Introduction

TARGUM-STUDIES—AN OVERVIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

This paper is intended to introduce the present volume. It is the outcome of our group work which I had the pleasure of organizing during the academic year 1985-6 at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University. A preliminary version of this paper was written in 1985, and was eventually published in the Proceedings of the 9th World Congress for Jewish Studies (Bible Panel Sessions, pp. 35f.) that convened at the university in the summer of 1985.

Targum studies should be both painted on a broad canvas and conducted in depth. It is accepted practice to deal with Targum as one of the ancient Bible versions. As such the Targum belongs to the sub-division of 'Text and Versions' that are to be found in most introductions to the Hebrew Scriptures, often referred to as 'Old Testament'. Such introductions were common since the eighteenth century, whatever the official name. It is part of our story that in recent years such comprehensive introductions have become rarer and rarer, because many Bible scholars either cannot handle the subject or prefer to ignore it and look for greener pastures. Apart from Ernst Würrthwein's Text of the Old Testament, there is no up-to-date introduction to the field, since those few scholars interested in textual questions prefer to deal with sub-specializations. The study of the text of the Bible in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Aramaic, and Syriac has been subdivided into so many fields that there is hardly anybody left who is interested in the entire picture, and the authors of comprehensive introductions to the Scriptures prefer to shy away from the subject altogether. To be sure, Bible scholars can still find discussions in the general introductions by Robert Pfeiffer, Aage Bentzen (1948) and Otto Eissfeldt (1958). But in the decades that have passed since then, no introduction has dealt specifically with the text, with the exception of Georg Fohrer's Einleitung.
Targum studies are not just a division of biblical studies. Just as Septuagint studies are connected to the study of the Greek koine, Peshitta studies to Syriac, and Saadya studies to medieval Judaeo-Arabic, so Targum studies are connected to Aramaic dialectology and to the study of rabbinic midrash. Tradition has it that the history of Targum goes back to the times of the 'Men of the Great Assembly' in the beginning of the Second Temple. We have no possibility to verify that tradition, but that does not indicate that the story is not based on real fact. The first written evidence of Targumic activity comes from the Qumran scrolls. That is the time of early pesher and midrash activity that finally led in part to written documents in the mainstream of Jewish tradition and was also mirrored in Hellenistic Jewish writings. Targum studies thus border on the study of development of halakhah and aggadah as well as the study of Christian origins as manifested in inter-testamental literature. It depends on each student which aspect he stresses: the Jewish or Christian, the philological or hermeneutical, the dialectological or the more broadly linguistic.

All in all, compared to the nineteenth century, the interest of the common Bible scholar in this specific field has become rather marginal. This seems to be belied by the ever increasing quantity of publications as one can see, e.g., in Etan Levin's recent summary in BZAW 174 (1988). The larger the number of publications, the less their overall appeal to the general Bible scholar. Our generation has witnessed the sprouting of super-specialized meetings for Septuagint, Peshitta and massora so that there hardly remains space left for the textual generalist.

The field of Targum studies was entered traditionally through two main gateways. The one was that of traditional Jewish exegesis and its metamorphosis in modern Judaic studies. Traditionally, Jews studied Targum Onqelos and got from that tradition their main approach to the text of the Torah. Because of the large-scale adoption of Onqelos into Rashi's commentary, Onqelos (through Rashi) practically became the main guide for the common Jewish layman, as well as scholar. Onqelos was the main guide to all Jewish students, and while it was substantially supplanted by Rav Saadya's Tafsir in Arabic speaking countries—especially in Yemen—it was the official guide to the Torah. While functionally and linguistically similar to the rest of the Scriptures, the Targum never attained that status of authority. After all, it is the Torah that is awarded pride of place throughout Jewry, and no other part of canonical
Scriptures can rival it. In this way Onqelos received part of that glory as a pale, but faithful, image of the Hebrew text.

To be sure, 'official' and 'authoritative' are terms of relative value. No Jewish exegete saw himself bound by the exegesis of Onqelos. But none could ignore it. Upon inspection, as we can see it now, Onqelos emerged as a crystallization of ancient Palestinian exegetical tradition that received its final form somewhere and somehow in Babylonia about the fourth century C. E. It was a word-by-word rendering of the Hebrew viewed through traditional spectacles and, contrary to midrash, it represented a uniform rendering of that tradition. While certain dicta in rabbinic literature defy identification with traditional Onqelos renderings, by and large the characterization of Onqelos as a somewhat colored verbatim rendering of the Hebrew must still be regarded as correct. In this respect, Onqelos represents a totally different type of targum than the so-called Palestinian one.

Targum in our façon de parler is a two-faced term. We speak of 'Targum' in a specific sense—Onqelos, Palestinian, Jonathan, etc—and as a general term referring to the institution of exegetical rendering in a kindred tongue. That institution may go back to as early as the fourth century B. C. E. Its first reflections in Aramaic cannot be dated earlier than the fourth century C. E.—ignoring the bits of evidence in the Qumran scrolls—and those in Greek do not antedate the third century B. C. E. yet it's first actual reflections in Aramaic cannot be dated earlier than the fourth century C. E.—ignoring the bits of evidence in the Qumran scrolls—none of which resembles the targums previously known ad locum. Nor do the renderings into Greek antedate the third century B. C. E. Whatever the quibble about the date, the editorial witness to our own Aramaic tradition is that of the fourth century C. E., and the actual manuscript tradition goes back only as far as the time of the oldest massoretic evidence, around 1,000 C. E. Thus, a gap of about 1500 years remains to be bridged between the time of Ezra and the manuscript tradition we have. Therefore, our terms remain ambiguous. We may speak of the Septuagint as "a Targum" and we may refer to Onqelos as "the Targum." What we have learned in the past quarter of a century is that at best we can establish connections between specific targumic crystallizations, but these are not by necessity compelling connections of targums in their final forms.

Another fact that we have to reckon with within each written tradition is the density of the variational spread. At present, we are able to compare the density
of variants within Targum Onqelos with that of the Palestinian Targum, since both deal with the same type of text. In spite of its broad territorial expanse, the differences among manuscripts of Onqelos are comparatively minimal, hardly of relevance for non-specialists. On the other hand, each find of a new fragment of Palestinian Targum yields new surprises. To the extent that facts can be related to manuscript evidence, Onqelos appears as basically unified and stabilized, contrary to the Palestinian Targum. To be sure, there are slight changes in Yemenite manuscripts of Onqelos that bear witness to constant corrective activity or partial harmonization with MT. The flow of tradition never stood still. But differences as those between the type of Onqelos-tradition of Targum and the Palestinian Targum remain decisive and each find of a Palestinian Targum in a Geniza fragment remains exciting.

This has concentrated our attention on the differences as to Sitz im Leben between Onqelos-type and non-Onqelos-type targum. The weight traditionally accorded to Onqelos sharply contrasts with the weight allotted in our century to the Palestinian Targum, especially in the wake of discoveries in the Cairo Geniza and in the Vatican Library. We are able at this stage to make a few definitive statements about the Palestinian Targum on the Torah. What has been known traditionally as 'Pseudo-Jonathan' on the Pentateuch has turned out to be an individual concocted mixture between Palestinian and Onqelos types, enriched from some midrashic sources. Indeed it looks similar to the Palestinian Targum. Yet it is individualistic since it basically represents one specific tradition, as one can learn from the unique British Library manuscript Add 27031 that was edited in Jerusalem in 1974 by the late David Reider who corrected the edition of Moses Ginsburger (Berlin 1903). That same targum is printed in various rabbinic Bible editions. By some freak of fate, that Targum entered the tradition of rabbinic Bible editions as 'Targum Jonathan' on the Pentateuch and became known as "Pseudo-Jonathan" in modern literature. But in fact it is far removed in character from Targum Jonathan on the Prophets. Today, this very text is available in the computer concordance of Pseudo-Jonathan edited by E. G. Clarke (Hoboken 1984).

Thus the place of the real Palestinian Targum was usurped. Only fragments were known from that tradition which survived in a few manuscripts, some of which also entered the tradition of the rabbinic editions and were finally collected by the same Moses Ginsburger (Berlin 1899) and recently published on the basis of all medieval manuscripts by Michael Klein (Analecta Biblica 76 [Rome
1980]), as well as a lot of geniza fragments also collected and republished by Michael Klein at HUC in Cincinnati (1986).

It was only thanks to the discoveries of Geniza fragments, initially edited by Paul Kahle (*Masoreten des Westens*, 1927) and the discovery of the Vatican Codex Neofiti in our generation by the lamented Alejandro Díez-Macho that the real Palestinian Targum was restored to its proper position. The progress can be gauged from evaluating the differences between what I was able to include in my anthology (*Aramaic Bible Versions*, Jerusalem, 1957, and reprints) and what we have at our disposal today with the Palestinian Targum represented by the editions of Díez-Macho and Klein. Today it seems ironic that I myself copied the first edition of samples from the Neofiti manuscript from a microfilm I had made for my own use while spending some time in Rome in the mid-fifties.

The real Palestinian Targum now emerges as a mixture of literal translations and mixtures of midrashic contents. Obviously, the concoction known to us as "Pseudo-Jonathan" followed typologically the path laid out by the real Palestinian Targum, but carried it out in its own idiosyncratic execution. Therefore it has become doubtful whether a form witnessed to solely by Pseudo Jonathan may be taken as evidence for Palestinian targum. To complete the confusion, one should compare now my edition "Fragments of Lost Targumim" (I-II, Bar-Ilan, 1983-1989) to realize how widespread Targumic activity was. If we pay attention to this collection of Targumic splinters in light of the extant *ad locum* traditions, we gain a varied and rich picture which could not even be imagined in past generations. Unfortunately we are unable to state up to what time that targumic activity continued. Some Aramaic phrases look suspiciously like they were influenced by Arabic.

This description of the facts as they emerged over the past century cannot completely describe the facts as they really were. The existence of manuscripts surviving to this day can only give us an approximation to the facts, the more so since many manuscripts got lost through persecutions. But it gives us a fair indication of how the facts might have developed. The statistics of variations are not absolute but they indicate the direction into which our search leads. Thus, if Targum studies, in general, are a sub-area of the study of Bible versions, dealing with the Palestinian Targum is a treat relished only by super-specialists. Writing today an article for an encyclopedia on 'Bible versions' needs a whole group of super-specialists in all the different branches.
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We cannot even answer for sure the question regarding the origins of the Palestinian Targum known as 'fragmentary' Targum and what is the raison d'être of entering various bits of midrashic material into a frame that was largely a verbatim rendering. Did the author attempt to save some bits of midrash or did he try to salvage the language? The Qumran scrolls have taught us that there was a long tradition of re-telling the Bible story in variant formulations in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, and that evidence can be seen as fitting what could be suspected from the Pseudepigraphic literature. That whole area should be seen as a unity.

Regarding the issue of language, here also we are overwhelmed by new material. We now have the concordance of Ernest Clarke (1984) on Pseudo-Jonathan which has relieved the concordance by C. Y. Kasovksy on Targum Onqelos (1940) from splendid isolation, and we have today the concordantial dictionary by M. Sokoloff on Palestinian Aramaic (1990), an achievement no one could visualize in pre-computer days. However, there are as yet no comprehensive up-to-date grammars of Palestinian Aramaic and we still have to rely on the grammar of Caspar Levias, newly edited in 1986 by M. Sokoloff and on various monographic treatments or else have to use the outdated little volume by B. Stevenson published more than half-a-century ago.

Up to now we have dealt with the work of modern scholars working against the background of Wissenschaft des Judentums. I do not wish to stress again what I have remarked elsewhere on modern Jewish Bible study and its history. It was not the declared aim of the founders of that field to stress the Jewish contribution to that area of learning just as they stressed medieval Jewish commentators and philosophers. Those were areas in which they would make their specific contribution, introducing the European world to Jewish Treasures. In this context we need not deal with the issue whether Samuel David Luzzatto (Shadal) should be counted as an early representative of Wissenschaft des Judentums or whether he was the last scion of post-medieval Jewish Italian Renaissance. In any case, Luzzatto contributed to the study of Targum just like the founders of Wissenschaft des Judentums in Germany. To be sure, at the same time, study of Onqelos in the traditional fashion was widespread in the Jewish community and for each specific case one has to establish whether interest in Onqelos is part of traditional learning or part of the nascent study of Judaica.
As a matter of irony, by the beginning of the twentieth century Jewish scholars branched out also into the field of Bible studies, in general. That field had remained until then the closed province of non-Jewish theologians and *Wissenschaft des Judentums* did not touch academic Bible studies. For some reason, Jews until then had taken as their own field of study only textual criticism or confined themselves to remarks on the influence of biblical beliefs and ideas on rabbinic or medieval Judaism. The branching out of Jews into that part of Bible studies previously the province of non-Jewish scholars only, became symbolic for the end of traditional Jewish sole occupation with Targum and entering the field of literary criticism. Until then, Jewish scholars had also dealt with the relationship of the Targum and Septuagint with the rabbinic sources. But the study of Septuagint for its own sake had remained the province of non-Jewish scholars like other areas of academic Bible study.

We have started off by differentiating the Jewish tradition of Targum studies from the non-Jewish. Now we must come to deal with the latter. In the sixteenth century, Christian scholars acquired the traditional knowledge of Aramaic side-by-side with that of Hebrew and, apart from that, also Arabic became part of Oriental studies. Thus the medieval triad of Semitic knowledge became part of the humanist Hebraic revival. Apart from that, Renaissance humanists acquired the knowledge of two Christian oriental languages, i.e. Syriac and Ethiopic. That was the outcome of the endeavor of the papal curia to forge connections between Rome and some Oriental churches.

Through Aramaic, humanists acquired the knowledge of Targum. The latter was problematic from the start. The Hebrew Bible was regarded as the original *hebraica veritas* and could thus be used for verifying (or disputing) the correctness of the rendition of the Vulgate. Targum, on the other hand, was soon recognized as being built on rabbinic 'fables' which did not contribute anything to Christian knowledge. Thus, for example, when Cardinal Ximenes published his first polyglot edition of the Bible, the *Complutensis* he had his baptized collaborator, Alfonso de Zamora, prepare manuscripts of the Targum for the entire Old Testament but refrained from printing any Targum outside the Pentateuch. That omission was remedied only in the edition which Arias Montanus published in 1569 in Antwerp, the *Biblia Regia*. Generally speaking, the reaction of the first Christian students to the Targum varied in those decades, partly based on their church affiliations. It could be a first genuine
effort at comparative exegesis; but it could also be accompanied with pejorative comments—as one can see in the unpublished manuscripts of the Swiss reformed Hebraist, Konrad Pellican. He lectured weekly on a portion of the Bible in the Zürich "Prophezei," a group of local listeners, and referred in his lectures or sermons both to Jewish medieval exegetes and to the Targum.

One has to study the Bible exegesis of Luther and his circle to realize their ambivalence towards Jewish exegesis. Luther repeatedly stressed that one could learn from the Jews the knowledge of the Hebrew language, but one had to keep one's distance from their exegesis: since Jews rejected Jesus they cannot assist believing Christians to understand the Bible with their exegesis.

To be sure, once the first storm was over, a somewhat more rational attitude could prevail. The knowledge of the texts generated side products in the form of lexical notes and grammars. While these were already the first by-products of the early polyglot Bibles, the linguistic study of Hebrew and Chaldean gained a standing of its own only in the seventeenth century, when Johannes Buxtorf of Basel created new tools for the study of the Targum. In this way, a new Christian attitude towards Targum was formed, different from that of Pellican and Luther.

Only since the mid-nineteenth century have lines of division of interests according to denominations become blurred. To be sure, Christian scholars were not particularly interested in comparative Targumic-rabbinic studies, but rather in Targum as a Bible version, as can be seen, for example, in the fact that Paul de Lagarde edited prints of the Targums to the Prophets and Hagiographia just as he edited reprints of the Arabic and Coptic versions. Again, when Geniza finds began to enhance the interest in Palestinian Targum, statements on the language of Jesus were influenced by denominational positions. When it comes to such points, denominational positions are often more decisive than scholarly insights. The issue of the language of Jesus re-emerged in the recent decades following the discovery of the Neofiti Targum manuscript, just as it did decades ago in the wake of the acquisition of a Peshitta manuscript of the New Testament (the Yonan Codex). There are areas in which the denominational conviction remains dominant and can influence or color linguistic evaluation even in our day and age.

Looking at this broad canvas, one can only wonder to what extent it makes sense to treat Targum Studies as a sub-area of Bible Studies in general, but not as a sub-area of Rabbinic Studies. Given this complicated picture, we cannot but feel that the field as a whole still has to take shape.
First we have to concentrate on the *Sitz im Leben* of Targum and its target audience. There are certain traditional views and statements on these issues. Traditionally, the target audience of Targum was the worshipping community that listened to the weekly reading of the Torah and for lack of Hebrew knowledge had to get the text retold in its targumic rendition. By and large this was also the target audience of midrashic hermeneutics which meant the re-telling of the biblical text with hermeneutical embellishments. Both were listening audiences and both the *meturgeman* and the *darshan* were expounding to the listeners their traditional understanding. To be sure, they were expounding without a written *Vorlage*, and worked from the oral tradition of the masters of their craft, some 'workshop' tradition of expounding. Thus out of the same workshop there may have grown different interpreters who expounded the same text with slightly differing variations. That picture was true for the Torah as well as for Prophets and Writings, even if in the latter case some more freedom might have existed than for the largely legal instructions of the Torah. Of course, the official character of the Torah rendition would have been stricter, but individual freedom persisted throughout. Thus it is not suitable to search for one proto-targum text.

That picture remains to be proved by analysis of individual books and may vary from book to book. But the general trend is identical, as far as we can ascertain at present; midrash can yield various interpretations and such variety is mirrored in later collections, while Targum is one for each tradition. In that respect targum is one translation and no alternatives exist. Thus we can have a collection of various midrashim that are varied, but only one version, whether representing the old Palestinian tradition as crystallized in Babylonia in Onqelos, or the later Palestinian tradition as crystallized in MS Neofiti I and in some fragments. This is a general picture, undifferentiated as to which book of the Bible we are investigating. In this description I am ignoring on purpose the targumic splinters which can come from any tradition and only for us they exist as splinters or quotes. Having dealt with these up-to-now in my two volumes of *Fragments of Lost Targumim*, I need not repeat my analysis on this occasion.

The final question remains whether Targum should be viewed as rabbinic midrash for the layman, and whether we may regard Onqelos as *sui generis* just because it served as an 'official' crystallization and is taken as authoritative as long as its interpretation agrees, as usual, with rabbinic halakhah. These issues are too important to leave to students of Bible versions, because they are basi-
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cally questions that ought to concern students of rabbinics just as in the past. An overall theory of Targum cannot ignore these basic issues.

Moreover we must pay attention to the problem of the targumic process in its own right. Targum has served as the model for much of the entire modern discussion on the nature of Bible versions. This is brought into sharp focus when we consider what is generally termed the discussion personified by contrasting the models of Paul de Lagarde and Paul Kahle. For some reasons that dispute is acted out until today specifically on the ground of Septuagint studies. Even though most textual critics tend to contrast MT with LXX, that sparring should not really be acted out in the area of LXX. Lagarde visualized the history of the Greek renderings as one original text that underwent changes and corrections in historical layers. That is, indeed, the history of the Septuagint. Kahle, on the other hand, visualized the history as the convergence from separate renderings that underwent some kind of converging in the process. Such a model looks enticing at first blush, but in the light of what we can now perceive after the discovery of the Qumran scrolls, this does not fit the facts of the Aramaic versions in their entirety, even less so the facts of the history of the Greek text. The Aramaic versions never converged, and to this day Ongelos and the Palestinian Targum represent two different entities. To be sure, Onqelos was the main targum and readings from it entered secondarily into the Palestinian tradition.

In this survey we have neglected the fact of the Targum of the hagiographa. But these stress diversity even more. From no angle emerges the picture of an "Ur-Targum" as an overall basis for later developments. The Targumim on Job and Psalms offer again and again side-by-side renderings that bear witness to different parallel origins and do not strengthen the idea of an archetype or an "Ur-Targum" in its development.

So much for a short survey of what I perceive as some of the major issues of modern Targum studies. While the aspect of Targum as a version has faded into the background and its importance as a witness to the Bible text emerges as negligible, its main importance lies today in the field of Aramaic dialectology and rabbinic studies. While students of Aramaic have toiled in recent years in this field, rabbinic studies has not caught up with it. Since students of rabbinics are interested mainly in talmudic philology and not in thought or midrash, they have left that corner relatively fallow. I hope that our common effort as a study group on Targum at the Institute during 1985-1986 has contributed something to the
needed interdisciplinary approach and to mutual appreciation among the scholars involved in work on the different sub-fields to which targum studies make their contribution.

A final note on the way the present volume is structured. As usual, not every presentation by a member of the group did result in a written paper, ready to be printed. Thus we can only include the material handed in. In order that the volume should be somehow representative of the issues discussed, I have included one of my own presentations. Since I had to re-edit my own material, I felt that I should carry out the editing process also for papers of my fellows, as long as that did not necessitate making changes on the disks from which this volume will be printed. Altogether, this is only by way of a short apology. No interference took place with the contents of individual contributions. Each contributor used his own system of references to his sources and no attempt at unification for quotes was made.

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