the arrival of the Messiah.

Alexander indicates that these three periods each follow the same pattern:

[The Targumist] divides the long history of Israel into three great periods, each of which begins with an exile, leads to an exodus, and culminates in an occupation of the Land, the building of the Temple, the establishment of the monarchy, and the abiding of the Shekhinah in the midst of the people.²⁴

²² Komlosch, *Bible in the Light of the Aramaic Translations*, 90.

²³ See Brady, "The Date, Provenance, and Sitz im Leben of Targum Lamentations," 26–27.

²⁴ Alexander, *Targum of Canticles*, 13.

The point of this pattern is that it begins with the people Israel in exile, followed by a return of the people to the land, and the establishment of an independent nation ruled by an approved king and enjoying the presence of God in the temple.

This spiritual history speaks to the Jews in their current setting—which Alexander sees as probably eighth-century Babylonia or Galilee. (This late dating is reinforced by the presence of Arabisms in the Targum's language, a feature found in few other Targums.) Jews are dispersed across the Diaspora, being ruled rather than ruling themselves, without a capital, a temple, or even God's direct presence.

The Targum's ideal focuses on the people Israel living in their land, ruled by a good king, and worshipping at a temple where God is present. The Targum sees this ideal as established by Solomon. He ruled the nation of Israel with righteousness and built the Jerusalem temple. At Solomon's temple, priests "are equipped with the words of the Torah" (Tg. Song 3:8) and from there they bless the people. The temple thus becomes a place of Torah study as well as sacrificial worship. Both Torah and temple provide strength for Israel's priests and thus for Israel.

Torah becomes both a means and an end. For it is through their practice of Torah in exile that God knows Israel is ready to return, and thus to rebuild the temple. This is clear in both the section on the Hasmoneans, who followed the Torah, and in the section on Israel presently in exile. The Solomonic ideal appears in both, with Solomon himself speaking through "the spirit of prophecy" (Tg. Song 7:2; see 1:1-2) about and to the Hasmoneans and the present exiled people. To the latter Solomon speaks encouragingly, telling them that God is still with them and listens to them. The King Messiah will bring them home soon.²⁵

Targum of Ecclesiastes (Qohelet)

The reading of the biblical book of Qohelet (Ecclesiastes) during the Jewish festival of Sukkot was well established by the eleventh century. It is apparent that the Targum was composed before Qohelet's link to Sukkot was made, for it never refers to that festival.²⁶ This makes it unlike the Targums of Lamentations and the Song of Songs, both of which contain symbolism of their respective liturgical ties.

²⁵ Furthermore, this Targum assigns calendrical computations to the scribes, which appears to be a relatively late development of haggadic tradition. One reason for that ascription is that, by this point in the development of rabbinic theology, Moses is "the great scribe," who is responsible for the Torah generally, including the Mishnah and the Talmud (Tg. Song 1:2). See Díez Merino, "Dates and Events."

²⁶ Knobel, *Targum of Qohelet*, 4–5, 12–15.

The biblical book of Qohelet propounds a worldview that is inimical to the worldview of rabbinic Judaism, even to that found in the rest of Scripture. Qohelet knows that wisdom and righteousness are superior to folly and evil, yet he concludes they both lead to the same end, death:

[W]isdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wise man has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness; and yet I perceived that one fate comes to all of them. . . . How the wise man dies just like the fool! (Qoh. 2:13-14, 16 RSV)

And,

[O]ne fate comes to all, to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the evil. (Qoh. 9:2 RSV)

This cynical view of the meaning of life constituted a challenge to the rabbis, and they apparently avoided dealing directly with its implications for many centuries. It was not until the close of the rabbinic period—Targum of Qohelet is generally dated after the composition of the Babylonian Talmud—that interpreters had the confidence to take it on directly.

Targum Qohelet takes the notion of Wisdom found in the biblical book and transforms it into Torah. As Paul Flesher has shown, the Wisdom Sage is replaced by the Torah Sage. The negative character of Qohelet's cynical approach to wisdom becomes the positive notion of Torah. And the book of Qohelet is recreated as a work that promotes Torah, its knowledge, and its implementation. It is not just about knowing Torah but also about doing Torah. To know Torah is good:

The heart of the sage is to *acquire the Torah which is given by the right hand of the Lord*, and the heart of the fool is to *acquire possession of silver and gold*. . . . *the words of the Torah were created as a cure in the world so that great sins may be forgiven and forgotten by the Lord.* (Tg. Qoh. 10:2, 4)

But to study the Torah is even better:

All of it is vanity. What profit does a man *have after he dies from all his labor which he labors under the sun in this world unless he occupies himself with Torah in order to receive a complete reward in the world to come before the Master of the world?* (Tg. Qoh. 1:2-3)

And to perform works of Torah—good deeds—is the ultimate goal:

And I saw that there was nothing better *in this world* than that a man rejoice in his *good deeds* . . . *so that a man should not say to himself, "Why I should waste my money giving charity?"* (Tg. Qoh. 7:03)

The Targum of Qohelet transformed wisdom into Torah, recasting a biblical book which emphasized the negative character of life in the present world into a work that emphasized the positive outlook in the world to come of a person engaged with the study and practice of the wisdom of Torah.

The dating of Targum Qohelet seems to belong at the end of the rabbinic period, since many of its parallels with rabbinic literature feature its crowning work, the Babylonian Talmud. Peter S. Knobel has pointed out that Targum Qohelet 7:3 agrees quite closely with b. Shab. 30b (although the Talmudic passage is in Hebrew):²⁷

Better is the anger which the Master of the World has against the righteous in this world than the sport which he plays with the wicked. (Tg. Qoh. 3:22)

Similarly, “*the day when King Messiah will come*” is understood to be a “*secret*” in Targum Ecclesiastes 7:24, as in b. Pesah. 54b. Another striking similarity is the aggadah that Solomon was possessed by the demon Asmodai as a result of his complacency in both Targum Ecclesiastes 1:12 and b. Gittin 68b.

The Targum explicitly compares Solomon with Saul in this sense (Tg. Eccl. 2:15), and that is part of its overall strategy for the interpretation. Because Solomon is both a flawed and an enlightened figure, he can present the wisdom of Qohelet while flirting with the famous heterodoxy of this book. In fact, the Targum has Solomon say “I am Qohelet, *who was previously named Solomon*” (1:12) just as he is possessed and disoriented. Both the Qohelet Targum and b. Gittin (despite differences between them) agree that Solomon’s defeat was involved with the loss of his signet ring, so that it seems clear that they share an aggadic portrait of the king. Moreover, b. Gittin 68b explicitly associates the words, “What profit is there to a man in all his labor at which he labors under the sun?” (Qoh. 1:3), with his moment of defeat by Asmodai.

The discussion in b. Shab. 30b refers to controversy about whether or not to “hide” the biblical book of Qohelet (i.e., to deny it canonical status). One reason for that discussion was that the book posed questions such as the one just cited (Eccl 1:3). The answer is given, however, “Under the sun he has none, but he has it before the sun”; that is, there is the reward involved with the Torah, which was before the sun. And that is just the sense which the Targum makes of the question:

²⁷ Knobel, *Targum of Qohelet*, 38–39.

What profit does a man *have after he dies from all his labor which he labors under the sun in this world unless he occupies himself with Torah in order to receive a complete reward in the world to come before the Master of the world.* (Tg. Qoh. 1:3)²⁸

At this point the Targum and Gittin agree in presenting Solomon's wisdom as genuine, confirming the value of the Torah and the determinative importance of the world to come. As Peter Knobel observes, the Targum shares the frequently expressed Amoraic conception (see Tg. Qoh. 8:14) that the righteous are punished for minor sins in this world in order to receive a complete reward in the world to come, while the wicked are rewarded in this world for their minor merits so that they may receive full punishment in the world to come.²⁹ So the source of anything which appears to contradict the wisdom of the Torah in Qohelet is the power of Asmodai, who acted as he did to punish Solomon in this world. Even drunk (Tg. Qoh. 2:3; see also Tg. Shen. 1:2), Solomon is vindicated.

The Qohelet Targum describes Solomon as a prophet (1:1; 4:15), and as moved by the spirit of prophecy (1:4; 3:11, 14; 4:15; 9:7; 12:10) as well as by the holy Spirit (1:2; 2:13; 8:12, 14). Given the clear emphasis on such a prophetic persona in the Targumim of the Former and Latter Prophets, that may be taken as an indication that the Qohelet Targum reflects considerable interpretative activity from the fourth century.³⁰ Still, the open use of Talmudic tradition and the midrashic style of the Targum suggest it was composed in its present form later, probably sometime during the seventh century.³¹ The "*destruction of the sanctuary*" (Tg. Qoh. 7:4) does not occasion hope of its restoration but is accepted as the persistent reality here. Clearly, a later dating than the "final" version of Targum Jonathan is indicated; commitment to the teaching of the two ages (this world and the world to come) appears to have supplanted imminent eschatology as the expectation of this Targum. That conclusion is supported by certain exegetical agreements between the Qohelet Targum and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. Both identify Elijah as high priest (Tg. Qoh. 10:20; PJ Exodus 6:18 and Deuteronomy 30:4; 33:11).³² Similarly, both describe the name of God as inscribed in the foundation stone of the temple (Tg. Qoh. 3:11 and Tg. PJ Exod. 28:30).

²⁸ See also Tg. Qoh. 2:11, 24; 5:14; 6:6, 8; 7:1, 12; 8:14; 9:6; 10:8-11; 11:10; 12:14.

²⁹ Knobel, *Targum of Qohelet*, 43.

³⁰ The association of Solomon with prophecy, however, is also rabbinic (see Knobel, *Targum of Qohelet*, 5). Still, the close fit with the pattern of Tg. Jon. is striking.

³¹ See the cautious assessment of Knobel, *Targum of Qohelet*, 12-15. With Bavli Ned. 32a, Tg. Qoh. 4:13 calculates that Abraham knew his Lord from the age of three.

³² As Knobel points out (7), Neofiti does not share the identification, which also appears in Tg. Lam. 4:22.

Targum of Ruth

The Ruth Targum contains perhaps the fewest expansions of any of the Writings Targums. The Targum's additional material should be seen as recasting the story as a whole, not as individual, separate interpretations. The additions transform this Targum into a story about Torah and prophecy. Not only does Boaz become a Torah expert—with his knowledge giving him access to prophetic insight—but Naomi likewise knows *halakhah* and teaches Ruth.

The ongoing problematic for Targum Ruth comes from Deuteronomy 23:4, which states, “No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation.” It has seemed obvious to readers for centuries that Ruth's identity as a Moabite should make her ineligible to marry an Israelite and hence a positive outcome to this story should be impossible. The meturgeman recognizes this problem right at the beginning, when he inserts an addition in Targum Ruth 1:4 that explicitly blames the death of Naomi's sons on their sin of taking Moabite women—including Ruth herself—as wives.

To address this issue, the Targumist has Naomi convert Ruth by instructing her in elements of rabbinic *halakhah*. Ruth's pledge of loyalty to Naomi in Ruth 1:16 becomes a proselyte's conversion ritual:

Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you, to go back from after you for *I desire to be a proselyte*.”

Naomi said, “We are commanded to keep Sabbaths and holy days so as not to walk beyond two thousand cubits.”

Ruth said, “Wherever you go, I will go.”

...

Naomi said, “We are commanded not to engage in idolatry.”

Ruth said, “Your God is my God.”

Boaz, as a man of Torah, knows the *halakhah* concerning the Moabite. When Ruth confronts him about her absence of standing in Israelite society, Boaz replies with what Derek Beattie indicates is a widely known *halakhic* ruling on the matter, that the rule in Deuteronomy 23:4 applies only to men and not to women (see, e.g., m. Yeb. 8:3). Later in the story, Ruth receives a prophecy of her value to Israel, for among her descendants will be six righteous men.

and immediately it was said to her prophetically that there would descend from her six of the most righteous men of all time, each of whom would be blessed with six blessings: David, Daniel and his companions, and the king Messiah. (Tg. Ruth 3:15)

In the end, it is clear that the creator of the Ruth Targum reworked the story with his additional material even as he translated it faithfully. It remains the same story, but its halakhic veracity is clarified and at the same time, the importance of Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi to the history of Israel has been enhanced.

With regard to the Targum's date, it should be noted that like Targum Esther Sheni, the Ruth Targum begins with a list of ten famines before the coming of the Messiah (1:1). The midrashic tendency of the Ruth Targum is much more restrained than that of Targum Sheni, however, and some claim that it may have been written during the period of the Tannaim.³³ It is more likely that it was not composed before the Amoraic period, for a version of the list of ten famines appears in Gen. Rab. 25:3.

The Ruth Targum also shares a number of parallels with the Babylonian Talmud. For example, the sexual restraint of Boaz in Ruth 3:8 is praised in terms reminiscent of b. Sanh. 19b, by comparing him to Joseph in Egypt and to Paltiel in relation to David's wife Michal. Ruth herself receives a promise that David, the companions of Daniel, and the Messiah will all descend from her in Targum Ruth 3:15, in parallel to b. Sanh. 93b. Finally, David's father Jesse is said to die only because of the primordial snake in Ruth Targum 4:22, which accords with b. Shab. 55b. It seems clear that the Ruth Targum represents the later interpretative tendency we find in some other Writings Targums, perhaps during the eighth century, of incorporating selected passages within a rendering that was generally more restrained. The emphasis upon a more domesticated sexuality, as compared to Sheni, suggests a more settled period, in which the threat of forced intermarriage had receded somewhat.³⁴

Targums of Esther

There are two Targums to the book of Esther, designated in Hebrew as the "first," Targum Esther Rishon, and the "second," Targum Esther Sheni. They can be referred to in abbreviated form, for instance as "Targum Rishon" or even just "Sheni." Both Targums apparently were composed after

³³ Beattie, *Targum of Ruth*, 12.

³⁴ For a very brief, general history, see Cohen, "Islam and the Jews." Although his book is not pointed toward this issue, Gordon Darnell Newby has written an illuminating social history, *A History of The Jews of Arabia*. He suggests that the period until 634, under both Muhammad and Abu Bakr, involved the most dramatic reallocation of identity from Judaism to Islam, and portrays Jewish identity thereafter as more stable (78–108). In his excellent study of the period, Jacob Mann shows that during the seventh century, "Muslim authorities could force the Jews to grant divorce," and that suggests a powerful intervention into the domain of marriage; see Mann, *Responsa of the Babylonian Geonim*, 122.

the Babylonian Talmud; neither represents the Esther Targum spoken of in earlier rabbinic writings, such as the Tosefta. Relative to other Targums, both Esther Targums have a large number of additions and expansions, but of these, Targum Shenī is much larger than Targum Rishon.³⁵

It is widely recognized that the biblical book of Esther presents a problem; it never refers to God and despite the difficulties facing the main Jewish characters and the people Israel, it never describes them as praying. To address this, the Septuagint inserted several additions into the Greek version of Esther, including some long prayers.

Other problems occur within this book. In particular, neither Mordecai nor Esther ever carry out any identifiably Jewish activities: they do not worship, observe the Sabbath or any other Jewish festivals, or follow Jewish dietary restrictions. Of course, the book portrays Mordecai and Esther as fasting, and donning sackcloth and ashes, but these activities are common to many peoples, and the text does not link them to prayer or to other types of communication with God. Haman's charge against the Jews is that they obey other "laws," but again there is nothing specifically Jewish in their description.

The First Targum of Esther, Targum Rishon, addresses these three issues head on. First, God becomes an active player in the story. Rishon gives God the title "Master of the World" (רבוֹן עֲלֵמָא or מֵאֲרִי עֲלֵמָא), and it is he who decides to punish Haman, but only after the king exalts Haman and makes him famous (Tg. Esth. Rishon 3:1). Later, at Targum Rishon 6:1, God acts to save his people from Haman's decree by setting in motion Mordecai's elevation over Haman. Similarly, it is God who decides Vashti's execution.

Second, the meturgeman inserts many references to prayer. Mordecai prays concerning King Xerxes' drinking bout, for Esther's acceptance as the king's bride (Tg. Esth. Rishon 2:11), and then for her success afterwards (Rishon 2:19). He prays for the people Israel when the threat to them becomes known (Rishon 4:1). In Targum Rishon 5:1 a long addition appears detailing Esther's prayer to help her be accepted by the king and to overcome Haman's evil plan. Esther instructs all Jews to pray for her in Targum Esther Rishon 4:16.

Third, Targum Rishon makes it clear that Jewish religious practices are important. Targum Esther Rishon 2:20 makes it clear that Esther, in the privacy of her own palace apartment, follows several Jewish practices.

³⁵ In 1975 P. Grelot and M. H. Goshen-Gottstein debated whether a third Targum of Esther existed from antiquity or whether it was a scholarly construction. See Grelot, "Observations"; and Goshen-Gottstein, "The 'Third Targum.'" The debate finally concluded by affirming the latter position; see Grossfeld and Le Déaut.

She observes the Sabbath and the festivals, follows the menstrual restrictions and other laws for women, and follows Jewish food regulations. Later, when Esther and Mordecai have saved the Jews, the king explicitly allows Jews to pray with their phylacteries, study Torah, practice circumcision, and to observe the Sabbath and the festivals. Furthermore, Esther establishes a “Sanhedrin” for Mordecai, where he and the children study Torah regularly (Tg. Esth. Rishon 2:21, 5:9). Finally, the Targum specifies Passover as the time around when these events take place (Rishon 4:17, 5:1).

Many of the additions to Targum Rishon weave the Purim story into the events of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the ensuing exile. Since the book of Esther is set in Persia, which conquered Babylonia several decades after Babylonia destroyed Jerusalem, this connection is not immediately obvious. The Targum does not blame the Persians for the destruction, but links them in three ways. First, Queen Vashti is Nebuchadnezzar’s granddaughter (Tg. Esth. Rishon 1:1). Second, King Xerxes possesses the booty of the gold temple vessels and Solomon’s throne, which King Cyrus took possession of when he conquered Babylonia (Rishon 1:2, 1:7). Xerxes attempts to use both of these, but neither works as he planned. The temple vessels transform other gold items into lead, and Solomon’s throne simply cannot be sat upon.

Third, people close to Xerxes, and ultimately Xerxes himself, prevent the temple from being rebuilt. Vashti takes a hand in preventing the temple’s rebuilding and so from God’s perspective deserves execution (Tg. Esth. Rishon 1:1), not just the banishment referred to in the biblical book. The Targum adds that she should be killed in the nude, since Xerxes orders the execution because she refused to appear in the nude before Xerxes’ kingly drinking companions. Similarly, Haman personally went up “to Jerusalem to abolish the rebuilding of the temple” (Targum Esther Rishon 3:1). But even Xerxes makes it clear to Esther that the temple will not be rebuilt because he has promised Sanballat, Geshem, and Tobiah—the opponents of Israel mentioned in Nehemiah 2:19 and 6:1—to prevent its reconstruction (Tg. Esth. Rishon 5:3, 6, as well as 5:7 and 7:2).

Daniel also makes an appearance in Targum Esther Rishon chapter 4. To accomplish this, the Targum explicitly equates Daniel with Hatakh in Targum Esther I 4:5. He is assigned to Esther as part of her entourage and becomes the go-between through which Esther and Mordecai communicate after she enters the palace. When Haman has Daniel killed for performing this duty, Daniel is replaced by none other than the angel Michael (Tg. Esth. Rishon 5:12).

Targum Rishon also contains a few additions that link the story to Israel’s past history. When Esther prays, she asks God not to deliver the

descendants of “Jacob” into the hands of Haman, the descendant of both Amalek and the “wicked Esau.” In an earlier aside, Mordecai’s lineage is heightened by linking him to a (supposed) ancestor who knew King David. But it is Haman’s wife who has the only explicit lecture on God’s activity to save Israel in the past, through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as through Moses and Aaron (Tg. Esth. Rishon 6:13).

In the end, Targum Esther Rishon recasts the rather secular romance of the biblical Esther story into a tale that is imbued with God’s guidance, Jewish religious activity including prayer and Torah study, and with explicit connections to the history of the people Israel. The neutral approach to the main figures’ characterization is now gone, having been overshadowed by a story which emphasizes God’s involvement from the beginning and his efforts on behalf of Israel and his watchfulness over them.

Targum Esther Sheni takes a different approach. Targum Sheni is about two and a half times the size of Targum Rishon; and since the additions in Targum Rishon double the size of the book (from approximately 3000 words to roughly 6000 words), that means that Targum Sheni increases Esther’s size by five times (from about 3000 words to 15,000)! The result of such massive alteration leads to the question of whether Targum Sheni has bent our definition of Targum so much that this work no longer belongs to the category of Targum. It certainly seems that way upon first glance: the additions no longer complement the literal translation but obscure it. Frequently, large additions seem to eradicate the translation altogether. It seems to be more of a “rewritten Bible” than a Targum, for the additional material carries the story; it is no longer in the translation itself. Further research is needed to determine whether or not Targum Esther Sheni meets to the letter of our definition of Targum, but it is already clear that the work does not follow the definition’s spirit.

Targum Sheni in general keeps to the storyline of the biblical book of Esther, but it elaborates the story extensively. It begins with huge additions in verses one and two, covering thirteen pages in Grossfeld’s Aramaic edition (twenty-six in the English). These concern the history of Israel and its enemies—concentrating on the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed Jerusalem, and his son Evil-Merodach (Vashti’s father)—and then move on to King Solomon and his wisdom, followed by a description of his throne. Targum Esther Sheni 1:3 begins the story of Xerxes’ drinking session and includes extensive additions concerning the wines, the vessels used, and the incident with Vashti. The tale then unfolds with many large insertions. These give detailed prayers, Mordecai’s lineage, Mordecai’s attempt to hide Esther from the king’s order that all virgins should be brought to him, Haman’s lineage, and a long description of Haman’s accusation against the Jews. God’s active

involvement in the story appears frequently, as do references to the history of his saving actions for Israel. Targum Sheni ends with the elevation of Mordecai to be Xerxes' viceroy, the elder and master for the Jews, and "chief over all the peoples."

Perhaps the most telling feature of Targum Sheni's enhancement of God's role in the Esther story is the regular reinterpretation of the designation "the king," which in the biblical book serves as a short-hand indicating King Ahasuerus. As Beate Ego points out, Sheni often casts this term as referring to God, that is, God the King.³⁶ The picture is of ten global kingdoms, beginning and ending with God's. In between, there are Nimrod, Pharaoh, Israel, Nebuchadnezzar, Xerxes, Rome, Greece, and finally the messianic son of David. As Ego points out, the midrash locates the book of Esther, and Israel's experience generally, in the tension between the rule of God and the rulers of the world.³⁷ That becomes a guiding theme; for example, toward the end of the large addition in Targum Esther Sheni 6:11, thousands of young men run before Mordecai, being led on the king's horse by Haman, and shout, "Thus should be done to the man whom the *King Who created the heaven and the earth* wishes to honor." This is heightened by Targum Sheni's list of ten kings and kingdoms who will rule throughout history. It begins and ends with the kingship of God, the "Lord of Hosts" (Tg. Esth. Sheni 1:1).

Scholars have long debated the relationship between Targum Esther Rishon and Targum Esther Sheni. It seems that there are few links at the level of wording since there is little word-for-word copying. But a number of thematic and literary connections exist. In both Targums, Vashti, the granddaughter of Nebuchadnezzar, is ordered to appear nude before King Xerxes and the kings drinking with him. She refuses and is hanged in the nude. But whereas Targum Rishon lays this out through a couple of medium-sized expansions inserted into the story, Targum Sheni brings in extensive additional material describing a debate among the kings at the party about whose women are the most beautiful, Xerxes' boasting that Vashti is the loveliest of all, the king's exact order, and Vashti's refusal in the women's court. In a similar vein, Targum Sheni follows Targum

³⁶ Ego, "Targumization as Theologization," 356. Grossfeld, *Two Targums of Esther*, 175.

³⁷ Ego, *Targum Sheni zu Ester*, 36–38. She presents the history of discussion lucidly, showing that Sheni has enjoyed attention in two main waves, during the second half of the last century and now with the work of Bernard Grossfeld (3–6). Indeed, Grossfeld's contribution is the basis upon which Ego wishes to make further progress. She is critical (6) of the absence of compositional and theological commentary from his principal study, *The Two Targums of Esther*. Her task is clearly defined: to argue that the second Targum to Esther is no mere farrago of traditions but a literary work, specifically a sermon (7). See also Ego, "All Kingdoms and Kings Trembled" and "God as the Ruler of History."

Rishon in that Esther's messenger to Mordecai, Hatakh, is discovered and killed by Haman. But whereas in Targum Rishon, Hatakh is identified with Daniel, in Targum Sheni, Daniel is identified with Memucan (Tg. Esth. Sheni 1:16), and it is he who advises Xerxes to punish Vashti, because he fears it will cause trouble with his own wife (with whom he is already having problems).

Another kind of similarity shows uncanny links between the two Targums that are difficult to define. In Targum Rishon 5:14, Haman's wife Zeresh advises him about how to kill Mordecai successfully. Rishon's addition lists options that should be avoided because Mordecai's famous ancestors overcame them.

Into the fire you cannot cast him, for his ancestor Abraham was saved from it; by sword you cannot slay him, for Isaac his ancestor was saved from it: in water you cannot suffocate him, for Moses and the Israelites were saved from it; into the lion's den you cannot cast him, for the prophet Daniel was saved from it.

Each item of the list begins by identifying a means of killing and then rejects it by indicating that an ancestor or ancestors avoided death by that means. Targum Sheni, in the same verse (Tg. Esth. Sheni 5:14), places a different list into Zeresh's mouth, but it plays the same function.

Were we to condemn him to stoning, David had once stoned Goliath the Philistine. If we try to cast him into a chain of bronze, Manasseh had once broken it and extracted himself from it. Throwing him into the sea, Moses once split it for the Israelites and passed through its midst. Sticking him into a fiery furnace, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah once uprooted it and emerged from it. Throwing him into the lions' mouth, once before the lions did not hurt Daniel.

Targum Sheni's addition here is phrased in the same general format of suggesting a means of killing Mordecai and then rejecting it because one of his ancestors overcame the punishment. Although there is no parallel wording, two items appear on both lists, Moses and the parting of the sea as well as Daniel in the lions' den. The parallels here hint that the meturgeman of Targum Sheni knew Targum Rishon's treatment of this verse, but the absence of parallels in wording prevents certainty. Further study along these lines is needed.

The Targum's apparent dependence upon Talmudic materials permits a closer dating of these two Targums than of most of the Targumim to the Writings. Although they are post-Talmudic, they also reflect persecution at the hands of a Roman Empire that had become Christian. The opening of Sheni is a long haggadah of ten kingdoms (concluding with the Messiah's and God's). In one manuscript from the fifteenth century (at Paris' Bibliothèque Nationale, catalogued as Ms Hebr. 110), Rome is

specified as the kingdom which is to be swept away in favor of the son of David. On that basis Grossfeld dates both Rishon and Sheni in the early seventh century, at the close of the Byzantine period, but prior to the rise of Islam.³⁸

Two cautions may be offered. First, it is notable that the reference to Rome is only a variant, so that it might not represent the tradition of Targum Sheni. In fact, the same manuscript of Sheni inserts reference to “the kings of the Davidic dynasty, who are destined to rule this world and the world of the Messiah” (Tg. Sheni 1:2), as if it were a continuous régime (perpetuated by the rabbis). There was a Targum of Esther during the Amoraic period, which is referred to in the Palestinian Talmud (Meg. 4:1). Although no longer extant, it may well have provided some basis for both the First Targum, Rishon, and the Targum Sheni. But that does not permit us to date these two Targums firmly within the Byzantine period. After all, the Pentateuchal Targums of the Cairo Geniza display a small amount of interpretative activity in Aramaic into the eleventh century.

Both Targums Rishon and Sheni represent continuing fascination with the book of Esther, the central focus on the feast of Purim, in an Aramaic form. In Aramaic, liturgical development, even to the point that translation changed into midrash, was possible—and even encouraged—within rabbinic Judaism. So, for example, Targum Sheni 5:1 takes up the image of the angels weeping at the time of the binding of Isaac, much as in Gen. Rab. 56:10. The same image is not used in the main text of the Isaiah Targum, which was composed earlier, but it does appear in a marginal reading of the Codex Reuchlinianus (Isa 33:7), which dates from 1105. Examples of earlier, Amoraic developments include the elaborate midrash that the throne of Xerxes had belonged to Solomon (Esth 1:2 in Rishon and Sheni) and the reference to Elijah as high priest (Esth 4:1 in Rishon).³⁹ The former reading reflects reaction to Sassanid hegemony in Babylonia, while the latter attests the growing conviction that the service of the temple remains safe in heaven (see Tg. Qoh. 10:20).

OTHER TARGUMS OF THE WRITINGS

The Targum of Psalms

The Targum of Psalms may be the least studied of all Targums. No complete critical edition has ever been prepared and although there are now

³⁸ Grossfeld, *Two Targums of Esther*, 19–21, 23–24.

³⁹ That becomes a reference to Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi in Sheni. In targumic literature they are not only eternal but persistent! The present reference probably presupposes Meg. 3a.

two English translations, prior to 2002 it had never been translated into English.⁴⁰ There have been some linguistic analyses, but these have only been published in general terms.⁴¹

The biblical book of Psalms constitutes a collection of songs. These are attributed to different composers, the most frequent being King David. The short studies of Moshe Bernstein exemplify a sound approach for understanding this Targum; each Psalm should be studied on its own.⁴² This approach was taken up in the work of Timothy Edwards, whose revised, published dissertation constitutes the only monograph on the Targum in recent decades.⁴³ Except in a general sense, there seems to be no overall program followed by this Targum's composer. Indeed, it may be that different Psalms came from different sources. Edward Cook suggests that the Targum of Psalm 18 may stem from the Targum of 2 Samuel 22, for instance.⁴⁴

Most of the Psalms Targum comprises literal rendering. While they contain some additional material, much of it consists of words or phrases interwoven into the translation with only a few larger expansions placed in strategic locations. Some Psalms, by contrast, have been systematically recast to convey a particular message. These include 18, 23, 60, 68, 80, 107, 110, and 137. Interestingly the Hallel Psalms, Psalms 113–118, have little in the way of addition, despite (or perhaps because of) their inclusion in the worship liturgy and being mentioned as having a *targum* in the Babylonian Talmud (b. Meg. 21b).

The Psalms which contain the most additional material are often presented as relating to a particular event or person in Israel's history. Psalm 23, for instance, features "*the Lord who fed his people in the desert*," and transforms the chapter into one which speaks about the manna and the quails, as well as the Torah and the tabernacle sanctuary. Psalm 18 likewise gives a new topic, "*Concerning the miraculous events that happened to the servant of the Lord, to David*." But the additions wind up featuring Moses' struggle against Pharaoh as well as the sterling characters of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob before actually speaking about David. In a similar twist, Psalm 60 has been composed, "*concerning the ancient testimony that was between*

⁴⁰ E. M. Cook, *Psalms Targum*, and Stec, *Targum of Psalms*. E. White's dissertation constructed a text edition of the first part of the Tg. Ps.; see White, "A Critical Edition of the Targum of the Psalms." Luis Díez Merino published Zamora's text; see Díez Merino, *Targum de Salmos*.

⁴¹ The most detailed is E. M. Cook, "Psalms Targum," 186–89.

⁴² See Bernstein, "Translation Technique," "Torah and Its Study," and "The 'Righteous' and the 'Wicked.'"

⁴³ See his 2007 book, *Exegesis in the Targum of Psalms*.

⁴⁴ See E. M. Cook, "Psalms Targum," 186.

Jacob and Laban.” It turns out that the expansions focus on David’s battles with Aram, the Edomites, the Moabites and the Philistines, with reference again to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Laban and Jacob’s interaction with him never appears, however.

Other recast Psalms feature the Torah, whether by focusing on God giving it to Israel or on Israel studying or practicing it. Psalm 68 in the Targum emphasizes the giving of the Torah, mentioning the smoking of Mt. Sinai and the people’s fear of God’s presence. Psalm 80 concerns “*those who sit in the Sanhedrin, who occupy themselves with the testimony of the Torah.*” Finally, the revised Psalm 110 indicates that God made David king because he “*had sat for the instruction of the Torah.*” He will rule “*the house of Israel, who offer themselves voluntarily to the Torah.*”

It turns out that the Torah and its importance constitutes a major theme of the Psalms Targum. In Targum Psalms 29:11, the Torah provides the moral strength of the people Israel, while in Targum 51:14 it becomes the source of their joy. The image of the dove covered with silver is a targumic simile for the congregation of Israel covered with the words of the Torah (Tg. Ps. 68:14). Psalm 68 offers a historical description of Israel, and speaks of the mountains in order to evoke Sinai, especially related by the Targum of the Torah (Tg. Ps. 68:14, 16, 17, 19). God teaches the Torah to David, and to the prophet (Tg. Ps. 49:16). Asaph, full of prophetic spirit, finds his consolation in the instruction of the Torah (Tg. Ps. 77:3); the radiance produced by the Torah prevents the punishment of death (Tg. Ps. 13:4); the instruction of the Torah liberates from the condemnation to the Gehenna (Tg. Ps. 49:16). When the Targum talks about the Messiah, it affirms that the scribe of the Torah will be on his right side (Tg. Ps. 45:10).⁴⁵

The Psalms Targum is only beginning to be studied and understood. Whether it has any overall coherence or constitutes simply a collection of translations and renderings of the individual psalms remains unclear. The few psalms that have been significantly recast, however, reflect the broader interests we have seen in other Writings Targums—namely, Torah and study as well as Jewish practices and history.

Targum of Job

If the biblical book of Esther is unusual among the books of the Hebrew Bible because it fails to mention God, then the biblical book of Job stands out because it never mentions the people Israel. Not only is there no mention of the people as a whole, but no individuals from Scripture, not even

⁴⁵ See Bernstein, “Torah and Its Study.”

heroes, appear. Adam, the first human is absent, as are the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as well as Moses and Aaron, David, and Solomon. No prophets are mentioned in Job, nor are Israel's enemies: Esau and Ishmael, for example, or the Philistines or the Amalekites, or the Babylonians and the Assyrians. Similarly, no event in Israel's history acquires even a side remark. So although the biblical book of Job may be about Israel's God, it is seemingly oblivious to Israel itself.

The rabbinic Job Targum sets out to rectify that situation. It incorporates numerous references to Israel's history and the people who populate it. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob appear several times. Jacob's daughter Dinah provides a link to Israel by taking on the role of Job's wife. Lot, Abraham's nephew, also appears. The prophets together play only a cameo role, as do the individuals Jeremiah and Jonah. The targumist treats the temple (the "sanctuary") as important and makes specific mention of the land of Israel.

Some of the enemies of Israel receive more play than the Israelites themselves. Although neither Moses nor Aaron make an appearance, Pharaoh and the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea show up twice. Other of Israel's enemies receive a mention: Balaam, Og, and the Canaanites, as well as Moab, Ammon, and Amalek. Ishmael, Edom, and Esau appear several times—suggesting coded reference to current enemies, such as Rome or the Muslim empires. The most wicked, however, are apparently the generation of the flood, who are mentioned five times (Tg. Job 4:8, 6:17, 22:16, 17, 24:2). The most elaborate citation—to the 974 generations whose memory was lost in the flood (Tg. Job 22:16)—finally brings about a reference to Noah.

The one word which appears in the biblical book of Job which could be understood as part of the world of ancient Israel is the term, *Torah*. In its context at Job 22:22, it is usually understood as simply referring to the idea of "teaching" from God, rather than an Israelite-specific reference to the "Torah" of God. The Targum of Job contains a total of ten references to the Torah, in the usual form of *'oraita'*. This becomes the center of the basic theology we have seen in most Targums, detailed in Genesis 2–3.⁴⁶ The Job Targum makes it clear, once again, that studying and practicing Torah leads one to Eden in the world to come and violating Torah leads to Gehenna after judgment. Gehenna and its punishments receives particular interest in the Targum. The Job Targum thus follows the Targum of Qohelet in its transformation of wisdom into Torah, although it is not as extensively laid out.

⁴⁶ See Flesher, "Resurrection of the Dead," and "Theology of the Afterlife."

Torah is key to a successful life. Targum Job 5:7 explains the main purpose of a person from birth is “*to labor in the Law*.” Through the words of the Torah, a person liberates himself from the coals of Gehenna. Furthermore, Job is exemplary in seeking out instruction from the “Powerful One” (Tg. Job 5:8). The study house, where the peace is found, is close to the sanctuary where there is no damage, and the temple is a synonym for the place of teaching (Tg. Job 5:24).

The Torah of the Lord, which is deeper than *sheol*, is unknown by man (Tg. Job 11:8). The Torah emanates from the mouth of the Lord, and his words must be placed in the heart (Tg. Job 22:22). The wicked person rebels against the Torah and does not follow its ways (Tg. Job 24:13); rain and dew disappear when people do not observe the Torah (Tg. Job 37:21).

The Job Targum provides a more restrained rendering than the Qohelet Targum or even Targum Jonathan. For that reason its innovations come out in slight but significant form. They center on how the Torah is to be followed and studied (Tg. Job 3:16-17; 5:7, 24; 11:8; 22:22; 24:13), and how characters and events from Israel’s past illustrate the necessity of Torah (Tg. Job 3:5, 19; 4:7, 8; 5:12-13, 17; 14:18; 15:10). Similarly, when reference is made to “*the grief which troubled Jeremiah at the destruction of the holy house*” (Tg. Job 3:5, see also Tg. Sheni 1:2), that is probably resonant with an acceptance (as in Tg. Qoh.) of the destruction of the sanctuary. In that connection, it is interesting that the action at the beginning of the book is set on the New Year (Tg. Job 1:6) and on the Day of Atonement (Tg. Job 2:1). For all its restraint, the Job Targum appears to have been an incentive to perpetuate pious observance of the calendar in the period after the destruction of the temple.

Literal translation appears to have been a reaction to the rich, liturgical development which is evident in Targum Esther Rishon and Sheni, and such projects represent a desire to produce a filled out Bible in Aramaic. The Job Targum, along with the Psalms Targum, presents a profile of fewer additions to the Hebrew text, which enables its closer correspondence to the Hebrew text—even to its variants (including the Septuagint and the Peshitta)—than is evident in the more expanded Writings Targums.⁴⁷

The Targum of Chronicles

The Targum Chronicles has received little scholarly attention. This may be in part because no religious observance draws upon the books of Chronicles or their Targum. The Targum was thus never brought before

⁴⁷ See Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist*, 216–28, 223.

average Jews in a regular manner; it would only have been encountered in the *bet midrash*.

There are only a few manuscripts to this Targum; only three are known. There is no scholarly edition, but Le Déaut and Robert have provided an accurate transcription of the Vatican manuscript.

It is apparent that the writer/translator of the Chronicles Targum knew a large number of the Targums we have discussed in this Introduction. Just as the biblical books of Chronicles use material from the biblical books of Samuel and Kings, so the Chronicles Targum draws frequently upon the Targums of Samuel and Kings. In the early sections of Chronicles, where the narrative parallels the Pentateuch, the Targum often makes use of the interpretations found in the Pentateuchal Targums, often following Targum Pseudo-Jonathan specifically. There are also some indications that it draws from Targum Onqelos. Among the Writings Targums, the Chronicles Targum also has parallels with the Ruth Targum and the Targum of Song of Songs. The “collective” character of Chronicles Targum suggests it was composed at a time when these other Targums were known and respected.

The Targum Chronicles’ broad historical spread coupled with the creator’s frequent drawing from other Targums enable the meturgeman to pursue a theme of the interaction of past and present in God’s blessings of Israel. One key means by which this happens in Targum Chronicles is the concept of the merits of the ancestors. The merit gained by the binding of Isaac (PJ Gen. 22:14) first prevents God’s wrath against Israel (Tg. 1 Chr. 21:15) and then becomes the theological reason for the building of Solomon’s temple (Tg. 1 Chr. 3:1). Indeed, the merit of pious people becomes an important theme of this Targum, where personal merit benefits either another individual or community. Moses’ merit “*was of more value to them than horsemen and chariots*” (Tg. 1 Chr. 2:55). Among the six names given to Moses, one is “*Chief of Soco because he covered the house of Israel with his merit*” and another “*Zanoah, because on his account, God forgave Israel’s sins*” (Tg. 1 Chr. 4:18). On account of the merits of Moses, the descendants of Rehabiah, son of Moses, became numerous (Tg. 1 Chr. 23:17). Afterwards the Chronicles Targum affirms that the merit of Abiel, grandfather of Saul, helps Saul to become king (Tg. 1 Chr. 8:33). The Targum also points out the benefits of David’s merit, who in offering a sacrifice to God prays: “*Keep this free will offering as eternal merit*” (Tg. 1 Chr. 29:18) and in another passage the Targum adds: “*for it was due to his merit that the gates of the sanctuary house had been opened*” (Tg. 2 Chr. 7:10).

It is not surprising that both David’s and Isaac’s merit impact the temple, for the temple in Jerusalem is a key theme for Targum Chronicles. That is where God’s Shekinah dwells. Even though the Targum is

well aware that God is much too large to fit on earth (Tg. 2 Chr. 2:5), "*the Shekinah of the Lord had taken up residence in the sanctuary house*" (7:10). The Shekinah's presence in the temple and in Jerusalem is a key theme to which Targum Chronicles returns a number of times. Beyond that, moreover, there is repeated targumic emphasis on temple rites, accoutrements, and officials—for example, specifications of "*sacrifices of holy things*" which are then distributed to the people as "*one sixth of an ox and one sixth of a hin of wine*" (Tg. 1 Chr. 16:3). Lists of officials in charge of temple sites (Tg. 1 Chr. 26), for instance, as well as descriptions of temple items, such as "*the basin which Bezalel had made . . . for the sanctification of the chief priest*" (Tg. 2 Chr. 4:6). In some ways Targum Chronicles echoes Targum Pseudo-Jonathan's interest in priestly and temple matters.

It is somewhat surprising that Targum Chronicles almost completely ignores eschatological and messianic discussions and information (although a developed angelology may be held to be a variant of that). In place of that emphasis, the Targum puts weight on three different types of knowledge, all of which center on how humans know God's will.

The first is knowledge of Torah. Key figures are laudable because of their understanding. David is wise, for example, because "*when he sat down to give instruction in the [Torah], the correct decision came to his mind*" (Tg. 1 Chr. 11:11), and Boaz, the husband of Ruth, is not only "*the leader of the sages of the academy of Bethlehem, who were engaged in (the study of) the words of the Ancient of Days.*" This activity even helps "*establish the world . . . and restore completely the ruins of the house of Israel . . . by the service of the Torah*" (Tg. 1 Chr. 4:22-23).

The second is the spirit of prophecy, by which people know information that would otherwise be hidden from them. The principal biblical personages possess the divine gift of prophecy. Thus the Hebrew syntagma "man of God" is always understood as "prophet of the Lord" (Moses, Tg. 2 Chr. 23:14; David, Tg. 2 Chr. 8:14; Shemaiah, Tg. 2 Chr. 11:2 and unnamed one, Tg. 2 Chr. 25:7). Also "the seer" becomes "the prophet" (Tg. 2 Chr. 16:7, 10) and "vision" becomes "prophecy" (Tg. 2 Chr. 32:32). In the same way every time that Hebrew text speaks of "the word of the Lord was with . . ." the Targum adds the qualifying "prophecy" ("a word of *prophecy* from before the Lord with . . .," Tg. 1 Chr. 17:3).

Finally, we come to the third source of information, seeking "instruction" from the Lord before a battle to ascertain whether one will be victorious. Thus David is respected for "*going forth on the instruction of the spirit of holiness,*" and thus "*he was victorious in battle*" (Tg. 1 Chr. 11:11). By contrast, Saul lost his final battle because "*he had not sought instruction from before the Lord through the Urim and the Thummim*" (Tg. 1 Chr. 10:14). The same fate came to Asa and even to Josiah for the same reason (Tg. 2 Chr. 16:12, 35:23).

In the end, it is clear that the Chronicles Targum shares many of the characteristic additional themes generally found in other Targums and in the Writings Targums specifically.

The Targum of Proverbs

The Targum of Proverbs differs significantly from the other Writings Targums. Whereas the other Targums have a tendency for large amounts of additional material, the Proverbs Targum gives a rendering quite close to the Hebrew text with little elaboration. Indeed, like Targum Onqelos it can be characterized as having few additions larger than the occasional phrase. While most other Writings Targums seem to have been composed in LJLA, Proverbs is heavily influenced by Syriac. Further, nearly all Targums translate the Hebrew term *torah* with 'oraita' and avoid rendering the **tetragrammaton**—often just giving it as a series of *yods*; the Proverbs Targum translates *torah* with *nomwz*, which is the Greek *nomos*, and cites God's name as 'lh'—an approach found in no other Targum. Most importantly, however, it lacks the additional themes found in the other Targums, such as Torah, Messiah, the kingship and kingdom of God, references to Jewish history and Jewish religious practice, and the merit of the patriarchs.

The reason for the difference of the Targum of Proverbs has been recognized since J. Dathe's study in 1764; the Targum has close ties to the Peshitta version of Proverbs. The primary scholarly debate since that time has essentially been to determine the exact nature of the links between the two. While it has been suggested that the Targum and the Peshitta stem from a common *Vorlage*, the scholarly consensus has been building for a simpler solution, that the Targum is based on the Peshitta.⁴⁸

The evidence certainly points in the direction of the latter conclusion. Not only is the Targum's language heavily Syriacized, but out of the 915 verses in Proverbs, nearly one third of them, 300 to be exact, have the Targum giving exactly the same rendering as the Peshitta. Since for most of these verses it is clear that the Peshitta translated directly from the Septuagint, as the Peshitta often does, it must be that the Targum depends on the Peshitta and not vice versa.

The main argument against this conclusion is the scholarly belief that Jews would not have used a Christian translation such as the Peshitta as the basis for their own rendering. This is an anachronistic projection onto a situation about which too little is known and is increasingly being seen

⁴⁸ The best recent overviews of the scholarship appear in Healy, *Targum of Proverbs*, 1–11; and Owens, "Relationship between the Targum and Peshitta Texts."

as untenable. Of course, until there are reliable scholarly editions of the Targum of Proverbs (the Peshitta Proverbs is already available), the matter cannot be finally resolved. The best recent work in this direction is that of Díez Merino.

The literal character of the Targum of Proverbs and the focus of scholarly energy on the relationship between the Targum and the Peshitta has left modern scholarship without any sense of a message from the Targum. There may not even be one.

CONCLUSION

Setting aside the Targum of Proverbs, which seems based on the Peshitta of Proverbs, the Writings Targums have a number of elements in common. Their dialect of Aramaic is that of IJLA, sometimes rather close to that found in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (such as the Targums of Psalms and Job) and sometimes not quite so close (as in the Targums of Lamentations and Ruth). In terms of parallels with rabbinic literature, most seem to have more in common with the Babylonian Talmud and later midrashim than they do with the earlier halakhic and midrashic writing of Palestine. In terms of dating, this places the earliest of them about the fifth century and the latest of them in the seventh or perhaps eighth century. The Targum of Song of Songs may be the latest since its language has been influenced by Arabic.

Another factor in the dating of the Targums of the Five Megillot is the link to their respective religious holidays. Perhaps following the model of Esther's link to Purim, each of the other four Megillot were identified with a holiday, apparently during the Geonic period (post-Babylonian Talmud). Some of these Targums were recast in light of their link to their holiday; the Song of Songs Targum contains Passover symbolism, the Lamentations Targum links to the Ninth of Ab, but the Ruth Targum reveals little Shavuot imagery and Targum Ecclesiastes indicates no connections with Sukkot. Perhaps this indicates these Targums were composed before the link was made between the biblical book and the holiday.

The Writings Targums, again except Proverbs, seem almost explicitly tied into the rabbinic exegetical and religious milieu, in a way that earlier Targums such as Onqelos and Jonathan, and perhaps even the Palestinian Targums, are not. Although there are Targums to books to which midrashim also exist—such as Midrash Lamentations, Qohelet Rabbah—they maintain a great deal of independence from them. They are not simply midrashim recast in the guise of translations. Nevertheless, they bring in many interpretations we know from rabbinic literature, and

they do so in a manner that is much more blatant than we find in earlier Targums.

In the earlier Targums, such as Jonathan, Onqelos, and Neofiti, it is evident that there are key themes and ideas which the targumists introduce into their work. But it is only with the Writings Targums that we find overt programs of transformation applied to individual books. The Targum of Song of Songs, for instance, recasts its romantic poetry into a three-part historical drama of the relationship between God and the people Israel. Targum Lamentations refigures a book about the destruction of the first temple into an explanation for the destruction of the second temple and the exile in which the people Israel now find themselves. Similar transformations take place for the Targums of Ruth, Ecclesiastes, and even Job. Both Targums of Esther stand out as following this characterization extensively.

So to bring together the introduction of all the Targums which we began at the beginning of this book, it becomes clear that the Writings Targums constitute a climax of development that began with Targum Onqelos to the Pentateuch and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets. Essentially, the Targums we have discussed fall into three groups: (1) Targum Onqelos and Targum Jonathan, (2) the Palestinian Targums, and (3) Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch and the Writings Targums. The Targum of Proverbs stands by itself, of course, since it stems from the Peshitta. The development which the Writings Targums epitomize can be seen in four criteria.

First, the linguistic development of Aramaic outlines these groups. Targums Onqelos and Jonathan were composed in a regularized form of JLA as it came through the first century into the second. The Palestinian Targums were composed in JPA, while Pseudo-Jonathan and the Writings Targums were written in LJLA.

Second, the relationship of these Targums to rabbinic literature places them into the same three groups. Targum Onqelos and Jonathan contain few additions, with Jonathan being slightly more expansive than Onqelos. There is some identity of these with interpretations found in rabbinic literature, but these are not extensive. The Palestinian Targums develop their relationships with material in early rabbinic literature in a greater way. They often contain interpretations that parallel the Palestinian halakhic and midrashic literature, but which frequently put a different twist on them. Finally, the Writings Targums and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan show a much broader link to rabbinic documents, especially later ones. Again, however, it should be noted that Pseudo-Jonathan has an agenda which often puts it at odds with rabbinic positions, despite its familiarity with them.

Third, the source development of these Targums divides them into similar groups. Both Targum Onqelos and Targum Jonathan are seen as being created in two stages. One stage takes place fairly early—usually dated sometime in the second half the first century or the first half of the second—while the second stage probably takes place in the third century or slightly later. The Palestinian Targums, of course, share a common source of their expansions, called the Proto-PT source. Pseudo-Jonathan builds upon the Proto-PT source, but bringing in its own, much-larger, collection of expansions called the PJ-unique source. This makes it different from the Writings Targums, each of which has its own developmental history.

Fourth, there is also a development among these three groups of themes added into the Targums. Chilton's work on Targum Jonathan to Isaiah identified a set of themes that the targumists to the prophetic books added in and emphasized in their works. These themes included Torah, Messiah, the kingdom of God, the sanctuary, the Shekinah, and so on. Such themes are also present in Targum Onqelos, although little work has been done on them. The Palestinian Targums took these ideas and developed them further. Although they included essentially all the themes Chilton identified, they put particular emphasis on certain ones, combining them into a theological nucleus. These begin with the study and practice of Torah and the division of human life into this world and the world to come. Torah practice rewards the righteous in the world-to-come by being placed in the Garden of Eden with the Tree of Life. Ignoring the Torah makes one wicked and condemns him to eternal life in Gehenna in the world to come. This theology, if that is not too fancy a term, becomes full blown in the Writings Targums and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, with its elements being incorporated extensively and without elaboration, indicating that it was widely known.

This brief sketch outlines a theory of development for the Targums of the books of the Hebrew Bible. Hopefully, those who read this Introduction and themselves proceed to study and analyze the Targums will fill out its details, challenge it when necessary, and recast it where it errs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: Targums of all the biblical books are available free at the website of the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* (<http://CAL1.CN.HUC.EDU>). Many are also included in Computer Bible software packages, such as those by Accordance and BibleWorks.

The most recent analysis of Targum Lamentations comes from Christian Brady's *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, his "Targum

Lamentations' Reading of the Book of Lamentations," and other essays, as well as Philip Alexander's *Targum of Lamentations* in the Aramaic Bible series. This Targum exists in European and Yemenite families. Van der Heide's *Yemenite Tradition of the Targum of Lamentations* constitutes an excellent edition of the Yemenite manuscripts, while the Western manuscripts are best represented by Brady's transcription of Codex Urbinas 1 in *Rabbinic Targum* and Juan José Alarcón Sainz's citation from Paris 110 in "Edición crítica." Sperber's text should be avoided.

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The Aramaic Bible translation of the Proverbs Targum was done by John Healy, *Targum of Proverbs*. The issue of the relationship between the Targum and the Peshitta to this book has been evaluated succinctly in Robert Owens, "*Status Quaestionis*." The best text is still De Lagarde, although Díez Merino has now published the text edited by Alfonso de Zamora. A scholarly text edition of the Proverbs Targum is needed.

SECTION IV

The Targums in Late-Antique Judaism

ARAMAIC IN JUDAISM

Aramaic was spread throughout the Middle East by the ancient empires of Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia, which required their vassals to learn and use the language. But it was not until the last of these empires was long gone that Aramaic became the language of choice for a great deal of Jewish writing—including the Targums. At a time when there was no external political pressure on Jews in the land of Israel to adopt Aramaic, they favored it for both internal and commercial reasons. Indeed, Aramaic had become the commercial and cultural *lingua franca* of the Near East, from Egypt to Mesopotamia, and beyond. One of the famous edicts of the Buddhist King Ashoka (3rd century CE), found in present-day Afghanistan, was written in both Greek and Aramaic.

Within Judaism, Aramaic competed with Hebrew as the language of religious literature, usually sharing the spotlight with it, but sometimes Aramaic emerged as the preferred linguistic vehicle. More than thirty-four works among the Dead Sea Scrolls and the entire targumic literature were composed in Aramaic, and both Talmuds and some midrashim made extensive use of Aramaic. Even in the European Middle Ages, Aramaic became the language of choice of works such as the Zohar.

This chapter will focus on the history of Aramaic as it has been used in Judaism in order to provide a linguistic context for the Targums. It will lay out the growth of Aramaic and the development of its dialects in the context of the history of the Jews and their geographical locations and migrations.

One of the problems in understanding the broad sweep of Aramaic is that scholars have not always agreed upon a common terminology. A few decades ago, at least three different ways of talking about ancient Aramaic development were current: one in Europe, one in Israel, and one in North America. Since the early 1990s, however, the situation has

been improving. With the establishment of the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* under Stephen Kaufman—a major linguistic and historical resource available electronically—an American-Israeli approach to Aramaic dialectology has developed and a common set of terminology has gradually emerged.¹ The foundation for the approach comes from Joseph Fitzmyer's influential essay "The Phases of the Aramaic Language," in which he laid out a diachronic sequence of five stages of Aramaic: Old (925–700 BCE), Official (700–200 BCE), Middle (200 BCE–200 CE), Late (200–700 CE), Medieval and Modern (700 CE–present). Although perhaps oversimplified at times, this scheme conforms to identifiable periods in the evolution of the language and so has become the basis for a descriptive outline of Aramaic's development. Scholarly insights, advances, and understanding are now regularly described in accordance with this framework, and adjustments have been introduced to take account of new evidence.

Although Hebrew itself, as a northwestern Semitic language, derived from an Aramaic prototype, ancient Israel seems to have become cognizant of Aramaic only in the second period, that of Official Aramaic. A few examples of Aramaic writing from that period have been preserved. To judge from extant sources, the heyday for Jewish use of Aramaic came in the Middle and Late periods, when it became more widely known and used than Hebrew among Jews in Ancient Palestine.² After the coming of Islam in the seventh century, common use of Aramaic among Jews died out, with only some pockets remaining into the Medieval and Modern period, especially in scholarly circles.

THE PERIODS OF OLD ARAMAIC AND OFFICIAL ARAMAIC

Aramaic was first spoken by Aramean peoples who came to historical recognition during the eleventh century BCE in Syria and Upper Mesopotamia after the collapse of the Hittite Empire. Several Aramean ethnic groups established small, independent kingdoms in this region, where they bore the brunt of the later Assyrian expansion toward the west. The longest surviving Aramean state, Aram, had its capital in Damascus, and remained independent until 732 BCE, falling to the Assyrians at the same time that this empire began to menace the northern kingdom of Israel. The Israelites apparently did not use Aramaic during this period.

¹ The *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*, often abbreviated as *CAL*, can be found online at: <http://call.cn.huc.edu/>.

² Of course, Greek-speaking Jewry in the lands around the Mediterranean Sea was another matter. They seemed to possess knowledge of neither Hebrew nor Aramaic for much of this time, although cities such as Tarsus did have an Aramaic-speaking population alongside predominantly Greek-speakers.

Scholars extend the period of Old Aramaic slightly beyond the time of the independent Aramean states, from the eleventh century BCE down to the start of the seventh. Then begins the next period, that of Official Aramaic, which continues until about 200 BCE.

As Assyria expanded and conquered the northern Aramaic kingdoms, its leaders were attracted by Aramaic, perhaps because it had a practical, alphabetic script, unlike the syllabic-based, Akkadian cuneiform. Under Tiglath-Pileser III, who ruled the Assyrian Empire (more properly called the Neo-Assyrian Empire) from 744 to 727 BCE, Aramaic replaced Akkadian as the language of imperial administration. Tiglath-Pileser brought Aramean scribes into his administration to take charge of correspondence across the empire. The spread of Aramaic was assisted by the deportation of conquered Aramean populations throughout the empire and by its use among imperial administrators and military garrisons.

An eastern dialect of Aramaic was chosen for an administrative role and its positioning throughout the empire brought previously unknown linguistic forms to the empire's western reaches, particularly areas on the Mediterranean Sea such as Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. The resultant dialect, known to scholars as Imperial Aramaic (also called Official Aramaic and *Reichsaramäisch*), became a standard for both spoken and written communication. The great variety of dialects in Old Aramaic, attested in inscriptions from northern Syria, upper Mesopotamia, and northern Palestine, eventually gave way to the relative stability of Official Aramaic.

The earliest evidence for knowledge of Aramaic among the Israelites comes from 2 Kings 18:13-27, the story about the Assyrian King Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in 701 BCE, when Hezekiah was king of Judah. During the siege the Assyrian officials stood outside the city wall and negotiated by shouting in Hebrew to Hezekiah's representatives standing inside the city. When the Israelite officials asked them to speak in Aramaic because, although they knew it, the average citizen did not, the Assyrians refused. In this case the ambassadors preferred to use the local language to enable their threats to be understood by everyone, rather than to speak in the language of the empire.

Unfortunately few texts or inscriptions have come to modern times written in Aramaic during the Assyrian Empire. The same holds true for the next empire, that of Babylonia (or better, the Neo-Babylonian Empire), which was in ascendance between 626 and 539 BCE. Despite the relative scarcity of extant sources, it is plain that the Babylonian Empire had a major impact on the Israelites' knowledge of Aramaic. In 586 the Babylonian armies sacked Jerusalem and deported its nobility and upper classes into exile near the cities of Babylon and Nippur. There the exiled Judeans and their descendents lived surrounded by a society making extensive use

of Aramaic in their day-to-day lives. When the Persian Empire gained control of this territory and its leaders let the Judeans return to Jerusalem, some Israelites were already more fluent in Aramaic than in Hebrew. Furthermore, when they wrote Hebrew, they used the Aramaic alphabet rather than the “proto-Hebrew” alphabet they had used during the First Temple period. These Aramaic characters became the basis for what we today call the “Hebrew alphabet.”

The period of the Persian Empire (also known as the Achaemenid Empire) has provided modern scholars with a wealth of material written in Imperial Aramaic. The written remains from the Persians, who ruled from 539 to 332 BCE, have been found across the empire’s territory, from Persia in the east toward the west across the fertile crescent and south into Egypt. Indeed, Egypt has provided the largest number of documents because its dry climate helps preserve usually perishable writing materials. The finds range from literary texts to inscriptions, letters, contracts, and other formal documents, and even to lists, graffiti, and other informal jottings. Many writings come from the archives of Jews who lived on Elephantine Island near Aswan during the fifth century BCE.

Judea has generally provided little written historical evidence from the Persian period. Apart from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, almost nothing exists. The same holds true for Aramaic texts, for only Ezra contains material composed in Aramaic. This material largely consists of correspondence and copies of imperial decrees concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple (Ezra 4:8-6:18 and 7:12-26). Apart from one sentence in the book of Jeremiah (Jer 10:11), this is the earliest evidence of Jews writing in Aramaic.

THE PERIOD OF MIDDLE ARAMAIC

Middle Aramaic, usually dated from the start of the second century BCE to the start of the third century CE (200 BCE–200 CE), is characterized by a proliferation of regional dialects. During the previous period, there had been an ongoing tension between the empire-wide standard of Imperial Aramaic and local dialects. (We know about the former mainly from written materials, while we know little about the latter because they were used primarily for speaking.) Yet Imperial Aramaic had maintained its dominant position because of its political support and administrative role. After Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire in the late fourth century BCE, political support for Imperial Aramaic disappeared. Instead the Hellenistic Greek empires under the Seleucids and the Ptolemies brought in Greek and used that language in their administrations. Without the constraints of Imperial Aramaic, the local Aramaic

dialects burgeoned and they came to be used in writing within various local settings.

Inscriptional evidence for three new dialects used in the countries near Israel appears at this time. Nabatean Aramaic was used in northwest Arabia and the Negev Desert, south and southeast of Palestine. Palmyrene Aramaic was used in areas of Syria influenced by the oasis-based trading city of Palmyra (Tadmor), halfway between the Mediterranean coast and the Euphrates River. In the region around Edessa in northern Syria, the earliest evidence of the Syriac dialect of Aramaic begins to appear. These all resulted from the interaction of local dialects with the breakdown of Imperial Aramaic, with the local dialects playing a dominant role in some cases.

In Palestine, a similar process resulted in two dialects. The local dialect, recently given a dictionary by Michael Sokoloff, is called Judean Aramaic. Like the three dialects in neighboring countries, the primary body of evidence comes from inscriptions, mostly related to burials. Archaeologists have found these in Jerusalem, Jericho, Masada, and nearby locations. There are also a number of lists (names, priestly shares, and rations among the Masada defenders) as well as legal documents of various kinds: sales, marriage, divorce, debt, receipts, and promissory notes.

Most of the inscriptions and lists stem from the first centuries BCE and CE, but the legal materials from Nahal Hever and Wadi Murabba'at derive from the early second century CE. These belong to the so-called Bar Kokhba finds, related to the Second Jewish Revolt against the Romans in 132–135 CE. In addition to the legal material there are twenty-two letters, mainly military dispatches, which Sokoloff also includes within Judean Aramaic. Finally, the last type of evidence for this dialect comes from the Megillat Taanit, a scroll listing days on which fasts should not take place, and from a few fossilized legal formulae that appear in the later Mishnah and Tosefta.

As evidence for a single dialect, this material presents a rather diverse character. The second-century CE Bar Kokhba letters reflect a colloquial dialect of the time, while the contracts and marriage documents of the same period probably reflect linguistic usage from a century or two earlier, frozen into legal formulae. The inscriptions of the previous two centuries may represent a colloquial language, but most are so short as to provide few dialectal indicators. This material has yet to result in an in-depth understanding of the dialect, but like those in surrounding areas, it seems to represent a synthesis of a local dialect with the memory of the earlier Imperial Aramaic.

The second dialect evidenced in Palestine is the dialect of Jewish Literary Aramaic, the only dialect of Middle Aramaic for which the evidence

is primarily literary rather than inscriptional and legal. This evidence allows us to trace the “afterlife” of Imperial Aramaic in the local, Judean context and provides insight into the development of all Middle Aramaic dialects. Like many stories of academic knowledge, the modern understanding began with one person’s brilliant flash of insight and then, as the explanation gained greater currency, some of its details were altered as the larger picture became clear.

The story begins in the Official Aramaic period, as told by Jonas C. Greenfield. When Imperial Aramaic became the main form of oral and written communication in the Persian Empire, a literary dialect arose alongside it. This prestigious dialect was used in composing formal declarations and literary works. Greenfield, who laid out this process, called the dialect “Standard Literary Aramaic” (SLA), and argued it could be found in the Ahiqar framework story and the Bar Punesh fragments, as well as in later Jewish literary texts. Greenfield viewed this dialect as the literary standard for the entire Persian Empire, even though he had little evidence for its widespread existence.

The prestige in which SLA was held among Aramaic scribes, even after Alexander changed the language of the empire to Greek, enabled it to retain its status as a literary dialect during the Middle Aramaic period according to Greenfield. In the land of Israel, it gradually attained a local flavor, probably under the influence of Judean Aramaic, but without losing a clear link to SLA. In American scholarly circles, the dialect has become known as Jewish Literary Aramaic.

The recognition of a dialect we now call Standard Literary Aramaic that provided continuity between the periods of Official and Middle Aramaic is key to understanding the dialects of Middle Aramaic. Its origins, however, remain unclear. While Greenfield identified a set of texts he thought written in this dialect, he never described any linguistic features that would distinguish it from Imperial Aramaic.³ Indeed, there are no major differences between SLA and Imperial Aramaic. Given this, it seems more likely that what Greenfield posited as SLA was actually Imperial Aramaic, the dialect known across the Persian Empire, and *not* a second dialect. After Alexander, Imperial Aramaic was adapted for literary use because of widespread scribal expertise in it. Greenfield’s proposal, by contrast, requires the nearly immediate loss of the widely known Imperial Aramaic after Alexander and the continuation of a literary dialect known so poorly that it has yet to receive a distinguishing linguistic description.

There are no known Jewish writings in the earliest stage of JLA. The book of Daniel, usually dated to the start of the second century BCE,

³ E. M. Cook, “A New Perspective on the Language of Onqelos and Jonathan,” 145–46.

comprises the earliest direct evidence. Already the sections of the book written in Aramaic rather than Hebrew (Dan 2:4–7:28) give the dialect a Palestinian twist. The differences between Daniel's Aramaic and the dialect found in the much earlier book of Ezra indicates the artificial nature of treating them as texts of the same "Biblical Aramaic," as was once done before the development of Aramaic adapted here was accepted.

The next stage in the development of JLA appears in the Aramaic literary texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The so-called Targum of Job—which is not linked to that book's rabbinic-era Targum—is the oldest, stemming from the mid-second century BCE. The youngest seems to be the Genesis Apocryphon, which retells stories of Abraham and other patriarchs and probably derives from the late first century BCE. Between these two works, scholars place several other texts, the most important being portions from Enoch, Tobit, the Testament of Levi, the Visions of Amram, and the New Jerusalem text.

Comparison of these works reveals that their linguistic character did not develop at the same pace or in the same direction. Rather than progressing along a single line of development, the Aramaic texts from Qumran indicate an increasing variety of linguistic forms in JLA, more approximate to the metaphor of an expanding cone than a line. Michael Sokoloff's study of the Job Targum, for example, indicated that out of the thirty-two features he examined, sixteen were in common with the older Aramaic of Daniel, four were shared with the younger Aramaic found in the Genesis Apocryphon, while three features could only be found in texts even more recent than the Apocryphon! Rather than representing a literary "standard," then, JLA seems to contain an ever-increasing range of new features, combined in different ways with older features as the dialect developed through time.

The dialect of Targum Onqelos to the Pentateuch and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets constitutes a development of Jewish Literary Aramaic, but these Targums do not contain the same variety of linguistic features found in the earlier witnesses to the dialect. Instead, they evidence a version of the dialect that imposed standardization on the earlier variety. This would have taken place in Judea during the first or early second century CE. Most scholars in fact place the initial composition of these Targums at the end of the Bar Kokhba rebellion in 135 CE, at the end of the evidence for Middle Aramaic in Judaism. Usually this chronology is offered without supporting arguments or data. The problem with this dating is that it puts the Jewish Aramaic's largest literary output, done in the most controlled dialect of Middle Aramaic, at the very start of the second refugee crisis for Jews in a space of less than 70 years. In the modern world, we know how disruptive sudden large

movements of people—forced refugees—can be, even when other countries have the ability to extend massive airlifts and shipments of food, shelter, and reconstruction aid. In the early second century CE, when the ruling Roman Empire and war caused the refugee situation, the circumstances were even more difficult. Those circumstances were hardly ideal to create such a literary work and have it successfully propagated throughout Palestinian Jewry.

Because of this, Paul Flesher argues that it is more likely that Targum Onqelos and Targum Jonathan, perhaps in their early form of Proto-Onqelos and Proto-Jonathan, were composed prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. On exegetical grounds, Bruce Chilton has argued for the production of the earliest framework of Targum Jonathan during that same period. Standardization must have come from an authoritative source that had the prestige and the power not only to enforce standards, but also to educate the scribes in the standardized dialect. Such a requirement could have been met by the first-century scribal class in Jerusalem, probably associated with the temple. Indeed, once the Romans installed procurators in place of kings in 6 CE, the temple comprised the sole central Jewish institution for the next sixty-four years. A school associated with the temple would have had the necessary power and prestige to make such standardization happen.⁴

One important question about Jewish Aramaic in the Middle Aramaic period cannot be answered: How widespread was JLA and Judean Aramaic in the land of Israel? Unfortunately, nearly all the evidence that can be located stems from Judea and the Jordan Valley. There are no Aramaic inscriptions from this period either from Galilee to the north or from Idumea to the south, and so no information exists about the dialect in these regions. Because of this situation, many philologists (including Fitzmyer) assume that JLA was used throughout Palestine. But linguistic analysis of countries such as England indicate that traditional dialects can change every twenty to thirty miles. If such results apply to Palestine, then we would expect different regions to have different dialects of Aramaic. Some Aramaic inscriptions and legal documents have been found in Samaria that date from the early part of the Middle Aramaic period or the end of the Official period.⁵ Unfortunately, they primarily evidence Imperial Aramaic and show rather little influence of any local dialect.

⁴ For a more in-depth argument, see Flesher, “Literary Legacy of the Priests?” 467–86, and Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*.

⁵ Gropp, *Wadi Daliyeh* and Magen et al., *Mount Gerizim Excavations*.

THE PERIOD OF LATE ARAMAIC IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL

The Period of Late Aramaic begins around the start of the third century CE, and scholars usually see it extending to around 700 in the land of Israel. Among the Jews of Israel, the dialect of Aramaic being used is not Jewish Literary Aramaic or Judean Aramaic, but rather Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. The earliest inscriptions in this dialect are usually dated to the mid-third century and this is often seen as the beginning of the period. Some scholars, however, date the initial composition of Palestinian Targums to the late second century. This would push back the beginning date to 150, although the later redaction of these Targums in their present forms makes them an insecure support for the early emergence of their dialect.

Jewish Palestinian Aramaic has three subdialects, closely related to each other but with some linguistic differences. The first subdialect is evidenced by a number of inscriptions, found mostly in burial caves and on synagogue floors, and by a few amulets. The earliest of these inscriptions was composed in the third century CE, while the latest derives from the seventh.

Many of these inscriptions appear alongside those in the other two principal Jewish languages of the time, Greek and Hebrew. The mosaic floor of the synagogue at Hammat Tiberias, for example, has inscriptions in all three languages. Greek probably stems from Jews most clearly linked to the ruling classes and to the Roman use of Greek in the administration of the eastern half of the empire. The Aramaic inscriptions are in the everyday language of the people, while the Hebrew inscriptions represent the language of liturgy and worship.

The location of these finds reveals the dialect's geographical distribution. Although the dialect is usually associated with Galilee, Aramaic synagogue inscriptions also appear along the Jordan Valley and into Idumea (i.e., southern Judea). Inscriptions in JPA do not appear in (northern) Judea around Jerusalem, for during this period it was dominated by Christians, whose primary Aramaic dialect was that of Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA). Nor does JPA appear in Samaria, the home of Samaritan Aramaic. This information indicates both a wider spread of this dialect than has often been recognized and reflects the pattern of Jewish settlement during this period.

The second subdialect of JPA appears within the later rabbinic literature composed in Galilee and is usually referred to as Galilean Aramaic. The main texts that use this dialect are the fifth-century Palestinian Talmud and the fourth-to-sixth century midrashim of Genesis and Leviticus Rabbah as well as Pesiqta de Rav Kahana. A few fragments of halakhic

writings from the Geonic period have also been found among the Cairo Geniza fragments, as well as some *ketubbot*. Some *piyyutim* have also been found written in this dialect. Galilean Aramaic has a great deal in common with the Aramaic of the inscriptions, and both show colloquial tendencies.

The third subdialect of JPA appears in the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch. More formal than the other two subdialects, it is referred to as Jewish Targumic Aramaic (JTA).

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, as we have explained, was once considered a Palestinian Targum. But although it contains most of the Proto-PT expansions known from the Palestinian Targums, its translation draws from—indeed often copies—the translation of Targum Onqelos. Furthermore, it contains additional material known as the PJ-Unique source that appears only in this targum, and which adds nearly three times as many expansions as the Proto-PT Source. The translation and the additional material distinctive to Pseudo-Jonathan are not written in JPA but in a dialect called Late Jewish Literary Aramaic, a prelude to the later usage of academic circles. This dialect was independently identified by Stephen Kaufman and Edward Cook.⁶

Pseudo-Jonathan belongs to a development later in this period, with suggested dates ranging from the fourth century up to the eleventh century. Recent research into the character of this dialect indicates that it fuses aspects of JLA and JPA, with the morphology tending to be closer to the former and the lexicon closer to the latter. The dialect also draws lexical items from several other dialects, including JBA, Syriac, Samaritan, and Christian Palestinian Aramaic, as well as from Hebrew. In addition, the dialect makes use of several archaic Aramaic forms, both real and invented.

Kaufman sees this dialect as an artificial, scholarly creation, even though he and Cook have also identified a wide usage. The Targums of Psalms, Chronicles, and Job were clearly composed in this dialect, and the Targums of the Five Megillot also reveal strong ties to it. It is worth noting that a number of these Writings Targums have been termed “Targum Yerushalmi” over the centuries, just like Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. This term should be understood as being like Pseudo-Jonathan in dialect rather than as indicating origins in Palestine, as some modern scholars have interpreted it. The existence of so many independent Targums written in this dialect indicates LJLA was a living dialect used by a large number of people, not just scholars. Since the Megillot Targums were probably used

⁶ Kaufman, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Late Jewish Literary Aramaic” and E. M. Cook, “Rewriting the Bible.”

in liturgy, it is unlikely to have been an artificial creation, although over time its circle of usage shrank.⁷

THE PERIOD OF LATE ARAMAIC IN BABYLONIA

In Babylonia the Late Aramaic period extended from about 200 CE to the end of the Geonic period, about 900 CE. Babylonian Jews lived in south-central Mesopotamia (in the general vicinity of Baghdad) in cities such as Pumbedita, Sura, and Nehardea. The population may have consisted in part of Jews who had descended from the exiles of 586 BCE—or at least some made that claim—as well as greater numbers of Jews who had fled the land of Israel after Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE, after the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE and after Constantine's conversion to Christianity in the fourth century. Written materials from Babylonian Jews reveal three different dialects in use during this period.

The best known and best evidenced of these is the dialect of the Babylonian Talmud. Scholars generally date the completion of this large religious text to around 600, although it was in the process of composition for decades, if not centuries. The main Aramaic dialect used in this massive text is called Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (JBA), although it sometimes receives the more specific name Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic (BTA). This is an eastern Aramaic dialect with many similarities to the other eastern dialects of Syriac and Mandaic. No known Targums were composed in this dialect.

A second "mixed" dialect appears in at least three types of Jewish documents. These documents include the tractates *Nedarim* and *Nazir*, a few other tractates in the Babylonian Talmud, certain official documents cited in the Babylonian Talmud, and Geonic writings. In addition, this dialect probably also appears in the Jewish magic bowls found in Nippur and other locations, and perhaps even in some Karaite writings. The dialect in each corpus differs slightly from that used in the others, but all witnesses share a large core of common linguistic features and differ in only a few. These differences may in part be attributed to chronological development—the bowls stem from the fourth through seventh centuries, the Talmudic material from the end of that timeframe, while the Geonic writings stem from the seventh century or later. But differences might also reflect variations among genres: "official" documents, Talmudic tractates, commentaries, and magical texts and incantations.

The common dialect of these texts is usually characterized as a "mixed dialect," and at least one scholar has deemed it a Jewish Babylonian Koine.

⁷ Paul Flesher has outlined a possible linguistic process that could account for the dialect's formation. See Flesher, "Literary Legacy."

At this point in time, no agreement on a name has been reached. The mixed dialect combines elements of a contemporary, eastern nature with features that are archaic and western. The contemporary, eastern aspects derive from BTA, while most of the archaic, western features appear in Targum Onqelos and Targum Jonathan. Some scholars have linked the latter features to Imperial Aramaic, but this is not necessary. The features that do not appear in the two Targums can be found in the Aramaic texts of the Hebrew Bible.

The presence of this mixed dialect provides evidence for a third dialect in Babylonia. Over the past century, scholars have tried to explain the mixed dialect in a number of ways; most fail the test of Occam's Razor. The remaining explanations aim to explain the source of the archaic features. Although one group of interpretations holds that the archaic features derive from texts that use those features—such as Daniel and the Targums—it seems more likely that they derive from a living dialect still being used in Babylonia at the time. If so, then this must be the dialect of JLA, which the exiles from Judea would have brought with them after the cataclysms of 70 and 135. The different genres in which the dialect is used makes this the most likely explanation. This explanation posits that a large number of Judean emigrants brought with them JLA from Palestine to Babylonia in the late first and second centuries.⁸ Over the generations, this dialect absorbed aspects of the dominant dialect BTA, until by the fourth century, the earliest date of our evidence, there is a thoroughly mixed dialect containing aspects of both the migrants' western dialect and the local eastern dialect to which they came.

This understanding is supported by a study of the literary character of the magic bowl texts done by C. Müller-Kessler (see "Earliest Evidence for Targum Onqelos"). She indicates that the texts are written in two parts: the incantations, and the introductory and closing framework surrounding them. The framework consisting largely of formulaic phrases is written in a form of Standard Literary Aramaic (Jewish Literary Aramaic), the dialect brought from the land of Israel by the Judean exiles. Müller-Kessler terms this transplanted dialect "Standard Literary Babylonian Aramaic," because it absorbed a few Babylonian linguistic features, even though it did not lose its western ones. The incantations themselves apparently appear in the "mixed dialect," which she calls Koine Babylonian Aramaic.

⁸ It is clear that this could not have been a version of Standard Literary Aramaic created in Babylonia—in accordance with Greenfield's position—because that would lack the western features that characterize Jewish Literary Aramaic.

So in the early part of this period, Jewish Aramaic in Babylonia seems to consist of two dialects: the local BTA and the Palestinian Jewish immigrants' JLA. Upon its arrival, JLA seems to have been the prestige dialect for Babylonian Jews, since it came from Jerusalem and its temple. Over the generations, however, it became unable to maintain its purity against the dominant BTA and gradually absorbed enough features of BTA to lose its identity and become a mixed dialect. So by the end of this period, there were still two dialects, but while BTA remained strong, JLA had shifted into a mixed character. The only exception to this scenario would be the retention of JLA in its Targums and in the fixed, formulaic phrases used in magical texts.

ARAMAIC IN THE MEDIEVAL AND MODERN PERIODS

After the end of the Late Aramaic period, Aramaic largely died out as a common Jewish language. Yet since parts of the Babylonian Talmud and the Geonic literature were written in Aramaic, as well as Targums Onqelos and Jonathan, the language remained a focus of study into modern times. Similarly, parts of Jewish liturgy were composed in Aramaic, such as the **qaddish** (*kaddish*) in various forms, and so Aramaic has also retained a liturgical use. Aramaic thus continued to be used through medieval and modern times up to today, but primarily in passive forms rather than as an actively productive language of Judaism, except within academic circles.

There are two exceptions to this picture. The first is the composition of the Zohar in Aramaic by Moses de Leon in thirteenth-century Spain. The Zohar is attributed to the second-century rabbi Simeon bar Yohai, and De Leon apparently composed it in Aramaic to give it an ancient flavor. Despite this attribution, it is clear that the Zohar's Aramaic is primarily a combination of Targum Onqelos' version of JLA and BTA, with a few forms garnered from other dialects and idioms taken from medieval Hebrew.⁹ Gershom Scholem considers this dialect an artificial creation by De Leon, although it was obviously intended to be read and understood.

The second exception comprises neo-Aramaic, which are dialects of Aramaic that remained the spoken *lingua franca* of Jews in small villages in a region stretching from northern Iran across Iraq and into Syria. They lived in towns such as Zakho, Saqqiz, and Dihok. There are written materials in this dialect as old as 1600, including midrashim and commentaries, poetry and translations. The Jews who spoke these dialects emigrated to Israel in the 1950s and became Hebrew speakers. Neo-Aramaic may

⁹ Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 163–68.

be a development, in part, from Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic. However, the dialects also share many common features with Christian neo-Aramaic speakers.

EXCURSUS: WHAT DIALECT OF ARAMAIC DID JESUS SPEAK?

When people ask the question, What dialect of Aramaic did Jesus speak?, they want to identify the linguistic world in which Jesus lived and functioned, and that world is one where the *spoken* word dominates. This immediately raises a methodological problem, for all the evidence we have for this period is *written*. Any attempt to ascertain the nature of Jesus' Aramaic must extract the spoken from the written. The method used will depend on the genre of the documents under study, for different genres require different methods for identifying spoken elements contained in them. Personal letters reveal the spoken language fairly close to the surface, often on purpose, while a biblical translation uses a more formal dialect that buries conscious use of the colloquial. Law documents, by contrast, often contain frozen legal formulae reflecting older language forms and thus reveal little about the contemporary spoken or colloquial language.

Since the methods used for getting at aspects of a spoken language depend upon a text's genre, the determination of which methods to use must wait until the identification of the texts themselves. It is at this stage that the search for the "language of Jesus" has gotten bogged down. Since Jesus lived his life in Galilee during the first century CE, scholars need texts that evidence the dialect at that time and in that location. The short response is that there are none. This lack has spurred scholars to search for a way to determine the character of first-century Galilee's dialect from the documents that do exist. Three solutions have arisen over the past century.

At the start of the twentieth century, Gustav Dalman tried to triangulate on first-century Galilee from two directions. He argued that the western Aramaic features of Targum Onqelos represented the Aramaic dialect of first-century Judea, while the Aramaic found in the Palestinian Talmud and the Palestinian midrashim were Galilean, although from a couple of centuries later. The proper balance of these two kinds of data would lead to Jesus' language. Paul Kahle countered by arguing that Targum Onqelos was composed in Babylonia and did not enter Palestinian prior to 1000 CE when it moved west with the Babylonian Talmud, and that the rabbinic literature was too late. Instead, the fragments of Palestinian Targums found in the Cairo Geniza, which Kahle had recently published, represented a pre-Christian form of spoken Palestinian Aramaic which Jesus would have known. Followers of his position—such as

Matthew Black, Martin McNamara, Roger Le Déaut, and Alejandro Díez Macho—gradually added all the Palestinian Targums, including Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, into this argument.¹⁰

The publication of the Aramaic documents found among the Dead Sea Scrolls had a significant impact on this debate. Here at last were texts from a first-century, Judean context that evidenced Aramaic from first century CE back to the second century BCE. First, E. Y. Kutscher used them to reinforce the role of Targum Onqelos in this debate by showing that its form of Aramaic was close to that of the Genesis Apocryphon. His method assumed that the linguistic features from texts of identifiable provenance (viz, the Apocryphon) could be used to date texts of uncertain origins (viz, Targum Onqelos). Second, Joseph Fitzmyer took a stricter approach. He argued that the key principle here was that written documents that could be located in time and place—i.e., Judea in the second century BCE to first century CE—eliminated the uncertainty of the dating of texts with uncertain provenance or whose composition was later (such as the Targumim). Thus the Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls trumped all rabbinic and targumic texts for use in the question of Jesus' dialect of Aramaic.¹¹ This has become the dominant position on the question which dialect of Aramaic Jesus spoke, largely because the position rests on evidence contemporary to Jesus' lifetime.

The problem with these positions, however, is that none of them identifies texts that directly evidence *first-century Galilee*. The Dead Sea Scrolls and Targum Onqelos are Middle Aramaic, but from Judea. The Palestinian Targums and the rabbinic literature are from Galilee, but come from the period of Late Aramaic. So despite more than a century of research in this matter, scholars have yet to find the proper evidence to resolve it.¹² In the absence of first-century linguistic evidence for Galilee, the only way to move forward is to draw upon evidence from the rest of Palestine, the texts and inscriptions of JLA (and Judean Aramaic) from Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Bar Kokhba finds and Wadi Murabba'at to Megillat Taanit and the Targums of Onqelos and Jonathan.

The delineation of Aramaic dialects during the time of Jesus, as during many periods of Aramaic, is a matter for continuing discussion, and

¹⁰ A fine, critical representation of the hypothesis is offered in McNamara, *New Testament and the Palestinian Targum, Targum and Testament*; and Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*. See also Díez Macho, "Le Targum palestinien"; and Le Déaut, *Message of the New Testament and the Aramaic Bible*.

¹¹ Fitzmyer, "Study of the Aramaic Background of the New Testament," 6–10.

¹² Nickelsburg has suggested that 1 Enoch may represent a Galilean authorship in his "Enoch, Levi and Peter." It would be interesting to see if that view finds any linguistic support.

must allow for the variable that spoken language is not always adequately represented by written evidence. But the trajectory of Aramaic's evolution is better understood today than once was the case, and permits scholars to place Jesus and other Aramaic speakers within a plausible linguistic context.

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The quickest way to get into Imperial Aramaic is though the *Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic* by T. Muraoka and B. Porten. It draws upon the large collection of texts edited by B. Porten and A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt*, which is also available in computer form from *Accordance Bible Software*. For the Aramaic of Ezra, the standard work is Rosenthal, *Biblical Aramaic*, but the recent teaching grammar by Fred Greenspahn is better for novices.

Greenfield's best presentation of SLA appears in "Standard Literary Aramaic." E. Cook provides a cogent critique of the idea's limitations in "Qumran Aramaic" and "A New Perspective."

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The development of JLA is laid out most clearly in Kaufman, "Dating the Language," and Cook's Central Aramaic hypothesis that appears in "A New Perspective." Goshen-Gottstein's essay "The Language of Targum Onqelos" has also been influential. Flesher's "Literary Legacy" attempts to fill in some missing details. For Daniel, see Rosenthal's *Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*. Daniel's Aramaic is studied often; an important recent work is Tarsee Li's *Verbal System*.

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TARGUMS AND TRANSLATION IN THE HISTORY OF RABBINIC LITERATURE

From the time of the earliest rabbinic document, the Mishnah, the rabbis recognized the importance of translation.¹ In Mishnah Sotah 7:5, they envision the closing act of the ceremony of Blessings and Curses on mounts Gerizim and Ebal, described in Deuteronomy 27–29, to be the erection of an altar upon which the Torah is written in seventy languages. Despite this emphatic elevation of written Torah translations, rabbinic writings do not paint a clear picture of how Targums were used or of their social and religious setting.

In general, rabbinic texts speak of three arenas for the practice of Aramaic translation: the synagogue service, teaching and study in a school, and private study. This observation does not reveal as much as we would like to know about the Targums. On the one hand, the preponderance of passages in rabbinic literature concerning translation focus on oral translation within the synagogue worship service. On the other hand, while several passages address questions concerning written Targums, most of them address halakhic matters that reveal little about practice and use. Despite this, we can glean significant information about Targums by examining rabbinic literature.

No rabbinic-era text ever takes up Targums, translations, or the activity of translating as a sustained topic of discussion, and therefore no broad description of targumic usage guides our understanding. Instead we find occasional remarks which require us to plumb beneath the surface for their assumed activities and expectations. These are few in total; across the Mishnah's thousands of pericopae, for instance, just eight passages

¹ In this chapter most translations of rabbinic literature were done by ourselves, usually in conversation with the translations of Jacob Neusner. Scripture translations are from NRSV. Unless otherwise noted, the texts of rabbinic literature are from *Bar Ilan's Judaic Library*, version 14.

mention Targums or translating. Similarly, the Tosefta contains twelve relevant passages, the Palestinian Talmud eighteen helpful pericopae, and the Babylonian Talmud only twenty-nine.

Most of these passages appear in the tractate Megillah. Megillah's nominal topic is the reading of the Esther Scroll (Hebrew, *megillah*) on the festival of Purim. This tractate also addresses matters concerning Torah scrolls, the reading of Scripture in synagogue services, the saying of prayers, and other topics relating to synagogues. In the Mishnah, six of the eight passages about Targums and translation appear in Megillah, rather than being scattered across its thirty-three tractates. Similar concentration in tractate Megillah also appears in the Tosefta, the Yerushalmi, and the Bavli.

Because of this dearth of information, many scholarly analyses of Targums and translation lump together information from the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods, from Palestine and from Babylonia, and even from the later geonim. This approach may superficially present a fuller picture, but it destroys any chance of identifying differences between time periods and widely separated geographical areas.

To counter this lack of differentiation, this chapter will take a chronological approach through the four major rabbinic halakhic texts: the Mishnah, composed about 200 in Palestine; the Tosefta, composed about 250 in Palestine; the Palestinian Talmud, composed around 400 in Palestine; and the Babylonian Talmud, composed about 600 in Babylonia.² Along the way, this will be accompanied by brief forays into the Tannaitic and Amoraic midrashic texts.

Seven issues in regard to Targums and translation arise in Rabbinic literature and may be considered chronologically. Six of these arise in the Mishnah and continue to be addressed in later halakhic texts. The first issue is the oral performance of Scripture translation—explicitly the translation of the Torah and the Prophets—in the synagogue service. This constitutes the predominant interest of the four halakhic texts from the Mishnah to the Babylonian Talmud when they discuss Targums and translation. The second issue is related to the first, that of the translation of the Megillah during the Purim celebration. The third issue provides guidelines about Scripture passages that may or may not be translated, or even read in Hebrew, while the fourth issue emphasizes questions of translation technique with regard to specific biblical passages, particularly as the matter applies to the synagogue services. The fifth issue explores the question of which languages the Scriptures may be translated into. The

² The differentiation between Palestine and Babylonia has been importantly emphasized by W. Smelik in his essay "Language, Context, and Translation."

sixth looks at the status of written translations. And the seventh focuses on the place of Targums and translation in teaching and private study. The first four of these focus on translation in the synagogue service, the next two on written Targums, and the last one—and the one in which the rabbis show the least interest—is the use of Targums in teaching and study.

TRANSLATING SCRIPTURE IN THE SYNAGOGUE SERVICE

The rulings and discussions about the role of translation in the synagogue service provide a fairly consistent picture across the four halakhic texts. In chapter 1, we briefly described the scenario which these rules presume as their context. Translation is part of the service's Scripture reading. One person reads the biblical text in Hebrew from a scroll, while another stands nearby and delivers an Aramaic translation orally. Two passages from the Mishnah illustrate how the rabbis expected this to be done in second- and third-century Galilee.

The first passage reveals the choreographed exchange between the Scripture reader and the translator. M. Meg. 4:4 allows us to see how the reader interacts with the translator.

הקורא בתורה לא יפחות משלשה פסוקים לא יקרא
למתורגמן יותר מפסוק אחד ובנביא שלשה
היו שלשתן שלש פרשיות קורין אחד אחד

- A. He who reads in the Torah (should read) no fewer than three verses.
- B. He may not read to the translator (meturgeman) more than a single [verse at a time, so the translator will not err],
- C. and, in the prophets, [no more than] three.
- D. [If] the three constitute three distinct pericopae, they read them one by one.³

This ruling reveals the interaction between the person who reads from the biblical scroll and the person who translates, referred to as the meturgeman (elsewhere called the *turgeman*). They interact almost musically—in a call-and-response pattern—with the Torah-reader providing one Hebrew verse at a time to the translator for Aramaic rendering, and the reader of the Prophets giving three.⁴ The antiphonal structure of this exchange establishes the Scripture reader as the performance's leader with the

³ Translation Neusner.

⁴ Note that in this verse by verse exchange, large additions to the translation would be noticeable by the difference in length. Attentive listeners would notice the difference even if they could not identify what was added to make that difference.

translator as the respondent, on behalf of and for the benefit of the listening congregation.

Notice what is not revealed here. While line A indicates a minimum number of verses for the reader, it mentions no maximum. Later texts will develop the notion of a **parashah**, usually several chapters in length, and organize the Torah into an annual or triennial cycle.⁵ These are absent in Tannaitic Judaism.

The terminology used in m. Meg. 4:4 fails to reveal how the translator performs his task. Line A designates the reader as “He who reads in the Torah” (הקורא בתורה). The participle used here stems from the verb קרא, “to call out, read out loud.” The preposition “in” indicates the text he reads, in this case, the Torah scroll. By contrast, the Mishnah only mentions the translator with no indication of how the translation is presented. A second passage, m. Meg. 4:6, helps us address that question indirectly, when it indicates the extent to which people of reduced levels of status may participate in the service.

קטן קורא בתורה ומתרגם אבל אינו פורס את שמע
ואינו עובר לפני התיבה ואינו נושא את כפיו פוחח פורס
את שמא ומתרגם אבל אינו קורא בתורה ואינו עובר
לפני התיבה ואינו נושא את כפיו סומא פורס את שמא
ומתרגם רבי יהודה אומר כל שלא ראה מאורות
מימיו אינו פורס את שמע

- A. A minor reads in the Torah and translates.
- B. But he does not recite the *Shema*, pass before the ark, or raise his hands [in the priestly benediction].
- C. He who is wearing ragged clothing recites the *Shema* and translates, but he does not read in the Torah, pass before the ark, or raise his hands.
- D. A blind man recites the *Shema* and translates.
- E. R. Judah says, “Whoever in his entire life has never seen light does not recite the *Shema*.”⁶

In this passage Scripture reading and translating takes place in a worship service along with other liturgical elements, such as praying the *Shema* and saying the priestly benediction over the congregation.

⁵ For further information about the annual and triennial reading cycles, see Heine-mann, “Triennial Lectionary Cycle”; Mann, *Bible as Read*; Wacholder, “Prolegomenon”; Shinan, “Sermons, Targums”; Campbell, “*Parashiyot* and Their Implications”; Fleischer, “Inquiries” and “Remarks.”

⁶ Translation Neusner.

Although these activities are treated as closely related, reading is accorded a higher level of prestige, to judge from the requirement of the standard of clothing required. It is also important to note that reading and translation are not performed by professionals but open to most capable boys or men in the congregation. The term *meturgeman* does not designate a synagogue officer, but simply refers to the person who happens to be translating at a particular moment.

The translation is delivered orally, not read from a text. In line A, the minor's ability to read Torah is described by familiar terminology, "[he] reads in the Torah" (קורא בתורה). By contrast, the Mishnah designates the act of translating with a single word, "[he] translates" (מתרגם). This verb shows that translating is performed or presented with no assisting materials. The translator does not read from a text, for the passage does not say, "he reads in the Targum," which would be קורא בתרגום.⁷ Line D extends this interpretation. The blind man is not allowed to "read Torah," not even by memory, but he may translate—apparently since that does not require reading.

The Tosefta picks up the Mishnah's interest in types of people with lesser status. In t. Meg. 3:21, it qualifies the minor's permission to read and translate by making it clear that he should not take the more honorable activity—that of reading Torah—if that demotes an adult to translating. This indicates the relative status of reading Scripture and translating Scripture.

A few passages later, in t. Meg. 3:27, the Tosefta cautions about the raggedly dressed man. The problem is not only that he is poorly clothed, but also that he is in danger of revealing too much of his body; he should take care not to do so when he translates.

Do these passages indicate actual, historical practice? Not necessarily, for they are prescriptive rather than descriptive. They unveil an ideal of what some rabbis thought should take place. This ideal of translation's role in the service persisted, however, becoming the guiding portrayal in halakhic texts up to the Babylonian Talmud. So perhaps the ideal became practice, at least in rabbinic circles and in those congregations guided by rabbinic practice.

The antiphonal relationship of Hebrew reading and Aramaic translation raises two issues that shape our understanding of the practice, although neither can be clarified fully. First, the expectation that an Aramaic translation should accompany the Hebrew reading suggests that Galilean Jews no longer understood Hebrew and were speaking Aramaic in their daily

⁷ By contrast, the Mishnah's framers explicitly allow the Megillah to be read from a translation in m. Meg. 2:1 (see below).

lives. While some modern scholars hold that Hebrew remained in active use among the Jews, pointing to the predominantly Hebrew rabbinic literature, others argue that Aramaic was the dominant language and that Hebrew had been largely forgotten outside the liturgical realm, pointing to the Targums and the passages just discussed. This major debate cannot be settled here, although chapter 13 lays out the issues involved.⁸ We argue for a middle position in chapter 15, recognizing that many Galilean Jews knew some Hebrew, primarily for use in a liturgical setting, but were not entirely fluent in it. Perhaps we can anachronistically suggest that, like many modern Jews, they knew “prayer book Hebrew.” That is, many of them had memorized prayers and commonly used biblical passages—and on that basis understood a few words of each Scripture reading—but the demands of farming, fishing, or other dawn-to-dusk jobs (to say nothing of household management and child-rearing!) robbed them of the leisure to become more fluent. They needed Aramaic Targums to understand Scripture’s meaning.

The second issue focuses on the skills needed to carry out Scripture reading and translation. If this performance was carried out extemporaneously, then both the reader and the translator would require significant education. The Scripture reader would not only need to know Hebrew, he would also have to possess the skill of reading. Studies of the ancient world suggest that a very small percentage of the adult males could read.⁹ Rabbinic Judaism put an increasingly high value on this ability as time went on, but it is unlikely that it translated into a higher number of readers in the general population. Most studies of ancient literacy estimate that only 3 to 10 percent of adult males could read. Given the importance of reading in the ritual, we might assume that twice as many Jews could read as any other nationality, even though that means at most 20 percent could read—two of out of every ten adult males.¹⁰ But recent studies of Jewish literacy actually argue that Galilean Jews possessed lower literacy rates than the general Roman population. Meir Bar Ilan and Catherine Hezser put probable Jewish literacy in Palestine at closer to 3 percent.¹¹ Furthermore, in this premasoretic period, the text was consonantal; none of the vowels,

⁸ And, of course, Greek was also an important language.

⁹ For general discussions of ancient levels of literacy, see Harris, *Ancient Literacy*; and Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, esp. 5.

¹⁰ Many scholars anachronistically argue that Jews were more highly educated as a people than other ancient peoples. We know of no hard evidence supporting this position and give this example to indicate that even if this position were correct, the numbers of readers would remain quite low.

¹¹ For Jews in particular, see Bar-Ilan, “Illiteracy in the Land of Israel,” 5, and Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine*, 496–504.

accents, or other pointing would have been present. To read the text accurately, a reader would have to have memorized the Hebrew text itself.

The translator would also have required key linguistic skills. Not only would he have to be bilingual in Aramaic and in the Bible's archaic Hebrew dialect, but he would have to be able to translate orally on the spot—a skill possessed by few agricultural laborers.

Alternatively, perhaps neither Scripture reading nor translating was done extemporaneously, but through memorization. Then the skill levels required of each participant would be lower. For the reader this would mean that the Hebrew text would just be a guide to the portion he had memorized (somewhat like today's *bar* and *bat mitzvah* readers). They would not need to understand the Hebrew they were reading. For the translator, he would simply memorize a fixed, probably written, translation. He would not need to know Hebrew or possess any translating skills.

While this scenario of memorization makes it easier to follow the rabbinic prescriptions for Scripture reading and translating, it is quite likely these rules were adhered to only in a small proportion of synagogues, perhaps only those where the rabbinic elite were in control. Rabbinic centers were in urban areas like Sepphoris and Tiberias, while most of Galilee was rural. Synagogues such as the one at Hammat-Tiberias, which was linked to the patriarch's court, probably had more educated men than the synagogue at Meiron, for instance, a village in Upper Galilee, or even the Beth Alpha synagogue with its famous mosaic floor.¹² Many rural synagogues were outside direct rabbinic purview and their lack of educated individuals may have required different practices for Scripture reading and translating. Given these limitations, it is likely that these guidelines were not widely followed outside rabbinic circles.

Another possibility is that people whose main language was not Hebrew, and likewise probably not Aramaic, simply ignored or were ignorant of rabbinic notions of the treatment of Scripture in synagogue services. If we read between the lines, t. Meg. 3(4):13 suggests that the Tosefta's framers were well aware of this situation.

בית הכנסת של לעוזות אם יש להן מי שיקרא עברית
פתחין עברית וחותרין עברית אם אין להן מי שיקרא
אלא אחד אין קורא אלא אחד

¹² See Dothan, *Hammath Tiberias*; Meyers, Strange, and Meyers, *Ancient Meiron, Upper Galilee*; and Sukenik, *Beth Alpha*.

- A. A synagogue of foreign language speakers.
- B. If there is among them [a person] who reads Hebrew,
- C. he reads the opening [of the passage in] Hebrew, and he reads the closing [lines of the passage in] Hebrew. [The rest of the passage is read in the native language of the congregation.]
- D. If there is not among them but one [individual] who reads [Hebrew], [then] he does not read but once. [That is, he does not read at both the beginning and the end.]¹³

The explicit meaning of this passage is that in congregations where a foreign language is native, the Hebrew of the parashah is read only at the beginning and the end. It is what is not said here that is important. First, in between the Hebrew readings, the rest of the parashah is read in the congregation's native tongue without any reading of the Hebrew text. So a written translation is read in the synagogue in place of the Hebrew Scripture. Second, what if a congregation has no one who can read Hebrew? By implication and by necessity, all Scripture readings will then be in the native language and not in Hebrew. The rabbinic structuring of the Torah reading in the call-and-response format does not apply.

Is this scenario meant to include the Targums? Probably not. The term for "foreign language speakers" in line A is לעזר. In general it can be used to indicate any language, but Jastrow (714) posits that it is often used when referring to Greek. Given the continued discussion of the antiphonal balancing of Scripture reading and translation, with regard to Hebrew and Aramaic, it seems highly improbable that this passage concerns Aramaic translation. But it does show the rabbinic recognition that their practices in regard to the reading and rendering of Scripture were not followed by "foreign" Jews; they seem to apply just to those in Galilee (and later in Babylonia). Even in Galilee, however, the possibility emerges that customs might have emerged among illiterate Aramaic congregations that were analogous to what Greek speakers did in their congregations.

The Amoraic period provides no changes to the synagogue service's basic structure of Scripture reading and oral translation. Rather, the Palestinian Talmud in the early fifth century adds theological backing to the already established antiphonal character of the practice while bringing in a few refinements. These theological enhancements appear in three consecutive pericopae at y. Meg. 74d. They feature R. Samuel bar Rav Isaac, who likens the act of Torah reading and translation to God's giving of the Torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai.¹⁴

¹³ Translation based on text in Lieberman, *Tosefta Kī-Fshutah*, 5:1179.

¹⁴ See York, "Targum in the Synagogue," 75–79. York and Smelik both see this passage

רבי שמואל בר רב יצחק עאל לכנישא חד בר נש
 קאים מתרגם סמיד לעמודא אמר ליה אסור לך
 כשם שניתנה באימה ויראה כך אנו צריכין לנהוג
 בה באימה ויראה

- A. R. Samuel bar Rav Isaac went into a synagogue.
- B. A man stood translating [while] leaning upon a pillar.
- C. He said to him, "It is forbidden to you [to lean while translating]."
- D. For just as [the Torah] was given in awe and fear, so we must deal with it with awe and fear."

רבי חגי אמר ר' שמואל בר יצחק עאל לכנישתא חמא חונה
 קאים מתרגם ולא מקים בר נש תחתוי אמר ליה אסיר
 לך כשם שניתנה על ידי סרסור כך אנו צריכין לנהוג
 בה על ידי סרסור

- E. R. Haggai said, "R. Samuel bar Rav Isaac went into a synagogue.
- F. He saw Huna standing translating and he had not set up anyone in his place. [That is, he was both reading Torah and translating it.]
- G. "He said to him, 'It is forbidden to you.
- H. For just as [the Torah] was given through a middleman, so we must deal with it through a middleman.'" [That is, the Torah reader should have a second person give the translation.]

ר' חגי אמר רבי שמואל בר רב יצחק עאל לכנישתא
 חמא חד ספר מושט תרגומא מן גו סיפרא אמר ליה
 אסרי לך דברים שנאמרו בפה ודברים שנאמרו
 בכתב בכתב

- I. R. Haggai said, "R. Samuel bar Rav Isaac went into a synagogue.
- J. He saw one teacher (*sofer*) reaching for the [written] targum from the midst of the [Hebrew] scroll.
- K. "He said to him, 'It is forbidden to you [to read from a written targum]."
- L. Words which were said orally, [give] orally! And [give] words which were said in writing in writing!

as evidence that Targum is part of Oral Torah. We disagree. Just because the Targum is delivered "orally" does not mean the rabbis considered it part of the technical category called Oral Torah. Nor does it appear apart from here. See Smelik, "Rabbinic Reception of Early Bible Translations."

These stories possess a highly formulaic character. The four-part division of each of them makes the formula unmistakable. In the first line of each pericopae (A, E, and I), Samuel enters a synagogue. The second line (B, F, and J) describes the activity he sees, while in the third (C, G, and K) Samuel declares, "It is forbidden to you." Finally, in the fourth line (D, H, and L), Samuel draws an analogy with God's giving the Torah on Mt. Sinai in order to support his dictum.

Each version of the Sinai analogy focuses on a different aspect of the event. Line D's emphasis on fear and reverence features the majesty of God's character and the awe in which the Israelites held Him (Exod 20:18-20). By comparison, therefore, Jews should still hold his Torah in reverence and stand straight, even though translating it and not reading it. Line H's analogy refers to the participants involved. At Sinai, God gave the Torah to Moses, who then passed it on the Israelites. In the synagogue service, the Torah reader is like God and the meturgeman like Moses; the meturgeman functions as a "middleman," for he enables the congregation to understand the reading. Finally, line L addresses the oral character of revelation. Just as God gave a written Torah to Moses, so too he gave what rabbinic teachers called an "Oral Torah." Samuel's remarks link the orally delivered Targum translation to the usual meaning of oral Torah as the laws passed on from Sinai to the rabbis through oral-aural memorization. Samuel's comments assume that the orally delivered translation in the synagogue service was recalled from memory, not composed on the spot.

Samuel's instruction that the translation should be delivered orally, not original with him, persisted, but his view of the divine origins of the Targum to the Torah did not exercise wide influence. Sinai is never again suggested as an origin in the Palestinian or the Babylonian Talmuds.

Samuel's comments elevate the importance of Torah reading and translating, treating their practice as a package that should be considered *imitatio deo*.¹⁵ Thus translation—oral not written—should go hand-in-hand with Torah reading. If reading and translating is truly modeled on the Sinai revelation, then translating is a *necessary* companion to Torah reading. To fail to give a translation is to fail in that event's commemoration and in the imitation of God.

But the Yerushalmi's framers do not agree with Samuel that Torah reading and translation necessarily go together, as evidenced by y. Meg. 74d.

¹⁵ Given that Samuel's remarks are all attached to a "real life" situation, it is tempting to surmise that each one has a grounding in a historical circumstance. However, each passage is also highly formulaic in its attachment to Samuel's theology of Sinai. It is just as probable, if not more so, that each passage was formulated as part of the larger unit propounding Samuel's comparison.

והתרגום מעכב אמר רבי יוסה מן מה דאנן חמיין רבנן
 נפקין לתעניתא וקראיי ולא מתרגמין הדא אמרה שאין
 התרגום מעכב אמר רבי יונה אף על גב דאת אמר אין
 התרגום מעכב טעה מחזירין אותו

- A. Is the *targum* [i.e., oral translation] an absolute requirement [after reading the Torah]?
- B. Said R. Yose, "From what we saw—rabbis going out to the fast and reading [Torah] and not translating—one says the *targum* is not an absolute requirement."
- C. Said R. Yonah, "Even though you say the *targum* [translation] is not an absolute requirement,
- D. "[if one] errs [while translating], they cause him to go back [and correct the error]."

Line B answers the question posed in line A. Translation is not a required part of the synagogue service, even though Torah reading is. Line B quickly settles the matter by reference to precedent. Samuel's position is ignored. R. Yonah states an important corollary, however, at lines C–D. When translation is done, it must be done well; errors must be corrected. We should not apply this example too broadly, however, for it is about the actions of the rabbis—the educated elite—not about ordinary people.

The Yerushalmi continues by raising the logically next question: If translation is not required, should the congregation generally expect it? The answer is clearly yes.

מניין תרגום רבי זעורא בשם רב חננאל ויקראו
 בספר תורת זה המקרא מפורש זה תרגום ושום
 שכל אילו הטעמים ויבינו במקרא זה מסורת

- A. From whence [do we know that the] *targum* [should accompany the Scripture reading]?
- B. R. Zeirah in the name of Rav Hananel, [citing Nehemiah 8:8, "And they read in the scroll of the Torah of God, clearly. And they set out the meaning and the people understood the reading."]
- B. "'And they read in the scroll of the Torah'—This is Scripture.
- C. "'Clearly'—This is the *targum*.
- D. "'And they set out the meaning'—These are the reasons.
- E. "'And [the people] understood the reading'—This is the tradition [of the meaning]."

In this passage, Zeirah exegetes Nehemiah 8:8, an exegesis repeated in later rabbinic literature. For the first time, Ezra is given credit for

the Targum. This is midrashically explained by interpreting *meforash* (מפורש)—given as “clearly” in the English rendering—to indicate the Targum. While there is no historical basis for this interpretation of Nehemiah, it makes sense etymologically. In Hebrew, the word’s root, פִּרַשׁ, means “to interpret,” and Aramaic provides the meaning of “to declare, speak out.” The combination of these two identifies the practice of Targum in a nutshell. This passage becomes, for the rabbinic movement, the originary story for Targum, usually understood as a text, but also for the oral practice of delivering a translation. The idea that Targum came from Ezra is a view which the Bavli will endorse, while Samuel’s suggestion that the Torah Targum was given at Mt. Sinai disappears.

When we move our investigation from fifth-century Galilee to early seventh-century Babylonia, we find that the Babylonian Talmud picks up only a notional comparison of the synagogue service with the Sinai revelation. Returning to the antiphonal character of Torah reading and its oral translation, b. Berakot 45a addresses the question of the relative volume of the reader’s and the translator’s voices.

אמר רבי שמעון בן פזי מנין שאין המתרגם רשאי
להגביה קולו יותר מן הקורא שנאמר משה ידבר
והאלהים יענו בקול שאין תלמוד לומר בקול ומה
תלמוד לומר בקול בקולו של משה תניא נמי הכי
אין המתרגם רשאי להגביה קולו יותר מן הקורא
ואם אי אפשר למתרגם להגביה קולו כנגד הקורא
ימעך הקורא קולו ויקרא

- A. Said R. Simeon ben Pazzi, “From where do we learn that the translator does not have permission to raise his voice above the reader’s?”
- B. “For it is written, ‘Moses spoke and God answered him with a voice.’ [Ex 19:19]”
- C. “For Scripture did not need to say ‘with a voice.’ Why did Scripture say, ‘with a voice’?”
- D. “[To indicate that God spoke] in a voice [like the voice] of Moses.”
- E. Thus it has been taught. “The translator does not have permission to raise his voice above the reader’s.”
- F. “And [conversely] if it is not possible for the translator to raise his voice as loudly as the reader’s, the reader should lower his voice to read.”

Line D likens the voice of God to Moses’ voice in order to indicate that God’s voice was at the same volume as Moses’, even though there were trumpets sounding and wild weather as a result of God’s appearance.

Although Simeon ben Pazzi's question in line A introduces the pericope, the interpretation of Exodus 19:19 introduces a complication, as stated at F. God at line F retains his analogical equivalence to the Torah reader. Since Moses could not speak as loudly as God, with his thunder and trumpets, God lowered his voice to match that of Moses. So too, in F, the reader should lower the volume of his voice to match the translator's if the translator lacks the ability to raise his to match the reader's. With voices at the same volume, the antiphonal quality is enhanced.

The Bavli contains two other passages that focus on the call-and-response character of the reading and the translation. The first indicates that the translator should wait to begin his translation until the reader finishes, and vice versa (b. Sotah 39b). The second instructs the Torah reader not to help the translator if he has trouble (b. Meg. 32a). The explicit reason is to prevent the audience from thinking the translation is written in the Torah scroll. This strict separation between the two functions also helps maintain the antiphonal character of reading and translating.

In the development of rabbinic Judaism, then, the discussion of Aramaic translation in the synagogue service moves along a single trajectory from the Mishnah to the Babylonian Talmud. Translation is to be delivered orally in an antiphonal manner, with the translation following the lead of the reading, separate from it yet dependent upon it.

READING AND TRANSLATING THE ESTHER MEGILLAH

Until the Babylonian Talmud, halakhic passages about translation spoke only of two categories of biblical books, the Torah and the Prophets. The Torah sets the standard and the Prophets follow its lead with just a few minor differences. The category of the Writings is absent from these discussions until the Bavli. Only the use of translations of the Esther Scroll, called the Megillah, draw the rabbis' attention.¹⁶

Starting with the Mishnah, attitudes toward the Megillah represent an anomaly. On the one hand, there is a trajectory of interpretation that sees the Megillah like the Torah, and consequently, the scroll and its treatment should follow the rules that apply to the Torah. On the other hand, a second trajectory sees the Megillah as different from the Torah. Indeed, the Megillah serves as a foil to the Torah, being treated in ways that would be an anathema if they applied to the Torah. The Mishnah sets up this contradiction in m. Meg. 2:1.

¹⁶ To be sure, a Tg. Job is mentioned in the Tosefta, but it is neither approved nor used.

הקורא את המגילה למפרע לא יצא קראה על פה קראה
 תרגום בכל לשון לא יצא אבל קורין אותה ללועזות
 בלעז והלועז ששמע אשורית יצא

- A. He who reads the Megillah (Esther scroll) backwards has not fulfilled his obligation.
- B. He who reads it by memory,
- C. he who reads a *targum* in any language,
- D. he has not fulfilled his obligation.
- E. But they read it to those who speak a foreign language in their language.
- F. The one who speaks a foreign language who hears it in Assyrian [i.e., Hebrew], has fulfilled his obligation.

Lines C–D set up the conundrum; at first reading, it seems to indicate that the Megillah may not be read in translation—that is, “a *targum*”—it must be read in Hebrew just like the Torah. Line C explicitly states, “into any language,” but probably assumes Greek or Aramaic as the most likely languages. This negative interpretation of Targums’ permissibility is reinforced by the negative treatment of the options suggested in A and B.

The Mishnah’s framers then bring in lines E–F, which redefine the meaning of line C, and make the Megillah the opposite of the Torah. Line E explicitly allows people whose primary language is not Hebrew to fulfill the obligation to read or have read to them the Megillah in their own language. Hearing the Hebrew is not required, as it is for the Torah. To avoid the contradiction of E with C, the reader must reinterpret line C as meaning “He who reads a *targum* in any language [which he does not understand].” To ensure that the original emphasis of line C remains, however, line F explicitly returns to C–D’s original implication—namely, that Jews fulfill their obligation to hear the Megillah by listening to the Hebrew text. In this way, the Mishnah’s framers again treat the Megillah like the Torah.

It is important to note the wording here. Rather than using the verb **תרגם**, “to translate,” the passage explicitly uses the verb **קרא**, “to read.” Line E sets it out more fully: “They read [the Megillah] to those who speak a foreign language in their language.” Whereas the Torah and Prophets should receive an oral translation in the synagogue, the Megillah can be read from a written Targum. Indeed, that Targum may stand in place of the original text. So this passage is contradictory in two ways: lines C and E seem to give opposite rulings, and the Megillah is treated differently from the Torah and the Prophets; people can fulfill their obligation to hear the Megillah by listening to a written translation in their own

language. Hearing the Hebrew is not required, although line F indicates that it will fulfill the obligation as well.

These two approaches to the question of whether the Megillah is like the Torah appear again in m. Meg. 2:2, which focuses only on the Hebrew Megillah without raising the matter of translation.

- A. [If] one read it piecemeal,
- B. or drowsily
- C. he has carried out his obligation.
- D. [If] he was writing it, explaining it, or correcting it, if he paid attention in doing so, he would carry out [his obligation to hear the Scroll], he has fulfilled his obligation.
- E. And if not, he has not fulfilled his obligation.
- F. [If] it was written in caustic, red dye, gum, or copperas,
- G. or on paper or unprepared leather,
- H. he has not fulfilled his obligation—
- I. unless it is written in square [“Assyrian”] letters, on parchment, and with ink.¹⁷

Lines A–E treat the Megillah as different from Torah. The obligation to read the Megillah is much more flexible than that for the Torah. A person can interrupt his reading, putting the reading down and picking it up several times; they can read it when they are sleepy. A person can even fulfill the obligation while working on it, whether writing a scroll or correcting one already written, or even while explaining it. As long as one has the intention (line D–E) to fulfill the obligation, he does so. There is none of the formality here that would be required for the Torah.

By contrast, lines F–I shift to the attitude that the Megillah is like the Torah, laying out how the requirements by which the written scroll of Esther should be composed. In particular, it must be written in Assyrian block characters on a scroll in ink. In this, it essentially refers to m. Yad. 4:5 which expects this of the Torah and all other scrolls of Scripture.

The Tosefta, compiled some fifty years after the Mishnah, saw the problem inherent in these two Mishnah passages. T. Meg. 2:6 brought the two passages together to work out a compromise between the two approaches but in the end just added to the confusion.

קראה בלעז הלעזות יוצאין ידי חוברן קראה אשורית

שומעין שאין שומעין יוצאין ידי חובתן לעולם אין

יוצאין ידי חובתן עד שתהא כתוב אשורית

בלשון עברי על הספר בדיו

¹⁷ Translation Neusner.

- A. [If] he read it in a foreign language, those who speak a foreign language thereby fulfill their obligation. [cf. m. Meg 2:1E]
- B. [If] he read it in Assyrian [Hebrew] both those who understand and those who do not understand [that language] thereby fulfill their obligation. [cf. m. Meg. 2:1F]
- C. Under all circumstances they fulfill their obligation only if it is written in Assyrian [script], in the Hebrew language, on a scroll in ink [m. Meg. 2:2I].¹⁸

Lines A and B restate the Mishnah's point in Meg. 2:1E–F. Treating the Megillah as a foil for the Torah, it permits the reader to “read” the Megillah in any language as well as the original Hebrew. The verb “read” here, קרא, again indicates the reading of a written text. The verb “to translate” (תרגם), which would indicate oral translation, does not appear.

The passage's third line combines the language of m. Meg. 2:2I and m. Yad. 4:5C. It spoils the opening clarification. On the face of it, line C simply clarifies line B by stating that the Hebrew text used for reading needs to follow the usual rules concerning scrolls of Scripture. This was certainly its meaning in the Mishnah. But the use of “For ever,” which comes from the Yadayim passage, implies in the Tosefta pericope that it applies to both A and B and thus invalidates non-Hebrew versions of Esther. The attempt to combine both views of the Megillah leads to a highly contradictory passage.

The Tosefta passage preceding the one just discussed, t. Meg. 2:5, focuses only on the Megillah as a foil for Torah, emphasizing the Megillah's differences from the Torah.

- A. He reads from [the Megillah] whether standing, whether sitting, whether lying,
- B. whether he brings in a translator (*turgeman*),
- C. Whether he said a blessing before it and whether he said a blessing after it, after it and did not bless before it, nor bless before it or after it.
- D. he has fulfilled his obligation.

This passage implicitly compares the Megillah's treatment with that of the Torah. Whereas one's posture with regard to the Megillah is unrestricted (line A), one must stand to read the Torah. Similarly, line C indicates that

¹⁸ Translation Neusner. The rabbis recognized two types of script for Hebrew and Aramaic: Assyrian, meaning the “modern-style” block Aramaic characters, and *Ivri*, the older, preexilic Hebrew characters. Line C comprises a secondary remark clarifying line B by picking up on the term “Assyrian.” In line B, Assyrian implies “Hebrew in Assyrian script.” Line C makes that explicit, “in Assyrian [script], in the Hebrew language” and then finishes off its designation by citing the end of Jer 36:18 “[and I wrote] on a scroll in ink.”

it does not matter if a blessing is said before or after the Megillah reading, or whether a blessing is said at all. The Torah reading, by contrast, requires a blessing both before and after. In both cases the Torah has clear requirements while the Megillah seems to have no requirements.

The surface meaning of line B is clear, it does not matter whether the Megillah reading (in Hebrew) is accompanied by a translation. Since the Megillah is a foil for the Torah, this indicates the Tosefta's framers believe the Torah reading requires translation. Although the Mishnah and Tosefta lack an explicit requirement, the circumstantial evidence argues that Torah reading should be accompanied by translation. And while the Megillah's translation can be written, the Torah's must be delivered orally only, without a written text.

The Megillah's character as a foil for the Torah appears in a second manner—that is, the Megillah's treatment contrasts with the strictures regarding the Torah. Line A in t. Meg. 2:6 allows a written translation of Esther to replace the written Hebrew scroll in the public reading, as did m. Meg 2:1E. The Megillah Targum becomes the Megillah itself, the authoritative statement of the contents and the meaning of Esther. The requirements for reading the Torah, by contrast, aim to prevent the replacement of the Hebrew Torah by its Targum. They permit only the Torah scroll to appear in the service, while written Targums are banned. They give a higher status to the original Hebrew text than to the oral translation. But the Megillah Targum's ability to replace so readily its Hebrew original indicates the danger facing the Torah. The Targum waits just outside the door, so to speak. If vigilance is ever relaxed, the Tosefta's framers apparently fear, then the Torah will become like the Megillah, and the Targum will enter and push aside the Hebrew original, replacing its interpretive translation for the original words of God.

The Yerushalmi's framers reject the Tosefta's notion of the Megillah as a foil for the Torah, whose character is defined by its difference from the Torah. They want the Megillah to be treated like the Torah. To accomplish this goal, they develop a long involved exegesis, recorded at y. Meg 73a. This series of arguments is too extensive to lay out in detail here, but it draws upon the contrarian line C of t. Meg 2:6. That line, taken as applying to the entire Tosefta passage, completely eliminates the halakhic possibility of translating the Megillah. Since there are no valid translations, then, only the Hebrew can be read in the synagogue service. Ironically, this restrictive position concerning the Megillah is argued even as the Yerushalmi's tradents agree that the Torah and the Prophets may be translated into any language. This achieves the Yerushalmi's goal having only Hebrew biblical scrolls in public synagogue services.

When we turn to the Babylonian Talmud, we find the Babylonian rabbis did not follow the Yerushalmi's restrictive interpretation. Instead, they saw line C of t. Meg. 2:6 as modifying only line B, which discussed the ability of the Hebrew reading to fulfill the Megillah obligation. That passage's opening line, which permitted written translations, remained in force. Thus b. Meg. 18a permits a person to fulfill their obligation to read/hear the Megillah in both one's own language and in Hebrew, "even if he does not know what they are saying." For translations, the Bavli's framers return to the original intent of both the Mishnah and the Tosefta and permit the reading of written Megillah Targums. The Megillah is reestablished as a foil for the Torah.

קראה תרגום לא יצא היכי דמי אלימא דכתיבה

מקרא וקרי לה תרגום היינו על פה לא

צריכא דכתיבה תרגום וקרי לה תרגום

- A. He who reads [the Megillah in] Targum [in any language]. [He does] not fulfill his obligation. (m. Meg. 2:1c)
- B. In what circumstances?
- C. If the written text is Miqra [i.e., Scripture in Hebrew] and he reads it [out loud] as Targum.
- D. This is [recitation by] memory! [And hence is not permitted, by m. Meg. 2:1b]
- E. [It is] not necessary [to interpret the matter this way].
- F. For the written text is Targum and he reads it [out loud] as Targum.

The matter here in the Babylonian Talmud is a fairly routine debate. It simply tries to situate the Mishnah's ruling into a real-life scenario. The passage approves the scenario at F, whereas the scenario at C is shown not to work, even though it fits the circumstances. In sixth-century Babylonia, then, the written Megillah Targum may be read in the synagogue service.¹⁹

¹⁹ The interesting point is in line D, for it says that the translation, i.e., the "targum," is done by memory. To do oral performance of translation in the synagogue service, then, the Bavli's framers presume that it happens via memorization of a translation, presumably a written one. Along with b. Qidd. 49a, discussed below, this strongly points to the conclusion that in Babylonia, the rabbis aimed to control the content of translation by expecting the memorization of a translation rather than emphasizing extemporaneous translation on the spot.

CENSORING SCRIPTURE

When reading and translating the Torah and the Prophets in the synagogue service, should every passage be read? Should every passage be translated? Perhaps some are inappropriate for the general Jewish public, especially children and women. And indeed there are a few. Some passages can be read in Hebrew but should not be translated, while others should not even be read. M. Meg. 4:10 lists the questionable sections.

- A. The tale of Reuben [Gen 35:22] is read but not translated.
- B. The tale of Tamar [Gen 38:1ff.] is read and translated.
- C. The first tale of the calf [Exod 32:1-20] is read and translated.
- D. The second one [Exod 32:21ff.] is read but not translated.
- E. The blessing of the priests [Num 6:24-26], the story of David [2 Sam 11:2ff.] and of Amnon [2 Sam 13:1ff.], are not read and not translated.
- F. They do not use as the prophetic lection the selection of the chariot [Ezek 1:1ff.].
- G. R. Judah permits.
- H. R. Eliezer says, "They do not use as the prophetic lection, *Cause Jerusalem to know* (Ezek 16:1ff)."²⁰

Without going into the reasons for each selection specifically, it is clear that most of these concern matters of sexual impropriety or idolatry. Two of these (B and C) can be read and translated according to the usual rules, while another two should be read but not translated (A and D). In these latter cases, those who know Hebrew will hear and understand the story, but those who do not will remain uninformed about this sinful behavior.²¹ Two of the three passages are apparently more heinous, for they concern Amnon's rape of his half-sister and David's adulterous seduction of Bathsheba. These should not be brought up in a worship setting, even in Hebrew. The blessing of the priests is ignored, presumably, because it should only be uttered by the priests, which they do elsewhere in the service. Note that this gives priests an exclusive, explicit role in the worship service; there is no explicit role for the class of rabbis.

When the Tosefta's framers come to this question in t. Meg. 3:31-38, they expand the list. Once the Mishnah raised the possibility that some passages should not be treated in the usual manner, and so passages not in the Mishnah's list were proposed. The Tosefta's compilers made their position clear; there should be as few exceptions as possible. Every one

²⁰ Translation Neusner.

²¹ Perhaps this suggests that women and children do not know Hebrew.

of the six additional passages found in the Tosefta's list should be treated normally, by both reading and translating them. These are: creation story (Genesis 1), Lot and his daughters (Genesis 19), curses, verses of warning and punishment, the concubine of Gibeah (Judges 19), and Absalom's possessing of his father's concubines (2 Sam 16:22ff.). Furthermore, it rules that three passages which the Mishnah restricted should be treated fully: Amnon's rape of Tamar, Ezekiel's chariot, and Ezekiel 16. The Tosefta agrees with the Mishnah that the story of Reuben taking his father's concubine and the second golden calf story should be read but not translated, while only the story of David and Bathsheba should not even be read. The Tosefta fails to address one item in the Mishnah's list, that of the priestly blessings. In the end, the Tosefta is less restrictive than the Mishnah; its framers want as much of Scripture as possible to be read. The entire increase of passages over the Mishnah was aimed at explicitly permitting passages to be read and translated, and allowing the same for some of those the Mishnah had prohibited.

A century and a half after the Tosefta, the Palestinian Talmud simply repeats most of the Mishnah's list of passages without commentary. Only the priestly blessings raise any interest at all. Whereas the Tosefta ignored them, the Yerushalmi supplies the reason they are not translated. According to R. Yose (y. Meg. 75c), the passage is for blessing and thus should not be given as a mere translation but spoken with the actual intent to bless.

When we finally arrive at the Babylonian Talmud some two centuries later in Babylonia, we find the Bavli's framers at b. Meg. 25a-b have taken the Tosefta passage and reorganized it but have not expanded it. They place together passages with the same rulings, supplying mnemonics for remembering them, and then finally give a rationale for each passage. Here is a sample.

- A. The rabbis taught:
- B. There are [biblical passage that are] read and translated;
- C. and there are [biblical passages that are] read but are not translated;
- D. and there are [biblical passages that are] neither read nor translated.
- E. Which [passages] are read and translated?
- F. The mnemonic for the following amplification is *b-l-t'-q-n n-sh-p-h*.
- ...
- K. [2] The story of Lot and his two daughters is read and translated (T 3:31).
- L. It is obvious [i.e., why not?].

M. You might say: we should be careful about Abraham's honor.

N. It teaches to the contrary.²²

So in the end, the final ruling on this question is that very few biblical passages should be avoided in reading and translation. The Bavli follows the Tosefta in permitting nearly all pericopae. Even as it acknowledges each, asking whether a passage should be treated fully, as at K–N, they rule that these passages should be read and translated. For the Tosefta and the Bavli, only one passage should be excised completely from the synagogue service, that of David and Bathsheba, while only two are forbidden to be translated. The rabbis have a decided distaste for censorship, practicing it rarely and with a light hand.

TRANSLATION TECHNIQUE

In the issues explored thus far, there has been a consistent effort to differentiate Scripture reading from its translation, especially in the synagogue service. The question of translation technique, however, elides the two. Sometimes rulings for Torah reading apply to translation, while at other times rulings confuse the two, unclear about which is being addressed. This latter approach appears in m. Meg. 4:9. The passage begins by specifying the wrong way to translate material in Leviticus 18, which concerns improper marriages and improper treatment of one's offspring.

המכנה בעריות משתקין אותו האומר ומזרעך לא

תתן להעביר למלך ומזרעך לא

תתן לאעבד בארמיותא משתקין אותו בגזיפה

D. He who uses euphemisms for shameful relationships [in Lev 18:6-18].

E. They silence him.

F. He who says [for the Hebrew] "from your seed, you shall not cause [them] to pass to Molech" [Lev 18:21, the Aramaic rendering of] "from your seed, you shall not cause [it] to impregnate an Aramean woman."²³

G. They silence him with a rebuke.

²² Translation Neusner.

²³ Later, b. Meg. 25a will return to this passage, recasting the mistranslation of Lev 18:21, which forbids passing one's seed through the fires of Molech, as the translation which was forbidden in Mishnah 4:9, recasting it not as a matter of intercourse with an Aramean woman, but with a Samaritan woman.

It is not clear whether lines D–E address matters of Torah reading or its translation. While the following lines, F–G, are clearly about translation, the preceding material is not. The point of D–E is to require the exact wording, whether in Hebrew or Aramaic, of the sexual character of the relationships forbidden in Leviticus 18. Rather than permit it to be said euphemistically, the Mishnah's framers require them to be explicit. Thus, the Hebrew text's repeated expression, that men "shall not uncover the nakedness of . . . [various related women]" should be given as written.

Later in that same chapter (v. 21), the Hebrew text presents a warning not to perform the fire ceremony of Molech, an issue of using one's children in idolatry. The translation forbidden in F changes that restriction into one against an illicit sexual liaison. This forbidden translation actually shows up in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, although not in TO or the PTs. Pseudo-Jonathan's rendering is even more explicit than the Mishnah. The Mishnah's line F is based on a Hebrew/Aramaic pun—taking the Hebrew עבר, "to pass through," in the Aramaic meaning of "to impregnate." Pseudo-Jonathan provides a double translation of עבר, both indicating sexual intercourse and its results, "And you shall not give any of your offspring to have sex (בתשמישה) with a daughter of the gentiles, impregnating (למעברא) them for foreign worship."²⁴ Pseudo-Jonathan clearly has a different view of the appropriate translation for this passage.²⁵

While it is unclear whether the Mishnah's framers knew the translation found in Pseudo-Jonathan, the following Tosefta passage clearly incorporates knowledge of written Targums. This is a famous passage, t. Meg. 3:41, which has been widely interpreted in scholarly circles—largely because its plain meaning is difficult to reconcile with the existence of Targums. We argue that the specific features which this passage forbids come directly from the written Targums known at the time—those we now possess.

כתב הנכתב ליחיד מכנין אותו לרבים לרבים מכנין
אותו ליחיד ר יהודה אומר המתרגם פסוק כצורתו
הרי זה בדי והמוסיף הרי זה מגדף תרגמן העומד

- A. A verse which is written in the singular they [do not?] present in the plural, and one [which is written] in the plural they [do not?] present in the singular.

²⁴ Translation by E. Clem.

²⁵ Whether this indicates that the Mishnah is speaking about PJ's translation and hence PJ was written at that time (i.e., mid to late 2nd century), or whether PJ's translator specifically went against a rabbinic ruling, we cannot tell.

- B. R. Judah says, "He who translates a verse according to its form [i.e., as it appears in Scripture] lo, such a one is a deceiver,
- C. "But he who adds [to what is written], lo, this person is a blasphemer."

This passages falls easily into two parts: A and B–C. Lines B–C are the most important. Judah at B seems to forbid literal translation. This seems odd, since literal rendering would seem to be a worthy goal. Then at C Judah forbids the translator to add anything into the translation. This is unexpected since presumably addition would be a good approach if literal translation is not approved. There is no mention here of paraphrastic translation, which we would consider the alternative to literal.

How should we understand this passage? The two characteristics that Judah forbids are the key components of the definition of Targum that we teased out of the texts in chapter 2. This book's definition of Targum is: A Targum is a translation that combines a highly literal rendering of the original text with material added into the translation in a seamless manner. Judah's remark takes aim at both characteristics; he dislikes literal translation and he dislikes additions. This means that Judah responds to the Targum texts with which he is familiar—the same ones we have today which consist of literal translations that incorporate additional material.

Line A also speaks of Targum characteristics with which we are familiar. A has a textual problem in the manuscript of the Tosefta, but otherwise its meaning is clear. The textual problem is that the two instances of "not" in the sentence are uncertain. Some versions or manuscripts have no "not"; some have only one; and some have both. So it is unclear whether switching between singular and plural is permitted or forbidden.²⁶ Such switching is common among the written Targums from this period, however, and so this too refers to a feature of Targums known then and now.

The Tosefta also worries about euphemisms, as does the Mishnah. This time the text clearly encourages the Scripture *reader* to use euphemisms. T. Meg. 3:39-40 states:

- A. All Scriptures which were written by using disgraceful language do they read using praiseworthy language, for example:
- B. *You shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her* (Deut. 28:30)
- C. Wherever it is written, *Will lie* (ישגלנה) *with her*, they read, "Will sleep (ישכבנה) with her."
- D. For example, [*The Lord will smite you*] *with the boils of Egypt and with the ulcers* (Deut 28:27).

²⁶ These different versions include different Tosefta texts, as well as different citations of this passage in the Talmuds. The text critical problems and evidence are laid out in Lieberman, *Tosefta ki-fshutah*, 5:1220–21.

- E. Wherever it is written, *With the ulcers* (עפולים), they read, “With hemorrhoids (טהורים).”²⁷

Scriptures that speak of sexual practices or scatological matters should be stated in a euphemistic manner. This actually goes against the ruling found m. Meg. 4:9, which forbids the use of euphemisms in Leviticus 18. Furthermore, if the reader is supposed to avoid such expressions, how much more so the translator! This rule, like the previous one, is followed by some written Targums—in this case by TO and TJ—but not by the Palestinian Targums.

The Yerushalmi brings little new to the question of translation technique, essentially restating a few elements of the Mishnah passages. Similarly, the Babylonian Talmud’s approach to translation technique mostly follows what has gone before. Some differences in detail appear, but none affecting the overall viewpoint. There is only one new issue in the Bavli we need to examine, that which establishes “our Targum” as a standard for accurate translation.

Turning now to the one Bavli passage that approaches this subject from a new direction, b. Qiddushin 49a, we can see that even it draws from the Tosefta passage just cited. The context is a series of passages in which the Bavli’s framers explore oaths between a man and a woman which may result in betrothal when they are fulfilled. In the following passage, a man swears betrothal when he has demonstrated that he can read Torah in the synagogue service. The passage’s discussion centers on the question of the criteria for fulfilling that oath.

תנו רבנן. על מנת שאני קריינא. כיון שקרא שלשה פסוקים
בבית הכנסת. הרי זו מקודשת. ר יהודה אומר. עד שיקרא
ויתרגם. יתרגם מדעתיה והתניא ר יהודה אומר המתרגם
פסוק כצורתו הרי זה בדאי והמוסיף עליו הרי זה מהרף
ומגדף אלא מאי תרגום. תרגום דידן

- A. Our rabbis taught [on Tannaitic authority]:
B. “[A man who swears to a woman that she will be betrothed to him] on the condition that ‘I am a reader [of Scripture in the synagogue service.]’
C. “When he reads three verses in the synagogue [in accordance with m. Meg. 4:4], behold, she is betrothed.”
D. R. Judah says, “[She is not betrothed] until he reads and translates.”

²⁷ Translation Neusner.

- E. [Does this mean that he may] translate according to his own opinion?
- F. And a *tanna* taught, R. Judah said, “He who translates a verse according to its form, behold this one is a deceiver.
- G. “and the one who adds to it, behold, this one is a blasphemer and a libeler.” [t. Meg. 3:41]
- H. But how should he translate?
- I. [According to] our Targum.

At first glance the oath’s fulfillment looks straightforward. Line C indicates that when the man reads three verses of the Torah, they are betrothed. But Judah raises the bar. Torah reading must include Aramaic translation. This indicates the person knows the Hebrew’s meaning and is not just parroting memorized sounds.

The Bavli’s framers raise a secondary issue at E by exploring the standard for measuring a passable translation. At E–F, to emphasize the importance of this standard, they cite Judah’s remark from the Tosefta, where improper renderings label one a blasphemer and a deceiver. To avoid this sad state of affairs, they provide a simple standard. The translator must render according to “our Targum.” This refers to a fixed, written Aramaic Targum. While the Bavli credits both Onqelos the Proselyte and Jonathan ben Uzziel with composing Targums, it never identifies their work with a specific text. Despite this, we showed in chapter 7 that the Targums the Bavli knows are Targum Onqelos to the Torah and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets, based on its citations of Targum translations. To give the translation for this passage of the Babylonian Talmud, then, is to recite *orally* the translation *written* in one of these Targums. The written Targum is memorized and then recited. The passage further suggests that this is the standard expected by the rabbinic community for translation, the knowledge of “our” written Targums, either Targum Onqelos or Targum Jonathan.

This explains why the soon-to-be groom needs to act as a translator; it shows that he is in line with rabbinic guidelines and expectations. While Scripture itself is not rabbinically approved—the idea is preposterous in rabbinism, God wrote it!—the Babylonian rabbis endorsed what we now call Targum Onqelos and Targum Jonathan as their translations, and they make the oath’s fulfillment dependent on the man’s knowledge of rabbinically approved Scripture translation.

GREEK, ARAMAIC OR ALL LANGUAGES?

Much of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century scholarship worked to draw from rabbinic literature a single, unified view of Targums. But as we have seen so far, rabbinic literature actually organizes debates and

examines differing positions on the same question. The discussion about the treatment of the Megillah forms a case in point. The question of which languages may receive Scripture translations—Targums—provides another. The Mishnah begins by explicitly permitting translations into all languages, with only a single dissenting voice insisting on restricting translations to Greek. Centuries later, in the Yerushalmi, that lone voice becomes the dominant position: Greek is the only permissible language for translation. In the Bavli that position becomes *halakhah*—explicitly stated as such in b. Meg. 9a—even though in many other passages the Bavli ignores the ruling in favor of Aramaic Targums.

Our analysis begins with m. Sotah 7:5's endorsement of translation into all languages—symbolically stated as “seventy languages.” The passage speaks of the ritual of blessings and curses performed in Deuteronomy 27–29. After the Israelites completed the rite, they translated the Torah.

- N. And afterward they brought stones and built an altar and plastered it with plaster.
- O. And they wrote on it all the words of the Torah in seventy languages,
- P. As it is written *Very plainly* (Dt. 27:8).²⁸

Torah translation appears here at the heart of Israelite worship, on the very altar for God's sacrifices. Furthermore, the translations are written. This mythic importance of Scripture translation is carried forward, in the Mishnah's vision, into the lives of living Jews. The opening sentence of m. Meg. 1:8, line A, makes this clear.

אין בין ספרים לתפילין ומזוזות אלא שהספרים נכתבין
בכל לשון ותפילין ומזוזות אינן נכתבות אלא
אשורית רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר אף בספרים לא
התירו שיכתבו אלא יונית

- A. There is no difference between [sacred] scrolls and phylacteries and *mezuzot* except that [sacred] scrolls may be written in any language, while phylacteries and *mezuzot* are written only in Assyrian [i.e., Hebrew].²⁹
- B. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says, “Also: in [the case of sacred] scrolls: they have not permitted that they may be written except in Greek.”

²⁸ Translation Neusner.

²⁹ Assyrian (אשורית) refers specifically to the script in which the Hebrew characters are written, which are the block Aramaic characters that were adopted after the return from exile in the fifth century BCE. The script used for Hebrew prior to that time is called *wri* (עברי) and designates the preexilic characters.

Line A reveals that sacred texts may be translated into any language (בכל לשון), while the biblical passages that are contained within the phylactery and **mezuzah** boxes may not be translated. They must remain in the original Hebrew. The freedom to translate Scripture scrolls in this passage follows the same position as that in the Sotah passage just cited and the similar view concerning Megillah translation in m. Meg. 2:1 discussed earlier in this chapter.

The Mishnah records Simeon's idiosyncratic position at line B, in which he disagrees with the generally held view of translation. He thinks that Scripture should be translated only into Greek, but not into any other language. In other words, he prefers the Septuagint.³⁰ Simeon's position is not a direct attack on Aramaic; he simply excludes all languages, including Aramaic.

The stature of R. Simeon, a Palestinian head of the Sanhedrin, gave his view increasing influence over the next two centuries. While the Tosefta's framers adhered to the general position, the Yerushalmi later decided that such a permissive attitude toward translation was unacceptable. With Simeon's Mishnah statement as the starting point, y. Meg. 71c laid out a brief, three-part case that Torah may be translated only into Greek.³¹

רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר אף בספרים לא התירו
שיכתבו אלא יוונית בדקו ומצאו שאין התורה יכולה
להיתרגם כל צורכה אלא יוונית בורגני אחד בידא
להם ארמית מתוך יוונית רבי ירמיה בשם רבי חייא
בר בא תירגם עקילס הגר התורה לפני רבי אליעזר
ולפני רבי יהושע וקילסו אותו ואמרו יפית מבני אדם

- A. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says, "Also: in [the case of sacred] scrolls [in translation]: they have not permitted that they may be written except in Greek." [m. Meg. 1:8]
- B. They investigated [the matter] and found that the Torah is not able to be translated into any form (כל צורכה) except Greek.

³⁰ Perhaps he thinks that translations should be inspired, and thus follows Philo's story about how God inspired the Septuagint translators. No other ancient Scripture translation makes that claim.

³¹ In their discussion of the Megillah above, the Yerushalmi's tradents indicated that the Torah and the Prophets scrolls may be composed in any language (y. Meg. 73a), even though they argued that the Megillah may only be written in Hebrew.

- C. A way-station resident invented for them an [artificial] Aramaic [translation] from the midst of Greek.³²
- D. R. Jeremiah in the name of R. Hiyya bar Ba, “Aquila the Proselyte translated the Torah before R. Eliezer and before R. Joshua.
- E. “They praised him and said, ‘Most handsome among men [are you]. [Grace is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever.]’”

Line A restates Simeon’s remark from the Mishnah and line B then claims the Amoraic rabbis researched and discovered that Torah translations are limited to Greek.

Line C reinforces this conclusion by describing a situation in which a person creates an Aramaic Targum from a Greek source. This tertiary rendering makes the Targum less trustworthy. Its inclusion here suggests Aramaic Targums in general should not be trusted. Not only is the translator an unnamed, temporary resident of a traveler’s way-station—a “fly by night” character—but the verb for “invent” here is **בִּידָה** and carries the connotation of lying, being related to the noun for “false report.”

Lines D–E further reinforce Simeon’s position in favor of permitting only Greek translation by telling how the Greek translation of the Torah was created, namely, through proper procedure and supervision. Aquila the proselyte is obviously a member of the rabbinic circle. His proselyte status may suggest he spoke Greek from birth, which, combined with the Hebrew expertise he gained by studying with rabbis, would have given him an excellent set of skills to translate the Hebrew Torah into Greek. He performs this act under the supervision of two rabbinic authorities. Since they praise him, they obviously approve of his Greek translation.

The overall point of this entire passage, then, is that Scripture translations—or at least Torah translations—into Greek are acceptable, while translations in Aramaic are suspect. They are done by suspicious characters using suspect procedures, while the Greek translation was done in a rabbinically approved manner.

The translation work of Aquila, also known as Aquila, is well known. He produced a highly literal translation of the Hebrew text into Greek around 130 CE, which remained in use among Jews until the sixth century. Today, only a few quotations and fragments remain.³³ It is doubtful there is any reliable historical information in this passage, but its telling functions to bring the Septuagint into rabbinic approval.

³² Some of the manuscript variants say it was Latin rather than Aramaic. This makes no sense in the context of the passage.

³³ See Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila*; Silverstone, *Aquila and Onkelos*; and Friedmann, *Onkelos und Akylas*.

The laudatory attitude toward Aquilas in this passage is echoed elsewhere in the Yerushalmi and other Amoraic writings by citations of his renderings. The Yerushalmi cites translations attributed to Aquilas in Sukkah 53d, Yoma 41a, and Megillah 73b. Leviticus Rabbah and Genesis Rabbah contain parallels to these passages and some citations of their own.³⁴ These are all rather brief, with a similar rhetorical formulation. Let us look at y. Sukkah 53d for an example.

רבי תנחומא תירגם עקילס הדר הידור אילן

שהוא גדל על פני המים

- A. R. Tanhuma. Aquila translated “[the fruit of] majestic [tree] (פְּרִי עֵץ הָהָר)” [Lev 23:40] as “[fruit of] water tree,” for it grows by the water.

The passage purports to present a Hebrew translation of a Greek translation of the original Hebrew Leviticus 23:40, citing just two words of the Greek, “water tree.” According to the passage, Aquila translated the key Hebrew word as a pun. The Hebrew text had הָהָר, meaning “majestic,” which Aquilas punningly translated into Greek as הִידוֹר, *hidor*. This pun works only from Hebrew to Greek, for the Greek word for water is ὕδωρ, *hudor*.³⁵

The Babylonian Talmud in seventh-century Babylonia carries forward this interest in Greek translation, especially in limiting translation to Greek alone. B. Meg. 8b–9a has a long, intricate debate about whether sacred scrolls—i.e., Scripture—can be in any language, only in the original (i.e., Hebrew with a little Aramaic), or in Greek translation as well as Hebrew. The entire debate’s interplay would take too long to explicate here, but it ends by approving the last option—that is, Greek is the only language into which Scripture can be translated. The climaxing argument is God’s intervention into Pharaoh Ptolemy’s plans to translate the Septuagint.

- A. And it has been taught: Said R. Judah. “When the rabbis allowed [scrolls of Scripture to be translated into] Greek,
B. “they did not permit [this] except for the Torah scroll, and then because of the deed of King Ptolemy.”
C. For it has been taught: It once happened that King Ptolemy gathered 72 elders [of Israel], and he put them into 72 houses, and he did not reveal to them why he had gathered them.

³⁴ Y. Yoma 41a, y. Suk. 53b, y. Meg. 73b, Gen. Rab. 46:3, Gen. Rab. 70:16, Lev. Rab. 11:9, Lev. Rab. 33:1, and Lev. Rab. 33:6.

³⁵ This Greek translation pun does not appear in the standard LXX text.

- D. And he entered to all of them separately and said to them. "Write for me the Torah of Moses your Rabbi [in Greek]."
- E. And the Holy One, blessed be He, put advice into the hearts of each one separately [concerning the difficult passages], and He caused all of them to agree on a single rendering [of each passage].

These opening lines of the pericope are followed by a list of examples of the difficult passages and how translators rendered them. The overall point of this pericope about the Septuagint is similar to that of Philo's telling of the same event.³⁶ The translators are kept separate so they cannot consult. To overcome this, God guides each one individually to compose the same translation. Thus the Septuagint which Ptolemy commissioned for Alexandria's library is inspired by God, just as the Hebrew Torah was inspired when it was given at Sinai. It is this character that makes the Greek translation unique. All others result from human knowledge and effort. Furthermore, note that the translation is fixed in writing; it is not composed orally or extemporaneously. The Greek translation received this status because it was God-given and became fixed.

To make its point clear, the passage ends by stating the *halakhah* on this matter, that only Greek, in addition to the original Hebrew, is suitable for writing sacred Scriptures.

- A. Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says: Even regarding scrolls, they did not permit that they be written in other than Greek [in addition to Ashurit]:
- B. Said R. Abahu, said R. Yohanan: The law (*halakhah*) is according to [the teaching of] Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel.
- C. And, said R. Yohanan: What is the reason of Rabban Shimon [Simeon] ben Gamaliel? Scripture said: "God will beautify Jepheth, and he will dwell in the tents of Shem" (Gen 9:27) [means] the words of Jepheth will be in the tents of Shem.
- D. Should I say: "This refers to [the language(s) of] Gomer and Magog"?³⁷
- E. Said R. Hiyya bar Abba: This is the reason that "God will beautify Jepheth [and he will dwell in the tents of Shem]" is written; the beauty of Jepheth [i.e., the most beautiful language of Jepheth, Greek] will be [spoken] in the tents of Shem.³⁸

In context it is clear that the law (*halakhah*) follows Simeon's ruling: biblical books may be written only in Hebrew and translated into Greek. The reason given here is that Greek is a beautiful language, according to

³⁶ Philo, *Life of Moses* 2.25–44.

³⁷ This question links the Bavli back to the similar interpretation of this verse in y. Meg. 71b. See another parallel passage in Gen. Rab. 36:8.

³⁸ Translation Neusner.

Genesis 9, and will be used by the Jews. Jepheth/Japheth stands for Greece and Greek, while Shem stands for the Jews.

Despite this clear decision concerning the *halakhah*, the matter is not yet closed. Later, at b. Meg. 18a, the Bavli's framers return to the question of translating Scripture, but this time only with regard to the Esther Megillah. After a long, intricate debate, recorded in shorthand, the decision is that the Megillah does not follow the rule that applies to the other biblical books. Here is the end of the debate:

וְלִמְרוּ הִלְכָּה כְּרַאבֵּן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אִי אִמְרֵי הִלְכָּה
כְּרַבֵּן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הוּא אִמְיָא הֵי מִלִּי שְׂאָר סְפָרִים
אֲבָל מִגִּילָה דְּכֹתִיב בָּהּ כְּכַתְּבָם אִימָא לֹא קִמְשַׁמַּע לֶן

- A. "And let them say the *halakhah* is according to Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel.
- B. "If they say the *halakhah* is according to Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel, then I say these words [apply only] to other scrolls,
- C. "but [with regard to] the Megillah, for it is written in it, '[the Jews established and accepted as a custom for themselves] . . . according to their writing (Est. 9:27),' I say no[, Simeon's ruling does not apply]."
- D. Thus we hear [that all languages are acceptable for reading the Megillah].

The point of the citation of from Esther 9 is that Jews should observe the festival of Purim "according to their writing," which the Bavli passage implies should be understood as "according to their [own] writing." In other words, in whatever writing or language Jews use, they should celebrate the festival in it. This means that Simeon's ruling does not apply to the Megillah, for the Megillah should be written in their own language and writing alphabet. The Megillah constitutes the exception to the *halakhah* that books should not be translated.

The Bavli's ruling that the *halakhah* disallows all translations but those into Greek goes against its own promotion of Aramaic Targums. On the one hand, there is a long passage combining several pericopae about the creation of Targums by Onqelos and Jonathan, several of which we have already discussed.³⁹ As we saw, the Bavli even recasts the Yerushalmi's saying about Aquilas translating Torah into Greek as a tale about Onqelos translating the Torah into Aramaic. "Targum of the Torah—Onqelos the proselyte said it before Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua." On the other hand, the Talmud provides a number of passages which cites Aramaic translations from the Torah and Prophets. These agree with the written

³⁹ See chaps. 8, 10 and 12.

Targums of either Targum Onqelos or Targum Jonathan, even though they are not so designated. The most laudatory of these is attributed to Rav Joseph, at the end of the section concerning the creation of the Aramaic Targums. B. Meg. 3a reads:

ביום ההוא יגדל המספד בירושלם כמספד הדדרמון
 בבקעת מגדון ואמר רב יוסף אלמלא תרגומא דהאי
 קרא לא ידענא מאי קאמר ביומא ההוא יסגי מספדא
 בירושלים כמספדא דאחאב בר עמרי דקטל יתיה
 הדדרימון בן טברימון ברמות גלעד וכמספדא דיאשיה
 בר אמון דקטל יתיה פרעה חגירא בבקעת מגידו

- D. "In that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning of Hadad-Rimon in the valley of Megiddon." [Zech 12:11]
- E. Said Rav Joseph, "Were it not for the Targum to this verse, I would not know what it says.
- F. "In that day, the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning of Ahab son of Omri whom Haddad-Rimon son of Tab-Rimon killed in Ramot Gilead, and as the mourning of Josiah son of Amon, whom Pharaoh Hagira killed in the valley of Megiddo." [TJ to Zech 12:11]

Rav Joseph's comment at line E is brought to indicate that meanings found in the Targum provide understanding of the Hebrew that would not otherwise be known. Not even to a scholar like Rav Joseph. So this example which Joseph draws from Targum Jonathan to the Prophets shows how the Targum makes hidden information plain.

In the end, of course, the existence of written Targums to all the books of the Hebrew Bible except those containing large amounts of Aramaic makes it clear that these rulings limiting Scripture translation to Greek were widely ignored. Even in the Bavli itself, it is clear that the rabbis are using Aramaic translations that we can identify with Targum Onqelos and Targum Jonathan and that they presume that Aramaic translations given orally in the synagogue are memorized from written translations. Why they would do this, we do not know. Why not simply make the *hal-akhah* conform to practice? A certain tension between rabbinic theory and targumic practice seems manifest.

THE SACRED STATUS OF WRITTEN TRANSLATIONS

The Mishnah's framers compare the holiness of written Targums and other translations of biblical books with the original books themselves.

They twice juxtapose translations with the original biblical text, deciding in both cases whether Targums and other translations are like or unlike Scripture. In m. Shab. 16:1, the framers ask whether translations should be saved from a fire.

כל כתבי הקודש מצילין אותן מפני הדליקה בין
שקורין בהן ובין שאין קורין בהן ואף על פי
שכתובים בכל לשון טעונים גניזה

- A. All sacred writings (כתבי הקודש)—
- B. they save them from fire,
- C. Whether they read in them or do not read in them.
- D. And even through they are written in any language, [when they become useless] they require storage [and are not to be burned].

Line A introduces a document type called in Hebrew *kitvei haqodesh*. These “sacred writings” constitute texts considered holy, including biblical books, their translations, and other sacred written material, such as the Scriptures contained in mezuzot and phylacteries.

The passage’s point is that sacred writings require respect and should not be destroyed by fire, whether during a sudden house fire or by burning them when they become worn out. Line D defines what happens when this happens. If they should not be burnt, how should they be disposed of? They should be stored. The phrase “they require storage” (גניזה) is the basis of the later notion of the geniza, an out-of-the-way location (e.g., an attic or a hole in the ground) where such texts can be left to deteriorate on their own. The point here is that translations of Scripture, i.e., Targums, should be treated just like Hebrew Scriptures with regard to fire and storage.

Another passage, m. Yad. 4:5 continues the inquiry concerning the status of translations. This time, the issue is whether Targums, like Scripture itself, render impure the hands of someone who touches them. The comparison is made particularly telling by contrasting the Aramaic portions already within Scripture with Aramaic translations of the Hebrew scriptural passages.

תרגום שבעזרא ושבדניאל מטמא את הידים תרגום
שכתבו עברית ועברית שכתבו תרגום וכתב עברי
אינו מטמא את הידים

- A. *Targum* [i.e., Aramaic passages] in Ezra and Daniel imparts uncleanness to hands.

- B. *Targum* [i.e., Aramaic passages in Scripture] which they wrote in Hebrew, or a Hebrew which they wrote in *Targum* [i.e., Aramaic], or [archaic] Hebrew script does not impart uncleanness to hands.

While one could argue that the term *Targum* means “Scripture in Aramaic,” this passage has given even that definition two meanings. First, in line A, *Targum* refers to the Aramaic portions of the books of Ezra and Daniel. “*Targum*,” by this definition, is simply Scripture passages written in Aramaic. Second, in line B “*Targum*” takes on the meaning of a biblical text translated into Aramaic from the Hebrew.

Despite the use of the same term, the two kinds of texts are clearly different. Aramaic in Scripture is treated in the same way as Scripture. All Scripture renders impure the hands of the one who holds them, whether in Aramaic or Hebrew. Translated Scripture, however, does not have the same holy standing. *Targum* translations do not require the user to purify themselves after use. Hence, although *Targum* texts are sacred writings, they do not rise to the same level of sacrality as the scriptural text itself.

The Tosefta’s view of the status of translations vis-à-vis Scripture follows the Mishnah’s view. With regard to written translations, t. Shab. 13:2 repeats m. Shab. 16:1—that translations are sacred scrolls that should be saved from the fire and stored when no longer useful—and then goes on to give a supporting example. This example concerns a *Targum* of Job and has often been cited in discussion of the Aramaic version of Job from Qumran.

- A. [If] they were written in *targum* [i.e., Aramaic translation], or in any language, they save them [from fire], and they store them [when their useful life has ended]. [m. Shab. 16:1]
- B. Said R. Yosé, “It once happened that R. Halafta went to Rabban Gamaliel in Tiberias and found him seated at the table of Yohanan b. Nezip. In his hand was the Scroll of Job in *targum*, and he was reading in it.
- C. Said to him R. Halafta, “I recall Rabban Gamaliel the Elder, your grandfather, that he was sitting on the staircase going up to the Temple mount. They brought before him a Scroll of Job in *targum* and he said to his sons, ‘Put it [into storage] under the course of stones.’”
- D. At that hour, Rabban Gamaliel [his grandson] sent [the Job *Targum* away] to store [it until it decayed].”

This story concerns the two patriarchs named Gamaliel, grandfather and grandson, both of whom had a Job *Targum* and both of whom put it away rather than burn it: the grandfather buried one in a (sacred) construction site, while the grandson had it put in a genizah. The actions of the grandfather at C are used as an example for the grandson at B and D.

Both of them put away the Job Targum into storage where it will deteriorate because it is a sacred scroll. So here the Tosefta keeps Targums in the category of sacred writings along with Scripture and other religious texts.

The Yerushalmi's framers follow up on their earlier denigration and distrust of translations. At y. Shab. 15b, they try to harmonize the two Mishnah passages about translations' status, which they do by lowering the Targums' standing. They accomplish this by saying that the Torah and the Prophets do not belong to the category of "sacred writings"; they are above it. This gives Scripture a higher status than Targums. Despite this disagreement with the Mishnah, however, in the end they agree that such scrolls should be saved from the fire to prevent their "disgraceful treatment."

The Babylonian Talmud largely ignores the Yerushalmi and carries forward the notions of Targum status found in the Mishnah and the Tosefta. B. Shab. 155a–b debates whether or not Targums and other sacred writings should be saved from a fire and stored when worn out. They should. This follows the matter originally established in m. Shab. 16:1.

TARGUMS IN TEACHING AND STUDY

The role of Targums and other translations in teaching and private study is poorly evidenced in rabbinic literature. The Mishnah, the Yerushalmi, and the Amoraic midrashim provide almost no insight into the matter, while the Tosefta has only two somewhat tangential passages and the Bavli only one. It is perhaps the Tannaitic midrashim that provide the best evidence, even though it concerns just two passages.⁴⁰

The first midrashic passage appears in *Sifra*, *Shimini* 1 (100). It comes at the end of an exegesis of Leviticus 10:10–11. Having just finished an exegesis of the two verses, the *Sifra* asks whether the passage also supports the practice of *targum*. The positive response is given by citing the first word of verse 11, "and you are to teach" (וְלִהְיוֹרֵת). Although no details are given, the passage clearly links teaching with the practice of *targum*.

The second passage comes from *Sifré Deuteronomy*, 161. This passage is often cited as providing the standard progression of teaching from elementary to upper level—a curriculum, if you will. Jacob Neusner gives the translation as:

⁴⁰ There are just two passages in six texts we examined—*Mekhilta d'Rabbi Ishmael*, *Sifra*, *Sifrei Bamidbar*, *Sifrei Devarim*, *Sifrei Zutta*, and *Mekhilta d'Shimon ben Yohai*—that even mention Targums.

מלמד שהמורא מביא לידי מקרא מקרא מביא לידי
 תרגום תרגום מביא לידי משנה משני מביאה לידי
 תלמוד תלמוד מביא לידי מעשה מעשה מביא לידי יראה

This teaches that fear brings a person to study Scripture, Scripture brings a person to study its translation (מקרא מביא לידי תרגום), the translation brings a person to study the Mishnah (תרגום מביא לידי משנה), the Mishnah brings a person to study the Talmud, the Talmud brings a person to doing deeds. Doing deeds leads a person to fear [God].⁴¹

In this scenario, Scripture provides the most elementary level, while Targum translation is the second stage, Mishnah study constitutes the third, and so on. Each step brings an added level of sophistication. Yet it is a circle, for at the top of the ladder, one begins again.

The passage uses the noun *targum* which we associate with the written Targum text rather than with the oral performance of translation. Since the word is surrounded by names of texts in the study process—Scripture, Mishnah, Talmud—there would seem to be a strong case here that this passage evidences written Targums in teaching and study. But there is a problem with that. If *Sifré Deuteronomy* is truly a Tannaitic text, then no Talmud text yet exists. Nor, quite probably, does a Mishnah text. Instead we should perhaps translate the passage more in line with Steven Fraade (leaving out the opening line):

Miqra (recitation of Scripture from a text) leads to *targum* (Aramaic translation), which leads to *mishnah* (oral teaching), which leads to *talmud* (engaged study), which leads to *maaseh* (performance), which leads to *yirah* (the fear of God).⁴²

On this reading, rather than Targum being a text among other texts used in study, this passage sees Targum as a study activity, probably oral, along with other activities. Still, *Sifré* may in fact be a later document than is sometimes supposed. On both readings, however, Targum is an important step in the educational curriculum to make one into a proper “rabbinic” Jew, one who is not just learned but who practices what he learns.

The Tosefta does not directly address the use of Targums, whether oral or written, in the formal teaching done in schools or in private study. One statement, which occurs at the end of t. Meg. 3:38, complements the general remarks of the midrashim and draws a distinction between the use of translation in synagogue worship and in study. This line occurs at

⁴¹ Translation by Neusner, *Sifre to Deuteronomy*, 2:30.

⁴² Translation by Fraade, *Tradition to Commentary*, 263.

the end of a list of biblical passages in which the Tosefta's framers indicate whether or not they should be read and/or translated in the service (t. Meg. 3:31-38). After working through the list and finally identifying the one passage neither read nor translated—the story of David and Bathsheba—the Tosefta gives this instruction to school teachers.

מעשה דוד ובת שבע לא נקרא ולא

מיתרגם והסופר מלמד כדרך

- A. The deed of David and Bath Sheba is neither read nor translated.
- B. But the teacher (*sofer*) teaches according to his [usual] way.

The point of the remark at line B is to make it clear that the rules for reading in the synagogue do not apply to the study of the text in the school. So the role of Targums in the synagogue worship service differs from their role in school teaching. This is significant, for a *sofer* teaches in a children's school, rather than in the *bet midrash* reserved for the students of the rabbis. So it draws the distinction even for the younger children and it indicates that Targum plays a role in that lower level of education.

The Tosefta's second passage shifts from teaching to private study. T. Baba Mezia 2:21 is not explicit but suggestive. It indicates the proper behavior of a person who found a sacred scroll who has had to keep it for a long time while trying to find the owner.

- A. He who finds [sacred] scrolls should read in them once in thirty days [to keep them supple].
- B. but he should not read in them the [weekly] *parashah* and repeat it,
- C. and he should not read in them and translate.

Although this passage addresses the proper treatment of found scrolls that belong to an unknown person, it provides a glimpse into the expected practice of private study. These are the practices that are forbidden in lines B–C. One studies by reading the weekly section (*parashah*) two times, or by reading and translating it. These are restricted because they constitute the actions of owners and do not treat a lost object with the respect for its rightful owner. The passage's point is that one is forbidden to use the found scroll for study.

The actions indicated foreshadow a passage in the Babylonian Talmud which will instruct people to study in this fashion, b. Berakot 8a. Each week's Scripture portion (*parashah*) should be prepared so that the service provides the climax of study.

אמר רב הונא בר יהודה אמר רבי מנחם אמר רבי
אמי לעולם ישלים אדם פרשיותיו עם הצבור
שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום

- A. Said R. Huna bar Judah, said R. Menahem, said R. Ammi, “A man should always complete his *parashah* with the congregation, twice in [Hebrew] Scripture and once in Targum.”

The study expectations are straightforward. The person should read the passage twice in the Hebrew language and once in the Aramaic translation provided by the Targum. It clearly picks up on the actions identified in the Tosefta passage and places them in the proper context, which is the preparation for the synagogue service, where one may be called upon to read or translate Torah. That is, this study is preliminary to participation in the Torah reading and translation as done during Sabbath worship. Private study is not random but explicitly linked to congregational worship. The activities described are probably not sufficient to achieve full memorization of the Targum’s translation, but it is enough to make one familiar with its meaning. Note the high level of knowledge expected here, fluency in two languages and the ability to read competently at least one of them. This suggests an educated audience, in all likelihood from within rabbinic social circles.

So it is clear that the development of the rabbinic *halakhah* regarding Targums focuses on the orally presented translation in the synagogue service and on the status and expectations of the written Targum texts. Although there it is clear that Targums are involved in study, both in school and private settings, this is not a major interest for the rabbis at any time during the rabbinic period.

CONCLUSION

Since the publication of Steven Fraade’s essay in 1992, there has been a growing scholarly urge for the exploration of the role of Targums in study rather than worship.⁴³ This chapter’s survey of rabbinic literature’s references to Targums and translations provides overwhelming evidence that the rabbinic movement would not agree. Five of the seven issues examined here emphasize the place of Targums and translating in the synagogue service, while only one looks at teaching and study—and it contains only five passages from all rabbinic period texts.

⁴³ Fraade, “Rabbinic Views on the Practice of Targum.”

In each of the four main halakhic works, from the Mishnah to the Babylonian Talmud, the overwhelming interest with regard to Targums and translating lies in the role of Scripture translation during synagogue services. This translation is presented orally, without the support of a written Targum within the service. At least this is the case for the Torah and the Prophets; with one exception, Writings Targums and their use are ignored until the Bavli.⁴⁴ That exception is the Esther Megillah, which attracts a great deal of rabbinic interest, largely because it serves as a foil for the Torah (and the Prophets). The primary view of the Megillah is that it is not treated in the same manner as the Torah, for it is less important. One need not show it the same respect or treat it with the same consistent reverence. Indeed, despite the expectation that Scripture should be orally translated, Megillah translations may be read from a written Targum. Of course there is a dissenting opinion: the Yerushalmi has a series of debates aiming to bring the Megillah into line with the Torah.

The vast majority of the references in rabbinic literature to Targums and translation concern orally delivered translations in the synagogue service. These accompany the reading of the Hebrew Torah and Prophets in an antiphonal manner, similar to the musical call-and-response form. The reader and the translator take turns presenting each verse in the proper language. The translation is given orally to differentiate it from the written Hebrew Scripture, which constitutes the original revelation. The passages about this practice are all worded generally, as if they apply to all Jews. But the skill and education levels necessary for this simple practice are far beyond the members of most Jewish communities. Indeed, rabbinic writings occasionally acknowledge that people who speak foreign languages often have at most one person who can read the Hebrew and hence usually hear the translation without accompanying Hebrew and certainly without understanding (much of) it. All these passages should be understood as applying primarily to members of rabbinic circles, therefore, and not to the vast majority of Jews.

Despite this emphasis on oral translation in the synagogue, there is widespread recognition and acceptance of written Targums as a normal part of the Jewish milieu. While there is little explicit discussion of their use—saving Targums from fire is more important than study techniques, for example—several passages reveal information. First, the most explicit concern Megillah Targums and translations. Not only does the Mishnah indicate that Megillah can be translated in written form into any language, but it also permits the reading of those written translations in the Purim service. Second, this use of the Megillah Targum as a foil for

⁴⁴ A Tg. Job is mentioned but only for rejection.

Torah practice indicates that written Torah Targums are well known and used. They remain behind when the translator enters the synagogue but only because of strict restrictions. Indeed, the Yerushalmi's story about Samuel finding a person reading from a Targum in the service indicates that this rule was not always followed. Third, the Yerushalmi and the Bavli both assume translations given in the synagogue have been memorized—obviously from a written Targum. Fourth, the Tosefta's comments about proper translation technique indicate that the tradents knew the written Targums we now possess, and their concerns address directly the Targums' defining characteristics. The Bavli's recontextualizing of that passage shows that the Babylonian rabbis used a written Targum, probably Targum Onqelos and/or Targum Jonathan, to indicate the correct translation of Scripture.

In all of this discussion, there is surprisingly little interest in the Targums' role in teaching and private study. The Babylonian Talmud's sole remark about study positions the private reading and translating of the weekly *parashah* as preparation for the Sabbath service. The remarks about the Targums' place in teaching curriculum place them into the elementary level. Perhaps this is where minors learn the translation which they are permitted to perform in the synagogue service.

Finally, we turn to the question of acceptable languages for Scripture translation. The Tannaitic texts recognize the validity of all languages for translation purposes. Simeon's remark about restricting translation to Greek simply appears as the record of a contrary opinion. The Yerushalmi then takes this up as a *cause celeb* and tries to overturn this earlier position and make Greek the only valid language for Scripture translation. Willem Smelik sees this as a prejudice of Palestinian Amoraic rabbis against Aramaic, while the Babylonian Amoraim reverse the position and come out in favor of Aramaic. While it is certainly true that the Babylonian Talmud shows a great deal of interest Aramaic Targums, both in their origins and in citations from them, it also rules that the *halakhah* follows Simeon's position in favor of Greek only. This topic seems to demonstrate the variety of opinions and positions on the question of translation in opposition to those who would like to see a single, unified view arising from the rabbinic literature.

TARGUM AS SCRIPTURE AND HIDDEN INTERPRETATION

TARGUM AS SCRIPTURE'S MEANING

The prescriptive character of much of what we read concerning Targums in rabbinic literature in the previous chapter makes it difficult to deduce actual, historical practice in any detail. Attempts to delve beneath the surface of these prescriptions inevitably depend upon the applicability to real situations of general interpretive rules—and these rules are neither entirely compatible with one another nor commensurate with the synagogue practice that they presuppose. As a result, we could apply the common axiom that prescriptive rules are promulgated in order to *prevent* current practices—which by definition would be the opposite of that approved by the rule. So if the prescription is that the Torah Targum is given orally, then the interpretive conclusion would be that many or even most synagogues followed the practice of reading the Targum from a written text. Or perhaps a chronological interpretation should be followed, arguing that at the time of the Mishnah, people read the Torah Targum from a text but later, perhaps in the decades just prior to the Yerushalmi's publication, they followed the rule by rendering the translation orally.

If we stop trying to sift through the details of the prescriptions for a historical kernel, and instead look at the agreement among the passages about synagogue translation, one point stands out. It is that the reading of Scripture from the biblical text—especially the Torah and the Prophets—is accompanied by Targum translation. This is the case whether the Targum is given orally or read from a written translation. Scripture reading is paired with its translation. The debate over the treatment of the Esther Megillah, which raged from the Mishnah into the Bavli, essentially focused on whether one of the pair could be eliminated, be it the translation or the Hebrew text itself.

The goal of this chapter is to draw out the implications of the pairing of Scripture reading and its translation. If the reading of the biblical text is regularly accompanied by its translation, what further conclusions can we draw? While this chapter will deductively tease out a series of ideas, we wish to state the overall point at the outset: even though Targums were not Scripture, they became the meaning of Scripture within their congregations. In a linguistic and religious world where Aramaic Targums were necessary, their contents provided the vast majority of their hearers and readers with the meaning of Scripture. If we want to know what the average Jew of third-century Galilee or sixth-century Babylonia knew about Scripture's meaning, we should look to the Targums, rather than to the Hebrew text of Scripture. To be sure, the rabbis' scriptural knowledge was collated with the Hebrew, but that educated elite was quite small in comparison to the total Jewish population. And even they sometimes depended on the Targums for their understanding of Scripture, as Rav Joseph said about Zechariah 12:11, "Were it not for the Targum to this verse, I would not know what it means" (b. Meg. 3a).

The claim that Targums provided Scripture's meaning sounds somewhat shocking at first. But if there was a linguistic need for an Aramaic Targum because the synagogue members did not understand the original Hebrew (although another, more nuanced view, is discussed below), then no other conclusion is possible.

When we consider the passages from rabbinic literature presented in chapter 14 concerning the oral rendering of the Targum, it is clear that for nearly half a millennium—during the period from the Mishnah through to the Babylonian Talmud—the rabbis thought there should be only one physical text (one scroll) in the synagogue service, namely, the Hebrew text of Scripture. Whether this Hebrew text was from the Torah or the Prophets, they consistently paired it with oral translation. They did not want a translated Targum text on display during worship. According to their prescription, there should be no Targum texts physically evident during the service. The usual explanation for this is that the prohibition prevents members of the synagogue from confusing the Targum with the original Scripture. This is certainly true in a literal sense. Toward the end of the rabbinic period, furthermore, the Bavli takes this one step further when it even outlaws the Torah reader from helping the translator formulate his translation, "So that they will not say, 'The Targum is written in the Torah'" (b. Meg. 32a).

The physical presence of scrolls containing only the Hebrew text of the Torah or Prophets in the service provided a visual signal that the Hebrew text is solely Scripture. Even for those who cannot follow the reading of the Hebrew text, this becomes aurally true as well. The oral

Targum translating the meaning of Scripture *is* the meaning of Scripture. However the translator renders the visible *Hebrew* scroll into Aramaic, that is (at least in theory) the meaning of the Hebrew. This is true whether the translator recites a memorized passage from a written Targum or whether he provides an extemporaneous rendering. Indeed, without a written Targum present, a memorized translation appears extemporaneous. And as we showed in chapter 14, the implication that the translation is memorized became increasingly stronger as the rabbinic period progressed until the Babylonian Talmud makes it clear that the only acceptable translation that may be given in the synagogue service is “our Targum” (b. Qidd. 49a), that is, Targum Onqelos for the Torah or Targum Jonathan for the Prophets.

Further teasing out of this scenario additionally suggests that the Targum given—whatever the source—is occasioned by the physical presence of the Hebrew Scripture. Unless the oral rendering was explicitly corrected, the congregation would assume that it constituted an accurate presentation of Scripture’s meaning.¹ So the visual presence of the Hebrew text authorized the aural reception of the orally presented Targum.

There was obviously a potential danger here. If the translation given was incorrect, it would lead to misunderstanding at best and blasphemy at worst. So there is a need to control the translation to ensure its accuracy, however that accuracy was defined. The most comprehensive way to do this would have been write out a translation of every book (a Targum) and then require the translation to be read from it. Perhaps we should assume that this was the purpose for some of the written Targums, at least in the minds of their composers.

Yet the rabbis, according to their own rulings, rejected this approach. They did not want the Targum text to compete with the biblical text, so they excluded written Targums from being present in the service. They expected the translator to recite memorized passages from written Targums. That would provide the next strongest level of control over the translation. Certainly rabbinic prescriptions expect this in the later rabbinic period, and perhaps they applied earlier, as well.

Many of the prescriptions and proscriptions found in rabbinic literature can be interpreted as attempting to control translation, in both form and content. The Mishnaic requirement that one read the Torah verse-by-verse to the translator, or three verses at a time in the case of the Prophets, constitutes an attempt to control the translation’s form. If the translation were significantly longer than the original, then the

¹ If someone knew that the translation was incorrect, then they should have corrected it.

difference would become apparent. This aims to control the content of the translation by formal means, since larger additions (common in the Palestinian Targums) would become apparent. And of course we should not forget Judah's remark in the Tosefta that forbids translating literally and with additions, a practice that would turn one into a liar and a blasphemer (t. Meg. 3:41)—a prohibition describing the Palestinian Targums in particular.

Similarly, the Mishnah's prohibition against translating Leviticus 18:1-20 in a euphemistic way directly requires specific treatment of Scripture's wording, as does its stated mistranslation for Leviticus 18:21 (m. Meg. 4:9). The Tosefta's list of passages requiring euphemisms (t. Meg. 3:39-40) even for passages read in Hebrew functions similarly. The list of passages that should not be translated and the shorter list of those that should not be read in Hebrew or translated served the same purpose.

These rabbinic prescriptions should be seen as recognizing the threat that Scripture translation (*targum*) represented to rabbinic control of Scripture's meaning and attempts to reign in the freedom which the translators could display in rendering Scripture's meaning to the congregation. This attempt at control ultimately developed into the designation of two Targums as favored by rabbinic authorities in Babylonia, Targum Onqelos to the Pentateuch and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets.

In addition to the rabbinic rules just cited, there are of course rules, such as that found at m. Yad. 4:5, which explicitly give Targums a lower status—a less holy standing—than the Hebrew text of the Tanakh. So in light of these rules which aim to separate Targums from Scripture and to make clear that Targums should not be equated with Scripture, we need to ask: how well did they work? Could the synagogue congregation which listened to the Scripture reading and the orally presented Targum that followed recognize when the two differed? When the translation deviated from a straight rendering of the Hebrew text, whether through additions or other means, did they know the actual meaning of the Hebrew in addition to that given by the Targum?

We argue that the congregation usually could not distinguish the differences and that when they could, they did not know the Hebrew text's meaning, but only the Targums'.² The rabbinic rules may have made clear that a difference existed between Scripture and its targumic renderings, but that difference actually constituted no difference at all because the audience had no independent access to the Hebrew text. They perceived its meaning only through the Targum. To be sure, the exact meaning of

² At least in the context of the Scripture reading. Of course, they could have been taught the true meaning of the HT in particular passages in contexts outside the liturgy.

some Hebrew passages could occasionally have been taught to the audience from outside the liturgy. But if the Targum was corrected every time it deviated, why use such a “poor” translation in the first place? It seems clear that the distinction between the Hebrew text and the Aramaic Targum constituted, in the end, a distinction without a meaningful difference. As translation, the Targum provided the meaning of Scripture for the congregation.

TARGUM AS HIDDEN INTERPRETATION

If Targum is the source of Scripture’s meaning, and the written Targums we have recovered from that period are representative of those used, then we need to explore how the Targums functioned to convey Scripture’s meaning. Since the Targums make no explicit or implicit statements about their use or purpose, we will need to draw out our conclusions from the character of the targumic rendering itself.³

This Introduction has consistently used a definition of Targum that emphasizes its formal characteristics:

A Targum is a translation that combines a highly literal rendering of the original text with material added into the translation in a seamless manner.

What is the impact of this format on how the Targum is heard by a synagogue audience? When a Targum text is recited to the congregation—or an on-the-spot rendering in the same style is given—what do they hear? In particular, can they hear the difference between the literal rendering of the Hebrew text and the additional material when those two sources are seamlessly interwoven or combined? Our response is, probably not, at least in the vast majority of cases.

To explain, we must begin by considering the linguistic expertise of the synagogue congregation. Since we are discussing an Aramaic translation, we assume that their first language—or their best language—is Aramaic. It of course makes no sense to translate into a language no one understands, or understands only with difficulty.

The big question is, however, how well did the audiences know Hebrew? Although there may be a small educated elite who knew biblical Hebrew rather well, it is safe to conclude that most of the synagogue audience lacked expert knowledge of the Hebrew text. Why else spend the time and energy to create a translation and recite it every service where Scripture is read?

³ Some of the ideas in the remainder of this chapter have appeared in a fuller form in Fleisher, “Pentateuchal Targums” and “Targum as Scripture.”

Drawing a more radical conclusion about the congregation's general level of Hebrew knowledge—that they knew no Hebrew at all—seems improbable as well. Not only did the liturgy contain a variety of weekly and annual prayers—not to mention the Psalms—most of which were in Hebrew, but also it seems highly unlikely that, given weekly Scripture readings in Hebrew, Jews would pick up no knowledge of Hebrew at all.

The form of the Targums suggests some ability on the part of the synagogue audience to recognize elements of the Hebrew text and its Aramaic equivalents. The painstaking rendition of the Hebrew text in the Targum translations implies that this was expected of the Targums' translators. The contrasting position would be that of the standard Septuagint, where there was no expectation that its readers/hearers would know Hebrew, and hence much less effort was initially expended to compose it in line with the Hebrew text. The resulting differences, as we have discussed, led Aristeas and Philo to argue for the translation's independent status from the Hebrew. Philo even attributed it to divine inspiration, which was echoed centuries later in the Bavli (see *b. Meg.* 8b-9a). Since the Aramaic Targums adhere so closely to the Hebrew, it is unlikely that their intended audiences lacked all knowledge of that language.

That leaves a middle position, one in which members of the audience had a wide variety of skill-levels in Hebrew. Some could presumably understand it rather well; some knew little more than the prayers. Still others had attended more formal schooling in the biblical text (attended either regularly or, more likely in an agricultural setting, irregularly), and so on. The elements of the Hebrew which a person knew, whatever proportion of the reading they made up, would help the hearer identify portions of the translation which corresponded to the original. Rather than give up the link between the original and the translation, as in the case of the LXX, the Targums' composers drew upon their readers' and listeners' ability to recognize some of the Hebrew text and its corresponding rendering in the Targum.

To conclude this question, the Targums' formal structure implies that its hearers had a variety of levels of Hebrew knowledge. The Targum was not composed for the purpose of the few educated elite who could follow the original Hebrew, nor did it assume that its listeners were totally lacking in Hebrew ability. While there were obviously some at both ends of the skill spectrum—from rabbis to children—the Targums were composed for the people in the middle.

Now that we have described the linguistic characteristics of Jews in synagogue audiences, let us return to this section's central question, namely, how did a Targum's seamless interweaving of literal rendering and additional material impact its hearers? Our answer is that—with the

exception of the largest expansions—additional material in the Targums went largely unnoticed.

For most Jews, the little Hebrew they knew—indeed the more the better, up to but not including fluency—served to authorize the Targum they heard as authentic and accurate. When they recognized elements of the Hebrew text they had just heard being reproduced in the translation, that would reinforce their perception that the translation was accurate. Since they lacked full fluency, however, the parts of the translation they did not recognize they would have attributed to their lack of understanding. These elements would include the additional material interwoven into the Targum. If a synagogue's practice followed the Mishnaic dictum of reading only a single verse at a time, then each person's Hebrew knowledge (of whatever level) could be most readily applied. If the practice was to read many verses together, or even an entire story or literary unit, then elements of the passage under translation would also be forgotten, sentences would be confused with each other, and other failures in comprehension would lower the ability for more complete recognition of correlations between the Hebrew and the translation. Larger expansions would similarly be less likely to be noticed, and would thus blend in with the recognized elements of the translation.

So Targums managed to hide substantially innovative interpretations in plain sight (or rather, "plain hearing") of their audience. The interpretive additions went largely unnoticed by the vast majority of its hearers. By incorporating the expansions into the literal translation without disturbing the narrative's flow, the Targums gave no signal of which words stemmed from the original text and which did not. Thus it is only by (1) knowing the original Hebrew text, (2) identifying the corresponding Aramaic material on the fly, and thus (3) separating out the added words, that one can flag the differences. If a participant in synagogue possessed sufficient skill to accomplish this, he would not need the Targum in the first place. Those who depended on the Targum for understanding Scripture lacked the expertise in Hebrew that would enable them to distinguish the additional material.

In the modern period, there has been a reluctance to concede this point. There is a certain logic that reasons: "we" know the difference between the Targum translation and the original Hebrew, how could they not have known? But we know the difference largely because we can read the texts side by side, assessing each corresponding form as we go, with whatever leisure and rereading we wish to devote to the task. That is because we possess well-published texts of Tanakh, Targum Onqelos, Targum Jonathan, rabbinic Bibles, etc., and we can compare the texts visually, moving back and forth between the original and its translation.

But as we have discussed, reading was not a widely held skill in antiquity, so the vast majority of Jews would have been unable to carry out a simple visual comparison of Scripture and its Targum—which we can do almost without thinking. To make it even easier, the Aramaic Bible series of translations, as well as other translations, print their English rendering of each Targum by indicating the non-scriptural added words in italics. Thus we know the difference between the translation of the original Hebrew and the additional material by visual means, a means which the original users and hearers lacked.⁴ And of course, the Targum manuscripts we now possess lack any signal indicating addition, whether visual or aural.⁵

Does the absence of such a signal make a difference? Should not a synagogue's congregation be able to pick out the additional material? We might conduct an experiment. Read the verses below from Genesis 30. Can you identify the changed or added material?

So she gave him Bilhah her handmaid for a wife, and Jacob went in to her. Then Bilhah conceived and bore to Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, "The Lord has vindicated me, and also has received my prayer and has given me a son. Therefore she called his name Dan. Then she conceived again and Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel, bore a second son to Jacob. Then Rachel said, "The Lord has received my request by showing me favor when I prayed. I desired to have offspring like my sister; it was also given to me." So she called his name Naphtali. When Leah saw that she had stopped giving birth, she took Zilpah her handmaid and gave her to Jacob in marriage. (TO to Gen 30:4-9)⁶

The easy alteration to identify is the eight added and two changed words in the phrase "The Lord *has received my request by showing me favor when I prayed. I desired to have offspring like my sister; it was also given to me.*" Did you also catch the change from the Hebrew text's "heard my voice"

⁴ This point emphasizes the seamless character of our definition of Targum over against the mere combination of literal translation and addition. There are texts that combine the two but not seamlessly. Jacob Neusner's approach to translating rabbinic texts, seen throughout this book, adds material in square brackets into the translation to assist the reader's understanding. The ArtScroll Series of Jewish religious texts published by Mesorah Publications does something similar with bold text indicating the translation and a plain Roman typeface indicating the commentary (interspersed with the Hebrew/Aramaic text itself). Neither of these belong to the category of Targum because they are not seamless—the seams remain clearly visible—and so the translation and the additions are readily apparent.

⁵ This is not to say that other kinds of signals do not exist in the medieval manuscripts of Targums. For example, some manuscripts flag the start of each verse with a short citation of the first few words of the Hebrew verse. This indication of place is the same whether the verse contains additional material or not.

⁶ Translation by E. Clem.

to “*received my prayer*”? Remember, you had the opportunity to study this visually, to return to the words and sentences of the passage and to consider them. A synagogue audience would have heard it once in passing. This little exercise provides a taste of the difficulty of distinguish literal translation from additional material.⁷

The format of the Targum enabled the hiding of interpretation in plain view. No wonder the Tosefta calls those who add to a translation “blasphemers,” for they are disguising their own words as God’s. Would the Targums’ composers have seen it that way? Probably not. They were aiming to provide in the clearest way possible the correct understanding of Scripture’s meaning as they understood it. The additional material works to prevent misunderstandings or difficult questions before they arise or correct them after they do. It emphasizes key theological points and guides readers and hearers to proper understandings of biblical heroes.

TARGUM IS NOT MIDRASH

We can further explore the character of the Targums’ hidden interpretation by comparing them with other Jewish writings focusing on Scripture interpretation known as the midrashim. Midrashic texts were composed at different times throughout (and following) the rabbinic period, and they took a variety of styles and formats. At one level these texts’ goal is to specify the meaning of a word, phrase, or passage, while at another these texts provide a variety of different meanings for the same biblical passages. One scholarly approach to midrashim has been to bring together the variety of interpretations for use in the study of the history of interpretation. Louis Ginzberg’s *Legends of the Jews* made extensive use of this approach.⁸ Jacob Neusner, by contrast, has emphasized the importance of form and format in the midrashim, as well as in the halakhic literature. The formal features of each individual midrashic work reveal key aspects of the nature of each work and the interpretive analysis it undertakes.⁹

The formal difference in the way that a midrash and a Targum organize their interpretations of Scripture reveals a key distinction between the explicit exegesis found in midrashim and the Targums’ hidden interpretation. A midrash cites Scripture and makes a clear differentiation

⁷ Some modern films also draw upon targumic principles when they draw upon written works to provide them authority. See chap. 21; Flesher and Torrey, *Film and Religion*, 71–85; and Flesher, “Being True to the Text.”

⁸ Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*. James Kugel has extended this type of study to include works unavailable to Ginzberg, in *Traditions of the Bible*.

⁹ See, e.g., Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture, Midrash in Context, Midrash as Literature, Uniting the Dual Torah*; and Neusner and Green, *Writing with Scripture*.

between the Scripture citation and the interpretive comments. While most midrashim treat the biblical text in order, some skip large chunks and interpret only a few selections. A few rearrange the text for their own purposes. A Targum by contrast interweaves interpretive additions with the Scripture translation in a way that obscures the difference. It lacks the freedom of a midrash, since as a translation, it treats in principle every word and phrase of Scripture in order. As A. Samely has observed, the Targum creates a “targumic shadow” of the Hebrew text.¹⁰

To see how midrashic texts treat Scripture, let us look at two representative passages. The first comes from *Genesis Rabbah* 16, a midrashic work written about the same time as the *Yerushalmi* (roughly 400). The passage begins by citing a sentence from *Genesis* 2:14.

- A. “{And the name of the third river is the Tigris} which flows east of Assyria” (*Gen* 2:14):
- B. Said R. Huna, “In three matters did the kingdom of Greece take precedence [a play on the word for ‘east’ and ‘precedence’] over the wicked kingdom [Rome]: in navigation, in setting up camp, and in language.”
- C. R. Huna in the name of R. Aha, “All kingdoms bear the name of Assyria because they get rich on account of exacting their taxes from Israel [a play on the word for rich and Assyria].”
- D. Said R. Yose bar Judah, “All kingdoms are called Nineveh because they ornament themselves at the expense of Israel.”
- E. Said R. Yose bar Halapta, “All kingdoms are called ‘Egypt,’ because they oppress Israel [a play on the words ‘oppress’ and ‘Egypt’].”
- F. “And the fourth river is the Euphrates” (*Gen* 2:14):
- G. This refers to Rome.
- H. It is called the Euphrates (PRT) because it unsettled and harassed his world.¹¹

This selection comprises three exegetical units: A–B, C–E, and F–H. The first clearly illustrates how the midrash distinguishes between Scripture and comment. Line A cites the verse, followed by Huna’s exegetical observation. The second section, lines C–E, addresses the same Scripture passage without citing it. In line C, Huna again refers back to *Genesis* 2:14, while in lines D and E, the editor gives two formally similar exegesis, but ones which relate to C only and not to the biblical verse being

¹⁰ See Samely, “Scripture’s Segments. and Topicality.” This essay also compares midrashim and Targums, but at a different level for a different purpose. It is worth reading, and studying, but focuses on their rhetorical character and attitudes rather than the implications of their formal characteristics, as here.

¹¹ *Gen. Rab.* 16; Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah*, 1:174. Numbering and {} are ours.

discussed. The third section begins with the verse's next sentence (F), and then provides the interpretation in lines G–H. The formula “This refers to . . .” clearly separates the citation from the comment. The key formal difference between this interpretive unit and the first two is that the third is anonymous, with no person credited for the interpretation.

The next example of midrash comes from the *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, a second- or third-century midrash to Exodus. The variety of forms giving structure to the exegeses is slightly wider, but they share the characteristic of separating the biblical citation from the interpretation. The passage begins with a citation of Exodus 13:18.

- A. “But God led the people round about by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea” {Ex 13:18};
- B. On what account?
- C. So as to perform miracles for them and mighty acts with the manna, the quail, and the well.
- D. R. Eliezer says, “‘by the way of the wilderness’: so as to tire them out: ‘He weakened my strength by the way’ (Ps. 102:24).
- E. “‘. . . of the wilderness’: so as to refine them: ‘who led you through the great and dreadful wilderness’ (Dt. 8:15).
- F. “‘. . . by the Red Sea’: so as to test them: ‘And they were rebellious at the sea, even at the Red Sea’ (Ps. 106:7).”
- G. R. Joshua says, “‘By the way’: to give them the Torah: ‘You shall walk in all the way which the Lord your God has commanded you’ (Dt. 5:30); ‘For the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light and a way of life’ (Prov. 6:23).
- H. “‘. . . of the wilderness’: to feed them manna: ‘Who fed you with manna in the wilderness’ (Dt. 8:16).
- I. “‘. . . by the Red Sea’: ‘to perform miracles for them and mighty acts: Terrible things by the Red Sea’ (Ps. 106:22); ‘And he rebuked the Red Sea and it was dried up, and he led them through the depths as through a wilderness’ (Ps. 106:9).”
- J. “And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle” (Ex. 13:18);
- K. The word translated “equipped for battle” means only “armed”: “But you shall pass over before your brethren armed” (Josh. 1:14).¹²

This midrashic selection consists of three units: A–C, D–I and J–K. In the first unit, the citation appears in line A, with the anonymous interpretation being introduced at line B with the formula “On what account?”

¹² Mekhilta d’ Rabbi Ishmael, Beshallah 1. Neusner, *Mekhilta*, 1:127. Numbering and {} are ours.

The second unit has no introductory formula, but its explicit attribution to two rabbinic authorities clearly distinguishes it from Scripture. Both Eliezer and Joshua divide the Exodus 13:18 sentence into three parts and exegete each by reference to another Scripture passage. These are all organized according to the same structure. Each one begins by citing the part of Scripture's sentence to be interpreted. At D, this is "by the way of the wilderness." This is followed by an interpretive remark by the rabbi. At D, Eliezer says, "so as to tire them out." This is then concluded by a supporting Scripture citation. Eliezer at D cites Psalm 102:24, "He weakened my strength by the way." Even at the level of the smaller exegetical divisions of the verse, the difference between Scripture and the interpretation remains evident—even without Neusner's punctuation.

The third unit of this midrashic passage begins with the citation of the next sentence of Scripture at line J. Line K then gives an anonymous interpretation, which begins with a citation of the biblical word being interpreted, followed by the interpretation and a verse that supports the interpretation.

All of these midrashic units, in both midrashim, are carefully organized so that each passage's formal structure distinguishes between the scriptural passage under interpretation and the exegesis given. Even when the interpretation is anonymous, there is no confusion between Scripture and its interpretation.

This difference is a hierarchical one, not an egalitarian one. The interpretation does not possess the same standing as Scripture but a lesser one. Even as the interpretation explicates Scripture's meaning, it is secondary. The interpretation hence does not possess the same sacred status as Scripture.

Although the interpretation differs from Scripture, it should also be noted that it is linked to Scripture. Each time an interpretation is given, it brings insight into the character and meaning inherent in the biblical word, phrase, or passage. That insight is directly paired with the Scripture citation. Furthermore, that insight is seen as positive. Throughout the midrashic text, the repeated joining of Scripture with its interpretation gives the interpretation a status just lower than that of Scripture. The interpretation is not Scripture itself, but its purposeful association with Scripture makes it the next best thing. Its conjoining with Scripture may not render it sacred, but it does become authoritative.

If the interpretation is considered authoritative, then so too are the interpreters. The midrashim consistently cite members of a single social and religious class as the interpreters, namely, rabbis. The passages cited as examples above are representative of the midrashim as a whole in that every person whose name is attached to an exegesis is a rabbi and

is labeled as such. This means that the Jews who consider the midrashic works authoritative must also consider the rabbis—the rabbinic class as a whole—as bearers of religious authority. Use of and belief in the importance of the midrashic work thus has the social consequence enhancing the status of the rabbinic authorities as a class. It reinforces their status.

With this perspective on the implications of the formal structure of the midrashic works, let us turn to the Targums and ask the same questions of its formal organization. As we have observed, the seamless interweaving of literal translation and additions in the Targums hides the additional material within the translation. For those who do not know the Hebrew text intimately or immediately bring it to recall, the entire Targum functions as translation. There is no signaling or indication of added interpretations, as in the midrashim, that would assist recognition of the different sources of the Targum's wording.

This has two implications for the status of targumic interpretation. First, the standing of the interpretation is the same as the standing of Scripture because it is seen as Scripture. That is to say, the interpretation is elided with Scripture and so becomes Scripture itself. Since there is no ability to differentiate the two, interpretation for all intents and purposes becomes Scripture. Second, there is a downside to this. In Targums, interpretation may achieve recognition as Scripture, but it does so by relinquishing its identity. Interpretation is no longer seen as different from Scripture. Since it cannot be identified, it cannot possess an independent identity. In terms of what can be recognized, interpretation no longer exists; it is all Scripture.

Of course the rabbis recognized the danger the Targums posed. They knew that Targums contained interpretation masquerading as Scripture translation. Many of the rabbinic rules we analyzed in the previous chapter were aimed at preventing Targums from succeeding in this function. Our point is that while such rules and practices may have made people aware of the problem, they did not actually prevent it from happening. As long as Targums were used, they functioned to hide interpretation within Scripture and give it the same standing. By the time of the Babylonian Talmud, it is clear that the rabbinic class had realized the ineffectiveness of their rulings in preventing the Targums' usurpation of Scripture's meaning. Instead, they decided that since they could not prevent this substitution, they could at least ensure that the correct interpretation was being substituted. That is why they threw their weight behind Targum Onqelos and Targum Jonathan.

What were the ramifications for social status of this targumic elision of interpretation into Scripture? Whereas the midrashic interpretations enhanced the status of the rabbinic class because of their dependence on

rabbis to give the interpretations, the Targums lack a parallel process. It is not just that the interpretations given in the Targums are anonymous and thus have no person or group to which to lend their support. It is that effectively there is no interpretation. If the synagogue congregation hears the Targum as all one thing, and that one thing is understood to be Scripture—as we just argued—then there is no interpretation (authoritative or otherwise) that would serve the same social function as midrashic interpretation. Whatever group or type of people composed the Targums, their interpretations cannot serve to lend them status.

This is ironic, since targumic interpretation achieved a higher status (in theory at least) than midrashically expressed interpretations. Interpretations in the Targums were the same as Scripture, while those in the midrashim were “just below” Scripture. Because targumic interpretations were not recognized as such, they lent no authority to their creators, while the lower standing of midrashic interpretations—even if the same in content—gave the rabbinic class authoritative social standing. This may contribute to the explanation of how, over the centuries following the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, the rabbinic class finally comes out on top as the leaders of Judaism.¹³

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the formal character of the Targums' text to envision how the Targums and their rendering functioned for the synagogue congregations who heard them. Their ability to incorporate additional exegesis and explanation as hidden interpretation that melded together with the literal translation to create a unified, seamless text enabled the rise of Targums to become the meaning of Scripture. Although the Targum texts never physically replaced the Hebrew Scriptures—in the way the Septuagint did for Greek-speaking Jews and the King James Version still does for many American Christians—the Targums became its contents, being seen as containing and purveying the meaning which linguistic differences had hidden in the Hebrew. If modern scholars hope to understand the scriptural knowledge of average Jews of this period—as opposed to the highly educated yet small rabbinic elite—then they need to turn away from the Hebrew text and toward the Aramaic Targums which provided that knowledge.

¹³ A successful rise of the rabbinic class to the leadership of Judaism was by no means assured in the centuries immediately following the temple's destruction. See Flesher, “Literary Legacy,” for an explication of the situation.

ANCIENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATIONS

In addition to the Targums, the Hebrew Bible was translated at least six times in antiquity,¹ sometimes paired with the New Testament as “the Old Testament.” The eastern Mediterranean provided the crucible for this linguistic activity. Among Aramaic speakers, evidence from Qumran shows that Jews translated the book of Job and other Hebrew Bible books into Jewish Literary Aramaic; Samaritans translated their Pentateuch into Samaritan Aramaic; Judean Christians translated the Old and New Testaments into Christian Palestinian Aramaic; and Syrian Christians translated the Christian Bible into the Aramaic dialect of Syriac. Jews also translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek, a translation known as the Septuagint that spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean and became Christianity’s first Bible. Later, at the end of the fourth century, Jerome came to Palestine, where he learned Hebrew and made the Latin translation known as the Vulgate.

For all this wealth of these translations, for much of antiquity, sacred texts simply were not translated, so that the cases of Judaism and Christianity are rather exceptional. In most religions, only prophets, priests, scribes, and other specialists needed direct knowledge of their sacred texts. Those who needed to read them were trained to read, and if the text was in a language they did not know, they were taught that language. So when the first books of the Septuagint were translated during the third century BCE, that undertaking was unusual, so odd that a Greek Jew named Aristeeas felt compelled to tell a story of how the translation had been accomplished by seventy-two of the most learned scholars from the Jerusalem temple who had been brought to Egypt for the purpose.² Despite this endorsement,

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, the translations in this chapter are our own.

² *The Letter of Aristeeas to Philocrates*. For a modern translation and introduction, see

the Septuagint's differences from the Hebrew text remained so controversial in the first century CE that another scholarly Egyptian Jew, Philo Judaeus, retold Aristeas' story, presenting the translation as the product of divine inspiration rather than of human intellect.

As discussed in chapter 2 of this volume, translations are caught between the Scylla of faithfulness to the source text and the Charybdis of intelligibility of the translated text in the target language. An Italian adage has it that *traduttore, traditore*, "to translate is to betray." A translator makes the brave choice to collate commitment to the original text with comprehension on the part of the hearer or reader. Translators also observed cultural factors in choosing between the two. In legal texts, exact wording was important, and so they were usually rendered in a highly literal manner; if the meaning of the translation was unclear, the court could be expected to provide a source-language expert to interpret.³ For other kinds of texts—letters, stories, and instructions—meaning was more important than the original wording, and so translators took steps to make that meaning clear.

In some ways translators should be considered craftsmen. They did what they were expected to do—i.e., translate—and they did it well. They did not theorize in public prior to their translation, nor did they lay out elaborate explanations of what they thought they were doing, as commonly happens today. Latin translators such as Cicero and Jerome occasionally remarked on the nature of translating or the character of translation types, but their comments were unusual, and for that reason remarkable. No one who translated into Aramaic left a reflective comment about the intent or purpose of translating. Although some rabbis mentioned different approaches to translating with the apparent purpose of condemning them (see chapter 14), there is no indication that those issuing the derisive remarks had ever done any translating themselves.

The goal of this chapter is to understand how the translations mentioned above balanced the concerns of providing a faithful rendering of the original text and those of making the translation understandable in the target language. What strategies did the translators use that we can see in the translations itself?

For Targums, these strategies are inherent in the definition of chapter 2. That definition, we recall, emphasized literal rendering of the original combined with non-literal additions:

Schutt, "Letter of Aristeas." For Philo's version of the story, see his *Life of Moses* (*Vita Moses*), 2:25–44. For text and translation, see Colson and Whitaker, *Philo*.

³ Brock, "Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity," 74.

A Targum is a translation that combines a highly literal rendering of the original text with material added into the translation in a seamless manner.

The key point is that the definition shows that the Targums combine two different aspects; each aspect should be analyzed separately, and yet in relation to the other in order to assess the impact of the whole. On the one hand, literal translation requires that the original Hebrew text should be replicated exactly, even word for word, in the Aramaic translation. This aspect emphasizes form over meaning, implying that the original's form should be visible in the translation. Every element of the Hebrew should have a corresponding element in the Aramaic, and those elements should appear in the same order as the original. Of course in practice the Targums contain exceptions to this principle, but targumic translations often adhere quite closely to this expectation. On the other hand, Targums deal with the question of intelligibility by adding words, phrases, and sentences into the literal rendering so that it can be understood. The additional material, sometimes lengthy, ensures not only that the translation can be understood, but that it conveys the "correct" theological understanding as well. In a formal sense, the additions represent nothing explicit in the immediate text being rendered; they break with the expectation of one-to-one correspondence in wording.

Our discussion here aims to explore how other ancient translations approached the two problems of fidelity and intelligibility. We begin with other translations into Aramaic.

ANCIENT SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION

Translators of Scripture in the ancient eastern Mediterranean left behind no theoretical remarks about their goals, purposes, or techniques, as we have mentioned. We can only infer their approach to translation from the translations they actually produced. To determine their approach in balancing the two goals of translation just discussed, therefore, we must examine how each translation treats the original work, identifying its similarities with and innovations from the original. The similarities and innovations together will reveal how they aimed to present the original biblical text. Innovations in particular will help us to see the ways in which they were willing, or thought it necessary, to diverge from the presentation of the original to help the translation remain intelligible to its new audience.

The issue of fidelity to the source text focuses on what features translators identified in the original that needed to appear in the translation. This might involve a literal rendering of the original form and meaning of each individual word, or the overall meaning of phrases or sentences with little attention to their form and wording—an approach that would result in a

paraphrastic translation. We know that the Targums normally provided literal renderings of the source text as a base line of their translations.

The various translators made their translations comprehensible to their readers by following a number of possibilities. If they took the targumic route, then they could make additions of any size (even of a hundred or more additional words) to ensure intelligibility. If their translational approach did not allow such additions, then the obvious choice was to modify the literal translation in some way. We will explore how these translations used substitution, omission, **transposition**, addition of one word or short phrase, or even paraphrase, in an attempt to make the translation's meaning clear.

As we shall see, additions to the translated text, as in the Targums, enabled the translator to give an exactly literal translation. In contrast, altering the literal translation to enhance intelligibility forces a translation to provide a less literal rendering of the original. Because the Targum has two aspects—that of literal rendering and that of addition—we are in a position to compare targumic policy with translations that do not incorporate large amounts of additional material.

In this study, we need to ask—or at least be aware of—one more preliminary question, what was the original text? To determine the number of alterations made in a translation—i.e., the “target text”—we need to know the exact wording of the original text, the “source text.” The most common and the best text of the Hebrew Bible is the Masoretic Text, a Hebrew version of the Tanakh that was stabilized by around the ninth century CE by scholars who compiled a Masorah, that is, a set of codes and notes aimed to ensure the accuracy of a traditional text for the purposes of copying and recitation. Versions of this text were known as early as the second century BCE and are now called the proto-Masoretic Text. During this time, however, there were several contemporaneous versions and translations used by significant groups of Jews (and, in the case of the Septuagint, by a language group larger than Hebrew or Aramaic speakers). These include the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint, and some text types discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran. These constituted potential source texts for translators, and they differ from each other in sometimes important ways. For that reason, in order to perform a comparison of a translation with its “original” text, we must determine what that source text was. Biblical scholars refer to the source text as a translation's *Vorlage*.⁴

⁴ It is a key point of this chapter that comparisons of target and source texts be performed with the correct *Vorlage*. We will not explore the matter of reconstructing the *Vorlage* of a translation. For that approach, see Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 129–33.

The question of Vorlage is particularly important to the first Aramaic translation we shall examine, the Samaritan Targum. It renders not the Masoretic Text, but the *Samaritan Pentateuch*.

THE SAMARITAN TARGUM

During late antiquity, the Samaritans who lived in north central Israel between Judea and Galilee developed a distinctive Aramaic dialect. Prior to the arrival of Islam and its Arabic-speaking civilization in the seventh century, Aramaic formed the dominant language of this religious community. Prayers were conducted in Aramaic and an Aramaic translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch was developed, now known as the Samaritan Targum. In the centuries following Arabic's arrival, knowledge of Aramaic gradually died out among most Samaritans. The prayers were recast into Hebrew, and an Arabic translation of Scripture replaced the Aramaic version. This transformation was so thorough that it was not until 1616 that Western scholars became aware of the Samaritan Targum's existence.⁵

At first, scholarly study of the Samaritan Targum was hampered by the inferior quality of the manuscripts known in the West. Some of them were fragmentary and had been copied by scribes who no longer understood the conventions of Aramaic and its copying. They introduced into the manuscripts many "corrections" based on their knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew and even incorrectly transcribed some letters; they furthermore moved marginal notions and abbreviations into the main text's body. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century, when access to better manuscripts became possible, that these problems began to be overcome.

Today, the academic world knows several readable manuscripts. These have been categorized by Abraham Tal, who has identified ms. J as the earliest known form of the Samaritan Targum (ST). We will examine this text in comparison with the Hebrew text of the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP).⁶ As we shall show in this section, the SP is the correct Vorlage for the Samaritan Targum, rather than the Jewish MT.

We wish to discover the approach used by the Samaritan translators in rendering their Hebrew text. How did they create an accurate rendering of their original while ensuring the audience could understand it? Did they use strategies known from the Targums, or did they take a different approach?

⁵ Tal, *Samaritan Targum*, 1.

⁶ Ms. J of the ST can be accessed at *CAL*. This edition appeared first in Tal, *Samaritan Targum*, along with ms. A. For the Samaritan Pentateuch, see the bibliographical remarks at the end of this chapter.

For our sample study here, we examined seventy-four verses of the Samaritan Targum, drawn from five passages of the Pentateuch: Genesis 12:1-20, Genesis 49:1-10, Exodus 15:1-10, Exodus 20:1-23 (according to the SP numbering), and Numbers 23:1-11. The results are straightforward.

The Samaritan Targum presents the SP in its translation by rendering the source text literally. This literal translation has been crafted to ensure that all elements of the SP were represented by corresponding elements in the Targum. It further aims to ensure that those elements are in the same word order as the original text. In the sample's seventy-four verses, the ST omits no words and transposes none. The literal character of the ST is thus comparable to the literal aspect of the rabbinic-period Jewish Targums.

The ST addresses the audience's ability to comprehend the translation primarily through the use of substitutions—semantic alterations of single words.⁷ There are a number of these in the verses studied here. The ST rarely uses addition in its approach to translation. We found only one single added word in the seventy-four verses studied, and there are none of the larger expansions we might expect if this were a Jewish Targum.

The ST uses substitution as the primary strategy for ensuring the understanding of its Aramaic translation.⁸ This can involve a simple replacement of one word with a semantically related second word, perhaps one providing a different nuance. At Genesis 12:3, the SP's Hebrew has God say that Abram will cause the blessing of all the "families" (משפחות) of the world, while the Samaritan Targum substitutes "clans, nations" (כרני) for "families."

A substitution with a slightly more significant change of meaning appears in Genesis 12:6, where the Samaritan Pentateuch's "Oak of Moreh" (אלון מורא) becomes the ST's "Plains of Vision" (מישר הזבה). The first word change is an outright substitution, while the second comes from an etymological rendering of the place name "Moreh" that interprets it as deriving from the root ראה, "to see."

Perhaps the most weighty semantic alteration occurring in the verses we analyzed appears from Genesis 49:5. The ST alters three words of this six-word verse with substitutions. Here, Jacob distances himself from the attack launched by Simeon and Levi against the Canaanite city ruled by

⁷ Szpek studies the motivations behind particular types of substitutions. See *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Job*, 169–200.

⁸ There is a grammatical level of divergences of the translation from its original that this introductory book will ignore. These include alterations in number, gender and tense, the separation of objective suffixes (or not), and the prefixing of prepositions (or not). Such differences are important at the linguistic level but do not help us address this chapter's main question.

Hamor and his son Shechem (Genesis 34). The ST reads, “they counted a lie among their oaths” (אסכמו שקר בקיומיון). The SP has “and they completed the violence of their swords” (כלו חמס מכרתיהם). The ST’s translation echoes the SP’s form, but not its meaning. Although the SP is about weapons and violence while the ST is about lies and oaths, they both begin with a plural, past-tense verb and end with a plural noun with a masculine plural suffix. The resultant translation shows how substitution provides a strategy for substantially recasting a passage without significantly altering its form or length. Perhaps the ST’s change redirects the violence, since by the time of the translation, Shechem—the name of Hamor’s son—had become the name of the Samaritan capital.

Apart from the substitutions, the ST in the sampled passages contains only a single, one-word addition in Exodus 20:21/22 (20:25 in the MT). The final phrase of this verse is somewhat unclear. The ST fixes the difficulty by transforming it into an if-then construction simply by adding an “if” (אן).

חרבך	כי	גזית	אתהן	תבנה	לא	SP
חרבך	הלא	גזיון	יתין	תבנה	לא	ST
		ותחללהו	עליו	הנפת		SP
		וחללתנה	עליו	הנפת	אן	ST

SP: You will not build [the altar] with hewn stones, for you wield your chisel upon [the altar] and you profane it.

ST: You will not build [the altar] with hewn stones, for your chisel, *if* you wield [it] upon [the altar], you will profane it.

While there are many small differences between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Jewish Pentateuch, the primary difference centers on the location of the cultic center, which was Jerusalem for the Jews and Mt. Gerizim for the Samaritans. In Exodus 20, where God gives the Ten Commandments, the SP contains three large insertions (from the perspective of the MT) emphasizing the Samaritan view. These additions are comparable to those in the Jewish Targums, so that in this case the SP represents the targumic approach better than the ST does. These the ST translates exactly without omitting or adding any words or transposing them. The Aramaic of the ST and the Hebrew of the SP to Exodus 20:13/14 (MT 20:17) can together be translated into English as:

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house, and you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, his field, his male or female slave, his ox or his ass or

anything that is your neighbor's. *And when YHWH your God brings you to the land of the Canaanites which you are about to invade and take possession of, you shall set up large stones and whitewash them with whitewash. And you shall inscribe upon the stone all the words of this Torah. And upon crossing the Jordan you shall set up these stones, about which I charge you today, on Mount Gerizim. And you shall build an altar there to YHWH your God, an altar of stones. Do not wield an iron tool over them. You must build the altar of YHWH your God of unhewn stones. You shall offer on it burnt offerings to YHWH your God. And you shall sacrifice well-being offerings and eat them there, and rejoice before YHWH your God. That mountain is across the Jordan, beyond the west road which is in the and of the Canaanites who dwell in the Arabah, before Gilgal, by the Oak of Moreh, before Shechem.*⁹

This one English translation actually renders both texts, the Hebrew Samaritan Pentateuch and the Aramaic Samaritan Targum. The ST provides such an exacting rendition of the SP that this is possible.

This overview of the ST and its relationship to the SP shows the detailed attention with which the Targum renders the original Hebrew text. The large insertion in Exodus 20 shows the importance of making the Hebrew/Aramaic comparison with the correct Vorlage. This is true for short passages as well as for such longer ones. A comparison of the ST with the MT instead of the SP would mistakenly suggest that the ST made more extensive use of additional material. Instead, the crucial additions appear in the Hebrew SP itself rather than the Targum. For example, at Numbers 23:4 and 5, where the MT depicts God himself appearing to Balaam, the SP adds the word “angel” (מלאך) to ensure the audience understands that it is not God himself, but his messenger, who spoke to Balaam. Similarly, when Abram and Sarah leave Pharaoh’s palace in Genesis 12:20, the SP makes clear that the entire party leaves by adding the two words, “and Lot was with him” (ולוט עמו). In both cases the ST translates the SP exactly. If the comparison had been incorrectly made to the MT, then it would look as if the ST was making additions, which it is not.¹⁰

Complications with regard to Vorlage can arise, however. At Numbers 23:10, the ST suddenly follows the MT more closely than the SP. The SP seems to have an abbreviated version of the MT text at this verse, but the Targum translates the longer rendition.

⁹ This translation is based on Hepner, “The Samaritan Version of the Tenth Commandment,” 149; italics added.

¹⁰ Another change in the SP appears at Gen 12:16, which tells of all the wealth that Abram took with him from Egypt, listing seven specific kinds of wealth, all living people or animals. Into this list, the SP adds three words beyond the MT, “quite weighty possessions” (קניאן יקר שריר). The SP then transposes one word, in comparison to the MT: “donkey” (חמרם) moves to be paired with “she-asses” (אתנן). Perhaps the SP is targumic.

יַעֲקֹב	עֶפֶר	מִנָּה	מִי	MT
יעקב	מעפר			SP
יעקב	עפר	מני	מן	ST
יִשְׂרָאֵל	רִבַּע	אֶת־	וּמִסְפָּר	MT
ישראל	מרבעת		ומספר	SP
ישראל	מרבע		מניאן	ST

MT: Who can count the dust of Jacob, and number the powder of Israel?

SP: From the dust of Jacob and the number of the powder of Israel.¹¹

ST: Who can count the dust of Jacob, the sum of the powder of Israel?

For the first four words of the Aramaic passage, the ST translates the text of the MT. The SP for this opening phrase sets up a five-word sentence fragment that lacks a verb; there is no term corresponding to the verb of the first phrase and the second, parallel phrase has become a noun. Even though the ST follows the SP in the second phrase, its rendering of the MT for the first phrase enables the sentence to make sense. The difficulty in the SP may be explained as a copyist error: perhaps SP was initially like the MT, but a copyist accidentally left out the first two words of the verse and even the direct object marker in the second phrase.¹²

The problems with Numbers 23:10 aside, it is clear that the Samaritan Targum provides a highly literal translation. It maintains the Hebrew text's word order and replicates every element of the HT so that there is no omission of linguistic information—much like the Jewish Targums. It nearly always addresses the concerns of intelligibility by the use of substitution, only rarely adding even a single word. There is no tendency to incorporate larger additional material and expansions for explanation or clarity, as with the rabbinic-period Targums.¹³

¹¹ In the MT, **מספר** is a verb with “dust” (**רבע**) as the direct object. The SP lacks an indication of the direct object, so **מספר** should be understood as a noun.

¹² This suggestion gains currency from the observation that ms. A of the ST follows the MT exactly in these two phrases. See Tal, *Samaritan Targum*, 2:251.

¹³ Given this approach to rendering the original Hebrew, perhaps the Samaritan Targum is no more worthy of the name “Targum” than is the Aramaic version of Job at Qumran.

BIBLICAL TRANSLATIONS BY PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS

A little known and even less explored set of Aramaic translations were produced by Palestinian Christians into their dialect, known as Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA).¹⁴ These translations have survived only in fragments, with a few verses extant here and there. They are important for our purposes, however, because they provide the responses to our question concerning translations similar to the Samaritan Targum's. First, they are literal renderings that address the question of audience comprehension primarily through substitution. Second, their Vorlage is not the Masoretic Text, but a different version of the Old Testament—this time, the Septuagint!

Christian Palestinian Aramaic formed the dialect of Aramaic speaking Christians of Judea—those who did not take up the Greek of a triumphant, imperial Christianity. When Constantine the Great ascended to mastery of the entire Roman Empire in 324, he sent his devout Christian mother Helena on a pilgrimage to territorial Israel. She identified numerous sites where Jesus' miracles and key events of his life took place, as well as other events cited in Scripture. Over the following decades and centuries, Greek-speaking Christianity came to Israel and transformed these locations into shrines and the foundation of the Christian Holy Land. Underneath this new overlay were Christians whose ancestors had been in Israel and who made up a native Christian population in Judea. These Christians spoke an Aramaic which began as a Palestinian dialect but which was gradually transformed over time by contact with Greek. These Christians did not readily understand the Greek Old and New Testaments, so they translated these texts into CPA.

Today we have a few fragments of this scriptural translation, not even 10 percent of the Hebrew Bible. The best of these derive from the fifth through eighth centuries. The most complete publication of these fragments is by Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff.¹⁵ These CPA translation fragments have not undergone wide study, and full analysis of their translation approach lies beyond the concerns of this volume. But one example will suffice to illustrate its balance between literal translation and substitution, as well as the character of its source text.

¹⁴ Sometimes CPA is called "Palestinian Syriac" because of the similarity of the CPA script to Syriac script. This is as far as the similarities go, however. CPA is a western Aramaic dialect that belongs among the Palestinian dialects, while Syriac belongs to the eastern Aramaic dialects.

¹⁵ See Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, *Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic*. For an older edition, see Goshen-Gottstein, *Syropalestinian Version*.

We begin with the Masoretic and CPA versions of Exodus 15:8. A look at the parallel texts below reveals a one-to-one correspondence between the Hebrew and Aramaic in the same word order. The English rendering of the CPA reveals a more complex story, with about half the translated words classed as substitutions (indicated with underline) rather than straight translation.¹⁶

וַיִּבְרוּחַ	אֶפְיָדְךָ	נִעְרָמוּ	מִיָּם	נִצְבּוּ		HT
וּבְרוּחָא	דחמתך	קמו	מיא	קטרו		CPA
כְּמוֹ-נֵד	נִזְלִים	קָפְאוּ	תְּהַמַּת	בְּלֶב-	יָם	HT
הֵיד	דְּשׁוּרָא	מִיָּא	קטרו	גלליא	במצעה דימא	CPA

MT: And in the breath of your nose the waters heaped up,
the streams stood up like a heap;
the depths congealed in the heart of the sea.

CPA: And in the breath of your wrath the waters stood up.
The waters bound together as a wall,
The waves bound together in the midst of the sea.

Exodus 15 contains two poems, and verse 8 belongs to the first one. Its allusive poetic character makes exact translation more difficult. What we see in the CPA translation constitutes a number of substitutions that border on the edge of translation. They shift the nuance or meaning of the original just enough to be noteworthy. In line 1, the CPA's rendering of "wrath" (חמתך) for "nose" (אֶפְיָדְךָ) is valid but limiting. The Hebrew term has a broad series of meanings which range from "nose, nostrils" and "face" to "wrath, anger." The CPA has chosen just the last meaning. Other words show an alteration of nuance. Line 2's "streams" (נִזְלִים) becomes simply "waters" (מיא); line 3's "depths" (תְּהַמַּת) become "waves" (גלליא); and its "in the heart" (בְּלֶב-) shifts to "in the midst" (במצעה). There is also a consistent move away from the notion of the waters "heaping." In line 1, the CPA indicates that the water "stood up" (קמו) rather than "heaped up" (נִעְרָמוּ) and in line 2, the waters "bind together as a wall" (קטרו היד דְּשׁוּרָא) rather than "stand like a heap" (נִצְבּוּ כְּמוֹ-נֵד). None of these changes alter the verse's general meaning, although they do shift some of its metaphors.

¹⁶ Although CPA has its own script, it is not widely known. To assist our readers, we give the CPA text in square Aramaic script.

This sample overview suggests the CPA translation of Exodus 15:8 could have been done right from the Hebrew, but actually it translated the Greek Septuagint version of this verse instead. The LXX made the same changes as the CPA. This becomes clear when we compare the two:

LXX: καὶ διὰ πνεύματος τοῦ θυμοῦ σου διέστη τὸ ὕδωρ
ἐπάγη ὥσει τεῖχος τὰ ὕδατα·
ἐπάγη τὰ κύματα ἐν μέσῳ τῆς θαλάσσης·

LXX: And by the breath of your wrath the water parted;
the waters were congealed as a wall,
the waves were congealed in the midst of the sea.

CPA: And in the breath of your wrath the waters stood up,
The waters bound together as a wall,
The waves bound together in the midst of the sea.

As you can see, the CPA essentially provided a literal translation of the *Greek* into Aramaic. Each of the underlined words in the LXX English rendering shows the translation choices the LXX translator(s) made. With one exception, they comprise the same decisions we saw in the CPA translation. Since the LXX is older by several centuries, it is clear that the CPA translation drew from it. There is no chance that the CPA would have made exactly the same six translation choices as the LXX by coincidence. The only difference between the CPA and its LXX Vorlage comes in the first line. Where the Greek indicates that the waters “part,” διύστημι, the CPA translation follows the MT more closely to indicate that the waters “stood up” (קום). Furthermore, this is representative of the CPA translation approach as a whole, and constitutes just one of many verses where the LXX and the CPA renderings are demonstrably dependent.¹⁷ In terms of this chapter’s question, the CPA keeps to a one-to-one equivalency presented in the word order of the source text, altered only by substitution. In this approach, it is like the ST even though its Vorlage is Greek rather than Hebrew.

Now that we have seen how the CPA and the ST Aramaic translations provide highly literal translations from their non-Masoretic source texts, it is time to turn to two Aramaic translations that draw from the Masoretic Text.

¹⁷ See Goshen-Gottstein, *Bible in the Syropalestinian Version*, viii–xi; and Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, *Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic*, 3.

The Qumran Aramaic Version of Job

From the time of its identification among the Dead Sea scrolls,¹⁸ a collection of fragments from an Aramaic translation of Job (11QTgJob) has been known as a “Targum of Job.”¹⁹ The fragments cover less than one quarter of the biblical book, but they provide an opportunity to expand our understanding of how ancient translations balanced fidelity and intelligibility. The question of Vorlage persists in this case as well. Although there is a general consensus that 11QTgJob was translated from a proto-Masoretic Text, the exact wording of that text remains unknown. So while we will base our analysis on the MT, we must always keep in mind that the wording of any individual passage may have differed from the final MT.

The name of this Qumran translation, “Targum of Job,” went unquestioned for decades; most scholars presumed it must be a Targum, since it was in Aramaic. More recently, Sebastian Brock and Alexander Samely pointed out that this Aramaic rendering was not like the rabbinic Targums and probably should not be called a “Targum.”²⁰ David Shepherd’s book, *Targum and Translation*, took up the gauntlet thrown down by these scholars and subjected their suggestion to a thorough scrutiny.²¹ In the end, he demonstrated that the Qumran Job did not share important features with the rabbinic-era Targum of Job. It was not a Targum but should more appropriately be called the “Qumran Aramaic version of Job” (QA Job), a decision we will follow here as we draw upon his work.

We recall the question we have brought to each of these translations: How did the translator balance the desire to represent the original text accurately with concerns for the audience’s ability to understand the resulting translation? For QA Job, the approach began with the intention to reproduce the source text in a literal manner, yet the translator adopted several different strategies to make it more intelligible—more than we saw in the two translations discussed previously. This includes a willingness to omit certain words and thus diverge from a one-to-one correspondence, a willingness to transpose words and thus ignore the source text’s word

¹⁸ The Qumran Aramaic rendering of Leviticus is not studied here because it is too fragmentary and has too few words preserved. See Stuckenbruck and Freedman, “Fragments of a Targum to Leviticus.” These fragments are the remains of just 8 verses, Lev 16:12-15, 18-21, for a total of 50 words, only 22 of which are complete.

¹⁹ Also a few fragments of a different copy from Cave 4, known as 4QarJob.

²⁰ Brock, “Palestinian Targum Feature in Syriac,” 274–75; and Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 159. Bruce Chilton independently made the same observation in “Targumim.”

²¹ Shepherd, *Targum and Translation*. Shepherd did not know the definition of Targum put forward in this volume—indeed, his work in part prompted its development.

order, and a willingness to add a few words into the translation.²² All this comes in addition to the use of substitution as a means of transforming the text's meaning while adhering to its form. In the end, the resultant translation becomes much less literal than the previous two.

Job 38:28-29 provides an example of QAJob's literal character, giving a corresponding rendering of the grammatical and semantic character of the MT with only one substitution in each verse.

Job 38:28

או	אב	למטר	היש-	HT
או	אב	למטרא	האיתי	QAJ
טל	אגלי-	הוליד	מי-	HT
טלא	ענני	ילד	מן	QAJ

Job 38:29

הקרנח	יצא	מי	מבטן	HT
גלידא	נפק	מן	בטן ומן	QAJ
	ילדו	מי	שמים	HT
	ילד[ה	מ[ן	שמיא]ע	QAJ

MT:²³

- (28) Has the rain a father,
or who gave birth to the drops of dew?
(29) From whose womb did the ice come forth,
and the hoarfrost of heaven who gave birth [to it]?

QAJ:

- (28) Has the rain a father,
or who gave birth to the clouds of dew?
(29) From whose womb did the ice come forth,
and who gave birth to the covering of heaven?

²² For comparative observations concerning the study of omission and transposition, see Szpek, *Translation Technique*, 108–17 and 162–69. Shepherd makes clear that, with only a couple of exceptions, the rabbinic-era Tg. Job does not use omission or transposition at all in the same areas where both the Peshitta and QAJ do. See Shepherd, *Targum and Translation*, 117 and 217–23.

²³ Both versions are our translation, with consultation of the NRSV.

The literal character of QA Job's translation stands out clearly. Every word of the MT has a corresponding equivalent in the translation, laid out in the same order. Most of each verse of the translation is semantically equivalent as well, with just two exceptions. In Job 38:28 the MT's "dew" becomes QA Job's "clouds." In the next verse, MT's "hoarfrost" is rendered by QA Job as "covering." This seems to be a mistaken reading of the HT, so obvious as to appear deliberate. The rare term for hoarfrost, כִּפֹּר, contains the same three root letters as the common verb meaning of "to cover" (כִּפֵּר). This latter term underlies QA Job's rendition, so this word's rendering could be seen as a translation rather than substitution. The sample of these two verses indicates that the aims of QA Job follow the same basic techniques that we have seen at work so far: a literal translation combined with substitution.

But QA Job also uses other strategies to achieve a more understandable translation. One technique is omission.²⁴ Sometimes QA Job blatantly leaves out a phrase of several words or even an entire sentence. At Job 42:10, for example, it drops the three-word phrase, "And Job prayed for his friends." At Job 38:24, the translation ignores the entire verse. In other passages, unusual grammatical constructions in the Masoretic Text attain resolution through the dropping of prepositions. QA Job chose not to translate the preposition עַל ("upon") in both Job 29:7 and 34:13, while it left out a prefixed מִן ("from") in Job 34:30.

Shepherd identifies twenty-nine different omissions in QA Job; in the rabbinic-era Targum of Job to the same passages there are just three.²⁵ This clearly shows the difference in translation approach between QA Job and the later Targum of Job. The rabbinic-era Targum adheres much more strongly to the goal of a consistent one-to-one correspondence of the translation to the words of its source text.

Small additions also constitute a strategy of QA Job's approach to translation. The dropping of prepositions, for instance, often goes along with the addition of a word. In Job 29:7, a verse whose fragment lacks the beginning and end, it is still clear that the translator added a word. The MT of the verse reads, בְּצֵאתִי שַׁעַר עָלִי-קֶרֶת, "When I went out to the gate of the city," while QA Job has צִפְרִין בְּתֵרַעִי קִרְיָא, "[In] the mornings at the gate of the city." Similarly at Job 34:13, the MT, מִי־פָקֵד עָלָיו אֲרָצָה, "Who gave him charge over the earth?" becomes in QA Job, הוּא אֲרַעָא עֲבַד,

²⁴ These examples are taken from Shepherd, *Targum and Translation*, 41–73.

²⁵ Shepherd, *Targum and Translation*, 35–74, indicates there are 28 omissions that occur only in QAJ plus one shared by all three Aramaic translations. There are two omissions unique to the rabbinic-era Targum plus one shared with the other Aramaic translations. See 35–40, 111–16.

“... He *made* the earth.” While the words before “earth” are missing, it is clear that “made” (עבד) is added at the end of the phrase.²⁶

Other additions inserted into QA Job’s translations remain small but vary in character. In Job 38:30, for example, the literal rendition of a three-word phrase adds a preposition with a pronominal suffix, indicating that recipient of the action, “Like a stone the water covered *over it*” (כא[בן] מין התקרמו מנה). QA Job’s translation of Job 39:6, by contrast, adds a noun to clarify the Hebrew’s implication. The MT gives the verse as:

אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמְתִי עֲרָבָה בֵּיתוֹ וּמִשְׁכְּנוֹתָיו מֶלֶחָה

[The wild ass] whom I gave the dry land as its home and its dwelling place the salt[-land].

A reading of the last two words of the verse could be interpreted as literally meaning that he gave the ass “salt” as a home, or it could be seen as a construct phrase meaning a “house of salt.” To avoid these misunderstandings, the translator of QA Job rendered the phrase with an added word, ומדדה בארע מליחה, “and his dwelling *in the land of salt*.”²⁷ These are examples of the short additions, usually one word, which QA Job regularly inserts as part of its strategy to enhance the clarity of translation. Their brief character makes it clear that this is not the same strategy used by the rabbinic-era Targums of inserting larger additions.

The final technique for clarity purposes used by QA Job’s translator is that of altering the word order of the translation from that used by the source text, called transposition. Shepherd points out that QA Job uses this technique twenty-one times, while the rabbinic-era Job Targum uses it (at most) twice in the same passages.²⁸ Often this is little more than two adjacent words trading places. In QA Job to Job 29:11, the MT’s “When the ear heard” (כִּי אָזַן שָׁמְעָה), becomes “[. . .] heard the ear” (שמע אדן[. . .]).

In QA Job to Job 36:25, this kind of switch happens twice, along with other complications. At the verse’s beginning, the MT’s “All men see it” (כָּל-אָדָם חֹזֵיבוֹ), is rendered by QA Job as “All men upon it look” (כל אנש) (א עלוהי חזין). Similarly, at the verse’s end, “Man searches from afar” (אָנוּשׁ

²⁶ Szpek’s classification of additions appear in *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Job*, 133–52.

²⁷ This rendering also appears in the Peshitta. See Szpek, *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Job*, 161.

²⁸ See Shepherd, *Targum and Translation*, 125–58, 193–98. Note that in the rabbinic Targum to Job some passages are not evidenced by all manuscripts, and hence the transpositions may stem from copyists rather than constituting the Targum’s original formulation.

יְבִיט מְרַחֵק (יבִיט מְרַחֵק) found in the MT is given by QA Job as “and the sons of men from afar for it they search” (ובני אנשא מרחיק [ב]ה יבקון). This second phrase is not just a simple transposition, however, it also contains two added words: “sons of” to make the subject plural paralleling the verse’s first phrase, and a lacuna that implies an added preposition to indicate the object of viewing as well.

The observation that additions appear together with transpositions indicates that the Targumist did not consider the techniques we have identified as separate tools only to be used independently. Instead, he combined them as needed to achieve the recasting of verses where deemed necessary. QA Job to Job 39:25 could be described as a mix of translation, addition, and substitution—and technically it is—but such a description misses the forest for the trees. The true point is that the translator recast the verse so that it would be comprehensible to its readers. The MT to the verse is as follows, with the translation divided to reflect the Hebrew’s three phrases:

בְּדִי שֶׁפֶר יֹאמֵר הָאֵחַ וּמְרַחֵק יֵרִיחַ מִלְחָמָה רַעַם שָׁרִים וְתוֹעָה

- A. In the sufficiency of the trumpet, he says, “aha”!
- B. and from afar he smells the battle,
- C. the thunder of the leaders and the shouting.

There are two problems with this verse. First, the opening word, בְּדִי (“In the sufficiency”), is problematic. Is it just an unusual way to say “when” or does it mean something else? Second, does line C lack a verb or does it belong with B—and thus B’s “he” also “smells” the thunder and the shouting. QA Job resolves both problems by combining these techniques to recast the verse.

וּלְקַל קֶרֶנָּא יֹאמֵר הָאֵחַ וּמִן רַחִיק יֵרִיחַ קֶרֶבָה וּלְנִקְשַׁת

זֶיז וּזְעָקַת אֲשֶׁתְּדוֹר יַחַדָּה

- A. And at the voice of the horn, he says, “aha”!
- B. And from afar he smells war,
- C. and at the clash of a weapon and the sound of *rebellion*, he rejoices.

The first problem is resolved simply by substituting “voice” for “sufficient.” The second problem is resolved by rewriting the entire line C. The addition of a verb and the balancing of both phrases to contain two words each, describes the grammatical changes. The semantic alteration, though, is more significant. The notion of “officers” is dropped, and the clash of weaponry substituted. Line C’s “sound” probably echoes the

MT's "shouting," although the notion of rebellion comes from nowhere. The most important change though is the notion that he takes pleasure in these sounds, that battle is somehow enjoyable.

In the end, it is clear that Qumran's Aramaic version of Job addresses the goal of making the translation intelligible by altering its literal character through substitution, addition, omission, and transposition. This not only provides flexibility for ensuring Aramaic readers can understand the translation on a linguistic level, but it also helps the translator address questions of the text's intelligibility in creative ways that go beyond the mere delineation of translation strategies to the enhancement of the text's message.

The Peshitta

Our survey of how different Aramaic translations balance fidelity to the source text with reader comprehension has moved from simple to more complex. All three translations approached fidelity by literal replication, while the strategies for reader comprehension went from only substitution to the use of transposition, omission, and addition as well. At the same time, these translations drew from different Vorlagen, from the Hebrew Samaritan Pentateuch to the Greek Septuagint, and then to the proto-MT.

The Peshitta translation of the Old Testament, like QAJ, combines a literal approach to its source text with a variety of strategies for ensuring comprehension. Of all the Aramaic translations, it is most surely based upon the proto-MT. It introduces a further level of complexity, however, that of the impact of Jewish biblical interpretation. Does the use of such exegesis constitute a second Vorlage, or do the interpretations play a less pervasive role?

The Peshitta has been used by the Orthodox churches of Syria and the East as far back as its existence is known. Extant manuscripts from the fifth century still exist and references to it appear in fourth-century writings; some scholars speculate that it may have been composed as early as the first century.²⁹ The translation is composed in Syriac, an eastern Aramaic dialect written in three different scripts.³⁰

²⁹ Dirksen refers to fourth-century comments by both Aphrahat and Ephraim Syrus mentioning the Peshitta. See Dirksen, "Old Testament Peshitta," 255. For a description of the Peshitta's stages, see Koster, "Copernican Revolution," 51–54. Scholars who place the Peshitta's composition into the first century usually link it to King Izates of Adiabene (c. 40 CE). According to Dirksen, this idea was first proposed by J. Marquart in 1903, and later elaborated by Anton Baumstark and Kahle. See Dirksen, "Old Testament Peshitta," 266–67. See also Gelston, *Peshitta of the Twelve Prophets*, 195.

³⁰ None of the three scripts for Syriac is like that of the block Aramaic letters used in Palestinian forms of Aramaic and post-exilic Hebrew.

Over the past half century, a project headquartered at the Peshitta Institute of Leiden University in The Netherlands has worked to produce a scholarly edition of the Peshitta on the basis of all known manuscripts.³¹ Although a few volumes remain unpublished, the edition has already inspired a major transformation in the understanding of the Peshitta. Prior to 1950, the Peshitta was known from its *Textus Receptus* or “Standard Text.” We now know this version arose in the ninth and tenth centuries. There were two earlier editions, one concentrated in the manuscripts of the fifth century and one based on the manuscripts of the seventh century.³² Since the latter text is the best evidenced, it has been published by the Leiden edition as the primary text of the Peshitta.

One result of this new picture of the Peshitta’s development is that the Leiden text is much shorter than the Standard Text. The earliest forms of the Peshitta translation had little in the way of additional material; over the centuries copyists introduced an increasing number of non-literal alterations and additions.³³

Even though the Peshitta’s transmission is generally unified, the composition of individual books was not. They were written at different times by different authors. While many books are quite similar in technique, others were composed using different translation approaches. Some are rather literal, such as those of the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets, while a few works exhibit more non-literal features. Indeed, Peshitta Chronicles contains expansive characteristics associated with Targums. So although we will speak in general terms about the Peshitta, the remarks apply in differing degrees to different books.

The Vorlage question for the Peshitta has been hotly debated since 1859, when J. Perles demonstrated that the Peshitta drew in many places from interpretations known in Jewish writings, primarily rabbinic literature.³⁴ In the twentieth century, Perles’ observations were extended by P. Kahle, A. Baumstark, and their students, into theories about how the Peshitta comprised a rendering of a Jewish Targum into Syriac.³⁵ Although these theories dominated scholarly discourse for much of the twentieth century, by the 1960s, they were unraveling. A different development

³¹ Published by Brill as the series *Peshitta: The Old Testament in Syriac*.

³² For a description of the Peshitta’s stages, see Koster, “Copernican Revolution in the Study of the Origins,” 51–54.

³³ This is Koster’s observation and has been borne out by other Peshitta scholars. See, e.g., J. Cook, “Composition of the Peshitta Version of the Old Testament,” 168.

³⁴ Perles, *Meletemata Peschitthoniana*.

³⁵ See Dirksen, “Old Testament Peshitta,” for an extensive review of the history of scholarship.

from Perles was the idea that the Peshitta used Targum Onqelos.³⁶ Even this position has been unpersuasive, as P. Dirksen has pointed out.³⁷

The problem is that parallels between the Targums and the Peshitta are comparatively few, often exegetically minor, and are few in number when compared to passages without such parallels. With one exception, no book shows consistent, continuous evidence of such ties. Parallels are usually either one or two words or merely similar ideas without “phraseological similarity,” as Wernberg-Møller put it.³⁸ The exception is the book of Proverbs, in which the Targum seems to depend on the Peshitta, rather than vice versa!

In the past twenty years, however, a new consensus has developed.³⁹ First formulated on a large scale by Y. Maori, the explanation is that the Peshitta’s translators knew Jewish interpretive traditions from a broad range of sources. These occur in the Peshitta translations episodically and randomly. Even in verses where the Peshitta and a Targum share an interpretation, that interpretation may derive from an exegesis expressed in rabbinic literature, in the Septuagint, or in other Jewish writings. Studies by a range of scholars have supported this understanding.⁴⁰ Scholarship has now come full circle from Perles’ initial claim that the Peshitta evidenced knowledge of Jewish traditions and interpretations.

Because of this low level of interpretive influence, the Peshitta’s Vorlage comes down to the proto-Masoretic Text. Its translators worked from this version of the Hebrew text, and provided a rather literal rendering of it. To be sure, they occasionally salted the translation with tidbits in common with Jewish interpretation, but there is no indication of systematic parallels or dependency of the Peshitta on the Targums.

With the matter of Vorlage settled, we can address the question of this chapter, how does the Peshitta balance fidelity to the original text with the need for clarity in the translation? For most books the original text is represented with a rather accurate, literal rendering. The Peshitta’s

³⁶ Dirksen, “Old Testament Peshitta,” 277–81.

³⁷ See Dirksen, “Old Testament Peshitta,” 283–85.

³⁸ See Wernberg-Møller, “Prolegomena to a Re-examination of the Palestinian Targum Fragments,” 255.

³⁹ See Maori, *Peshitta Version of the Pentateuch* and “Relationship Between the Peshitta Pentateuch and the Pentateuchal Targums.”

⁴⁰ The participants in Flesher, *Targum Studies*, vol. 2: *Targum and Peshitta* agreed with this position, at least for the evidence they examined. These include Jerome Lund, Moshe Bernstein, Piet Dirksen, M.D. Koster, Anthony Gelston, Michael Weitzman, and Heidi Szpek—among others. Other scholars have produced data supporting this position. See Smelik, *Targum of Judges*, 234–90; and J. Cook, “Composition of the Peshitta Version of the Old Testament.” De Moor and Sepmeijer’s study of Joshua led them to see a connection with the Targum, however.

translators made substitution their primary approach to readability. Otherwise literal renderings, which adhere closely to the form of the MT, may contain one or more substitutions. These do not alter the form, yet they affect its meaning. Exodus 15:9 and 10 provides a good example of this approach.⁴¹

שָׁלַל	אֶחָלֵק	אֲשִׁיג	אֶרְדֹּף	אוֹיֵב	אָמַר	HT
בזתא	ואפלג	ואדרך	בעלדבבא ארדוף		אמר	Pesh.

יָדִי	תּוֹרִישְׁמוֹ	חֲרָבִי	אֶרִיק	נַפְשִׁי	תִּמְלֵאֲמוֹ	HT
אידי	ותחרוב אנון	סיפי	אסמות	נפשי	טבלע אנון	Pesh.

HT: The enemy said, ‘I will chase, I will overtake,
I will divide the booty, my soul shall be full from them.
I will empty my sword [from its sheath], my hand will dispossess them.’

Pesh.: The enemy said, “I will pursue, I will trample.
And I will divide the spoil. My soul will swallow them.
I will draw my sword. My hand will lay waste to them.”

The Peshitta version of Exodus 15:9 has four substitutions of verbs. In two cases only a shift of implication takes place rather than any important change. The Hebrew’s “to be full” becomes “to swallow,” an alteration which indicates how one becomes full. The MT’s “I will empty my sword” implies the act of drawing the sword by “emptying” the scabbard—which is what the Peshitta renders. The other two verbs become indicators of the physical outcome which the enemy hopes to inflict on Israel—“trampling” and “laying waste”—instead of the rather allusive notions of “overtaking” and “dispossessing.” Note also the added *waw*, “and,” a common technique in the Peshitta.

The Peshitta’s rendering of Exodus 15:10 has only a single substitution.

צָלָלוּ	יָם	כְּסָמוֹ	בְּרוּחָךְ	נִשְׁפָּתָה	HT
צבעו	ימא	אנון	ועסי	רוחך	אשבת
		אֲדִירִים	בְּמִים	כַּעֲזוּפָרֶת	HT
		תקיפא	במיא	אברא	איך
					Pesh.

⁴¹ The Peshitta text is that of the Leiden text. We give it in square Aramaic characters, since the Syriac alphabet is less widely known.

HT: You blew with your wind, sea covered them;
they sank like lead in the noble waters.

Pesh.: You blew with your wind, *and* the sea covered them;
they sank like lead in the strong waters.

The Peshitta follows the MT with just two alterations. The first is the substitution of the final word, “strong” instead of “noble.” The second is an added *waw* before the third word. These two verses demonstrate the same approach to balancing fidelity and comprehensibility, literal translation with substitution, that we have seen in the previous texts.

Like QA Job, the Peshitta goes beyond this single technique to include other ways of ensuring clarity. It employs the same three approaches as in that earlier text: altering the word order through transposition, reducing the one-to-one correspondence through omission, and the use of added words.

Transposition happens on a regular basis in the Peshitta. Sometimes this is just the exchange of two words in a list, like those for silver and gold in Genesis 24:53 and Numbers 22:18 or names in Exodus 32:3. In other passages the change affects the emphasis in a sentence. At Judges 13:11, the MT’s וַיָּקָם וַיֵּלֶךְ מְנוּחַ “And he rose and followed Manoah . . .” becomes קוּם מְנוּחַ וְאֵזַל “And Manoah rose and followed. . . .” Similarly, at Numbers 5:9, the MT’s “and all the holy things of the Israelites which they bring . . .” becomes in the Peshitta, כֻּלְהוֹן קוּדְשָׁא דְמִקְרַבִּין בְּנֵי אִיסְרָאֵל “all the holy things which they are bringing[*i.e.*,] the Israelites.” In this last change, the ownership which the MT’s construct construction implies disappears in the Peshitta translation.

The Peshitta frequently uses omission as well, sometimes by simply leaving out words without making any changes in the surrounding context, especially if the missing words in the MT seem redundant. The story of Rahab and the spies in Joshua 2 has several such instances. In Joshua 2:1, the MT’s וַיָּבֹאוּ בֵּית-אִשָּׁה “and they entered the house of the woman [Rahab]” becomes in the Peshitta, וְעָלוּ לֹת אֲנַתְתָּא “and they entered with the woman.” Joshua 2:3 has the king asking her to give up the spies, saying in the MT, הוֹצִיֵאִי הָאֲנָשִׁים הַבָּאִים אֵלַיךְ אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ לְבֵיתְךָ “Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house.” The Peshitta drops the last three words of the request, אַפְקִי גְבֵרָא דְעָלוּ לֹתְכִי “bring out the men who have come to you.” The Peshitta continues to drop out words across this story, leaving out three words from Joshua 2:10, and one word each from Joshua 2:11, 12, 16, and 22.

Sometimes the Peshitta’s translators rework the remaining context after an omission to ensure that the resulting sentence makes sense. Judges 19:5 omits two verbs yet remains comprehensible.

HT וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הָרְבִיעִי וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בְּבֹקֶר וַיָּקֻם לִלְכָּת
Pesh. וּבְיוֹמָא דַּארְבַּעָא קְדָם בַּצְפְּרָא לְמֵאזֻל

HT: And it was on the fourth day and they rose in the morning and he prepared to go.

Pesh.: And on the fourth day he got up early in the morning to go.

The MT has three verbs in the opening seven words of the verse. The Peshitta reduces them to one. The first omitted verb, the copula, is not needed to start the sentence and hence is dropped. The second missing verb, the MT's "and he prepared" transfers some of its features, such as its singularity, back onto the remaining verb. The translators also remove the *waw*, "and," that had been connecting the last two phrases to join them together with the same verb.

Perhaps it is the care with which the Peshitta's translators recast sentences after omission that led to a technique we have not yet seen, that of true paraphrase. By paraphrase, we mean the translation of the meaning of a phrase or sentence while ignoring its form. The Peshitta to Joshua 1:8 does this when it omits five of the verse's last seven words. In the MT, the verse's end reads:

לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל-הַכְּתוּב בּוֹ כִּי-אֶזְרָא תַּעֲלֶיךָ אֶת-דֶּרֶכְךָ וְאַזְתָּשְׁכִּיל

. . . to act in accordance with all that is written in it [i.e., the Torah]. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful.

The Peshitta shortens its translation of this verse by retaining only the verbs in the last two phrases, "וְתַעֲבֹד כָּל דְּכָתִיב בָּהּ וְתַצְלַח וְתִכְשֹׁר", ". . . and do all that is written in it, and you will be successful and fortunate."

Another paraphrase appears in the Peshitta to Job 39:2.⁴² In the MT, God speaks of the number of months of a deer's pregnancy and asks Job, "Can you number the months that they fulfill?" This is just three words in Hebrew, תִּסְפֹּר יָרֵחִים תִּמְלֹאנָה. The Peshitta recasts this, giving the same meaning but leaving out any representation of the third word, "they fulfill (תִּמְלֹאנָה)." It simply reads: נַתְר אֵית מְנִינָא דִּירְחָא, "Can you watch the counting of the months?" In the Peshitta the notion of counting is moved from the verb to a noun, while the indication of person shifts to a separate personal pronoun and a new verb is inserted—a participle emphasizing "watching, guarding," which is a notion not in the original.⁴³

⁴² Shepherd, *Targum and Translation*, 101–2. Szpek, *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Job*, 166.

⁴³ Szpek discusses the use of paraphrase in the Peshitta in similar terms. See Szpek, *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Job*, 161–62.

The Peshitta also uses the addition of a small number of words—not the larger expansions known in the Targums—to help ensure reader comprehension. These are usually just a single word, and rarely may be as many as four. At 1 Kings 10:24, The MT's וְכָל-הָאָרֶץ מְבַקְשִׁים, “And all the earth sought out [King Solomon]” is rendered by the Peshitta with one added word as וְכָל-הָאָרֶץ מְבַקְשִׁים בְּעֵין, “And all *the kings* of the earth sought out [King Solomon].” Similarly, Judges 6:25 contains two extra words, added individually at different locations. The MT מִזִּבְחַ הַבַּעַל אֲשֶׁר לְאֵבִיד, “[pull down] your father’s altar of Baal, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it” becomes in the Peshitta, מִדְּבַחָה, דְּבַעְלָא פְתַכְרָה דְּאִבּוּךְ וְאַסְתֵּרָא דְּקִימָא עִלּוּהּ פֶּסֶק, “[pull down] your father’s altar of Baal *Pitkarah*, and cut down the Astarte that *he erected* beside it.” A larger insertion appears in Judges 1:1, where the Peshitta adds a four-word formula: וְהוּא מִן בְּתַר דְּמִית יֵשׁוּא בְּרִנּוֹן עַבְדָּה דְּמַרְיָא, “And it was after the death of Joshua *bar Nun, servant of the Lord*.”

For most books of the Peshitta Old Testament, translators use these strategies to aid the intelligibility of the translation. In addition to substitution, the Peshitta uses omission, transposition, and the addition of a word or short phrase. It will also use a paraphrase in a short sentence or phrase. The significance of this departs from its usual approach to representing the MT—that of reproducing its form—and instead renders only the semantics of the source text.

While the citations we have examined provide a picture of the literal character of much of the Peshitta, elsewhere in the Peshitta a different approach appears. The Peshitta to Chronicles provides the best example of these differences. Whereas the other Peshitta books present a translation that hews to a literal format, the Peshitta of Chronicles often strays from rendering the Hebrew text to augmenting, extending, or otherwise taking it beyond the original’s meaning. While T. Nöldeke and his student S. Fraenkel argued that this indicated that the Peshitta drew upon a Targum, M. Weitzman has recently argued much of the non-translational material stems from working with a defective Hebrew manuscript.⁴⁴ The translator often leaves out verses—as many as eight in a row in 1 Chronicles 28—and the passages immediately surrounding the missing sections seem to have been damaged as well.⁴⁵ This of course affects his ability to translate them. This is certainly the case for 1 Chronicles 12:23, where verse 24 is also missing and for 1 Chronicles 4, where verses 34-37 are absent and the translation is problematic for 4:33, just before the missing material.

⁴⁴ Weitzman, *Syriac Version*, 111–16. For his comparison of Targums and Peshitta, see 111–22.

⁴⁵ For a partial list, see Weitzman, *Syriac Version*, 115.

Weitzman goes too far, however, when he argues that this explains most of the non-literal material in Peshitta Chronicles. Verses with such material, he argues:

do not bear any semantic relationship to MT, nor to any putative Hebrew text remotely resembling MT. In that sense they should not be described as translations at all, but rather as free composition. They suggest that in Chronicles the Hebrew *Vorlage* had suffered damage so extensive that the translator was often reduced to weaving sense round the few words or letters that he could read.”⁴⁶

Weitzman’s claim that such passages bear no “semantic relationship” to the Hebrew text and that they seem to be “free composition” makes them sound like targumic additions. The observation that such material has no link to the Hebrew text does not indicate the lack of an original text, where the translator was “reduced to weaving sense round the few words or letters that he could read.” Instead, it suggests that Nöldeke and Fraenkel may have been right, the Chronicles Peshitta may be targumic in character.

Weitzman, like the two earlier scholars, evaluated this issue through the question of whether or not the Peshitta contained targumic exegeses. Our formulation of the question differs. It emphasizes matters of rhetorical form rather than parallel interpretations. An examination of Peshitta to 1 Chronicles 10:3 shows how Peshitta Chronicles fits our formal definition of Targum. In this verse the Peshitta translator provided a translation equivalent of each word in the MT and inserted an addition of eight words crafted to match the flow and sense of the sentence—remarkably targumic!

וַיִּמְצְאוּהוּ	שָׂאוּל	עַל-	הַמֶּלֶךְ חָמָה	וַתִּכְבֹּד	HT
וַאֲשַׁכְּחוּהִי	שָׂאוּל	עַל	קִרְבָּא	וְעָשָׂן	P
			בְּקִשָּׁת	הַמּוֹרִים	HT
לְמִשְׁדָּא	טב	דְּאוּמַּנִּין	קִשְׁטָא	אֲנִשָּׂא	P
					HT
שָׂאוּל	אֲנֹן	חֲזָא	וּכְד	בְּקִשְׁטָא	P

⁴⁶ Weitzman, *Syriac Version of the Old Testament*, 113.

הַיּוֹרִים	מִן		וַיַּחַל	HT
קִדְמֵיהוֹן	מִן	טב	דחל	P

HT: The battle was heavy against Saul; and the archers found him, and he travailed because of the archers.

Pesh.: And the battle was strong against Saul and the *highly* skilled bow-men found him *to shoot with the bow and when Saul saw them* he was *well* afraid before them.

In the part of the translation that follows the MT, there is a one-to-one correspondence with each word, following the HT's word order. Substitution occurs only in the final phrase, where the MT verb חיל ("to writhe, travail") is interpreted as דחל ("to fear"), and the last word switches from the MT's "archers" to "before him." In this, the Peshitta follows the literal character of a Targum.

The additional material also works in a targumic manner; it is inserted without disruption of the sentence's flow into the translation. The clause beginning "and when" (וכד) links the addition to the translation by making the translation subordinate to the additional material, "*and when Saul saw them* he was *well* afraid before them." This verse thus conforms to the definition of Targum. If we read it in a Jewish context and a Jewish dialect, we would not hesitate to call it targumic.

The Peshitta of 1 Chronicles 12:1 works in a similar manner but with a larger amount of additional material. As we can see from the following parallel text, the Peshitta contains significantly more words than the MT, but it still maintains a one-to-one correspondence and in the same word order.

הוּ	דְּקִימִין	דְּדוּיד	גְּבִירוֹהִי	כִּלְהוֹן	הַלִּין	Pesh.
דְּוִיד	אֶל-	הַבָּאִים	וְאֵלָה			HT
דויד	עם	דְּעִלוּ	וְהַלִּין	בְּקִרְבָּא	עֵמָה	Pesh.
מִפְּנֵי	עֲצוֹר		עוֹד		לְצִיקְלָג	HT
מִן	עֵרַק	הוּ	כִּד	קִרִּיתָא	לְעִנְקִלָג	Pesh.
בְּגִבּוֹרִים	וְהִמָּה	קִישׁ	בֶּן-	שָׂאוּל		HT
בְּגִבּוֹרוֹתָא	וְהַנּוֹן	קִישׁ	בֵּר	שָׂאוּל	קִדָּם	Pesh.

						HT
ואלו	דדויד	גברוהי	כלהון	הו	קימין	Pesh.
						HT
בר	לשאול	לה	הו	קטלין	צבא	Pesh.
						HT
הו	וגברא	הו	דגנברין	מטל	קיש	Pesh.
				המלחמה	עזרי	HT
למשבק	דויד	צבא	ולא	קרבא	עבדי	Pesh.
						HT
			לשאול	למקטלה	אנון	Pesh.

HT: And they were the ones who came to David at Ziklag, when he was still restrained before Saul son of Kish; they were among the mighty warriors who helped him in the war.

Pesh.: *All of these were the mighty warriors of David who remained with him in the war. And they were the ones who entered with David into the city of Ziklag, when he was fleeing from before Saul son of Qish. And they were among the mighty warriors all of whom remained serving David. And if he desired killing Saul son of Qish they were with him, because they were mighty warriors, and the mighty warriors were the ones who carried out the war. And David did not desire to allow them to kill Saul.*

Again, this verse fits the definition of Targum laid out in chapter 2 and looks like several of the Targum passages we examined in chapters 2 and 3. The three aspects of the definition can be seen here. There is a straight translation combined with additional material that is interwoven into a single narrative structure. The entire Hebrew verse is replicated in the Peshitta translation, with a new and larger context to be sure, but that is the nature of a Targum. So rather than fitting Weitzman's remarks that the translator has broken with the source text and gone into "free composition," this verse has simply been rendered in a targumic manner.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Weitzman, *Syriac Version of the Old Testament*, 112–13. Weitzman emphasizes the "extended doublet" of this expansion, but fails to realize its targumic character. For the targumic character of doublets, see Klein, *Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopathisms*, 145–51.

In these two verses, then, the translator of Peshitta Chronicles brings a targumic sensibility to his rendering of the Hebrew text. If these verses are representative of the translation as a whole, then we would be justified in designating this Peshitta book as a Targum.

It is important to note, however, that Peshitta Chronicles does not adhere consistently to the Targums' characteristic literal character. Rather than respecting the literal replication of all the Hebrew text, the Peshitta translator is still willing to omit words and transpose them. First Chronicles 10:14 gives a straightforward example of this.

וַיִּמָּיתֵהוּ	בִּיהוָה	דָּרַשׁ	וְלֹא־	HT	
		שָׁאֵל	לֹא	אֱלֹהֵה	וּבְמֵרִיא Pesh.
יִשְׂי	בֶן־	לְדָוִיד	הַמְּלֹכָה	אֶת־	וַיָּסֶב HT
אִישִׁי	בֶּר	לְדָוִיד	מַלְכוּתָהּ	וְאֵתִיהַבַּת	Pesh.

HT: and he did not consult the Lord. Therefore [the Lord] killed him and transferred the kingdom to David son of Jesse.

Pesh.: And the Lord *God* he did not ask. And the kingdom was given to David son of Jesse.

The transposition occurs at the first word, with the MT's third word "Lord," being moved to the opening position, accompanied by the added word "God." Two further changes occur in this short verse. First, the notion that God actually killed Saul seems to be too much for the translator, whether because of the moral question or because of the anthropomorphism, and so the translator omits the word (and thus the deed). Second, the last clause of the verse is thus left without an actor, and so the verb is transformed into a passive and the direct object indicator is dropped. The translation of this verse thus indicates that the translator of Peshitta Chronicles adhered to the Peshitta's approach to literal translation rather than the Targum's more exacting standard.

These two techniques appear in more expansive passages as well, such as 1 Chronicles 5:1-2.

כִּי		יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּכוֹר־	רְאוּבֵן	וּבְנֵי	HT
דָּהוּ	מֵטֵל	דְּאִיסְרִיל	בּוֹכְרָה	דְּרֹבִיל	וּבִנְהֵי	Pesh.
אָבִיו	יְצֻעֵי	וּבְחֻלָּלוֹ		הַבְּכוֹר	הוּא	HT
דְּאִבּוּהֵי	תְּשׁוּיָתָהּ	וְצֵעַר	דְּאִבּוּהֵי	בּוֹכְרָה	הוּא	Pesh.

בְּנֵי	יֹסֵף	לְבָנָיו	בְּכֹרֶתוֹ	נִתְּנָה	HT
בר	אחֹהֵי	לְיוֹסֵף	בּוֹכְרוֹתָהּ	אֶתִּיהֶבֶת	Pesh.
			לְהִתְיַחֵשׁ	וְלֹא	יִשְׁרָאֵל
תְּרִיהוֹן	הַלִּין	וְעַל		אִיסְרִיל	HT
					Pesh.
			לְבִכְרָהּ		HT
דְּאִיסְרִיל	שְׁבַטֵּא	כִּלְהוֹן	מִן	בּוֹרְכָתָא	אֶתִּין
					Pesh.
וְלִנְגִיד		בְּאַחֲיוֹ	גְּבֵר	יְהוּדָה	כִּי
	מַלְכָּא	נְפֹק		יְהוּדָא	מִן
					Pesh.
		לְיוֹסֵף		וְהַבְּכֹרָה	מִמֶּנּוּ
		לְיוֹסֵף	וּבּוֹכְרוֹתָא	תִּתִּיהֶב	מִשִּׁיחָא
					HT
					Pesh.

HT: The sons of Reuben were the firstborn of Israel. For he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel, and he is not listed in the genealogy by birthright. For Judah prevailed among his brothers and a ruler came from him, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph.

Pesh.: The sons of Reuben were the firstborn of Israel. *On account of* when he *was* the firstborn *of his father* but he disgraced his father's bed [and] the birthright was given to Joseph *his brother* son of Israel. *And on account of these two, they took the blessing from every tribe of Israel.* From Judah goes out the King Messiah, and the birthright *will be given* to Joseph.

In 1 Chronicles 5:1, the Peshitta replicates all the MT's words from the first line, but leaves out one in the second, "sons [of Joseph]." This is because of the added word modifying Joseph, "his brother." The addition places the sentence into the past with "their" indicating the eleven brothers of Joseph, whereas the "sons" applies to the current moment and indicates Joseph's descendants. The added word requires the dropping of the omitted word. In the third line of this verse, the Peshitta leaves out two further words, "and he is not listed in the genealogy [by birthright]."

In the next verse, the translator's omissions and transposition are part of his recasting of the verse. He omitted equivalents for two more words, "prevailed over his brothers," in order to insert a prediction about the future, "And from Judah will come out the King Messiah." The transposition moved the preposition "from" from the end of the phrase to its

beginning. The reference to the King Messiah here echoes the interpretation found in Targum Neofiti (and the other Targums) to Genesis 49:10.⁴⁸

The Peshitta of Chronicles thus has an expansive character that seems to be related to the Targums. Although some of its non-literal renderings may be due to passages missing in its Vorlage, where that is not at issue, this Peshitta book seems to follow targumic principles of incorporating additional material. However, the willingness to omit and transpose the rendering of the Hebrew text differentiates it from Targums and shows that the writer still worked within the translation approaches common to other Peshitta books.

THE SEPTUAGINT

From the late fourth century BCE on, more and more Jews were reared in a Greek-speaking environment. Thousands of Jews lived in Egypt, where they were powerfully influenced by Hellenistic culture and learning. Their basic language was Greek, and they were schooled in Greek literature and philosophy. Over time, they became unable to read their own Bible in the original Hebrew and Aramaic. Since that literature remained highly valued, the priestly leadership in Jerusalem reportedly collaborated with the non-Jewish ruler of Egypt (the Pharaoh) to have a Greek translation made of the Pentateuch, which in subsequent centuries was followed by translations of the other books of the Bible. A legend arose about the miraculous agreement among seventy translators working independently, and the translation in its final form came to be known as the Septuagint, from the Greek word for “seventy” and the basis for the frequent abbreviation of its title as “LXX.”⁴⁹ It was widely used throughout the Greco-Roman world, by Jews and later by Christians, becoming the basis of the Christian canon in Greek.

During the Hellenistic and Roman periods Jews in Palestine and the Diaspora produced an abundance of literature in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin. Jews translated many of their Hebrew and Aramaic works into Greek, since so many Jews around the Mediterranean Sea no longer knew their earlier languages. Although the Jewish Bible—its canon—remained defined by the Hebrew versions of the books, when the Christian Church began to assemble its canon, they drew from the Greek texts they had been reading all along. Different branches of Christianity included a number of these Greek translations and writings originally composed in Greek in their version of the Hebrew Bible, which became

⁴⁸ In reference to these two verses, see also the discussion of Reuben in Genesis 49:3-4.

⁴⁹ See Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*.

known as the Old Testament. In addition to the books of the Hebrew Bible, Roman Catholicism recognized as canonical the books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (also known as Sirach or Ben Sira), Baruch (including the Letter of Jeremiah), 1 and 2 Maccabees, additions to the books of Esther, and new tales connected to the Prophet Daniel, such as the story of Susanna and the Elders. In addition to these, the Greek Orthodox churches added 1 Esdras, the Prayer of Manasseh, Psalm 151, and 3 Maccabees, with 4 Maccabees as an appendix. All these works came under the designation of Septuagint. In the end, therefore, although Jews were responsible for the translation of most of their religious texts from Hebrew and Aramaic into Greek, the church's long-term and intimate interest in them has shaped the Septuagint's character as collection.

We must be careful here not to give the Septuagint a unity it does not deserve, for the term "Septuagint" does not designate a single, consistent and coherent translation; it is rather a general designation for different Greek translations of various Hebrew books done over several centuries. While the Greek translation of the Pentateuch probably dates from the third century BCE and was perhaps indeed composed in Egypt, other books were translated later and went through various revisions. The oldest version, the "Old Greek," clearly constitutes a collection of translations of various Hebrew books from different hands and times. In addition, there were multiple Hebrew manuscript traditions for the Bible, as the Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrate, and also different editions of the Scriptures of Israel in Greek, each based on discrete manuscript traditions. During the Roman period, yet more Greek translations of the Bible, as well as revisions and adaptations of books, were made to fit specific needs in the Jewish and Christian communities.

Consideration of a simple passage (which we will discuss again in chapter 20) helps us to see one aspect of Septuagintal policy at work in regard to both formal correspondence and innovation. Genesis 22:14 in the MT reads:

And Abraham called the name of that place, YHWH will see, which is said to this day, On the mount YHWH will be seen.

In the Septuagint this becomes:

And Abraham called the name of that place, Lord saw, so that they say today, on the mount Lord was seen.

<i>MT</i>	<i>LXX</i>
וַיִּקְרָא אֲבָרָהָם שְׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא	καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Ἀβραὰμ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ τόπου ἐκείνου
יְהוָה יִרְאֶה	Κύριος εἶδεν
אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַיּוֹם בְּהָר	ἵνα εἰπωσιν σήμερον Ἐν τῷ ὄρει
יְהוָה יִרְאֶה	κύριος ὥφθη

In most of the passage, the Greek provides a literal rendering of the Hebrew text, but what is immediately striking is that “Lord” (*kurios* in Greek) replaces the usage of the four-letter name for God in the Hebrew text. This Greek substitution parallels the substitution for the name YHWH in Hebrew which has been known since late antiquity; in the Hebrew change, it is understood that the written form of YHWH (known as the *ketiv*) should not be read aloud. Instead, the spoken substitution (called the *qere*) of “Lord” (*ʿAdonai*) should be said. This is a Masoretic, and obviously a pre-Masoretic, practice. In the case of this usage, the Septuagint confirms its antiquity, while also showing the extent to which the translators were in accord with a widespread custom within Judaism. It is notable that the term “Lord” (*kurios*) does not even appear with the definite article, which again parallels the Hebrew *qere* of *ʿAdonai*, and amounts to an unusual, Semitizing locution in Greek.

The Septuagint follows the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew exactly in the rest of the verse; for each word of the Hebrew, it provides a corresponding word in Greek with the same meaning. The only changes come in the verb tense, which in effect alters the meaning of the passage. In the Hebrew text, both times the verb “to see” (רָאָה) appears in verse 14 (once as active and once as passive or reflexive, a niphal), the form appears in the imperfect tense; as such, it refers to the future or to durative action from the past into the present (since the Hebrew language lacks a tense that only designates the future). In the Greek of the Septuagint, both usages are rendered with the aorist, which ordinarily refers to simple, completed action in the past. For this reason, we have here rendered “will see” and “will be seen” in the Masoretic Text as “saw” and “was seen” in the Septuagint.

Such adjustments of tense are inevitable, because the verbal systems of Hebrew and Greek are different. But the Septuagint is also sensitive to the sense of the text and renders that sense for its readers in a manner somewhat more explicit than the Masoretic Text does. Earlier in the story (Gen 22:8) Abraham had promised his son, “God will see for himself” a

lamb for sacrifice, and the Septuagint renders it as a future. The form of the verb is exactly the same as in the place name, “Yahweh will see.”⁵⁰ But the Septuagint asserts that God fulfilled Abraham’s promise to his son, because the Lord indeed “saw” on the mount just what should be sacrificed. This in turn, is underlined as a revelation, because the Septuagint presents the understanding that the Lord “was seen” on the mount.

Genesis 22:14 thus illustrates how the Septuagint tries to remain close to a literal rendering, limiting its changes here to substitution and alteration of verbal tense. Maintaining a word-for-word rendering in the same order as the Hebrew original is not as easily done in Greek as it is in Aramaic, for Greek’s sentence structure, tense system, and other grammatical elements function differently from Hebrew, and from its Semitic-language cousin Aramaic. So when Greek translation follows the Hebrew word order, the result is often awkward phrasing for Greek readers. Despite this, in most passages the Septuagint’s general approach is to provide a literal translation. For each element of the Hebrew sentence, the Greek will usually have a corresponding element in its translation, often down to the level of a Hebrew particle, and usually in the same order. This does not mean it will necessarily have the “same” element, but something will be there. In this approach the Septuagint is similar to the so-called Samaritan Targum.

The verses following Genesis 22:14 provide another example of how careful and consistent the Septuagint’s rendering usually is; here is Genesis 22:15-16. We give the Hebrew and the Greek texts in parallel, along with our English rendering of the Septuagint. [Note: In the English, LXX additions are italicized, while substitutions or tense changes are underlined.]

<i>MT</i>	<i>LXX</i>	<i>LXX in English</i>
וַיִּקְרָא מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֶל־ אַבְרָהָם	καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ἄγγελος κυρίου τὸν Ἀβρααμ	And the angel of <u>Lord</u> called to Abraham
שְׁנִית מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם	δεύτερον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ	a second time from heaven,
וַיֹּאמֶר	λέγων	<u>Saying,</u>

⁵⁰ Unfortunately, this identity is not conveyed in most English versions, a fact that we will explain later in this discussion.

<i>MT</i>	<i>LXX</i>	<i>LXX in English</i>
בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה	Κατ' ἑμαυτοῦ ὥμοσα, λέγει κύριος	To myself I swear, said <u>Lord</u> ,
כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־ הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה	οὗ εἵνεκεν ἐποίησας τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο	For because you did this thing
וְלֹא חָשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֶךְ אֶת־ יְחִידִי	καὶ οὐκ ἐφείσω τοῦ υἱοῦ σου τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ δι' ἐμέ	And did not spare your son, your beloved one, <i>because of me.</i>

In these two verses, the LXX’s approach to translation begins in a familiar fashion. Verse 15 is completely literal, with the exception of the substitution of “Lord” for the Hebrew’s “YHWH.” Verse 16 echoes this approach, repeating the substitution within a generally literal rendering. There are a few more differences, however: the tense of the first word shifts the Hebrew’s active verb to a Greek participle; the Hebrew’s three uses of the particle indicating the direct object (את) find no direct correspondence in the Greek, although the case is changed to accusative.

The Septuagint has a small, two-word addition at the end of verse 16, “because of me,” where “me” refers to God. This constitutes a true addition, for none of the other versions or their major manuscripts contain these words. While not large, the addition does impact the sentence’s meaning, for it makes clear that Abraham’s actions were inspired by obedience to God and were not some diabolical scheme of his own. This addition is typical of the LXX; additions tend to be quite small and rather uncommon.

The Greek translations of the biblical books vary as to how strictly they render the Hebrew and how much they modify the text in the interests of interpretation. When the Hebrew was obscure or did not fit the Hellenized culture or Jewish beliefs of the translators, adaptation and interpretation occurred. For example, the Greek version of the book of Job omits many, though not all, anthropomorphic references to God. “I have not departed from the commandment of his lips” becomes “I have not departed from his commandments” (Job 23:12). By comparison, the Septuagint Psalms retain references to God’s body and emotions—indicating the lack of consistency across different LXX books. Furthermore, the Greek version of Job tones down Job’s attacks on God to avoid the appearance of blasphemy and to present Job as a blameless martyr. For example, in the Hebrew, Job charges that God hid his intention to oppress him: “Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose” (10:13). The Greek turns Job’s attack on God into an affirmation of divine omnipotence: “Having all these things in yourself, I know

that you can do everything; nothing is impossible for you.” Similarly, Job’s hypothetical admission of sin in the Hebrew text, “And even if it were true that I erred, my error remains with me” (19:4), might have suggested to some readers that Job sinned. The Greek protects his innocence by defining his hypothetical fault as a very minor failing. Thus the Christian image of “patient Job”—which James 5:11 portrays as so well known as to be proverbial—derives more from the Septuagint (and the *Testament of Job* in the Pseudepigrapha) than from the Hebrew Bible. Further, although the Hebrew book of Job does not manifest belief in an afterlife, the Greek introduces it (14:14) in order to conform the book to Jewish theology of the Hellenistic period.

It is important to note the manner in which the Septuagint introduces these changes to Job. It departs from the close, word for word, approach it uses elsewhere and essentially paraphrases the text in these passages. The LXX rendering of Job 23:12 shows this quite clearly.

מִצֹּת שִׁפְתָּיו וְלֹא אָמַשׁ מִקִּי

And I have not departed from the statutes, the commandments of his mouth.⁵¹

ἀπὸ ἐνταλμάτων αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐ μὴ παρέλθω

And I have not departed from his commandments.

As we observed above, the anthropomorphic character of this passage is simply omitted; “mouth” is removed. Along with it goes the near repetition of “statutes” along with “commandments”; just the latter remains.

But the Septuagint paraphrases the second half of Job 23:12. The Hebrew is quite short, only three words: **צָפַנְתִּי אִמְרֵי־פִי**. Literally, the Hebrew means “I hid the speeches of his mouth.” The LXX takes the implied meaning here and renders it explicitly, replicating only one of the three words and otherwise recasting its wording.

ἐν δὲ κόλπῳ μου ἔκρυψα ῥήματα αὐτοῦ·

And in my bosom I hid his words.

The important point here is that the LXX leaves behind the approach of literal rendering and rewrites this phrase as paraphrase. Only the word “to hide” is carried forward, although the general meaning of the Hebrew as understood by the LXX translator is presented.

⁵¹ The English translations we give here do not follow the word order of the Hebrew or the Greek.

So in the end, our short forays into the Septuagint's approach to translation suggests that it uses two modes of translation. One is quite literal, replicating the Hebrew text word for word, in approximately the same order. Its changes focus on substitution, omission, and the occasional short addition. The other mode is paraphrase, where the translator determines a passage's meaning and then states it in his own words.

THE VULGATE AS A TRANSLATION

The Church Father Origen completed an edition of the Bible in six columns known as the Hexapla. Now largely lost, the edition compared the Bible's Hebrew text to four different Greek translations. At the time his emphasis on the importance of the Hebrew text in its comparison with Greek versions had a profound influence on future Bible translations.

As Latin spread as a common language of the Mediterranean world in the second and third centuries CE, several Latin translations of the Bible were known. Most were based on one of the Greek translations and included a variety of textual variants and additions to the Scriptures. For the Roman (Catholic) Church, Latin was the primary language of the biblical canon. To form a single text from these different Latin versions, Pope Damasus I commissioned the scholar Jerome to produce a uniform Latin version. Jerome began this task in 386 at a monastery near Bethlehem. His approach was deeply influenced by a copy of Origen's work, which he had found in Caesarea. As a result, Jerome based his Latin rendering upon the Hebrew text (while consulting the LXX) so much so that even his great contemporary, Augustine of Hippo, resisted the implicit demotion of the Septuagint. But the basic quality of Jerome's work saw it through. It became so influential that more than a millennium later, in 1546, the Council of Trent decreed his Latin "Vulgate" to be "authoritative in matters of faith and morals, without any implication of rejecting or forbidding either the Septuagint or the original Hebrew text, or in the New Testament the Greek text."⁵²

It is Jerome who formulated the dichotomy of literal versus paraphrastic translation, which emphasizes the direct correspondence between the words of an original text and its source, in contrast the correspondence of the meaning of phrases and sentences. Jerome formulated the distinction in 395 when he found himself widely criticized for his Latin translation of a letter from Pope Epiphanius to Bishop John of Jerusalem. He waved away these critiques in a letter to his colleague Pammachius in which he trumpeted:

⁵² Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, 94.

For I myself not only admit but freely proclaim that in translating from the Greek . . . I render sense for sense and not word for word.⁵³

In Jerome's time, the technique of translating word for word, in Latin *verbum e verbo*, had long been known—as we have seen throughout this chapter. But Jerome coined a phrase that came to be seen as the natural opposite of *verbum e verbo*. This new term is *sensus de sensu*, which is Latin for “sense for sense,” or, in other words, paraphrase.

Jerome would have been surprised to discover that the distinction he drew became very influential. He thought he was simply agreeing with Cicero, a Roman politician, orator and literary figure, who had written some 450 years earlier:

And I did not translate them as an interpreter (*interpretas*), but as an orator (*orator*), keeping the same ideas and the forms . . . of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage. And in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word (*verbum pro verbo*), but I preserved the general style and force of the language. For I did not think I ought to count them out to the reader like coins, but to pay them by weight, as it were.⁵⁴

Cicero claims that in his translations he avoided rendering word for word, which he compares to exchanging currency coin by coin. Instead, one should pay over an equivalent value. He holds to the original's progression of ideas, that is, the same “forms . . . of thought,” but puts them into “language which conforms to our usage.” In other words, he determines what an entire phrase or sentence means in its original Greek and then casts that meaning into native Latin wording. Although polite and allusive, Cicero's comments about word for word translating are highly critical. Cicero, like Jerome after him, elevated his literary approach over what he considers the plodding of word for word translation.

But this is not Jerome's only view of translation, for he thinks that the translation of sacred Scripture is different, and he states that difference explicitly. The Jerome quotation cited above is incomplete. The entire sentence Jerome wrote to Pammachius about his translation of Pope Epiphanius' letter reads:

For I myself not only admit but freely proclaim that in translating from the Greek (except in the case of the holy scriptures where even the order of the words is a mystery) I render sense for sense and not word for word.⁵⁵

⁵³ Jerome, Letter 57 to Pammachius, ¶5.

⁵⁴ Cicero, *The Best Kind of Orator (De optimo genere oratorum)*, ¶5.

⁵⁵ Jerome, Letter 57 to Pammachius, ¶5.

Jerome had clearly formulated a *modus operandi* for translating Scripture different from that for translating non-sacred texts. Even as he proclaims his preference for *sensus de sensu* translation, he argues that the “holy scriptures” should be translated *verbum e verbo* in order to preserve the word order.

As Jerome finished translating each section of the Old Testament from the Hebrew, he wrote a brief preface for it. Jerome’s goal of producing an accurate translation direct from the Hebrew meant that it necessarily differed from the LXX and the Latin translations based upon it. Jerome’s critics pounced on these differences and claimed that he was betraying and falsifying the church’s traditional Scripture (i.e., the Septuagint). In each of the prefaces Jerome wrote, he had to defend himself against these critics. Since he would find no knowledgeable defenders within the church—for Jerome was one of the few who knew the Old Testament’s original language—he had to turn to the Jews for defense. His comment in the preface to Samuel and Kings, his first, became a model.

I am truly not at all aware of anything of the Hebrew to have been changed by me. Certainly, if you are incredulous, read the Greek and Latin books and compare them with these little works, and wherever you will see among them to differ, ask any one of the Hebrews, in whom you might place better faith.⁵⁶

For his Old Testament translations, Jerome put his efforts into *verbum e verbo* translation, claiming that nothing was changed from the Hebrew into the Latin. If the Greek Septuagint or its Latin translations differed, they were the ones that misrepresented the original Hebrew, not he. So Jerome set his translation against the translation that the church had used over the centuries since its founding. Because of his scholarly acumen, which he had acquired by studying with the Jews—who obviously knew their own text in his belief—he single-handedly aimed to change the church’s Bible by fixing its text.

Given Jerome’s views on the translation of Scripture, it is not surprising that the Vulgate’s rendering of Genesis 22:14 is even more exact than the Septuagint’s:

And he called the name of that place the Lord sees, so that until today it is said, In the mount the Lord will be seen.

The use of the present tense of “see” (*videt*) here is striking and picks up on the Septuagint’s sensitivity to the completion of what Abraham promised

⁵⁶ Jerome, Preface to *Kings*.

his son in Genesis 22:8. In fact, instead of simply quoting in verse 8, “God will see for himself,” as the Septuagint does in a literal representation of the Hebrew text, the Vulgate has Abraham say, “God will foresee for himself” (*Deus providebit sibi*). Although this rendering enhances the cohesion between Abraham’s statement and God’s intervention within the story, the use in English renderings of the Latin verb *providere* led to the translation of “to provide,” which in common practice has lost its connection with the verb “to see.” The consequence is that the feature of the text in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin has been lost in English.

Jerome’s rendering of Genesis 22:8 is typical of his approach to translating the Hebrew of the Old Testament into Latin; it is largely word for word. Further exploration of his translation shows that he is not as slavishly literal as some other renderings. In particular, the correspondences between the words of the source text and of the target text are not always one-for-one. When Hebrew semantic constructions cannot be replicated in Greek, Jerome is willing to add words to the translation—or leave them out—to help the clarity of the Latin rendering. This becomes clear when we look at the example of Genesis 1:4 in comparison to the Septuagint.

<i>Hebrew text</i>	<i>Septuagint</i>	<i>Vulgate</i>
וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאוֹר בִּיְטוֹב	καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ φῶς ὅτι καλόν·	et vidit Deus lucem quod esset bona
וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ	καὶ διεχώρισεν ὁ θεὸς ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ φωτός καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σκοτός·	et divisit lucem a tenebras

HT: And God saw the light, that it was good; and God differentiated between the light and between the darkness.⁵⁷

The first four words of the Hebrew’s first line are accurately replicated in the Vulgate. That means the Hebrew’s marker of the direct object, *et*, is dropped out and the Latin word for light, *lucem*, appears in the accusative. The LXX takes the same approach. The line’s last two words (“that it was good”) cause some difficulty, however. The Hebrew construction constitutes a verbless clause, one in which “to be” is understood—a formula unavailable in Greek or Latin. Despite its ungrammatical character, the Septuagint renders the Hebrew’s two words with a corresponding two words of its own, ὅτι καλόν, literally, “that good.” Jerome’s Latin, by contrast, is not so bound to the Hebrew rendering. The Vulgate adds a form

⁵⁷ Our translation.

of “to be” so that it is a good Latin construction, *quod esset bona*, “that it was good.” The insertion of the “to be” verb happens in other places as well, such as in Genesis 1:7.

In the second line of Genesis 1:4, the different approaches to the Hebrew text taken by the Septuagint and the Vulgate are even more pronounced. The typical Hebrew construction indicating that two things are distinguished from each other, **בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ**, is reflected in our English translation, “[God differentiated] between the light and between the darkness.” The LXX attempts to provide an accurate rendering of the Hebrew text into Greek by translating the Hebrew **בֵּין** “between” as μέσον “among” both times the word appears. Then, because this makes no sense in Greek, the translator adds ἀνὰ, “therefore,” before each appearance. This remains a poor Greek construction, but it gives the entire wording of the Hebrew text.

The Vulgate, by contrast, does not attempt to replicate the wording at all. Instead, it simply renders the phrase’s meaning without any indication of the Hebrew’s actual construction. In good Latin it reads, “and he divided light and darkness” (*et divisit lucem ac tenebras*). Note also that the deity’s name is missing; Jerome simply decided it was too repetitive, given that it appeared in the previous line. Thus, Jerome renders the sense of this phrase rather than the wording, in this case through omission.

The approach is similar in the Vulgate’s rendering of Genesis 1:19, where the Hebrew text reads, **וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר**, “And it was evening and it was morning, [the fourth day],” repeating the verb “to be.” The Septuagint gives an exact word for word rendering, καὶ ἐγένετο ἑσπέρα καὶ ἐγένετο πρωί, “And it was evening and it was morning.” The Vulgate, however, decides this is too repetitive so it drops out one verb and simply says, *et factum est vespere et mane*, “It was evening and morning.”

In our brief, and not at all thorough, examples, the Vulgate seems to follow Jerome’s description; it is literal. He is willing to omit Latin correspondents for Hebrew words when that omission produces better Latin—and likewise to insert a word when that helps clarity as well—but these small alterations are typical of many literal translations we have examined.

CONCLUSION

What these different types of translation in antiquity reveal is that they share an emphasis on literal rendering in their approach to translation. They privilege a one-to-one correspondence of words from the source text into the target translation. Usually the corresponding target words are laid out in the same order as those of the source text.

The differences in the approach to rendering found in these six different translations lie in what they permit themselves to do when they depart from strict replication. The most common forms of departure are the omission in the target text of words from the source text and the substitution of individual words in the target text for corresponding ones in the source text. A few translations, such as the Peshitta or the Septuagint occasionally made short additions of just a few words; none of the examples we examined were longer than four words in length. Not one of these six translations followed the Targums in their use of larger, non-translational additions—with the possible exception of the Peshitta to Chronicles.

When comparing these texts' translations in terms of their approach to literal representation of their Vorlage, there is a range of strategies. In general, the Targums' approach to literal rendition was similar to that found in the Samaritan Targum and the CPA translations, namely, consistent one-to-one correspondence in the same word order, with the use of substitution to address questions of intelligibility. In other words, like the ST and the CPA, the Targum's translation, in comparison to its use of addition, is highly literal. Its willingness to use addition, however, makes the resultant rendering more comprehensible to its audience than the other translations.

When looking at the Aramaic version of Job from Qumran and the Peshitta, again with the exception of Chronicles, we saw a continued reluctance to use additional material of any size. But unlike ST and CPA, they brought in other strategies to enhance the translation's intelligibility. They were willing to use small additions, usually of just a single word, but sometimes slightly longer. They were also more ready to omit words and thus forego consistent one-to-one correspondence, and to transpose words and thus violate the source text's word order. In the end, we also saw that the Peshitta would occasionally use paraphrase to render the meaning of Vorlage even though that procedure ignored the source's lexical and grammatical form.

The Septuagint adhered to many of these same approaches. It was largely literal, even when it went against Greek word order, and used substitution, omission, and the occasional small addition. The Septuagint makes use of paraphrase in place of literal rendering in some places.

These comparisons show that the Targums need to be understood in two capacities. In terms of literalness, the Targums are perhaps the most literal of the Aramaic translations in rendering the Vorlage exactly. This is because they use addition to the literal rendering to make the translated material intelligible; they insert additions into the translation rather than alter it. In terms of the Targums' use of additional material, however, they essentially stand alone. Among these brief and admittedly cursory

examinations of these translations, we found the use of large non-translational additions practically non-existent.

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volumes. An English translation of this text has not yet appeared, although there are translations of the Standard Text; the best is by George Lamsa. The scholars active in this work have published a variety of monographs and essays, many in the Brill series, *Monographs of the Peshitta Institute Leiden*. The best introductory essay to the Peshitta is probably P. B. Dirksen's "The Old Testament Peshitta," while M. P. Weitzman's, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament: An Introduction*, will be the foundational book-length introduction for decades to come. T. H. Robinson's *Syriac Grammar* remains a good introductory level grammar, while T. Muraoka's *Classical Syriac for Hebraists* provides a helpful entrée for those already proficient in Hebrew. T. Nöldeke's *Compendious Syriac Grammar* provides more comprehensive knowledge. The standard dictionary is *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, edited by J. Payne Smith; the important M. Sokoloff's *A Syriac Lexicon* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2009) has recently appeared. The question of the relationship between the Targums and the Peshitta has been most extensively addressed in *Targum Studies*, vol. 2, *Targum and Peshitta*, edited by Paul V. M. Flesher. H. Szpek's *Translation Technique in the Peshitta to Job* provides a comprehensive scheme for analyzing ancient translation texts.

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SECTION V

The Targums and Early Christianity

COMPARING THE TARGUMS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

It was inevitable that scholars would draw comparisons between the Targums and the Gospels, given that both kinds of works were linked to the Galilee of the early centuries of the Common Era. But to Paul Kahle, the Targums and the Gospels were more than comparable or similar; the latter depended upon the former. In his Schweich Lectures, given at Oxford University in 1941, Kahle argued that the Palestinian Targum as a text was earlier than the New Testament, so that interpretations found in the Palestinian Targums and the Gospels resulted from the New Testament writers—or perhaps even Jesus himself—borrowing from the Targum.¹ As we described at the beginning of chapter 9, this position became highly influential among Targum scholars, with Targum Pseudo-Jonathan being incorporated into the claim as well. When Alejandro Díez Macho discovered the Neophyti manuscript in 1949, it was immediately treated as further evidence that the entire Palestinian Targum was known to Jesus and his followers. Martin McNamara's writings identified a number of important instances where the Targums helped explicate the biblical passages.

Unfortunately, these arguments for the early dating of the Palestinian Targum were built on a house of cards. When they were refuted by A. D. York, P. Wernberg-Møller, and others in the 1960s and 1970s, not only was the dating discredited, but also the entire enterprise of comparing early Christian materials with targumic writings fell into disrepute. This was unfortunate, for even though the similarities between the two documents do not indicate historical dependence between written texts, there is no denying that there are literary, interpretive, and thematic parallels between them.

¹ Published as Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*. Of course, the Palestinian Targum which he meant was best evidenced by the Targum fragments from the Cairo Geniza which he had published in 1930 in Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens II*.

The Targumim are a rich source of that form of early Judaism where the folk and the expert (i.e., rabbinic) aspects of the religion met. For that reason, serious students of the New Testament should read them to help them comprehend the religious and social context within which Jesus taught and in which his movement first developed, especially in the years before the transition to a Hellenistic social milieu and the Greek language. Modern students of the New Testament have sometimes become so obsessed with the issue of whether particular Targumim predate Jesus, they appear to have forgotten that targumic influence on the Gospels does not require that chronology at all. The Gospels were composed during the close of the first century and the very beginning of the second century. This is the same period during which the early stages of the Prophetic Targums and Targum Onqelos were composed, as discussed in chapters 9 and 10, and it is reflected in many of the Palestinian Targums' early interpretations and additions. Indeed, although Targums as *texts* were composed after the events laid out in the New Testament, since they drew upon a wide range of understandings of Scripture, in many cases their *interpretations* of scriptural passages come from earlier decades.

To put the observation another way: the composite nature of the Targumim is such that, upon occasion, one may discern in them the survival of materials that circulated in the time of Jesus and which probably influenced his teaching and/or the memory of that teaching among those disciples who were familiar with such traditions. Leviticus 22:28 in Pseudo-Jonathan is an example of such a survival, "My people, children of Israel, since our father is merciful in heaven, so should you be merciful upon the earth." The expansion in the Targum is unquestionably innovative in comparison to the Masoretic Text. Furthermore, there is possibly an echo with Luke 6:36, where Jesus is speaking what is usually called "the sermon on the plain":

Become merciful, just as your Father is also merciful.

Since no sources for the Lukan remark other than the Targum have so far been identified, it seems likely that the targumic tradition—as distinct from Targum Pseudo-Jonathan itself—was current during the first century. Its presence in Luke indicates either that it influenced Jesus or that it influenced his followers' formulation of this teaching.

A causative reading taken in the opposite direction is, of course, theoretically possible: perhaps the saying originated with Jesus, and was then anonymously taken up within the Targum. Yet the statement is rhetorically more at home within Luke than in Pseudo-Jonathan, where it appears unmotivated, a tradition incorporated simply because it was

valued. It seems inherently unlikely that Pseudo-Jonathan, which of all the Pentateuchal Targumim is perhaps the most influenced by a concern to guard and articulate Judaic integrity, would inadvertently convey a saying of Jesus.² More likely, both Pseudo-Jonathan and Luke's Jesus are here independently passing on proverbial wisdom: both sources convey material from the stock of folk culture. After all, the same Targum twice explains love of another person (whether an Israelite or a stranger) with the maxim, "*that which is hateful to you, do not do*" (Lev 19:18, 34 in PJ; Luke 6:31 and Matt 7:12).³ Luke shows that the stock of proverbial wisdom Jesus drew on goes back to the first century, while Pseudo-Jonathan shows that it continued to be reused until the date of its composition. The targumic echo is therefore most certainly not the immediate source of Jesus' statement, but it may help us to understand the nature and general character of Jesus' statement within Judaism.⁴

Examples such as Leviticus 22:28 in Pseudo-Jonathan demonstrate that the Targumim help illustrate the sort of Judaism that Jesus and his followers took for granted. The example cited is a case in which a Targum just happens to be a good resource for understanding Judaism in the first century. Targumim may therefore enable us to find materials that are useful in comparison with the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament. In a scholarly age when comparison based on social models has become common, the Targumim provide insights into the treatment of Scripture among ordinary Jews.

Another example illustrates an instance in which Jesus appears to have cited a form of Scripture that is closer to the Targum than to any other extant source. In such cases, an awareness that he does so helps us to understand his preaching better than the general similarity between Luke and Pseudo-Jonathan illustrates. Targum of Isaiah 6:9, 10 is an especially famous instance, and it helps to explain Mark 4:11, 12. The statement in Mark could be taken to mean that Jesus told parables with the express purpose "that" (Greek: *hina*) people might see and not perceive, hear and not understand, lest they turn and be forgiven:

² As we discussed in chap. 8, PJ's rendering of Lev 22:28 is forbidden by the Palestinian Talmud at y. Ber. 5.3 (9c) and y. Meg. 4.9 (75c), perhaps with an awareness that it had been coopted within Christianity. See the discussion in McNamara, *New Testament and the Palestinian Targum*, 133–38.

³ There is also a well-established connection with Shab. 31a in the Babylonian Talmud. For a discussion of the question, see Chilton and McDonald, *Jesus and the Ethics of the Kingdom*, 8; for further texts, see Díez Macho, *Neophyti I*, 3:502–3.

⁴ A similar claim can be made for the use of the phrase "high priests" in PJ (Lev 16:1), which shows that the plural usage in the New Testament is no error. See Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Leviticus*, 165.

And he was saying to them, To you the mystery has been given of the kingdom of God, but to those outside, everything comes in parables, so that (Greek: *hina*) while seeing they see and do not perceive, and while hearing they hear and do not understand, lest they repent and it be forgiven them.

The Targum also (unlike the MT and the LXX) refers to people not being “forgiven” (rather than not being “healed”), and this suggests that the Targum may give the key to the meaning presupposed in Mark. The relevant clause in the Targum refers to people who behave *in such a way* —“so that” (indicated in Aramaic by the letter “*d*” [dalet])—that they see and do not perceive, hear and do not understand, lest they repent and be forgiven. It appears that Jesus was characterizing people in the targumic manner, as he characterizes his own fate as the son of man similarly in Mark with a clause employing *hina* (see Mark 9:12); he was not acting deliberately in order to be misunderstood.

In this famous case from Mark, then, the underlying Aramaism of using the clause with *d* caused the saying of Jesus to use the term *hina* in Greek, which may mean “in order that” or “so that.”⁵ If the former meaning obtains, Mark’s Jesus speaks so as not to be understood and deliberately to preclude the forgiveness of those who do not understand. If the latter meaning obtains, then Jesus referred to Isaiah in its targumic form in order to characterize the *kind* of people who do not respond to his message and what happens to them. The fact of the similarity in wording with the Targum shows us that the second meaning is preferable, as does the fact that Jesus elsewhere in Mark refers to *his own followers* as being hard-hearted, with unseeing eyes and ears that do not hear (Mark 8:17-18). His point in alluding once again to Isaiah 6 is given at the end of the rebuke, “Do you not yet understand?” (8:21). Jesus’ citation of Isaiah 6 in its targumic form was intended to rouse hearers to understanding, not to make their misunderstanding into his own program.

The two examples given so far, taken from Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and the Isaiah Targum, instance cases in which the similarity between the New Testament and the Targumim is a matter of shared expression and meaning, and even of a common exegesis of Scripture. They illustrate how interpretations found in the Targums help us understand the meaning of stories and remarks in the New Testament without the requirement that one depends upon the other in a direct, historical sense.

⁵ See Manson, *Teaching of Jesus*, 76–80; Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi and His Bible*, 90–98; Evans, *To See and Not Perceive*. A recent attempt by Michael Goulder to deny the similarity between Jesus’ saying and Tg. Isa. is refuted in Chilton and Evans, “Jesus and Israel’s Scriptures,” 300–304; see Goulder, “Those Outside (Mk. 4:10-12).”

FOUR TYPES OF COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TARGUMIM
AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

If historical dependence is not the only means by which the Targums can provide insight into understanding the New Testament, then how should that question be approached? This chapter identifies four main types of affinity between the New Testament and the Targumim. In each, Targums provide a different kind of assistance in understanding the interpretive world of early Christianity.

The first type provides the most stringent sort of affinity. In the strongest cases, a passage from a Targum and a passage from a Gospel evidence comparable material with cognate wording that is associated with the same text of Scripture. The comparison between Isaiah 6 in the Targum and its citation in Mark 4:12, discussed above, provides an instance of this type. Weaker instances of the first type of comparison occur when the New Testament and a Targum share wording but there is no particular reason to assume that the wording arose as an interpretation of a biblical passage. The example of Leviticus 22:28 in its relationship to Luke 6:36 instances this weaker formulation of the first type of analogy.

The second type of affinity takes place when a Targum passage and a New Testament passage evidence a comparable understanding of the same biblical passage, but no common wording appears. In other words, the meaning is shared but without verbal correspondence. An example is Jesus' parable of the vineyard in Matthew 21:33-46, Mark 12:1-12, and Luke 20:9-19. After Jesus has told his story of the abuse suffered by the people whom the owner sends to acquire his share of the vintage, the Synoptic Gospels agree that the opposition to Jesus among the Jewish authorities has hardened to the point that they want to seize him. When the symbolism of the vineyard in the Isaiah Targum 5:1-7 is considered, the opposition to Jesus becomes easily explicable. There, the vine is a primary symbol of the temple, so that the tenants of Jesus' parable are readily identified with the leadership of the temple. They knew he was telling the parable against them.⁶

It is apparent that the second type of affinity is not as strong as the first. Because no actual wording is shared, the connection between the Targum and the New Testament is not as demonstrable. Moreover, an image such as the vineyard is so resonant that several biblical passages may be used to illustrate and/or understand it. Nonetheless, when a given passage in a Targum provides the interpretive key to the New Testament text, that affinity should not be ignored.

⁶ See Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi and His Bible*, 111-14; Chilton and Evans, "Jesus and Israel's Scriptures," 304-6.

The third type of affinity comes about when characteristically targumic phrases appear within the New Testament. The best example is the central category of Jesus' theology, namely, the "kingdom of God," which also appears in the form "kingdom of the Lord" in the Targumim (see Tg. Onq. to Exod 15:18; Tg. Jon. to Isa 24:23; 31:4; 40:9; 52:7; Ezek 7:7; Obad 21; Zech 14:9).⁷ The first usage in the Isaiah Targum (24:23) associates the theologoumenon of the kingdom of God with God's self-revelation on Mount Zion, where his appearing is to occasion a feast for all nations (see 25:6-8). The association of the kingdom with a festal image is comparable to Jesus' promise in Matthew 8:11 and Luke 13:28-29 that many will come from the ends of the earth to feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God.

The fourth type of affinity appears when the New Testament and the Targumim share only a thematic emphasis. Just as the second type of affinity is less substantial than the first, the fourth is less demonstrable than the third—and for the same reason. Comparability of actual wording is not at issue, but the less obvious question of themes is in play. Jesus, for example, lamented the persistent refusal to listen to the prophets (Matt 5:12; Luke 6:23); the meturgeman of Isaiah also lamented that "with *odd speech* and *mocking tongue* this people *were scoffing at the prophets who prophesied to them*" (Tg. Isa. 28:11). Although the relationship with the targumic interpretation may be helpful in understanding Jesus' perspective, since the Targum at Isaiah 28 is pointed in its condemnation of cultic abuses (as Jesus famously was), it must be borne in mind that the abuse of the prophets is a *topos* within the Judaism of the period and thus the shared point does not indicate a strong connection.⁸

The remainder of this chapter will discuss a number of analogies between the Targum and the New Testament illustrating each of the four types and then draw some conclusions from them.

Affinity 1—Comparisons Based on Common Wording

These examples require common wording found in both the Targum and the New Testament. The more stringent of these will derive that common wording from a shared interpretation of a biblical text, while the less stringent will not require a shared biblical passage.

⁷ For the comparable phrasing, "*of the Lord is the kingship*," see TN Exod 15:18, an evident analogy of the statement in Onqelos. McNamara has argued for a particular relationship with Rev 4:2-11 in *New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, 204-8.

⁸ See Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten*.

Lest it be forgiven them

The relationship between Targum Isaiah 6:9-10 and Mark 4:11-12 has already been discussed above. Within that discussion, it became apparent that Jesus' usage was designed to characterize the attitude of those who were so dense when it came to seeing and hearing that they were not forgiven. Characteristically, he directed such warnings to people who were trying to listen to him, such as his own disciples (as in Mark 8:17-18).

Unquestionably, however, the present setting of Mark 4:11-12 gives Jesus' statement a fresh, rather elitist meaning. The new setting is revealed in the claim that is directed by Jesus to "those around him with the Twelve" that the mystery of the kingdom has been given to them, while "to those outside everything happens in parables" (Mark 4:10-11). Here the actual understanding of Jesus' teaching is restricted, so that what was originally a rebuke of dense hearers (including disciples) becomes the warrant of the exclusive possession of the "mystery" by a select few. The term "mystery" appears only here in the Gospels, while it is found rather frequently in the Pauline corpus (in its broad sense) and in the Revelation of John. That fact comports with another: the reference to people who do not belong to the movement as "those outside" fits with the usage of later Christianity (see 1 Cor 5:11-13, 1 Thes 4:12, and Col 4:5).

The probable source of the saying of Jesus in its present context is the Jerusalem circle around James, Jesus' brother. That would account for several factors: (1) the Aramaism with its targumic source, (2) the reference to a tight group "around Jesus" *before* mention of the Twelve, and (3) the claim exclusively to interpret and apply the teaching of Jesus. The last trait is expressly attributed to James in the Acts of the Apostles (15:13-29), when he adjudicates the dispute over circumcision: was it necessary for believers, along with baptism, for salvation (see Acts 15:1)? The decision, which is presented as James' own judgment, is that circumcision was not required, although uncircumcised Christians must observe certain basic rules of purity out of loyalty to the Law of Moses. The meeting of the leaders present endorses that judgment and demands by letter that uncircumcised Christians in Antioch follow the policy. In Mark 4:10-12, the claim exclusively to interpret is also deployed.

The sword

"All those who grasp a sword will perish by a sword" (Matt 26:52).

The sword, like the "measure" (see below) seems to have been a proverbial figure. In the Isaiah Targum 50:11, it is applied graphically:⁹

⁹The similarity with Matthew has been recognized for some time; for a discussion, see Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi and His Bible*, 98-101.

Behold, all you who kindle a fire, *who grasp a sword!* Go, *fall in the fire which you kindled* and on the *sword which you grasped!*

The link to the passage in Isaiah (or any passage of Scripture) cannot be demonstrated in the case of Jesus' saying, so that the correspondence seems to be of the proverbial type—the saying about the measure. Nonetheless, the close agreement in wording and imagery makes this a comparison of the first type.

Gehenna

The final verse of the book of Isaiah in the Targum identifies who will suffer—and specifies where they will suffer—at the end of time, when it says “*the wicked shall be judged in Gehenna until the righteous will say concerning them, We have seen enough*” (Tg. Isa. 66:24). “Gehenna” is just what Jesus associates with the statement that “their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched” (Mark 9:48, and see vv. 44 [46 in many manuscripts]), which is taken from the same verse of Isaiah.¹⁰

The term “Gehenna” refers in a literal sense to the Valley of Hinnom in the Kidron Valley, just across from the temple in Jerusalem. Because it had been a place where idolatrous human sacrifice by fire had taken place (see 2 Kgs 16:3; 21:6), the site was deliberately destroyed and desecrated by King Josiah as part of his cultic reform during the seventh century BCE (see 2 Kgs 23:10). As a result, Gehenna came to be known as the place of the definitive punishment of the wicked.

In the New Testament, apart from James 3:6, the term appears exclusively in sayings of Jesus. Beyond that, only the Pseudepigrapha (esp. the book of Enoch) and rabbinic literature provide us with examples of the usage from the same period or near the same period that enable us to see what the term means. Gehenna is the place of fiery torment for the wicked. But it is not known as such in the Septuagint, Josephus, or even Philo: evidently, the usage belongs to an Aramaic environment.¹¹

Rabbi Aqiba also is said to have associated Gehenna with the end of the book of Isaiah (see m. Eduyoth 2:10). In the Isaiah Targum, the judgment of the wicked in **Gehinnom** may potentially last forever, “And it shall be from new moon to new moon . . .” (Tg. Isa. 66:23). Aqiba, however, interprets the same verse to indicate that punishment in Gehenna has a limit of twelve months, for he seems to be thinking of the new moon of Passover in particular, which requires a year for recurrence. For Jesus,

¹⁰ In the Targum, the first part of the phrase reads, “their breaths will not die.” For a discussion of the passage, see Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi and His Bible*, 101–7.

¹¹ See Watson, “Gehenna.”

as in the Isaiah Targum, part of the threat of Gehenna was that its limit could not be determined in advance. As Cathcart and Gordon conclude, "The correspondence between the targumic Gehinnam, both the term and the concept, and the New Testament Gehenna is particularly close."¹²

Jannes and Jambres

Martin McNamara has pointed out that these two names are given to the sorcerers who opposed Moses in Pseudo-Jonathan at Exodus 7:11-12, just as in 2 Timothy 3:8-9.¹³ In a searching criticism, Lester Grabbe has objected that the *Greek* form of the names in the Targum shows that "the form known to us is at least as late as the 7th century."¹⁴ To his mind, that refutes McNamara's two principal contentions, (1) that there was a "Palestinian Targum" extant during the first century, and (2) that the names given in 2 Timothy correspond only to that Targum. On that basis, Grabbe goes on to conclude, "*Ergo*, McNamara's arguments, according to his own criteria, are totally irrelevant in this particular case." Grabbe grants that his argument may appear "facetious," although its harshness seems to have little to do with humor.

The heat of Grabbe's conclusion stems from his attack on the assumption of "the Palestinian Targum" being in existence in the first century. That is why the Greek form of the names (for Yohanan and Mamre in Hebrew and Aramaic) strikes him as so telling. But once it is granted—as it has been in this book—that the sharing of the names does not establish the existence or the antiquity of "the Palestinian Targum," the simple fact of the *similarity* remains.

Although the first name in the pair is referred to in the *Damascus Document* from Qumran (CD 5:17-19) and Pliny the Elder (*Nat.* 30.2.11), both extant in the first century, finding the two names together proves more elusive. Eusebius, the church historian of the fourth century, quotes Numenius, a second-century Greek writer, as referring to them (*Preparation of the Gospel* 9.8.1), and the later Babylonian Talmud includes a reference (b. Menahoth 85a), but in neither case is there a close fit with the passage

¹² See Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 133, citing Tg. Nah. 1:8; Tg. Ps. 88:13, and the many uses in the Gospels. They are particularly struck by the emphasis on Gehenna as a place of darkness, as in Tg. Ps. 88:13 and Matt 8:12. Céline Mangan notes the frequent usage of the term in the Tg. Job, of which the most striking case is perhaps "fire of Gehenna" in 20:26 (cf. Matt 5:22); see Mangan, *Targum of Job*, 27 n. 15; see also Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 30. But Gehenna can also be cold in the Tg. Job (28:5; 38:23), and can refer to how one feels (17:6) at the point of death (5:4; 38:17); those are quite evolved images.

¹³ See McNamara, *New Testament and Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, 83–85.

¹⁴ Grabbe, "Jannes/Jambres Tradition in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Its Date," 400.

in Pseudo-Jonathan's Exodus or 2 Timothy. Unless one were to argue that 2 Timothy has influenced Pseudo-Jonathan, the similarity would incline one to the view that the naming of the two sorcerers is not the invention of 2 Timothy, but is grounded in a contemporary tradition in Greek and perhaps in Aramaic. At the same time, it is evident that the tradition in Pseudo-Jonathan, according to which Jannes and Jambres successfully interpreted Pharaoh's dream, as referring to Moses' birth (PJ to Exod. 1:15), is a later development.¹⁵

Affinity 2. Comparisons of Common Understanding

The similarity between the Synoptic parable of the vineyard and the song of the vineyard in the Isaiah Targum 5 has already been discussed. It is worth noting in addition, however, that both Matthew (21:33) and Mark (12:1) allude to Isaiah 5:2 in the parable, when they refer to a hedge set around the vineyard. Their allusion is to the Septuagintal version of Isaiah 5:2, so that any conscious awareness of the Targum at the point of the composition of those Gospels cannot be claimed. The point is rather that the memory of allusion to Isaiah 5 is preserved; what the targumic version of Isaiah explains—while other versions do not—is *why* the priestly opposition to Jesus would feel particularly enraged by his parable.

Hanging upon a tree

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul uses this phrase to describe Jesus' execution. The wording itself comes from Deuteronomy 21:23, and Paul applies it to argue that, in being crucified, Jesus was subject to the curse of "everyone who hangs upon a tree" (Gal 3:13, which follows the LXX in its wording). Paul's argument assumes that crucifixion carries with it some sanction of Judaic law, and that is just what we find in the Targum of Ruth, when Naomi says, "*We have four kinds of death for the guilty, stoning with stones, burning with fire, execution by the sword, and hanging upon a tree.*" In his commentary on the Targum Ruth, Derek Beattie observes the contradiction of the Mishnah (Sanh. 7:1), which refers to stoning, burning, beheading, and strangling. That is a principal support of his suggestion of "an ancient origin, at least for that part of the Targum."¹⁶

This argument is spoiled by the criticism of the hasty assertion that a statement appearing to be anti-Mishnaic in content must be pre-Mishnaic in origin. After all, midrashic exegeses explore almost any logical and

¹⁵ And here the general agreement with the positive evaluation in Numenius is perhaps telling. The relevant texts are set out by McNamara and in a summary form by Grabbe.

¹⁶ See Beattie, *Targum of Ruth*.

historical possibility, precisely because midrashim are *not* identified with halakhic authority. And the Ruth Targum is midrashic in nature. Yet Beattie's insight can be supported by reference to what Paul says. After all, Paul represents an indisputably first-century usage in which the midrashic connection between crucifixion and Deuteronomy 21:23 appears explicitly. Taken together, Galatians and the Ruth Targum show us that this connection is indeed as ancient as Beattie suggests, and that Paul was making an argument that was within the idiom of midrashic possibility.¹⁷

Affinity 3. Comparisons of Common, Named, Theological Concepts

We mentioned above the usage of the phrase "kingdom of God" in the Isaiah Targum. Influence of such a usage on Jesus would help to account for one of the most striking features of Jesus' theology: his insistence that the kingdom is a dynamic, even violent intervention within human affairs.¹⁸ The Isaiah Targum provides a theological precedent for the sort of usage that Jesus developed further.

The Masoretic Text offers a picture of the Lord descending upon Mount Zion as a lion, which is not afraid of the shepherds who attempt to protect the prey. That arresting image refers explicitly to the kingdom in Isaiah Targum 31:4:

As a lion, a young lion roars over its prey, and, when a band of shepherds are appointed against it, it is not broken up at their shouting or checked at their tumult, so the kingdom of the Lord of hosts will be revealed to settle upon the Mount of Zion and upon its hill.

This passage should put to rest the outworn generalization that the kingdom within Judaic usage was static in nature, and that the dynamic aspect was Jesus' innovation. The kingdom's dynamism was not original with Jesus; his particular contribution was in his portrayal of how the kingdom comes.

The Targum of Job speaks of God making the righteous sit "upon the throne of his kingdom with established kings" (Tg. Job 36:7) in a way that invites comparison with Luke 22:28-30 and Matthew 19:28. Here, the motif of entry into the kingdom and the joint reign with the just is clearly articulated. Stress upon the ethical conditions which make entry into the kingdom possible was characteristic of Jesus' message (see Matt 19:16-30 as a whole, with its parallels).

¹⁷ In the same letter, Paul alludes to the idea that the Torah was mediated by angels (Gal 3:19, cf. Acts 5:53 and, e.g., Targum 1 Chron 29:11), although he then uses that well-known motif to suggest that the law is derivative in its authority (Gal 3:20-29).

¹⁸ For a full discussion, see Chilton, *Pure Kingdom*.

Measure for measure

The moral concept of “measure for measure” is well known in Judaism, being broadly evidenced by the Targums and by rabbinic literature. Targum Isaiah 27:8 contains the addition, “With *the* measure you *were measuring with they will measure you.*” In Matthew 7:2 and Mark 4:24, Jesus utters a similar saying, “In the measure you measure it shall be measured you.” In both locations, the maxim is stated as an ethical concept that explains a judgment. In Targum Isaiah, the judgment applies to a future king who will be oppressing Israel and signals Israel’s rescue by God and the king’s defeat. In both Matthew and Mark, the phrase is cast in the plural and refers to Jesus’ listeners as he urges them. Here is Matthew 7:1-2:

Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

The principle in both the Targum and the Gospels works the same, with slight reformulation for the context. That flexible character suggests that the ethical notion of “measure for measure” functions as proverb. A quick survey of other Jewish writings supports that conclusion. The Mishnah, at m. Sotah 1:7, states the principle in the third person, as does the Babylonian Talmud in b. Sanh. 100a. Genesis Rabbah to Genesis 1:31 similarly emphasizes the principle as an ongoing key fulcrum in judgment.

The concept of measure for measure is deployed in Judaism even when the formula is not used. It appears in biblical works such as Proverbs and Job, yet Ezekiel comes closest to the formulation here when he prophesies in God’s name against Jerusalem, “Thus says the Lord God: I will deal with you as you have done.”¹⁹ It also appears in later Targums, such as Targum of Lamentations, where the principle of measure for measure governs three large additions in 1:3, 1:4 and 2:20.²⁰ In this case we seem to be dealing with a proverb in Aramaic which Jesus and a meturgeman of Isaiah both just happened to use.²¹ This is an instance in which, despite close verbal agreement, no case for dependence can be made one way or the other.

Other key shared concepts

Targum Jonathan instances other key phrases that are classified as comparisons of the third type. The phrase “mammon of deceit” in the Isaiah Targum (5:23; 33:15) is certainly not unique within rabbinic or Judaic

¹⁹ Ezek 16:59. See also Prov 22:8 and Job 4:8.

²⁰ See Brady, *Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations*, 60–66.

²¹ For other instances and further discussion, see Chilton, *A Galilean Rabbi*, 123–25.

usage,²² but Targum of 1 Samuel 8:3; 12:3; Targum of 2 Samuel 14:14, and Targum of Isaiah 5:23; 33:15 provide an analogy with Jesus' usage in the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:9), because in all those instances bribery is at issue. In any case, the key concept of "mammon" is a shared usage between Jesus and the Targumim.²³ A different notion appears in the phrase, "*The people inquire of their idols*, the living *from* the dead," which is an obvious rebuke in Isaiah Targum 8:19. But its concluding expression seems echoed in the pointed question that "two men in dazzling clothes" pose to the women at the tomb of Jesus (Luke 24:5), "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" Obviously, these remarks feature turns of phrase rather than content, but they should be noted.

Also in Luke, Jesus cites what appears to be a passage from Isaiah 61 in a synagogue (Luke 4:18-19), but it turns out to be a mixture of several passages or themes from the book of Isaiah. Among them is Isaiah 42, which in the Targum (Tg. Isa. 42:3, 7) especially refers to the poor, the blind, and prisoners, who are pointedly mentioned in Jesus' "citation."

At the time of Jesus' baptism, a voice is said to attest that God "is well pleased" with him (so Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22); in the Isaiah Targum, God is said to be well pleased with Israel or Jacob (41:8-9; see also 43:20; 44:1) and the Messiah (43:10), when the Masoretic Text speaks only of God's choice of such figures. Similarly, the idiom that there is (or is not) "pleasure before" God is shared by the Gospels (Matt 18:14) and the Targumim (e.g., Tg. Zeph. 1:12).²⁴

Paul portrays "the scribe" in particular as led astray by the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:20). In that portrayal he agrees with the Isaiah Targum (3:1-3) as well as with Targum Jonathan more generally.

Céline Mangan has helpfully observed that it is specifically "*new wine*" that splits wineskins in Job Targum 32:19, and that invites comparison with Jesus' saying in Matthew 9:17, Mark 2:22, and Luke 5:37. The underlying image is already similar to the Masoretic Text, and Mangan herself comments that the wine is also "new" in Symmachus, a Greek version that competed with the Septuagint.²⁵ But the agreement between the Targum and the Gospels is nonetheless worth noting. Similarly, the phrase

²² See Chilton, *A Galilean Rabbi*, 117-23.

²³ See Cathcart and Gordon, *Minor Prophets*, 40, 152, also citing the Tg. Hab. 2:9, the Tg. Jer. 6:13 and Matt 6:24; Luke 16:9, 11, 13; Mangan, *Targum of Job*, 6, citing Tg. Job 22:3, 27:8.

²⁴ See Cathcart and Gordon, *Minor Prophets*, 167. On p. 190 they come to the conclusion that the usage is ubiquitous, "It is very unlikely . . . that there is theological significance in Tg.'s less than literal rendering." The present point is not theological, but regards the turn of phrase in itself.

²⁵ Mangan, *Targum of Job*, 73.

“*flesh and blood*” is used innovatively in the Job Targum (in manuscript 110 of the Bibliothèque Nationale) to refer to human beings and their limited knowledge (Tg. Job 37:20, within the speech of Elihu). Mangan notes this and the similar usage in Matthew 16:17 and 1 Enoch 15:4.²⁶ But she does not mention that, in the following chapter (Tg. Job 38:17, the Lord’s reply to Job), the question is posed “*is it possible* that the gates of death have been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of *the shadow of death of Gehenna?*” When Peter is told in Matthew 16:17-18 that “flesh and blood” has not revealed the identity of Jesus to him, and that “Hades’ gates” will not prevail against the church of which he is the rock (*kepha*’ in Aramaic), that may be taken to be a use of imagery comparable to what is reflected in the Job Targum in reference both to the limitations of flesh and blood and to the power of the gates of death.²⁷ Similarly, those echoes join the resonance of the passage with the Isaiah Targum 22:22, where shutting and opening are made into specifically priestly functions.²⁸

It is interesting that Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, a later Targum, contains many phrases that echo the New Testament. Pseudo-Jonathan to Genesis 37:11 states that Jacob kept the dreaming of Joseph “*in his heart,*” which is reminiscent of Luke 2:51, “His mother treasured all these things in her heart.”²⁹ Although no direct connection one way or the other with the New Testament can be claimed, it is striking that in Exodus 10:28 in Pseudo-Jonathan, Pharaoh tells Moses, “*I will deliver you into the hands of those who were seeking your life,*” a phrasing that Michael Maher compares with the prediction of Jesus’ death in Mark 9:31, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands.”³⁰ He also observes that the phrase “*high priests*” (in the plural) appears in Pseudo-Jonathan (at Lev 16:1), as it does in the New Testament.³¹ And, as we have already seen, Leviticus 19:18 includes the negative form of the Golden Rule in Pseudo-Jonathan, which is attributed to Hillel in b. Shab. 31a and is frequently compared to the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31. Finally, Pseudo-Jonathan in Numbers 24:3 (and in the earlier Targum Neofiti) says of Balaam that “*what has been hidden from all the prophets has been revealed to him,*” a claim similar to one which Jesus expressed in Matthew 13:17 and Luke

²⁶ Mangan, *Targum of Job*, 83.

²⁷ See Finley, “‘Upon This Rock,’” 133–51.

²⁸ See Chilton, “Shebna, Eliakim, and the Promise to Peter.”

²⁹ See Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 125. He also points out (39) that the positive reference to Noah’s “*good works*” at Gen 6:9 in both TN and PJ. (i.e., the Proto-PT source) is reminiscent of Eph 2:10 and Titus 2:14.

³⁰ See Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 188.

³¹ Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Leviticus*, 165 (citing Matt 2:4; 16:21; 21:15). It should be noted, however, that Josephus also reflects the usage, see Chilton, “Judaism.”

10:21&24.³² Such cases are reminders that the Targumim, like rabbinic literature as a whole, may illuminate the language and imagery of the New Testament, even at the remove of several centuries.³³

The Gospel according to John has not featured prominently in this discussion of possible affinities with the Targumim (a situation addressed in chapter 19), but Martin McNamara has called attention to one notable convergence. The phrasing of Jesus' promise in John 14:2, that he goes "to prepare a place" for his followers, is similar to the theme expressed in the Pentateuchal Targumim generally that God or his Shekhinah prepares for Israel a place of encampment or rest, as in Numbers 10:33 and Deuteronomy 1:33. As McNamara points out, the usage renders a variety of Hebrew terms in the Masoretic Text and should therefore be seen as characteristically targumic.³⁴ The usage in John is not sufficiently specific to make the targumic connection more than possible, but the convergence remains notable.

Affinity 4. Comparisons of Common Themes

The fourth type of affinity between the Targums and the New Testament lies in the area of common themes. Here there is no common wording, terminology, or formulation, but only a similar articulation of thematic concepts. This is the weakest form of comparison between Targums and the New Testament, and although it provides evidence of the common Jewish background of the two kinds of writings, it cannot be pushed much further than that.

The theme of the consequences of Israel's failure to attend to the utterances of the prophets was shared by Jesus with Judaic tradition, including the Isaiah Targum, but Jesus also formulated a demand based on the unique experience of his followers (Matt 13:17; cf. Luke 10:24):

³² So McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Numbers*, 136. But might this be a case of anti-Christian polemic?

³³ The early TN makes the use of the verbs "releasing" and "forgiving" as synonyms (see Gen 4:7, 13 in Neofiti, and Matt 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23). See McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, 66. See also Lev 4:20, 31; 5:10, 13, 16, 18, 26; 19:22, cited in McNamara and Hayward, *Targum Neofiti 1: Leviticus*, 10.

³⁴ He first called attention to the usage in TN on Exodus in *Targum and Testament*, 88–89, but then observed that it is also characteristic of Onqelos, PJ, the Fragment Targums, and even the Peshitta; see "To Prepare a Resting-Place for you." He especially cites their renderings of Num 10:33 (in respect of the ark) and Deut 1:33. From our perspective, in both verses, this expression represents the Proto-PT source. Its appearance in TO suggests that it belongs to the earliest layer.

Amen I say to you that many prophets and just people wished to see what you see and did not see, and hear what you hear and did not hear.

This conviction that a fresh experience of God brings with it new requirements of response is also reflected in Isaiah Targum 48:6:

You have heard: *has what is revealed to you been revealed to any other people*; and will you not declare it?

Obviously, no case for dependence can be made here, but the thematic coherence is nonetheless worthy of note.³⁵

The Isaiah Targum speaks of “*the righteous, who desire teaching as a hungry person desires bread, and the words of the law, which they desire as a thirsty person desires water*” (Tg. Isa. 32:6). That interpretation of hunger and thirst is reminiscent of the Matthean Jesus, who blesses those who hunger and thirst after righteousness in Matthew 5:6. The statement “*Blessed are you, the righteous*” in Targum Jonathan at 2 Samuel 23:4 might also be mentioned in comparison with Matthew 5:6. Neither comparison extends to the Lukan Jesus at Luke 6:21, which raises the possibility that the present wording in Matthew was shaped during the course of transmission—as has happened with targumic interpretation. Similarly, Craig A. Evans has suggested that the Targum’s association of the lame with sinners and exiles might illuminate Matthew 21:14-15 (see Tg. Jon. to 2 Sam. 5:8; Zeph 3:19; Isa 35:6; Mic 4:6-8).³⁶

Robert Hayward has observed a similar comparison, citing the Targum of Jeremiah 23:28:

Behold, just as one separates the straw from the grain, so one separates the wicked from the righteous, says the LORD.

This image appears in both the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt 3:12) and in a parable of Jesus’ (Matt 13:30).³⁷ Since John’s statement also appears in Luke 3:17, a purely Matthean usage cannot be claimed; still, the compositional pattern is manifested more clearly in Matthew than in any other Gospel. Perhaps even more striking is the phrase “*doers of the truth,*” which appears in Jeremiah Targum 2:2 and in the Johannine

³⁵ The similar phrasing associated with Balaam in TN Num 24 may or may not be relevant.

³⁶ Evans, “A Note on 2 Samuel 5:8 and Jesus’ Ministry to the ‘Maimed, Halt, and Blind.’”

³⁷ See Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 27, 75, 113. As he mentions, the usage is linked with the well-established connection between the image of harvest and judgment at the end of time. For the related motif of the handling of chaff (see Matt 3:12; 13:30; Luke 3:17; Tg. Hos. 13:3; Tg. Zeph. 2:2).

literature (John 3:32; 1 John 1:6).³⁸ A more general, but less exact, analogy exists between Jesus' complaint about the "adulterous and sinful generation" in which he found himself (see Matt 12:39; 16:4; Mark 8:38) and the cognate characterization in the Isaiah Targum 57:3. Jesus' reference to sin as "debt" (see Matt 6:12 and 18:23-35) appears to be an idiom shared with the Targumim.³⁹

The Targumim participate in a cosmology that reflects convictions of how eschatological reward and punishment are to be worked out. It is unlikely that the targumic scheme is original; more probably, it reflects widespread expectations. But sometimes the Targumim illuminate otherwise esoteric statements within the New Testament. Isaiah Targum 63:6 specifies the "*lower earth*" as the place to which God will cast the "*mighty men*" of his enemies. A similar phrase is used in Ephesians 4:9 in order to refer to Christ's descent to the dead.⁴⁰ Divine anger is invoked in the Isaiah Targum 3:16-24 against women who adorn themselves—especially their hair—in an exaggerated fashion, and that invites comparison with 1 Timothy 2:9 and 1 Peter 3:3. God's anger is understood to "whiten" (Tg. Mal. 3:2) in a way that may illuminate passages such as Mark 9:3 and Revelation 7:14.⁴¹ The definitive punishment of the wicked is that they are to suffer the "second death." That is the threat of both Targum Jonathan (Isa 22:14; 65:6, 15; Jer 51:39, 57) and the Revelation of John (2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8).⁴² Any extension of time serves to allow for the possibility of repentance (see Tg. Isa. 26:10; 42:14; Tg. Hab. 1:13; 3:1-2; 2 Pet 3:9; Rev 2:21).⁴³ When the God who judges in this fashion takes notice of people, a "memorial" or "remembrance" may be said to come before him. This is a generally targumic expression—amply attested in Targum Jonathan—which also appears in the New Testament (see Acts 10:4; as

³⁸ See Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 53 for further references. Hayward also (27, 187) sees a comparison between 1 Pet 2:1-10 and Tg. Isa. 28:6 and Tg. Jer. 51:26. That connection (and several others mentioned by Hayward) strikes us as too tenuous to mention, although there may be some merit in the exegeses he proposes. It is more plausible that the image of the stone could be taken messianically; see also Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 194 (commenting on Tg. Zech. 4:7).

³⁹ The general point is made in Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 139.

⁴⁰ Indeed, the similarity should settle the question in favor of that interpretation, instead of seeing it as a reference to the incarnation: see Scott, *Epistles of Paul*, 208-9. A recent attempt has been made to link the term *kathegetes* in Matt 23:10 to *parnas* in the Tg. Ezek. 34:23; 37:24; see De Moor, "Reconstruction of the Aramaic Original of the Lord's Prayer." The difficulty here is that the sense of *kathegetes* applies to teaching, while that of *parnas* applies to pragmatic leadership and care.

⁴¹ See Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 235.

⁴² That threat is elegantly explained in Smolar and Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan*, 183.

⁴³ See Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 155.

well as Matt 26:13; Mark 14:9).⁴⁴ Awareness of such divine remembrance is a foretaste of the “*consolation(s)*” people are to enjoy as a consequence of divine judgment (see Tg. 2 Sam. 23:1; Tg. Isa. 8:2; 18:4; 40:1-2; Tg. Jer. 12:5; 31:6, 26; Tg. Hos. 6:2, with Luke 2:24-25; 6:24; Acts 4:36; Rom 15:5; 2 Cor 1:7; 1 Thess 2:3-4).⁴⁵ Moreover, favorable judgment may be attributed to an angelic advocate, designated by the Greek term *parakletos* (so Tg. Job 33:23 and John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1-2). In all this, God acts as sovereign, the king of the ages (see Tg. Isa. 6:5; 30:33 Tg. Jer. 10:10; Tg. Zech. 14:16; as well as 1 Tim 1:17; [Rev 15:3]), who is able to raise the dead with the sound of a trumpet (see 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16, and Exod 20:18).⁴⁶

Not every point of contact between Judaism and the early Christian writings of the New Testament appear parallel. There are several passages in which the Targums present an interpretation that rules out a Christian exegesis. Robert Hayward suggests that the statement in Jeremiah Targum 33:25 contradicts Christian belief that God would cause the present heaven and earth to pass away.⁴⁷ Similar cases include the rendering of Targum of Hosea 11:1, “Out of Egypt I have called *them* sons.” That corrects the passage away from the singular application of “Out of Egypt I have called to my son,” which had long been used as a Christian testimonium (see Matt 2:15). It obviously cannot be demonstrated that the Hosea Targum here responds to the testimonial usage; but that it removes the possibility of such an interpretation is notable. Perhaps for a similar reason, the Targum of Zechariah omits the reference to thirty pieces of silver at 11:12, the reference to “the potter” at 11:13 (cf. Matt 27:3-10), and the reference to “him whom they have pierced” at 12:10 (cf. John 19:37; Rev 1:7).⁴⁸ It has also been suggested that the surprising rendering of Malachi

⁴⁴ See Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 93 n. 13.

⁴⁵ See Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 131. For further discussion, and citation of Num 23:23 in TN, see McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Numbers*, 133.

⁴⁶ See Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 219.

⁴⁷ Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 34, 143; he cites 2 Pet 3:10-13; Rev 20:11; 21:1 by way of comparison, as well as 1 En. 91:16 and the Stoic teaching that the world would be destroyed by fire. As Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 158, point out, the Targumim would seem to agree with such a teaching.

⁴⁸ Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 54, cite the support of Matt 2:15 for the MT, but they do not speculate on the reasons for the departure of the Targum from the other versions. Along the same lines, Gordon rightly cautions in a series of remarks that we can only surmise in regard to the influence of Matthew upon the targumic rendering of Zech 11 (*Minor Prophets*, 212-15). On that basis he makes a connection between Zeph 2:1 in the targumic Codex Reuchlinianus and Matt 7:3-5 and Luke 6:41-42, which is based on the speculation that a reading of the term “straw” (*qosh* in Hebrew) was applied verbally. The idea is, as Professor Gordon explained in a letter that he has given permission to cite, that a pun such as “Be ‘strawed’ and then ‘straw’” is behind Jesus’ usage. Their treatment of Tg.

2:16, “But *if you* hate her, divorce her,” which contradicts the straightforward meaning of the Hebrew (“But he hates divorce”), is designed to militate against the stricter Christian teaching (see Matt 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; Rom 7:2-3; 1 Cor 7:10-11).⁴⁹

Still, in several passages, Targums support Christian interpretations. In Targum Zechariah 14:21 refers to the time when there will be no “trader,” rather than “no Canaanite,” in the temple, and that may be an antecedent of Jesus’ complaint in John 2:16.⁵⁰ Similarly, the statement found in Hosea Targum 1:3, “*if they repent, it will be forgiven them; but if not, they will fall as the leaves of a fig-tree fall,*” may be a precedent for the imagery of the story in Mark 11:12-14, 20-23, and parallels. The idea that an animal which has been strangled is offensive to God (because its blood has not been drained away) is shared by Acts 15:20 and the Targum of Malachi 1:13.⁵¹ Those connections are too slight to warrant the conclusion of direct contact; similarly, passages such as Matthew 26:64, Mark 14:62, and Luke 22:69 represent a convergence with the well-known Judaic tendency to refer to divine “power,” rather than to God himself.⁵² The interpretation of incense offered to God as prayer is perhaps a somewhat more specific connection (see Tg. Mal. 1:11 and Rev 5:8; 8:3-4), as is the image of water as a multitude of people (Tg. 2 Sam. 22:17; Tg. Hab. 3:8; Rev 17:15).⁵³

We end this section with a word of caution concerning the Targum of Proverbs. Although it presents several usages of imagery that seem to

Zech. 12:10 in respect of the NT (*Minor Prophets*, 218–19) is balanced, and develops a surmise also considered in Smolar and Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 165.

⁴⁹ See Smolar and Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 3, where the interpretation is assigned to the school of Aqiba on the basis of m. Git. 9:10 and b. Git. 90b; Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 235. Similarly, it is perhaps a bit of a strain to conceive of interpreters imputing seduction to Hezron simply because he is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus. See McIvor, *Targum of Chronicles*, 50, citing Tg. 1 Chron. 2:21; Matt 1:3; and Luke 3:33. After all, the name of the resulting son is not the same in the Targum as in the NT. McIvor also suggests (41) that naming Shem as “the great priest” in 1 Chron 1:24 is a response to claims about Melchizedek and Jesus in Heb 7. It seems more plausible that the association with Shem shows the kind of force and affiliation the image of Melchizedek exercised; see Grossfeld, *Targum Onqelos to Genesis*, 69, citing Gen 14:18 in Onqelos. It is nonetheless of interest that Maher (*Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 58) accepts the anti-Christian reading of Melchizedek in P^J. But that is because he sees the verb “to minister” as denying priestly function, when in fact that term is quite consistent with a priestly understanding of Melchizedek.

⁵⁰ Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 226.

⁵¹ Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 231.

⁵² See Levey, *Targum of Ezekiel*, 63 n. 8, citing Tg. Ezek. 20:22; Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 67, notes the frequency of “power” in the Targumim, although he cites the wrong passage in Mark.

⁵³ Cathcart and Gordon, *Targum of the Minor Prophets*, 231 and 158.

cast light on the Gospels, the Proverbs Targum is based on the Peshitta, which in turn was translated in close consultation of the Septuagint. So the Targum primarily echoes the Septuagint in its parallels with the New Testament. For example, the Targum indicates the ant is said to have no “*harvest*,” rather than no “*chief*” in Proverbs 6:7, and John Healy has compared that to the characterization of animals in Matthew 6:26 and Luke 12:24.⁵⁴ But because the point of Proverbs is to promote industry, while the Gospels commend release from care, the similarity should not be pressed. Indeed, the Targum simply follows the Septuagint here. A stronger case may be made for the statement, “It is a snare for a man *that he vows to the sanctuary* and afterwards *his soul rejoices*” (Tg. Prov. 20:25). The basic situation is as envisaged in Matthew 15:4-6 and Mark 7:10-13, the practice of dedicating property to the temple while continuing to enjoy its use.⁵⁵ But since the Septuagint renders the verse similarly, there is no question of a particular comparison with the Targum.

CONCLUSION

Our initial finding must be categorical and negative. The comparison of the second type, where the New Testament and the Targumim share a common literary understanding of the same biblical passage, resulted in the smallest number of cases of all the categories of comparison we have considered. That strongly underlines what has emerged from this discussion as a whole: in their literary form, the Targumim had not fully emerged by the first century. Had that been the case, the literary category of comparison would have been much more strongly represented.

The comparison of the first type—where actual wording is involved in the interpretation of the same scriptural passage or in a more general assertion—represents a stronger relationship between the New Testament and the Targumim. This result seems paradoxical. Why should that be the case? In each instance, a saying of Jesus was involved, and a saying of Jesus in regard to a key concept within his teaching (forgiveness, violence, and Gehenna). Evidently, the Targumim represent traditions that were a formative influence on the tradition of the Gospels at an early stage. Once the Gospels emerged in their Greek form, however, targumic influence all but disappeared. This explains why the second, literary type of comparison yielded so few results.

That complex relationship, in which the Targumim represent traditions from the earliest period of formative Judaism in texts that are

⁵⁴ Healy, *Targum of Proverbs*, 21.

⁵⁵ See Healy, *Targum of Proverbs*, 45. For further discussion, see Chilton, *Temple of Jesus*, 127–28.

relatively late in their literary forms, is best attested in the third type of comparison. Here, many of Jesus' most famous sayings find their echoes: the kingdom of God, the measure by which one is measured, mammon, the citation of Isaiah 61, new wine, the promise to Peter, being merciful as God is merciful, and the Golden Rule. But this comparison (unlike the comparison of the first type) is not limited to sayings of Jesus. Characteristic expressions of God being well pleased, of seeking the living among the dead, of keeping things in one's heart, of being delivered to death, and of a plurality of high priests, also find their place here. That raises interesting questions with regard to actual contacts that may be posited between the Targumim and the New Testament. These will be pursued in the second part of this conclusion.

Finally, the fourth type of comparison includes more passages than may be mentioned here, but it is instructive in its range. It offers Jesus' statement about the revelation of what was hidden from the prophets to Jesus' own followers, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, divine judgment as the separation of straw and grain, the present generation as adulterous and sinful, and the danger of vows concerning the temple. Although it should be borne in mind that comparisons of the fourth type do not concern typically targumic expressions, the very fact of this overlap means they are of value in an understanding of the New Testament. For all the variety of the dates involving different degrees of distance from the first century, the Targumim include material that resonates with some of the most primitive materials in the New Testament. Here again, as in the third category, that resonance involves more than sayings of Jesus. Expressions such as "doing truth" (as in 1 John 1:6), "the lower earth" (Eph 4:9), "the second death" (Rev 20:14; 21:8) find their place here, as does the particular concern about women decorating their hair (1 Tim 2:9, 1 Pet 3:3).

The study of the Targumim in their relationship to the New Testament is complex, and it has been hampered by the binary opposition between two equally untenable points of view. The hypothesis that "the Palestinian Targum" existed in pre-Christian times once claimed a nearly dogmatic status among some scholars and supported many scholarly studies that linked the Targums and the New Testament. That position has now been discredited, as we discussed in chapter 9, but that has brought about the mirror image of that claim. There is now the dogmatic assertion that because the Targumim emerged relatively late as documents, their traditions can teach us nothing about the growth of the New Testament.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ That kind of dismissal is characteristic of the attitude of some scholars of the NT toward rabbinic literature as a whole. Even the basic requirements of comparison

This latter position has lessened the amount of attention paid to the Targums in New Testament and thus the influence of the Jewish context, as opposed to the Graeco-Roman, has been seen as less important.

Our approach has been more critical and has worked to chart a path between these two untenable extremes. That is why we have insisted upon an approach that identifies the kind of comparison appropriate to each case, and why we have not begun by assuming either the priority or the irrelevance of targumic material in any of them. Even so, we need to close on a note of caution. As has been pointed out, similarity to targumic materials is no guarantee of what is commonly called the “authenticity” of a given passage in the New Testament. Simply put: a targumic analogy is no proof in itself that Jesus said what the Gospels claim he said. As a matter of fact, in the first case of the first type of comparison (the teaching about those who fail to see and hear), we have observed that the formative influence of the circle around James was emphasized.⁵⁷ The types of comparison we have offered are between two bodies of traditional literature, and should not be confused with historical findings.

As we have emphasized, historical relationship differs from verbal and literary comparison. Once a verbal or literary comparison has been developed, it opens the historical question: why should the two kinds of literature be related as they are? In global terms, we have provided an answer to that question. The Targumim were in the process of formation during the period in which the New Testament emerged.

Resonance of the sort we have seen does not by itself demonstrate contact or priority between the two literatures. As a matter of inference, Jesus’ citation of Isaiah 6 in a targumic form, and the subsequent development of that citation in the circle of James, is consistent with the evidence but by no means proven by that evidence. In historical terms, resonance only suggests that there might be an analogy between the two literatures involved in comparison.

The four types of comparison studied in this chapter indicate that historical analogies between the New Testament and the Targumim appear when we attend to their possible relationships. The first relationship involves common reference. Mark 9:47-48 and Targum Isaiah 66:24 both relate the wording at the close of the book of Isaiah to Gehenna, which they understand as the place of ultimate judgment. No causal relation between Mark and the Targum can be argued on that basis alone, but the commonality of reference comprises an immediate inference. By secondary

(competence in Aramaic and Hebrew, as well as in Greek) are not built into the normal graduate programs in many cases.

⁵⁷ As in Chilton, *Galilean Rabbi and His Bible*, 94–97.

inference, the question of contact may be addressed, and it seems in this case that targumic tradition has influenced the New Testament.

The second relationship involves shared context. The understanding that the vineyard is a symbol for Israel is manifest in Jesus' parable of the vineyard (Matt 21:33-43, Mark 12:1-12, Luke 20:9-19) and also in the fifth chapter of the Targum of Isaiah. Here, no commonality of wording or direct reference is at stake, but it is evident that all the documents speak from a common context of the association of Israel's temple and the vineyard. As we have seen, the literary history of the Targumim makes this a rather rare analogy with the New Testament.

The third type of relationship is systemic. The kingdom of God, it turns out, is not a phrase uniquely attributed to Jesus (as is still widely asserted). That precise wording also appears in the Targumim, where the issue is not in the least of the legalistic sort which many scholars still attribute to Judaism. Rather, it is an explicitly eschatological concept, comparable to Jesus', and presented without any indication of a reaction against Christian thinking. In that regard, any response to Christianity within the Targumim appears to be sporadic and certainly cannot be assumed to have been a controlling concern.

The reference to Jesus (inevitably within the study of the New Testament) raises an issue within scholarly discussion that mirrors the debate regarding the dating of the Targumim. Because familiarity with Judaism is so rudimentary among scholars of the New Testament, the argument is sometimes stated or implied that any similarity with a rabbinic institution must be attributed to Jesus, rather than his followers (who—it is supposed—were non-Judaic Hellenists). Such a presupposition ignores the findings in which Jesus seems to be better understood by contrasting him with his contemporaries, whether they happen to have been associated with his movement or not. Whether the relationships at issue are of common reference, of shared context, or of systemic expression, no assumption for or against what is usually called the historicity of the Gospels can be assumed.

The Gospels refer back to Jesus as their source, but there is no "historical Jesus" in the sense of a person whose deeds and character are accessible by means of verifiable public evidence. The literarily historical Jesus, on the other hand, is a fact of reading. We cannot understand the documents unless we identify the Jesus to whom they believe they are referring. That Jesus, of course, is an object of their belief. He becomes historical for us in the literary sense when we discover that we must suppose facts about Jesus (e.g., his teaching of the kingdom with an eschatological meaning) in order to explain the generation of a given text. For that reason, Jesus

is a figure of critical history to the extent, and only to the extent, that he permits us to explain how certain texts arose in their mutual relations and in their literary milieu. Literary comparison of the New Testament with the Targumim by itself does not solve “the problem of the historical Jesus,” but it can proceed in a way which does not exacerbate it and which may be productive for further analysis. Finally, the “historical Jesus” is a variable in the overall equation of how the New Testament arose; for that reason, comparative study with the Targumim may be expected to provide that variable with more specific value than is usual in today’s general assertions about Jesus.

THE ARAMAIC RETROVERSION OF JESUS SAYINGS

In chapter 17, we studied how the Targums could help us understand the meaning of utterances associated with Jesus or of other remarks found in the New Testament. Here in chapter 18, we want to explore how the Targums and other Aramaic texts and inscriptions can assist us in identifying the language Jesus spoke and thus in delineating the way in which his remarks were formulated among his early followers. The previous chapter looked at *what* was said, while this chapter looks at *how* it was said. What were the words that would have been used? What sentence structure and grammar organized those words into semantic coherence? What were the linguistic and dialectical properties of the sayings' formulation?

Why is it important to study the language—and if possible, the dialect—which Jesus and his early followers knew and used? The New Testament Gospels are composed in Greek. But Jesus and his followers in Palestine did not communicate in Greek; they used Aramaic. The Greek Gospels provide no direct access to Jesus' linguistic world except for occasional transliterations from Aramaic into Greek. If we want to understand the character of his speech—at least as it was preserved in the written Gospels—then we must work out an approach to get behind the Greek text. We cannot follow the position of fundamentalist Christianity, nor of the Jesus Seminar for that matter, and simply approach the Greek as if it gives us immediate access to the earliest layer of Jesus traditions.

While it has long been recognized that Jesus spoke a Semitic language, there has been extensive disagreement about whether it was Aramaic or Hebrew. Centuries of scholarly analysis and debate have finally made it clear that Jesus' language was Aramaic. The discoveries in the Judean Desert, such as those at Khirbet Qumran and Wadi Murabba'at, and of inscriptions in Jerusalem have brought a wealth of new knowledge about the two languages and their place in the linguistic milieu of

ancient Palestine. In this context, Max Wilcox's 1984 review of the question essentially brought the debate to a close.¹ His examination of the eight transliterated Semitic words in the Gospels drew upon a wide range of previous scholarship to show that five words could only be Aramaic (and not Hebrew), two were probably Aramaic, and one could equally be Aramaic or Hebrew. In other words, the evidence requires the conclusion that Jesus knew and used Aramaic. It is possible that he also knew Hebrew, but the evidence does not require that conclusion.

How do we get to Jesus' Aramaic wording? There are only two possibilities. Either we find an Aramaic source text on which a Greek gospel was based or we recreate through **retroversion** an Aramaic version of the Greek by (re)translating the Greek text into Aramaic. The former would provide the most sound knowledge, but the latter forms a means by which the question can be approached if the first approach is not possible. And since there are no Aramaic texts that have survived antiquity which can be identified as source texts for the Gospels, we must unfortunately turn to retroversion—acknowledging the degree of inference involved—as our only tool for extending our knowledge in this field.

That is not to say that candidates for an Aramaic gospel source have never been proposed. Prior to the Second World War, George Lamsa used the Peshitta—a Syriac version of the New Testament (and the Old Testament)—as the basis for replicating Jesus' teaching in Aramaic.² His approach was taken up and popularized by Neil Douglas-Klotz in 1990.³ Modern practitioners of this approach perpetuate a basic confusion of language, since the Aramaic of Jesus' time and the Peshitta's Syriac dialect of Aramaic come from different centuries and geographical regions. In addition, the approach is based on uncritical treatment of the Peshitta's version of the Gospels. The Peshitta Gospels were translated from Greek into Syriac (not vice versa) in order to counteract usage of the harmonized **Diatessaron**, a compendium of the Gospels that were used in worship in much of the Syriac-speaking world. For this purpose these "separated Gospels," as they were called, stuck as closely as possible to the original Greek text of the Gospels. As a result, the Peshitta often introduces Hellenisms into the Syriac, producing exactly the opposite cultural accommodation to what retroversion aims to achieve. The tendency is evident in Douglas-Klotz's very long and baroque additions to the Lord's Prayer, which he claims are translations of Jesus' Aramaic.

Syriac sources of course have their place in establishing trajectories of Aramaic usage and of exegetical traditions. But in that regard, it is the

¹ See Wilcox, "Semitisms in the New Testament." The summation appears on p. 1007.

² See Lamsa, *Hidden Gospel* and *New Testament from the Ancient Eastern Text*.

³ Douglas-Klotz, *Prayers of the Cosmos*.

Old Syriac Gospels,⁴ rather than the Peshitta, that should be used, for they are significantly earlier than the Peshitta. But in any case, the supposition that a Syriac version as it stands represents the Aramaic Jesus spoke and therefore gives his teaching more accurately than the Greek Gospels is simply wrong.

Other Aramaic gospel fragments were once considered as possible candidates for sources for the New Testament, but the proposal was quickly discarded. These were composed in a dialect once called “Palestinian Syriac,” but now more accurately known as Christian Palestinian Aramaic. This Aramaic dialect was spoken among Christians in and around Judea and developed following the Christianization of the “Holy Land” starting in the early fourth century. It was quickly recognized that the dialect, and not just in the Gospels, was heavily infused with Graecisms which arose through extensive contact with the Christian immigrants. Key studies attempting to accomplish this have recently been published by Klaus Beyer, Joseph Fitzmyer, Maurice Casey, and Bruce Chilton.⁵

In principle, the practice of retroversion is straightforward: simply translate a Greek sentence into Aramaic. Two guidelines will help make the practice more likely to replicate accurately the wording of Jesus’ teaching—or at least the teaching of the *literary* Jesus present in a Gospel—that is, the Aramaic source reflected in the present, Greek texts.

Step one: When selecting a passage of the Greek New Testament to retrovert, identify one that contains some evidence of being a literal translation from the Aramaic. For example, look for Semitisms, transliterations, puns, or mistakes that could take place in Aramaic but not Greek. Wilcox’s essay, “Semitisms in the New Testament,” provides a useful survey of different linguistic forms and idioms that most plausibly indicate a Semitic background in Greek writing. Source criticism among the different gospels may sometimes also provide a reliable guide to pre-Greek layers of a Gospel.⁶

Step two: Once a suitable passage for retroversion has been identified, translate it into idiomatic, first-century Aramaic. As we described in chapter 13, Jewish Literary Aramaic is the primary Jewish dialect of Aramaic for the period of Middle Aramaic, 200 BCE to 200 CE, and thus for

⁴ See Burkitt, *Evangelion da-Mapharreshe*; and Chilton, “Amen.”

⁵ Beyer, *Semitischen Syntax im Neuen Testament*; Fitzmyer, *Gospel according to Luke*; Casey, *Aramaic Sources of Mark’s Gospel, An Aramaic Approach to Q Sources*; Chilton, “Maurice Casey’s *Aramaic Sources of Mark’s Gospel*,” and *Jesus’ Prayer*.

⁶ The notion that an entire gospel or most of a gospel constitutes a translation of an entire Aramaic gospel, as C. C. Torrey argued, or as Casey assumed, is beyond the evidence presently available and in the end is tendentious and indemonstrable. See Charles Cutter Torrey, *Documents of the Primitive Church* (New York: Harper, 1941).

the first century. Michael Sokoloff has argued that some of the texts and inscriptions from Palestine in this period evidence a second, non-literary dialect which he calls Judean Aramaic. It is unclear whether this constitutes an accurate designation, for much of the material has been treated as part of the same dialect as the Qumran Aramaic material, and most of the terms in his dictionary also appear there. For the purposes of this chapter, then, we will treat it as all part of JLA.

The goal of the retroverted translation is to recast the Greek into the Aramaic word choices, grammatical constructions, and idioms that would have been used in the first century. The fundamental source for this knowledge is of course the Aramaic works of the first-century dialect. Fitzmyer emphasized that this meant the Aramaic documents among the Dead Sea Scrolls and inscriptions and other written material known from Judea in the first century and before.⁷ However, the increasingly detailed scholarly delineation of JLA in the decades since he composed that view indicates that, with proper care and consideration, most written JLA works can be used. A critical survey of linguistic forms should begin with Daniel in the early second century BCE and extend through various Aramaic Dead Sea Scrolls and Judean burial inscriptions, to the second century CE finds of the Babatha legal archive and the Bar Kokhba letters in locations such as Wadi Murabba'at and Nahal Hever, as well as second-century Aramaic documents such as the Megillat Taanit.

It is now clear that Targum Onqelos to the Pentateuch and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets also belong to this collection of JLA material, being initially composed in Palestine earlier than Megillat Taanit—and perhaps before any of the second-century finds. As Kutscher first observed, the linguistic character of Targum Onqelos is a close parallel with the Genesis Apocryphon, and more recent study has only given further support to that analysis. Indeed, whereas the JLA writings from Qumran evidence an expanding variety of forms through time, both Targums Onqelos and Jonathan represent a regularizing of the dialect, both in terms of vocabulary and grammar. If we are correct in dating the initial composition of these works to the period prior to the temple's destruction, then they constitute important sources of information concerning Aramaic in the first century.

Numerous tools are now available to assist the exercise of retroversion. Much of the work in recent decades has made extensive use of collections of this material available in Fitzmyer and Harrington's *Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*, and Klaus Beyer's, *Die Aramäische Texte vom Toten Meer. A.*

⁷ Fitzmyer, "Study of the Aramaic Background of the New Testament," 8. See also Fitzmyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament*.

Yardeni's collection, *Textbook of Documentary Texts*, now widens the selection of material readily available. Many of these works have glossaries in them, but Sokoloff's *Dictionary of Judean Aramaic* and Edward Cook's *Glossary of Targum Onkelos* now provide helpful guides for lexical explorations. There are a vast number of grammatical studies, both of morphology and syntax, by a variety of scholars. See the bibliographies under Kutscher, Muraoka, Schattner-Reiser, Sokoloff, Kaufman, Cook, Huehnergard, and Kutty, as well as the bibliography materials at *CAL* and *NTCS*.

The most valid retroversions will be those that are based on wording and grammatical formulations that are evidenced in several or even all of the texts from this period. Furthermore, common aspects of Aramaic that appear the same in all known Aramaic dialects, even if they are not evidenced in this corpus, are also acceptable. Infrequent or unique formulations appearing in a single text should be avoided, since they may be idiosyncrasies of the author or even scribal or copyist errors.

While scholars have made significant advances in the understanding of languages and dialects in Palestine during the period of Middle Aramaic, much remains uncertain. Questions concerning the impact of different genres on Aramaic rhetorical and linguistic forms, of register and dialect, of written and spoken Aramaic differences, as well as details concerning the influence of Greek and Hebrew remain unresolved at this time. At the moment, attempts at retroversion will need to keep those questions in reserve. But as answers become more available, those who practice retroversion will need to adapt appropriately.

One last observation before we proceed to an example of the scholarly utility of retroversion. Retroversion does not provide access to Jesus' *ipsis-sima verba* or to his *ipsissima vox*, that is, to a positive identification of every word Jesus spoke and the manner in which he spoke them. The technique enables an approximation of the words of the literary Jesus, the Aramaic teacher whom the church recollected in written theological biographies composed several decades after his death. Given the different interests of the Gospels we now have, the literary Jesus is not a unity but instead represents a variety of views and understandings current among the early Christians.

With these general remarks in mind, let us now proceed to an illustration of what we can learn from the use of retroversion.

THE ARAMAIC RETROVERSION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer has been a foundational tradition from the earliest accessible layers of Jesus' teaching. By the time we see the earliest formation of the church, it is already becoming a central portion of the liturgy.

Indeed, only the Gospel of Luke provides a window into the prayer before it became an object of liturgy rather than a simple guide—in outline form even—for personal prayer. The retroversion of Luke’s version of the Lord’s Prayer back into Aramaic shows us how it was originally formulated and reveals a poetic organization that facilitated memorization and presented its meaning.

Step 1: Choosing the Passage

There are two versions of the Lord’s Prayer in the New Testament. Their relationship provides a good model for the task of retroversion and for the illustration of our approach. Of the two (Matt 6:9-15 and Luke 11:2-4), Luke’s is widely considered the earlier in form. Matthew’s version presents what is in effect a commentary woven together with the prayer. The relative sparseness of Luke has won it virtually unanimous recognition among scholars as the nearest to the form of an outline which Jesus recommended. Some uniquely Matthean elements appear to be expansions on the model. “Your will be done” explicates “your kingdom will come,” and should be taken as a gloss for those for whom the term “kingdom” needed explanation:

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Luke</i>
Our father, who is in the heavens your name be sanctified, your kingdom come, your will happen as in heaven, even on earth. Our bread that is coming, give us today, and release us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors, And do not bring us to the test, but deliver us from the evil one.	Father, your name be sanctified, your kingdom come. Our bread that is coming, be giving us each day, and release us our sins, Because we also ourselves release everyone who is indebted to us And do not bring us to the test.

The distinctiveness of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew as compared to Luke shows that simple scribal copying is not a suitable model for understanding the relationship among the Gospels. Social forces and oral memory were evidently powerful. Similarly, the **Didache** commends saying the prayer three times a day, as in the case of **‘Amidah** in Judaism. An

increasingly liturgical development of the prayer, from Luke through Matthew and on to the *Didache*, is evident. In some ways the version of the *Didache*, with a concluding doxology, is most like traditional practice, and that conclusion is represented in later manuscripts of Matthew.

Although scholars seem right to prefer the Lukan version of the prayer, two related cautions are in order. First, the prayer is delivered as a model rather than a liturgical formula (which it grew into over time), so that sparseness in this case should be taken as an indication of greater originality. Second, Luke's text itself presents an evident gloss, an explanation of the Aramaic term "debt" that seems no less secondary than the similar addition in Matthew.

Explanatory glosses aside (apparently produced in Greek to explain Aramaic terms), the same basic prayer is reflected in both these versions. The differences between them show that early Christians allowed themselves considerable freedom in how they put their prayers into words. They understood that prayer was not a matter of literal repetition, and they remembered that Jesus specifically warned against mechanical and ostentatious prayer (Matt 6:5-8). Matthew gives us the version of the prayer most often used in its community, just as Luke provides us with the received view in its community, although evidently for more private purposes (since Luke does not share Matthew's communal address of God).

The different versions of the prayer present the meaning behind Jesus' teachings in different styles and wordings. The basic model or outline of the Lord's Prayer upon which both versions are based consists of calling God Father, acknowledging that his name will be sanctified and that his kingdom will come, and then asking for the bread God will provide that day, forgiveness, and not to be brought to the test (i.e., as we shall see, not to be forced into disloyalty to God).

Assessed by its individual elements, the Lord's Prayer may be characterized as a fairly typical instance of the Judaic piety of its general period, quite apart from issues of retroversion into Aramaic. To call God "father" was—as such—nothing radical, and the association of his fatherly care with his actual provision for prayerful Israel is attested in Psalm 68:5.⁸ The same passage shows that the connection of God's holiness to his fatherhood was seen as natural, and the importance of sanctifying God's name within the earliest of rabbinic texts of prayer—such as the *Qadish*, which means "Sanctified [be God's name]"—is well known and accords with Leviticus 11:44, for example. That his holiness is consistent with people being forgiven and accepted by him is also unexceptionable, as Psalm 51 shows. Finally, the idea that God's being king amounts to a

⁸ Chilton, "God as 'Father' in the Targumim."

“kingdom” that was about to be revealed has ample precedent within the Aramaic Targumim, which accord with Psalm 103:19. Finally, texts such as Deuteronomy 4:34 reveal the fear of being brought to trial that would lead to disloyalty to God.

Of course, the last paragraph cites only a few of the usages within the Hebrew Bible, all resonant with the interpretative tradition of Judaism, that illuminate Jesus’ prayer. The range involved in many of them is complex; the relationship between Deuteronomy 4:34 and Psalm 26:2, for example, would be evocative for a treatment of the last line of the Lord’s Prayer. No other literature can compare with the connection the Hebrew Bible has with the Greek text of the prayer in both Matthew and Luke.

Step 2. The Translated Retroversion and Its Interpretation

According to the prayer, God is to be approached as father, his name sanctified, and his kingdom welcomed. The act of prayer along those lines, with great variety over time and from place to place and tradition to tradition, has been a hallmark of Christianity. To address God as father, and yet to sanctify his name, acknowledges the ambivalence that permeates attitudes toward God. The initial approach might seem without restraint, and yet God remains unapproachable, as holy as people are ordinary. The welcoming of his kingdom, of his comprehensive rule within the terms of reference of the human world, wills away a natural ambivalence toward approaching God. His intimate holiness is to invade the ordinary, so that the force of God itself overcomes ambivalence. The kingdom is dynamically ingressive and is welcomed in the act of prayer, however others might react to the kingdom.

The three elements which open the prayer, then, characterize a relationship and an attitude toward God which the one who prays makes his or her own. The distinctiveness of the prayer is nothing other than that consciousness of God and of one’s relationship to him, which is recapitulated whenever one prays. Such an awareness of God and of oneself is what people kindle when they pray the Lord’s Prayer. One of the reasons the prayer is effective in this regard is that it is not simply a series of petitions. Rather, God is addressed as father, his name sanctified, and his kingdom welcomed before any request whatever is made.

In the following table, we present an Aramaic version of the Lord’s Prayer, retroverted from Luke’s text, 11:2-4, but with consistency in the singular, in accordance with Jesus’ instruction to pray privately. The Greek texts of Matthew and Luke preserve an important distinction between the first and second halves of the prayer by using the third person imperative in the former and the second person imperative in the latter. Although

that is an effective presentation of the structure of the prayer, in Aramaic the difference is stronger, between the imperfect third person (section A) and the imperative of the second person (section B), since Aramaic lacks the third person imperative:

A

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. 'abba' | Father [or Source] |
| 2. yitqadash shemakh | your name will be sanctified |
| 3. tetch malkhutakh | your kingdom will come. |

B

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 4. hav li yoma' lakhma' d'ateh | Give me today the bread that is coming, |
| 5. ushebaq li yat chobati | and release me my debts— |
| 6. ve'al ta'aleyni lenisyona'. | not bring me to the test. |

The two sections, A and B, conform to the prayer's movements. The first movement constitutes an address. It greets God, praises him, and assents to the coming of his kingdom. The second movement brings to God the petitions of the person at prayer. There are three: the provision of food, the forgiveness of sin referred to metaphorically as debts, and the hope to be spared "the test."

Within that structure, the prayer's sparse wording is notable. The retroversion is based on correspondences with Aramaic instanced at Qumran, primarily, and with other texts of the period. Where relevant, the evidence Targums Onqelos and Jonathan are included.

Line 1 has only a single word, 'abba'. In 1926 E. L. Sukenik discovered an ossuary near Jerusalem with 'abba' in the emphatic form, just as Paul's usage in Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15, and Mark's attribution to Jesus in Mark 14:36 would lead us to anticipate.⁹ In the case of the ossuary, the usage of 'abba' is clearly personal; and the subject (Dositheus) is also referred to as "our father." But sometimes the term "father" in Aramaic (as in Hebrew) is applied in the sense of "source" or "principle." In the Aramaic Job from Qumran, for example, we find the rhetorical question, "Does the rain have a father?" (Job 38:28). This question is effective because the term *ab* may be taken in either or both ways, a factor that Fitzmyer and Harrington ignore in their presentation, but is well established in lexicography.¹⁰

Within the *Genesis Apocryphon*, Bitenosh says to her husband Lamech, in the course of denying having had sexual relations with the Watchers,

⁹ See Fitzmyer and Harrington, *Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*, 95, a, b, and 230–31.

¹⁰ See Fitzmyer and Harrington, *Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*, 5.31.5 and p. 307.

“I swear to you by the great holy one, by the king of the heavens, that this seed is from you.”¹¹ The combination, in Jesus’ language, of the terms “holy,” “name,” and “king,” all in respect of God is striking, and suggests that the Lord’s Prayer exploits possibilities of usage within first-century Aramaic. The verbal stem of *q-d-sh* does not happen to appear at Qumran, but two factors need to be taken into account in this respect. First, the finds at Qumran are fragmentary, and while they are indispensable for reconstructing Aramaic in the first century, they must not be confused with a comprehensive selection of the language. Second, usages of the formal, sometimes legal kind that Bitenosh represents appear elsewhere in the Qumran corpus and may represent particular interests and turns of phrase.¹² The expectation that any speaker of Aramaic from the first century would find his diction reflected in a one-to-one correspondence, as Fitzmyer sometimes implies, is not realistic. Furthermore, the verb is well represented in Targums Onqelos and Jonathan—about 100 times—since these texts are significantly larger than the rest of the JLA corpus. The exact form used in the retroversion, **יְתַקְדֵּשׁ**, appears at Exodus 29:21, 29:37, 30:29; Leviticus 6:11 and 6:20 in Targum Onqelos.

With regard to line 3, the usage of “kingdom” is, of course, well represented. Although no instance with the pronominal suffix of the second person singular has so far appeared in the earlier texts of this dialect, the form appears in Targum Jonathan to 1 Samuel 13:13-14, 20:31; 2 Samuel 7:16; 1 Kings 1:47, 5:19, 9:5, and elsewhere.¹³ When it comes to the imperfect form of *’atah*, given here as *teteh*, there is a good analogy in a Bar Kosiba letter (58.2), albeit in the masculine: **יְתֵה**.¹⁴

The retroversion of *hav li yoma’ lakhma’ d’ateh* in line 4 is bound to cause continuing discussion, owing to the keen debate over the meaning of the Greek term *epiousios* itself.¹⁵ But at least *hav li yoma’ lakhma’*, “give me today (the) bread,” seems straightforward, in view of the ubiquity of “give” (see Fitzmyer and Harrington’s reconstruction of the imperative, *hav*, at 21.1.15) and “bread,” as well as the frequent appearance of *yoma’*. Fitzmyer and Harrington reconstruct the same imperative form as *hav*,

¹¹ See Fitzmyer and Harrington, *Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*, 29b.2.14-15.

¹² E.g., at Fitzmyer and Harrington, *Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*, 28.2.18, with *memar*, which also appears in the Targumim and underlies the Johannine usage of *logos*.

¹³ Fitzmyer and Harrington, *Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts*, 20.1.2-3, in the Testament of Levi, for example.

¹⁴ Fitzmyer, *Gospel according to Luke*, 901, also reconstructs the verb in this form. By comparison, Chilton, *Jesus’ Prayer*, 36, has *tetey*. This is in keeping with the feminine form demanded by the noun as evidenced in TO and Tg. Jon.: Gen 24:39; Lev 12:6, 15:29; Judg 20:34, 41; 1 Sam 2:32, and elsewhere.

¹⁵ See Hemer, “*Epiousios*.”

which is in keeping with more than thirty instances of the masculine, singular, imperative form in Targums Onqelos and Jonathan. It is arguable that the demonstrative *dena'* or an equivalent should appear as well—e.g., *yoma' denah* (as in Fitzmyer and Harrington 3F.5; 29B.21.5, 22.21; 40.2, 13; 44.17.1; 45.1.2; 49.1.7, 8; 51.3, 13; 52.10). But these examples represent formal and/or emphatic usages not required for the setting of Jesus' prayer.¹⁶

Contention in understanding the prayer comes from the use of the Greek term *epiousios* in Luke 11:3 (and Matt 6:11). Only accentuation in Greek determines whether one renders it in relation to the verb “to exist” or “to come”—the latter becoming a common term in association with the eschatological “day to come.” The majority of ancient interpreters took the second option, but Origen admitted to perplexity. The form is so rare in Greek that a definitive decision in regard to the meaning intended by the original texts of Matthew and Luke is probably not possible. But the task of retroversion, for once, is straightforward as compared to the rendering of Greek. In that the meaning of Greek *epiousios* hesitates between two possibilities, a **desideratum** in retroversion is the discovery of a form whose translation into Greek would have caused the confusion that has perplexed exegetes. The participle *d'ateh*, “that is coming,” meets that test, and is instanced (without the particle *d*, but with the verb “to be,” it should be noted) in the *Genesis Apocryphon* 29B.21.17.

In line 5, the usage of “debt” for sin is a well-established Aramaism reflected in the New Testament, not only as a conventional usage but as a grounding metaphor (see, e.g., Matt 18:23-35). The occurrence of the term in what has been called the Messianic text from Qumran (Fitzmyer and Harrington 28.2.17) appears in tandem with the word for sin, establishing the conventional usage. Oddly, Fitzmyer and Harrington only render the word as “guilt” and do not note its connection to debt, and the same is true of the rendering of the corresponding verb in the Aramaic version of Job from Qumran (Fitzmyer and Harrington 5.21.5; 5.34.4). But the database of the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* clearly establishes the commercial metaphor. Fitzmyer and Harrington (338) do bring out, however, the range of meaning of the stem *sh-b-q* appropriately, where they cite it as “leave, forgive, divorce.” Within that lexical range, the verb links to the word “debt” and yields the meaning “release.”

The final line of Jesus' prayer, line 6, involves only routine vocabulary, although neither the noun *nisyona'* in the meaning of “test” nor its verbal counterpart appears at Qumran or in other early JLA works. Both are known, by contrast, in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic works such as Targum

¹⁶ In any case several are reconstructions rather than original readings.

Neofiti, and the verbal form appears in the JLA Targums Onqelos and Jonathan. That attestation, as well as the counterpart verb and noun in classical Hebrew, would make it implausible to deny that the usage was current in Aramaic during the first century.

The meanings of *nisyona*' in Aramaic corrects against the devotional perspective, which renders *peirasmos* in the Greek text as "temptation." The result has been that some people seriously imagine that Jesus' prayer involves the rejection of human passion in itself. At the same time, the commonality of *nisyona*' undermines the widespread scholarly view that the petition refers to the final, apocalyptic judgment of the world. Such a point of view is without doubt represented in the New Testament. The Revelation of John 3:10, for example, promises that those who keep Jesus' word will be guarded from "temptation" (*peirasmos* in Greek, *temptatio* in Latin), and in context the reference is clearly to apocalyptic trial. But without an apocalyptic context, *nisyona*' cannot be assumed to demand an apocalyptic meaning. The Matthean gloss, "Deliver us from the evil one," provides an unequivocally apocalyptic sense, and at the same time demonstrates the necessity of gloss to make that meaning unmistakable. As in the case of the clause concerning God's will, the Matthean version explains what could be a difficult concept to understand.

Nisyona' in Aramaic or *masah* in Hebrew cover a broader, and at the same time more personal, range of meaning than "temptation" or "(apocalyptic) trial." Although there was a biblical tradition of the testing of heroes of faith, such as Abraham (see Gen 22:1), it was also acknowledged that tests could be directed against such antagonists as Egypt (see Deut 4:34; 7:19). The prayer's position is that, in calling God our parent or source, we ask him never to put us to the ultimate test that might prove us disloyal. It is neither a plea against our own impulses, nor a request to be spared an apocalyptic conflict, but the appeal of trusting children to remain with their father whatever might come.

CONCLUSION

In addition to the refinements of meaning that are possible by retroverting Jesus' prayer into Aramaic, its coordinated structure has also become more apparent. This coordination extends to the meter of the original wording as well. Meter and rhythm were particular concerns of Marcel Jousse, but since he worked prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, he had no recourse to Aramaic sources contemporaneous with Jesus.¹⁷

¹⁷ See Jousse, *Les récitatifs rythmiques parallèles, La manducation de la parole, Dernières Dictées*, and *Le style oral rythmique et mnémotechnique*. Also available in translation as *The Oral Style*.

This investigation of meter along the lines of Jousse's ideas proves useful, however, and is only possible on the basis of a vocalized text. In the following version of Jesus' prayer in Aramaic, the symbol "/" is used to indicate stresses within a line:

'abba'/'
yitqadash/ shemakh/
te/teh malkhutakh/
hav/ li yo/ma' lakh/ma' d'a/teh
ushebaq/ li yat choba/ti
ve'al/ ta'aley/ni lenisyon/a'.

The meter underlines the distinction, marked by the change from imperfect to imperative, between the first three and the last three lines, by opening the third line with the only four-beat meter. That metrical structure also climaxes a pattern of building from one beat followed by two lines of two beats each. At the shift, the beats are doubled to four, brought down to two, and the last line swings up from that to three beats. That completion with a shift from two beats to three, a reversal of the Semitic *kinah* meter used for lamentations, is one observed during the course of retroverting Mark into Aramaic in sayings of Jesus that involve eschatological celebration.

The utility of the Targumim in retroversions of Jesus' teaching involves both considerations of interpretative history, such as are investigated in the last chapter, and the linguistic history, the topic of this chapter. Each needs to be analyzed separately and the results collated with findings of New Testament exegesis.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND TARGUMIC *MEMRA*

The Gospel according to John is widely recognized as the last in the New Testament to have been written, around 100 CE in Ephesus. Although we do not know who wrote this anonymous work, frequent references to the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23-25; 19:26-27; 20:2-8; 21:7, 20) and his identification as the one who remembered or recorded this Jesus material led many in the early church to the conclusion that the Gospel was written by John, the son of Zebedee, although he is never mentioned by name in the Gospel. The reference in John 21:22 to the possibility that this disciple might live until Jesus returned to earth led some to suppose that he was writing at a greatly advanced age, perhaps late in the first century. No matter how appealing, these are no more than ancient guesses, and in any case the Gospel itself refers to a group of people who received the testimony of the beloved disciple as writing the words of the text (John 21:24). What is clear is that this Gospel is not directly dependent on the others and that its composers and writers were more interested in symbolic meaning than in historical narrative.

Indeed, John shows delight in using words with double meaning—for example, Jesus in John says to Nicodemus in Greek that one must be born *anōthen* in order to see the kingdom of God (John 3:4). The term can mean either “from above” or “again,” and the passage goes on to explore Nicodemus’ misunderstanding, so that the audience will grasp both meanings rather than choose between them.

Two major cultural factors influenced the reworking of traditions in John. The first derives from the wisdom tradition of the Hellenistic age as developed in Judaism. The second is manifest in the keen interest among both Jews and Gentiles of the first century CE in forms of religion that offered the possibility of a direct experience of God, especially through visions and hearing sacred messages. With a growing sense of the vast

difference between God and human beings came a yearning for some instrument or agent by which mere humans could benefit from contact with the sovereign, holy God. For some, this mediating agency was found in Wisdom, viewed as the first of God's creations and even as his cocreator (Proverbs 8) and as the channel through which knowledge of God comes to human beings. Others hoped for a direct vision of God, on the model of the experiences of Moses, Elijah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, whose very appearance was altered as a consequence of their having been in direct contact with God. In the Gentile world of this time, there was a similar striving for religious experiences that would bring together the hallowed traditions of divine wisdom with a direct and immediate experience of the deities.

The prologue to the Gospel according to John (1:1-16) speaks of the "word," or *logos*, of God as the instrument of creation and of divine self-disclosure. In a way that recalls the roles of Wisdom, but at the same time is significantly different because it is identified with a particular person, the word enables human beings to become members of God's own people (John 1:12-13). This admission to the new community of faith differs completely from natural birth into an ordinary human family or race. Indeed, the word's own people did not receive him (John 1:11). This unique Son of God is the source of the light of the knowledge of God (John 1:4) and of the radiance of God's glory (in contrast to the temple, where God's glory once shone) and is the channel of God's grace and truth (John 1:14, 16, 18). The requirement for becoming God's child is to trust God's Son (John 1:12). John the Baptist prepared for Jesus' coming (John 1:6-9, 19-27), denying that he was himself the Light, and acclaiming Jesus of Nazareth as the Lamb of God, who takes away the world's sin (John 1:29, 36), and as the Spirit-anointed Son of God (John 1:32-34). At the outset of his public career, Jesus begins to rally around him the core of his followers, who acclaim him as Messiah, Son of God, and king of Israel (John 1:41, 49). He responds by promising them that they will see his ultimate vindication by God's angels as Son of Man (John 1:51). Paradoxically, John's Gospel pictures Jesus as fully human ("son of Joseph"; John 1:45) but also as sharing the nature of God (John 1:18, 8:58, 17:21).

The seamless quality of John's writing, a simple but poetic evocation of Jesus' significance that addresses both the expectations of Judaism and the sensibilities of the Hellenistic world, makes the investigation of possible relationships to the Targumim different in kind from the case of the Synoptic Gospels. Because the Synoptics as a whole are less seamless in stylistic terms than John, scholars have been able to concentrate on the question of the various sources within them, and to identify episodic cases of affinity with the Targumim, as we saw in chapter 17. When we come to John, the challenge is to discover thematic connections with the

Targumim (the fourth type of affinity developed in chap. 17), since direct verbal references are rare and allusive.

We found in chapter 17 that thematic connections are the most difficult to draw, as compared to many occasions on which the Synoptic Gospels link up verbally with earlier traditions of Scripture. In the case of John, however, because the appropriate approach to the composition is less episodic and more thematic, matters of theme become more prominent. For example, John 6 explores a connection between Jesus' meals for his followers and the manna that was given in the wilderness to the Israelites. This is a manifest theme, which does not appear in the Synoptic Gospels and develops Judaic traditions of the manna that are represented in Targumim.¹

The principal theme developed in John, however, is that of the "word" of God. This fact has occasioned considerable discussion of the relationship between the Johannine theme and targumic usage of *memra*. We believe that, based upon our approach to the Targumim, a connection may now be regarded as solid. In this chapter we deal both with previous discussion and the evidence that leads us to draw our conclusion. Our exploration of the targumic connection by no means implies that other associations—notably with Stoicism—are precluded.² The genius of John's Gospel is its focalization of diverse cultural resonances. We simply wish to affirm that the Targumim permit us to identify one of those connections.

PREVIOUS DISCUSSION OF *MEMRA* IN RELATION TO JOHN'S GOSPEL

The remarks of G. F. Moore concerning the term *memra* in the targumim have taken on a virtually canonical status in recent discussion; scholars have generally accepted that "nowhere in the targums is *memra* a 'being' of any kind or in any sense," and that the term is "purely a phenomenon of translation, not a figment of speculation."³ But it is frequently

¹ See Malina, *Palestinian Manna Tradition*, 104, citing Díez Macho, "Un Nuevo Targum a los Profetas," 293–95. An attempt to link the Johannine *logos* to targumic *memra* has been made by Ronning in *Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*. Unfortunately, he does not show familiarity with recent writing on the dating of the Targumim or the Christology of John's Gospel. This chapter builds on earlier publications: Chilton, "Typologies of *Memra* and the Fourth Gospel." Boyarin's recent study is similarly superficial (*Border Lines*, 112–47).

² See, e.g., the influence of Stoicism on Paul, another Ephesian writer during his most productive literary period; see Chilton, *Rabbi Paul*, 23–24, 26, 51–52, 63–64, 150, 183, 233.

³ Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, 419; see also, Moore, "Intermediaries in Jewish Theology," 53, 54. Moore's approach is accepted by Aufrecht in his "Surrogates for the Divine Name," and by Chester in *Divine Revelation and Divine Titles*. Chester refutes the arguments of Muñoz León in *Dios-Palabra* and Hayward in *Divine Name and Presence*; see the description in Chilton, "Recent and Prospective Discussion of *Memra*."

overlooked that Moore did not close his inquiry with those observations. *Memra* does indeed render particular passages, conveying such senses as “utterance,” “command,” or “word.” But why is it used in some places, and not in others—where **pitgama** might appear instead of *memra*, or no like usage? And with what policy or purpose is it introduced into certain passages, apparently without immediate reference to the Hebrew text that is rendered? Those who stop reading Moore when he speaks of *memra* as a phenomenon of translation, as if it were merely a matter of representing a given in the texts rendered, miss the most productive aspect of his analysis.⁴

Moore in fact recognized that a definable spectrum of usages characterizes the distribution of *memra* in the Targumim and that there are evident patterns of meaning within that spectrum. He identified types of usage which include the notions of command, the obedience of command, the acceptance of a command, divine speaking, divine meeting with others, oracles, oaths made by God, his fighting for Israel, his protection, his establishing covenant.⁵ Moore’s categories were developed on the basis of his reading of Onqelos. In a work published in 1982, Chilton offered a typology of *memra* in the Targum of Isaiah, based upon Moore’s approach, and applying it to new material.⁶ In that study, however, the order of categories was determined by the order of appearance of the first instance of each category within the Targum. In other words, the Targum itself controlled the introduction of the categories. The types present *memra* variously as an occasion for rebellion, an agent of punishment, a demand for obedience, an edict, a voice, divine protection, an eternal witness, an intermediary of prayer.⁷ The overlap with Moore’s categories is evident but not complete. His typology, based on Onqelos, included categories and a precedence of categories not found in Jonathan’s Isaiah, and vice versa. The possibility emerges that the Targum of Isaiah is distinctive in its usage of *memra*, precisely by virtue of its focus upon Israel’s disobedience and God’s demand for a reversal on the basis of his election of his people. In other words, literary variation needs to be built into our

⁴ That is precisely the difficulty in Chester’s work, *Divine Revelation and Divine Titles*, 308, 309, 313. He says that *memra* is “translational” and that it “portrays one main mode of God’s activity,” apparently without recognizing that in the first case he speaks of a linguistic phenomenon and in the second of a theologoumenon (see Chilton, “Recent and Prospective Discussion of *Memra*,” 122, 123).

⁵ Moore, “Intermediaries in Jewish Theology,” 47–51.

⁶ Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 56–69.

⁷ Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 57–64 (see also n. 31 and 143–44). It must be understood that Chilton cited the observation of V. Hamp, that use of the term “intermediary” need not imply a hypostatic entity; see Hamp, *Der Begriff “Wort,”* 204.

characterization of the usage of *memra* rather than obscured by a general reference to translational technique.

A comparative investigation of the usage of *memra* was recently undertaken by classifying its occurrences in Neofiti 1 and Pseudo-Jonathan.⁸ Because the order of appearance of the first instance of each category is not a practical criterion for sequencing types of usage when more than one document is involved, it was determined to order the types according to the frequency of their occurrence. What is immediately striking is how the types vary from book to book within each Targum. In Neofiti's Genesis, *memra* appears as (1) speaking, (2) involved in worship, (3) influencing people and events, (4) involved in covenant, and (5) creating. In Exodus, on the other hand, Neofiti's *memra* is presented as (1) being with others, (2) influencing, (3) deliberating, (4) involved in worship, and (5) demanding obedience. The shift in emphasis may not be explained on the basis of the contents of Genesis and Exodus alone, because Pseudo-Jonathan gives us a different take on *memra* in each case. *Memra* is (1) aiding, (2) deliberating, (3) involved in covenant, and (4) influencing in Pseudo-Jonathan's Genesis, but (1) acting, (2) demanding obedience, (3) being with others, (4) involved in worship and (5) influencing in Pseudo-Jonathan's Exodus.

Indeed, a comparison of Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan can be developed, by identifying distinctive emphases within each as we move from book to book. Such a procedure has Neofiti's *memra* speaking, involved in worship, and creating in Genesis, while deliberating in Exodus. Meanwhile, Pseudo-Jonathan's *memra* is aiding and deliberating in Genesis, and acting in Exodus. By comparing what is distinctive in each book of each targum, a clear pattern emerges.

Neofiti portrays the *memra* as involved in worship in Genesis, and it emerges as the distinctive emphasis in Leviticus; Neofiti's Numbers has the *memra* deliberating, as in Exodus, while in Neofiti's Deuteronomy, the *memra* is essentially a voice. Neofiti's pattern of distinctive usage is therefore chiasmic, with vocal associations predominating in Genesis and Deuteronomy, deliberation in Exodus and Numbers, and Leviticus presenting an involvement with worship. Pseudo-Jonathan, on the other hand, moves from the emphasis upon the *memra* as deliberating in Genesis, to acting in Exodus, and thence to giving the law (Leviticus), demanding obedience (Numbers), and occasioning revolt (Deuteronomy). The pattern of distinctive usages, then, appears more sequential—and even consequential—in Pseudo-Jonathan, as compared to Neofiti.

⁸ See Chilton, "Recent and Prospective Discussion of *Memra*," 125ff. Full citations are provided in the article and are omitted here for reasons of space and clarity.

Of course, in these cases we are comparing sporadic data. There is no question of a deliberate patterning of the usage of *memra*; neither Neofiti nor Pseudo-Jonathan appears to have been composed with a view to developing consciously distinctive linguistic profiles. But the fact that the profiles are distinctive invites the consideration that *memra* should not be considered as a word of fixed meaning, whose use may be explained simply on the basis of the exigencies of translation. That *memra* is to be related to the verb, *'amar*, the ordinary verb of speaking, and assumes a divine subject as the origin of the address, is indeed a necessary occasion of such usages, but the patterns of types manifest within Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan suggest that the association is not the sufficient condition of the usages. Rather, the immediate inference from the patterns of distinctive usage observed is that God is portrayed as speaking in different ways and at different points within Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan. In other words, *memra* is not simply a metonym for God, or even for God understood as speaking, but is the term which conveys the sense of God's distinctively vocal, deliberative, and worshipped aspects in Neofiti, and his distinctively active, demanding, and resisting aspects in Pseudo Jonathan.

In general terms, one may infer that *memra* is the targumic reference to God's activity of commanding. Within that activity, a meturgeman might think of "commanding" as what is ordered, as the response to the order, or as what is behind the order. There are a range of emphases, both interior to the act of commanding, informing the decision of command, and exterior to the act, devolving from it, which *memra* might theoretically convey. There is no warrant for saying that there is such a thing as a concept of God's *memra*, certainly not as personal being or **hypostasis**, nor even that there is a systematic idea that is consistent among the Targumim. What links the Targumim, in their distinct usages of *memra*, is not a theological thought but a theological manner of speaking of God in terms of divine commanding. *Memra* is not invoked haphazardly when some verb of speaking happens to be used of God in the Hebrew text which is rendered. The Targums to hand suggest that the usage of the term reflects the manner in which given meturgemanin conceive of God's intention in the command or the human response to what is effected (or affected) by the command.

Within the history of each Targum's development, the typologies of usage vary, and the principal variables at issue are (1) the notion of how God commands (and what response his command elicits), and (2) the complex of ideas triggered by a given book and passage. *Memra* might therefore be understood as covering the conceptual field of divine speaking, inclusive of the deliberation behind, and the results of, that speaking.⁹

⁹ See Mounin, *Les problèmes théorétiques de la traduction*, 71–112.

The term performs taxonomically, invoking the possibility that a range of terms within the appropriate lexical field might be employed.

THE *MEMRA* IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

Within the study of the fourth Gospel, commentators in recent years have largely dismissed the hypothesis that *memra* might be a precedent for the usage of *logos*.¹⁰ That dismissal, however, is produced by a misconception of both terms. First, it is assumed by students of the New Testament that the issue turns on whether *memra* refers to a hypostasis or is purely translational. Such an understanding did indeed characterize discussion in the time of Moore, when his argument for the latter characterization prevailed, but it takes no account of the impact of more recent work, much of which is based on more adequate linguistic and exegetical categories. Second, most modern commentators on John, writing from the perspective of Christian tradition (and, more often than not, from the perspective of their own Christian faith) assume that *logos* in John also refers to a hypostasis, namely to Jesus conceived of as personally existent prior to his incarnation.¹¹ The present argument holds that the targumic theologoumenon of the *memra* as God's activity of commanding has influenced the sense of *logos* in the fourth Gospel and that *logos* in that Gospel is not only a christological term, as contemporary discussion has assumed.

In order to develop the argument, references to *logos* in the body of the Gospel will first be considered, in that its prologue is, by critical consensus, to be approached as a separable entity.¹² It is interesting that the initial pattern of usage apart from the prologue refers not to God's word in the first instance but to Jesus'. His disciples are said to believe his word concerning the temple after his resurrection (John 2:22); large numbers of Samaritans are attracted to Jesus' own discourse (John 4:40-42); a royal official accepts Jesus' word that his son is healed (John 4:50). The *logos* of

¹⁰ See Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 153, who refers to *memra* as "a blind alley in the study of the biblical background of John's *logos* doctrine." A more judicious appraisal is offered by Brown in *The Gospel according to John*, 524, who grants that the meaning of *memra* may have influenced the fourth Gospel. Nonetheless, he holds that the "personification of the Word would, of course, be part of the Christian theological innovation"; see the remarks which follow immediately. The principal counterargument has been made by McNamara in *Targum and Testament*, 101-4.

¹¹ A significant, perhaps disproportionate, influence upon commentators has been exerted by G. Kittel's remark in the *Theologisches Wörterbuch* that "all attempts to explain the λόγος statements of Jn. 1 in terms of the targumic מִמְרָא have failed, since this is never a personal hypostasis, but only a substitute for the tetragrammaton" (Kittel, λέγω. D. "Word and Speech in the New Testament," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 4:100-136).

¹² See Miller, *Salvation-History in the Prologue of John*, 2-10.

Jesus is said to be hard (6:60) or difficult to understand (John 7:36, cf. v. 40). No particular background in Aramaic may be said to be manifest in such usages, and even within that language, *memra* is not notably more appropriate than, say, *pitgama* or **matla** as an analogue of λόγος.¹³

Then, however, as we follow the pattern of presentation in the body of the Gospel itself, the claim is made that those who hear Jesus' word and believe in the one who sent him have eternal life (John 5:24). Implicitly, attending to Jesus is equated with trusting in God. That equation is more than implicit in the usage that follows immediately (John 5:37, 38):

The father who sent me has witnessed concerning me. You have at no time heard his voice, nor have you seen his form; you do not have his word remaining among you, because you have not believed the one whom he sent.

The relationship between John 5:24 and 5:37, 38 merits attention. Two uses in such proximity are likely to have been coordinated, and both occur within what is presented as a single discourse of Jesus (beginning at v. 17, as a response to "the Jews"). The "word" which Jesus speaks in verse 24 is the occasion on which one might believe God and have eternal life. In verses 37 and 38 a failure to believe Jesus shows that God's word does not abide among those addressed by Jesus. Evidently, Jesus' word and God's word are held to be so closely related that to fail to believe the former implies a rejection of the latter.¹⁴ That relationship between human discourse and God's discourse, both referred to as "word," is reminiscent of the position in the Targum of Isaiah, where *memra* may refer to what prophets are commanded to say, as well as to God's commanding message.¹⁵

Because Jesus' "word" and God's are correlates in the Johannine presentation, the notion that Jesus' disciples should "remain" in his *logos* (John 8:31, cf. vv. 37, 51, 52) becomes explicable.¹⁶ Moreover, in the eighth

¹³ Indeed, one of the two latter terms would be the more natural analogue of the usage of λόγος in the plural, see 10:19, and the reading of the Codex Bezae at 15:20a. The usage in the Gospel where Pilate hears the "word" of "the Jews" (19:8, cf. v. 13) cannot be said to add to the particular meaning developed in the work.

¹⁴ Haenchen's perplexity concerning verses 37, 38 is incomprehensible, except on the supposition that his terms of reference are more dogmatic than exegetical. He writes, "To what does 'word' (λόγος) refer? To Jesus, the *Logos* of the Prologue, or to the OT?" (*John* 1, 263, 264). In stunning contrast, Westcott, *Gospel according to St John*, emphatically refers to "belief in the word of the Father who speaks through the Son" in v. 24 (87) and to God's word as "a power within man" in v. 38 (90).

¹⁵ See 63:10 (and 30:1; Tg. Zech. 7:12), and Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, 56–69. For a translation of the Targum, see Chilton, *Isaiah Targum*. It might also be recalled that in John 2:22, Jesus' disciples believe in both the scripture and his "word."

¹⁶ In that the issue in 5:38 is whether God's word is "remaining" in those addressed, the correlation between God's word and Jesus' is reinforced by verbal usage (μένω).

chapter, a distinction is made between understanding Jesus' λαλιάν ("speech") and hearing his λόγον, such that the latter makes the former possible (v. 43). Such a distinction is perfectly at home within Aramaic, in which *memra* refers more to message, to word, and *pitgama* to saying. Then, the most demanding statements in the chapter, that keeping Jesus' *logos* preserves one from death (vv. 51, 52) find their explanation in Jesus' own insistence that he knows the father and "keep(s) his word" (v. 55). It would be difficult to contrive a more lucid juxtaposition of Jesus' word and God's.

Although the coordination of the message of Jesus and God's discourse is the most striking pattern in the Gospel, there is also a willingness to speak quite directly of God's own address through Scripture as his *memra* (10:34-36):

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, "I said, you are gods"? If those to whom the word of God came he called gods, and the scripture cannot be dissolved, can you say of the one whom the father sanctified and sent into the world, "You blaspheme," because I said, "I am God's son"?

Evidently, a statement of a christological order is here being made, but the striking feature of the claim from the present point of view is that *logos* is used, as if routinely, of God's address to Israel by means of the scriptures, not of Jesus' own status as God's son. The understanding of a targumic background would help to account for such usages, as if as a matter of course. The usages in respect of Isaiah's prophecy (John 12:38) and the book of Psalms (John 15:25) would seem to be associated with that category of meaning.¹⁷

In John's Gospel, the underlying perspective that the *logos* may be God's in particular, not only Jesus' or even God's in Jesus', turns out to be fundamental. It is precisely on that basis that Jesus can claim that the word which he speaks will judge anyone who rejects him and does not accept his utterances (John 12:48); it is neither Jesus himself, nor precisely what he says, which will judge such a person on the last day, but the *logos*. The *logos* spoken by Jesus is held to have a dynamic property here, as in John 15:3, where it purifies those who belong to Jesus.¹⁸ But it is Jesus, and no other, who is understood to speak the *logos*, and the treatment of the disciples is to reflect people's response to him (John 15:20). Yet the underlying force of discipleship is that disciples have kept God's *logos*: in chapter 17, commonly known as the high priestly prayer, Jesus addresses his father

¹⁷ See Chilton, "John XII 34 and Targum Isaiah LII 13."

¹⁸ See Westcott, *Gospel according to St John*, 217.

(v. 1) with the claim, “they have kept your *logos*” (v. 6).¹⁹ Moreover, Jesus’ function is described instrumentally here (v. 14):

I have given them your *logos* and the world hated them, because they are not from the world, just as I am not from the world.

Keeping the *logos*, the fundamental attribute of discipleship, makes the disciple one with the son who speaks, and with the father who frames, that *logos* (vv. 20-23). Indeed, that dynamic extends even to those who believe in Jesus as a result of his disciples’ “word” (v. 20): because the power of the *logos* concerned is God’s, it is not diluted by repetition or extension. That sense is perhaps inherent in subsequent usages in the Gospel which are certainly less redolent of the meaning of *logos*, but which reflect the conviction that Jesus’ word is to be fulfilled (John 18:9, 32), just as scripture is (cf. John 15:25), and that even what disciples repeat as Jesus’ promise must be in some way vindicated, even if that is possible only by means of qualification (John 21:23).

The fundamental perspective of the body of the Gospel, then, appears plain. Jesus speaks, and uniquely speaks, God’s message, such that keeping that “word” makes the disciple one with son and father. The way is therefore open to identify the son with the *logos*, as indeed occurred during the second century, in the theologies of Irenaeus and Clement, for example.²⁰ But that identification does not yet take place in the Gospel according to John, which makes Jesus the speaker of the divine *logos*.

The only exegetical obstacle which may prevent commentators from acceding to the last assertion is the prologue of the Gospel, to which we must now turn. Because that is held to reflect a doctrine of Jesus’ personal preexistence as the *logos*, that conviction has been read into the Gospel as a whole. That procedure is methodologically flawed, in that the prologue is held to be separable from the Gospel, in view of its history in the tradition.²¹ Even more crucially—as will now be argued—the prologue itself does not impute personal preexistence to Jesus as the divine *logos*, although it does see the *logos* itself as eternal. The reading that sees usage of the term as exclusively christological is unduly influenced by the subsequent theology of the early church.

The first usage of *logos* in the Gospel simply establishes its identity with God (not with Jesus, John 1:1, 2)²² as the creative source of what exists (1:3),

¹⁹ Haenchen, *John 1*, 2:150, ascribes that designation to the sixteenth-century work of David Chytraeus.

²⁰ See Aall, *Geschichte der Logosidee*, 354–69, 405–27.

²¹ See Miller, *Salvation-History in the Prologue of John*; and Haenchen, *John 1*, 101, 102.

²² Haenchen, *John 1*, 108, 109, suggests that, in the absence of the definite article, we

in a way quite consistent with the association of *memra* and creation.²³ The development of a theology of the *logos* by Philo of Alexandria provided a precedent of a personal image of the “word” as the initial reason of God, the plan of the architect who created the world.²⁴ But the startling point in any comparison of the prologue and Philo is what is not in the prologue: the *logos* is simply said to be divine, not to be personal, or the plan of divine reason.

The notion that the *logos* is to be identified with Jesus in the prologue is to some extent based upon a reading of the text in Greek which does not attend adequately to its obviously deliberate sequence. God’s *logos* is said to be the place where “life” is, and that life is held to be the “light” of all humanity (v. 4). Insofar as a directly christological category is developed in the prologue, that category is “light,” not “word.”²⁵ It is the “light” which shines in the darkness (v. 5), which enlightens every person (v. 9). Most crucially, the “light,” a neuter noun in Greek (φῶς), is identified as masculine and singular in v. 10:

In it was the world, and the world came into existence through it, and the world did not know him.

From that moment, the usage of pronouns and the summary reference to Jesus’ ministry (vv. 11-13, cf. vv. 6-8) make it clear we are dealing with a person, not an entity. But, from the present point of view, the telling factor is that Jesus has been presented, precisely and grammatically, as the light which takes its origin in the *logos*, not as the *logos* itself.

We then come to the clause which has dominated the reading of the fourth Gospel, and which has been taken as the cornerstone of a christological construction of the *logos* in Christian theology from the second century (v. 14a):

And the *logos* became flesh and dwelt among us. . . .

should take θεός here to mean “divine,” as in Philo, *De somniis* 1.229, 230 and Origen’s *Commentary* 2.2.1248.

²³ Westcott’s remark (*John* 1, 2, 3; see xiv–xix), “The theological use of the term appears to be derived directly from the Palestinian *Memra*, and not from the Alexandrine *Logos*,” is apposite.

²⁴ See *De opificio mundi* 17–25. See Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria*; and Chilton, “Commenting on the Old Testament,” 130–33. For the developing identification of “word” and “wisdom,” and the tendency to personify that divine activity in Hellenistic Judaism, see also Duncan, “The *Logos*,” 125–26.

²⁵ It is striking how Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, normally a cautious exegete, conflates the two; see p. 10.

Once *logos* has been identified with Jesus, as it is for Clement and Irenaeus, the reference of the clause can only be to the incarnation.²⁶ Indeed, the Latin text of the clause, *et verbum caro factum est*, is conventionally taken in association with the creedal assertion that the “son,” understood as the second person of the Trinity, became incarnate (*incarnatus est*). But all such readings and construals are possible only on the assumption that the *logos* and Jesus are one and the same, that Jesus is a preexistent, personal entity come down from heaven. The problem with such an exegesis of the Johannine text is the care with which Jesus is not directly associated with the *logos* in verses 1-13.

If verse 14 is not read as asserting a christological incarnation, what else can it be saying? The present proposal is that an approach to that question, guided by our discussion of the *memra* in the Targumim, suggests an answer. *Memra* is essentially God’s mighty command, vindicating and warning his people; verse 14 refers to the *logos* as becoming flesh, and then explains that assertion by saying it “dwelt among us” (ἔσκηνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν). The verb σκηνώω, it is often observed, relates naturally to כּשׁ in Hebrew and Aramaic, from which Shekinah, the principal theologoumenon of God’s presence in the cult, is derived.²⁷ Little can be gathered by the usage in itself, but it may suggest that the vocabulary of the prologue has been influenced by an awareness of targumic theologoumena. In any case, to describe the *logos*, understood as *memra*, as dwelling among us such that we might behold its glory, is not in the least surprising.

The “glory” beheld is subjected to a precise qualification at the end of the verse; it is “glory as of an only one with a father, full of grace and truth” (1:14c). At this point, elementary misreadings have obscured a complex statement. The assertion is not “we beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father,” as in the Revised Standard Version; still less is it “we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son, who came from the Father,” as in the New International Version. The definite articles are conspicuously absent from the text in Greek; the glory spoken of is as of an only child, not “the only Son.” The comparison is straightforwardly metaphorical, not doctrinal. Now, however, comes the element of complexity: the glory of the *logos* is “as of an only one” (ὡς μονογενοῦς), and we know, as readers of the Gospel, that Jesus is God’s son.²⁸ Indeed, we know explicitly that Jesus, as God’s “son,” speaks his “word,” and that the reaction to the one is congruent with the reaction to the other. The inference that the

²⁶ Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 30–31.

²⁷ Westcott, *The Gospel according to John*, 11, 12.

²⁸ The Gospel is intended for a synchronic reading, by those who have already passed through catechesis, see Chilton, *Profiles of a Rabbi*, 180, 181.

glory as the *logos* was “as of” Jesus is therefore precisely consonant with the presentation of the Gospel as a whole.

The remainder of the prologue reflects the maintenance of the distinction between the *logos* and Jesus that has been posited and suggests the sense in which we should understand that the *logos* “became flesh.” John, we are told, witnessed “concerning it” (i.e., the light in the Greek text), by saying of Jesus, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He that becomes after me . . .’” (v. 15). Fundamentally, the *logos* is still more the object of the prologue’s attention than Jesus, and that continues to be the case in verse 16:

For from the fullness αὐτοῦ we have all received, even grace upon grace.

Αὐτοῦ, whether taken of the *logos* or of Jesus, is a masculine pronoun, but the statement seems a resumption of what has been said in verses 3-5: we live from devolutions of the *logos*, the dynamic structure of word, light, and life.

The understanding that God’s “word” is still the essential issue in play makes the transition to the next topic straightforward (v. 17):

For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

The connection of *logos*, taken as *memra*, to the revelation through Moses is evident. Moreover, the syntax and logic of verse 17 coheres with that of verse 16; the coordination of God’s activity in creation with his donation of the law through Moses is established as a targumic theologoumenon by our discussion in the first part of the present paper.

The link between the verses is literal as well. The “grace” (ἡ χάρις) which came through Jesus Christ (v. 17) is akin to the “grace upon grace” (χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος) we have all received (v. 16). There is a constant and consistent activity of God’s *logos* from the creation and through the revelations to Moses and to Jesus. The *logos* in John is a development of conventional notions of the *memra* in early Judaism. *At no point and in no way does the prologue present the revelation through Jesus as disjunctive with the revelation through Moses: any such disjunction is an artifact of imposing an anachronistic christology upon the text.* Verse 17 also provides guidance in regard to the reading of verse 14. The statement that grace and truth “came” (ἐγένετο) through Jesus Christ is comparable to the assertion that God’s word “became” (ἐγένετο) flesh; in both cases, the underlying contention is that Jesus is the actual person in whom God’s “word,” his activity in creating and revealing, is manifest.

The last verse of the prologue is also the last word of the present argument. Verse 18 makes an assertion which causes any formally incarnational reading to appear nonsensical:

No one has at any time seen God; a unique God, who was in the bosom of the father, that one has made him known.

The first clause makes no sense whatever, if the prologue means to say that Jesus is the *logos*. If the *logos* is God (v. 1:1), and Jesus is that “word,” verse 18 is more than paradoxical. But verse 18 makes eminent sense on just the reading we have here suggested: no one has at any time seen God, provided the reader has followed the logic of his revelation as the prologue outlines it. Jesus, as unique (again, without the article) has made God known (ἐξηγήσατο). Just as we would expect on the basis of our reading of passages which refer to *logos* in the body of the Gospel, Jesus is presented as the exegesis of God, the one who speaks his word. In that role, the fourth Gospel can refer to Jesus as θεός, just as Philo so refers to Moses: not to make any ontological assertion, but to insist that the instrument of God’s word is to be taken as divinely valued.²⁹ In this case, John is better understood in the light of the Targumim than otherwise, and the resonance of the Gospel with other documents of Judaism becomes more evident.

²⁹ See *Legum allegoria* 1.40; *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 9; *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat* 161, 162; *De migratione Abrahami* 84; *De mutatione nominum* 19; *De Vita Moses* 1.158; *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 43.

SECTION VI

Conclusions and Prospects

GENESIS 22 IN THE TARGUMIM AND IN EARLY JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION

The goal of this book has been to introduce Targums both as interpretative translations of a sacred text and as texts in their own right. In addition, they stand in relationship to other ancient writings, whether the Jewish writings of the intertestamental and rabbinic periods or the Christian writings of the New Testament and the early church. They also function within and reflect their distinctive linguistic, historical, religious, and social contexts.

In this final chapter in regard to Targums in the ancient world, we bring together the perspectives of Targum as text, as translation, and in comparison to other ancient texts. We have selected Genesis 22, the “Sacrifice of Isaac,” to illustrate how these perspectives reveal different aspect of Targums and their study.

The central issue of this research focuses on the meaning of the Targums and their approach to presenting the biblical tale. We ask two questions, what meaning do the Targums’ composers see in the scriptural story? and then, what new meanings do they bring into the story when they recast it? Answers to these two questions emerge through a dialectical approach. On the one hand, we need to undertake a close reading of the story of the sacrifice of Isaac as found in the Hebrew Bible. By working to understand its plot and the dynamics, its impact and its lingering questions, we can see how the tale was read. This reading is not taken in isolation from the Targums’ readings but with full knowledge of what they say. On the other hand, we will look at the Targums’ recasting of Genesis 22. Observing how they react to the biblical text and what new points they bring to it, we can see what they saw in it. By then stepping back and reading the story as a whole, we will see the tale as they wished their readers to see it, with a new set of dynamics and characterizations, and even new plot elements. We will lay out the “hidden interpretations” which the

meturgeman placed in plain view, as we discussed in chapter 15. Since Genesis 22 appears in the Pentateuch, we will be able to examine three main versions of the story, those in Targum Onqelos, the Palestinian Targums, and in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan.

The interaction between these two foci and the understanding of the Targum passages that it produces is an important analytic step. By itself, this literary analysis provides a wealth of information about the Targum, its composers, and what message those composers were trying to convey to the audience of readers and hearers. But as should by now be clear, the Targums are not studied in isolation from the religious, social, and historical context of late antiquity. Scholars of the Targumim want to know what the Targums can tell us about the role of biblical interpretation and theological innovation in response to the events involving Jews in the land of Israel and Aramaic-speaking Near East. How did they understand Scripture in the wake of the temple's destruction, for instance, both in the decades immediately following and as the centuries developed with no new temple being erected? How did the Targums become part of the rabbinic world—where did they fit? and when?—as rabbinism developed and became the dominant form of post-temple Judaism?

Other scholars have shown more interest in another group of Jews—those who helped shape nascent Christianity. How do the biblical interpretations and theological positions found in the Targums help us understand the way the early Christians—and perhaps the literary Jesus of the Gospels—approached their Scriptures and how they interpreted them for their own needs?

These interests make the scholarly investigation of Genesis 22 more complex but still manageable. Here is how this chapter will approach the inquiry. First, since interpretation of Scripture must begin with Scripture itself, we will lay out the story of Isaac's sacrifice as it appears in the Hebrew Bible originally. Second, since we are interested in understanding the Targums' versions of the tale in the context of Judaism, we will provide an overview of the interpretative trajectory that the story follows from the early post-biblical period to the end of the rabbinic period. Third, we will then turn to the Targums themselves to see how they respond to the scriptural story and to determine whether we can identify where their interests fit in terms of the history of development just laid out. Fourth, we will then return to the historical context of the story, this time in the direction set out by early Christianity, rather than by rabbinic Judaism, to explore what light the targumic rendering of the sacrifice of Isaac sheds on New Testament interpretations.

What will we discover? In brief, the meaning of Genesis 22 undergoes a significant transformation from the time of the Maccabees in the

second century BCE to the late rabbinic period about 600 CE, from a story about a young passive Isaac being sacrificed by Abraham to one in which Isaac becomes a willing, adult participant in his own slaughter. As part of a developing understanding of the role of martyrdom in early Judaism, in some accounts Isaac even appears to die and to be restored to life. The transformed story is known as the *Aqedah*, the “Binding of Isaac.” The term “binding” relates to the use of the verb *‘qd* in Genesis 22:9 to say that Abraham “bound” Isaac on the altar, but the noun *‘qdh* (*Aqedah*) itself appears in the Mishnah to refer in particular to the binding of the lamb for daily sacrifice (m. Tamid 4:1). To speak of the “binding” of Isaac therefore implied that his intended death was sacrificial, and over time this story came progressively to be associated with the daily sacrifice (the *tamid*), with the celebration of the New Year when the ram’s horn—the *shofar*—was blown, and finally with Passover. These interpretations also find echoes and reactions in Christian writings and exegesis.

THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC IN THE BIBLICAL TEXT

The story of the sacrifice of Isaac in the Masoretic Text is a tale of God testing Abraham’s faith. God gives Abraham a command to slaughter as a sacrifice the only son born to him and his wife Sarah, a child conceived long after they were so old they had given up hope of having children. To make it clear to the reader that the story has significance beyond a casual instruction by God, the story signals its character as a test in the first verse. Here is the NRSV translation of the Genesis 22:1-18:

- v. 1: After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”
- v. 2: He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.”
- v. 3: So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him.
- v. 4: On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away.
- v. 5: Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.”
- v. 6: Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.
- v. 7: Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here I

- am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”
- v. 8: Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.
 - v. 9: When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.
 - v. 10: Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.
 - v. 11: But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”
 - v. 12: He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”
 - v. 13: And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.
 - v. 14: So Abraham called that place “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”
 - v. 15: The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,
 - v. 16: and said, “By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son,
 - v. 17: I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies,
 - v. 18: and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Taken at face value, the biblical story is straightforward. God orders Abraham to sacrifice Isaac at a particular place (Moriah). After they arrive and begin ascending the mountain, Isaac asks his father where they will acquire the lamb for the sacrifice (v. 7). Abraham has apparently told Isaac that they will sacrifice but has not yet told his son that Isaac himself is to be the sacrifice. Abraham’s response (v. 8) leaves Isaac none the wiser, although it makes Abraham allude unintentionally to the climax of the action. On the mountaintop Abraham builds an altar and places Isaac bound on top of it. Isaac does not protest or react in any way. Just before Abraham kills his son, an angel appears to stop him and shows him the ram the Lord has supplied instead. Abraham then gives the location a name (v. 14), and the angel reappears to bless Abraham’s descendants and the peoples of the world (vv. 17-18).

God and his angel interact only with Abraham. Not only does God give Abraham the command, but also at the story’s end, God’s angel gives

Abraham the blessing. Isaac is subsidiary throughout: Abraham does not even tell him the truth about the sacrificial victim when Isaac asks him directly. Isaac is passive; he neither protests nor complains when put upon the altar—just as a sacrificial animal should behave. That is one of two puzzling elements in the story. The other is that, while God directly commands Abraham to offer his son in sacrifice, an angel—rather than God himself—prevents Abraham from following through on his action. That change was the consequence of ancient editorial adaptation in the story, but it opened the possibility that God had really wanted the sacrifice. That possibility, together with the thought that Isaac was a willing participant, lead to radical rereadings of Genesis 22.

In the biblical story, God “tests” Abraham, much as God allowed the Accusing Angel (*hasatan*) to test Job.¹ Apparently God never had any intention of having Isaac killed. Despite this, the story raises the disturbing question of why Isaac was so passive. If he were a young boy, as the biblical story implies but does not state, that might explain his behavior. But if he were an adult, as later Judaic tradition maintained, we would expect him to have a categorical opinion about what was being done to him. He should either protest or give his consent. As will become clear, the Palestinian Targums and Pseudo-Jonathan address this question through their additional material, but the earliest Pentateuchal Targum, Targum Onqelos, ignores it completely.

Finally, there is one matter that stood out to the ancient interpreters, which may not seem as important to us. Where is the “land of Moriah” (אֶרֶץ מֹרְיָה) mentioned in verse 2 as the location of the sacrifice? The biblical text gives no indication.

THE AQEDAH IN POST-BIBLICAL AND RABBINIC JUDAISM

The post-biblical interpretation of Genesis 22 begins with an association with martyrdom. In the second century BCE, the non-canonical *Book of Jubilees*—which derives from a group that had been allied with the Maccabees, separating from them later in the second century BCE—provides a case in point.² According to *Jubilees*’ version of the story, the Aqedah was the seventh, climactic test of faith that Abraham faced, so that his heroism is marked (*Jub.* 17:17-18).³ Yet *Jubilees* also makes the example of

¹ At a later stage in the history of interpretation, this connection was actually made; see *Jub.* 17:6, where Mastemah (an alternative name for Satan) challenges God to test Abraham. This interpretation also appears in 4Q225; see Bernstein, “Angels at the Aqedah,” 268–69; and Kugler, “Hearing 4Q255.”

² The best ET appears in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 35–142.

³ As counted in Fitzmyer, “The Sacrifice of Isaac in Qumran Literature,” 214.

Abraham pertinent to Israelites as a whole, individually and collectively, by comparing his test at the time of the Aqedah to what Job, the Judaic equivalent of everyman, had to endure. In *Jubilees* Satan (called by an alternative Hebrew name, Mastemah) challenges God to test Abraham, claiming that the patriarch loves his son more than God (*Jub.* 17:16), a precise echo of the opening of Job. By introducing Satan into the Aqedah, *Jubilees* protects God from the charge that he commanded human sacrifice and at the same time equates the Seleucid persecutor with this Prince of Darkness that all the faithful are to resist.

Deepening political divisions set those who opposed the Seleucids into differing camps over time, yet they agreed that the story of the Aqedah served as the symbol of the faithfulness demanded of all Jews. The author of 2 Maccabees, who was less pro-Hasmonean than the writer of *Jubilees*, praises the victorious leader Judas Maccabeus only with restraint (as compared to 1 Maccabees) and ignores the brothers who were his lieutenants, all the while attributing the defeat of Antiochus IV and the salvation of Israel to the fortitude of the Jewish martyrs and to divine intervention. Differing further from 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees places the responsibility for the sufferings of the Jewish people and the desecration of the temple on *both* the Jewish people and the Seleucid ruler, arguing that, because many of the people—and especially the leaders—deserted Jewish law in favor of Greek ways, God brought punishment to Jerusalem. It is the martyrs' fidelity that brings about the community's reconciliation with God according to 2 Maccabees, in a theology which is less activist yet more radical than 1 Maccabees.

Second Maccabees shows how it values martyrdom over military resistance through the stories of Eleazar, an aged scribe (2 Macc 6:18-31), and a woman with her seven sons (2 Macc 7). The narrative praises their martyr's sacrifice and encourages all who hear their stories to be equally faithful. The martyrs give speeches expressing their fidelity to God's law, desiring to set a good example for those who come after them and display confidence that in the resurrection from the dead their mutilated bodies will be replaced and restored.

Eleazar, aged ninety, refused to eat pork forced into his mouth, and even to eat kosher meat disguised as if it were pork (at the suggestion of a sympathetic executioner). He summarizes both his personal sense of responsibility and the author's perspective when he says, "By manfully giving up my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age and bequeath

Fitzmyer mounts a sustained critique on the claims of Vermes ("Redemption and Genesis xxii"), who in turn relied on the work of Israel Lévi from the beginning of the twentieth century.

to the young a noble example of how to die a good death willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws" (2 Macc 6:27–28). Viewed from the angle of the community's commitment to the Torah, death was preferable, not only to apostasy but even to the appearance of apostasy.

The mother of seven sons shows herself even more radical than Eleazar in her commitment; her ordeal is set in a surreal encounter with Antiochus Epiphanes himself. After seeing six of her sons being tortured to death—by whips, cords, cutting of flesh, amputation, and fire—for their refusal to eat pork, the mother refuses Antiochus' advice that she encourage her last remaining child to transgress his ancestral traditions. "In derision of the cruel tyrant, she leaned over close to her son and said in Aramaic, their native language, 'Son, have mercy on me, who carried you in my belly for nine months, nursed you for three years, nurtured and brought you up, to your present productive age. . . . Do not be afraid of this executioner, but become worthy of your brothers and accept death, so that in mercy I may receive you again with them'" (2 Macc 7:27, 29). After the death of her youngest child by the cruelest tortures of all, the mother also suffers execution. But she has already endured worse than death, strengthened by having—as the text says (7:21)—"aroused female thought with male resolution." In the conception of this Maccabean theology, women achieved a greater motherhood even than giving birth by providing their children as martyrs in the resolute manner of Abraham.

The second book of Maccabees pioneered a style of presentation later repeated and intensified in Jewish (as well as Christian and Muslim) stories of martyrdom, portraying physical suffering in exquisite detail. This violence, however, was by no means gratuitous; rather, blood and pain sealed the accomplishment of sacrifice and encouraged further sacrifice by arousing admiration, awe, and the desire to follow noble examples of the triumph of devotion over fear. In this way, 2 Maccabees put into action the praise of Abraham that links his pivotal role specifically to his willingness to offer his son. The second century BCE, the Maccabean century, made Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son (cited in 1 Macc 2:52 by Mattathias, the founder of the Maccabean dynasty), together with the willingness of Israelites to give their children to the cause of the Torah, into the model of what Jews should do as Jews.

The Seleucid threat to Judaism came and went, only to be replaced by Roman hegemony, which was formally established over Jerusalem in 63 BCE, when Pompey entered the city. During Judaism's long and sporadically violent struggle with the Romans, a shift occurred in the depiction of Abraham's offering of Isaac. Because previous studies of the Aqedah have often been purely literary in their orientation, scholars have not observed the direct correspondence between the portrayal of events on Moriah and

historical conditions in Judea. Just as Maccabean literature remains inexplicable unless its emergence is seen within the context of Seleucid policy, so Roman hegemony proves key to understanding the development of the Aqedah.

During the Roman period, Abraham's obedience as the proof of his virtue remained, but Isaac's willing complicity with his father—reflecting the determination necessary for a martyr—emerged as a principal theme. Philo of Alexandria, Hellenistic Judaism's preeminent intellectual during the first half of the first century CE, pictures Abraham as a priest with his son as a victim (*On Abraham* 197–98), making explicit the connection between sacrifice and noble warfare that the Maccabean literature had already forged. Philo retains the biblical text's focus on Abraham as the primary actor, even though he refers to the passive, uninformed Isaac as being God's "son," because divine intervention had made his birth possible, *and* because Isaac was perfectly obedient (*On Dreams* 1.173). In a clear departure from the biblical text, Abraham did not even have to bind Isaac in Philo's description (*Abraham* 176), but—articulating an image frequently portrayed by Western artists during the centuries after Philo—simply placed Isaac on the altar.

Another first-century Jewish intellectual, Josephus, had been a Jewish general in the disastrous revolt that resulted in the destruction of the temple by fire in 70 CE. He defected to the Romans when his campaign in Galilee failed; in addition to changing his allegiance, his name changed from Yosef bar Matthyiah to Josephus. In libraries in the West, he is still called Flavius Josephus, because the Flavian dynasty of Rome protected him. When he came to write his *Antiquities of the Jews* in Greek (c. 93 CE) from the comfort of his property in Italy, a gift from his Roman protectors, Josephus nonetheless let slip some of the Maccabean theology that had motivated him as a young man—and spurred many Jews to embrace death rather than capitulate to the Romans.

Josephus takes up the interpretative challenge posed by the Bible's passive Isaac and transforms him into a warrior-martyr. Perfectly obedient to his father and to God, Isaac knew exactly what he was doing when he enthusiastically agreed to be a sacrifice because he was *twenty-five years old* (*A.Ĵ.* 1.227), no longer the youth of the Hebrew Bible, but the same age as the soldiers Josephus commanded in the field. Josephus takes pride in relating how, in the midst of an array of adventures, he organized the young men under his command at Jotapata in Galilee to commit mass suicide rather than surrender to the Romans. Drawing lots, each offered his naked throat to a brother-in-arms turned executioner. Once the executioner had struck, he in turned offered his own neck to another colleague.

Josephus escaped his own order as general, convinced by a revelation, he said, that power was passing from Jerusalem to Rome by divine will (J.W. 3.141–408). Instead, the defeated general who had seen his own troops embrace an honorable death in the manner of Isaac gave himself up to Vespasian. Becoming a propagandist for Vespasian and his son Titus, Josephus accepted Flavian protection for the rest of his life. In depicting the scene on Moriah, Josephus may allude to Agamemnon and Iphigenia⁴ in Euripides, signaling his desire to bring together Judaic and Hellenistic culture. Although allusions are notoriously difficult to pin down, the motif of the willing victim features among various cultures in antiquity that have long been appreciated. The links that bind together Isaac's offering, sacrifice, and martyrdom by military means are not merely theoretical possibilities but have been openly acknowledged for the better part of two thousand years.

So Josephus makes Isaac into a willing and knowledgeable martyr (A.J. 1.232), who rushes to his sacrifice and his fate. Defeat at the hands of the Romans made Jewish interpreters emphasize the noble sacrifice of Isaac to the point that new elements—his adult maturity and enthusiasm to be offered, for example—supplemented or even supplanted what was written in Genesis 22. The famous case of mass suicide at Masada in 73 CE was not an isolated incident, but represents a pattern of suicide-martyrdom that had been promoted by generals such as Josephus, who conducted the failed revolt against Rome.⁵ The Maccabean martyrs had been glorified both by divine approval and by eventual victory for their nation: under Rome, the Jewish martyr's only reward was divine approval, and he embraced his fate to the point of joining in mass suicide.

The final reward of the martyrs, immortality, is laid out during the Roman period in terms drawn from Hellenistic thought. When *Fourth Maccabees*, written at the turn of the first and second centuries CE, comes to describe the young men who embraced death rather than desert the Torah, the description is a mix of the image of Isaac that Josephus had presented, along with the Hellenistic term “immortality” (*athanasia*): “all of them, as though running a race for immortality, hastened to death by torture” (4 Macc 14:5).⁶ The author even believes that the martyrs atone for Israel's sins, like animal sacrifices, by their blood: Eleazar prays for his people: “Make my blood their purification, and take my life in exchange

⁴ See Kessler, *Bound by the Bible*, 101. Kessler, 59, helpfully refers to other classical portrayals, namely, Homer's depiction of Hector and Priam.

⁵ Josephus reports (J.W. 7.320–401) that in 73, after a lengthy siege, when it appeared the Romans would soon break through the final defenses, the 960 Jewish men, women, and children determined that suicide was preferable to either slavery or execution.

⁶ The best ET appears in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 531–64.

for theirs" (4 Macc 6:29). The death of martyrs is portrayed as redemptive for the sins of Israel (4 Macc 17:20-22), so that sacrifice, the imagery of Isaac, and the promise of afterlife all combine to move the martyr to his ultimate offering. In a single, striking image, the author portrays Isaac as unafraid, even when he saw his father's hand coming upon him with a sword, depicting the sacrificial scene in Genesis 22 in terms of the threat of martyrdom under Roman arms (4 Macc 16:20).

In a work from early in the second century CE that rewrites the primordial stories of Israel called *The Book of Biblical Antiquities* (or in its Latin language the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*) and written by an anonymous author referred to as Pseudo-Philo, a fully mature Isaac calmly informs his father that he had been born into the world to be offered as a sacrifice to God (*Biblical Antiquities* 32:2-3).⁷ He perfectly reflects the ideal of martyrdom, the prototypical witness to the value of the Torah in the face of danger, pain, and death.

The Book of Biblical Antiquities represents a transitional moment, fueled by the reality and the remembrance of martyrs who really did die, when Isaac was seen as an actual sacrifice and had been intended as such by God. This is the moment, very early in the second century CE, when the term "Aqedah" came into its own, because it was a reference to the way the sheep of the daily offering (the Tamid) was tied up for slaughter, foreleg to hind leg. Isaac became a ritual offering and his death appeased God for the sins of Israel.⁸

This human sacrifice emerged as the paradigm of all sacrifice at a crucial moment in Israelite history. The Romans had burned the temple when they occupied Jerusalem in 70 CE, preventing the public practice of the sacrificial ritual that had until that time been the principal seal of the covenant. How could God have allowed this place, the intersection of heaven and earth, to be defiled by Gentiles? The fundamental challenge of the Romans to Israelite identity made a second great revolt, during 132–135 CE, as inevitable as it was inevitably disastrous. The *Book of Biblical Antiquities*, written either between these two wars or after them both, has Isaac say that his willingness to die at Abraham's hand proves that God has made human life a worthy sacrifice (*Biblical Antiquities* 32:3): only the prototype of offering remained after the temple's destruction, and it became understandable that within Judaism Isaac's offering should be seen as complete and perfect. That interpretative move permitted Jews to

⁷ The best ET appears in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 297–378.

⁸ See m. Tamid 4:1 and the comments of Spiegel in the single most useful work ever written on the Aqedah, Spiegel's *The Last Trial*, xix–xx. See also Agus, *The Binding of Isaac and Messiah*.

conceive of the covenant as continuing even after the most visible sign of the covenant, sacrifice in the temple, had been wiped off the face of the earth by the Romans.

When Abraham placed Isaac on the altar as a burnt offering, both father and son were rejoicing as well as ready to act (*Biblical Antiquities* 40:2-3). Here the older theology of the Maccabees finds its capstone. Although the *Book of Biblical Antiquities* stops short of saying that Isaac died on Moriah, it stands as the earliest reference to Isaac's "blood" (*Biblical Antiquities* 18:5): "on account of his blood I chose them." The intention of father and son was so perfect, their offering was accepted as if it had been completed, and that "blood" seals the election of their progeny. In the interpretation of Genesis 22, the turn toward the primordial reflex of child-sacrifice is the consequence of violent external forces—the Roman demolition of the temple—combined with a theology designed to enable the community to survive in desperate circumstances—Maccabean martyrdom.

Isaac's "blood" in the Aqedah stood for sacrifice, and—because the Romans had burned the temple down in 70 CE and then razed the remaining masonry in 135 CE—Isaac came to embody the only sacrifice that God would or could accept. During the second century (Mishnah, Taanit 2:5), some Rabbis taught that the sound of the ram's horn with prayer and fasting would cause God to answer the community as he had once answered Abraham on Moriah. The Aqedah eventually took the place of the daily sacrifice required in the temple, the Tamid lamb. Centuries later, around 450 CE, the rabbinic midrash of the book of Leviticus explained that, when any Israelite reads about the Tamid, God remembers the Aqedah (Leviticus Rab. 2:11). Because the Aqedah is presented as the true ideal that the offering of the daily lamb recollects, Isaac and the martyrs took the place of the discontinued ritual in the temple.

Once the connection between Isaac's Aqedah and ritual sacrifice had been made, it was possible for it to be articulated in other sacrificial contexts. A second-century midrash called the *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, for example, has God explain in Exodus 12:13 why he will pass over houses where he sees blood at the threshold of Israel's doors during the first Passover: "when I see the blood, I see the blood of Isaac's Aqedah." In this creative reading, typical of the ancient genre of midrash and quite unlike a strict commentary in the modern sense, the association of the Aqedah extends into a new paschal bond without breaking the earlier connections with the Tamid sacrifice.

Some of the reasons for this innovative association with Passover only become plain when during the second century, Christian claims (discussed later), presenting Jesus' death at Passover as the true sacrifice

foreshadowed by Isaac, are taken into account. But Isaac's status as the prototype of martyrdom and sacrifice made that Christian theology possible, and enabled rabbinic Judaism to reply to the association between Christ and Isaac on the part of those whom the Rabbis considered heretics.

In his role of the prototypical martyr offering his life, Isaac crossed the line from readiness for sacrifice into sacrifice itself. When sacrificial blood is at issue, what God sees might be considered metaphorical or literal, and there is good evidence that rabbinic interpretation took the image both ways. Perhaps, some interpreters said, Abraham went so far as to nick Isaac's carotid artery, so that he lost a quarter of his blood before his father was stopped in the course of his sacrificial routine.⁹

As this trajectory of interpretation developed, Isaac's awareness about all the events around him also sharpened. Now he was no longer twenty-five years old, but thirty-seven, and he approached the sacrifice, and no longer as a zealous martyr but in mournful humility. Tears fall from his eyes as—contradicting Philo's picture—he asks his father to bind him fast, so that he will not struggle and blemish his body, which had to be perfect to be acceptable as a sacrifice. When the midrash *Genesis Rabbah* came to completion during the fifth century, Isaac's determination became quieter and deeper than in earlier interpretations, and for good reason. By then Constantine's recognition of Christianity put Judaism as a religion in a more perilous position than ever before within the Roman Empire.

The sacrifice that Abraham made of his son by this stage meant to some interpreters that not only that Isaac's blood was shed but also—in the later presentation of the Babylonian Talmud (*Ta'anit* 16a)—that he had been reduced to ashes. No more extreme statement of the completion of the ritual could be imagined. By the same token, means could be imagined by which Isaac would appear again in the biblical narrative: God must have raised Abraham's son, the child of promise, not merely from death but from the ashes of a sacrifice by fire. Isaac symbolized a human offering that pleased God but at the same time the will of God for Israel's survival by any means necessary, including physical resurrection from the dead. Isaac was redeemed from Moriah, no matter how far the sacrifice had gone, just as the people Israel had returned from what seemed certain extinction in Babylon.

The treatment of Genesis 22 in the midrash *Genesis Rabbah*, found in chapters 55–56, apparently took several centuries to evolve into its present, essentially fifth-century, form. It interweaves a number of different interpretations of these verses, focusing on different questions and topics,

⁹ See Mann, *Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue*, 67; Schoeps, "Sacrifice of Isaac in Paul's Theology"; Lohse, *Märtyrer und Gottesknecht*.

sometimes compatible, sometimes contradictory. Read as a whole, Isaac is now furnished with a temperament, character, and spiritual experience commensurate with his resurrection. By that stage, *Isaac's* Aqedah had taken on a literary fullness such that Isaac nearly eclipsed Abraham within the narrative of events on Mount Moriah.

No longer, for example, did God simply test Abraham, as in the Hebrew text, nor did Mastemah push God to act in the way he does in the *Jubilees* out of jealousy of Abraham. Instead, the impetus for the test comes from a dispute between Isaac and Ishmael (Gen. Rab. 55:4), in which Ishmael brags that, since he was circumcised at the age of thirteen, his devotion was greater than Isaac's, who—circumcised as an eight-day old infant—had neither choice nor consciousness in the matter. Isaac replied that, were God to ask all his members in sacrifice, he would not deny them. The Aqedah then transpired.

After the events in Genesis 22, Gen. Rab. 56:11 indicates that Isaac went to study with Shem, the son of Noah. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Genesis 22:19 even indicates that he was taken to Shem's study house (בִּימְדֵרְשָׁא) by angels.¹⁰ Shem is identified with Melchizedek, the mysterious figure that once gave Abraham a priestly blessing (Gen 14:18-20).

Just by looking at two key elements in Genesis Rabbah—Ishmael's and Isaac's dispute and Isaac's studying in the academy of Shem—the allusive quality of the interpretations is obvious, and all the more so, when read in the context of the many other interpretations also presented in Genesis Rabbah. How are we to understand these statements? Today scholars still debate those points, yet it seems wise not to insist on a categorical reading when Genesis Rabbah so carefully constructs a series of possibilities—rather than a linear set of events—for virtually every turning point in the story.

Side by side with these creative and often surreal developments in the story of the Aqedah, the laconic power of the original text of Genesis remained. Many Jews saw their experience of persecution by Romans, whether under a pagan or a later Christian aegis, as impossibly cruel compared to Abraham's trial. In Lamentations Rabbah, we find a midrash on the Maccabean story of the woman who saw her seven sons die. The mother embraces her last child before his death and says, "My son, go tell Abraham, our father, My mother says to you, Do not take pride, claiming, I built an altar and offered up my son, Isaac. Now see, my mother built seven altars and offered up seven sons in one day. And yours was only a

¹⁰ See McNamara, "Melchizedek." As McNamara shows, the Targumim belong within a more generally rabbinic pattern.

test, but I really had to do it.’”¹¹ Yet even as she gives her message to her son, the woman articulates the Maccabean belief that her child will live again to speak with Abraham, and she takes up the Maccabean imperative to sacrifice life, limb, and children for the sake of faith.

The Judaic Aqedah put these convictions in narrative form (in Isaac’s resurrection and in his competition with Ishmael) and gave Christianity and Islam opportunities to develop interpretations that suited their characteristic teachings on sacrifice and martyrdom.¹² From the Maccabean period on, martyrdom was no longer merely an extreme response to social crisis by means of human sacrifice, such as occurs sporadically in most religious cultures; instead, Mount Moriah occupied a permanent place at the center of ethics, and self-sacrifice had become a standard virtue. Not only in the specialist literature represented by the Talmud, but as we shall now see, in the targumic versions of Scripture that were recited in synagogues for all who attended, Isaac offered his neck willingly for sacrifice, was praised by the angels, and gave his blood so that it would be remembered at the time of the Passover. The historical conditions that brought about this new theology were unique, but the persistence of the confrontation between loyal Jews and imperial oppression—whether by Seleucids or Romans—at a time of relatively high literacy within Judaism ensured that the image of the glorious martyr would be embedded within Jewish literature. Judaism has made Isaac into the image of the necessary readiness for martyrdom, a requirement of all true Israelites.

The targumic renderings of Genesis 22 present interpretations that intersect with the whole range of pre-rabbinic and rabbinic interpretations discussed in this section.¹³ Although no Tannaitic midrashic work to Genesis has survived, even pre-Tannaitic elements are evident in the Targums as they can be read to-day. The motif that the Aqedah was the tenth test of Abraham is related to *Jubilees’* enumeration of his tests, and we shall see that the mention of Isaac being reduced to dust and ashes in Neofiti echoes Amoraic theology (Talmud Bavli, Taanit 16a) and Pseudo-Jonathan’s mention of Isaac’s and Ishmael’s quarrel and of Isaac’s angelic vision reveals a connection with late and rich developments.

¹¹ See Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 2:01. The midrash names the woman as Miriam, daughter of Tanhum and also has her suckle her two-and-a-half-year-old son before his death.

¹² See Chilton, *Abraham’s Curse*.

¹³ See Chilton and Davies, “Aqedah”; for Isa 33:7, see Chilton, “Recent Discussion of the Aqedah”; for Exod 12:42, see Chilton, “Isaac and the Second Night”; for Lev 22:27, see Levenson, *Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son*, 183–84.

THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC IN TARGUM ONQELOS

Targum Onqelos is not particularly interested in Isaac's willingness to be a sacrifice, in the self-sacrifice of martyrs, or, to be blunt, in sacrifice at all. The vital point for Onqelos in this chapter is God's choice of a site for the altar. Onqelos identifies the choice of a worship location for Abraham with God's later choice of a worship location for the Israelites—i.e., the Jerusalem temple—who will take possession of the land long after Abraham's death. Already in the Hebrew Bible, these two locations are identified as the same. Genesis 22:2 indicates that the mountain for the sacrifice is in the "land of Moriah" (אֶרֶץ הַמֹּרְיָה), while 2 Chronicles 3:1 indicates that Solomon built the temple on "Mt. Moriah" (הַר הַמֹּרְיָה).¹⁴ These are the only appearances of the name Moriah in the Hebrew Bible.

Targum Onqelos wants to make it clear that these worship activities took place and will take place in the same location. In order to do so, it relies not on the name of the place, but on its function, namely, that of worship. So the Targum alters two verses, Genesis 22:2 and 14, to ensure that its audience/readers understands the link between the two. Here is the key part of Targum Onqelos of Genesis 22:2.¹⁵

אֶת־	בְּנֶךְ	אֶת־	נָא	קַח־	וַיֹּאמֶר	HT
יְתִית	בְּרִיךְ	יְתִית	כְּעַן	דְּבַר	וַאֲמַר	TO
	יִצְחָק	אֶת־	אֶהְבֶּתָּ	אֲשֶׁר־	יְחִידְךָ	HT
	יִצְחָק	יְתִית		דְּרַחֲמִיתָא	יְחִידְךָ	TO
	הַמֹּרְיָה	אֶרֶץ	אֶל־	לְךָ	וְלְךָ־	HT
	פְּלִחְנָא		לְאַרְעָא	לְךָ	וְאִיזִיל	TO

HT: And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah. . . ."

TO: Then he said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of *worship*. . . ."

A glance across the parallel Hebrew and Aramaic texts above shows that the Targum is quite literal; it constitutes a word-for-word rendering

¹⁴ *Jub.* 18:13 echoes this connection.

¹⁵ In this chapter, translations of the Hebrew text are our own or NRSV. Translations of the Targums were done by Eldon Clem, with italics added to indicate additional material in the Targum. English translations of FT(P) and FT(V) are our own.

of the biblical text, following the same order. Only the Targum's last word differs in meaning from the original—a substitution. TO renders it “worship” instead of “Moriah.” Abraham is to travel to the “land of worship”—almost as if there is only one place where worship can take place.

TO's rendering of verse two sets up its version of Genesis 22:14. Rather than naming the place where God's angel appeared as in the MT, TO has Abraham pray to God in a way that makes it clear that the location of his sacrifice will become the location of his descendants' sacrifices.

Then Abraham *worshipped and prayed* there in that place and said, “Here generations will be worshipping before the Lord. Then it will be said *as on* this day, ‘On this mountain Abraham worshipped before the Lord.’”

Abraham in his prayer envisions his future descendants praying and sacrificing in the place where he has just offered the ram and reminding themselves that in this same spot Abraham worshipped God by offering his son Isaac. In this way Onqelos ties the temple site to the place where Abraham followed God's command by attempting to sacrifice his son.

Let us take a moment to see how the meturgeman accomplished this recasting in TO Genesis 22:14. The targumic rendering interweaves literal translation with addition and substitution. The verse's transformation begins with a double substitution, two Aramaic words with similar meaning replacing one Hebrew word, the alteration shifts the verse from a description of Abraham naming the site to one in which Abraham prays to God. The way the targumist accomplishes this can be seen in the following parallel phrase.

ההוא	המקום	שם	אברהם	ויקרא	HT
אמר	ההוא	באתרא	אברהם	וצלי	TO

TO: And Abraham *worshipped and prayed* there in that place. *He said,*

The opening word of the MT, “And he called” is replaced by two Aramaic words, “And he worshipped and he prayed.” Each word is known in TO as a possible rendering of “to call,” especially in the context of interactions with God. פלח, “to worship,” renders the HT קרא “to call” in Genesis 33:20 and Exodus 17:15, while צלי “to pray,” appears for the same term in Genesis 13:4, 16:13, and 26:25. In Genesis 33:20, in fact, the same translation trick is used, where a passage about naming becomes a translated passage about worshipping. We should not ignore the probable role which etymological interpretation has played here either. As Bernard Grossfeld has pointed out, the targumic transformation involves taking the verbal

root “to see” (*r’h*) as equivalent of “to fear” (*yr*), understood in relation to worship.¹⁶

Two other features should be mentioned. First, in the HT, שם means “name.” But the targumist treats it as if it means “there” שם (different vowel pointing but same consonants) and renders it תמן. Second, since Abraham is praying, the meturgeman sets up the rest of the verse to constitute his prayer by adding in the single word אָמַר, “to say.” Here is Abraham’s prayer in the remainder of Genesis 22:14:

	יְרֵאָה		יְהוָה		HT
דְּרִינָא	פְּלִחִין	יְהוֹן	הָכָא	יִי	קִדָּם
	בְּהֵר		הַיּוֹם	יֹאמַר	אֲשֶׁר
הַדִּין	בְּטוֹרָא	הַדִּין	כְּיוֹמָא	יִתְאַמַּר	בְּכִין
	יְרֵאָה		יְהוָה		HT
	פְּלַח	יִי	קִדָּם	אֲבִרְהָם	TO

TO: “*Before the Lord here generations will be worshipping. Then it will be said as [on] this day, ‘On this mountain Abraham worshipped before the Lord.’*”

The HT twice states the name Abraham gives to the location, יְהוָה יְרֵאָה. This becomes the basis for a two-part sentence that parallels Abraham’s action with those of future generations. As given in the MT, יְרֵאָה is a niphāl imperfect third-person masculine singular. Assuming that God is the subject, it should be interpreted as “God will be seen” or “God will appear.” The Targum by contrast understands the subject to be the worshipper rather than God, which results in the translation of “he [i.e., the worshipper] will be seen [before] God.” And what are people doing when they are “seen before God”? They are worshipping. That translational logic gives the targumic rendering provided here, that people “will be worshipping” “before the Lord.” And, since the phrase יְהוָה יְרֵאָה appears twice, the targumist applies it once to future generations and once to Abraham, altering its grammatical character to make the sentence work.¹⁷

The verb for “to worship,” פִּלַּח, does not need the preposition קִדָּם “before” to indicate the recipient of worship. The preposition’s addition

¹⁶ Grossfeld, *Targum Onqelos to Genesis*, 87.

¹⁷ The MT of Gen 22:8 has a version of this two-word phrase, אֱלֹהִים יְרֵאָה, with the verb in the qāl rather the niphāl. TO takes a literal approach to its translation, using the verb גָּלַי “to reveal.” This may indicate that the targumist likewise understood this verb as a niphāl. Other than this alteration, this verse provides a literal rendering of the HT.

comes from the Targum's tendency to avoid wording that seems to anthropomorphize God. Worshipping God directly apparently implies his physical presence, so to avoid that implication, the targumist regularly adds "before" to imply that the worshipper is not speaking directly to God. This notion also applies to how one treats exalted royalty; a person having an audience with a king does not speak directly to him, but "before" him. This avoidance of anthropomorphisms of God is common to all Targums.¹⁸ Otherwise, this verse's translation is quite literal.

Finally, it should be noticed that despite the additional material in these two phrases, the HT finds literal representation in the Targum. Every word of the Hebrew has a corresponding term in the translation, and in the same order as the original. To be sure, those corresponding terms are interwoven with added words, but the requirements of literalness have been met; this verse is a good example of the definition of Targums given in chapter 2.

Onqelos' agenda in Genesis 22 is the identification of the location of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac with the location of the later temple in Jerusalem. TO changes two verses to accomplish this goal, Genesis 22:2 and 14, in a manner that enables them to support this point.

THE AQEDAH IN THE PALESTINIAN TARGUMS

In contrast to Targum Onqelos, the Palestinian Targums respond to the central question raised by Abraham's attempt to sacrifice his son. Through key additions in Genesis 22:8, 10, and 14, these Targums aim to remove the impropriety and questionable circumstances Scripture's version of the story seems to imply. The question, we recall, focuses on the role of Isaac: Why is he so passive? Does he agree with his own slaughter or not, and what truly was God's intent?

The Palestinian Targums draw upon their shared Proto-PT source to address these questions and enhance the story's importance. The PTs that have the key material for this story are Targum Neofiti, Fragment Targum (V) and Fragment Targum (P).¹⁹ Neofiti has the entire chapter, while FT(V) has just verses 1, 2, 8, 10, 11 and 14, and FT(P) has only 8, 10, 11, and 14. In the typical character of the FTs, each of the extant verses has

¹⁸ Another example of an anti-anthropomorphic rendering in this story appears in the last word of Gen 22:18, where the term מִיִּמְרֵי "my memra" is substituted.

¹⁹ There are no Cairo Genizah fragments from the typical PT type. However, a fragment of CG(K) contains parts of five verses from this chapter, enough to indicate that it produced its own version of the story, drawing upon elements found in the Targums but creating a rendering that did not adhere to the definition of Targum. See Klein, *Geniza Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, 34–35.

additional or altered material to indicate the rationale for its inclusion in the Fragment Targum. The Proto-PT source of additions here occurs in all verses listed except verse 11.

Here is Targum Neofiti's rendering of the Aqedah story. We cite Clem's translation, which does not indicate the addition material or other alterations, but we will soon make them apparent.

- v. 1: Then it came about after these things that the Lord tested Abraham with the tenth trial and said to him, "Abraham." Abraham answered in the language of the sanctuary, and Abraham said to him, "Here am I."
- v. 2: Then he said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Mt. Moriah, and offer him up there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I will tell you."
- v. 3: Then Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took his two servants with him, and Isaac his son, and he split wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place that the Lord said to him.
- v. 4: On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar.
- v. 5: Then Abraham said to his servants, "Wait here with the donkey, and I and the young boy will arrive there, and we will pray and return to you."
- v. 6: Then Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and put it on Isaac his son, and he took the fire and the knife in his hand. And the two of them walked together with a whole heart.
- v. 7: Then Isaac said to Abraham his father saying, "Father." And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"
- v. 8: Then Abraham said, "The lamb for the burnt offering has been prepared before the Lord. But if not, you are the lamb of the burnt offering." So the two of them walked on together with a whole heart.
- v. 9: Then they came to the place that the Lord had told him, and Abraham built there the altar, and arranged the wood, and he bound Isaac his son, and put him on the altar over the wood.
- v. 10: Then Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slaughter Isaac his son. Isaac answered and said to Abraham his father, "Father, bind me well, so that I don't kick you and your offering become unfit for you, and I be thrust into the pit of destruction in the world to come." The eyes of Abraham were gazing at the eyes of Isaac, but the eyes of Isaac were gazing at the angels of the height. Abraham was not seeing them. At that moment a *bat qol* came out from heaven and said, "Come, see two unique ones in my world. One sacrifices and one is being sacrificed; the one who sacrifices

does not hold back, and the one who is being sacrificed stretches out his neck.”

- v. 11: Then the angel of the Lord called out to him from the heavens and said, “Abraham, Abraham.” And he said, “Here I am.”
- v. 12: Then he said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the boy, and do not do anything to him, for now I know that you fear from before the Lord, since you have not withheld your son, your only son from me.”
- v. 13: Then Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, a ram was caught in a tree by his horns, and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up as a burnt offering instead of his son.
- v. 14: Then Abraham worshipped and prayed in the name of the Word of the Lord and said, “Please, by the mercies from before you, O Lord, all is revealed and known before you, that my heart was not divided the first time when you said to me to offer Isaac my son, to make him dust and ashes before you, but immediately I got up in the morning, I rose up and did according to your command with joy, and I fulfilled your decree, and now, when his sons stand in the time of distress, remember the binding of Isaac their father and hear the voice of their prayers, and answer them and deliver them from all distress, so that the generations who will arise after him will say, ‘In the mountain of the sanctuary of the Lord where Abraham offered Isaac his son, and in this mountain, the Glory of the Shekhinah of the Lord was revealed to him.’”
- v. 15: Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from the heavens
- v. 16: and he said, “By the name of my Word I swear, says the Lord, that because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son,
- v. 17: I will indeed bless you, and I will indeed increase your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand that is on the shore of the sea, and your descendants will inherit the cities of their enemies,
- v. 18: and in your clans of all the peoples of the earth will be blessed, because you heard the voice of his Word.”

The MT’s version of this story attributes nearly all human action to Abraham. God calls Abraham; Abraham brings together and leads the party; Abraham tells people what to do; Abraham builds the altar and organizes the sacrifice; God speaks to Abraham; and so on. Only in verse 7 does Isaac take some initiative when he asks his father about the sacrificial lamb. In the MT, Abraham gives the “God will provide” answer, and regaining the initiative continues as the stories primary protagonist.

Targum Neofiti refocuses the story by elevating Isaac’s role in verses 8 and 10. TN’s verse 8 expands Abraham’s response to Isaac’s question so that Isaac knows that he will be the sacrificial animal.

Then Abraham said, “The lamb for the burnt offering has been prepared *before* the Lord. *But if not, you are the lamb of the burnt offering.*” So the two of them walked on together *with a peaceful heart.*

The English translation’s italics here indicate the added material. The first phrase has Abraham tell Isaac directly that if God provides no lamb, Isaac becomes the sacrifice. Just as important are the two added words in the last sentence, they “walked on together *with a peaceful heart.*” This indicates that Isaac accepted Abraham’s statement and his own designation as the sacrifice. They walk not just together, as in the MT, but with peaceful acceptance and surety of what is to come.²⁰

The two Fragment Targums each contain this verse (Gen 22:8) and their version of the translation with its additional material is quite close to that found in TN, including both the added phrases, indicating that Isaac may be the sacrificial victim and including the remark about their “peaceful heart.” The TN translation lacks a corresponding translation for one word in the MT, בָּנִי, both the Fragment Targums have it. For an example, here is the comparison between MT and its translations in TN and FT(P).

לֹא	יִרְאֶה	אֱלֹהִים		HT
לֵה	אִזְדַּמֵּן	יִי	מִן־קֹדֶם	TN
	אִזְדַּמֵּן	יִי	מִן־קֹדֶם	FT(P)
	בְּנִי	לְעֹלָה	הָשָׂה	HT
		לְעֹלָתָהּ	אָמַר	TN
	בְּרִי	לְעֹלָתָא	אִמַּר	FT(P)

TN: *From before* the Lord a lamb for the burnt offering has been prepared.

Both TN and FT(P) are quite literal, as you can see. The missing “my son” of TN is supplied by FT(P). Similarly, FT(P) is missing a minor word, the direct object indicator *lamed* with the pronominal suffix; TN has that. Both Targums take care to render the original exactly, but each has made a different omission, intentionally or not.

At Genesis 22:10, the Palestinian Targums begin with a literal translation of the Hebrew verse, and then they add a sizable, self-contained

²⁰ Davies and Chilton interpret TO’s use of כַּהֲדָא here as echoing the PTs’ “with a peaceful heart.” Yet כַּהֲדָא also represents a standard translation in TO and the PTs of the HT’s יְהִדִּי. So in TO, the standard, literal translation may at the same time reflect knowledge of the Proto-PT tradition. See Davies and Chilton, “Aqedah,” 545 and 542, esp. #3.

addition. We give Targum Neofiti’s version on the left and FT(V)’s on the right. The italicized words in FT(V) represent its different wording from TN, rather than from the HT.

<i>TN</i>	<i>FT(V)</i>
Isaac answered and said to Abraham his father, “Father, bind me well, so that I don’t kick you and your offering become unfit for you, and I be thrust into the pit of destruction in the world to come.”	Isaac answered and said to Abraham his father, “Father, bind <i>my hands</i> well so that <i>in my hour of distress I don’t jerk and confound you</i> and your offering <i>be found</i> unfit and I be thrust into the pit of destruction in the world to come.
The eyes of Abraham were gazing at the eyes of Isaac, but the eyes of Isaac were gazing at the angels of the height. Abraham was not seeing them.	The eyes of Abraham were gazing at the eyes of Isaac, but the eyes of Isaac were gazing at the angels of the height. <i>Isaac was seeing them</i> , Abraham was not seeing them.
At that moment a bat qol came out from heaven and said, “Come, see two unique ones in my world. One sacrifices and one is being sacrificed; the one who sacrifices does not hold back, and the one who is being sacrificed stretches out his neck.”	At that moment <i>angels went forth from on high and were saying to each other</i> , “Come, see two <i>righteous</i> unique ones in <i>the midst of the world</i> . One sacrifices and one is being sacrificed; the one who sacrifices does not hold back, and the one who is being sacrificed stretches out his neck.”

The addition contains three parts. In the first one, Isaac takes the initiative and asks his father to tie him up well so that the offering is not spoiled. Isaac’s remark indicates that he is looking out for his father’s welfare in addition to his own status as an offering. This is another indication that Isaac is in favor of this sacrifice.

In the addition’s second part, the meturgeman elevates Isaac above Abraham. Abraham’s gaze is earthbound while Isaac is blessed with a vision of the heavenly angels—which Abraham specifically does not see.

The third section brings the two men into parity in their roles of sacrificer and victim. The *bat qol*—a heavenly voice—lauds both of them for their selflessness and obedience to God.

FT(V), in the right-hand column, has essentially the same meaning as TN. The alterations indicated in italics are matters of nuance and emphasis but do not alter the point. In the addition's third section, FT(V)'s shift to angels alters the actor(s) and the proclamation manner, but does not change the proclamation itself. It brings the expansion more into line with the Proto-PT addition in Genesis 28:12, in which the observing angels say to each other concerning Jacob, "Come and see the pious one (אֲדִיִּם)!"—which appears in TN and both FTs.

The emphasis on Isaac in these two verses is so strong that he begins to eclipse Abraham's importance. Not only does he agree to be sacrificed, but he also tells his father to take extra precautions to prevent any accidental blemishing of the sacrifice. This is Isaac the willing martyr, which appears outside the Targums in Josephus, Pseudo-Philo, and later rabbinic materials. The heavenly voice or angels echo Isaac's importance as parallel to Abraham's by praising both men equally. Even more than this, however, Isaac receives a heavenly vision of angels denied to Abraham—a point doubly reinforced in the Fragment Targums. By the end of verse 10, it seems that Isaac has become more important to the story than Abraham.

To obviate this problem and keep the focus on Abraham, the meturgeman for the Proto-PT source takes two steps, both of which constitute an application of Targum Rule 5, to place an addition at the beginning or end of the passage to ensure the clarity of its point. In verse 1, Proto-PT—as evidenced by TN and FT(V)—adds the following phrase: "And it was after these things and the Lord tested Abraham *with the tenth test*." This short addition makes it clear from the beginning that this is the last of the ten tests God gave to Abraham. This label, added into the rendering, reminds the audience that God has been giving Abraham tests throughout this period, a situation that does not apply to Isaac. Furthermore, the notion of Abraham receiving ten tests is well established in rabbinic literature, as B. Grossfeld has indicated, and appears as early as m. Avot 5:3.²¹ This represents an extension of a tradition found as early as the book of *Jubilees* (17:17-18), according to which the events of Genesis 22 represented the climactic *seventh* test that Abraham confronted.²²

But the strongest reassertion of Abraham's importance in this tale appears in the addition to Genesis 22:14, when Abraham requests God to remember his faithfulness and help Isaac's descendants when they are in need. The Palestinian Targums share a Proto-PT expansion here,

²¹ Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti I*, 173–74.

²² See Chilton, *Abraham's Curse*, 54–55; Fitzmyer, "Sacrifice of Isaac in Qumran Literature."

although it has been altered slightly by the later Fragment Targums. We give TN and FT(P) in parallel translations (*italics indicate FT(P)'s differences from TN*):

<i>TN</i>	<i>FT(P)</i>
Then Abraham worshipped and prayed in the name of the Word of the Lord and said, "Please, by the mercies from before you, O Lord, all is revealed and known before you, that my heart was not divided the first time when you said to me to offer Isaac my son, to make him dust and ashes before you,	Then Abraham worshipped and prayed <i>there</i> in the name of the Word of the Lord and said, " <i>You are he O Lord God who sees and are not seen.</i> All is revealed and known before you that there was no division <i>before me/him in the hour when you said, "sacrifice Isaac your son."</i>
but immediately I got up in the morning, I rose up and did according to your command with joy, and I fulfilled your decree,	Immediately, I got up in the morning and did your commandment and carried out your decrees
and now, when his sons stand in the hour of distress, remember the binding of Isaac their father and hear the voice of their prayers, and answer them and deliver them from all distress,	and now <i>by the mercies from before you, O God,</i> when the sons of Isaac my son enter into the hour of their distress, remember <i>for them</i> the binding of Isaac their father and <i>for the debt of their sins</i> and save them from every distress
so that the generations who will arise after him will say, 'In the mountain of the sanctuary of the Lord where Abraham offered Isaac his son, and in this mountain, the Glory of the Shekhinah of the Lord was revealed to him.'"	so that the generations who will be established after them will say, 'In the mountain of the sanctuary of the Lord Abraham offered Isaac his son, and in this mountain, the Glory of the Shekhinah of the Lord was revealed to him.'"

Abraham makes two requests of God. First, he draws upon the Aqedah to persuade God to help Isaac's descendants from future difficulties. Note the Targums refer to Isaac's descendants rather than labeling them as Abraham's. This remark constitutes an implicit appeal to God to recall the merit Isaac has earned through this experience. The binding of Isaac now should cause God to deliver the Israelites from future distress.

Second, in the final section, Proto-PT follows TO's interest by linking the location of Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac with the temple cult on the same mountain. The Shekhinah was revealed for Abraham in the same location that it will continue to appear in the future for the people Israel—namely, in the Jerusalem temple where they sacrifice.

FT(P) at some points gives a different rendering of the material from TN, but there are few significant differences to the overall point of the event and its interpretation. Furthermore, there are other, smaller additions in the PTs' version of this tale, but none that affect its meaning in any key fashion, as does the additional material just discussed.

THE AQEDAH IN TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHAN

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan inherits the Proto-PT version of the Aqedah story and so responds to it, rather than to the bare biblical tale. It accepts the enhanced role of Isaac, the willing martyr; indeed it views Isaac as the central figure, not Abraham. To emphasize this different perspective, PJ recasts the verses which extend Abraham's role and drops out verse 8's expansion altogether. This enables PJ to present Isaac as the story's key player, rather than Abraham.

The first thing that PJ does in its reshaping of the story is to place an addition in verse 1—following Targum Rule 5—that emphasizes that God is testing Isaac as well as Abraham. Indeed, Isaac provides the motivation for PJ's tale, not Abraham. Here PJ positions a sizable addition between two parts of the verse's translation to set up its version of the story.

Then it came about after these things, *after Isaac and Ishmael had quarreled, Ishmael was saying, "It is fitting for me to inherit my father because I am his firstborn son." Then Isaac was saying, "It is fitting for me to inherit my father, because I am the son of Sarah his wife, but you are the son of Hagar, my mother's maidservant."* Ishmael answered and said, *"I am more righteous than you because I was circumcised at thirteen years old, but if it had been my will to refuse, I would not have handed over myself to be circumcised, but you were circumcised at eight days old. If the knowledge had been in you, perhaps you would not have handed yourself over to be circumcised."* Isaac answered and said, *"Behold, I am today thirty seven years old, and if the Holy One, blessed is He,*

would require it, I would not hold back any of my members.” Immediately these words were heard before the Master of the Universe, and immediately the Word of the Lord tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham,” and he said to him, “Here I am.”

Isaac and Ishmael debate who should be Abraham’s heir. Ishmael opens his case by citing his position as first-born son. When Isaac counters by comparing the status of their mothers, Ishmael one-ups Isaac in his adherence to God’s command: Ishmael as an adult had chosen to allow himself to be circumcised, but Isaac had been circumcised as a baby and hence had made no choice. Isaac’s response—that God could have all his members—sounds a bit overblown, as one might expect in such a tit-for-tat debate. God, however, decides to take Isaac at his word and gives him the opportunity to live up to his statement; he immediately calls to Abraham to put the test in motion. This addition in PJ constitutes an enhanced version of the dispute between Isaac and Ishmael that appeared in Gen. Rab. 55:4. But whereas in Genesis Rabbah, the debate stands alone without any literary or thematic connection to the other interpretations of Genesis 22, here in Pseudo-Jonathan the event launches the reader into the rest of the story.

Following the large, opening addition, the first part of PJ’s story has a few details added in. Only in verse 5 does a complication arise. Abraham adds a test of his own. He tells the two servants, “Wait here with the donkey, and I and the young boy will arrive there *to test if it will be fulfilled what I had been told, “Thus will your descendants be.”*” Abraham’s test emphasizes his hopes for Isaac, which stem from a promise God made to him in Genesis 15:5. At that time, God promised Abraham that his sons would be as numerous as the stars. Since, in Genesis 22, Isaac has not yet had children, God’s command to sacrifice Isaac would seem to contradict this oath. So Isaac has become the focus of a test of God’s faithfulness to Abraham, as well as Abraham’s to God. Isaac stands at the crux of both tests.

So when we get to verse 8, it comes as a surprise that PJ lacks the Proto-PT expansion here. Instead, PJ offers a straight translation, with only the last two added words.

Then Abraham said, “The Lord will choose for himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together *with a peaceful heart*.

There is an important change to this translation. Every Targum so far has translated the two Hebrew words אֱלֹהִים יְרָאָה into the passive,

anti-anthropomorphic construction מִן־קֶדֶם יְיָ אֲדָמָן, “From before God it will be prepared [i.e., the lamb of the burnt offering].” PJ has instead the active יְיָ יִבְחֶר, “God will choose [for himself the lamb for the burnt offering].” The two added words, “the two of them went together *with a peaceful heart*,” indicate that both men are comfortable with this belief. Whatever God chooses will be right.

Since Abraham does not tell Isaac directly that he was to be the sacrifice, it probably comes as a surprise to Isaac in verse 10 that Abraham pushes him onto the altar as the offering. PJ’s familiar rendering of this verse, however, shows that Isaac was up to the situation.

Then Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. *Isaac answered and said to his father, “Bind me well, so that I do not jerk convulsively from pain of my soul, and I be thrust into the pit of destruction, and there be found a blemish in your offering.” The eyes of Abraham were looking on the eyes of Isaac, but the eyes of Isaac were looking on the angels of the height. Isaac was seeing them, but Abraham was not seeing them. The angels of the height were answering, “Come and see two unique ones who are in the world. One sacrifices and one is being sacrificed; the one who sacrifices does not hold back, and the one who is being sacrificed stretches out his neck.”*²³

Isaac passes his test. He immediately asks his father to bind him so that he will not spoil the sacrifice. PJ has a version of this expansion that contains elements of both TN and FT(V). At the expansion’s beginning, Isaac’s request to “bind me” rather than “bind my hands” follows TN’s wording, as does the angels’ proclamation to come see the two “unique ones” rather than the two “unique, righteous ones.” At the other differences between TN and FT(V), PJ follows FT(V). Whether PJ knew both versions of the PTs or just a single version that had already made this integration, we do not know.

It is the final large addition in Genesis 22:14, however, where PJ reshapes its inherited Proto-PT material. If Isaac’s importance is emphasized by a new addition in Genesis 22:1, then here at the end of the story, Abraham’s importance is diminished by the removal of some of the actions that bolster his role. We give PJ’s version in comparison to that of TN to show PJ’s active recasting.

²³ Translation by E. Clem, with added italics.

<i>TN</i>	<i>PJ</i>
Then Abraham worshipped and prayed in the name of the Word of the Lord and said, "Please, by the mercies from before you, O Lord, all is revealed and known before you, that my heart was not divided the first time when you said to me to offer Isaac my son, to make him dust and ashes before you,	Then Abraham thanked and prayed there in that place and said, "Please, by the mercies from before you, O Lord, it is revealed before you that there was no trickery in my heart,
but immediately I got up in the morning, I rose up and did according to your command with joy, and I fulfilled your decree,	and I sought to do your decree with joy,
and now, when his sons stand in the hour of distress, remember the binding of Isaac their father and hear the voice of their prayers, and answer them and deliver them from all distress,	thus when the sons of Isaac my son come into the hour of distress, may you remember them that you might answer them and deliver them,
so that the generations who will arise after him will say, 'In the mountain of the sanctuary of the Lord where Abraham offered Isaac his son, and in this mountain, the Glory of the Shekhinah of the Lord was revealed to him.'"	and all these generations that are going to arise will say, 'On this mountain Abraham bound Isaac his son, and there the Shekhinah of the Lord was revealed over him.'"

In the first two sections of this addition, *PJ* refocuses Abraham's opening line of his prayer to make only a single point. Abraham's heart was filled with joy, and no trickery, as he carried out God's command. It drops the Proto-PT recitation (as shown in *TN* here) of God's command, which elaborates on the order "to offer your son" by emphasizing that the sacrificial act will make Isaac "dust and ashes." Perhaps this is left out because it actually makes Abraham sound conflicted about the impact of God's command on his son. Moreover, the missing material in the second part here keeps the focus on the joy of Abraham's true heart, rather than piling on other remarks concerning his actions.

Finally, it is important to note that in the fourth section TO's point is missing. PJ drops three Aramaic words that are common to the PTs, "... the sanctuary of the Lord. . . ." This removal took out the identification of the Temple Mount with the mountain of Abraham's sacrifice. Despite PJ's general following of TO in its translation, it does not always follow TO in its expansive material. Instead of linking Abraham's mountain with the future temple, PJ uses an addition in verse 9 to identify it with past sacrifices, those of Adam and Noah.

Then they came to the place that the Lord had told him, and Abraham built there the altar *that Adam had built, though it had come apart in the waters of the deluge. But again Noah had built it, and it had come apart in the generation of the division.* Then he arranged the wood on it, and he bound Isaac his son, and put him on the altar over the wood.

To look at the three targum types together, then, we see three different goals for their recasting of Genesis 22. First, TO leaves the story pretty much as is, and simply makes changes in two verses to bring out its point about the identification of the mountain on which Abraham attempts to sacrifice Isaac with the Temple Mount. Second, the PTs uses additional material to address the question raised about Isaac's passive role in the biblical version of the tale and reshapes it in the process. It emphasizes Isaac's willing agreement with Abraham carrying out God's command, even though it means his own death. But the PTs do not want Isaac's new role to overshadow that of Abraham, so they add material at the beginning and end (Gen 22:1, 14) to ensure the prominence of Abraham's role. Third, PJ largely agrees with PT's version of the heightened participation of Isaac and wishes to take it further. Its recasting of the story makes Isaac even more central to the tale and removes some aspects of Abraham's role. It works to prevent Abraham's actions from detracting from Isaac's role as martyr.

So these three targum types provide their audiences—whether listeners in the synagogue or readers in more private settings—with three different ways to view the story. To the extent individuals were exposed to only one of these, it is that one which they knew. So the contents of Scripture were not the same for those who did not know Hebrew and used only Aramaic; the Targums which they heard in synagogue worship determined what they learned as the story. With the Targums' intersection with and independence from other Jewish interpretation of the Aqedah, let us explore how they fit with early Christianity's emphases.

THE AQEDAH IN CHRISTIANITY

The single text in the New Testament that explicitly relates Jesus' death to Isaac in Genesis 22 is the epistle to the Hebrews, which was composed circa 95 CE.²⁴ It is not clear—and seems unlikely—that Hebrews assumes Isaac's actual death, but it remains certain that Hebrews sees Isaac as a foreshadowing of Christ, particularly saying that Abraham "reasoned that God is capable of raising even from the dead, whence—by analogy—he also secured him" (Heb 11:19). Those qualifying words, "by analogy" (*en parabolē*), show that Hebrews is not interested in speaking of what actually happened on Mount Moriah or of what interpretations of the story might lie in the background. That is why we do not have sufficient evidence to decide whether the author thought of Isaac also as dying and returning from the dead. The driving concern in Hebrews is not what happened to Isaac or Abraham, but the meaning, in terms of Jesus' perfect sacrifice, of what they did and intended to do. Event, intention, possibility, and promise are all mixed together, somewhat in the manner of rabbinic interpretation, because the significance of Genesis 22, in the epistle to the Hebrews' conception, is that the sacrifice of Isaac was truly completed in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

In the vision of Hebrews, Abraham's offering of Isaac stood both for the supreme sacrifice of Christ and for the mysticism of suffering which linked every believer to Christ. The heavenly reality, revealed to Israel since the time of the Aqedah, was the eternal sacrifice of Christ, the Son offering to the Father the only worship the Father ever wanted. Once, this reality could only be discerned by means of symbols. That is why Hebrews sees Abraham and Isaac, Abel, and the whole sacrificial system of Leviticus as foreshadowing Christ's sacrifice.

At the close of the first century, shortly after Domitian's persecution of Christianity ended, Clement—the influential bishop of Rome, later referred to as the pope—taught that Isaac personally acted as he did "with confidence, knowing what was coming" (1 Clem. 31:3).²⁵ The phrase "what was coming" (*to mellon* in Clement's Greek) referred both to the immediate future in the story—i.e., the release which would come to Isaac by angelic intervention—and to the ultimate completion of Isaac's sacrificial offering by Jesus' crucifixion. With the subsidence of the threat of persecution, Clement focused more on the sacrifice that Jesus replaced

²⁴ See Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac* and the review by Attridge in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*.

²⁵ See Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers I, II*. Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1912) and the later edition by Bart D. Ehrman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003). Unless otherwise indicated, we cite editions from the Loeb series.

than on the sacrifice demanded from disciples, but both features of the Christian Aqedah would prove to be extremely influential in the decades that followed.

The typology that the epistle to the Hebrews pioneered, which saw events and characters in the Old Testament as analogies to realities in heaven, was so basic to Clement that it became instinctive to him. It was not limited to him, however, for patristic thinkers as a whole followed the same interpretative impulse, which likewise inspired the behavior of thousands of Christian believers. In this typological mode of reading the Old Testament, Christians saw figures such as Isaac as “types” of Christ. These “types” were understood as forerunners who performed rudimentary or provisional activities that foreshadowed the completed or fulfilled action to be undertaken by Jesus. The true sacrifice was Christ, eternal in heaven, and that heavenly reality—called the “antitype” in the neo-Platonic language of early Christianity—left its imprint, its “type,” on the course of human events even before the time of Jesus. Rather than being an imitation of a past deed, the “type” was an imperfect model of a future, perfect act. In this case Isaac’s near sacrifice constituted an early type for the perfected human sacrifice of Jesus, the antitype.

Early Christianity can only be understood when its belief in the eternity of Christ is fully taken into account, along with Christ’s capacity, through types such as Isaac, to make himself known to people who could not possibly have known Jesus in history. Christian faith evolved on the basis of timeless principles, comparable to the Torah in Judaism. The Fathers and their congregations saw the world from the perspective of eternity; historical events, however dramatic, were incidental in comparison. For that reason the Fathers could adopt Plato as one of their own, the philosopher who made best sense of their own faith and the sensibilities of growing numbers of Christians in the Mediterranean world. The portrait of Jesus as a martyr, fashioned in conscious awareness of the example of Isaac, became a vocational appeal for Christians to accept martyrdom.

The first known contemporary account of a martyr’s actual death with an articulation of his theology of martyrdom was written in order to glorify Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna. Written by an unknown hagiographer and dating from shortly after 156 CE, when Polycarp died, *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* portrays the events leading up to the bishop’s execution as providential] and makes its hero into a replica of Christ: “For almost all the proceedings happened in order that the Lord from above might show us martyrdom according to the Gospel” (1.1). *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* shows in its initial, thematic statement that it sees its hero as fulfilling the specific example of Jesus in the New Testament.

Polycarp's own experiences and actions reinforce the theme of his inevitable suffering. After acceding to his community's urging to flee from Roman persecutors in the city of Smyrna proper into the surrounding countryside, a vision convinced Polycarp—now eighty-six years old and no doubt weary of the constant effort involved in evading soldiers—that the time for flight had passed. During prayer in a farmhouse he fell into vision, and in that state he saw the cushion he was lying on in flames. This made Polycarp realize that his death by fire was God's will, and he decided to give himself up when the Roman police at last caught up with him. After they could not convince him to relent in his refusal to sacrifice to Caesar as to a god, they conducted him back to Smyrna (5.1–8.3) and to the stadium where he would have to choose between apostasy and death.

There Polycarp confronted the proconsul, who urged the old man to be prudent and follow along with general custom: "Swear by Caesar's spirit, repent, say, 'Destroy the atheists,'" the proconsul urged.²⁶ This follows a frequent motif in martyrologies, which probably reflects what sometimes really did happen: the persecutors show their victims pity and argue that the demand to acknowledge the emperor's divine status is more *pro forma* than a demand for personal belief. But in the end (9.1-3), Polycarp simply asserts that he is not about to abandon Christ after eighty-six years of discipleship.

The martyr's concern is not with self-defense, or even with convincing the magistrate that Christians should not be tortured in order to turn them from their faith. In fact, Polycarp issues a flat refusal of the opportunity to defend his beliefs before the crowd, saying that if the proconsul really wanted to learn the truth about Christianity, he would do so on a private occasion, not in front of the rabble gathered in eager expectation of a public killing (10.1-2). With aristocratic aplomb Polycarp goes on to say that he does not consider such a mob "worthy for a defense to be made to them." Democratic debate is made to seem beneath contempt, when compared to the persuasive power and salvific effect of a martyr's death.

Instead of arguing for his life to be spared or for toleration of Christianity, Polycarp uses what bargaining power he had to influence how he will be killed. He is bound on his pyre, and then the executioners prepare to nail his limbs to stakes, so that once the cords burn through he will not be able to escape the flames. But Polycarp asks them not to do so, explaining that his vision of the flaming pillow had assured him of his ability to remain in the fire without being fastened (11.1–13.3): he is to die as a *bound* victim. The executioners oblige, and this means that Polycarp dies in a

²⁶ "Atheists" was what the Romans considered the Christians to be, since they did not believe in any gods other than their own.

way that accords not only with his vision, but also—and specifically—with the ram in Genesis 22: “So they did not nail him, but they bound him, and he put his hands behind him and was bound, just as a ram distinguished from a great flock for an offering, a sacrifice by fire prepared, acceptable to God” (14.1).

Following the example of Christ, Polycarp is more like the ram that was actually sacrificed on Moriah than he is like Isaac, who was redeemed by the ram. The ram prefigured Christ, and Polycarp’s death brings the reality of Christ’s sacrifice as well as its symbolic type in Isaac directly into the experience of all who saw him die, according to the *Martyrdom*. In that way the redemption of Christ is extended by the martyrdom, and Polycarp thanks God for letting him accomplish that (14.2), having “received a share among the number of the martyrs in the cup of Christ.”

Although the educated fathers of the early church used the example of Isaac and careful reflection to urge martyrs on, martyrdom never ceased to be a folk movement. The mysticism of death as communion with Christ became plainer during the Patristic period. Melito, the second-century bishop of Sardis, is of particular interest because his writing *On the Pascha* was popular, intended for public recitation at the time of the paschal celebration of Easter. He argued, in an eloquent but inaccurate folk etymology, that the Aramaic term *paskha* (i.e., “Passover,” when Christians celebrated the resurrection of Jesus) derived from the Greek verb meaning “to suffer,” *paskhein*. Melito expressed the idea with a poetic eloquence that won him many admirers in his own time and later.

Melito’s evocation of the suffering of Christ as the specific meaning both of the crucifixion and the Scriptures of Israel helps explain why the image of Isaac on Moriah and of the Suffering Servant from Isaiah was so easily identified with Jesus in early Christianity (*On Passover* 46–69).²⁷

What is the Pascha?

It obtains its name from its characteristic:

from “suffer” comes suffering.

Learn therefore who is the Suffering One,

and who shares the suffering of the Suffering One,

and why the Lord is present on the earth

to clothe himself with the Suffering One

and carry him off to the heights of heaven.

It is he that delivered us from slavery to liberty,

from darkness to light,

from death to life,

²⁷ See Stuart J. Hall, *Melito of Sardis, Peri Pascha and Fragments*. Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979).

from tyranny to eternal royalty;
 and made us a new priesthood
 and an eternal people personal to Him.
 He is the Pascha of our salvation.
 It is he who in many ways endured many things:
 It is he that was in Abel murdered,
 and in Isaac bound,
 and in Jacob exiled,
 and in Joseph sold,
 and in Moses exposed,
 and in the lamb slain,
 and in David persecuted,
 and in the prophets dishonored.

Recitations of this kind made the image of Jesus being bound with Isaac so well known that the Fathers could refer to it in passing with the assurance that the image would be understood and appreciated. Melito had already taught Christians so well to “Learn therefore who is the Suffering One, and who shares the suffering of the Suffering One,” (line 49) that they could readily understand they were to be new Isaacs, following the example of the One who had completed the sacrifice of Isaac. That was key to his argument that, while Jesus was bound by his executioners as Isaac was and carried his cross as Isaac brought the wood for sacrifice, Jesus suffered and completed the paschal offering, while Isaac did not.

The Christian justification for martyrdom built upon the Maccabean portrayal of Isaac as a martyr. It also pressed that portrait into the claim that Jesus actually replaced sacrifice with his death. Within Judaism, a similar argument had been made in Pseudo-Philo’s *Book of Biblical Antiquities*. But when Christian apologists, from the learned to the most popular, coopted the image of Isaac to explain the paschal death of Jesus, it was natural for the emerging Aqedah within Judaism to be identified directly with Passover and to offer the perspective that Isaac stood in his own terms for the true significance of sacrifice. The Targumim represent these developments and reflect not only the traditions that influenced Christianity but the traditions that reacted to Christianity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Aqedah and Genesis 22 have received a great deal of scholarly discussion because of its link to the daily sacrifice in Judaism and to the theology that saw Jesus’ sacrifice as the ultimate, saving sacrifice in Christianity.

We provide here some studies that have been important in the analysis of the Aqedah in the last century and a half. While many essays feature the Aqedah in both Judaism and Christianity, those whose primary emphasis is on the Aqedah in Judaism include Geiger, "Erbsünde und Versöhnungstod"; Le Déaut, "Abraham et le sacrifice d'Isaac"; Sabourin, "Aqeda isaaci et sacrificium paschale"; Spiegel, *The Last Trial*; Davies and Chilton, "The Aqedah"; Davies, "Passover and the Dating of the Aqedah"; Hayward, "The Present State of Research"; Saldarini, "The Interpretation of the *Akedah*"; Ephrati, *The Trial of the Akedah*; Chilton, "Recent Discussion of the Aqedah"; Agus, *Binding of Isaac and Messiah*; Fitzmyer, "The Sacrifice of Isaac in Qumran Literature." Studies whose concentration focuses more on the Aqedah's place in early Christian thought as well as in Judaism include Lévi, "Le sacrifice d'Isaac et la mort de Jésus"; Schoeps, "Sacrifice of Isaac in Paul's Theology"; Daniélou, "La typologie d'Isaac"; Lerch, *Isaaks Opferung*; Vermes, "Redemption and Genesis xxii"; Rosenberg, "Jesus, Isaac and the 'Suffering Servant'"; McNamara, *New Testament*; Wood, "Isaac Typology"; Dahl, "The Atonement"; Hruby, "Exégèse rabbinique et exégèse patristique"; Daly, "The Soteriological Significance of the Sacrifice of Isaac"; Schwartz, "Two Pauline Allusions"; Segal, "The Sacrifice of Isaac in Early Judaism and Christianity"; Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac* (and a review by Attridge); Manns, *Sacrifice of Isaac*; Noort and Tigchelaar, *The Aqedah*; Kessler, *Bound by the Bible*; Chilton, *Abraham's Curse*.

TARGUMS IN THE RABBINIC WORLD AND BEYOND

Throughout this book we have focused on the earliest centuries of the Targums, trying to understand their composition and use, primarily during the rabbinic period. We looked at the earliest known Aramaic Bible translation—the Aramaic version of Job from Qumran. We examined the rise of the Pentateuchal and Prophetic Targums during the first to the fourth centuries CE and the further development of all Targums from then into the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, in both Palestine and Babylonia. While scholars still debate the date of composition for some later Targums—investigating whether they were composed as late as the eighth or ninth century—the heyday of the creation and early use of most Aramaic Targums seems roughly coextensive with the rabbinic era.

Targums and the practice of translating did not disappear with the close of the rabbinic period, however. Aramaic Targums continued to be used in synagogue services from Babylonia to Spain for several more centuries. The Jewish authorities in Geonic Babylonia and later in early medieval Europe gave rulings about Targums that have shaped scholarly research to the present day. Manuscripts of Aramaic Targums continued to be copied and even found new life in the age of print. Furthermore, translations and Targums have been composed in most languages that Jews have spoken since the seventh century. In many of these, the targumic process remained alive and well, as Philip Alexander and others have pointed out. Alexander's separation of the targumic process—which he terms “Targumism”—from its ancient, Aramaic context makes it evident that the targumic process was not irremovably linked to Aramaic—raising the possibility that the practice of Targum might be found in artistic arenas far removed from the Targums. One such area is modern film: biblical movies such as *The Ten Commandments* and *The Passion of the Christ* make significant use of techniques and perspectives found in the Targums.

Scholarly research into these aspects of Targum studies has been less extensive than into rabbinic-era Targums, but there has been some. This final chapter aims to provide a brief characterization of the research into these areas. It will briefly characterize each area of investigation, explain its importance, and point toward possible future exploration. This chapter will be divided into three sections. The first will address the Targums in the post-Talmudic period. The second will focus on the ongoing production of Targums and translations of Scripture into languages other than Aramaic down into the twentieth century. The third section will address the use of targumic techniques in films related to Scripture.

TARGUMS IN THE GEONIC AND MEDIEVAL PERIODS

The half-millennium following the publication of the Babylonian Talmud had an enormous impact on Judaism's view of Targums. The writings of those centuries shaped attitudes toward and knowledge about the Targums that are still current. Much of that knowledge was not improved upon until the latter half of the twentieth century. Building upon the foundation laid by rabbinic literature, especially the Talmud, rabbinic authorities from Babylonia to Spain laid out their understanding of Targums in responses to halakhic questions in commentaries, and even in poetic and philosophic writings. Through the Middle Ages, these authors helped shape Judaism among the Jews in two of the world's largest regions: the Islamic realm of the Middle East, North Africa, and southern Spain (Andalusia); and the Christian realm of Europe.

The Geonic period (roughly 589 to 1038) continued the rabbinic-era rivalry between the Jewish centers of Palestine and Babylonia for leadership of the Jewish community. From their academies (*yeshivot*) based in Baghdad, Babylonian geonim gained the upper hand over the Jerusalem academy in Palestine, probably during the tenth century.¹ Ultimately, the form of Judaism promoted by the Babylonian leaders supplanted that of Palestinian Judaism, even in the lands around the Mediterranean Sea. This established the Babylonian geonim as the arbiters of *halakhah*, and made the Babylonian Talmud the superior source of Jewish belief and practice—second only to Scripture itself. Accompanying this was the primacy of Targum Onqelos to the Pentateuch and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets.

It was the Babylonian expertise in the *halakhah* of the Babylonian Talmud, distributed through their *responsa* (sg. *responsum*)—written answers to

¹ This was helped along by the rise in Palestine of the Karaites who eschewed the validity of rabbinic Judaism and its Talmuds altogether.

halakhic questions sent to them from Jews throughout the diaspora—that ultimately gained Babylonian Jewry its superior status. Palestinian Jewry became more widely known for its midrashim as well as its Aramaic and Hebrew poetry for synagogue services, known as *piyyutim*.² Both genres produced works that depend upon or interact with the Targumim.

As Geonic Babylonia began to wane in power toward the end of the tenth century, rabbinic centers in Spain, France, and Germany took its place (while continuing and celebrating its intellectual legacy). Later, when the Spanish government attempted to force Jews to convert to Christianity beginning in 1492, many Jews fled Spain, taking their learning and expertise north to Holland and east to Italy, Turkey, and the rest of the Ottoman Empire. This was just in time for the rise of printing and the ready availability of written works that it enabled, including the publishing of Aramaic Targums in rabbinic Bibles.

In the medieval period (11th and 12th centuries), Muslim Spain and North Africa produced commentaries on Scripture and rabbinic works, philosophic treatises, and poetry. The most famous included writers such as Judah HaLevi and Maimonides. The latter often cited both Targum Onqelos and Targum Jonathan in his philosophical writings and commentaries.

At the same time, rabbinic scholars from elsewhere in Europe became influential. Rashi wrote his biblical and talmudic commentaries toward the end of the eleventh century, often drawing upon Targums Onqelos, Jonathan, and even Esther Sheni. Nahmanides (1194–1270) did likewise, not only in his commentaries but also in *piyyutim*. The Italian commentator Bertinoro also uses Targums in his Mishnah commentary from the fifteenth century. A student of Rashi's, Simhah b. Samuel of Vitry, composed the liturgical work *Machzor Vitry*, which incorporated several long citations from a Targum with strong similarities to Fragment Targum, ms. P.³ The Targums also provided data for the linguistic work known as the *Aruk*, written by the Italian Nathan b. Yehiel and published in 1101.

From this variety of sources, a number of issues with regard to the Targumim can be investigated. To provide an example of what can be learned through their exploration, let us look at two questions: the reading of the Targums in the synagogue service in the centuries following

² The midrashim to which this sentence refers includes post-Talmudic midrashim and other works of scriptural interpretation, often attributed to the earlier Amoraim, such as the later Exodus and Deuteronomy Rabbot, Midrash Psalms, the Tanchuma-Yelammedenu literature, and Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer. These also include the so-called "Minor Tractates" of the Talmud, such as Avot de Rabbi Nathan, Soferim, and Sefer Torah.

³ See Kaufman and Maori, "Exodus 20," 16. For the text of *Mahzor Vitry*, see the text of S. Hurwitz, 2nd ed., Nurnberg, 1923.

the Babylonian Talmud's publication and the naming of Targum Onqelos and Targum Jonathan.

As the rabbinic period drew to a close around 600, Aramaic translation alongside the Torah and Prophets reading in the synagogue had apparently become widespread. Yet little more than two hundred years later, rabbinic leaders began expressing worry that the practice was dying out. Around 855 CE, the Babylonian *gaon* ("president") of Sura, Natronai ben Hilai, expressed disappointment that some Babylonian synagogues were ignoring the Targum, since they considered Arabic translations sufficient. A couple decades later, Judah ibn Kuraysh wrote a responsum to the Jews of Fez, Algeria urging them not to neglect the reading of the Targum. In the early eleventh century, Hai Gaon of the Pumbedita Academy in Baghdad became distressed when he heard that the Spanish Jews had given up the Targum, while Samuel Ha-Nagid, Vizier of Granada, a couple decades later indicated that only Jews in the northern part of Spain (the Christian part) had done so. What these responsa indicate is that during the Geonic period knowledge of Aramaic decreased across the Jewish diaspora and that the reading of the Aramaic Targum began to be replaced by reading a vernacular translations. During the thirteenth century, rabbinic authorities of Italy even declared Judaeo-Italian Scripture translations equivalent to the Targums for halakhic purposes.⁴

Turning to our second question: during the same period, Targum Jonathan to the Prophets and Targum Onqelos to the Torah were given their names as they increased in authority within the Jewish community. Whereas the Babylonian Talmud did not link its description of Onqelos the Proselyte translating the Torah with any specific text, not even the one quoted in the Talmud, the geonim and early European rabbis did so.

One of the earliest of those who identified the Pentateuchal Targum being used in Babylonia with that composed by the Babylonian Talmud's Onqelos the proselyte was Sar Shalom, the Gaon of Babylonian Sura from 838 to 848. Interestingly, he did not explicitly use the name "Targum Onqelos."

The Targum of which the sages spoke is the one which we now have in our hands; no sanctity attaches to the other Targumim. We have heard it reported as the tradition of ancient sages that God wrought a great thing [miracle] for Onkelos when He permitted him to compose the Targum.⁵

⁴ References in this paragraph are drawn from Bacher, "Targum," and from Grossfeld and Sperling, "Translations, Ancient Versions, Aramaic."

⁵ Cited in Bacher, "Targum," 59.

Maimonides made extensive use of Targums Onqelos and Jonathan in his philosophical treatise, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, which was published in 1190. He specifically identifies the Targum citations he gives as belonging to Targum Onqelos or to Targum Jonathan. Often he even attributes his citations to the persons, Onqelos and Jonathan, rather than to their Targums directly. (See, e.g., *The Guide for the Perplexed*, chaps. 2 and 11.)

The elevation of Targum Onqelos here goes hand in hand with the demotion of other Targums, “no sanctity attaches to the other Targumim.” This is a direct attack on the validity of the Palestinian Targums. The statement may come from the rivalry between Babylonia and Palestine, and without much direct knowledge of the Palestinian Targums. Hai Gaon himself indicated:

And as for your question “as for the Targum of the Land of Israel, on whose authority is it taught? And what has been decided concerning exegesis contained in the Minor Tractates [of the Talmud] and the Aggadah?” We do not know who taught the Targum of the Land of Israel; indeed we do not know it itself, and have heard only a little of it.⁶

This Babylonian authority did not know the Palestinian Targums and he had not been taught anything about them. They were not important. The rise to hegemony of Babylonian Judaism—along with its Talmud and its Targums—put Palestinian Jewry and its targumic tradition into its shadow. It essentially kept them there until the rise of printing. Even then, TO and TJ remained the featured Targums. The Palestinian translations of PJ and the Fragment Targums, in keeping with this responsum, were given a secondary and even perfunctory treatment.

The point here is that much of the way later generations saw and understood the Targums, and evaluated their importance, was determined by the rabbinic authorities in the Geonic and medieval periods. Some of those perspectives were even read back into the rabbinic literature, as if they had always been there. It is an important desideratum for the field of Targum studies to investigate these later remarks and attitudes so that we can discover the shaping of the Targums and knowledge about Targums that took place over these centuries.

TARGUMS AND TRANSLATIONS BEYOND ARAMAIC

The reading of Aramaic Targums in synagogue services gradually diminished during the Middle Ages. Jews in Spain, France, and Germany, as well as those in Egypt and Babylonia, became fluent in their local

⁶ Harkavy, *Zikhron Kamah Geonim*, סנמן רמח. Thanks to Seth Ward who assisted us in this translation.

languages and no longer used Aramaic as a *lingua franca*. Over centuries, knowledge of Aramaic died out among nearly all Jews except among rabbinic scholars. It was replaced with Spanish, French, German, Arabic, and other languages. Only Yemenite Jews retained the use of Aramaic Targums in synagogue worship.

This is usually seen as the end of Targums except as a scholarly interest by the most learned. But Philip Alexander points out that although Aramaic Targums may have lost their relevance, “Targumism” had not.⁷ Alexander observes that Targumism—essentially what we have called the targumic process—continued among Jews. But rather than using Aramaic, they rendered Scripture into the languages they knew. Alexander based his conclusions on his investigations of translations of the Aramaic Targum of Song of Songs into several languages, from Ladino (Judaeo-Spanish) and Yiddish (Judaeo-German) to Judaeo-Arabic, neo-Aramaic, and even Hebrew. While some of these are straightforward translations, others targumize the original, and Alexander terms these “Targums of Targums.”

Alexander sees Targumism as evident in two main features: the translation of Aramaic Targums into other languages and the use of targumic attitudes and techniques in the rendering of biblical books into other languages, especially renderings based on Targums to those biblical books in the first place.⁸

Alexander’s work points not just to the practice of Targumism in medieval Jewry but to the continued emphasis of medieval Jews on knowing Scripture in their own *lingua franca*. Scholars of medieval Judaism have long known and studied these translations. What Alexander recognizes is that some of these translations are not simply translations but Targums in their own right. Targum studies as a field needs to incorporate the medieval practice of Targumism and the translation of Targums into its purview.

Four questions should guide how Targum studies approaches these texts:

First and foremost is the consideration of whether these translations are indeed Targums. This book has consistently argued that Targums are a particular kind of translation; they are not just translations in general. The definition in chapter 2 lays out the defining characteristics of targumic translation, and the Rules of Targum in chapter 3 indicate the

⁷ Alexander, *Targum of Canticles*, 51–52; Alexander, “Targums of the Targum.” The notion that a targumic process of revising Targums continues into the medieval period has been observed by other scholars. See, e.g., Beattie, “Textual Tradition,” in Beattie and McNamara, 341, and its approving citation in Avalos, “Ladino Version,” 181.

⁸ Alexander draws upon the article by Le Déaut, “Un phénomène spontané.”

primary rhetorical treatments that the rabbinic-era Targums applied to the Hebrew text. The question of whether the targumic process continues to be used rests on the question of whether or not translations continue to be made that fit the definition of Targum. If they do not meet the definition, then Targumism is no longer practiced as a genre of translation.

The importance of this distinction is raised by an examination of H. Avalos' article comparing the Ladino rendering of the Targum of Ruth with the Aramaic Ruth Targum prepared by D. Beattie.⁹ Avalos concludes, citing Beattie, that "the tradition of revising Targums lived on until recent times." What actually does this conclusion mean in relation to the question of Targumism? The implication seems to be that the Ladino rendering continues to targumize. However, the evidence Avalos cites is both small in size—a word or two—and rather infrequent. Further investigation is needed to determine whether this actually represents Targumism, or whether it is little more than commonly attested acts of scribal alteration during normal copying. Perhaps they simply result from the common translation practices we discussed in chapter 16.

Second, do the translations render the Hebrew text or an Aramaic Targum? Both should be studied, if only to be able to distinguish between them. Jewish communities in several different linguistic regions show interest in translating the Hebrew text even when they do not indicate any interest in translating Targums.¹⁰ Even though Alexander found no interest among Arabic-speaking Jews in a Judaeo-Arabic translation of the Targum of Song of Songs until the sixteenth century, Saadya Gaon translated the Hebrew Tanakh, not its Aramaic Targums, into Arabic in the tenth century, and fragments of Arabic translations of the Torah are known from even earlier. The translations of Aramaic Targums into local languages, in addition to or instead of the Hebrew text, indicate a continued interest in (and indeed knowledge of!) the Targums themselves and not just in the Hebrew text.

Third, do translations and/or Targums draw from techniques and interpretation used in the Aramaic Targums? This is a third option for targumic influence on medieval translations, in addition to Targumism proper and the translation of Aramaic Targums into the vernacular. Translations of biblical books, in whatever style, may draw from techniques and interpretations known from the rabbinic-period Targums. Saadya's Arabic translation, for instance, uses anti-anthropomorphic techniques known from Targum Onqelos as well as occasionally repeating interpretations known from other Targums.

⁹ Beattie, "Textual Tradition," in Beattie and McNamara.

¹⁰ Or perhaps I should say more accurately, we have no evidence that they translated Targums.

Fourth, in all of this it will be important to differentiate between translations and Targums that were created for use in the Jewish community and those that were created for the Christian community or for scholarly purposes.¹¹ In the centuries following the expulsion of Muslims from Spain, there was a great deal of translation activity of all three types, one often drawing from another. While not definitive, clues can be found in the format of the publication or the language of the translation. Some scholarly editions brought together translations of a biblical book in several different languages—beyond what would constitute the vernacular of a community. A common printed format was the rabbinic Bible, which arranged many different versions on the same page—a format copied by Christian scholars in works such as the Complutensian Polyglot Bible,¹² and Brian Walton's *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta* (London: Roycroft, 1657). Another might be a Targum of a single book accompanied by commentary and analysis, such as Christian David Ginsburg's *Cohleth* (London, 1861) or John Gill's *An Exposition of the Book of Solomon's Song . . . to Which is Added the Targum . . . with Some Explanatory Notes on It* (London, 1751, 2nd ed.), both cited in Grossfeld's *Bibliography*.¹³

The oldest Jewish translations of the Hebrew Bible outside of the Septuagint and the Targums are in Arabic.¹⁴ We have already mentioned Saadya Gaon's translation of the Tanakh in the tenth century, known as the *Tafsir*, along with a commentary to many of the books. Many scholars believe that he did the complete Bible, but we now have specimens only of the Pentateuch, Isaiah, and several books of the Writings. Saadya's translation in Middle Arabic dominated Arabic-speaking Judaism for the next several centuries. But researchers among the Cairo Geniza fragments have discovered fragments of Arabic translations of different biblical books that were composed in the centuries before Saadya's work. Furthermore, as knowledge of classical Arabic gave way to local dialects, new Arabic Bibles began to appear in the fourteenth century. These were known as *sharh*, or *shuruh* in the plural.

Karaite Jews also produced Arabic translations of Scripture, the most common of which are the Torah, the Psalms, the Megillot, and the Minor

¹¹ Of course, a scholarly, critical edition of a community translation/Targum should be classed as a community text.

¹² Financed by Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros and published in 1522 (printed in 1516–1517). A facsimile edition was published in Valencia in 1984–1987. Alfonso de Zamora was an active participant in preparing the Targums for this edition, many of which have been edited and republished by L. Díez Merino.

¹³ Targums and translations such as these are cited in Section VII of all three volumes of Grossfeld, *Bibliography of Targum Literature*.

¹⁴ See Sasson, "Translations, Ancient Versions, Arabic."

Prophets.¹⁵ The most popular translator in Jerusalem seems to have been the tenth-century Yefet b. Eli al-Basri. In the eleventh century, the Jerusalem translator Yeshuah ben Yehudah was commissioned to compose a translation and commentary on the Pentateuch. In his introduction he laid out his theory of translation. His theory directly criticizes rabbinic notions of translation found in the Tosefta (t. Meg. 3:41; see chapter 15) which in turn were critical of the targumic approach to translation.

Know that whoever translates from one language into another and does not use in some places additions or omissions, or changes (the gender) from masculine into feminine and feminine into masculine and the plural into the singular and vice versa and so on, which, as you will observe, is the prevailing practice of the translations in this commentary, runs the risk of making its meaning obscure and its wording incomprehensible in the language to which they have been translated.¹⁶

Yeshuah's remark here comments on practices mentioned, and in some cases forbidden, in the Tosefta passage: additions, omissions, and the changes in number. This is significant especially with regard to additions, since additions are a key element of our definition of Targum. Perhaps the Karaites used the targumic process in their translations.

The comments of Qirqisani, a tenth-century Iraqi Karaite, seems to reinforce both impressions. On the one hand, he directly criticizes Targum Onqelos, and the passages he singles out for criticism all contain additional material.¹⁷ On the other hand, Qirqisani explicitly approves the use of additions in creating a workable translation.

There are passages in Scripture which require the use of addition in order that they be complete and well-ordered. There are several kinds (of required additions) in a passage: addition of a clause, addition of a word, addition of a letter.¹⁸

Clearly, Karaite Arabic Scripture translations should be investigated to see whether they continue targumic practices. Indeed, given the Karaite translations' similarity to pre-Saadyan Arabic translations, these should also be investigated to determine whether they are Targums. Saadya himself seems to have had an idiosyncratic approach to translation, one which moved between literal and paraphrase and drew from Aramaic Targums as well as his knowledge of philosophy.

¹⁵ See Sasson, "Translations, Ancient Versions, Arabic"; and Polliack, *Karaite Tradition*.

¹⁶ Polliack, *Karaite Tradition*, 49.

¹⁷ Polliack, *Karaite Tradition*, 67. Tg. Jon. is singled out for criticism as well on 68–69.

¹⁸ Polliack, *Karaite Tradition*, 73.

The Jews of the western Roman Empire seem to have had a rendering of the Hebrew Bible in low Latin from the early Christian period, if quotations on funerary inscriptions are any indication. U. Cassuto thinks this was a memorized translation.¹⁹ As low Latin developed into the various romance languages, the scripture translation also shifted into those languages. Evidence of these begins appearing in written sources in the eleventh century although few manuscripts of complete books are earlier than the fifteenth century. In Judaeo-Provençal, there is a thirteenth-century manuscript of the Song of Songs; while an entire Hebrew Bible manuscript in Judaeo-Italian appears later. The Judaeo-French translations have been lost, although biblical glossaries and dictionaries based on them are known from as early as the thirteenth century.

Alexander identifies Judaeo-Italian interest in the Song of Songs Targum, but otherwise, the interest of the Latin and Judaeo-Romance languages in Targums is apparently unexplored. The tradition of Ladino, also a Judaeo-Romance language, clearly evidences interest in translations of both the Hebrew text and the Aramaic Targums. Abraham Asa's 1744 publication of the Five Megillot (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Qohelet, Esther), for instance, contains a Ladino translation of the Hebrew immediately followed by a Ladino translation of its Targum.²⁰ This was a popular publication, reprinted several times. Its format may reflect the talmudic adage of reading the "Miqrā" along with its Targum to prepare each week's *parashah* as understood in the age of the printing press. This later work was preceded by publication of the earlier *Ferrara Bible* of 1553, as well as by a series of manuscripts from as early as the thirteenth century.

Yiddish seems to have produced the widest variety of translation types. Although it is unclear whether any of them targumize, Alexander has identified several "Targums of Targums" for Song of Songs and Esther from the sixteenth century and later. Prose translations of biblical books are known from the fourteenth century onward, as well as a number of poetic translations and paraphrases. The latter focus mostly on the Megillot and the historical books—those with good stories—and largely avoid the Pentateuch. Beginning in the sixteenth century, what might be called works of "Rewritten Bible"—to use the term coined by G. Vermes for antiquity—began to appear. These incorporated stories and haggadah from the Talmuds and the midrashim from Targums and from folklore. The most famous of these was *Ze'evah u-Reenah*, which had wide circulation among eastern European Jews in the nineteenth century and remains in print today.

¹⁹ Cassuto, "Judeo-Romance Languages," 609.

²⁰ Lazar, *Ladino Five Scrolls*.

Translations of the Hebrew Bible and its Targums are known in several other languages, including Judaeo-Turkish, Judaeo-Tatar, and Judaeo-Persian. The earliest known Judaeo-Persian translation is a Pentateuch from 1319. Manuscripts of other books remain from before the 1500s.

The study of these Targums and translations is just in its infancy, but a few observations can be made.

Not all biblical books drew equal attention from the translators. If the evidence of printed editions is any guide, the Pentateuch and the books of the Five Megillot were the most popular. The Pentateuch is known in Saadya's Arabic translation²¹ and in at least two different Ladino versions as well as a Yiddish version as early as 1540.²² There is also a Judaeo-Persian version from the fifteenth century.²³ The Five Megillot were published together in both Ladino and Yiddish, while individual books are known in many Jewish languages. The Ladino included each book's Targum as well. The most popular of these were Song of Songs and Esther. The three volumes of Grossfeld's *Bibliography* cite numerous Yiddish renderings of the Second Aramaic Targum of Esther. Finally, although renderings of the entire Tanakh were known for many of these languages, there seems to have been little independent interest in translating the books of the Prophets.

The manuscript traditions of the Aramaic Targums became more stable during the medieval period.²⁴ There is not widespread variation among them as if the targumic text of each book was considered open to major alterations. In that light, the process of Targumism that takes place indicates that the Aramaic Targums have acquired an aspect of sacrality—as Lazar puts it—that was lacking in the early rabbinic period.²⁵ This is an important shift in status, one which expected stability in the Aramaic text tradition but permitted targumizing in the translation of another language. It is as if the Aramaic Targum was being treated as the Targums had treated Hebrew Scripture centuries earlier.

And of course there is no reason why Aramaic Targums cannot themselves be targumized in Aramaic. We have an example of this from a manuscript in Paris (BN. HEBR. 75), which has been mislabeled since

²¹ If Saadya did not translate the entire Bible, then manuscript evidence indicates he focused on the Pentateuch and books of the Writings. Only Isaiah is known from the Prophets. His Pentateuch was the most widely copied.

²² There was also a popular "homiletical paraphrase" of the Torah into Yiddish known as *Ẓe'ena Ure'ena*, published in 1590, and still in print today.

²³ Hakham, *Shahin Torah*.

²⁴ See Beattie, "Textual Tradition: Observations," 12; and Alexander, *Targum of Canticles*, 51.

²⁵ Lazar, *The Ladino Five Scrolls*, x.

1739 as Hebrew. It begins with the citation of a Hebrew lemma, followed by quotation of Targum Jonathan and then a targumic Tosefta. Here is an example from Targum Isaiah 6:1 providing (A) the Hebrew text, (B) Targum Jonathan, and then (C) a new interpretative rendering:²⁶

(A) In the year (he) died: (B) in the year that King Uzziah was struck with it, the prophet said, I saw the glory of the Lord dwelling upon his high and exalted throne in the heavens of the height and the splendour of his glory filled the Temple. . . :

(C) In the year that King Uzziah died in it, that is the same year he was struck. For there are four things such that, while men are alive, they are reckoned as dead. And they still stand—he who is struck and he whose eyes are darkened and he who has no sons and he whose possessions go down from power . . .

Jonathan, by speaking of when Uzziah was “struck” with the uncleanness of the skin condition (“leprosy”) for which he had to be confined, appears to contradict the Hebrew original. The interpretative problem of the Targum is resolved by citing the Masoretic Text alongside the Targum and letting each be right. The Hebrew text is the first lemma, but Targum Jonathan is the second. So Uzziah did die that year, because he was “struck” (see 2 Chr 26:19-21, as well as Tg. Jon.). By a proverbial flourish, leprosy and death are equated, along with blindness, lack of progeny, and bankruptcy. The key to the proverbial creativity is the express willingness to set the MT and the Targum side by side. It is especially telling that *בה* in the Targum is taken as referring both to the year “in which” Uzziah died and to the leprosy “with which” he was struck. The very language which posed the intertextual problem is interpreted proverbially so as to provide a solution.

BN HEBR. 75 is at times a self-conscious Targum upon a Targum. Indeed, we see the movement into the text of the sort of play which had been marginal in the manuscript called Reuchlinianus approximately two centuries earlier. BN HEBR. 75 confirms and extends what Reuchlinianus teaches us: during the thirteenth and later centuries (as well as during the twelfth), the work of meturgemanin and copyists was creative and hardly a simple matter of preservation. As they handed on the targumic tradition, they attempted to make sense of it, so that their texts are structurally ambivalent, and would remain so, until the fifteenth century saw an attempt to distinguish Targum Jonathan as such from the attempts to perpetuate its interpretative ingenuity in new idioms. The manuscript reminds us that, while definite versions of Targumim were received in

²⁶ See Chilton, “‘HEBR. 75’ in the Bibliothèque Nationale.”

given places, no such version was truly final. The notion of the “final” form of the text is theological; within the study of how biblical meanings were generated, we can speak only of what traditions a given community received, and what sense that community attempted to make of them. To that extent, the textual criticism of the Targumim is a reminder of the hermeneutical conditions in which critical inquiry into the meanings of Scripture may be conducted.

The neo-Aramaic Targums, as practiced by the Jews of Kurdistan, retained the oral and memorized character well into the twentieth century and have only been written at the request of scholars. Their oral translations of the Torah followed a “rigid language in comparison to everyday speech,” indicating their close adherence to the Hebrew text and its grammatical characteristics.²⁷ Despite this general rigidity, translators and teachers were often willing to draw from early Targums and occasionally from Jewish commentators such as Rashi to improve the comprehensibility of a word or phrase. These translations were taught orally and remained largely unknown to the outside world until scholars recorded their performances. Yona Sabar has published the entire Torah in the neo-Aramaic dialect of the Jews of Zakho, for example, as well as neo-Aramaic renderings of the Five Megillot.²⁸

In the end, Alexander and others point to a rich tradition of translation of the Hebrew text and its Targums into Jewish vernacular languages. Whether they were created through literal rendering, paraphrase, or the targumic process, we can learn a great deal about the history of Targums and Targumism, as well as their impact on Jewish and Christian interpretation of Scripture, by exploring these vernacular renderings further.

MODERN TARGUMS? SCRIPTURE FILMS AND BIBLICAL STORIES²⁹

When we developed our definition of Targum back in chapter 2, we argued that we needed a definition that was not linked to external attributes of language, time period, religious adherence, etc., but which focused on the internal literary structure of targumic texts. Such a definition enables the determination of whether or not a newly discovered ancient text could be classified as a Targum. This book’s definition is “a Targum is a translation that combines a highly literal rendering of the original text with material added into the translation in a seamless manner.” The definition

²⁷ Sabar, “Targumic Influence,” 55.

²⁸ See Sabar, *Book of Genesis in Neo-Aramaic*, and *Hamesh ha-megilot*.

²⁹ This section draws heavily from the work of Paul Flesher. For a more complete discussion with more extensive examples, see the book *Film and Religion*, composed with Robert Torrey, esp. chaps. 1, 4–8; and Flesher, “Being True to the Text.”

does not require that a Targum be from the ancient world or in a particular language. Indeed Philip Alexander's work, which we discussed in the previous section, indicated that Targumism—the practice of composing Targums—extended into the medieval period (and perhaps later) and into several languages other than Aramaic. Furthermore, the definition does not require that Targums be composed by Jews. It is just that we have not identified any.

From a theoretical perspective, the definition constitutes a rhetorical description of a manner for composing a text. If a text—a translation, literary rendering, or other artistic rendering—meets the definition, then it is a Targum: neither the language, the society, the historical period, nor even the character of the original base text matters. Given this flexibility, we argue that some modern films, or at least scenes in them, follow the targumic process. This is evident in the way in which they adhere to the definition.³⁰ The parallels are most evident in Scripture films but can also be found in other films that aim to be seen as faithful to a well-known literary or other artistic work.

It might be objected that films are not translations; when they tell biblical tales, they draw from Scripture translations in the same language. That is true. But Scripture films translate in a different sense: they take a rather unenhanced written story—one in which an individual's imagination must supply most of the details—and recast it fully, providing every visual and aural element not supplied by the text. Is the main character good-looking or plain, tall or short, light-skinned or dark, passionate or calm, well-dressed or not? What about the weather: sunny or cloudy, warm or cold, windy or not? How does each episode fit together into a larger plot? Biblical tales are notoriously lacking in details. Sometimes there is no direct dialogue given in a reported exchange between individuals. Other times the dialogue is so brief that a movie audience would not credit it as a true human interaction. In both cases, further interaction must be supplied to make it appear realistic. In fact, appearing "real"—referred to as **verisimilitude**—is an important goal in most film making. Anything that would give a scene a sense of reality that is not in the text must be supplied by the film makers. In that sense, a film translates a "written story" into a "seemingly real event."

Scripture films must wrestle with a tension between verisimilitude and faithful presentation of the biblical story. A film created from scratch can concentrate simply on telling its story in a realistic manner. A film that is based on a novel or a story (or an earlier film) needs to follow it in general, if only to claim the relationship to the earlier text, but there is no

³⁰ Many also follow some of the Rules of Targum we laid out in chap. 3.

overwhelming need to follow its events exactly. A Scripture film reproduces, by contrast, an authoritative and sacred text that most of the audience knows quite well. Most viewers can be expected to have opinions about a biblical story—often strong ones. So a Scripture film needs to negotiate a fine line between being true to the text and recreating the story as coherent reality.³¹

While this might be seen as a hurdle which filmmakers must overcome, it also provides a opportunity. If a film's director can harness the sacred text's authority, then he can use it as a means for giving the film stature and authenticity. If the audience sees the film as faithful to the text, then the film borrows the sacred text's authority, and the changes made to enhance the tale's sense of reality are imbued with sacred authority as well. To accomplish this, many Scripture films use the strategy of Targumism—the targumic process. They follow techniques that we have seen in the Targums themselves, combining literal renderings with additions in a seamless manner that carries the story forward rather than interrupting it. Did filmmakers know about the Targums and consciously base their techniques on them? There is no evidence they did. Instead, it seems Targumism is a process that can arise independently in different literary and artistic arenas.³²

What Scripture films are doing is tapping into the Targums' character as "hidden interpretation," which we discussed in chapter 15. This is the recognition that audiences hear the reading of the Targum in a particular manner, namely, that the literal translation enables them to acknowledge the close link between the Targum and the original scriptural text, while the additions—especially the shorter ones—hide unnoticed within the literal rendering. They hide, as it were, in plain sight. Since they remain unnoticed, they garner the authority with the audience which they give to the literal portrayal of the sacred text. Let us look at a few examples.

The 1965 film *The Greatest Story Ever Told* opens with the camera panning down the interior of a classically styled apse, beginning at the domed ceiling and gradually moving down to a portrayal of Jesus on the wall, painted in the likeness of the actor portraying Jesus. During this, the narrator reads the Gospel of John 1:1-5 in a version quite close to the King James. The following table compares the two.

³¹ Some of what we identify as Targumism falls under the heading of intertextuality and the recent "theoretical" discussions of "midrash." Targumism should be seen as a specific type of each, in which the rhetoric and the function are understood more technically and not just the topics and contents of interpretation.

³² There is a growing scholarly literature on artistic "adaptation," within which Targumism can be understood.

<i>KJV</i>	<i>Greatest Story Ever Told</i>
1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.	In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
	I am He.
2. The same was in the beginning with God.	He was in the beginning with God.
3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.	All things were made through him; and without him was made nothing that has been made.
4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.	In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
5. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.	And the light shines on in the darkness; and the darkness passed it not.

Two important points. First, note how the narrator's words adhere closely to the KJV. Although the wording of only two verses is exact, there is nearly one-to-one correspondence in the others. The wording changes aim essentially to update out-of-fashion expressions. The KJV's "shineth," for example, becomes "shines on." The film thus provides a highly literal rendering of the KJV, which at the time was the most familiar English Bible translation. It follows the first part of the definition of Targum. Second, a three-word sentence is added between the first two verses, "I am He."³³ Why is this placed here? John 1:1-5 is vague about indicating the person about which it speaks—it never mentions Jesus directly; indeed nowhere in the entire passage of John 1:1-14 is Jesus mentioned by name. This insertion into the film's reading of the text nails down the identity of the "Word" as Jesus. The addition is short, barely noticeable even to those who have the passage memorized. Its character is quite similar to many of the small additions in Targum Onqelos. The "I am He," is a carefully added addition, in keeping with the second part of our Targum definition.

Another example comes from the 1961 Jesus film, *King of Kings*, from Pilate's conversation with Jesus about Jesus' own character. Although the three Synoptic Gospels portray Jesus as remaining silent during his interview with Pilate, John's Gospel has Jesus respond to Pilate's questioning.

³³ At the moment these words are spoken, the camera pans over a plaque between two angels on which the Greek words, EGO EIMI, "I am," are written. These refer back to the LXX version of Exod 3:14, where God tells Moses at the burning bush that this is his name.

Here is how *King of Kings* presents the discussion found in John 18:37-38. The words which follow Scripture are given in Roman type, some of which again are the KJV, while the additional material appears in italics.

Pilate: Are you a king?

Jesus: It is your own lips that have called me king. *My kingdom is the kingdom of God.*

Pilate: Then you are a king.

Jesus: I was born and came into this world to give testimony to the truth.

Whoever believes in the truth will listen to me.

Pilate: What is truth?

Jesus: Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Pilate: *Oh different people have different feelings. Can there not be more than one truth?*

Jesus: *There is only one truth and it is written in the commandments. Be true to God.*

In this passage, there is a small addition in Jesus' first utterance and a large one at the end. These are placed among the original sentences in a manner that makes the dialogue seem realistic. The first addition may pick up on Jesus' remark in the previous verse, John 18:36, where he says, "My kingdom is not of this world." The film's addition here picks up that negatively phrased claim about a kingdom and transforms it into a positive one. A remark about the kingdom is associated with this scene, so it does not seem out of place and would go unnoticed as an addition by the audience.

The second addition is longer. Pilate's remark possesses a two-fold purpose. It unpacks his question, "What is truth?" while it sets up Jesus' answer. Pilate asks, "Can there not be more than one truth?" and Jesus replies, "There is only one truth and it is written in the commandments. Be true to God." This is an odd statement, what "commandments" are meant? It apparently refers to the Ten Commandments. At the time of the film's release in 1961, many communities in the United States of America had recently erected monuments in city parks and elsewhere displaying the Ten Commandments. Indeed, Cecile DeMille's 1956 film, *The Ten Commandments*, had helped encourage this activity, and the *King of Kings* presents itself as a follow-on to that film. So this remark should be seen as Jesus emphasizing the importance of the Ten Commandments, at a time when America has been doing just that.

For an additional example, let us look briefly at the portrayal of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-11), as shown in *King of Kings*. In the Gospel the woman is brought by the Pharisees, whereas in this film (as in most other Jesus films), the woman is running from the crowd. The main addition which the film brings to the scene are the cries of the crowd, insulting her and calling for her punishment. The film gives

the explanation from John 8:4-5 fairly accurately and then Jesus' remarks nearly exact. There is one addition to the scene, an added action rather than added words, that alters the scene's portrayal of Jesus. Barabbas, whom the film features as a foil to Jesus, is standing at the back of the crowd and he prevents the one person with a rock from throwing it. Thus it is not Jesus that persuades the crowd, but unknown allies among them that ensure it *appears* that Jesus persuades the crowd. Rather than over-awing them with his charisma, Jesus has human help.

Filmic additions can also be inspired by an association of scriptural passages and will often introduce characters and ideas from elsewhere in Scripture, as would be expected from Targum Rule 4. In Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), Satan plays a prominent role.³⁴ The opening scene features Satan mocking Jesus in Gethsemane, ridiculing the belief that one man can suffer so as to expiate the sins of others. Jesus' psychic pain is at its height at this point. In fact, the film reaches its climax within three minutes or so; everything that follows is denouement. This is a very brave dramatic gamble, and an artistic success. Jesus' hands tremble manically, as they will later during his pitiless flogging, because the savior of the Catholic Reformation knows everything that is going to happen to him in advance and has to embrace that pain as his personal sacrifice and payment for the sins of the world. This theory—a theology really—that Jesus ransoms the sins of the whole world has also made its way to become one of the “fundamentals” of Fundamentalism, which explains why Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell took up positions in support of the film, even though it is far from a literal adaptation of the Gospels.

Once Jesus' payment is made, salvation is secure. If Jesus fails, all is lost. But he will not and cannot fail. As Jesus lies on the ground in his prayer to God in Gethsemane, Satan releases a snake. But resolution takes hold and once again on his feet, Jesus crushes the snake's head and marches out to meet his tormenters. That scene, of course, is not in the Gospels; Satan and his snake are imported from medieval imagination—from a christological reading of Genesis 3:15, tinged with the imagery of Revelation. This kind of targumization is allowed in a passion play, as are all the scenes Gibson invents from legend and imagination. And as in the case of any passion play, the artistry consists in what is invented, along with its fidelity to the Gospels. History is useful for establishing the known, from which targumization can take place.

This targumic approach to drawing upon the authority of Scripture is common in films that tell biblical stories. It is also used by films of secular

³⁴ See Timothy K. Beal and Tod Linafelt, eds., *Mel Gibson's Bible: Religion and Popular Culture, and The Passion of the Christ* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

books or stories that wish to persuade the audience they are being faithful to the original tale. Paul Flesher has elsewhere shown how this works for both *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.³⁵ In the end, it is clear that understanding Targumism and the targumic process is important not only for ancient and medieval translations but also for artistic works of the twentieth and the twenty-first century. Indeed, there is no reason to limit Targumism to film; films are simply suggestive of the possibilities of how targumic techniques can be used.

The narrowing down to a clear definition that this book performed in chapter 2, now that we can see how it can be applied, has opened up an entire new way of understanding how translations, texts, and other artistic works draw authority from each other through the targumic character of hidden interpretation. Where else might “Targums” be found?³⁶

³⁵ Flesher and Torry, *Film and Religion*, 15–40; and Flesher, “Being True to the Text.”

³⁶ We suggest looking at children's Bibles, comic books (both religious and non-religious, Christian, Hindu, and other religions), graphic novels, devotional literature, published sermons (particularly those concerned with Scripture), novels retelling biblical stories, and so on.

Appendix A

THE PARALLEL EXPANSIONS OF GENESIS 28–50

This appendix is based on the two appendices in Flesher, “Synoptic Targums.” The table presents the parallel expansions among all extant PTs to these chapters: TN, CG(C), CG(D), CG(E), CG(Z), FT(P), FT(V) and PJ.

Of the 86 expansions in the table below, 82 belong to the Proto-PT source. Of the remaining 4, 1 expansion appears only in TN (39:23), 1 is shared between PJ and the FTs (33:4), 1 is shared among PJ, the FTs, and the CGs (37:33), and 1 appears only in the CGs (48:20).

Another 91 expansions in these chapters have been identified by Beverly P. Mortensen as appearing only in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and belong to the PJ-unique source. These are: Genesis 28:3, 28:20, 29:9, 29:10, 29:12, 29:13, 29:25, 29:32, 29:33, 29:34, 29:35, 30:6, 30:11, 30:13, 30:16, 30:18, 30:20, 30:21, 30:25, 31:19, 31:21, 31:24, 31:43, 32:6, 32:8, 32:12, 32:32, 33:2, 33:3, 35:4, 35:5, 35:8, 35:14, 35:21, 35:22, 36:24, 36:43, 37:2, 37:13, 37:14, 37:17, 37:29, 37:35, 38:7, 38:24, 38:29, 39:1, 39:14, 40:1, 40:14, 40:16, 41:1, 41:8, 41:16, 41:47, 41:52, 42:5, 42:6, 42:8, 43:16, 43:33, 43:34, 44:16, 45:14, 45:19, 45:24, 45:27, 46:3, 46:4, 46:12, 46:14, 46:17, 46:21, 46:27, 46:28, 46:29, 47:7, 47:9, 47:22, 47:27, 47:30, 47:31, 48:7, 48:9, 50:3, 50:11, 50:13, 50:15, 50:20, 50:25, 50:26. Six further expansions appear only in PJ, but in verses where other Targums have expansions: Genesis 39:23, 42:1, 42:36, 48:20, 48:22, 50:19.

Key:

- y Indicates the Targum contains an expansion which parallels other “y” expansions.
 - x Indicates the Targum contains an expansion which does not parallel the “y” expansions.
 - +
 -
- Indicates the expansion in question contains significantly more material than the first “y” expansion in the row.
- Indicates the expansion in question contains significantly less material than the first “y” expansion in the row.

	<i>Bk</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>TN</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	\tilde{z}	<i>P</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>Pj</i>
1	G	28	10	y					y	y	y
2	G	28	12	y					y	y	y+
3	G	28	17	y					y		y
4	G	28	22	y			y				y
5	G	29	17	y			y		y	y	y
6	G	29	22	y			y		y	y	y
7	G	29	31	y			y				y
8	G	30	2	y			y				y
9	G	30	8	y			y				y+
10	G	30	15	y			y				y
11	G	30	22	y			y		y	y	
12	G	30	30	y			y				y
13	G	31	2	y			y				
14	G	31	5	y			y				y
15	G	31	22	y			y		y	y	y
16	G	31	39	y	y				y	y	y
17	G	32	3	y					y	y	y
18	G	32	21	y	y						
19	G	32	25	y	y						y+
20	G	32	27	y	y				y	y	y+
21	G	32	29	y	y						
22	G	33	4						y	y	y
23	G	33	10	y							y
24	G	34	31	y					y	y	y
25	G	35	9	y	y				y	y	
26	G	36	39	y					y	y	y
27	G	37	33			y	y-		y+	y	y
28	G	38	9	y							y
29	G	38	15	y							y
30	G	38	21	y		y					
31	G	38	25	y		y	y		y	y	y+
32	G	38	26	y		y	y-		y	y	y-
33	G	39	9	y			y				
34	G	39	10	y			y		y		y
35	G	39	23	y							x
36	G	40	12	y			y		y	y	y-
37	G	40	18	y			y		y	y	y
38	G	40	23	y					y	y	y-
39	G	41	38	y	y						
40	G	41	43	y			y		y	y	y

	<i>Bk</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>TN</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	\tilde{Z}	<i>P</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>Pf</i>
41	G	41	44	y			y				y
42	G	42	1	y					y		x
43	G	42	13	y					y		y
44	G	42	23	y					y	y	y
45	G	42	32	y							y-
46	G	42	36	y			y+		y+	y+	x
47	G	43	9	y			y				
48	G	43	14	y		y			y-	y-	y
49	G	44	18	y		y		y	y	y	y-
50	G	44	19	y				y	y	y	
51	G	45	28	y					y	y	y+
52	G	46	30	y		y			y-		y
53	G	47	21	y						y-	y-
54	G	48	4	y		y		y			
55	G	48	16	y		y		y			
56	G	48	20			y		y			x
57	G	48	22	y				y-	y-	y-	x
58	G	49	1	y				y	y-	y	y
59	G	49	2	y				y	y	y	
60	G	49	3	y				y	y	y	y
61	G	49	4	y				y		y	y
62	G	49	5	y				y		y	
63	G	49	6	y				y		y	y
64	G	49	7	y				y	y	y	y
65	G	49	8	y					y	y	y+
66	G	49	9	y				y	y	y	y
67	G	49	10	y					y	y	y
68	G	49	11	y				y-	y-	y	y
69	G	49	12	y				y		y	y
70	G	49	13	y							y
71	G	49	15	y					y+	y+	y
72	G	49	16	y				y	y		y
73	G	49	17	y				y	y	y	y
74	G	49	18	y					y	y	y
75	G	49	19	y					y	y	y
76	G	49	20	y					y	y	y+
77	G	49	21	y					y	y	y
78	G	49	22	y					y	y	y-
79	G	49	23	y					y	y	y
80	G	49	24	y					y	y	y

	<i>Bk</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>TN</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Ž</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>Pj</i>
81	G	49	25	y					y	y-	y
82	G	49	26	y					y+	y+	y
83	G	49	27	y					y	y	y
84	G	50	1	y					y	y	y
85	G	50	19	y					y	y	x
86	G	50	21	y					y		

Appendix B

A GUIDE TO BABYLONIAN POINTING

In published texts, Aramaic vowel pointing for the dialects of Jewish Aramaic usually follows that of the Tiberian pointing for Hebrew. There are a two main exceptions. First, many of the eastern Aramaic manuscripts use supralinear pointing, also known as Babylonian pointing and occasionally as Yemenite pointing, since it is most frequently found in manuscripts of Yemenite origin. Since Alexander Sperber relied heavily on manuscripts of such eastern origins in his editions of Targum Onqelos and Targum Jonathan, he used this form of vowel pointing in the publication of his edition, *The Bible in Aramaic*. Unfortunately, there is no readily accessible table of these vowel signs, so we provide one below with its Tiberian equivalents. Second, Computer Bibles which contain Onqelos and Jonathan—such as the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon, Accordance and BibleWorks—have reproduced the Babylonian pointing using Tiberian signs. Since the two systems are not quite equivalent, the table contains those variations as well.

	Tiberian	Babylonian	Babylonian in Computer Bibles
Qameṣ	קָ	ק̣	קָ
Pathah	קַ	ק̣̇	קַ
Seghol	קֿ	ק̣̇̇	קֿ
Ṣere	קֶ	ק̣̇̇̇	קֶ
Ḥireq	קִ	ק̣̇̇̇̇	קִ
Ḥolem	קוֹ	ק̣̇̇̇̇̇	קוֹ
Shureq	קוּ	ק̣̇̇̇̇̇̇	קוּ
Shewa	קֻ קֹ	ק̣̇̇̇̇̇̇̇	קֻ קֹ

GLOSSARY

Abot or **Avot** — means “fathers” in Hebrew. As capitalized the term refers to an additional tractate of the Mishnah that sets out the chain of authority from Moses up to Rabbi Judah the Prince, the principal editor of the Mishnah. By anchoring Rabbinic tradition in the Torah revealed to Moses, Abot sets out the claim of an oral Law, available from Rabbinic teaching, alongside the written Law.

aggadah, pl. aggadot, aggadic — the noun aggadah means “narrative” in Aramaic, and refers to material within Rabbinic literature which sets out teaching, not by declaration or ruling, but by way of example. Aggadah might apply to a typical behavior of a rabbi or another person, or to a single, exemplary act; in either case, by example (and less frequently, counter-example), Torah is conveyed. “Aggadic” is an adjective in English, relating to the noun.

Amidah — derived from the verb “to stand” in Hebrew, the term “Standing Prayer” (or “Prayer of the Standing,” *Tefilat Haamidah*) refers to the standard prayer of Rabbinic Judaism. Also known as “The Eighteen,” for its repeated blessings of God, the prayer praises God for his loving kindness to Israel throughout the ages, anticipates his redemption, and prays for his mercy. Regularized during the time of the Mishnah, the Amidah is to be recited three times daily.

Amora, pl. Amoraim, Amoraic — an Amora is a sage of Judaism who undertook to explain the Mishnah and refers to a rabbi living after the year 200 CE who contributed to the Talmud, whether the Bavli or the Yerushalmi. The Amoraim were the rabbinic authorities as a whole living between the Mishnah and the Talmuds who interpreted the Mishnah. This period is called Amoraic.

anthropomorphism — is derived from the Greek compound meaning “human formed.” Many passages in the Hebrew Bible refer to God in these terms, by referring to his speaking, walking, his anger, and the

like. In order to avoid this language, which was not representative of the theology of Rabbinic Judaism, circumlocutions were developed. For example, instead of saying that God “spoke,” one might say that God’s “Word” (*Memra*) was revealed. This kind of substitution is known as an anti-anthropomorphism.

Aqedah — means “binding,” and refers to the binding of Isaac on Mount Moriah in Genesis 22. The verb appears in that passage (Gen 22:9), but the noun also appears in the Mishnah to refer to the way in which an animal for sacrifice is bound. Rabbinic literature sometimes speaks of Isaac as if his binding was seen by God as a sacrifice or perhaps actually was a sacrifice.

Bavli — also known as the Babylonian Talmud, presents itself as a commentary on the Mishnah but at times adds substantially to the discussions at issue, and extends into fresh topics. In this Talmud, the Amoraim show that their view of the Oral Torah is extensive and reaches out to the whole of experience. It justifies the description of Talmud, “learning.” This Talmud came to its present form around 600 CE. This Talmud was composed in Babylonia.

bat qol — literally means “daughter of a voice” or echo. The Rabbis believed that the age of prophecy had ceased with the last of the biblical prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, but that those attentive to the ways of heaven could still hear echoes from the heavenly council where all wisdom was known.

Berakhot — means “blessings,” and refers to the opening tractate of the Mishnah (and therefore Talmud) that is dedicated to the topic. It deals with the Shema, the Amidah, blessings over food, prayers of sanctification connected with the Sabbath and holidays, and special blessings.

bet knesset — or “place of gathering” is the Hebrew term for a synagogue, the principal site of worship for Jews in the period after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE. The earliest evidence for the synagogue comes from third-century BCE Egypt.

bet midrash — or “place of inquiry” refers to an academy where Rabbis might study and pass on their knowledge to disciples (talmidim). The term “midrash” is also applied to the products of study that emerged, especially the commentaries on biblical books that worked to relate the Written Torah (Hebrew Bible) to the Oral Torah. This institution was developed after the Jerusalem temple’s destruction.

desideratum — in all fields of scholarship, the discipline cannot make further progress until gaps in knowledge are filled in. To express the hope that researchers will take up a topic whose elucidation would be a service to learning it is called “something to be desired,” a desideratum in Latin.

devar aher — means “another word” in Hebrew. The expression is used in midrashic literature to introduce another way of interpreting a word or

passage, although frequently the point is the complementarity or agreement of the interpretations overall.

Diatessaron — is a Greek compound word which means “through four.” From the second century CE., the four Gospels were subject to projects of harmonization, such that they might be presented in a single coordinate text. The most famous Diatessaron, sadly no longer extant, was that of Tatian; his effort and similar attempts influenced the text of the New Testament.

dibbur — meaning God’s “utterance” in Hebrew is typical of the Amoraic period and is a variant of the term *memra* or “word.” The emergence of this alternative appears to be more limited, perhaps deliberately so, characteristic to matters related to the temple and the Torah.

Didache — means “teaching” in Greek; as capitalized the term refers to a document from the late first century that set out the ritual and communal order of the church. Philotheos Bryennios recovered a manuscript of the *Didache*, which had been thought to have disappeared, in 1873.

Five Megillot — from the singular Hebrew term Megillah, “scroll,” refers to the Books of the Writings used in association with liturgical occasions of Rabbinic Judaism: Purim (Esther), Passover (Song of Songs), Shavuot (Ruth), Sukkot (Ecclesiastes), Ninth of Ab (Lamentations).

gaon, geonim — after the emergence of the Babylonian Talmud, heads of academies came to be down as gaon, or geonim in the plural. Until around 1000 CE, they lead influential communities of scholars in Sura, Pumbedita, and Baghdad.

Gehenna, gehinnam, or gehinnom — all refer in a literal sense to the Valley of Hinnom in the Kidron Valley, just across from the temple in Jerusalem. Because it had been a place where idolatrous human sacrifice by fire had taken place (see 2 Kgs 16:3; 21:6), the site was deliberately destroyed and desecrated by King Josiah as part of his cultic reform during the seventh century BCE (see 2 Kgs 23:10). As a result, Gehenna came to be known as the place of the definitive punishment of the wicked.

Gemara — is a noun deriving from the Aramaic verb, *gamar*, which means “to complete” or “to fulfill.” The Talmud consists of the Mishnah and the completion of that tradition by means of discussion and analysis among the Amoraim. The Gemara comprises the non-mishnaic elements of the Talmud.

gematria — is a method of interpretation that builds on the fact that each letter in Hebrew and other alphabets possessed a numerical value in antiquity, prior to the adoption of Arabic numerals. For that reason, words could be converted to numbers, and numbers back to words.

geniza/genizah — in Aramaic and Hebrew (respectively) a room where old religious texts were left to deteriorate naturally, rather than being destroyed, a practice intended to avoid any desecration of the divine name that was

written in them. The most famous genizah is that found in the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo. Over 200,000 manuscript pieces were moved from the “Cairo Genizah” to western libraries after its discovery during the nineteenth century.

geonim — *See* gaon

haftarah — readings from the Prophetic Books of the Bible that followed readings from the Torah in the synagogue service. Over the centuries, the rabbis selected specific passages from the Prophets now known as the haftarah in the singular, or haftarot in the plural.

haggadah — *See* Aggadah

halakhah, pl. halakhot, adj. halakhic — the noun and its associated adjective refer to the “path” or the “way” that one should walk as instructed by the Torah. The reference includes commandments and customs within Rabbinic Judaism, articulated as imperatives—matters of morality, worship, and law—rather than derived from the narrative examples of aggadah. The term can refer simply to the Torah’s legal matters in general or to decisions about correct practice in individual cases.

hapax legomenon — sometimes, within a given text, a word is only “said” (legomenon in Greek) a single time (hapax). When that occurs, the hypothesis might be entertained that the expression is unusual or that the subject matter is out of the ordinary.

Hebrew Bible — an English term referring to the Jewish Bible, known in Hebrew as the Tanakh. In general, this is the same as the Christian Old Testament.

hypostasis — refers in philosophical Greek to the reality or nature of a being, as distinct from its essence. Orthodox theology referred to the three hypostases (the plural) of a single God within the Trinity. As a result, *memra* was sometimes seen as a divine hypostasis in study of the Targumim.

kashrut — this abstract noun relates to the Hebrew adjective kosher, referring to what is suitable for human consumption according to the Written and Oral Torah. Both types of food and their preparation are concerned.

ketubah, pl. ketubbot — a marriage contract or contracts, which sets out the obligations for bride and groom. A tractate of the Mishnah entitled Ketubbot stipulates the requirements and practices involved.

Ketubim — refers to “Writings” in Hebrew, the term applied to the third division of the Hebrew Bible, after the Torah and the Prophets. *See* “Tanakh.”

lemma — in textual criticism a word or phrase may be taken from a main text and further explained. In Greek the verb to “take” is *lambanein*, from which the term “lemma” (that which is taken) is derived. In Targum manuscripts, a lemma often constitutes the first few words of a Hebrew

verse given prior to the entire verse rendered in Aramaic. This helps the reader of the Targum identify its corresponding place in the Hebrew text.

logos — in Greek philosophy and religion means “word,” but not simply in the sense of a set of syllables. Rather, a *logos* is the meaning or reason behind a word. In English, its inclusion of logic is manifest in the “logy” ending of terms such as “theology,” “psychology,” and “anthropology.”

Mahzorim — a mahzor is a prayer book used for the cycle of the greatest holidays in Judaism. Some festival prayer books contain readings from the Targums and are comparable for that reason to some Fragment Targum manuscripts.

masorah — a masorah is a systematic compilation of critical notes, to help ensure the biblical text was accurately copied. The aim was to preserve the unusual readings in Scripture and to ensure that they were not eliminated as mistakes. A masorah was also devised to Targum Onqelos.

Masoretic Text, Masoretes — the Hebrew Bible was the object of special care in transmission, so that the authoritative text, set out with two masorahs, is known as the Masoretic Text. The medieval scholars who developed the Masoretic Text are called the Masoretes.

matla — in Aramaic means “word,” but where *memra* emphasizes the meaning of a given term, *matla* concerns more the statement or matter concerned.

memra — may also relate to *logos* in Greek, and in addition to focusing on the intent in the act of speaking, it especially refers to the act of God in commanding, and human response to the act.

meturgeman, pl. meturgemanin — the Aramaic term meaning “translator.” It is used in rabbinic texts to indicate a person who translates during the synagogue service. It also refers to those who produced the Targums, both at the oral and written phases. By contrast, the term “Targumist” refers to someone who studies a Targum, although meturgeman and “Targumist” are used interchangeably by some scholars.

mezuzah — in Hebrew this word means “doorpost.” But the term comes to mean the verses of Scripture that are to be affixed there according to the commandment in Deuteronomy 6:9 (cf. 11:20), “write them on the doorposts of your house.”

midrash, pl. midrashim — derived from the verb *darash*, which means “interpret.” The noun in singular and plural specifically relates to inquiry into the meaning of Scripture. Although the form of presentation is often referred to as commentary, the investigation is better described as a correlation between the written Torah and the Oral Torah.

Mishnah — refers etymologically to something repeated, from the Hebrew verb shanah. Rabbis conveyed their teaching in the form of oral saying that could be memorized (i.e., repeated). At approximately 200 CE the

rabbinic movement published an authoritative anthology of these called “the Mishnah.” The Mishnah is divided into six divisions, or orders, each of which contains a number of tractates.

Moed — means “festival” and is an order of the Mishnah, containing tractates related to that topic. They deal with the Sabbath and what defines the limits of permissible travel and activity, Passover, the collection of the half-shekel, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, New Year, Fasting, Purim, days within a festival, and pilgrimage.

Nashim — means “women” and is an order of the Mishnah, containing tractates related to that topic. They deal with betrothal, marriage, divorce, the status of children, as well as Levirate marriage, contracts, vows, the Nazirite vow, and wayward wives.

Neviim — *See* Tanakh.

Nezikim — means “damages” and is an order of the Mishnah, containing tractates related to that topic. They deal with civil matters, especially related to torts and ownership, rules related to courts and their powers, punishments, oaths, idolatry, and sin-offerings. Abot appears in the penultimate position.

nomos — the Greek term for “law,” corresponding to “Torah” in Hebrew.

Oral Torah — The rabbis believed that God gave Moses an Oral Torah as well as a Written Torah on Mt. Sinai. The Oral Torah was passed down through memorization through the centuries to the rabbinic movement, as described in Abot, and was first recorded in the Mishnah. As commentaries on the Mishnah, the Talmuds were also thought to reveal the Oral Torah.

parallelomania — refers to the tendency among scholars to assume that similarities among bodies of literature show that there must be direct connections.

Parashah — a section of the Torah or another sacred text that was selected for reading.

pericope, pl. pericopae — derived from the Greek term, refers to a passage that forms a coherent unit for study.

peshet — means “interpretation,” and at Qumran designated commentaries that related biblical texts to the life of the community.

piyyut, pl. piyyutim — the Hebrew term derives from the Greek word for poetry and refers to hymns and poems incorporated within synagogue services. These were composed in Hebrew and Aramaic and began appearing in the late Rabbinic period.

pitgama — is another Aramaic term for “word,” and is applied to decrees and messages. Compare *memra* and *dibbur*.

qaddish (kaddish) — means “sanctified” and applies to prayers that declare God’s holiness. Today associated especially with funerals, forms of the qaddish prayer in Aramaic relate to any occasion of sanctification of God’s name.

Qodashim — “holy things,” a division of the Mishnah whose tractates deal with the Temple, its utensils, and the arrangements for sacrifices and offerings.

Qohelet — an alternative name for the biblical book of Ecclesiastes. The Hebrew term is usually translated “preacher,” but its meaning is uncertain, since it derives from the verb “to gather,” and is written in the form of a feminine participle.

retroversion — because the Aramaic traditions behind the Greek Gospels do not appear in any extant source, scholars have undertaken to reconstruct the Aramaic forms involved on the basis of the Gospels and contemporary Aramaic evidence. This process is known as retroversion.

Saboraim — the term refers to rabbis between the Amoraim and the Geonim (and so between around 500 CE and 700 CE) who played a role in the final editing of the Babylonian Talmud.

seder — means “order” in Hebrew. The term refers particularly to (1) the liturgical celebration of the evening Passover meal and (2) to each of the six principal divisions of the Mishnah.

sharh, pl. shuruh — this term refers to translations of the Hebrew Bible into Arabic that began to emerge during the fourteenth century. Sharh is also a term in Islam that refers to commentaries on the hadith.

Shekinah — derived from the verb “to dwell” (*shakan*), this term indicates the presence of God, particularly in the temple.

shema — is perhaps the most ancient and well-known prayer in Judaism. The word *shema* forms the imperative of the verb “to hear” begins the passage, “Hear, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one . . .” (Deut 6:4-5).

Sifré — refers to a midrash to Numbers and a midrash to Deuteronomy, each is distinctive and they follow different approaches. Both midrashim feature rabbis of the Tannaitic period and are more interested in halakhic matters than aggadic ones.

standards — poles with banners carried by Roman legions. The upper end of the pole had a cross bar from which a banner hung. The pole was often topped by a small statue of an eagle, although other animals such as a bear or wolf were sometimes portrayed.

sunagoge — the Greek rendering of bet kneset which gave English the term “synagogue.” Both the Greek and the Hebrew terms mean “gathering.” The purpose of the congregation was worship, learning, and community organization.

synagogue — *See* sunagoge and bet kneset.

Synoptic (Gospels) — the first three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) are comparable in their wording, content, and order. They are so closely related that they may be printed in columns and “viewed together,” which is what this compound adjective from Greek means.

Tafsir — is the translation of the Tanakh into Arabic done by Saadya Gaon in the tenth century.

Tanna, pl. Tannaim; adj. Tannaitic — Tanna was the term given to the rabbis who lived between 70 and 200 CE. They formulated, gathered, and repeated the traditional materials that went into the Mishnah and early midrashim (e.g., Mekhilta, Sifra, Sifré). They are named for the Aramaic verb “to repeat,” *tanah*, the equivalent of *shanah* in Hebrew. They were followed by the Amoraim.

Tanakh, TaNaK — the traditional Hebrew term indicating the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible follows its own order of canonical books, which is unlike the English canon. First come the five books of Torah, then the Prophets (Neviim, both “former” Prophets, including Judges, Joshua, and 1 Samuel-2 Kings, and “latter” Prophets, from Isaiah on), and finally the “Writings” (Ketuvim). The first letters of each group make up the acronym.

targum, pl. targumim — in Aramaic, literally a “translation,” whether oral or written. This book defines a Targum as: a translation that combines a highly literal rendering of the original text with material added into the translation in a seamless manner. It can refer to the Aramaic sections of Ezra and Daniel.

targum aher — “another targum”; just as *devar aher* signaled an alternative interpretation in midrashic literature, targum aher signals another rendering of a passage in a few, later Targums.

turgeman, torgeman — *See* meturgeman.

Tetragrammaton — the four letters (in English transliteration, YHWH) that make up the sacred name of God. The name itself was held to be ineffable and unapproachable and unpronounceable within Rabbinic Judaism. In the Targums, often rendered as yyy.

tetrarch — within Graeco-Roman administration, a tetrarch refers to someone who rules one quarter of a larger region. The term came to be used of provincial governors generally.

Theologoumenon — in Greek, this refers to an opinion or a way of speaking of God or other spiritual realities.

Tohorot — literally means “purities” in Hebrew, and designates the sixth division of the Mishnah. Its tractates deal with such issues as vessels, contact with corpses, foods and their use, ritual bathing, and sexual contact.

Torah — in Rabbinic Judaism, the revelation given to Moses at Mt. Sinai, both in written form in the Pentateuch of the Bible and in oral form in the teaching of the rabbinic sages. The latter was epitomized in the Mishnah and the Talmuds. The Septuagint translated this term as *nomos*, from which Christianity derives its term “Law.” It also refers to the approved contents of those works, especially for moral and religious practices. Studying and doing Torah became the highest calling of Rabbinic Judaism. *See also* Oral Torah and Written Torah.

tosefta, pl. toseftot — the term in Aramaic means “addition” or “supplement,” and so might be used generically to designate any additional matter appended to or associated with a work of rabbinic literature. More particularly, the term refers to a book which collected rabbinic material into the same divisions as the Mishnah, published around 250 CE. There is also a class of targumic additions known as Targumic Toseftot.

transposition — in translation study this term describes the result of changing the relative position or orders of two or more words. By doing so, an interpreter may influence meaning significantly, while treating the original work in a conservative manner.

verisimilitude — refers to the quality of appearing to conform to reality, whether or not that appearance is reliable.

Yerushalmi — meaning “of Jerusalem.” By itself, the term designates the Palestinian Talmud, a.k.a. Jerusalem Talmud or Talmud of the Land of Israel. With the word Targum preceding it, as in Targum Yerushalmi, it refers to the two sets of Pentateuchal Targums, Pseudo-Jonathan and Fragment Targums. The term Targum Yerushalmi has been superseded in scholarly circles by the name Palestinian Targum.

Written Torah — a rabbinic concept referring specifically to the Pentateuch, but can also refer to the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible).

Zeraim — “seeds” is a designation within the Mishnah of its first division, including tractates that deal with blessings, leaving the corners of fields for gleanings, tithing, forbidden mixtures, Sabbath years, and some offerings.

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