AVOIDANCE OF ANTHROPOMORPHISM IN THE TARGUM OF PSALMS

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INTRODUCTION

One of the characteristics of the Aramaic Targums is their avoidance of anthropomorphic expressions that abound in all the books of the Bible. The degree of consistency in avoiding and the clarification of the method and the criteria in choosing various circumlocutions for anthropomorphic expressions require a separate treatment of each book and of each Targum. Such a detailed examination will enable us to understand more exactly the differences between the Palestinian and the Babylonian translations in this matter, as well as between the early and late translators.

The present article is devoted to an examination of the problem of anthropomorphism in the Aramaic Targum of the Book of Psalms (henceforth TPs).

In the discussion of the translations of the parts of the human body as attributed to God, we may distinguish two groups:

a. Translations that designedly avoid anthropomorphism.

b. Literal translations.

In the first group we discern two ways of translating:

1. Interpolation of a prepositional phrase, especially when the Hebrew expression cannot be translated literally (e.g. Is. 56:1: לא כאבדה את משלמה and לא מאריך קרמה משלמה).

2. Substitute translations for anthropomorphic expressions. These substitutes occupy a special position. At times one gets the impression that they serve as hypostases, in particular when they come as the performers of some action (e.g. Ps. 81:15: הנה גוברתי... והל פורים אשisObject יד - the blow of my might). Against this supposition militates the inclusion of such substitutes in verses which use unmitigated anthropomorphic expressions in speaking of God. The mechanical repetition of these substitutes in well-defined circumstances diminishes their expressiveness to the extent that their insertion into a given passage becomes a mere matter of context, and does not result from the compulsion of religious feeling which in Greek culture gave rise to the hypostasis.

The means of avoiding anthropomorphism in the tradition of the Aramaic Targums of this type we shall call circumlocutions.
Our study performe will be based on the text printed in Rabbinic Bibles,\textsuperscript{1} in lack of a critical edition of TPs. Resultingly, our conclusions will suffer from the same lack of finality that diminished the value of all the studies of TPs published so far.\textsuperscript{2} But we hope that our effort may be of some assistance to future editors of TPs.

The attitude of TPs to anthropomorphisms so far has not been examined to the extent it deserves. Mostly the question was dealt with in a general description such as: "...It (TPs) too, recoils from the least shadow of anthropomorphism... though in the matter of Divine attributes it does not exhibit the same constancy and severity that are found in the Targums of the Pentateuch and the Prophets".\textsuperscript{3}

A detailed examination may advance our understanding of the phenomenon, and serve as a provisional stage in the process of dating the composition of TPs, and in determining its dependence on Midrashic literature. This examination also will show TPs' influence on the mediaeval exegetes, an issue which is of particular importance in an investigation into the methods employed by the later translators, \textit{e.g.} Saadiah and the Karaite Jepheth ben Ali. When they translated the Bible, including Psalms, into Arabic, they were obliged to take a stand on the subject of anthropomorphism which, in their time, was still a subject of inter-sectarian theological polemics in Judaism and Islam.

We shall review the translations of fourteen parts of the human body mentioned in Psalms in connection with God.

They will be divided into three groups in the following order:

\begin{itemize}
\item[A.] The head and parts of the face (these make up more than half the instances).
\item[B.] The extremities: hands, arms, fingers and feet.
\item[C.] Isolated mentions of other limbs.
\end{itemize}

\section*{I. פנים}

Forty-two verses in Psalms mention the face of God.\textsuperscript{4} In twenty-two verses

\begin{itemize}
\item[1] \textit{Miqrāʾot Gedolot Pardes} (Tel Aviv 5719 [1958/59]) which is a photographic reproduction of the Warsaw edition 5620-5625 [1860–1865].
\item[3] P. Churgin, \textit{op. cit.}, 19; and similarly, Komlos, \textit{op. cit.}, 266, who states that "all the translations aim at removing the anthropomorphism. This is the fixed principle also here, even though the anthropomorphic expressions have not been removed to the same extent as in Targum Onkelos."
\item[4] פנים also are not enumerated here. They are prepositions and were translated as such also in other Targums. \textit{על פנים} (9:20) is included because of its rare use in re-
the translator used a literal translation, not avoiding anthropomorphism. The other verses have circumlocutions: שִׁכְנָהוּ, שֵׁכִינהּ, יי, שֵׁכִינה, יי יי, רְאוֹם. In addition, there are prepositions with pronouns. We shall try to establish a connection between the context and the choice of translation for these anthropomorphic expressions.

1. **אָנָא**. Twenty-one verses render MT **ﬠָמַּה** by **אָנָא**.
   (a) A group of nine verses stands out in which God’s countenance shines with a light that reveals His mercy and His truth, this being a sign of blessing and redemption:
   4:7: נָשָׁתָל הַגַּאֹר מְנוּנַי
   80:20: מְנוּנַי (cp. 31:17; 67:2; 80:4, 8; 89:16; 90:8; 119:135)
   (b) Four verses mention the concealment of God’s countenance:
   13:2: הָאָמַּה מְנוּנַי (cp. 10:11; 51:11; 88:15)
   (c) Three verses deal with seeking God’s face:
   27:8: אָמַּה מְנוּנַי (cp. 24:6; 105:4)
   (d) In the other instances God’s face is approached, or causes joy:
   89:15: מְנוּנַי (cp. 95:2)
   17:15: מְנוּנַי (cp. 11:7)
   16:11: מְנוּנַי
   In fact, **אָנָא** by itself without any addition appears in only eight verses. Six of these have **כָּרְבּ** as an object linked to a request for beholding God’s countenance (11:7; 17:15; 24:6; 27:8) and its light (4:7; 31:17). In four verses dealing with the hiding of God’s face (13:2) and its brilliance (67:2; 89:16; 119:135) appears **מִנְנָי** (or **מִנְנִי**), but in the second hemistic of the verses 80:4, 8, 20 is consistently translated **רְאוֹם**. In any case, the insertion of constructs before **אָמַּה**, though it softens the effect of anthropomorphism, does not avoid it.

2. The largest group among the circumlocutions mentioned is that of seven verses which use the word **שֶׁכְנֵיתָה**. These instances concern the hiding of God’s face.

27:9 MT: **אֵלָה הָטֶלֶם שֶׁכְנֵיתָה** מְנוּנַי (cp. 102:3; 143:7)

TPs: **אֵלָה הָטֶלֶם שֶׁכְנֵיתָה** מְנוּנַי

ference to God. 27:8a has not been included because the translation turns the phrase so that it applies to the face of the supplicant. As against this, 42:12 and 43:5 were included because TPs understood them as referring to God.

5 **ﬠָמַּה** or **ﬠָמָה**


7 In MS Parma (32)3232 only **ﬠָמַּה** appears, without **ﬠָמָה**.

8 **שֶׁכְנֵיתָה** also occurs in reference to the bestowal of divine mercy. See n. 27.

It is hard to see why this method was employed here while it was avoided in the preceding cases.9

The problem of finding a rule for the manner of translation is further complicated by the following facts. Indeed, סלחו את סעתרתי (44:25) like סלחת ופיים by itself, also concerns the hiding of God’s countenance; but סלחת ופיים (42:3) and ופיים (44:4) respectively refer to beholding God’s face and its radiance:

44:25 MT: סלחת ופיים TPs: סלחו את סעתרתי
42:3 MT: גלה את הסתרתי TPs: סלחת ופיים
44:4 MT: ופיים TPs: סלחת ופיים

If we recall the verses with והנה ופיים mentioned above, we shall realize that the genitive after והנה is not fixed in TPs, but alternates between סלחת ופיים and והנה and has no connection with the context.

3. The hiding of God’s face also produced the translation בפנים (31:21) and similarly the expression על פני (21:10). As against these, 34:17 has a surprising anthropomorphism for God’s face: 10

31:21 MT: הסתרים דברים מפיי TPs:reements between שמים
21:10 MT: הסתרים כמזה מה אחרון ופיי TPs: TPs: agreements between שמים
34:17 MT: הסתרים דברי בדיעתי TPs: TPs: agreements between שמים

4. In the remaining eight verses, the word קפד appears instead of מפיי.

(a) In three,11 a preposition precedes the word מפיי in the MT:


This does not sufficiently explain why here והנה was avoided, for in 16:11—

(b) In four cases of קפד in the genitive, the translation renders it by a preposition:

42:6 MT: סלחת ופיים TPs: מוסיפה דמם קפד
80:17 MT: גלה את סעתרתי TPs: מוסיפה דמם קפד

9 Cp. group b of the verses with והנה.
10 The כמא (17:15) is rendered in TPs קפד. TO Num. 12:8 איראני קפד as מפני (According to Kramer, who takes ב الأمر והנה, תרגום has Jerusalem 1940) does not use קפד.
11 In the last two verses also Saadia translated with a preposition, probably without depending on TPs.
12 Also Saadia uses a preposition in this verse: cp. Jeptheth ben Ali: מפיי אלחרתא פפיי, פפיי אלחרתא פפיי.
It cannot be decided whether the translation by a preposition results from the employment of the construct in MT, or whether it depends on the word preceding the genitive: מִיִּתְּרָה וּכְרֵם respectively. In none of all the other cases mentioned do words of this type precede the genitive, and therefore no conclusion as to the method of their translation in TPs can be based on them. Other words preceding מֵימָר in the genitive, such as בָּאת בָּאת הָאָרֶץ, do not require the interpolation of a preposition since they do not pertain to divine actions.

(c) The isolated instance of כֵּן הֶזֶד in 119: 58 follows the stereotype manner of translating this phrase in all passages in the Bible, where זה is the syntactical object.

All this goes to show a lack of method in the choice of translation for זה. Many of the twenty-two verses that were translated without circumlocution, express the same ideas as several of the twenty verses translated by means of circumlocution. Only מענה occupies a clear position in representing the divine attribute of mercy when He withholds it from the individual or the community.

II. עיני
Fourteen verses attribute eyes to God. In nine instances TPs translates the verse literally. The other five are divided into groups:

(a) A preposition is used instead of בְּעֵינַי:

51: 6 MT: וַיַּעַרְגָּה נְבֵי צְבָא הָאַרֶץ TPs: דִּבָּרָם קָדָם בְּעַד וּפְנֵי שֶׁפֶם
72: 14 MT: וַיַּעַרְגָּה נְבֵי צְבָא הָאַרֶץ (cp. 116: 15) TPs: דִּבָּרָם קָדָם בְּעַד וּפְנֵי שֶׁפֶם

(b) The circumlocutions are employed to render פָּנֶיהָ מִמָּרָה קָדָם TPs: כִּלּוֹת וְדָמָן וּפְנֵיהָ
31: 23 MT: נְרָוחָה מֶנֶגֶד עֹנְצֵךְ TPs: מַכְבַּיָּה יַקָּרֵךְ

Also G translates “eyes” in all three verses in group (a) as prepositions εἰκόνιον, οὐράνιον. It is strange that this idiomatic expression was not so translated also in 90: 4 (not even in G), but was rendered literally:

MT: אֲרוֹם אֲלָף שְׁמֹנָה בִּשְׁעֵנִי TPs: אֲרוֹם אֲלָף שְׁמֹנָה בִּשְׁעֵנִי Group (b) also has one exception:
5: 6 MT: לֹא יִפְתָּחֵהוּ כֶּפֶל עֵין TPs: לֹא יִפְתָּחֵהוּ כֶּפֶל עֵין In cases of a literal translation the words עֵין הָיִית appear as the subject of a verbal clause:

11: 4 MT: עֶנֶה חַמַּה TPs: עֶנֶה חַמַּה (cp. 17: 2)
66: 7 MT: עְנֶה הֵרָפֵעַ TPs: עְנֶה הֵרָפֵעַ וְפַרְצַה
139: 16 MT: נְמֵימַת מַמְנֹחַ TPs: נְמֵימַת מַמְנֹחַ

Twice is the subject of a nominal clause:

33: 18 MT: נְמַלְכֵּה לְדָעֵת מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ TPs: נְמַלְכֵּה לְדָעֵת מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ
34: 16 MT: עֵין הָיִית לְדָעֵת TPs: עֵין הָיִית לְדָעֵת
While in 33:18 the translator added the “missing” verbal predicate, in 32:8 he turned the difficult Hebrew sentence into two connected, simple sentences:

32:8 MT: אֲמַלְכֵנוּ וְאַשָּׁרָה עֵלֶךָ לָכָּא עַדְיָה TPs: אִצְצַּג עֵלֶךָ עַדְיָה

Due to the inconsistency in the translation of עַדְיָה, we can only note the obvious lack of sensitivity with regard to the anthropomorphic implications of this member.

III. פַּּ֥ד

Seven verses mention God’s mouth. In five of these TPs translates literally:

33:6 MT: דָּרוּאָה דָּפָּרָה TPs: דָּרוּאָה דָּפָּרָה (cp. 119:13)

105:5 MT: מֶמֶשׂ פִּי TPs: מֶמֶשׂ פִּי

119:72 MT: מְזוֹרָה פִּי TPs: מְזוֹרָה פִּי

119:88 MT: מָשָׁלָה פִּי TPs: מָשָׁלָה פִּי

In 18:9 TPs renders מֶמֶשׂ פִּי by מֶמֶשׂ פִּי אַמְרֵי פִּי. There is no apparent reason why מֶמֶשׂ פִּי should be translated differently from the other expressions mentioned. This translation apparently is not a circumlocution, but an explanatory elaboration of a neutral expression in the MT.13

Only in 18:9 MT: שֶׁלֹּא רֹםֵהוּ מִמֶּנָּה בּוֹרָא TPs: עַלָּה עַשָּׁוְא בַּמַּפֶּחָה אֲשֶׁר מֵפְּרָשׁוּ דָּמֵנָּה קָדִימָה — the vivid description of God’s anger shocked the translator, and he rendered it metaphorically by interpolating the preposition “like”, in addition to translating מֵפְּרָשׁוּ by means of a preposition.

IV. שֶׁפֶּהּ

Only two verses attribute lips to God:

17:4 MT: בֶּן הָעֵדָה שֶפֶּהּ TPs: בֶּן הָעֵדָה שֶפֶּהּ

89:35 MT: מִצְרָא שֶפֶּהּ TPs: מִצְרָא שֶפֶּהּ

In neither instance does TPs avoid the anthropomorphism, but rather gives a literal translation.14 This literalness is put in relief by a comparison of the above renditions with the Aramaic translation of Is. 30:27 which in its entirety is a daring, picturesque description of God. Here the Targum consistently employs circumlocutions:

MT: מַן קָדִימוּ הָעָלָה רֹשֵׁהְוַא נָפַס לוֹ תָּבָא שֵׁפֶּהְוַא מִלָּאְוַא וַעָם (לָאשָׁתַא אֶתְאַלְאָה)

(הָיוָה להרָבָא אֶתְאַלְאָה).

13 In Job 23:12 the translator saw no reason to employ a circumlocution for אָמָרֵי פִּי and translated it literally. The Targum of Job appears to resemble TPs in the literal rendition of anthropomorphic expressions. Cp. the following note.

14 Similarly Job 11:5: שֶׁפֶּהּ מִסְפַּדְתָּו אֲשֶׁר מֵפְּרָשָׁוְא 23:12: מָפְרָשָׁוְא שֶׁפֶּהּ מִסְפַּדְתָּו.
V. ַח

All the eleven verses which attribute ears to God are translated literally, without an attempt at circumlocution.

10: 17 MT: תֵּקָשֶׁר אָוֶּךְ TPs: תֵּקָשֶׁר אָוֶּךְ
17: 6 MT: חֶפְּלָה אָוֶּךְ TPs: חֶפְּלָה אָוֶּךְ
130: 2 MT: הַמַּחְנֵשׁ אָוֶּךְ TPs: ... הַמַּחְנֵשׁ אָוֶּךְ

Cp. further 18: 7; 31: 2; 34: 16; 71: 2; 86: 1, 88: 3; 102: 3; 116: 2. This is in contrast with the renditions employed by the Targum to the Pentateuch and the Prophets; e.g. TJ to Isaiah, 15 when in three cases the preposition is used:

Is. 37: 17 MT: תָּכְתַּב הַזְּעִיר עַל עַמְּאֵמָה T: נֵילָה קָרָם ... וְשָׁמֵעַ קְדֹרֶם
36: 29 MT: יִכְרְעֵו עַל עָלָה בָּאֵר T: וְאָתַרְתָּנָאִים מִלָּחַק קְדֹרֶם
59: 1 MT: לְאַל בִּנְכֵרֵךְ קְדֹרֶם מַלְמָשְׁמָה T: לָא בָכֶרֵךְ קְדֹרֶם מַלְמָשְׁמָה

The Targums generally translate the expression the hand of God, irrespective of whether the phrase pertains to a human being (Is. 36: 11; Jer. 28: 7) or to God (Num. 11: 1, 18 in TO and TJ, 16 1 Sam. 8: 21). Therefore it is worthy of remark that in 18: 7 MT: יִכְרָעֵו עַל עָלָה בָּאֵר TPs: יִכְרָעֵו עַל עָלָה בָּאֵר translates the phrase literally.

VI. ַח

The ‘hand of God’ is mentioned thirty-eight times. In thirty-three of these (87%) TPs renders: אֶדֶּם. ַח.

1. In twenty-eight verses this translation appears without any addition. 17
2. In four instances is translated by a genitival phrase where it serves as nomen rectum (see group (a) below).
3. Once is the nomen regens in a genitival construct in TPs (b).

Circumlocutions: מַחְתַּב נוֹבָרָתָה, מַחְתַּב הַצָּלַע (twice), מַחְתַּב מְעָלָה, מַחְתַּב מְעָלָה (c).

(a) 38: 3 MT: מַחְתַּב כָלִּ֨רֶנְס TPs: מַחְתַּב כָלִּ֨רֶנְס
39: 11 MT: מַחְתַּב נוֹבָרָתָּה TPs: מַחְתַּב נוֹבָרָתָה
10: 12 MT: קְדֹרֶם מַחְתַּב כָלִּ֨רֶנְס TPs: קְדֹרֶם מַחְתַּב כָלִּ֨רֶנְס

15 According to Stenning’s edition, the Targum understood Is. 5: 9; 22: 14 as being spoken by the prophet in reference to his own ears. Therefore they are irrelevant to the issue on hand.

16 Similarly also in Sperber’s edition of TO and Ginsburger’s Targum Jonathan. But MS Neofiti 1: בֵּית קְדֹרֶם בָּאֵר, בֵּית קְדֹרֶם בָּאֵר !

17 Ps. 8: 7; 10: 14; 19: 2; 28: 5; 31: 6; 16; 74: 11; 75: 9; 80: 18; 89: 14, 22; 92: 5; 95: 4, 5, 7; 102: 26; 104: 28; 106: 26; 111: 7; 119: 73, 173; 136: 12; 138: 7, 8; 139: 10; 143: 5; 144: 7; 145: 16.

18 This should not be considered as an attempt to avoid the anthropomorphism of lifting the hand. Cp. 106: 26 MT: יִכְרָעֵו עַל עָלָה TPs: יִכְרָעֵו עַל עָלָה, יִכְרָעֵו עַל עָלָה 144: 7 MT: יִכְרָעֵו עַל עָלָה TPs: יִכְרָעֵו עַל עָלָה.
Thus we see that TPs scarcely takes any offence at the anthropomorphistic expression ‘the hand of God’. Moreover, in all verses in which God’s hand is described as bringing about an act of kindness and mercy, TPs has a literal translation; but where it brings about misfortune and punishment it is translated by means of a circumlocution or by means of a genitival construct. This is the case when ממחת, מחת נברחת, מחת יד, מחת נברחת יד are employed. The decisive word here is מחת which denotes the particular nature of God’s hand in this context. 20

Also בדיא נברחת can be thus understood. Even though this phrase shows some avoidance of anthropomorphism, here too נברחת is the dominant element in the verse in so far as it explains God’s actions as referring to the gentiles. 21

Also מסוף שבעת is connected with the negative aspects of God’s acts, even though the actual translation does not emphasize God’s strength and might. TPs usually employs שבעת when the Bible describes the withdrawal of divine mercy from man (see above, I. 19).

VII. יכ
The only verse that mentions the palm of God appears in TPs without circumlocution like the translations of the verses in group (a) of the hand of God.

139:5 MT: אזור לקודש ותרטת עליל集成电路 נמחת ומסופת שבעת יד TPs: אזור לקודש ותרטת עליל集成电路 נמחת ומסופת שבעת יד

VIII. ארצה
Fingers are attributed to God only once, and the translation is literal:

8:4 MT: מעשה ארצה TPs: מעשה ארצה

IX. ודים
In the translation of (ד) ז擔心 no uniform treatment can be discerned. How-

19 That difficult verse was translated midrashically, and is an isolated example of no importance.

20 That the nomen regens explains the nature of the nomen rectum, as also in 78: 42 נמא יד, the last example in (a).

21 Saadiah clearly noticed this, and found no better rendering them כרדה, nor did Jepheth ben Ali.
ever, the outstanding fact is that TPs invariably renders this anthropomorphism literally:
(a) Without any deviation from the wording of MT, as in
   89:14 MT: יְהוָה יִשָּׂרָאֵל ☐ TPs: יְהוָה יִשָּׂרָאֵל (cp. 89: 22; 136: 12)
(b) With the interpolation of a noun which stresses the power of God’s arm:
   77:16 MT: נָגְלוּ בְּהוֹרֵס נְפֹךְ... TPs: נַגְלוּ בְּהוֹרֵס נְפֹךְ (cp. 79: 11; 89:11)
(c) By bringing ‘arm’ into the construct stated with another noun:
   44:4 MT: חוֹרֵס בָּהָר TPs: חוֹרֵס בָּהָר (ср. מִשְׁמַר הָאָרֶץ) 1 MT: אָוָדִים נַגְלוּ (תִּשקַּף לְתַמְנָא) TPs: אָוָדִים נַגְלוּ (תִּשקַּף לְתַמְנָא)

It has been noted before that the addition of a noun in the genitive is a kind of circumlocution. But, considering the numerous cases of a literal translation, it appears that in this instance no avoidance of an anthropomorphism was attempted, as indeed is the case in TJ to the Prophets. The Targum of Is. e.g. employs circumlocutions in translating רְוִיעַת (33:2; 51:9):

The preponderant phrase is תֹּקְף וּרְאֵי נָבְרִיט (Is. 40:10; 48:14; 51:5; 53:1).

In Is. 59:16 we find also תֹּקְף וּרְאֵי נָבְרִיט i.e. דּוֹרֵשׁ אֵלֶּם and can serve both as the nomen regens of the succeeding דּוֹרֵשׁ (b), and as its nomen rectum. These are stereotype formations used by the translator without difference in meaning.

The addition of שְׁכִנָּה to an existing genitival phrase (Ps. 98:1) has no impact on our considerations, since it does not imply circumlocution. In Is. 52:10 T translates without שְׁכִנָּה: כְּבָרָה. Similarly in Is. 63:12: דּוֹרֵשׁ וּשְׁכִנָּה—דּוֹרֵשׁ וּשְׁכִנָּה. It may be that שְׁכִנָּה was wrongly inserted in Ps. 98:1 on account of the word דּוֹרֵשׁ by way of association with instances where דּוֹרֵשׁ in the view of the translator refers to the Temple. In general MT: דּוֹרֵשׁ is rendered in TPs: קָדָשָׁה; but in some specific instances TPs translates it בֵית מַקְדָּשָׁה, occasionally with the addition of שְׁכִנָּה.

68:6 MT: בָּמֹרְד בֵּית שְׁכִנָּה קָדָשָׁה... TPs: בָּמֹרְד בֵּית שְׁכִנָּה קָדָשָׁה

108:8 MT: מַמְלָכָה אָבָר בֵּית בָּיָת קָדָשָׁה... TPs: מַמְלָכָה אָבָר בֵּית שְׁכִנָּה קָדָשָׁה

It appears that TPs preserved also another translation to the parallel verse of 108:8 — a convincing demonstration of the elasticity of translation technique in TPs, without us being able to point out any kind of fixed pattern or conditions that necessitate one translation or another.

22 E.g. מָזוּר (Ps. 2:6; 3:5; 48:2; 99:9) is translated מָזוּר בֵּית מַקְדָּשָׁה, and similarly Ps. 78:54: נַבּוֹל כָּרָשׁ – תַּחוֹת אֵזֶר בֵּית מַקְדָּשָׁה, but see also further on.
X. טויה
In three verses feet are attributed to God. In the translation of these cases TPs is not consistent. In one instance MT is rendered literally, while in the other two circumlocution or explanatory prepositions are employed:

132: 7 MT: נסוד לעבשה דרגול TPs: ונסוד לעבשה דרגול
99: 5 MT: וחסדו ולחולו רגליים TPs: וחסדו שלוחו רגליים
18: 10 MT: עטפי האמאה בכבוד קדוש TPs: עטפי האמא בכבוד קדוש

These differences in the translation of virtually identical phrases in the MT, once again raise the question whether TPs was lacking uniformity from the very start or whether in its history it was subjected to alterations and never experienced a final redaction.

XI. ס荪
The two instances in which מכסים is attributed to God are translated without circumlocution, by the same word that is used to render the term in reference to humans (58: 11; 17: 5). Ifiderלארו = אספוריר TPs: אחיו אספוריר
74: 3 MT: הורמה מכסים TPs: ושמל לדזר פ☕
85: 14 MT: ושמל לדזר פ☕ TPs: ושמל לדזר פ☕

XII. ראש
In two identical verses in parallel chapters דבד appears in an unclear context. 60: 9 (= 108: 9) MT: דבד אספורים מכסים דריוש TPs: אספורים מכסים דריוש

If King David is the subject of this sentence as Saadia, Rashi, Ibn Ezra and others believed, then the above phrase in MT and its translation in TPs do not concern us here. If it is understood that God is the speaker we would have another case of anthropomorphism which TPs renders literally.\(^\text{23}\)

XIII. וב
The sole instance of this anthropomorphic phrase\(^\text{24}\) is translated literally:
33: 11 MT: מתחבצל לזריוו ריוו ( jspbים שללשלת אתול) מתחבצל לזריוו ריוו TPs: מתחבצל לזריוו ריוו

XIV. חק
The only occurrence of חק with regard to God is translated by the same word that serves for the rendition of the human bosom.\(^\text{25}\)
74: 11 MT: (לハמָשׂךְ דָּרְךָוֶיךָ) סַכֵּרֶךְ חֲקָק (חֲקָקֶךְ: חֲקָקֶךְ) לכל TPs: (לแซָמָךְ דָּרְךָוֶיךָ) סַכֵּרֶךְ חֲקָק (חֲקָקֶךְ: חֲקָקֶךְ) לכל


\(^{24}\) TPs for certain does not take קב in 27: 8 as referring to God.

\(^{25}\) Cp. e.g. TO on Ex. 4: 6.
CONCLUSIONS

In the following table the various renditions of each item that was discussed above, are divided into two groups: translations that aim at an avoidance of anthropomorphism, and literal translations. The table shows that only approximately 25% of the material shows avoidance and circumlocution. All the other cases belong to the second group. Moreover, nine out of the fourteen parts of the body enumerated altogether are rendered literally in every instance, whereas there is not one that always is translated by circumlocution. In the rendition of avoidance of anthropomorphisms and literal translations practically are balanced. The rarity of רָאָה does not enable us to draw any definite conclusions. But it is worth noting that whereas in two out of three instances רָאָה is translated by a circumlocution, its synonym מָצָא is translated literally in its two occurrences. The tendency towards circumlocution in TPs’ rendition of רָאָה may perhaps be explained as arising from the secondary sexual connotation of this word which led the translators to treat it with greater caution.

Special sensitivity, however, is exhibited in the method of translating theriomorphisms, such as הבקר and הבקר which originally pertain to birds. These are all translated by circumlocutions:

36:8 MT: בצלאל נמסר TPs:27 בְּצַלְמָל שָׁמָּן (cp. 57:2; 63:8)
61:5 MT:בטשקר נמסר TPs:בְּטשַׁקְר שָׁמָּן
17:8 MT:זכלאל נמסר TPs:זכלאל שָׁמָּן

91:4 MT:תחתופ个百分ם TPs:חַתּוֹת יְכִרֵיה תְחַתּוֹת (MT:äänבכמה יְכִרֵיה תְחַתּוֹת) in the translation of the first hemistich.

The table below shows that in general TPs saw no theological difficulty in literal anthropomorphic translation. Deviations from this norm can be explained as being due to contextual considerations which at times induced the use of circumlocution in accordance with traditional renderings with which

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26 Percentages are given in round numbers without fractions.

27 Since God’s wings serve as a shelter (17:8), a refuge (36:8; 57:2; 61:5; 91:4) for the supplicant who “rejoices in their shadow” (63:8), this limb is explained as an expression of Divine mercy bestowed upon the believer, and that is the reason why in this connection just the use of שְׁכִינָתָא serves as a fixed circumlocution.
the translators were familiar. The investigation of the small number of the circumlocutions for anthropomorphisms in the MT has not produced evidence of any rule in the choice made by the translators. This raises the question of the place of these circumlocutions in the history of TPs in general. It appears that initially the translation was rather close to the Hebrew text, i.e. anthropomorphisms were rendered literally (except for isolated instances). In the course of time, after generations had used TPs, circumlocutions possibly penetrated into it, such as are characteristic for the Targums of other Biblical books. This assumption gains weight in view of the phenomenon that limbs which occur only once or twice in anthropomorphisms are always translated literally, whereas others that occur frequently are translated so as to avoid anthropomorphism. It is perhaps this very recurrence which caused this change. Were we to assume on the other hand, that the circumlocutions in TPs are original, we would come up against the difficulty of accounting for their variety, the lack of design in their choice, and the apparent differences in this respect between TPs, Targum Onkelos and the Targum to the Prophets.

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<th>Literal translation</th>
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