

Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures

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The Extant Rabbinic Texts

THE PENTATEUCH: ONKELOS

Targum Onkelos (= Onk) was the official targum of Babylonia: the Babylonian Talmud refers to it as 'our targum' (*B.T. Kiddushin* 49a), and introduces quotations from it with the phrase 'as we translate' (e.g. *B.T. Sanhedrin* 106b). On halakhic matters Onk is in close agreement with the Mishna, at least as the Mishna was understood in the Babylonian academies, and the Bavli cites it as an authority even on halakha (see e.g. *B.T. Nazir* 49a, quoting Onk to Num 6:4). Onk offers a single, non-expansive version. It does contain some aggada, but this, where it occurs, is presented in highly allusive, abridged form.¹

The traditional attribution to Onkelos is based on a single passage in the Bavli; the parallel in the Yerushalmi, however, speaks of *Aquila*:

Bavli *Megilla* 5a

R. Yirmeyahu – or son e say R. Hiyva b. Abba – also said: The targum of the Pentateuch was composed by Onkelos the proselyte under the guidance of R. Elazar and R. Yehoshua.

Yerushalmi *Megilla* 71c

R. Yirmeyahu said in the name of R. Hiyva bar Ba (= Abba): Aquila the proselyte translated the Pentateuch before R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua, and they praised him and said: *Yopyāpūtā mibb'nē 'ādām* (Ps 45:2).

Two points are clear. First, the form *Onkelos* is simply a corruption of *Aquila*: the corruption is found elsewhere in rabbinic literature (cf. e.g. *T. Demai* 6:13 with *P.T. Demai* 25d). Second, the Yerushalmi is referring to the *Greek* version of the Pentateuch known as *Aquila*, which it cites on a number of occasions (e.g. *P.T. Sukka* 13d). This is clear from the context which is concerned with the dictum of R. Shimon ben Gamliel that it is permissible to write the Sacred Books only in Greek, and from the recherché pun on *yopyāpūtā mibb'nē 'ādām*, which is taken to mean, not 'you are fairer than the sons of men', but 'you have used the language of Japhet better than the sons of men', the 'language of

Geniza Fragment from the Taylor-Schechter Collection, Exod 39:39-40:17 with Babylonian *masora* and *mesora* on targum Onkelos (Cambridge University Library, MS T-S B4.12 verso).

Cf. Kahle, *Masoroten des Ostens* 6, 106. According to A. Díez Macho (*Estudios bíblicos* 16, 1957, 219) the fragment dates from the 9th-10th century.

¹ For examples of aggada in Onk see Vermes, 'Haggadah in the Onkelos Targum', and Bowler, 'Haggadah in the Targum Onkelos'.

Japhet' being Greek: see Gen 10:2, where Javan (= Greece) is put among the sons of Japhet, and compare *B.T. Megilla* 9b (parallel: *Genesis Rabba* 36:8, p. 342), where 'the words of Japhet' mean Greek. If this interpretation of *P.T. Megilla* 71c is correct, then the Bavli parallel becomes problematic, for it is obvious in context that it refers to an *Aramaic* version. The simplest solution is to suppose that the Babylonians misunderstood the logon of R. Yirmeyahu, and took it as conveying information about their own anonymous Aramaic translation of the Tora.²

Compared to the Palestinian targumim, Onk has come down to us as a highly unified, stable tradition. It even has its own masora, which includes a list of readings where the tradition of Nehardea differs from that of Sura. All the evidence points to some sort of official recension of the text in Babylonia in the talmudic period. Already among the Geonim Onk was received as being of the highest sanctity. There are, nonetheless, significant divergences between its mss. The aim of the text-critic must be to recover the Babylonian form of the targum. This may be possible through Yemenite mss which preserve strongly the Babylonian tradition. Of these mss 131 (EMC 952), 133a (ENA 1705), 152 (ENA 80), and 153 (EMC 48) of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, and Ms. Ebr. 448 of the Vatican Library are particularly important.

THE PENTATEUCH: PALESTINIAN TARGUMIM

NEOFITI 1. In 1956 A. Díez Macho discovered a copy of the Palestinian Targum of the Pentateuch (Codex Neofiti 1 [= Neof]) in the Vatican Library, where it had lain largely unnoticed because it had been miscatalogued as Targum Onkelos.³ The text, written by three main hands, is virtually complete. A colophon states that it was copied at Rome in (5)264 A.M. = 1504 C.E. for Giles of Viterbo. It is possible to trace this recension back much earlier for it has been shown to agree significantly with the Palestinian Targum quotations in earlier Jewish writings (e.g. the *Arukh* of Nathan ben Yehiel of Rome, d. 1106), where these cannot be paralleled in other extant texts of the Palestinian Targum.⁴ On the whole the translation is restrained and sober, the aggada being less extensive than that in either the Fragmentary Targum or Pseudo-Yonatan. Neof is richly supplied with glosses, both marginal and interlinear, in about ten different hands. These are, in the main, alternative Palestinian Targum readings. Different sources were drawn upon. Note, e.g. Gen 10: where there are two variants, the second of which is introduced by *L''* = *l'shon 'aher*, 'another

reading'. The glosses sometimes agree with Pseudo-Yonatan, sometimes with the Fragmentary Targum, sometimes with the Cairo Geniza fragments, and sometimes with Onk. A number of them are textually unique.

PSEUDO-YONATAN. The title of this work found in the *editio princeps*, viz. 'Targum of Yonatan ben Uzziel', is a misnomer which came about through a false resolution of the abbreviation T'Y as *Targum Yehonatan* instead of *Targum Yerushalmi*. The mistaken ascription of this targum to the supposed author of the Babylonian Targum to the Prophets may go back to Menahem b. Benjamin Recanati in the 14th century. The work is, in fact, a recension of the Palestinian Targum of the Pentateuch, which, save for a few verses, is complete.

Pseudo-Yonatan (= Ps-Y) is the most paraphrastic of all the Pentateuchal targumim: it is estimated to be about twice the length of the original Hebrew text. It is a highly mixed tradition, an amalgam of interpretations from widely different periods. It has been argued that it contains at once some of the earliest and some of the latest dateable targumic material. Some of its aggadic traditions are not attested elsewhere in rabbinic literature. In its final state the collection has been worked over with some care, and in many ways Ps-Y is the most literary of the Palestinian targumim. That its final redaction cannot have been earlier than the 7th cent. C.E. may be deduced from its rendering of Gen 21:21:

Hebrew text

And he (Ishmael) dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; his mother took for him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

Pseudo-Yonatan

And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, and he took as wife 'Adisha [v.l. Hadisha; Ginsburger proposes 'Ayesha] and he divorced her; and his mother took for him Fatima as wife from the land of Egypt.

The same aggada is found in more expanded form in *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* 30. The names of the two wives of Ishmael (the supposed progenitor of the Arabs) correspond to those of a wife and daughter of Muhammad: Fatima was the daughter of Muhammad by his first wife Khadijah; 'Adisha/Hadisha may be Khadijah, or, if we read 'Ayesha with *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* 30 (as Ginsburger suggested), the reference could be to another wife. 'Ayisha. Counterbalancing such late elements, however, are early ones, and there is sufficient evidence of internal contradiction, reworking and glossing in this targum for us to see that in its present state it is the culmination of a very long process of evolution. There are two witnesses to the text: (1) the *editio princeps* in *Ha-nishah hunshe Torah* published by Asher Forins, Venice 1590-91 (on which see M. Steinschneider, *Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, Berlin 1852-60, no. 295); and (2) Ms. Add. 27.031, British Library, London, which bears the signature of the censor Dominico Gerosolomitano and the date 1598. The disagreements between these two texts establish their independence; their large

² The rabbinic traditions are discussed by Friedmann, *Onkelos und Aky'us*, and Silverstone, *Aquila and Onkelos*, but see especially Barthélemy, *Les devanciers*, 148-50.

³ Díez Macho, 'The Recently Discovered Palestinian Targum'.

⁴ See Speier, 'Relationship'.

measure of agreement indicates that they are derived from a common archetype.

CAIRO GENIZA FRAGMENTS. 7 MSS recovered from the Cairo Geniza containing extensive passages from the Palestinian Targum appear to be remnants of once complete targumim to whole books of the Pentateuch, or even to the whole Pentateuch. One MS (Kahle D) still preserves parts of Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy. Some MSS give the full text of the original, Hebrew and targum alternating, verse by verse. Others present only abbreviated Hebrew lemmata. The significance of this difference (which extends to other targum MSS) is not obvious. The Cairo Geniza fragments (= CG) are the earliest extant witnesses to the text of the Palestinian Targum, the oldest of them (Kahle A) dating from the 8th/9th cent., at the latest. The texts show all the characteristic features of the Palestinian Targum, aggadic passages alternating with sections of more or less literal translation. The MSS do not agree precisely with any of the other recensions of the Pal. Targ., nor even with each other, in the few instances where they overlap. This is eloquent testimony to the extreme fluidity of the text of the Pal. Targ.

FRAGMENTARY TARGUM. The *editio princeps* of the Fragmentary Targum (= FT) was published under the title 'Targum Yerushalmi' in the first edition of Bomberg's *Biblia Rabbinica*, Venice 1516-17 [= Bombl 1]. Five MSS closely related to the Bomberg text are now known:

- (1) V = Ebr. 440, fols 198-227, Vatican Library (13th cent.);
- (2) N = Solger 2,2, fols 119-47, Stadtbibliothek, Nürnberg (1291 c.E.);
- (3) L = B.H. fol. 1, Universitätsbibliothek, Leipzig (13th/14th cent.);
- (4) M = Ms 3 of the Günzburg Collection, Moscow (16th cent.);
- (5) S = Ms 264 of the Sassoon Collection (17th cent.).

Klein has demonstrated the inter-relationship of these various textwitnesses.⁵ Bombl 1 and M are both transcriptions of N. S is copied from Bombl 1, or possibly from the second edition of the *Biblia Rabbinica*, Venice 1524-5 [= Bombl 2]. V and L are both independent of N, and of each other. V contains 908 verses of the Pentateuch (taken from all five books), N 833 verses, and L 293 verses. Though V, N and L differ in length, it appears from their overlaps that they constitute a single recension of FT and, presumably, ultimately go back to a common archetype. FT as represented by these MSS has three distinguishing features: *first*, it is a Palestinian Targum, in western Aramaic; *second* it covers only selected verses of the Pentateuch (hence its name); *third*, although it contains numerous aggadic expansions, it also contains a significant number of verses where the translation is literal.

⁵ Klein, 'Extant Sources'.

There are four other MSS, which cannot be related stemmatically to the Bomberg group, though they show all the characteristics of the FT. These should be regarded as four further recensions of FT. The MSS are:

- (1) P = Hébr. 110, fols 1-16, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (15th/16th cent.): 589 verses of the Pentateuch;
- (2) J = Ms 605 (MSA 2587), fols 6-7, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York (14th/15th cent.): Exod 14:1, 13, 14, 29-31; 15:1-2; 17:15-16; 19:1-8;
- (3) B = Or. 10704 (Gaster collection), fol. 8, British Library, London (? 12th/13th cent.): Deut 1:1-5:9;
- (4) C = T-S AS 72.75.76.77, University Library, Cambridge (9th/10th - mid 11th cent.): Deut 23:15-28:5; 32:35-33:9.

There are, then, in all some five different recensions of the targum-type known as the Fragmentary Targum.

Why did the FT text-form evolve? Why should anyone make such a collection of Palestinian Targum fragments? It is hard to say. Some have seen FT as a set of variant readings intended to supplement a complete text of the Palestinian Targum. In support of this idea it should be noted that if the marginal glosses of Neofiti I were collected and published separately they would constitute a kind of FT. On the other hand, it is arguable that, like the targumic Toseftot (on which see below), the collection was made to supplement Onk. Both the Toseftot and the FT may have arisen at a time when Onk was becoming the dominant targum in the west. Since Onk is, on the whole, a non-aggadic targum, the need was felt to preserve the aggadic material of the Palestinian Targum. The Toseftot may be rather random Palestinian traditions known to scribes who copied Onk. FT, however, looks like something more systematic: it has probably not arisen through collecting traditions from different sources, but by deliberate abridgement of complete recensions of the Palestinian Targum. Complete Palestinian targumim were collated against Onk, and the non-aggadic passages removed. This view gains support from the fact that the verses which are not represented by any of the recensions of FT are usually rendered more or less literally in at least one of the complete recensions of the Palestinian Targum.

TARGUMIC TOSEFTOT. Here and there in the MSS of Onk aggadic passages are to be found under the rubric 'Tosefta' or 'Tosefta Yerushalmi'. These passages are clearly interpolations, derived from the Palestinian Targum, which were meant to embellish the literal version of Onk. The Toseftot may be inserted into the text of Onk at the appropriate place, or written in the margin, or gathered together at the end of the main text. Separate collections of Toseftot are also attested. The Toseftot differ from FT in two respects:

- (1) they are always expansive, whereas FT contains a significant number of verses which are translated literally; and
- (2) while FT's western Aramaic dialect has been preserved more or less intact,

the dialect of the Toseftot has been deliberately corrected (with varying degrees of consistency and success) to conform to the dialect of Onk. This linguistic recasting is a feature not only of the Toseftot inserted into the Onk mss, but also of the separate collections of Toseftot as well, thus showing that the latter too were intended to supplement Onk. Where the Toseftot overlap with other Pal. Targ. texts they often prove to represent independent recensions of the Pal. Targ.

FESTIVAL COLLECTIONS. Some mss contain collections of targumim covering the Tora lections for the festivals and special Sabbaths. The nature of this type of text is well illustrated by Bodleian Ms Heb. e 43, fols 57-67 (= Kahle F), the colophon of which states: 'This is the notebook (*diftar*) of Jacob, son of Šemah . . . It contains the targum of the additional readings (*musafim*) for all the Festivals, and the targum for Hanukka' (fol 57r). The relationship between these Festival Collections and the complete Palestinian targumim such as Neof is analogous to the relationship between the homiletic midrashim (e.g. *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana*) and the straightforward exegetical midrashim (e.g. *Mekhilta de-R. Yishmael*). The Festival Collections differ from each other both as to content and as to textual reading. There is nothing to suggest that they go back to a common archetype, or archetypes, or that there was any attempt to produce a standard collection.

TARGUMIC POEMS. The character of these Aramaic compositions is well illustrated by the poem '*Ezel Moshe*', which gives, in the form of an alphabetic acrostic, a dramatic version of Moses' encounter with the Red Sea during the Exodus from Egypt. Though not strictly a targum, there is evidence connecting the poem to the targum of the Tora reading for the 7th day of Passover (Exod 14-15). It is inserted into the targum after Exod 14:29 in ms Paris 110, and interwoven with the verses of the targum in ms 335 of the University Library, Hamburg. The poem represents, in rather extreme form, the sort of aggadic embellishment of the biblical narrative which is common in the Palestinian targumim. The different ways in which it is presented in the Paris and Hamburg mss in relation to the targum, may reflect different ways of reciting the poem in synagogue. The antiquity of the '*Ezel Moshe*' is confirmed by the fact that a 4th/5th cent. papyrus fragment of it is extant.⁶ A number of other Aramaic poems relating to the 7th day of Passover are known, as well as to Shavuot, to *Shabbat ha-Hodesh*, and to the story of the death of Moses (Deut 34).⁷ These poems throw light on the aggada of the targum, and on its liturgical presentation in synagogue.

⁶ Nahalem, '*Ezel Moshe*', edits the papyrus and compares it with the medieval versions of the poem.

⁷ The most extensive listing of these poems is still Zanz, *Liturgisches*, 18-22, 74-80, 150-51.

THE PROPHETS: YONATAN

Targum Yonatan [= Yon] is the counterpart of Onk on the Pentateuch; it is the official Babylonian targum to the second division of the canon. The attribution to Yonatan ben Uzziel is based on *B.T. Megilla* 3a: 'R. Yirmayahu – or some say R. Hiyya bar Abba – said: . . . The targum of the Prophets was composed by Yonatan ben Uzziel from the mouth of [= under the guidance of] Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi'. Yonatan is a shadowy figure. According to *B.T. Sukka* 28a (cf. *B.T. Bava Batra* 134a; *P.T. Nedirim* 39a; *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* A14, 29a) he was the most distinguished of Hillel's pupils; but here he is made a contemporary of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, the last of the prophets.⁸ Barthélemy has argued that in fact the reference in *B.T. Megilla* 3a is not to an Aramaic version, but to the Greek version of Theodotion (= Yonatan). He points out that on a number of occasions elsewhere in the Talmud the Targum of the Prophets is, by implication, attributed to Rav Yosef bar Hiyya (c. 270-333 C.E.), the head of the Academy of Pumbeditha – a scholar reputed to have made a special study of targum. Thus Targ. Isa 5:17 is cited in *B.T. Pesahim* 68a, and Targ. Olad 6 in *B.T. Bava Keramma* 3b, under the rubric, 'as Rav Yosef translates'. (See also Hai Gaon's commentary on *Tohorot* quoted in the *Arukh*, ed. Kohut, II pp. 293a, 308a.)⁹ The tradition is cited in the name of R. Yirmeyahu and R. Hiyya b. Abba (both third century Palestinian authorities), so it could well have referred originally to Theodotion. There can be no doubt, however, that in Babylonia it was taken as referring to an Aramaic version. The mistake would be analogous to the transfer to the Targum of the Pentateuch of a tradition originally about the Greek version of Aquila.

Yon was held in high esteem in Babylonia and is cited as authoritative in the Bavli. On several occasions quotations from it are introduced by the formula: 'Were it not for the targum of this verse we should not know what it means' (*B.T. Megilla* 3a; parallels: *B.T. Moed Katan* 28b; *B.T. Sanhedrin* 94b; *B.T. Berakhot* 78b). It has close affinities with Onk both in language and in the character of its translation, though it is rather more aggadic than Onk, and in poetic passages can be quite expansive (see e.g. Judg 5 and I Sam 2:1-10). It has all the marks of thorough editing, its renderings being, on the whole, consistent. Yon was probably redacted in Babylonia about the same time as Onk. Though, like Onk, its text is very stable there are significant textual variants in the mss. The major text-critical problem is the relationship of the Yemenite mss with supralinear vocalisation (e.g. Mss Or. 2210 and Or. 2211 of the British Library, London) to western mss with Tiberian vocalisation (e.g. Codex Reuchlinianus). There appear to be two slightly different recensions of the targum – a western and a Yemenite. It is generally assumed that the Yemenite mss take us closer to the Babylonian form of the targum.

⁸ An analysis of the rabbinic traditions regarding Yonatan may be found in Neusner, *Development*, 90 and *Rabbinic Traditions* I, 198-200, 206-7, 393.

⁹ Barthélemy, *Les devaniers*, 90.

Codex Bezae Cantabrigiae contains about 80 passages (in both the Former and the Latter Prophets) under the rubric 'Targum Yerushalmi' or 'Targum 'Aqra'. These are probably remnants of a recension, or recensions of a complete Palestinian Targum of the Prophets. Other fragments are found in other sources, sometimes called 'Tosefa of the Land of Israel', or simply 'Tosefa'. Like the Palestinian Targum of Onk the Targum were presumably intended to supplement Yon's literal version. Though Palestinian in origin they are often recast in the Aramaic dialect of Yon. They presumably arose at a time when Yon was displacing the Palestinian Targum of the Prophets as the authoritative liturgical version, and represent an attempt to salvage some of the more interesting Palestinian traditions.

THE WRITINGS

According to *B.T. Megilla* 3a Yonatan ben Uzziel wanted to translate the Writings, but was forbidden: 'He (Yonatan ben Uzziel) further sought to reveal (by) a targum (the inner meaning) of the Writings, but *bat qol* went forth and said: Enough! What was the reason? — Because the fate of the Messiah is foretold in them.' This might suggest that in talmudic times no targum of the Writings was known, or in use, in Babylonia. Yet targumim for all the Writings are extant (with the predictable exception of Ezra, Pseuchim and Daniel), some of which are ascribed in rabbinic literature to the Babylonian scholar Rav Yosef. Thus *Sederim* 13:6 introduces a quotation from the *Targum Sheni* to Esther 3:1 with the words, 'Rav Yosef translated'. This may be yet another case of attributing an anonymous targum to the great Babylonian targum expert. Mediaeval writers, more reasonably, refer to the targumim of the Writings as 'Targum Yerushalmi'. The aggaic nature of many of these targumim, their basic dialect, and their translational equivalents tend to bear out this classification.

The targumim of the Writings have not been studied as intensively as the Pentateuchal targumim, and many fundamental textual problems still remain unresolved. There is evidence everywhere of great textual fluidity — a lack of textual stability reminiscent of the Pal. Targ. to the Pentateuch. Quite diverse recensions exist for most of the Writings. Targ. Lamentations is a case in point: at least two recensions of this are extant — one in the Yeminite mss (e.g. Or 1470 of the British Library, London), the other in western mss (e.g. Codex Urbinas 1 of the Vatican Library). Comparison of these two recensions leads to the unexpected conclusion that, if we ignore the superior vocalisation of the Yeminite mss, the western recension is arguably older and better than the Yeminite.¹⁰ This distinction between western and Yeminite recensions seems to extend to Targum Canticles and Targum Ochiei as well. Mss both of

¹⁰ This is argued at length by Alexander, 'Textual Tradition'.

western and Yeminite provenance exist for the other two Megillot (Ruth and Esther), but there the recensional picture is very unclear. The case of Esther is particularly difficult. Bomberg in his Rabbinic Bible distinguished two targumim to Esther — one of which he called 'Targum' and the other 'Targum Sheni'. There are Yeminite mss (and, apparently, some western mss) which do not observe this distinction, but present texts displaying a mixture of both recensions of the Targ. 'Esther'. There is also the so-called 'Third Targum' to Esther, found only in the Antwerp Polyglot (1569-72).

The targumim to Psalms, Job and Proverbs form an interconnected group. In Job, and to a lesser degree in Psalms, two (sometimes three or even four) targumim are given for a single verse, the first being more or less literal, the second, introduced by the formula 'Targum 'Aqra', being aggaic. These targumim were presumably created by deliberate and systematic fusion of originally different recensions. They mark the confluence of originally different streams of tradition. Targum Proverbs has significant affinities to the Peshitta of Proverbs. It is not clear whether the targum depends on the Peshitta, or the Peshitta on the targum, or whether both draw on a common source. No targum of Chronicles was known to the editors of the early Rabbinic Bibles and the Polyglots. The *editio princeps* did not appear till 1680-83.¹¹ Three mss are extant:

(1) E = the Erfurt Codex (now Ms. or. fol. 1210 and 1211, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Berlin);

(2) C = Ms. Or. 5.9, University Library, Cambridge;

(3) V = Codex Urbinas 1 (14th. Ebr. 1, Vatican Library).

A fourth ms was destroyed in 1945; all that survives is a charred block in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek in Dresden (Mscr. Dresd. A 46). The mss appear to represent two different recensions of the targum — one found in C and V, the other in E. Targum Chronicles shows strong affinities to the Pal. Targ. of the Pentateuch, particularly Ps-Y (cf. e.g. Targ. 1 Chr 14-24 with Ps-Y Gen 10:1-32).

In character the targumim of the Writings differ from each other. Proverbs and Chronicles are non-expansive. Psalms and Job contain numerous aggaic passages. However, it is in the Megillot that the greatest degree of paraphrase is to be found, particularly in Lamentations, Song of Songs and Esther. *Targum Sheni* to Esther is the most expansive of all the targumim.

The Character of the Targum

TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES

A literature as vast and diverse as the targumim defies easy generalization. One

¹¹ It was published by E.L. Beck at Augsburg. Beck used the Erfurt ms.

common approach to characterizing the targum is to identify and list its various translation-techniques. The implication is that these techniques in sum should suffice to define the phenomenon of 'targumism'. The following are some of the more important translation-techniques which have figured in the discussion:

(1) *Treatment of anthropomorphism*

The targum on many occasions softens anthropomorphic expressions used of God. E.g., Gen 11:5, 'The Lord came down to see the city and the tower'; Neol, 'The Glory of the Shekhinah of the Lord was revealed to see the city and the tower'; Gen 3:5, 'For God knows'; Neol, 'It is revealed and known before the Lord'; Exod 3:20, 'I will put forth my hand and smite the Egyptians'; Neol, 'I will send the plague of my punishments and put to death the Egyptians'; Exod 15:8, 'With the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up'; Ps-Y, 'By a Word [*memar*] from before you, the waters were transformed into heaps and heaps';

2. Gen 3:5, 'For God knows'; Neol, 'It is revealed and known before the Lord';
3. Exod 3:20, 'I will put forth my hand and smite the Egyptians'; Neol, 'I will send the plague of my punishments and put to death the Egyptians';
4. Exod 15:8, 'With the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up'; Ps-Y, 'By a Word [*memar*] from before you, the waters were transformed into heaps and heaps';
5. Gen 26:3, 'Sojourn in this land and I will be with you'; Ps-Y, 'Sojourn in this land and my Word [*memar*] will assist you'.

Since the time of Saadya it has been argued that such translations are motivated by doctrine and arise from a desire to defend the transcendence and spirituality of God. The problem is that the targum are not consistent; they also translate literally many anthropomorphic terms. No one has yet discovered a pattern in this inconsistency, or offered a convincing explanation for it. It is unlikely that targumim played a significant role. In rabbinic literature contemporary with the targumim God can be spoken of in strikingly anthropomorphic language. The translations quoted above are sonorous, and, presumably, intended, in a general way, to be reverential. They are characteristic of the style of the targum – to the extent that at certain points in targumic literature the style almost becomes parody.¹²

(2) *Actualisation*

The targumim have a tendency to 'update' Scripture. E.g. they regularly identify biblical peoples and places with peoples and places from their own times. All the Palestinian Targumim systematically interpret the names on the

¹² Klein gives the most balanced treatment of anthropomorphism in the targumim. See especially his *Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopausalisms*. Further, Hayward, *The Menara*, and Munoz Leon, *Dios Palabra and Gloria de la Shikina*.

Table of the Nations in Gen 10. Thus Gen 10:2 becomes in Ps-Y: 'The sons of Japhet were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras, and the names of their provinces are: Phrygia, Germania, Media, Macedonia, Bithynia, Asia, and Thrace'. The targumic treatment of Gen 10 gives a map of the world as known to the meturgemanim. In similar fashion they identify many of the places mentioned in the definition of the borders of the 'Promised Land' in Num 34:3-12, and so provide a targumic map of Erets Israel. Later institutions, such as the synagogue and the Beit ha-Midrash, are introduced into the narratives of the patriarchal period (see e.g. Ps-Y to Gen 9:27, and Neol to Gen 30:13). In general the phenomenon of actualisation may be compared to the practice in 17th century Dutch art of painting biblical scenes in 17th century Dutch costumes and settings.

(3) *Doublts*

In a doublet the original is translated twice. E.g. Gen 18:3: MT, 'If now I have found favour in your eyes'; Neol, 'If now I have found grace and favour in your sight'; Exod 15:1: MT, 'I will sing to the Lord'; Neol, 'Let us praise and extol before the Lord'. In these two cases one word in the original is involved. Sometimes it is a phrase. E.g. Gen 4:4: MT, 'The Lord favoured Abel'; Ps-Y, 'It was pleasing before the Lord, and the Lord favoured Abel'. There may be different reasons for doublets. It may be simply a matter of style. Or a pair of words may have come to form a cliché: for 'grace and favour' see Isai 2:17, and for 'praise and extol' see Dan 2:23. In some cases doublets can arise through the conflation of different textual traditions. In the doublets considered here the second element is synonymous with the first. There are, however, examples of double translation where the second element offers a different, perhaps even contradictory, rendering of the Hebrew from the first. Note Ps-Y's double rendering of the Hebrew *na'aso* in Gen 4:13 as 'tolerate', and 'forgive' (see further below). Such antithetic doublets are, perhaps, aimed at maximizing the sense of Scripture.

(4) *Associative translation*

Associative translation¹³ occurs where in translating text A the meturgeman is influenced by similar phraseology in text B. E.g. Exod 16:31 states with regard to manna that 'the taste of it was like wafers (made) with honey' [Hebrew: *ta'mo k'sappit bid'hal*]. Neol translates: 'its taste was like pancakes [*stain*] with honey'. The parallel text in Num 11:8 describes the taste of the manna as being 'like the taste of a cake baked with oil' [Hebrew: *k'ta'm l'sad ha'ssemen*]. There

¹³ See Klein, 'Associative and Complementary Translation', Klein's various essays analysing the translation techniques of the targumim are particularly commendable. Further, Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 4B, 37-261.

too Neof has, 'like the taste of pancakes with honey'. The psychological mechanism of associative translation is not always clear. In some cases the influence of the parallel text seems to be subconscious: there is no deliberate harmonisation; the parallel simply echoes at the back of the translator's mind. In other cases the association may be more calculated, perhaps triggered by a linguistic problem. In the example just given the meturgeman may have been puzzled by the expression *šad haššemen* in Num 11:8, and simply for convenience re-used the translation of the parallel passage in Exod 16:31.

(5) Complementary translation

This is a variant of associative translation. However, instead of an element from text A displacing the parallel element in text B, the parallel elements are combined and a composite translation worked out which is used in *both* texts. E.g. Cain is described in Gen 4:2 as 'a tiller of the soil' [*šbēd 'dāmā*]; Noah is called 'a man of the soil' [*šš 'dāmā*] in Gen 9:20. Ps-Y translates in both cases, 'a man tilling the soil'.

(6) Converse translation

In converse translation¹⁴ the targum appears to give a sense opposite to the plain meaning of Scripture. This frequently involves the insertion or deletion of a negative. E.g. Gen 4:14, 'Behold, you have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and I shall be hidden from your face'; Neof, 'Behold, you have banished me this day from the face of the earth, and it is not possible for me to be hidden from before you'. In some of these cases the targum has reversed the sense of Scripture by treating positive statements as questions without an interrogative particle, to which the implied answer is 'no'. Note Ps-Y's translation of Gen 4:14, 'Behold, you have banished me this day from the face of the earth: yet is it possible that I should be hidden from before you?' Converse translation in this instance is motivated by doctrinal concerns: the plain sense of Scripture appears to call into question the omniscience of God.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF TARGUM

Analysis of the translation-techniques of the targum is an important subject, but its limitations should be clearly recognized. It very rapidly ends up in subjectivity: we find ourselves trying to guess what was going on in the minds of the meturgemanim. (I note, particularly the problem of associative translation.) Moreover a definition of targumism in terms of translation-techniques can hardly be adequate because it fails to discriminate between texts, and it ignores fundamental questions of literary form. There are, in fact, quite different types

of translation found within the confines of the targumic corpus. A distinction is commonly drawn between 'paraphrastic' and 'literal' targumim, by measuring the relative lengths of the targumim against the original. That is not a very meaningful approach, for it obscures the fact that paraphrastic translations may differ fundamentally from each other, and that a paraphrastic and a literal targum may, formally speaking, have more in common than two paraphrastic targumim. There are more important classifications to be made. Two basic types of targum – type A and type B – should be distinguished. To illustrate their character we will present an extensive sample of each.

Type A Targum

TARGUM PSEUDO-YONATAN, GENESIS 4:3-16

4:3, MT: *It came to pass in process of time, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord.*

TARGUM: *It came to pass in process of time, on the fourteenth of Nisan, that Cain brought of the produce of the ground, of the seed of flax, an offering of first-fruits before the Lord.*

4:4, MT: *And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof, and the Lord favoured Abel and his offering.*

TARGUM: *And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof, and it was pleasing before the Lord, and the Lord favoured Abel and his offering.*

4:5, MT: *But Cain and his offering he did not favour. And Cain was very angry and his countenance fell.*

TARGUM: *But Cain and his offering he did not favour. And Cain was very angry and the expression of his countenance fell.*

4:6, MT: *The Lord said to Cain: Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen?*

TARGUM: *The Lord said to Cain: Why are you angry, and why has the expression of your countenance fallen?*

4:7, MT: *If you do well, is there not lifting up [šē'et]? But if you do not do well, sin crouches at the door; to you is its desire, but you shall rule over it.*

TARGUM: *If you will amend your deeds, shall not your guilt be forgiven you? But if you will not amend your deeds in this world, your sin is kept till the great day of judgement. Sin crouches at the doors of your heart, but into your hand I have given authority over the evil inclination; to you shall be its desire, but you shall rule over it, whether to act justly or to sin.*

4:8, MT: *And Cain said to Abel his brother . . . And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and killed him.*

¹⁴ Klein, 'Converse Translation'.

TARGUM: *Cain said to Abel his brother: Come, let us both go out into the field. And it came to pass, when they had gone out, both of them, into the field, that Cain answered and said to Abel: I see that the world has been created through mercy, but it is not ordered according to the fruit of good deeds; and that there is partiality in judgement. Otherwise why was your offering accepted with favour, whereas my offering was not accepted from me with favour? Abel answered and said to Cain: The world has been created through mercy, and it is ordered according to the fruit of good deeds, and there is no partiality in judgement. It is because the fruit of my deeds was better than yours and preferable to yours that my offering was accepted with favour. Cain answered and said to Abel: There is no judgement, no judge, no other world; there is no fair reward given to the righteous nor punishment exacted from the wicked. Abel answered and said to Cain: There is judgement, there is a judge, and another world; there is a fair reward given to the righteous and punishment exacted from the wicked. On account of these matters they were quarreling in the open field, and Cain rose up against Abel his brother, drove a stone into his forehead, and killed him.*

4:9, MT: *The Lord said to Cain: Where is Abel your brother? He said: I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?*

TARGUM: *The Lord said to Cain: Where is Abel your brother? He said: I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?*

4:10, MT: *He said: What have you done? The voice of the bloods of your brother cries to me from the ground.*

TARGUM: *He said: What have you done? The voice of the bloods of the killing of your brother that were swallowed up in the clay cry before me from the ground.*

4:11, MT: *And now cursed are you from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive the bloods of your brother from your hand.*

TARGUM: *And now, because you have killed him, cursed are you from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive the bloods of your brother from your hand.*

4:12, MT: *When you cultivate the ground, it shall not henceforth yield its strength to you; a fugitive and a wanderer shall you be in the earth.*

TARGUM: *When you cultivate the earth, it shall not henceforth yield the strength of its fruits to you; a fugitive and a wanderer shall you be in the earth.*

4:13, MT: *Cain said to the Lord: My sin is too great to bear.*

TARGUM: *Cain said before the Lord: My rebellion is far too great to be borne, yet before you is the power to forgive it.*

4:14, MT: *Behold, you have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and I shall be hidden from your face. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that anyone finding me will kill me.*

TARGUM: *Behold, you have banished me this day from the face of the earth; yet is it possible that I should be hidden from before you? And if I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth, any just man who will find me will kill me.*

4:15, MT: *The Lord said to him: Therefore, whoever kills Cain, sevenfold shall vengeance be exacted from him. And the Lord set for Cain a sign, lest anyone finding him should strike him.*

TARGUM: *The Lord said to him: Therefore, whoever, for seven generations, kills Cain, punishment shall be exacted from him. And the Lord inscribed upon the face of Cain a letter from the great and glorious Name, so that anyone who found him, when he saw it, should not kill him.*

4:16, MT: *And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of wandering, before [qdm] Eden.*

TARGUM: *And Cain went out from before the Lord, and dwelt in the land of the wandering of his exile, which had been made for him from of old [milleqadmin], like the Garden of Eden.*

Even a cursory reading of this passage from Pseudo-Yonatan will show that it does not offer a translation of the Hebrew, in any normal sense of that term: it is a paraphrase. Two important points about the nature of this paraphrase should be noted. *First*, when expansions occur they are presented in such a way that they can be bracketed out, leaving behind a viable one-to-one rendering of the original. This is the distinguishing characteristic of type A targum: it consists of a base translation + detachable glosses. In the targum translation above the base translation is indicated by the use of italics. *Second*, the expansions are unevenly distributed. Sections of the text are rendered more or less literally; others are expanded many times over. The most striking expansion is at verse 8. The effect of this within the targumic retelling of the story is to focus attention on this point of the narrative. The meturgeman saw the events of verse 8 as marking a crisis in the unfolding drama, as holding the key to its meaning. The additions in Ps-Y to Genesis 22:10 and 14 perform a similar literary function in the targumic version of the Akedah.

The additions at Gen 4:8 have been generated by a lacuna in the biblical narrative: the Bible fails to tell us what happened in the field which led to Cain murdering Abel. The targum supplies the omission: Cain and Abel had an argument – a prefatory theological argument about the relationship between the divine attributes of mercy (*rahumim*) and justice (*din*). The narrative lacuna in the Bible provides the meturgeman with the chance to read into Scripture some of his own theological concepts. Abel takes the classic rabbinic view that in his governance of the world God holds justice and mercy in balance. If Abel has been favoured, it is because God is rewarding his good deeds. Cain on the other hand denies that justice operates: there is only mercy, which, in the absence of the counterweight of justice, becomes perverted into partiality and

favouritism. God has accepted Abel's sacrifice on an arbitrary whim. By introducing this debate the meturgeman universalizes the story: Abel becomes the prototype of the martyr who dies for the profession of his faith; Cain the prototype of the heretic who persecutes the faithful. Some have detected an anti-Sadducean polemic here.¹⁵ This is speculative. There is only one element in Cain's position which is arguably distinctively Sadducean, viz. the denial of the world to come. But it should be noted that there is no stress on this: it comes in incidentally, in the context of the denial of divine justice.

At a number of other points the targum fills in narrative lacunae.

(1) The Bible fails to give a satisfactory reason why Abel's offering was accepted, and Cain's rejected, thus leaving dangerously open the possibility that God acted arbitrarily. Two small additions in the targum of verse 1 are addressed to this problem. The targum asserts that the events took place on the 14th of Nisan, i.e. at the time of Passover, and that the offering brought by Cain was 'the seed of flax'. The implication is that Cain and Abel were celebrating a primitive Passover: Abel's offering was appropriate ('the firstlings of the flock'), but Cain's was not ('produce of the ground').

(2) At the beginning of verse 8 the masoretic text states that 'Cain said to Abel his brother', but does not tell us what he said. The targum renders: 'Cain said to Abel his brother: Come, let us both go out into the field'. It is possible that the meturgeman actually had a Hebrew text which read the additional words (cf. LXX and Peshitta); the MT may simply be defective. In this case we would have a textual rather than a narrative lacuna. However, it is equally possible that the meturgeman had the MT before him and deduced the missing words from the context.

(3) At the end of verse 8 the targum supplements the Bible by suggesting *how* Cain killed Abel: 'he drove a stone into his forehead'. This tradition, which may have been influenced by a memory of Exod 21:18 ('if men contend, and one smites the other with a stone . . .'), is as old as *Jub* 4:31.

(4) The targum identifies the 'sign' which the Lord set for Cain (verse 15) as a letter from the 'great and glorious Name' (= the Tetragrammaton), which God inscribed on his face (i.e. presumably on his forehead). The letter of the divine name acted like an amulet to shield him from harm.

In each of these instances the meturgeman has supplied the sort of circumstantial detail which an audience would demand from a retelling of the Bible story, though at the same time he never misses an opportunity to impose his own theology on the text. At other points he expands the text to cope with more immediate exegetical problems. Verse 7 is a case in point. The meturgeman produces a coherent, and in its way convincing, resolution of this *crux interpretum*. He takes the ambiguous *š'ēt* as = *š'ēt 'āwōn*, 'removal of guilt', i.e. forgiveness (cf. Psalm 85:3). So the sense of the first part of the verse becomes: If you amend your ways – in effect, if you repent – you will be forgiven. The

converse is then added: If you do *not* repent, your sins will be judged on the day of judgement. 'Sin crouching at the door' is read as an image of temptation – as an allusion to the evil inclination *yeyer ha-ra'*. The 'doors' are the doors of the heart. Sin desires to enter and dominate, but it lies entirely within man's power whether he does good or evil. Once again the meturgeman has skilfully worked his own ideas into the text. In this case it is the doctrine of the two inclinations, in particular the notion that man can subdue the evil inclination and choose to do good.

Repentance is a major motif in the targum's reading of the story. Cain is a notable example of repentance, as well as of heresy. At verse 13 Cain acknowledges the heinousness of his crime: 'My rebellion is far too great to be borne'. The sense appears to be that it is intolerable to *God*, as the translation 'rebellion' (*merda*) for the Hebrew *'āwōn* indicates. Yet God's power of forgiveness transcends even Cain's sin. Verse 13 is read as a prayer for pardon. In effect it involves a double rendering of the Hebrew *n'sā* – as 'bear/tolerate' and as 'forgive'. Cain's repentance explains the suspension of divine punishment 'for seven generations' (perhaps to allow him to prove the sincerity of his change of heart), and the protection of the divine name – a privilege which would not have been granted to an impenitent scoundrel (cf. *Canticles Rabba* 4:12, 2: 'The weapons which were given to them at Horeb had the ineffable Name inscribed on them, and when they sinned it was taken away from them'). The Hebrew *šib'āṭayim* ('sevenfold') in verse 15 has been interpreted as 'for seven generations', and, contrary to the masoretic accentuation, has been joined with the preceding phrase ('whoever kills'), rather than with the following verb ('punishment shall be exacted'). That this is the intention of the targum becomes clear from Ps-Y to Gen 4:24: 'If for Cain who sinned and returned in repentance, (judgement) was suspended for seven generations, for Lamech, the son of his son, who did not sin, it is right that (judgement) should remain in suspense for seventy-seven generations.'

It is not possible to go into detail here as to Ps-Y's relationship to the other targumim of this passage. Two brief notes must suffice.

(1) At verse 13 the sense of the targum is not immediately clear. The meaning is probably *not* that the land of Cain's exile was one of the special things, like the Garden of Eden, created at the beginning of the world.¹⁶ Rather the idea is that before Cain's sin the earth was like the Garden of Eden. His sin had a disastrous effect on nature. God's curse on the earth (Gen 3:17-18) was suspended, and only became operative after the murder of Abel. The meturgeman saw a parallel between Cain's exile and Adam's expulsion from Paradise, between the curse of Gen 3:17-18 and the curse of Gen 4:12. The sense of the targum then is: Cain dwelt in the land of his exile, which had been to him formerly like the Garden of Eden. Some of the other targumim are more explicit: 'Cain went out

¹⁶ As argued by Bowker, 'Haggadah in the Targum Onkelos', 54-55. The parallel with Ps-Y Gen 2:8 is not compelling.

¹⁵ Isenberg, 'An Anti-Sadducee Polemic'.

from before the Lord and dwelt as an exile and a wanderer in the land east of the Garden of Eden. Until he killed Abel the earth had borne him fruit like the fruit of the Garden of Eden, but after he sinned and killed Abel, it changed and bore him thorns and thistles' (Neof). Ps-Y's interpretation is allusive. The obscurity of its translation has come about because it is abbreviating a fuller tradition.

(2) At verse 10 Ps-Y surprisingly does not exploit the plural 'bloods' (*dāmīm*). There was an old and widespread tradition (found in *M. Sanhedrin* 4:5, and in the other targumim to this verse) that the plural alludes to Abel's righteous progeny whom Cain aborted by murdering his brother. The omission is surely significant, even though the precise reason for it is unclear. Perhaps the meturgeman did not want to blacken Cain too much, and so make his repentance and forgiveness less plausible.¹⁷

Type B Targum

Type B targum, like type A, is paraphrastic, but it displays a fundamental difference in form. In type A a viable one-to-one translation of the Hebrew can be extracted from the paraphrase by bracketing out the additions. In type B a base translation cannot be recovered: the translation is dissolved in the paraphrase. Type B targum may be illustrated from the description of the body of the beloved in Canticles 5:10-16.

TARGUM CANTICLES 5:10-16

5:10, MT: *dōdī ṣāḥ w'ādōm dōgūl mēr'bhā.*

My beloved is white and ruddy, pre-eminent above ten thousand.

TARGUM: Then began the Assembly of Israel to speak of the praise of the Lord of the Universe, and thus she said: That *God do I desire* to serve who in the day is wrapped in a robe *white* as snow, and is occupied with the Twenty Four Books – the words of the Law, and the words of the Prophets and the Writings; and by night he is occupied with the six Orders of the Mishna. The splendour of the glory of his face shines like fire, on account of (his) great wisdom and powers of argument, for he promulgates new decisions every day, and he will disclose them to his people on the Great Day. And his *banner* [*tiqṣa*] is over *ten thousand* myriads of angels who minister before him.

5:11, MT: *rōšō keṭem pāz q'wussōtāyw taltallīm š'hōrōt l'ā'ōrēb.*

His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are curled, and black as a raven.

TARGUM: *His head* is the Law, which is more precious than *pure gold*; and [*his locks are*] the interpretation of the Words (of the Law), in which are *heaped up*

¹⁷ The best discussion of this passage is Vermes, 'Targumic Versions'. For an earlier treatment see Grelot, 'Les Targums du Pentateuque'.

reasons and precepts. To those who keep them, they are *white* as snow, but to those who do not keep them, they are *black* like the face of the raven.

5:12, MT: *'ēnāyw k'yōnīm 'al-'piqē māyim rōh'sōt beḥālālē yōš'ḥōt 'al-millē't.*

His eyes are like doves beside the water-brooks; washed with milk, and fitly set.

TARGUM: *His eyes* look constantly upon Jerusalem, to do good to her and to bless her, from the beginning of the year to its end (*like doves* that stand and look at *fountains of water*) – through the merit of those *sitting* in the Sanhedrin, who busy themselves with the Law, and make justice shine/flow [*manḥawin*], so that it is smooth like *milk*, and (through the merit) of those sitting in the Houses of Study, who are circumspect in judgement, till they reach a decision to acquit or to condemn.

5:13, MT: *l'hāyēw ka'rūgaṭ habbōšēn migd'lōt merqā'īm šip'lotāyw šōšannīm nōf'pōt mōr 'ōbēr.*

His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as banks of sweet herbs; his lips are as lilies, dropping with flowing myrrh.

TARGUM: The *two tablets* [*luḥe*] of stone which he gave to his people are written in ten lines, similar to the lines in a *spice-garden*, and produce [*merabbim*] subtleties just as the garden produces *spices*. And the *lips* of his sages, who busy themselves with the Law, *drip* reasons on every side, and the utterance of their mouths is as *choice myrrh*.

5:14, MT: *yōdāyw g'lilē zāḥab m'mullā'īm battaršiš mē'āyw 'ešet šēn m'ullepeṭ sappīrīm.*

His hands are as rods of gold set with beryl; his body is as polished ivory overlaid with sapphires.

TARGUM: The *twelve tribes* of his servant Jacob were *enrolled* [*gelilan*] upon the breast plate, the *golden* ornament of holiness – engraved upon twelve gems, along with the three Patriarchs of the world, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Reuben was engraved on carnelian; Simeon was engraved on topaz; Levi was engraved on smaragd; Judah was engraved on carbuncle; Dan was engraved on sapphire; Issachar was engraved on agate; Naphthali was engraved on amethyst; Zebulun was engraved on beryl; Joseph was engraved on onyx; Benjamin was engraved on jasper. (These were) like the twelve signs of the zodiac, shining like a *lantern* [*ašašit*], resplendent in their workmanship as elephant's *tusk*, and shining like *sapphires*.

5:15, MT: *šōqāyw 'ammūdē šēš m'yussādīm 'al-'adnē-pāz mar'ehū kall'bānōn beḥūr kā'rāzīm.*

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold; his aspect is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

TARGUM: *The righteous are the pillars of the world, resting on supports of fine gold, that is to say, on the words of the Law with which they busy themselves, and by means of which they admonish the people of the House of Israel to do his will. Comely is he, and filled with compassion towards them as an Ancient One, and he makes the guilt of the House of Israel white as snow. He is ready to wage triumphant war against the nations who transgress his word, like a young man, mighty and strong as cedars.*

5:16, MT: *hikko mam'raqqim w'kullô mal'maddim zeh dôdî v'zeh rê'î b'nôt y'rûsâlâyim.*

His mouth is most sweet; yea he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

TARGUM: *The words of his palate are sweet as honey, and all his precepts are more desirable to his sages than gold or silver. This is the praise of God, my beloved, and this is the strength of the might of the Lord, my friend, O you prophets, who prophesy in Jerusalem.*

The targum's reading of the original is highly coherent. Following the general lines of rabbinic exegesis of Canticles, the speaker is taken as the Assembly of Israel, the Beloved as God. The emphasis in the targum is notably unmystical: the relationship between God and Israel is defined in classic fashion in terms of Tora and commandments. Like much of targum Canticles, this whole passage is presented as a paean of praise to the study of the Oral and Written Law. God himself sets an example: he spends the day studying Scripture, and the night studying Mishna!

At first sight the targum appears untrammelled. Closer analysis suggests that behind it lies a disciplined and exact exegesis of the biblical text. Each element in the original is taken as a symbol or cypher to be decoded and arranged in a coherent story, within the broad hermeneutical perspective that the text is an allegorical statement about God's relationship to Israel through Tora. Canticles 5:13 illustrates the method. 'Cheeks' (*Phâyayim*) in the Hebrew is interpreted, on the basis of similarity of sound, as alluding to the 'two tablets (*luhot*) of the Law'. But how can the tablets of the Law be like 'a bed of spices'? The comparison must be between the orderly rows of plants in the herb-garden, and the lines of writing on the tablets. The meturgeman's interpretation of the next word seems to turn on a repointing: for the masoretic *migd'lôt* he reads *m'gadd'lôt*, 'producing'. *Mergâhîm* is then given a twofold sense: literally as 'spices', and allegorically as 'the subtleties of the Law'. Hence: 'The Law produces subtleties, just as a herb-garden produces spices'. God's 'lips' are taken naturally as referring to his spokesmen, the Sages, and the 'myrrh' which flows from the lips as the pronouncements of the Sages on matters of Law.

The exegesis underlying the targum is not always obvious. Sometimes it appears to ignore elements in the original. At other times, where the correspondence between the targum and the Hebrew is fairly certain, the basis of the

correspondence is not clear. E.g. in Targum Canticles 5:13 what has happened to the biblical 'lilies (*šôšannim*)'? One suspects it is represented by 'the Law' in the phrase 'who busy themselves with the Law'. But on what grounds has this equation been made? *Canticles Rabba* 5:13, 1 comments: '*His lips are as lilies*: This is the scholar who is fluent in his Mishna'. This clearly implies a correspondence between *šôšanna* and *mišna*. Perhaps a similar idea lies behind Targum Canticles, but we cannot be sure. It is similarly unclear why in verse 11, 'head' is equated with 'Law', and 'locks' with 'the interpretation' of the Law, or why in verse 14, 'the twelve tribes of his servant Jacob' should stand against 'his hands'. The reason for these uncertainties is simple. The meturgeman has not made clear his exegetical reasoning, and he has not done so because he remained conscious that, despite the large element of paraphrase which he was introducing, he was producing a text in the form of a translation, not in the form of a midrash. Sometimes he sails close to midrashic form, as at the beginning of verse 11, but his discipline and restraint are quite remarkable. There are a sufficient number of clear correspondences between the targum and the original (shown in italics in the targum translation above) to reveal the basic pattern: each element of the original is taken in its proper order and expounded, and *all* elements of the original are represented. In those cases where elements appear to be 'lost', we may give the meturgeman the benefit of the doubt. It is simply due to our ignorance of the underlying exegetical processes. So then, type B targum, as to general method, turns out to be similar to type A: both types aim to exegete every element in the biblical text in proper, serial order. The difference comes down in the end to one of form. From type A a straightforward, one-to-one rendering can be extracted; from type B it cannot: the original is dissolved in the paraphrase.

The ingenuity and learning of the meturgeman in Targum Canticles should not be underestimated. To sustain this sort of paraphrase over the whole book is a *tour de force*. Targum Canticles is not 'folk' literature; it is a highly learned book, displaying a degree of coherence which suggests that the basic scheme must have been worked out by a single author. Who he was, or where and when he lived it is impossible to say. His originality is shown when we compare his targum with the great compendium of rabbinic interpretation on Canticles, *Canticles Rabba*. There are overlaps between the two works: that is hardly surprising. More significant are the numerous cases where Targum Canticles offers an interpretation *not* found in *Canticles Rabba*. E.g. *Canticles Rabba* is totally unaware of the targum's view that Canticles 5:14 alludes to the high priest's breast-plate, engraved with the names of the twelve tribes. Though Targum Canticles and *Canticles Rabba* drew at certain points on a common tradition of exegesis, it is unlikely that either work is directly dependent on the other.

Sitz im Leben

In what circumstances did these Aramaic versions of the Bible originate, and how were they used? These questions bring us to the *Sitz im Leben* of the targum.

The targum was a flourishing institution in the period of the Talmud, and a large number of statements scattered through classic rabbinic literature reveal something of its character, use and purpose. These statements must be treated with caution: they are often prescriptive, i.e. they indicate what the rabbinic authorities thought *ought* to happen rather than what was in actual fact the case, and they come from different periods and diverse regions. But they are our only real evidence on the *Sitz im Leben* of the targum, and they must be the starting-point of any discussion on this subject. Rabbinic literature points to the use of the targum in three distinct settings: (a) synagogue; (b) private devotion; (c) school.¹⁸

The primary setting for the targum was the synagogue. The majority of the rabbinic references relate to its use in this context. It formed part of the institution of the public reading of the Tora. As the biblical lessons were read out (both Tora and Haftara) they were simultaneously rendered into Aramaic. The rabbinic rules for the delivery of the targum express some very clear ideas as to the targum's nature and function. Targum belonged to the category of Oral Law (*Tora she-be'al pe*) and the way in which it was to be delivered neatly illustrates the rabbinic view of the relationship between Oral and Written Tora (*Tora she-bikhtav*). Every effort had to be made to avoid confusing the targum with the written text of Scripture. The Scripture reader and the translator (*meturgeman*, *turgeman*, *ha-metargem*) must be two different people. The Scripture reader had to be clearly seen to be *reading* from the scroll; the translator had to recite the targum from memory: he was not allowed to use a written text in synagogue, nor was he permitted to glance at the Tora scroll – 'lest the people should say that the translation is written in the Tora'.¹⁹ Nor was the reader allowed to prompt him if he faltered. Translation was simultaneous, but targum was not allowed to overlay Scripture: Scripture and targum were delivered alternately; in the case of the Pentateuch, each verse of Scripture was followed by the corresponding verse of targum, in the case of the Prophets up to three verses could be read before the targum was given.

The underlying purpose of these rules is obviously to keep Scripture and targum apart. At the same time a contrary tendency can be observed – to bring Scripture and targum closely together. The reader and translator stood side by

side. Only small portions of the original were read against the translation, and while translation and original were not allowed to overlap, ideally there should be no pause between Scripture and targum; Scripture and targum were intended to form one continuous, seamless text; they interlocked to make a single unit. The rabbinic view of the function of the targum does not envisage it as an independent version: targum should always stand in the presence of Scripture; original and translation should always be juxtaposed and live in dialectical tension. Again a twofold purpose is discernible. On the one hand the Rabbis were concerned to prevent targum taking off into a life of its own, and so, possibly, replacing Scripture: Scripture had absolute priority; targum was only a bridge to the understanding of Scripture. Once one had crossed over to a secure understanding of Scripture, the bridge could, in theory, be ignored. On the other hand targum offered a useful means of imposing a certain reading on Scripture, without resorting to the drastic expedient of altering the text of the original – a reading that would be in keeping with rabbinic theology and that would exclude other readings (e.g. Christian) of which the Rabbis disapproved. The fact that Scripture was in Hebrew and the targum in Aramaic was a help. The two texts were easily distinguished on linguistic grounds, so in bringing targum close to Scripture there was little danger of one being confused with the other.

There is clear evidence that the Rabbis viewed the targum as more than translation in any narrow sense: its purpose was to exegete and to interpret Scripture. Significantly they traced the inauguration of the targum back not to Sinai, but to the re-presentation of the Law to Israel by Ezra after the exile in the square before the Water Gate (Nehemiah 8):

What is the Scriptural justification (*minnayin*) for the targum? R. Zeira said in the name of Rav Hananel: *And they read from the book, from the Law of God* – this refers to Scripture; *clearly [m'pōrās]* – this refers to targum; *and they gave the sense* – this refers to the accents; *so that the people understood the reading* – this refers to the traditional text; some say it means the decisions, others the beginnings of the verses. (*P.T. Megilla* 74d)

The targum, then, makes the Scripture 'clear' (*m'pōrās*): it contains an element of *perush*. The *meturgeman* performs a Levitical role. The sense of the word 'targum' itself should be noted: its semantic field corresponds closely to that of the Latin *interpretatio*, i.e. it covers both *translation* from one language into another, and *explanation* of a text in the same language. When Joseph was feigning ignorance of Hebrew he spoke to his brothers through a *meturgeman* (Neof and Ps-Y Gen 42:23). Equally Aaron, when acting as Moses' spokesman to Pharaoh and the Israelites, is referred to as Moses' *meturgeman* (Neof Exod 7:1, cf. *Exodus Rabba* 8:3). All the evidence suggests that both these elements of *interpretatio* – translation and commentary – were meant to be present in the targum.

¹⁸ See Alexander, 'Rabbinic Rules', and York, 'The Targum in the Synagogue and in the School'. The major rabbinic references on the use of the targum in synagogue are: *M. Megilla* 4:4, 6; *T. Megilla* 4(3):20, 21; *P.T. Megilla* 74d, 75a; *B.T. Megilla* 21b, 23a/b, 32a; *B.T. Berakhot* 45a; *B.T. Sota* 39b; *Pesikta Rabboti* 5 (p. 14a/b) = *Tanhuma Buber* II, 87-88 (*Wayera* 6). The rules are summarized by Maimonides in *Hilkhot Tefilla*, 12:10-14. The *locus classicus* for the targum in school is *Sifrei Deut.* 161, p. 211.

¹⁹ *B.T. Megilla* 32a.

The use of the targum in other settings – in private devotion and in school – is closely related to its basic liturgical use in synagogue. The *locus classicus* for the use of targum in private devotion is *B. T. Berakhot* 8a (end): 'Rav Huna bar Yehuda said in the name of Rabbi Ammi: A man should always complete his *parashiyot* with the congregation – twice in the Hebrew and once in the Targum'. The idea is that one should prepare oneself in the privacy of one's own home to hear the public reading of Tora in synagogue by going through the relevant section both in the Hebrew original and in the Aramaic translation. The aim presumably was to be able to follow the public reading with understanding. Besides being able better to understand the Hebrew one would have been in a position to vet the targum – a point to which we shall return presently. Note once again, as with the liturgical presentation of targum in synagogue, Scripture and targum are juxtaposed, a relationship of interdependence is established. However, the priority of Scripture is maintained by having it read twice, as against the one reading of the targum.

The staple of primary education in the school (*beit ha-sefer*) was the Hebrew Bible. The Bible was approached through the targum. Besides giving the pupils an approved interpretation of the original, the targum would have played a fundamental role in the acquisition of Hebrew by forming a bridge between the vernacular and the sacred tongue. Yet again the fundamental fact shines through: the targum was meant to function only side by side with Scripture. The school setting was probably of vital importance for the transmission of the targum. The targum was largely passed on by oral means. Though there seems to have been no strong objection to the use of written texts of the targum in private devotion or in school, it is unlikely that many copies of the targum would have been in circulation. In general books were rare and expensive. Apart from the schoolmaster few would have owned a copy of the targum. Following normal paedagogical practice the targum would have been learned off by heart in school. It was there that boys first acquired a knowledge of the text which they might later be called upon to recite in synagogue.

Rabbinic literature has little to tell us as to who was responsible for the targumim, or when they originated. The tradition noted earlier about the inauguration of the targum in the time of Ezra should be seen more as a statement about the nature and function of the targum than as straightforward historical fact. The traditions attributing the Pentateuchal Targum to Onkelos, the Prophetic Targum to Yonatan ben Uzziel, and the targumim of several of the Writings to Rav Yosef, are, as we saw, totally unreliable. One point, however, is clear: the rabbinic authorities were aware of the influence these versions could exert, and attempted to control not only the manner of their delivery but their content as well. It was forbidden to translate certain sensitive portions of Scripture, and certain translations were explicitly censured. The congregation was encouraged publicly to rebuke or to silence a translator who

gave an unauthorized translation.²⁰ This should be seen in the light of the fact that all the males would have learned the targum in school, and would have refreshed their memories of it before coming to synagogue, if Rabbi Ammi's rule ('twice in Scripture, once in targum') was at all widely observed. The way in which the targum was transmitted would have made strict standardization difficult. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the *meturgeman* would have been free to translate more or less as he chose. The targum was a 'text', and its content would have been fairly comprehensively determined by tradition.

How do the extant targumim relate to the targum in the talmudic period as reflected in classic rabbinic literature? Can we assume that the texts as they now stand go back to the talmudic period and that they represent direct transcripts of targumim actually used in synagogue? There is clear evidence that at least some of the extant texts did play a liturgical role. Thus, a number of the Cairo Geniza mss have been marked with the *sidrot* for the triennial lectionary cycle, and it is natural to assume that the Festival Collections of targumim, consisting exclusively of readings for festivals and special Sabbaths, were put together for liturgical use. The Aramaic poems, such as *Ezra Moshe* clearly formed part of the liturgy, and, as we have seen, they are often intimately bound up with the targum. Onk and Yon were certainly recited in synagogue, and the liturgical use of a number of other targumim has continued in Yemenite synagogues down to the present day. There can be no doubt that most of our texts are ancient (the oldest Cairo Geniza fragments date to the 8th/9th century), and that they give us access, sometimes very directly, to the targum as delivered in the old synagogue in the talmudic era. But it would be wrong to generalize: not all the targumim had a liturgical role, and it is unwarranted to make liturgical use integral to the definition of targum. Some simple facts should be borne in mind. Yon covers the whole of both the Former and the Latter Prophets, despite the fact that only part of the second division of the canon would ever have been read in synagogue. A similar situation pertains in the Writings: there are, for example, targumim for Job and Proverbs, even though it is hard to imagine that these books had a liturgical use. The targum had a role in the Beit ha-Midrash, which, though overshadowed by its synagogue role, was not dependent on it. The targumim continued to be copied, and, possibly augmented and altered, in the middle ages, long after the targum had ceased to function as a liturgical version in most synagogues. They were valued as convenient repositories of traditional exegesis, as readings of Scripture. They had a life as purely written texts. Targum became solely a literary genre. Indeed, it is not inconceivable that some of the later targumim were composed in the early middle ages purely for private use.

²⁰ See Alexander, 'Rabbinic Lists'. The main rabbinic references are: *M. Megilla* 4:9, 10; *T. Megilla* 4:3:31; *B. T. Megilla* 25a b.

History of the Targumim

INTERRELATIONSHIPS

In attempting to reconstruct the history of the targumim the first point to be clarified is the interrelationship of the texts. Most of the work done on this subject relates to the Pentateuchal targumim, which have been subjected to detailed internal analysis and synoptic comparison. As our survey indicated the Pentateuchal targumim fall into two groups: group 1 consists of Onk; group 2 of Neof, Ps-Y, FT, CG and the other representatives of the Palestinian Targum. The distinction between the groups has to do partly with the nature of the translation: Onk is on the whole literal, whereas the Palestinian Targumim tend to be paraphrastic. It is also, in part, a distinction as to dialect: Onk is in a type of Standard Literary Aramaic²¹; the Palestinian Targumim display a number of varieties of Galilean Aramaic. A third factor is provenance: Onk was the official targum of Babylonia, and there is good evidence that it reached its present form there; the Palestinian Targumim, as their name suggests, circulated in Palestine. However the distinction as to provenance should not be pushed too far, for analysis suggests that Onk is, in fact, Palestinian in origin. The dialect of Onk is not Babylonian (that is to say, it differs from that in the Babylonian Talmud). Though as a type of Standard Literary Aramaic it could, in principle, have been written either in the east or the west, it has been shown to display certain linguistic traits which point to a western origin.²² Its Aramaic is close to that of the *Genesis Apocryphon* from Qumran. Moreover, Onk, though generally non-expansive, does contain a certain amount of aggada. This aggada, which as to content appears to be of Palestinian origin, is often presented in a highly allusive form which suggests that a fuller tradition is being abridged.²³ The fuller tradition is frequently attested in the Pal. Targ. The most economical explanation of the facts is that Onk has evolved from a fuller Palestinian Targum, which was shortened, perhaps with a view to bringing it into closer conformity to the Hebrew text. It should be noted that, although mistaken as to the precise authorship of the targum, Babylonian tradition does recognize Onk as a product of the west. The interrelationships of the Pentateuchal targumim are displayed on Fig. 1.

The situation in the second division of the canon is probably analogous. Yon, the official targum of Babylonia is in a dialect similar, if not identical to, that on Onk²⁴, and like Onk it probably originated in the west. The Toseftot, despite

²¹ On the character of this type of Aramaic see Greenfield, 'Standard Literary Aramaic'.

²² See Kutscher, 'The Language', especially p. 10.

²³ This is argued persuasively by Vermes, 'Haggadah in the Onkelos Targum'. See further Kuiper, *The Pseudo-Jonathan Targum*. The aggada is not exclusive to the targumim, so it could be argued that Onk has drawn independently on the same aggadic traditions as the Palestinian Targumim. However, the hypothesis that it is shortening a fuller Pal. Targ. is more economical.

²⁴ For a discussion see, Tal, *The Language of the Targum of the Former Prophets*.

attempts to recast them in the dialect of Yon, were originally in Galilean Aramaic, and are remnants of a Pal. Targ. similar to the Pal. Targ. of the Pentateuch.

As for the third division of the canon, a distinction between 'Babylonian' and 'Palestinian' does not seem to apply: all the texts are Palestinian in origin. There are, indeed, different recensions extant of the various books, analogous perhaps to the different recensions of the Pal. Targ. to the Pentateuch, but the requisite work has not yet been done to clarify their interrelationships. As was indicated earlier, a grouping of the targumim of the Writings, on the basis of translation-equivalents and style, is widely recognized: three groups are distinguished: (1) the Five Megillot; (2) Job, Psalms and Proverbs; (3) Targum Chronicles. Affinities between some of the targumim of the Writings, and the targumim of the Pentateuch and the Prophets, have been clearly demonstrated: e.g. Targ. Chron. in dialect, translation-equivalents and aggada is particularly close to Ps-Y. However, it is hard to establish in such cases which text has priority, and one should be careful not to jump to conclusions.

DATING CRITERIA

Literary analysis and synoptic comparison establish the genealogical relationships between the targumim, and give some indication as to their relative dates. They do not, however, furnish us with absolute dates. The wide divergence of opinion among the experts shows that dating the individual targumim is by no means an exact science. It simply has to be conceded that, in the case of the Aramaic targumim, objective dating criteria (apart from the *terminus ante quem* provided by the dates of the MSS) simply do not exist. The major problem lies with the extremely fluid nature of the texts. Apart from Onk and Yon there is little to suggest that any of the texts was redacted or standardized at a definite point in time. Most of the texts underwent change and development over long periods, with the result that they are all composite – amalgams of elements of very different date. Few of the targumim have an absolute date.

Despite the difficulties there are a number of methods which have been widely applied to the problem of the dating of the targumim. Three in particular are worthy of note – analysis of the aggada, analysis of the halakha, and analysis of the geographic equivalents in the targumim. It should be stressed that none of these methods can yield an absolute date. However, if used with circumspection they do provide clues as to the history of the targumim.

ANALYSIS OF AGGADA. It can often be established from datable early Jewish texts (such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, Josephus, and certain of the Pseudepigrapha) how early a given aggadic tradition was current. If it can be shown that a targum contains a large number of early traditions, then there is at least a *prima facie* case for seeing a stratum of that targum as early. This method can be refined in a number of ways. A more rigorous approach is to trace how the

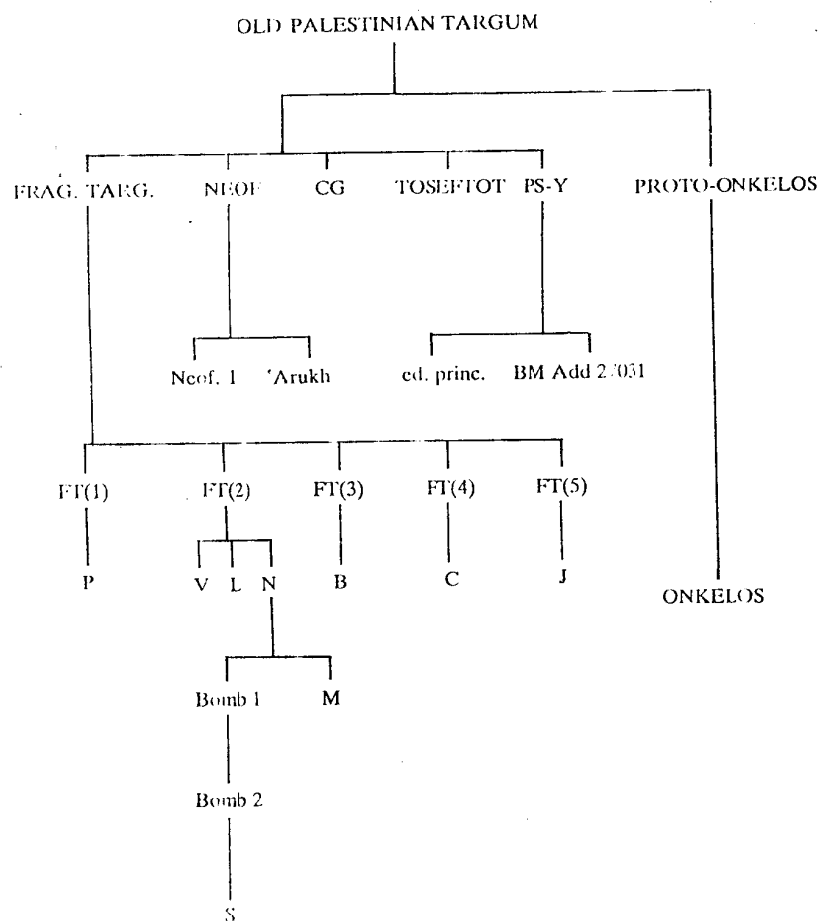


Fig. 1. The genealogical relationships between the recensions and manuscripts of the pentateuchal targumim.

interpretation of a particular biblical verse develops through early Jewish and Christian literature – and then find out where the targumic exposition fits into this development. E.g. a survey of the earliest aggadic sources (the Pseudepigrapha, the NT, the Dead Sea Scrolls) establishes that at the turn of the eras the expression *b'nē 'lōhīm* in Gen 6:3 was taken to mean 'angels'. Later, however, probably for doctrinal reasons, a reaction to this view set in both in rabbinic and Christian circles: it was taught that the reference was not to heavenly beings, but to mortal men. The standard rabbinic view became that the *b'nē 'lōhīm* were 'sons of the judges', or 'sons of the nobles'. Christian reaction against equating the *b'nē 'lōhīm* with angels seems to begin in the late second century C.E. In rabbinic circles, however, this exegesis came under attack a little earlier, if *Genesis Rabba* 36:5, p. 247 is to be believed: 'R. Shimon ben Yoḥai called them (i.e. the *b'nē 'lōhīm*) the sons of the judges. R. Shimon ben Yoḥai cursed all who called them sons of God.' The targumim have the following translations: Onk, 'sons of the nobles'; Neof, 'sons of the judges'; Neof margin, 'angels'; Ps-Y, 'sons of the nobles'. Onk and Neof agree with the newer exegesis, Neof margin with the older. Ps-Y, at first sight, also agrees with the newer exegesis, but in fact its text is mixed, for a little later (in 6:4) it renders *henn'pilīm* by 'Shamhazai and 'Aza'el, who fell from heaven'. Shamhazai and 'Aza'el were two notable angels in early Jewish angelology, the leaders, according to 1 Enoch 6-11, of the angels who rebelled against God. There are other elements in Ps-Y at this point which recall the traditions found in 1 Enoch 6-11. So Ps-Y's 'sons of the nobles' appears to be a later revision of the targum, possibly in the light of Onk. This sort of analysis discloses the mixed nature of the targumim: the majority of the texts reflect an exegesis that became current probably after 150 C.E.; however, there are also traces of an earlier stage of the targum which has escaped the reviser's hand.²⁵

ANALYSIS OF THE HALAKHA. The targumim translate the halakhic portions of the Pentateuch, and in doing so interpret the halakha. Their halakhic interpretations can be compared with the halakha in the Mishna (compiled around 200 C.E.). In cases where the targumim disagree with the Mishna, the possibility is worth considering that they represent an exegesis that arose prior to the redaction of the Mishna and its acceptance as authoritative. This argument must, obviously, be used with caution: it would be a mistake to imagine that the Mishna imposed a monolithic uniformity on all subsequent halakha. The Mishna itself quotes divergent rulings. However, the method does have its use, and a significant number of such disagreements between the Mishna and a text intended to explain Scripture in the synagogue, may reasonably be taken as an indication of the presence in the targum of early, possibly pre-mishnaic material. E.g., the Mishna established as the standard rabbinic interpretation of Exod 22:5-6 (Hebrew text 22:4-5) that Exod 22:5 refers to the case of a man who lets

²⁵ Further, Alexander, 'Early Exegesis of "Sons of God" '.

his cattle crop his neighbours field or vineyard, whereas Exod 22:6 refers to the case of a man who lights a fire and it burns the standing corn in his neighbour's field. This interpretation involves a play on the root *b'r*, which in verse 5 is taken to mean 'graze cattle', but in verse 6 as 'to burn'. In the Palestinian Targum as represented by Neof and by CG, Kahle A (though the text of the latter is rather confused) the root is given the sense of 'burn' in both verses. The divergence of these texts from the halakha may be illustrated by contrasting Neof's rendering of Exod 22:5 with Onk's of the same verse, which predictably agrees with the Mishna:

Onk Exod 22:5

If a man causes to be eaten a field or a vineyard, and sends his cattle and they eat in the field of another, he shall give in restitution the best of his field and the best of his vineyard.

Neof Exod 22:5

If a man sets fire to a field or a vineyard and lets the fire spread, and it causes fire in the field of another, he shall give in restitution the best of his field and the best of (his) vineyard.

Once again the Palestinian Targum contains a mixed tradition: Ps-Y concurs with the mishnaic view, whereas Neof and CG disagree. It is a reasonable postulate that the divergent targumic interpretation is the earlier and arose prior to the Mishna being established as the authoritative statement of rabbinic halakha.²⁶

ANALYSIS OF GEOGRAPHICAL EQUIVALENTS. The tendency of the targumim to 'actualize' Scripture by identifying peoples and places provides opportunities for dating traditions, since the targumic equivalents are presumably from the world and the time of the meturgeman. Few geographical terms in the targumim of the Pentateuch relate exclusively to the Byzantine or Arabic geographical onomastica;²⁷ the vast majority belong to an earlier period. E.g. the equivalents which Neof gives for the Table of the Nations in Gen 10 fit best with the world of the 3rd to 4th centuries C.D. As with analysis of aggada this approach can be improved if it is combined with a history of traditions. The possibilities may be illustrated from Num 34 which contains a cluster of geographical terms defining the borders of the Land of Israel. There is evidence of reworking in the Palestinian Targumim at this point, but from each targum a primary literary stratum with a set of border points can be extracted. The

²⁶ This type of argument must be applied with full sensitivity to the diversity of early rabbinic halakha. The crude rule of thumb that what is anti-mishnaic is pre-mishnaic is virtually meaningless. On targum and halakha see: Albeck, 'Aprocrifal Halakha'; Schelbert, 'Exodus XXII 4'; Heinemann, 'Targum Exodus 22:4'; idem, 'Early Halakha'; Jackson, 'The Fence-Breaker'; Itzhaky, 'The Halakha: Ma'ori, 'Relationship'.

²⁷ The name ZYNYC'Y in Ps-Y Gen 10:7 looks like an example of a name which first appears, at least in this form, in the onomasticon during the Islamic era. It is clearly related to the Arabic *zandj* or *zindj* which denoted the negro tribes of east Africa: see e.g. Abulafia, *Geographica* IV, p. 151.

borders of the Land of Israel as defined by each of the Palestinian Targumim prove to be the same. These targumic borders can be compared with the rabbinic definitions of Erets Israel. The Rabbis showed interest in this subject because it affected the operation of the 'commandments pertaining to the Land (*mišvot teluyot ba'areš*)'. A line of development can be traced through the rabbinic pronouncements, running from a boundary-formula contemporary with Gamliel II (c. 100 C.E.) (*M. Halli* 4:3; *M. Sheviit* 6:1), through a boundary formula of Yehuda bar Ilai (c. 150 C.E.) (*M. Gittin* 1:2; *B.T. Gittin* 8a), to the Tannaic Boundary List (c. 200 C.E.) (*Sifrei Deut.* 51, p. 117; *T. Shabbat* 4:11; *P.T. Sheviit* 36c). The general tendency is to retract the borders of the Land as time goes on, those in the time of Gamliel being much wider than those described in the Tannaic Boundary List. The targumic borders agree with those defined in the time of Gamliel, and diverge from the other definitions. An early date for the Palestinian targumic borders is confirmed by the fact that almost identical borders for Erets Israel are found in the *Genesis Apocryphon* (*IQGenAp* 21:14-19). The revised nature of Onk also emerges from this analysis: Onk offers only one identification in this whole passage (viz. Kadesh Barnea = Reqem Ge'ali, i.e. Petra). This happens to be the sole point where the Pal. Targ. border definition and the Tannaic Boundary List coincide.²⁸

Concluding Synthesis

We are a long way yet from writing a definitive history of the vast and complex corpus of the targumim. The following concluding notes offer a tentative synthesis of the results so far achieved.

(1) The practice of translating the books of the Bible into Aramaic began in the late Second Temple period. This is proved beyond all doubt by the existence of the Qumran Targumim of Job and Leviticus, as well as by the *Genesis Apocryphon*, which, though doubtfully a targum in the rabbinic sense, does attest the practice of paraphrasing the Bible into Aramaic. Corroboration for such an early date for the institution of the targum can be drawn from the rabbinic targumim. There is now a wealth of evidence that all the rabbinic targumim contain early aggadot, and converge significantly as to their Bible interpretation with datable early texts (e.g. Josephus, Philo, and the NT). Moreover, given their dialect, it is highly unlikely that Onk and Yon (at least as to their basic text) could have originated after 135 C.E..

(2) It is impossible to say how much of the Bible was available in Aramaic in the late Second Temple period. It is natural to assume that the Pentateuch would have been translated first. However, it should be remembered that we have excellent evidence for very early translations of the Writings into Aramaic. There is not only the direct evidence of the Job Targum from Qumran,

²⁸ Further, Alexander, *Toponymy*.

but indirect evidence from rabbinic literature of early Aramaic versions of Job and Esther.²⁹

(3) From the beginning the institution of the targum had a twofold setting – in both the synagogue and the study. It is a mistake to overstress its liturgical function. Aramaic versions were used not only to translate the biblical lections in synagogue; they were used as a way of offering an interpretation of Scripture for the Bible student, and bridging the gap between his vernacular and the original Hebrew. As a type of Bible commentary the targum has a number of advantages: it allows the original to be left intact; the interpretation is carried by a separate text, which, for simple linguistic reasons, is immediately distinguishable from original Hebrew. The antiquity of the Beit ha-Midrash setting of the targum is once again indicated by the Qumran Job Targum: it is hard to conceive of any liturgical use for Job.

(4) The Old Palestinian targumim were probably in Standard Literary Aramaic. This is the dialect of the Qumran targumim. It is also the dialect of Onk and Yon. Their language was literary, and probably did not correspond precisely to spoken Aramaic, either in Judaea, or (a fortiori) in Galilee. It is a mistake to suppose that in dialect, or linguistic register, a targum must correspond precisely to the vernacular. There is clear evidence of targumim being used liturgically where the language does *not* correspond to the vernacular: Onk and Yon in Babylonia are a case in point. An important observation flows from this: the targumim are learned versions. By over-stressing the targum's function to translate the Bible into the vernacular, the impression can be given that they are popular in origin, that they constitute a kind of folk-literature. This is *not* borne out by close analysis. Though some targumim may have been aimed at 'the common man', they are deeply learned versions, the work of scholars. By the same token it is wrong to suppose that the targum in synagogue was ever a spontaneous rendering. The translation was always likely to be traditional and to a large measure predetermined.

(5) It is hard to say whether the Old Palestinian targumim were expansive or non-expansive. The evidence suggests that both types of targum were known. The Qumran Job Targum is 'literal', whereas the *Genesis Apocryphon* is expansive. There are indications that Onk at least was derived from a more expansive targum, and it has been shown that some of the aggadic additions in the extant Palestinian Targumim are of a very early date. In the light of this evidence one should avoid the facile rule of thumb that the shorter and simpler a version, the earlier it is.

(6) At some point the Old Palestinian targumim in Standard Literary Aramaic were recast in the younger dialect of Galilean Aramaic. This probably happened after the Bar Kokhba war when the centre of Jewish cultural life moved from Judaea to Galilee. However, the change was not solely connected with a change in the spoken dialect of Aramaic. As was stressed earlier, the

language of the targumim (either in register or dialect) probably never coincided precisely with the vernacular. Moreover there is reason to believe that the main features of the so-called Galilean dialect had already emerged in Galilee *before* the Bar Kokhba war. The linguistic change probably reflects the new-found acceptability of Galilean Aramaic, which, as the Gemara of the Palestinian Talmud shows, was now widely used in the schools for the discussion of halakhic questions. The implication of this argument is clear: none of our extant Palestinian Targumim, as to their basic *linguistic* form, can be earlier than the late second century C.E.

(7) The Palestinian Targumim were never standardized. This is evident from the number of recensions now extant. Though the various targumim clearly belong to the same tradition, and often overlap in content, no official text of the targum emerged in Palestine. There was some attempt by the rabbinic authorities to control the content of the targum: certain texts were not allowed to be translated in public, and certain translations of individual verses were censured; but rabbinic control was neither extensive nor all that successful. The rabbinic injunctions are sometimes ignored. Targumim were in circulation which took up halakhic positions diverging from those advocated in the Mishna. It is impossible to say whether, broadly speaking, the various extant recensions of the Palestinian Targumim represent successive revisions of the targum, or were contemporaneous forms which differed due to regional variation. The latter is more likely to be the case. The regional diversity in the text of the targum would be analogous to the regional diversity in the text of the standard synagogue prayers (the *Amida* and the *Shema*).

(8) A recension of the Old Palestinian Targum (both to the Pentateuch and the Prophets) was taken to Babylonia, probably before the Bar Kokhba War, i.e. before the Old Pal. Targ. began to be recast into Galilean Aramaic. There it was subjected to a thorough revision and standardization which resulted in the emergence of Onk and Yon. The Babylonian revision of the Old Pal. Targ. involved two things: first, a shortening to bring the targum into close conformity to the Hebrew text, and second, a thorough revision of the halakhic aspects of the targum to bring it into agreement with the halakha of the Babylonian schools. The Babylonian revision did not, however, involve a radical recasting of the targum into the Aramaic dialect of Babylonia: the targum remained basically in its original dialect – a western form of Standard Literary Aramaic. The preservation of the original dialect of the targum probably reflects conservatism on the part of Babylonian Jewry, as well as the prestige of the original version brought to Babylonia. It arrived with a certain sanctity, at a time when the spiritual authority of Erets 'Israel was paramount in Babylonia.

(9) In the post-talmudic period the Babylonian recension of the Old Palestinian Targum (i.e. Onk and Yon) returned to the west. This return reflects the growing authority of the Babylonian Gaonate in the early middle ages, and its spiritual hegemony over world Jewry. Onk and Yon did not, it seems, totally displace the Palestinian Targumim, but their arrival did have profound affects

²⁹ Job: *B. J. Shabbar* 115a; Esther: *M. Megilla* 2:1.

on the targum in the west. First, it led to the emergence of truncated forms of the Pal. Targ. which were designed to supplement Onk and Yon. These so-called Fragmentary Targum, and the targumic Toseftas illustrate this phenomenon. These forms of the Pal. Targ. presumably arose in a milieu where Onk and Yon had become the dominant targum. Second, the arrival of Onk and Yon led to extensive linguistic contamination of the Palestinian Targumim from the dialect of Onk and Yon. This is seen at its most extreme in certain targumic Toseftot where the original Palestinian Targum has been systematically recast into the Onk/Yon dialect. It is also illustrated by Ps-Y which is dialectally mixed – i.e. it contains features of both Galilean and Onk-type Aramaic. The targumim of the Writings are in a mixed dialect, broadly similar to that of Ps-Y.

(10) The liturgical use of the targum began to die out in the middle ages. An important factor in this development was the rise of Islam and the emergence of Arabic as the vernacular of the Jews in the middle east. It is possible that Saadya's *Tafsir* took over the liturgical function of the targum in some synagogues. The liturgical use of the targum continues in Yemenite synagogues to this day: it is hard to say whether this represents a genuine historical continuity with talmudic and post-talmudic practice, or a revival of the institution of the targum. After its liturgical demise the targum continued to be widely used as an aid to the study of the Bible: it never lost its place in the Beit ha-Midrash.

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