Description of *History and Origin of Targum Jonathan*

Protestant Theological University, Kampen

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1. Definition of the problem, relevance

Targum Jonathan (henceforth TJ) is the standard Jewish Aramaic translation of the Biblical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings (the so-called Former Prophets), and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve Minor Prophets (the Latter Prophets). Of this Targum to the Prophets only one more or less recent edition is available (Sperber: 1959-73), which does not, however, meet modern standards with regard to critical editions. Based on a very limited selection of manuscripts from the Western and Yemenite traditions, it does not give any indication of their mutual relations and it leaves the important Babylonian tradition out of consideration entirely (e.g. Houtman: 2000). Moreover, the rendering of the variants is not always accurate. It is generally recognised, however, that a new edition will only be possible once the origin and history of the text of the Targum to the Prophets have been clarified, which in view of the importance of this Targum is a worthwhile target in itself also. The present program meets these needs for this official Targum on the Prophets, which together with Targum Onqelos on the Torah is the most important Jewish Bible translation.

The study of the Targums is relevant for scholars in the fields of theology, Jewish studies and patristic literature. This is especially true for Targum Jonathan, which is a major source for the history of biblical interpretation, because it often inserts paraphrastic explanations, which sometimes go back on very old exegetical traditions found in no other rabbinical work, and which in other cases constitute their earliest attestation. The language of the classical Targums Onqelos and Jonathan, one of the best-attested Aramaic dialects, is an important subject of linguistic study, highly relevant for Semitic linguistics in general. The stemmatological problems encountered for Targum Jonathan will necessitate the development and use of techniques that will prove useful for other texts, rabbinic or other, as well.

2. Theoretical framework, method, sources

According to a commonly held opinion, Targum Jonathan was first written in Palestine around the beginning of the Common Era, then transferred to Babylon, where, edited and adapted to local needs, it attained official status. Shifts in translation techniques and theological emphasis can be observed, apparently partly depending on date and place of origin, and partly on the literary genre of the source text (Wesselius: 1996, 2001; Van Staalduine-Sulman 1999, 2001). It remains to be seen whether these aspects can be used for reconstructing the process of development underlying Targum Jonathan.

Beside the standard text of Targum Jonathan, numerous fragments of Aramaic translations of these Biblical books are contained in rabbinic literature (Goshen-Gottstein: 1983, 1989). It is an undecided question where they originated and whether they ever belonged to the same tradition as TJ.

In the fifth to sixth centuries the revised Targum probably found its way back to Palestine and was supplemented with alternative local traditions, the so-called Toseftas. That these Toseftas consist of extraneous traditions added to TJ proper is evident, if only from their absence in the eastern text tradition. Also their designation 'Tosefta', which means 'addition', suggests that these expansions are regarded as supplements to TJ. Their status is not completely clear: are they branches of the traditions that also brought forth the official TJ, or are they representatives of a living translation activity in Palestine? An important criterion for the assignment of Toseftas and Targum fragments is their linguistic character, particularly for narrowing down their time and place of origin (cf. Smelik: 1995, and Kasher: 1996).

Probably through the authoritative character of TJ, a considerable number of manuscripts have been preserved: some 15 to 30 complete manuscripts beside numerous liturgical anthologies. A complicating factor is that the text has been preserved in varied contexts: independently, verse-by-verse with the Hebrew original, sometimes together with an Arabic translation. Additionally, the text underwent local development throughout the Jewish Diaspora in Asia, Europe and Africa. Little research has been done on the relations between these manuscript traditions: no inventory of the available sources has been made, let alone a stemmatological inquiry that could clarify the tradition of TJ.

Within the program, the following questions are to be considered:

(1) What is the relation between the Toseftas and the targumic passages quoted in rabbinic literature on one side and the official version of Targum Jonathan on the other? Are they to be considered as earlier stages of the text or as alternative Targum traditions? Both linguistic and theological approaches must be explored.
(2) What is the best way to explain the variety of translation techniques within Targum Jonathan? This question is also related to the problem whether Targum Jonathan to the Former and Targum Jonathan to the Latter Prophets are to be considered as a unity or as separate works.
(3) What is the relation between the manuscripts? Should decisions about stemma and variant readings be made by scholars or by the computer, or (as seems probable now) a combination of both? Which manuscripts should be used for a critical edition?

Since the Qumran discoveries around the middle of the twentieth century, interest in the origin and language of Targum Jonathan has surged, especially since some targumic and related Aramaic texts were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The lacunas in Sperber's edition (Sperber: 1959-73) have gradually been pointed out and partly filled. The Babylonian tradition is being studied in Spain and published for separate biblical books (Ribera Florit: 1988, 1992, 1997, Martínez Borobio: 1987, 1989, 1998). The Toseftas have largely been collected and published (Kasher: 1996). The fragments in rabbinic writings have been partly published by the late M. Goshen-Gottstein (Goshen-Gottstein: 1983, 1989). The results gained in these three fields of research are to be incorporated in the present program. Both the Spanish team and Professor Kasher have promised their co-operation.

Resources that are essential for this work are a concordance and commentaries. A concordance is the only effective means to detect translation conventions and deviations from them. Commentaries on the text help to classify variants, because variants that are not the result of corruption of the text will usually arise either from linguistic or from theological considerations. The first resource is now being prepared under the direction of Prof.dr J.C. de Moor, Dr W.F. Smelik (now in London) and Dr A. Houtman (De Moor: 1995-...). For six of the eight books of TJ concordances are available and the other two are nearing completion. Commentaries on Judges (Smelik: 1995), Samuel and Isaiah will be available by the start of the project. The only resources still lacking are a linguistic description of TJ, which is to be provided by Mr R. Kuty under the guidance of Prof.dr T. Muraoka, and a catalogue of all the manuscripts of the Targum to the Prophets.

The technical side of the stemmatological research will benefit from computer programs made for this purpose by Dr. E. Wattel of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science of the Free University in Amsterdam (see A. Houtman: 1999). In the course of the project some

refinements will probably have to be made for the specific situation in TJ; Dr Wattel has promised his support. Experience shows that unforeseen computing problems usually turn up in the last stages of the preparation of a complex publication, and therefore some extra computer programming support will probably be necessary in the last year.

The specific problems with regard to the textual history of TJ to Samuel will be dealt with in a monograph by Van Staalduine-Sulman, containing also a sample edition of this book. Kuty will study the linguistic features of the same text. Samuel has been chosen, firstly because it contains a representative amount of poetical passages and chapters (unlike Joshua, Judges), and a lot of simple prose as well (unlike the books of the Latter Prophets), and because it does not contain the complex exegetical problems of Kings, and secondly because Van Staalduine-Sulman is an expert in this very book, having edited a concordance and written a commentary on it (Van Staalduine-Sulman: 1996, 2002). The stemmatological situation is to be discussed in a joint article by Houtman, Van Staalduine-Sulman and Wattel, to be published in the *Journal for the Aramaic Bible* (*JAB*). The origin and history of TJ in general, as well as the theological developments underlying the main text, the additions and the fragments will be treated in a monograph by Houtman. Wesselius will deal with the poetical passages in an article to be published in *JAB*, perhaps co-authored by Van Staalduine-Sulman.

3. Connection and added value of the programmatic set-up

The study of Targumic texts is always on the crossroads between linguistics, history, theology and stemmatology, and it is generally recognised that in many publications some of these prosper at the expense of the others, as no one can be an expert in all of them. By bringing expertise from these areas together we will attempt to avoid this pitfall and to achieve a balanced picture of origin and history of TJ. The linguistic description is an essential basis for the other parts of the project, and the stemmatological, text-historical, tradition-historical, literary and theological approaches are all essential for achieving this picture and are partly dependent on each other. In the past decades, the Theological University of Kampen has evolved into a centre of Targumic studies, where expertise, various working instruments and materials and a good library are available, for which the University was and is willing to make its own investments as well.

4. Elaboration of the constituent parts

Descriptive grammar of the Targum to Samuel (R. Kuty)
A scientific, philological study of an ancient text must go hand in hand with a study of its linguistic structure. Such a text cannot be edited without sound knowledge of its linguistic structure, including lexicography. This principle applies even more to a text that is a translation of another ancient text with many philological and text-critical difficulties of its own. Unfortunately, as far as the Aramaic grammar of the Targums, or for that matter, of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic as a whole, is concerned, despite some significant *Einzelstudien*, we are still dependent on the classic work in the field, namely Gustaf Dalman's *Grammatik des jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch* of 1905 (!). Far ahead of its time when first published, it is universally agreed nowadays to be in need of radical revision and supplementation at many points. This is due to the subsequent discovery of many new manuscripts, identification of divergent Targum traditions, and the numerous Aramaic texts subsequently discovered, particularly those found close to the place of origin of the Targum, namely the Judaean Desert

(notably Qumran). Moreover, Dalman's grammar is limited to orthography, phonology and morphology, and lacks morphosyntax and syntax altogether, a compartment of the linguistic structure that is indispensable for proper assessment of any language. Avraham Tal's *The Language of the Targum of the Former Prophets and its Position within the Aramaic Dialects* (Tel Aviv 1975) has significantly improved the situation. For our purpose it is especially important, since it also deals with the language of the book of Samuel, the immediate object of our proposed research project. Unfortunately for us, while it exhibits significant advances, characterised by awareness of fundamental methodological issues, diachronic and dialectological issues and general sound scholarship, it deals only with a rather limited number of linguistic features. His study includes only pronouns, particles (prepositions, *nota objecti,* conjunctions), adverbs, numerals, a rather sketchy description of the morphology of the noun and the verb, and finally selected lexical items studied from a diachronic, comparative Aramaic perspective. In the field of Aramaic lexicography some other significant gains have been made which may benefit this project, notably Michael Sokoloff's *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat Gan, 1990). Sokoloff's lexicon of Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic is in its final phase.

This brief description of the *status quaestionis* amply demonstrates that in our knowledge of Targumic Aramaic there are considerable gaps waiting to be filled. A doctoral dissertation as part of this research proposal shall study and analyse the Aramaic of the Targum of the book of Samuel and fill some of those gaps. It will include:
>   (a) the orthography;
>   (b) the morphology of the noun and the verb;
>   (c) the morphosyntax of the noun (esp. the status);
>   (d) the morphosyntax of the verb (esp. the so-called two tenses and the participle);
>   (e) the syntax of the noun (esp. its genitival expansion by means of the status constructus versus its analytical syntagm by means of the particle *di*);
>   (f) the syntax of the verb (esp. various patterns of the verb complementation by means of pronominal suffixes attached to the verb, through various prepositions and the *nota objecti,* other modes of expansion of the verb phrase through the infinitive, participle, and subordinate clauses); and
>   (g) the word-order, particularly where the Targum departs from the underlying Hebrew original.

The study needs to draw upon data already known on earlier and contemporary phases of Aramaic and its various dialects. On the basis of the results obtained by this research the Ph.D. student would be in a position to proceed to the next stage of the research project, namely evaluation of linguistic data in Targum traditions deviating from the main Targum tradition of the book of Samuel.

The textual tradition of the Targum to Samuel (E. van Staalduine-Sulman)
The history of the textual tradition of Targum Samuel is still virgin territory. Although we now know of 25 continuous MSS of Targum Samuel and hundreds of fragmentary manuscripts and collections of *haftarot* (liturgical readings), their mutual relations are still largely unknown. In rough outline, textual witnesses of the Targum on the Prophets can be classified into a Babylonian, a Yemenite and a Western tradition. In his edition Sperber used some witnesses of the Yemenite and the Western tradition, but without evaluating the significance of the variants (Sperber: 1959-73). The Babylonian tradition has recently been published (Martínez Borobio: 1987). Important as this publication is, it does not clarify the relation between this tradition and the others. A reliable stemma of all the material remains a desideratum. Because of the abundance of the material, one must look for a way to create

such a stemma without having to scrutinize all the textual material first. A possible way to do this is a sample survey (Houtman: 1999).

A feasible start of the stemmatological research is to begin with the continuous text tradition. For this part of the collation, all the available continuous MSS and early editions will be used. Also the Babylonian fragments will be included to provide a point of comparison with a markedly different tradition.

At the next stage, the drawbacks of this initial choice of textual material must be considered. Firstly, there is the chance factor of tradition. An inferior text may have survived as a whole in a well readable manuscript, whereas a major ancient text tradition may be available only in a badly damaged fragment. Therefore, if a variant reading is found in a fragment, we must try to place this fragment in the provisional tree on the basis of the recorded characteristics of the branches; this is especially important in the case of the so-called Geniza fragments. Secondly, we must reckon with the possibility that the *haftarot* had an independent history because of their liturgical function. Therefore the *haftarot* will be first examined as a corpus and then compared with the continuous tradition. For the actual collation the program Collate will be used (Robinson: 1994).

In the 1970s a new stemmatological approach in three stages was developed (Dees: 1975). This method will be adapted for the present purpose. In the first step, the manuscripts are clustered into subfamilies on purely quantitative grounds. In the second step, manuscripts that might have been intermediary in the process of transmission are identified. These two steps produce the chain of relationships that underlies the genealogical tree. At this stage, the nature of the relationships between the groups is settled, but not as yet the direction of the relationships. This has to be determined at the third step, where the point of suspension, i.e. the root of the tree, is determined on the basis of qualitative arguments, such as weighting of the variants, palaeographic and codicological data and historical information.

In recent years, this method has profited greatly from the development of E. Wattel's computer program that takes care of the first two steps (Houtman: 1999). Thanks to his program, which calculates the affinity between textual witnesses, one can now work with large amounts of material. The program has been tested extensively in several projects and has proved its worth. What remains for the philologist is the challenge to evaluate the output and to interpret it in the light of circumstantial data.

The origin and development of the Targum to the Prophets (A. Houtman)
As it is, little is known about the origin and development of Targum Jonathan. On the one hand, the limited variation in the manuscript tradition of TJ suggests that once the text assumed its final form great care was taken to preserve this form. On the other hand, the period before the fixation of the text is veiled in mist. Internal evidence, such as historical allusions and diverse theological tendencies, suggests a long formative period. External evidence, in particular the finds in Qumran, points to an early existence of Aramaic Bible translations, including the Prophets. That is about all we know. It is self-evident that study of contemporary literary sources as well as modern secondary literature on the subject is necessary for the investigation into the *Sitz im Leben* of Targum Jonathan. But beside this we have two other important keys at our disposal to open up the formative period, i.e. the targumic Toseftas and quotations from alternative Targum traditions that are found in rabbinic and medieval Jewish literature.

The origin of the targumic Toseftas and their relation to TJ is still largely unexplained. As concerns their contents the Toseftas seem to be rooted in Palestine, while they seem to reflect some knowledge of the Babylonian Talmud and late midrashim also, though the evidence is not entirely conclusive (Smelik: 1995, 1-23, 163-165, 643-645). Their language also exhibits considerable Babylonian influence (Tal: 1975, 191-200; Kasher: 1996, 14-16). These seemingly contradictory characteristics are hard to reconcile. In rough outline there are two possibilities. Either the Toseftas contain ancient traditions that have been adapted to a more formal style later on, or they are later extensions of an originally formal translation. If the former case holds true, then part of the pre-history of TJ could well be recoverable through an analysis of these Toseftas as possible remnants of the older Palestinian Targum tradition.

In view of the numerous quotes in rabbinic and medieval exegetical works, it is clear that the ancient Aramaic interpretation played an important role in the work of later exegetes. The interesting point now is that beside numerous more or less literal quotations from TJ, there are also quotations that have no parallel in this corpus. These quotes may turn out to be of considerable importance for the reconstruction of possible precursors of TJ. In any case they show that the material surviving in TJ is only a part of an originally much larger body of targumic traditions. Although it is not always possible to classify the material dialectically because of the briefness of some of the quotations, part of it is decidedly Palestinian. Therefore, with these fragments of what Goshen-Gottstein coined 'lost Targums' we now have Palestinian type renderings of the Targum to the Prophets where hitherto we only had TJ and the targumic Toseftas it contains (Goshen-Gottstein: 1983, 1989).

The Toseftas and the 'lost Targums' must be analysed in relation to each other and to the text of TJ. To this end the different traditions will be read into a shared database that enables synoptic study of the material, for which the synoptic database program developed by Houtman for her dissertation is to be adapted (Houtman: 1997). The material must be studied as concerns its linguistic usage as well as its cultural and theological content.

The combination of these lines of research will hopefully shed new light on the long-standing question whether the different traditions should be interpreted as converging or diverging tendencies within the evolution of the text, or as representing two different traditions each with its own typologically different variants. The proposed research will concentrate on Targum Samuel as representative of the Former Prophets and Targum Isaiah as representative of the Latter Prophets.

Ultimately, the outcome will be combined with the results of the other sub-projects and incorporated in a monograph on origin and development of Targum Jonathan.

A computerized catalogue of manuscripts and early editions of the Targum to the Prophets (David Kroeze)
Before one can start working on a new edition, the conditions must be created under which future editors can do their work efficiently. The most important of these is ready access to the primary sources. To that end first of all a computerised catalogue of all the known manuscripts and early editions that contain (parts of) Targum Jonathan will have to be built. Existing catalogues must be scrutinized and libraries must be contacted for information. Of all the collected relevant material uniform digital records must be made to enable selection and combination of search criteria, such as class-marks, codicological and palaeographical data, and contents.

In Kampen, within the current project of the Targum to the Prophets, a start has been made on the development of such a database, but it is still far from complete.

At the end of 1986 the card-catalogues of the Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts (IMHM) in Jerusalem were closed and all cataloguing has been done by computer since. Due to budgetary reasons, only new acquisitions and previously uncatalogued manuscripts are being recorded in this way, so that much material is not yet digitally available. Close contact with the IMHM is therefore necessary to make full use of its resources and avoid superfluous work on either side, and its director, Dr B. Richler, has indeed promised his co-operation.

Apart from these initiatives, many targumic scholars have compiled lists of manuscripts for their own use. They will be asked via the International Organization for Targumic Studies to make their material available.

When the descriptions in the existing catalogues are too terse, or when they give contradictory information, the researcher will in many cases have to examine the manuscript *in situ*.

All this material must be combined into a central database. Subsequently, librarians and individual scholars must be asked to check it and compare its contents with their own data. In this way the database is to be supplemented and corrected.