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Targum, Targumim

The Hebrew word *targûm* (pl. *targûmîm*) is generally understood to refer to the ancient translations of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic during the early centuries C.E., and possibly the late centuries B.C.E. Most of our extant targumim appear to go back to scriptural translations that were produced initially within the land of Israel (Palestine), having been transmitted mainly under rabbinic auspices. (Neither the *Samaritan Targum* nor the Syriac Peshiṭta is being considered here.) The term "targûm" is based on the quadriliteral verbal root *trgm,* which has cognates in other Semitic languages but is likely to have had an Indo-European origin. It originally appears to have denoted the translation of an administrative or commercial document from one language to another in the context of an international exchange. This appears to be the usage of the sole biblical appearance of the verb *trgm* in Ezra 4:17, with reference to a letter written by local Judean officials in Aramaic, but translated, or to be translated *(mĕtûrgām),* for presentation to the Persian king Artaxerxes. The nominal form *targûm* is not evidenced prior to early rabbinic literature (beginning with the Mishnah, ca. 200 C.E.), where it is used principally for the translation of the Hebrew Bible, mainly into Aramaic, but also into other languages, especially Greek. However, it is also used in rabbinic literature for the Aramaic sections of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., in Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah), and for "internal translation" within Hebrew, whereby one person of lower status broadcasts or explains the words of another of higher status (Alexander 1985: 320-21; Safrai 2006: 244-45).

Targumic Origins

The origins of the practice of translating the Hebrew Bible, most likely beginning with the Torah (Pentateuch), into Aramaic is clouded in uncertainty. Some scholars (both modern critical and ancient rabbinic) see the practice first enacted or modeled in Ezra's reading of the Torah to the assembled masses in Jerusalem ca. 450 B.C.E., as described by Neh. 8:1-8, with the simultaneous (or interlinear) elucidation by the Levites so that the people would understand the reading: "They read from the scroll of the teaching *(tôrâ)* of God, translating it *(mĕpōraš)* and giving the sense, so they understood the reading" (v. 8 NJPS). At issue here is the meaning of *mĕpōraš,* which could mean anything from "distinctly" to "with explanation." The use of the same verbal form in Ezra 4:18, in which the Persian king Artaxerxes responds to the aforementioned letter from the Judean officials by referring to "the letter that you wrote me has been read to me in translation *(mĕpōraš)*" suggests that *mĕpōraš* and *mĕtûrgām* are synonymous expressions, denoting translation from one language (Hebrew/Aramaic) into another (Aramaic/Persian) but also entailing a degree of clarification and interpretation (in Neh. 8:8).

Whatever transpired at this event, we do not have a single mention of the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic in any source from the Second Temple period (unlike several accounts of the translation of the Torah into Greek in mid-third-century-B.C.E. Alexandria, Egypt). Thus, it is impossible to know whether Ezra's bilingual reading and rendering of Scripture represents or initiated a regular practice of public translation of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic, say (as is commonly presumed), in the weekly readings of Scripture in Second Temple synagogues, whether orally or from established texts (Levine 2005: 159-62). Although we have several depictions (in Josephus, Philo, and the New Testament) of the public reading of the Torah and Prophets in Second Temple synagogues, not one of them refers to the practice of an accompanying recitation of an Aramaic translation, as described in rabbinic sources beginning with the Mishnah.

Although we have fragments of an Aramaic translation of two noncontinuous sections of Leviticus (4QTgLev [4Q156]) and parts of two copies of an Aramaic translation of the book of Job from Qumran (11QTgJob [11Q10] and 4QTgJob [4Q157]), both of these being fairly literal in their renderings, we have no way of knowing what their function was within that community or its larger movement. It would appear that they did not accompany the lectionary recitation of Scripture in a synagogue context, since we have no reason to presume that those texts had a place in the synagogue service (Shepherd 2004). Otherwise, we have no extant targumic texts, or knowledge of such, that can be dated confidently to prerabbinic (pre-70 C.E.) times. Our earliest extant targumic texts (outside of the Dead Sea Scrolls) date from no earlier than the third century C.E., although they likely draw on an earlier targumic substratum and certainly incorporate earlier exegetical traditions, as do all early rabbinic texts (Kaufman 1985; York 1974).

Targumic Social Practice: Synagogue

For the social practice of targumic scriptural translation in the synagogue setting, we are dependent on the laws and narratives of early rabbinic texts, beginning with the Mishnah. To what extent those rules and narratives are representative of what actually occurred in ancient synagogues is impossible to know, in part because the degree of rabbinic authority in the synagogues is uncertain, and because there is no reason to assume a common liturgical or lectionary practice in synagogues across time and place. Nevertheless, early rabbinic literature is our only extant source for the social practice of targum. In those texts we are told that a person called the *mĕtûrgĕmān* (or *tûrgĕmān*) was designated to follow the reading of each verse from the Torah, or up to three verses from the Prophets, with a rendering in Aramaic. While the scriptural text is to be read from a scroll, its targum was rendered orally, whether spontaneously, from memory, or, most likely, in some combination of the two. It is presumed that targumic texts circulated and were stored in synagogues, and that they shared some but not all of Scripture's sanctity. Their public performance was not from a written text, however, so as not to blur the distinction between written Scripture and their oral explication, and the persons reading and

rendering were separate and distinct. Similarly, the higher status of the written text of Scripture over its oral targumic accompaniment was accentuated through the choice as *mětûrgěmān* of someone of lower status than that of the scriptural reader. Unlike the ancient Jewish Greek translation of Scripture (the Septuagint), the recitation of the targum never, as far as we know, replaced the reading of the Hebrew Scriptures, but rather served as its accompaniment. Thus, what one heard in a synagogue, at least one that followed these early rabbinic rules, would have been a bilingual, interlinear reading/ recitation of the Hebrew scriptural text and its Aramaic rendering (Alexander 1985; Fraade 1992; Levine 2005: 578-83; Smelik 1995: 31-41). There is, then, no evidence for an ancient "Aramaic Bible" (at least not of the rabbinic targumim) akin to the Greek Bible.

Targumic Social Practice: Study

While it is often presumed that the extant targumim reflect the practice of targum mainly in the synagogue and that they were intended thereby for a popular synagogue audience who lacked comprehension of the Hebrew Scriptures, we have strong evidence, once again from early rabbinic literature, that they may just as well reflect the practice of targum in the context of scriptural study, whether by individuals or small groups, at a wide range of educational levels, but including those who were learned in Scripture and rabbinic tradition and bilingual in Hebrew and Aramaic. As in the liturgical setting, the use of targum in the context of study accompanied rather than replaced Hebrew Scripture. This is confirmed by our earliest extant manuscripts of rabbinic targumim from the Cairo Geniza, in which at least the first few words of each verse in Hebrew precede their Aramaic rendering (Klein 1986, 2002). In the context of study, the Aramaic targum appears to have served both as a reinforcement for the learning of Scripture in Hebrew ("twice Scripture and once targum" [*b. Berakot* 8a-b]) and as a pedagogical bridge between the fixed "written Torah" and the more fluid "oral Torah" of scriptural interpretation ("Scripture leads to targum, targum leads to mishnah [oral teaching], mishnah leads to talmud [dialectical commentary]," *Sifre* Deuteronomy 161). The pedagogical settings and functions of targum remain largely unexamined except for some preliminary probes (Fraade 2006; Smelik 1995: 24-31; York 1979).

Targum and Ancient Jewish Multilingualism

The rabbinic emphasis on the accompanying function of targum with respect to Hebrew Scripture raises the question of the degree to which the targumic audience was multilingual, having access to the Hebrew original even as it relied on the Aramaic rendering for a fuller understanding of the Hebrew. Here it should be stressed that the common portrayal of the function of targum as serving those who had no comprehension of Hebrew, since Hebrew had died as a language of widespread comprehension in all but the limited scholastic circles of the rabbinic sages, does not find support within the ancient sources. However, caution is in order

since the vast majority of those sources, in the centuries following the destruction of the Second Temple, come from rabbinic circles. Still, there is an ever-increasing corpus of nonrabbinic Hebrew texts from Hellenistic and Roman times, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, the documents found in the Bar Kokhba caves, and numerous inscriptions, mainly from synagogue remains, all of which suggest that Hebrew continued in use, at least in some locations and among some groups, well into late antiquity, alongside the use of Greek and Aramaic, albeit in different proportional and functional mixes (Smelik 1995: 2-23). Nor does Mishnaic Hebrew represent a largely dead, unspoken, scholastic language replaced by Aramaic for all nonscholastic uses. In short, it cannot be presumed, on the model of the Greek Jewish Scriptures, that the targumim in the early centuries C.E. were primarily intended for an audience that had no comprehension of the Hebrew "original" (Tal 2001).

Types of Translation

The universal dilemma of the translator, whether to bring the target audience to the source or vice versa — whether to aim for fidelity to the source language or fluency in the target language — is best expressed by a saying attributed to Rabbi Judah bar El'ai (mid-second century C.E.): "One who translates literally (according to its form) is a liar, while one who adds [to it] is a blasphemer" (*t. Meg.* 3:41). Presumably, the ideal lies somewhere between the two extremes, but how to locate it is not explained. Perhaps it is for this reason that a variety of targumim, especially for the Pentateuch, display varying solutions to this quandary, with some cleaving closely to the original Hebrew text, aiming for a word-for-word equivalency while still being interpretive in nature (e.g., *Targum Onqelos* to the Pentateuch and *Targum Jonathan* to the Prophets), and others being more paraphrastic and expansive of the Hebrew original, thereby aiming to convey the broad sense of Scripture as understood by the interpretive tradition of the translators (e.g., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to the Pentateuch). However, neither of these are pure types; the former provide plenty of nonliteral explications, and the latter often begin with a close rendering of the scriptural base text before adding explanatory expansions. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to the Pentateuch, for instance, is far more expansive than the other Palestinian targumim (Kasher 1988; Shinan 1979, 1992). For a descriptive survey of the extant targumim to the Pentateuch, Prophets, and Writings, see Safrai 2006: 263-78.

Form and Genre

The style and form of targum distinguish it both from prerabbinic forms of "rewritten Bible" (e.g., the *Genesis Apocryphon* from Qumran, the *Book of Jubilees*) and from forms of scriptural commentary (Philo's allegorical commentaries, the Qumran pesharim, and rabbinic midrash), even as it often shares exegetical methods and traditions with all of these. In its most expansive and paraphrastic forms (e.g., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to the Pentateuch), it stretches the limits of targum as translation while still being clearly distinguishable

from midrashic forms of scriptural commentary. Unlike midrash, targum does not employ technical terminology to differentiate between, or to link, the scriptural verse and its rendering. Nor does it juxtapose multiple, conflicting interpretations (although it does exhibit numerous "double translations"), or attribute its renderings to named authorities. Further, targum does not explicitly render one verse by means of another, is not explicit in its interpretive methods, and does not reflect upon or authorize its discourse. In all of these ways, targum is directly and continuously linked to the Hebrew text of Scripture that it accompanies in both textual and social practice (with the exception of the *Fragmentary Targum*).

Relation to Rabbinic Literature

The relation of targum to early rabbinic literature, and alternatively to late Second Temple Jewish literature and the New Testament, has long been a subject of debate. Although the extant targums have been preserved and transmitted through rabbinic channels (with the exception of those among the Dead Sea Scrolls), and all of our ancient references to and rules for the social practice of targum are to be found in early rabbinic literature, some scholars, especially from the 1930s through the 1980s, have sought to locate targumic renderings or their incorporated traditions in either pre- or extrarabbinic settings. Those who have argued for a prerabbinic provenance have sought thereby to find in targum a Jewish source for the exegetical teachings of the New Testament and early Christianity by locating them in the context of late Second Temple Judaism, especially in what is presumed to be the popular setting of the synagogue (e.g., McNamara 1972).

Such arguments are based largely on isolated affinities between targumic renderings and Second Temple Jewish and New Testament ideas and traditions of scriptural exegesis, and on equally isolated differences between the targumim and early rabbinic texts, especially in the case of halakah (rabbinic law). They likewise presume a linguistic situation that has been called into serious question, as noted above.

Like each branch of rabbinic literature, targum has its own distinctive generic features of terminology and form that are specific to its distinctive rhetorical and pedagogical purposes. For example, the targumim frequently employ terms such as *memra* (hypostasized divine speech), which does not correspond to any word in the scriptural base text, as a buffer between what might otherwise appear as direct divine-human contact. Nevertheless, the differences between targum and other forms of rabbinic literature hardly negate their abundant affinities.

Efforts to locate the extant targumim, or their traditions, in prerabbinic times and loci have not withstood the burden of scholarly scrutiny for a variety of reasons, not least of which is the difficulty of dating the targumim as early as some have sought. Nevertheless, a systematic study of the affinities and differences between the targumim, especially with respect to halakic traditions and interpretations and the varieties of early rabbinic literature, remains a serious desideratum. Only then will it be possible to evaluate the balance between such similarities and differences, and to determine whether the differences reflect social and ideological provenance or genre (Fraade 2006; Safrai 2006).

Purpose and Function

The purpose(s) of targum is not self-evident from the targumic texts themselves, but must be surmised from deductions of its setting and audience (e.g., synagogue/house of study, popular/scholarly) and from its manner of delivery and employment. There is no reason to presume that these were singular either synchronically or diachronically. In all contexts and usages, the targums sought to give their readers and auditors a better grasp of the Hebrew original which it accompanied, by rendering it in accord with the exegetical traditions current among their creators. By maintaining a clear linguistic demarcation between written Scripture in Hebrew and its orally delivered, interlinear recitation and explication, targum served to render Scripture comprehensible in new cultural settings without altering or displacing the iconic status of its sacred base text. In this way, targum itself became a model for Jewish scriptural translation through the ages, even as it acquired its own privileged place, in rabbinic Bibles, alongside Scripture long after Aramaic ceased to be a vernacular Jewish language.

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Tcherikover, Victor (Avigdor)

Victor Tcherikover (1894-1959) was born in St. Petersburg and studied philosophy and ancient history at the University of Moscow. In 1921 he went to Germany and studied ancient history under Eduard Meyer in Berlin. In 1925 he moved to Palestine and became one of the first teachers at the Hebrew University; he taught until his death in 1959.

His first major work was a study of the foundation of Hellenistic cities, "Die Hellenistischen Städtegründungen von Alexander der Grossen bis auf die Römerzeit," *Philologus Supplementband* 19,1 (1927) 1-216. His subsequent work, however, dealt primarily with Jewish topics. In 1930 he published in Hebrew a major study, *Ha Yehudim va-ha Yevanim ba Tekufah ha Helenistit* (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1930), which appeared in English only in 1959, the year of his death, as *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1959; rpt., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999).

This book combined two detailed studies, the first dealing with the events leading up to the Maccabean Revolt and the second dealing with the history of the Jews in Alexandria. He argued that the so-called Hellenistic reform in Jerusalem was political and economic in its goals. It "involved no principles." The initial fighting between Jason and Menelaus was a struggle for power within the ruling elite. The Syrian intervention, however, was provoked by a hypothetical revolt by the Hasidim, the nonpriestly scribes who were the forerunners of the Pharisees. So "it was not the revolt which came as a response to the persecution, but the persecution which came as a response to the revolt." Both of these positions remain controversial. Elias Bickerman and Martin Hengel argued that the reform was cultural and religious, and that primary responsibility for the persecution rests with Menelaus. Tcherikover's view reflects his own conviction of the primacy of economic and social considerations, but it requires little extrapolation beyond the sources, and has again found favor in recent years. The revolt of the Hasidim, however, has no basis in the ancient sources and is now regarded as an unnecessary hypothesis.

On the subject of Alexandrian Judaism, Tcherikover argued that the introduction of the *laographia,* or poll tax, by Augustus created a clear-cut division between citizens and noncitizens, as only the latter were liable for the tax. The Jews now found themselves classified with the Egyptians. Hence the Jews aspired to citizenship and tried to infiltrate the gymnasium with this end in view. Consequently, conflict developed both with the Alexandrian citizens, who resented their intrusion, and with the Egyptian masses, who resented their pretensions to superior status. This argument remains extremely controversial. Many scholars deny that the Jews would have sought Alexandrian citizenship, since it would have entailed some recognition of pagan gods. Others dispute whether Augustus made any drastic change in the system of taxation. The evidence for Tcherikover's interpretation lies in a few fragmentary papyri whose interpretation is open to dispute. Nonetheless, there is no evidence for such a poll tax before the reign of Augustus, and Tcherikover's theory remains the most compelling interpretation that has been proposed of the conflict between Jews and their neighbors in Alexandria in the first century C.E.

From 1935 on, a central place in Tcherikover's work was occupied by the preparation of the corpus of Jewish papyri, in collaboration with Alexander Fuks. The first volume appeared in 1957, prefaced by a book-length introduction to the Diaspora in Egypt. The second and third volumes appeared posthumously in 1960 and 1964. This multivolume work stands as Tcherikover's *magnum opus*. It remains the standard edition of the Jewish papyri from Hellenistic-Roman Egypt.

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Teacher of Righteousness → Pesharim

Tefillin → Phylacteries and Mezuzot

Temple, Jerusalem

Our information regarding the Jerusalem Temple throughout the Second Temple period is extremely uneven. The Persian period yields almost no data, the Hellenistic-Hasmonean period somewhat more but still extremely limited data, and the Herodian-Roman era an incredibly rich trove of information, both literary sources and archaeological finds.