

SAIS 7

*Ahuva Ho*

STUDIES IN ARAMAIC INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

# The Targum of Zephaniah

*Manuscripts and Commentary*

BRILL



# The Targum of Zephaniah

# Studies in the Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture

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*By*  
Ahuva Ho



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## PREFACE

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Ahuva Ho  
Orange, California  
February 2009

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Aq	Aquila
AS	Aramaic Studies
ASV	American Standard Version (1901)
AT	Additional Targum
ATSAT	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BO	Bibliotheca Orientalis
BS	Bibliotheca Sacra
BThB	Biblical Theology Bulletin
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DBSup	Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplément
EB	Estudios Bíblicos
EDB	Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible
EI	Eretz Israel
EJ	Encyclopaedia Judaica
ET	The Expository Times
ETHR	Études Théologiques et Religieuses
FRB	First Rabbinic Bible, Venice, 1515–1517 (ms B)
HB	Hebrew Bible
HOTTP	Preliminary and Interim Report on the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
IDBS	The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary Volume
JAB	Journal for the Aramaic Bible
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JE	Jewish Encyclopedia
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JNSL	Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages
JNUL	Jewish National and University Library, Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts

JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JQR	The Jewish Quarterly Review
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JThS	The Journal of Theological Studies
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MGWJ	Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums
MLCU	The Manuscript Library of Columbia University
ms	manuscript
mss	manuscripts
N	Neofiti
NAB	The New American Standard Bible
NAS	New American Standard Bible (1977)
NAU	New American Standard Bible (1995)
NEAEHL	The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land
NIB	New International Version (UK)
NIV	New International Version (US) (1984)
NJB	The New Jerusalem Bible
NKJ	New King James Version (1982)
NRS	New Revised Standard Version (1989)
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
Pesh	Peshitta
P <sub>s</sub> J	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
PT	Parma 555 Targum
RdQ	Revue de Qumran
RSR	Recherches de Science Religieuse
RSV	Revised Standard Version
RV	Revue Biblique
Simm	Simmachus
SRB	Second Rabbinic Bible, Venice, 1524/25 (ms G)
Tg	Targum
Theod	Theodotion
TJ	Targum Jonathan
TO	Targum Onkelos

UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
VT	Vetus Testamentum
Vul	Vulgate
WCJS	World Congress of Jewish Studies
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 PROLOGUE

Babylonian manuscripts for the study of Targum Zephaniah are rare and often fragmentary<sup>1</sup> as in the case with Eb 80 and Eb 88,<sup>2</sup> whose photo-copies are blurry and difficult to read. This is especially so with Eb 88. Designating them as basic text for our study in order to get to the original text of the MT<sup>3</sup> and/or TJ is an unattainable task and therefore not the purpose of this research.<sup>4</sup> They are helpful in understanding the development of accents and the supralinear system of vocalization, which are not the focus of this study either. For our purpose, their import lies in validating variants found in Yemenite mss and in discerning textual development vis-à-vis the Yemenite mss.<sup>5</sup>

The focus of this work is to examine Targum Jonathan (TJ) to Zephaniah and to find traditions that have been preserved in the diaspora. When differing from Yemenite traditions, what conclusions can be withdrawn? Were there differing texts from the outset in Palestine and Babylonia or were such texts altered when moved to other locales? Based on such questions, can we discern families of texts that not only pertain to certain provenances but cross borders? To accomplish this

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<sup>1</sup> Willem F. Smelik *The Targum of Judges* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 114–15.

<sup>2</sup> Josep F. Ribera published only the Targum of mss Eb 80 and Eb 88 in “La Versión Aramaica del Profeta Sofonías,” *Estudios Bíblicos* 40 (1982): 127–58. He compared these two Babylonian fragments to Ms Or. 1474 (Ms Z in our study), a Yemenite ms dated to the end of the 16th century.

<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew and Greek Biblical mss discovered in the Dead Sea region attest to the variety of variants of the period (3rd century BCE to 2nd century CE).

<sup>4</sup> Malachi Martin’s call to use Babylonian mss as basic text is more conducive perhaps to the study of the Pentateuch and Mishnaic texts (“The Babylonian Tradition and Targum,” in *Le Psautier, Ses origines. Ses problèmes littéraires. Son influence* [OBL 4; Louvain: Université de Louvain, 1962], 427–51). For Mishnaic texts see I. Yeivin’s *A Collection of Mishnaic Geniza Fragments with Babylonian Vocalization*. Jerusalem: Makor Publishing Ltd, 1974.

<sup>5</sup> As a side note, the Babylonian supralinear vocalization, when compared with the Tiberian system of vocalization, explains sometimes the Yemenite pronunciation.

a basic ms had to be chosen and other mss, from five major communities, Palestinian, Babylonian, Yemenite, Ashkenazi, and Sepharadi were brought into the examination. Two main goals were set: One, to present a commentary on TJ along these lines: Through the Targum's characteristics, what motivated the translator(s) to compose the translation at hand? What were the social, historical, theological, geographical, didactic reasons behind this or that rendering? What Rabbinic influence, whether *midrashic* or *halakhic*, is reflected, if at all? How were *Toseftot* influenced by TJ? Can we detect various traditions? The second goal, with the help of the other mss, is to discern qualitative changes along time and location. Can distinctive stemmas be recognized? Answers to such questions will help in determining the place of Targum in the life of the Jewish communities from the earliest period (Babylonian) to the latest (Lutzki 239). On the other hand, have copying activities such as the role of the scribe and the various editors (*maggiah*, *naqdan*, *massorete*, private users), deem conclusions to be rather inconclusive, inaccurate or even futile?

Yemenite mss are closest to the vanishing Babylonian tradition in text, punctuation and accents and therefore can be considered their natural heirs.<sup>6</sup> TJ is richly available, complete, and more accurate and reliable than any other post-Babylonian tradition.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the basic text in this study is the British Museum MS Oriental 2211 from the Hebrew Collection (Ms V), the same ms chosen by Alexander Sperber, in spite of harsh criticism of his monumental edition.<sup>8</sup> The value of

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<sup>6</sup> According to Israel Yeivin, all Targumic editions of Yemenite mss show Babylonian pronunciation, substantially or not, which attests to the fact that they are all derived from Babylonian mss (“קטע מחיבור מסורתי בבלי למקרא ולתרגום אונקלוס,” in *Sefer Zikaron le-Hanokh Yalon* (Tel-Aviv: Bar-Ilan, 1974), 115.

<sup>7</sup> Moshe Goshen-Gottstein expressed a view opposite to Shlomo Morag's in “Biblical Manuscripts in the United States,” *Textus* 2 (1962): 47–50 and especially notes 20, 24. Morag had stated earlier that Yemenite codices had a special degree of relationship to Codex Aleppo. These are “the only point of reference” was Goshen-Gottstein's response. He added that the “Yemenite *receptus* codices... are as ‘good’ or as ‘bad’ as Ashkenazi or Italian or other *receptus* Massora codices.”

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Sperber, *The Targum and the Hebrew Bible, The Bible in Aramaic III*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973. Sperber's work has been criticized mostly as inaccurate and incomplete, having neglected to use extant Babylonian mss with their ancient and “original” vocalization that are preferable to the Yemenite mss chosen, and the choice of a limited number of textual Witnesses. Among these critics are R.P. Gordon, “Alexander Sperber and the Study of the Targums,” in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in Their Historical Context* (eds. D.R.G. Beattie and M.J. McNamara; JSOT.S, 166, 1994), 92–102; “Sperber's Edition of the Targum to the Prophets: A Critique,” *JQR* 64 (1973–74): 314–21; *Studies in the Targum to the Twelve Prophets: From Nahum to Malachi* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994),

Ms V as a basic text has been acknowledged by scholars and the criticism of Sperber's apparatus is a separate issue that has no bearing on the value of Ms V.

## 1.2 THE NATURE OF TARGUM JONATHAN

With the advent of the Persian empire in the 5th century BCE, Aramaic became the lingua franca of the Near East including the language of the dispersed Jews.<sup>9</sup> With the exile and the Ezra movement back to the land of Israel, the Hebrew scriptures served an important role in the unity of Jewish nationhood, worship, and belief which resulted in an urgent need for Aramaic translations. According to the Jewish tradition (*Bavli*, *Megillah* 3a on Neh 8:8) the first targum was initiated by Ezra in Palestine.<sup>10</sup> Even though Alexander the Great took over the Near East and Greek became the uniting language in the empire, Aramaic continued to be used and developed so that Aramaic dialects spoken in Palestine, Babylonia, Syria and so on, became distinguishable from each other. These were the root causes for the proliferation

---

28–30; Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancient Testament: Ézéchiel, Daniel, et les 12 Prophètes* (OBO 50/3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), ccxi; Smelik, *The Targum*, 113–18 and the rich bibliography there. Smelik defends Sperber to some extent. He faults Sperber's mainly for "the lack of accuracy in the representation and selection of the variant readings" and the absence of sufficient Western texts in the apparatus (p. 116). Martin's major criticism concerns two aspects: the choice of non-Babylonian mss from the 12th century as basic texts, and mss which do not belong to a Babylonian text-tradition ("The Babylonian," 427–51). Against these criticisms, Abraham Rosenthal's review expresses appreciation of Sperber's monumental achievement. He draws attention to 'minute flaws' in the first edition of Vol. II with the hope that they be corrected in the next edition ("כתבי הקדש בארמית על יסוד כתבי יד", *וּסְפָרִים עֵתִיקִים*, *Tarbiz* 38 [1969]: 400–08).

<sup>9</sup> Michael O. Wise argues for Aramaic influence among Jews in Israel and Judah coming from their contact with Aramaic kingdoms such as Aram-Zobah, Aram-Beth-Rehob and Aram-Damascus. Through cultural and linguistic assimilation, trade and intermarriage a variety of Aramaic dialects, whether literary or spoken, made their way into the Jewish society ("Accidents and Accidence," in *Studies in Qumran Aramaic* [ed. T. Muraoka, Louvain: Peeters Press, 1992], 124–67).

<sup>10</sup> E.g., M. McNamara, "Targums," *IDBSup* 860; Paul E. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*. The Schweich Lectures on Biblical Archaeology, 1941 (London: Oxford University Press London, 1947), 124. Pinchos Churgin rejects this tradition and claims that TJ did not originate before the Maccabean age (*Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* [2nd printing; New York: Ktav, 1983], 37).



of targumim together with the increasing import of Scriptures in the synagogues.<sup>11</sup>

However, written translations did not occur from the outset but most likely started orally in the synagogue, when one person read the verse aloud then gave its literal or interpretative translation. Such interpretations could be presented by another, more erudite sage. Nehemiah 8:7–8 clearly describes the procedure: “And the Levites explained the Teaching to the people while the people stood in their places. They read from the scroll of the Teaching of God, translating it and giving the sense, so they understood the reading” (NJPS). This system imitated a long-standing political procedure when letters brought to one royal court were orally translated to the local language.<sup>12</sup> The Aramaic translator (this may be true with the Greek or the Syriac translation process) started to write down portions of his translated material for the next calendar year. Finding it more useful, he edited his own writings to give his work uniformity. Others could copy and use this material in their own locales. With the rise of the Pharisees and Rabbinic interpretation, these translations could be shaped by unifying rules and techniques. Later on, one translation would be chosen over the others by Rabbinic official authority. It is commonly agreed that passages of the Law tend to be translated literally while the rest of the Torah and the Prophets are rendered both literal, paraphrastic and interpretive. Yet, the core of the Hebrew text remains transmitted faithfully.

### 1.3 THE IDENTITY OF TJ AND THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATION

Targum Jonathan is attributed to two people: Jonathan ben Uzziel, the most outstanding student of Hillel (1st century BCE to 1st century CE),<sup>13</sup> who had ‘received it from the mouth of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi’<sup>14</sup> (5th century BCE), and R. Joseph ben Hiyya (ca. 270–333),

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<sup>11</sup> Paul V.M. Flesher, “The Targumim,” in *Judaism in Late Antiquity* (vol. 17; ed. Jacob Neusner. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 41–42.

<sup>12</sup> Chaim Rabin, “The Translation Process and the Character of the Septuagint,” *Textus* 6 (1968): 17–19.

<sup>13</sup> *Bavli, Megillah* 3a.

<sup>14</sup> That is, transformed the oral edition into a written form.

the leader of the Pumbedita Academy.<sup>15</sup> The attribution to Jonathan assumes a divine inspiration through the prophets.<sup>16</sup>

In the Jewish tradition the Targum to the Prophets is attributed to the former, for R. Jonathan was of great esteem.<sup>17</sup> *Bavli, Megillah* 3a says that Jonathan wanted to translate the Writings as well, a divine voice said: Enough! He was forbidden to do so because the Writings contained the secrets to the Coming of the Messiah. Targum Job, which Rabban Gamliel the Elder requested to bury, might have been the work of ben Uzziel.

However, several scholars questioned the historicity of ben Uzziel and TJ. Abraham Geiger suggested that TJ Prophets was rather associated with Theodotion, who revised the LXX.<sup>18</sup> Theodotion's system of a 'mere correction' fit the second-century state of affairs, in which targumim grew away from the original Hebrew. The revised targum in Babylonia took on his Hebrew name, Jonathan. The link to Jonathan ben Uzziel was in fact associative. Since R. Joseph bar Hama of the fourth century edited it diligently, it was associated with him even to the 11th century, when R. Hai Gaon still referred to it as Targum Rav Joseph.<sup>19</sup>

In *Les Devanciers d'Aquila*, Barthélemy reiterated Geiger's identification of Theodotion with TJ and his Hebraized Greek name of Jonathan. The Talmudic reference, in fact, is to the *Greek* translation of Theodotion whose quotations can also be found in the New Testament. This is, indeed, the same *Kaige* Theodotion found in *Nahal Hever*.<sup>20</sup> The link

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Nathan ben Yehiel's *Sefer Arukh HaShalem* (Vienna: Menorah, 1926), 293a, 308a.

<sup>16</sup> Claud Tassin, "Targum," *DBSup* 13 (2002), 107\*.

<sup>17</sup> For example, *Bavli, Bava Batra* 134a and *Sukkah* 28a; *Yerushalmi, Nedarim* 19b; Rabbam (12th century), *Hilkhot Klei ha-Miqdash* 10; Avraham ben Shelomo refers to ben Uzziel in his commentary to the Prophets written in 1422, in *Yemenite Midrash* (trans. Yitzhak Tzvi Langermann. NY: Harper Collins, 1996), 283, 314 note 26; R. Judah Loew (the Maharal of the 16th century), *Geurot ha-Shem* 183,47, in The CD-Rom *Judaic Classics Library* version 2.2.

<sup>18</sup> He credits Luzzatto with this identification, published in Geiger's newsletter, vol. 5, 124. *המקרא ותרגומו* (trans. Y.L. Barukh; 2nd printing; Mossad Bialik: Jerusalem, 1972), 105 note 2. Originally, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel*, Breslau: Heinauer, 1857. The Hebrew translation is based on its second edition of 1928 (Frankfurt a.M.: Mada). All references to A. Geiger are derived from the Hebrew translation.

<sup>19</sup> Geiger, *המקרא ותרגומו*, 105–06.

<sup>20</sup> This is the same "proto-Theodotion" that was attributed to the origins of the Hexapla and other Theodotionian texts. Emanuel Tov, *ביקורת נוסח המקרא* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1989), 115–16; Dominique Barthélemy, *Les Devanciers d'Aquila* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), 90. However, according to Levy Smolar and Moses Aberbach

with Tg Prophets is a later development retained in the famous reference in *Bavli, Megillah* 3a.<sup>21</sup> Aquila, the translator of the Torah and ben Uzziel, the translator of the Prophets, are mentioned to highlight the special contribution of the famous disciples. Jonathan ben Uzziel would not go against the great Simeon ben Gamliel II<sup>22</sup> who allowed him only to translate the Prophets into Greek.<sup>23</sup>

Rightly so, Gordon responds that in the same passage where the assumed reference to ben Uzziel's *Greek* translation occurs, there is a quotation from the *Aramaic* Tg Prophets.<sup>24</sup> Churgin, too, dismisses the identification of TJ with Theodotion which shows no erudition in Hebrew and whose revised version of the LXX is contrary to the Rabbinic TJ.<sup>25</sup> Churgin offers a new conclusion. Since no citations in the Talmudim are known from ben Uzziel, and since R. Joseph only quotes another Targum, he argued, it indicates that no one knew the author of Tg to the Prophets, and that only sages of authority could quote from it.<sup>26</sup>

Zacharias Frankel raises several reasons for his denial of TJ to ben Uzziel among them is the fact that nowhere in Rabbinic literature is there a quote brought in his name. Rather, it is R. Joseph's quotations that are found. Yet Frankel concedes, based on R. Joseph's exclamation in *Bavli, Megillah* 3a (and *Sanhedrin* 94b, *Moed Qatan* 28b), where he quotes a previous targum, that ben Uzziel could have made an older version. He further finds later additions to R. Joseph's complete work, except for Ezekiel, which lacks typical targumic characteristics.<sup>27</sup>

The subject of R. Joseph's quotations needs further discussion. The opinion that it was R. Joseph who translated the Prophets into Aramaic

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(henceforth, Smolar) this connection had been made by Kahle in 1958 and refuted by E.J. Kutschner in 1960. Smolar, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* (New York and Baltimore: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1983), xiii, xv. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 15–16, attributes the connection between TJ and Theodotion to Drusius whose theory was promoted by Geiger and Karpeles. He calls this theory a “fanciful hypothesis.”

<sup>21</sup> Barthélemy, *Les Devanciers*, 153–54.

<sup>22</sup> On this point, L. Hausdorff suggested in 1894 that this ban by Rabban Simeon ben Gamliel in Palestine caused Tg Prophets to lose its importance, and hence, its rising interest in Babylon (“Zur Geschichte der Targumim nach talmudischen Quellen: III,” *MGWJ* 38 [1894]: 244–45).

<sup>23</sup> *Yerushalmi, Shabbat* 79a.

<sup>24</sup> Gordon, *Studies in the Targum*, 13.

<sup>25</sup> Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> Zacharias Frankel, “Zu dem Targum der Propheten,” in the *Jahresbericht des jüdisch-theologischen Seminars “Fraenkel’scher Stiftung”* (Breslau, 1872), 1–48.

was espoused because of the expression כדמתרגם רב יוסף. There are 12 such cases which occur only in *Talmud Bavli*. If we read the Talmudic text carefully we realize that the formula, ‘as R. Joseph translates,’ simply reflects a citation by rote. This is why most quotations do not match the original TJ perfectly.<sup>28</sup> It is clear from the two quotations mentioned by Chilton<sup>29</sup> that R. Joseph cited an already extant and authoritative<sup>30</sup> targum. The differences in seven other places are extremely minute, reflecting Babylonian Aramaic.<sup>31</sup>

On several occasions Aramaic targumim are presented with the impersonal formula דמתרגמינן.<sup>32</sup> Used many times to describe Rabbis who translated not only Scriptures but statements of former teachers,<sup>33</sup> these are merely explanations and clarifications to those who are more comfortable in Aramaic. The “translations” are made in Hebrew several times.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the word כדמתרגם should be read, ‘as he paraphrases’ or ‘as he explains,’ according to the context.

In two other cases, R. Joseph feels free to clarify the midrashic targum of TJ. In *Megillah* 3a R. Joseph adds the location where Ahab died (the Heights of Gilead) to parallel the already extant location where Josiah died (the Valley of Megiddo).<sup>35</sup> In *Qiddushin* 72b on Zech 9:6, R. Joseph adds a further exposition on TJ stating that the House of Israel shall dwell ‘on their land in security’ (cf Lev 25:18; Ezek 34:27, and Zech 14:11). This addition comes instead of ‘in Ashdod.’ This polemic statement wishes that in the future the Jews will live on their own land, not ‘like foreigners’ as they did in R. Joseph’s time. In *Moed Qatan* 28b, *Megillah* 3a, and *Sanhedrin* 94b Rav Joseph admits that without

<sup>28</sup> Churgin cites three “misquotations” in the Talmud (*Targum Jonathan*, 14 note 12). On the other hand, Chilton gives two occurrences in which R. Joseph’s quotation of TJ is accurate: *Bavli*, *Sanhedrin* 94b (for Isa 8:6) and *Moed Qatan* 28b (for Zech 12:11) in *The Glory of Israel*, 120, note 11.

<sup>29</sup> *Sanhedrin* 94b and *Moed Qatan* 28b; Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, 120, note 11. Three other exact quotations are found in *Bavli*, *Pesahim* 68a for Isa 5:17, *Moed Qatan* 26a for 2 Kgs 2:12, and *Nedarim* 38a for Amos 7:14 (the absence of אית in TJ makes no difference to the meaning of the translation).

<sup>30</sup> Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Bavli*, *Menahot* 110a1 for Isa 9:18; *Avodah Zarah* 44a for Isa 41:16; *Bava Qama* 3b for Obad 6; *Qiddushin* 13a for Hos 4:2; *Pesahim* 68a for Isa 5:17; *Yoma* 32b for Jer 46:20 and 77b for Isa 33:21.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. *Bavli*, *Shabbat* 10b; *Gittin* 8b; *Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 8,1.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., Rav Sheshet, *Bavli*, *Sottah* 48b; Rabbi Abba, *Berakhot* 14a; Rav Hisda, *Shabbat* 115b; Jacob of Kfar Niburayya, *Yerushalmi*, *Berakhot* 62b.

<sup>34</sup> E.g., Rav Nahman, *Bavli*, *Berakhot* 24a; Rav Ada, *Shabbat* 60a.

<sup>35</sup> His same quotations in *Bavli*, *Moed Qatan*, 28b do not have it.

the Targum he would not have understood the Scripture.<sup>36</sup> Again, there is no quotation, but rather commentary to an extant Targum.

In only one case, in *Nazir* 3a, does R. Joseph propose not a targum but an interpretation. By using Job 5:10, he gives an example of how ‘and (who) sends water’ can mean ‘plenty.’<sup>37</sup> His interpretation, rather than a targumic quote, shows that while TJ was already known (and authoritative?) in the 3rd–4th century, the targum of Job was not fixed but was still open to renderings.<sup>38</sup> *Tosafot* on *Shabbat* 115a notes concerning R. Simeon reading Targum Job: ‘It shows that in the days of the Tannaim Targum Writings already existed, and similarly we find in *Megillah* 21: Even ten may read and ten may translate *Megillah* and *Hallel* [Psalms], which is not so regarding Torah, even though Jonathan did not translate it. Even so, it was made in the days of the Tannaim, and not as some say, that the Writings were translated by R. Joseph.’

Moreover, originally, an *amora* was also a *meturgeman* and the common use of Aramaic in reading Scriptures was a natural occupation. He, then, did not translate the Prophets, but probably had a role in consolidating and affirming Targumic tradition in respect of the Prophets.<sup>39</sup>

Expressions like כדמתרגמינן, כדמתרגם, or simply תרגם open expositions on words or Scriptures. For example, in *Bavli*, *Sotah* 48b R. Joshua ben Levi explains in Hebrew the meaning of נִפְתַּת צוּפִים (Ps 19:11). In order to better understand his explanation, the *Gemara* brings Rav Sheshet’s *metaphorical interpretation in Aramaic* by placing כדמתרגם as a foreword.<sup>40</sup> Others, such as Rav Judah, Abaye and Rav Safra explain (מתרגם) difficult passages in Aramaic (*Bavli*, *Yevamot* 9b). Introduced by תירגם, R. Qumei expounds in Aramaic on a Hebrew statement (*Yerushalmi*, *Sheqalim* 22a) and R. Yose explains the words of R. Hanina’s

<sup>36</sup> On these and more, see Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 9–15.

<sup>37</sup> ‘When the fruit (tree) is provided with water, (its fruits) multiply.’

<sup>38</sup> For example, two targumim are mentioned in *Bavli*, *Shabbat* 115a, one read by Rabban Gamliel and one by his grandfather, Rabban Gamliel “the Elder,” who forced it into a genizah. See also 4Q157 and 11Q10.

<sup>39</sup> Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, 3.

<sup>40</sup> Rav Sheshet was a Babylonian *amora* of the late 3rd, early 4th century. A similar usage for ‘translation’ appears in *Yerushalmi*, *Berakhot* 62b. A question is asked, ‘who praises God?’ (Ps 106:2) to which R. Jacob of the village of Niburayya (3rd century) responds by “translating” (תרגם) Ps 65:2. He answers in Aramaic that praising God should be done in silence. He likens this to vocally praising a pearl and thus devaluing it.

students (*Sanhedrin* 13b). In these and other cases, the root **תרגם** describes interpretation in Aramaic of the Hebrew, be it Scriptural or not.<sup>41</sup>

Another example from 5th century Babylonia concerns R. Tabyomi (Mar bar Rav Ashi), head of the Academy of Sura, who made an unusual exercise in exegesis. In *Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* (Margaliot) 34,15 R. Tabyomi explains the word **יחליץ** (Isa 58:11) by four different meanings. Each example is prefaced by **כדמתרגמינן** ('as we translate'). For only three meanings does he bring their Aramaic equivalents, two from Deuteronomy and one from Psalms. However, the translation for Deut 25:9 does not agree with either Onkelos or PsJ; the translation for Deut 3:18 agrees with PsJ and the translation for Ps 140:2 disagrees with the extant MG. In a parallel passage in *Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* 34,15, instead of **כדמתרגמינן** we find 'as people say.' From these we conclude again that 'translating' did not and does not mean precise citation from a known, authoritative targum, but rather a free translation or citation from *a* targum or *a* teacher. It is assumed that by mid 5th century (over a century after Rav Joseph) Targum Onkelos was known and authoritative in Babylonia.

This conclusion is also reflected by Rashi and *Tosafot*. In *Bavli, Sotah* 48b the Rabbis discuss the meaning of **נופת צופים** ('choice honey'). In his commentary, Rashi refers the reader to Rav Joseph's translation of **כַּאֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂינָהּ הַדְּבָרִים** (Deut 1:44). However, this raises two problems. First, it is rather Rav Sheshet's translation, for it says **כדמתרגם רב ששת**.<sup>42</sup> Second, Rav Sheshet quotes Onkelos **כמא דנתון דבריתא** ('as the bees emit [honey]') and adds a further elucidation on the interpretative targum: 'and fly about on the heights of the world, and bring honey from the herbs of the mountains.'<sup>43</sup> Rashi clearly knows that this translation is not original and that it elaborates on a known targum. **כדמתרגם**, then, means an oral translation in Aramaic.

In *Bavli, Qiddushin* 13a, Rashi explains the expression **כדמתרגם רב יוסף** as a point of reference because Rav Joseph 'was knowledgeable in the Targum of the Prophets that Jonathan ben Uziel had translated.'<sup>44</sup> Rashi could not make it clearer.

<sup>41</sup> A literal translation using the root **תרגם** is often used by Rashi and *Tosafot*, e.g., commentaries to *Bavli, Bava Qama* 117a; *Taanit* 6a (Rashi) and *Menakhot* 87a; *Bava Batra* 7a (*Tosafot*). A literal translation is also found in *Midrash Tehillim* 76,3 (for Gen 14:18b).

<sup>42</sup> Rav Sheshet was Rav Joseph's contemporary.

<sup>43</sup> Jastrow, 1531.

<sup>44</sup> In this case, Rav Joseph was explaining Hos 4:2 in Aramaic.

Three *Tosafot* mention **בדמתרגם רב יוסף**, but one is the most relevant to our case. Concerning *Bava Qama* 3b, it says: “The expression is ascribed to Rav Joseph because he was knowledgeable in Targum, for ‘Targum’ has several meanings, not merely ‘translation.’ Rav Joseph used Targum Jonathan as an oral source for exegetic response to questions raised by the Rabbis. He could not use a precise TJ quotation since quoting from translated books of the Bible was forbidden lest laymen mistook the translation to be divinely authorized.<sup>45</sup> This also evidences that in the 3rd–4th century TJ was known and popular, at least among the scholars, as an interpretative source for the Prophets.

Similar translation techniques were used in Palestinian synagogues, but no Palestinian source attests to written texts of Aramaic targumim, at least not in a synagogical milieu. Here, too, the meturgeman or the teacher rephrased extant texts or interpreted as he read.<sup>46</sup>

#### 1.4 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH

Most scholars agree that many Aramaic targumim evolved from early stages of liturgical transmission associated with the synagogue, and that certain versions were found to be more authoritative than others. They also agree that the number of targumim of the Pentateuch outnumbered those of the Prophets and the Writings, and that they were all composed in Palestine. TO and TJ were, at some point, taken to Babylonia where they were revised. Targum Jonathan went through several stages of editing until the 7th century. A short review of studies and opinions concerning TJ is presented here.<sup>47</sup>

Gesenius<sup>48</sup> led the argument for a pre-70 TJ by finding no references to anti-Christian polemics in TJ’s rendition of Isa 53. Ideas such as

<sup>45</sup> *Tosafot* on *Bava Qama* 3b and on *Shabbat* 115a.

<sup>46</sup> Flesher argues that in northern Palestine in the early centuries of the Common Era, the need for written translational texts was marginal for the educated. They could only make use of the additions which provided interpretation. The uneducated could make use of basic targumim such as Neofiti to the Pentateuch, which was antithetical to the rabbinic elite. Paul Flesher, “Targum as Scripture,” *Targum and Scripture* (E.J. Brill: Leiden, 2002), 62, 74–75.

<sup>47</sup> For a fuller overview of research, see, e.g., Smolar, *Studies in Targum Jonathan*, xi–xxxii; Gordon, *Studies in the Targum*, 5–39; Smelik, *The Targum of Judges*, 41–85; Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, “Targum-studies: an overview of recent developments,” *Textus* 16 (1991): 1–11.

<sup>48</sup> W. Gesenius, *Philologisch-kritischer und historischer Commentar über den Jesaia, I:1*. Leipzig, 1821: 65–81.

messianism were part of Judaism before the rise of Christianity. He also found no references to the destruction of the second Temple. Targum was needed in early times since Jews spoke Aramaic in Palestine. The literary style of TJ, he argued, attests to its unity.

Like Gesenius, Cornill found no messianism in TJ Ezekiel or reference to Christianity. He discerned accuracy in the transmission of TJ by finding no such polemics in later revisions. He further noted that the variant readings between TJ and the MT confirm that the former preceded the latter's final approval.<sup>49</sup> In a later study, Cornill found TJ to be older than TO.<sup>50</sup> This last point was rejected by Dalman,<sup>51</sup> noting the liturgical importance of TO over the Prophets.

Geiger raised several issues in targumic traditions that set the stage for other studies and theories. He identified a process in targumic activity in Palestine and Babylonia where early, incidental Aramaic targumim to both the Torah and Prophets, were available in Palestine. That is, these targumim shared Palestinian proto-targumim. The reasons for their secondary importance, and hence, the ease in which additions and changes were made, were the knowledge of Hebrew and the close contact of the translators with the sages. But the need for new targumim based on R. Akiva's strict rules demanded a completely new enterprise for the Torah and a revision for the Prophets that contained very little *halakhic* material. In Babylonia, where Hebrew was not familiar, the need for targumim was urgent. Because the two new targumim complied with the new rules of Rabbinic interpretation, their popularity in Babylonia was secured. It can be safer to say that it was Rabbi Joseph of Pumbedita of the 4th century who performed the final editing.<sup>52</sup> The question that Geiger does not address is: If targumim were so urgently needed in Babylonia, why did that Jewish community wait for the fourth century to adopt the originally Palestinian versions? The answer might be that oral targumim continued to exist in synagogues and in the Schools in both Palestine and Babylonia (as seen above by Rav Joseph's and Rav Sheshet's quotations).

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<sup>49</sup> C.H. Cornill, *Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1886), 110–36.

<sup>50</sup> C.H. Cornill, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Freiburg i.B.: Mohr, 1892), 305–07.

<sup>51</sup> G. Dalman, *Grammatik des jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1894), 10–12.

<sup>52</sup> Geiger, *המקרא ותרגומו*, 103–07.



Churgin, too, found early targumim as well as similarities between TO and TJ, for they were cherished by the same communities and evolved in the same milieu of liturgical activity. The similarities point to a common source rather than to a dependence of one over the other.<sup>53</sup> This process of communication was also verified by linguistic analyses of TJ. Several revisions took place in matters of *halakhah*, political events and geographical names. Unified translation of certain words, names, phrases, and updated names and events are considered as evidence for these revisions.<sup>54</sup> In examining textual variations in TJ he identified several non-Massoretic passages, but also agreement when rationalizing variant translations of person and number. He also identified agreement when rendering same translations to similar passages according to the rule of *gezerah shavah* (analogy). One unique characteristic of TJ is the choice of words that make a distinction between the sacred and the profane.<sup>55</sup> On the basis of textual analysis of several passages, he concluded that there was no *one* translator to the Prophets.<sup>56</sup> Rather, TJ was a progressive composition that did not originate before the Maccabean age and ended before the Arab invasion of Babylonia.<sup>57</sup>

Churgin viewed the elimination of anthropomorphism and the concept of *Memra* as evidence for TJ's early Palestinian origin. The official targumim (TO and TJ) developed gradually over centuries and emanated from one source at one time, in the same milieu (synagogal services), sharing a common history. He found several historical allusions, the earliest he ascribes to the Sadducean Hasmonean rulers (TJ Isa 28:1). In TJ Hab 3:17 he found a reference to the Roman census of 6–7 CE, while in cases like Isa 64:11, 65:4 and Hos 4:13 he found references to the Herodian period. He dates the final redaction of TJ to no later than 640–41, since the Arab invasion of Babylonia is not mentioned anywhere (TJ Isa 21:9, 'Babylon is going to fall'). By R. Akiva's time (he knows TJ Zech 12:11) the official targumim attained a definite shape.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 35.

<sup>54</sup> Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 41–47.

<sup>55</sup> In the Commentary of 1:1, I will show a similar conscientious distinction regarding the title of King between a Judean and non-Judean king.

<sup>56</sup> Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 16.

<sup>57</sup> Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 30.

<sup>58</sup> Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 20–36, 42. In fact, TJ's quotation is attributed to R. Joseph of the early 4th century, unless the text means R. Yose (HaGelili) who was

Similarly, Smolar and Aberbach found historical allusions in TJ ranging from the days of Antiochus IV (168–165 BCE) to the recovering days following the Bar Kokhba episode (middle of second century). *Halakhah* according to R. Akiva's school (first half of second century) governs TJ's translation even when the Hebrew text reveals otherwise.<sup>59</sup>

Kahle argued that one ms from the Cairo Geniza and the Targum to Job shown to Rabban Gamliel<sup>60</sup> (ca. 50) indicate that there were pre-Christian era Targumim, for if a Job translation was already in use in the first century BCE, all the more so that targumim to the Torah and the Prophets had been in existence much earlier.<sup>61</sup> Like Geiger, he also stated that TJ was a revised edition of an older Targum.<sup>62</sup> In his 1959 edition of the Cairo Geniza, he strengthened this argument by adding Brownlee's<sup>63</sup> and Weider's<sup>64</sup> conclusion that Qumran Peshet Habakkuk depended upon a pre-70 version of TJ Habakkuk.<sup>65</sup>

Like Geiger, Kahle stated that, since the Palestinian targumim had no authority as TO was in Babylonia, their translations were less literal and more midrashic and homiletic in character so as to supplant the literal translations of the latter without being competitive. The complete Palestinian translation of TO (and probably of TJ) were held in high esteem in Nehardea up to its fall in 259.<sup>66</sup> The variety of targumim (e.g., Neofiti, Cairo Geniza) differ from each other in some important ways.<sup>67</sup> Their continued importance in the Jewish communities up to

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R. Akiva's contemporary (unlikely). Cf Gordon, who does not give it much credit. He, nevertheless, conditions R. Akiva's knowledge of TJ Zech 12:11 of a lament for Ahab, if this tradition was restricted to this verse and to the *Bavli*, *Moed Qatan* 28b and *Bava Kama* 17a (*Studies in the Targum*, 55–56).

<sup>59</sup> Smolar, *Studies in Targum Jonathan*, xxix–xxx, 1.

<sup>60</sup> E.g., *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Shabbat* 79a; *Tosafot*, *Shabbat*, 14,2.

<sup>61</sup> Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 123–24.

<sup>62</sup> Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 118.

<sup>63</sup> W.H. Brownlee, "The Habakkuk Scroll and the Targum," *JJS* 4 (1953): 14–18.

<sup>64</sup> N. Weider, "The Habakkuk Midrash and the Targum of Jonathan," *JJS* 7 (1956): 169–86.

<sup>65</sup> Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 196.

<sup>66</sup> Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens* (vol. 2; Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1930), 1f and 119. Also, L. Zunz, *Die gottes-dienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1892), 80–83; R. Le Déaut, "The Current State of Targumic Studies," *BThB* 4 (1974): 17.

<sup>67</sup> This phenomenon is witness to the fluidity of Palestinian targumim up to the 9th century. Philip S. Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures," *Mikra* (CRINT; ed. Martin Jan Mulder and Harry Sysling; vol. 1 of *The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud*. Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1990), 220.

the 9th century shows that (at least) TO was not accepted as authoritative in Palestine because the communities there had targumim in the Aramaic they could understand. However, the rise of Arabic in the Near East and the need to guarantee the official interpretation of the Law as developed in Babylonia, changed this.<sup>68</sup>

M. Martin, who adopted most of Kahle's observations, contended that TJ went through a similar process of development and authority as TO: that is, there existed a pre-3rd century establishment in the academies of Nehardea and Sura while other versions were in use in Palestine until the Tiberian text, punctuation and accents took hold in the 10th century. In its Tiberian form, TJ "arose from the conflation of the old Palestinian form and the Babylonian form."<sup>69</sup> He finds the proof for the Tiberianizing of the Babylonian system in the Heb. Ms. B 3 of the Leningrad Public Library (Codex Babylonicus of the Prophets) completed in 915.<sup>70</sup>

Levey agreed with Churgin's theory of one source to the official targumim, assigning their origin to between 200 and 150 BCE.<sup>71</sup> But he disagreed on the *terminus ad quem* which he designated as some time after 640–641 (right after the fall of Babylonia to the Arabs) because he noticed some imitation of the Moslem credo in 2 Sam 22:32.<sup>72</sup> In his response to Churgin, Levey argued that the *argumentum e silentio* does "not necessarily prove this point conclusively." Levey believed that Saadia Gaon was the last editor of TJ (10th century) based on his similar translation of its doublet in Ps 18:32, and the mention of

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<sup>68</sup> Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 124–27. As Smelik has said, there is no reason to deny the same process to TJ in Babylonia since they were "considered to be a twin translation" (*The Targum of Judges*, 49).

<sup>69</sup> Martin, "The Babylonian Tradition," 427–35.

<sup>70</sup> This Codex St. Petersburg Heb3B was published by H. Strack, *Prophetarum Posteriorum Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus*. Petropoli: Editio Bibliothecae Publicae Imperialis, 1876. Martin's contention that a later hand added the Tiberian system onto the Babylonian seems to be incorrect, for the orthography of the *massorot* is identical to that of the text itself. The Babylonian vowel signs and accents rule, while the Tiberian vowel signs are minimal (only *segol* and *shuruq*). However, *degeshim* and partial accents are used.

<sup>71</sup> In his opinion, the use of **משיחא** precedes the use of **מלכא משיחא**.

<sup>72</sup> Gordon dismisses this position saying, among others, that such a credo could be taken from the HB itself, e.g., Deut 4:35,39 (*Studies in the Targum*, 143). Smelik adds that the Islamic credo could be rather dependent on the Jewish tradition, found also in the NT and Peshitta (*The Targum of Judges*, 50 and note 287).

Armilus in TJ Isa 11:4b, an apocalyptic king dated to between the 7th and the 10th century.<sup>73</sup>

However, since the date of Armilus is “highly uncertain” as Levey himself admits, it may be incorrect to determine its occurrence in TJ to be centuries later. This is especially so if the name Armilus is “a disguised or Aramaized form of Romulus which represents Rome.”<sup>74</sup> However, it would be more appropriate to date it to the early Christian era.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the apocalyptic Messiah son of Joseph and the Messiah son of David may correspond to the Priestly and the Davidic Messiahs in Qumran’s theology.<sup>76</sup>

After examining the etymological system of TJ Twelve by four criteria, Komlosh reached conclusions similar to those of Churgin. The four criteria show that the basis of TJ was set upon the rules of common ancient Palestinian interpretation, which help date TJ to the Second Temple period up to the Tannaic. Philological agreements could be found between TJ, LXX, Peshitta and Vulgate. When translating by context, TJ differs from others, though this same characteristic is used by these ancient Witnesses. Rabbinic interpretation is understandably reflected in TJ. Like TO, TJ also removes anthropomorphism.<sup>77</sup>

In his study of key theological terms in Isaiah such as **גלותא** **אוריתא**, **מקדשא**, compared with Rabbinic literature, Chilton found two different theologies from two different periods: Tannaic and Amoraic; Palestinian and Babylonian. He identified characteristic conventions within an exegetical framework that were crystalized between 70 and 135 CE.<sup>78</sup> In the early phase the basic criterion is the belief in

<sup>73</sup> Samson H. Levey, “The Date of Targum Jonathan to the Prophets,” *V/T* 21 (1971): 186–96.

<sup>74</sup> Levey, “The Date,” 194.

<sup>75</sup> In *Otzar ha-Midrashim, Mashiah* 13, it is noted that the nations call Armilus the Antichrist. The name Antichrist in Christian eschatological literature first appears in the New Testament in I John 2:18,22 and II John 7. In Jewish literature (see, for example, *Otzar ha-Midrashim, Mashiah* 13–14, *Zerubbavel* 4–6, *Aseret Melakhim* 6) Armilus is the offspring of Satan and a Roman stone statue of a beautiful woman, who will rule the world before the advent of the Messiah and the deliverance of Israel and the Jews’ return to the land of Israel.

<sup>76</sup> And so not later than the first century. Cf. 1Q28b, IQSb (Priestly Messiah); 4Q285, 4Q161 (Davidic Messiah); Israel Knohl, “The Messiah Son of Joseph,” *BAR*, September/October 2008: 58–62.

<sup>77</sup> Yehudah Komlosh, “בירורים איטימולוגיים בתרגום יונתן לספר תרייעשר,” in *מחקרים בעברית ובלשונות שמייות* (in memory of Prof. Yehezkel Kutcher. Ed. Gad Ben-Ami et al; Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 1980), 159–65.

<sup>78</sup> Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, 97.

messianism and the restoration of Temple and *Shekhinah*. The criterion of the Amoraic and Babylonian stage represents a more ethical and individualistic expectation rather than communal and nationalistic hope, though the latter was not excluded completely. Targum Jonathan went through a lengthy oral targumic activity but shows consistency in its theological strong conviction of Israel's vindication.<sup>79</sup>

Gordon has reached a similar conclusion following an examination of seven passages from the Twelve.<sup>80</sup> Because it is easier to find post-70 readings than pre-70, he argued that it is difficult to determine a pre- or post-70 unless we know for certain the extent of the oral tradition. He found historical allusions, for example, in a remark that mentions the second affliction upon the Jews (TJ Nah 1:9), and in uncertainties concerning Roman taxation (Hab 3:17). Yet, he expressed some reservations that these passages might refer to a pre-70 period. He questions Chilton's criterion for early, messianic characteristic, on the grounds that eschatological perspectives should be taken into account. He found Mal 3:6 to carry the only vestigial pre-70 on the grounds that it addresses those (Sadducees) who rejected the doctrine of resurrection and reward and punishment in the afterlife.<sup>81</sup>

In the same year, Gordon published a study on the dialogical-disputational approach of TJ.<sup>82</sup> Incipits of the "prophet said" type have "functional and/or interpretive significances" and are at the earliest level of TJ's composition.<sup>83</sup> Having similar translational techniques in, for example, TJ and Peshitta, does not signal dependency but rather shared translational principles "across the versional boundaries."<sup>84</sup> One must take into consideration the "Jewish connection" of the versions.

In a study with Kevin J. Cathcart on Tg Minor Prophets, occasional features that "seem to be more satisfactorily explained on the basis of a pre-AD 70 date of origin," were discerned.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, there is a "fairly clear indication of a post-AD 70 origin . . . especially in

<sup>79</sup> Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, 30, 58–59, 97–111.

<sup>80</sup> Gordon, *Studies in the Targum*, 40–61.

<sup>81</sup> Gordon, *Studies in the Targum*, 134–37.

<sup>82</sup> Robert P. Gordon, "Dialogue and disputation in the Targum to the Prophets," *JST* 39 (1994): 7–17.

<sup>83</sup> Gordon, "Dialogue and Disputation," 16.

<sup>84</sup> Gordon, "Dialogue and Disputation," 17.

<sup>85</sup> Kevin J. Cathcart and Robert P. Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*. The Aramaic Bible 14. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989. The commentary on Zephaniah was written by R.P. Gordon and therefore his name alone will be mentioned henceforth.

relation to the two topics of the *Shekhinah* and the land.” In our book of Zephaniah (3:15), for example, the *Shekhinah* is said to be lost as a result of the destruction of the Temple.<sup>86</sup>

Goshen-Gottstein<sup>87</sup> examined fragments not part of the extant literature from Midrashic, Talmudic, and Medieval literature, and noted the availability of a large variety of translations in Jewish literature. He raised the possibility that some of these quotes could have been derived from larger compositions (*Toseftot*) that for reasons unknown were pushed aside by Rabbinic authorities.<sup>88</sup> Any remnant of old traditions was considered sacred especially when it was ascribed to Ezra.<sup>89</sup> They were also most likely attributed to someone of local authority whose association is lost to us.

A contrasting view is proposed by others such as Perrot,<sup>90</sup> who argued that since these *Toseftot* were used as *Haftarot* on Sabbaths and festivals, they were not remnants of a complete translation but were originally a selection of passages. Churgin viewed these marginal additions (as well as extra-targumim) as survivals rejected by the later revisers not considered as a “separate category” but rather dependent on TJ. These *Toseftot* either explain or complement TJ and perforce later.<sup>91</sup>

Robert Hayward wondered why TJ rendered ‘scribe’ to the Hebrew ‘prophet.’<sup>92</sup> He noted that it reflected a perception which saw the prophet as holding the same duties as the Priests or the scribes: the teacher of Torah, a consultant in matters of divine will, and as an important element in the organization and administration of the Jewish Community.<sup>93</sup> Such functions fit a period long before the first century, before the Rabbis took control of these functions.

<sup>86</sup> Gordon, *The Targum*, 16–18.

<sup>87</sup> Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, *Fragments of Lost Targumim*. Part I, II; Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1983, 1989 (in Hebrew). See the bibliography for other works on targumim by Jewish scholars. Especially notable is Ezra-Zion Melamed’s book on targumic traditions, *מפרשי המקרא—דרכיהם ושיטותיהם*. Jerusalem: Magness, 1978.

<sup>88</sup> Goshen-Gottstein, *Fragments*, part I, 22, or xxii in the English introduction.

<sup>89</sup> Also Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 19.

<sup>90</sup> Charles Perrot, “Le Targum.” *Études Théologiques et Religieuses* 52 (1977): 224–25. Also Pierre Grelot, *What are the Targums?* (Old Testament Studies Series; vol. 7; trans. Salvator Attanasio. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 12.

<sup>91</sup> Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 18, 42, 151–52. More on such *Toseftot* see note 102.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Hayward, “Some Notes on Scribes and Priests in the Targum of the Prophets,” *JJS* 36 (1985): 210–21.

<sup>93</sup> Hayward, “Some Notes,” 221.

Like Geiger before him, S.A. Kaufman<sup>94</sup> examined Palestinian Targumim and concluded that TO, TJ and the Palestinian Targum shared “a text perhaps never committed to writing, but a real text nonetheless, one that reflects the earliest stages of rabbinical biblical exegesis.”<sup>95</sup> He calls this text a proto-Targum from which the Palestinian Targum and Targum Onkelos [and probably Targum Jonathan] descended. However, earlier (p. 124) he suggested to remove TO from the Palestinian mix<sup>96</sup> when confronting the problem of dating the Qumran Aramaic vis-à-vis the Aramaic of TO and TJ. Another problem in Kaufman’s conclusion concerns his opinion that Tg of Qumran Job and Genesis Apocryphon received their final form between 70 and 135.<sup>97</sup> If Rabban Gamliel the Elder was already reading Tg Job in the first century, then Kaufman’s dating should be pushed back to, at least, the first half of the 1st century.

Kaufman also examined a unique magic bowl found in Nipur bearing an incantation with two passages of TJ from Jer 2:1 and 2:2. He concluded that using TJ in a magic text attests to its being “considered to be an ancient, authoritative and sacred document (in Babylonia, at least) by the time of the composition of this incantation” (i.e., the Sassanide periode).<sup>98</sup>

Edward Cook, on the other hand, is clearer in his assertion that the origin of TO and TJ was in neither East nor West Aramaic. He found similarities in grammatical forms such as prefixes and suffixes that are more typical to Central Aramaic, the area triangulated between Damascus, Palmyra and Ashur, the ancestral home of Aramaic.<sup>99</sup> It is also supported by the absence of TO and TJ in Palestinian literature,

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<sup>94</sup> S.A. Kaufman, “Dating the Language of the Palestinian Targums and their Use in the Study of First Century CE Texts,” in *The Aramaic Bible, Targums in their Historical Context* (Supplement Series 166; ed. D.R.G. Beattie and M.J. McNamara; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 118–41.

<sup>95</sup> Kaufman, “Dating the Language,” 130.

<sup>96</sup> Paul Flesher also isolates TO from the Palestinian mix (“The Targumim” [1995], 43).

<sup>97</sup> S.A. Kaufman, “The Job Targum from Qumran,” *JAOS* 93 (1973): 326–27. This corresponds to Flesher’s first stage in the history from Targum composition (“The Targumim” [1995], 42–43).

<sup>98</sup> S.A. Kaufman, “A Unique Magic Bowl from Nipur,” *JNES* 32 (1973): 170–74.

<sup>99</sup> Edward M. Cook, “A New Perspective on the Language of Onkelos and Jonathan,” in *The Aramaic Bible, Targums in their Historical Context* (ed. D.R.G. Beattie and M.J. McNamara. JSOT, Supplement Series 166. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 148.

and by “the connection of the Peshitta to the targumic interpretive tradition.”<sup>100</sup>

Like Martin, Flesher argued that as with Pentateuchal targumim, other Palestinian targumim to the Prophets existed but were abandoned as TJ took hold in Palestine.<sup>101</sup> Traces of one appear as expansions alongside TJ (targumic *Toseftot*) and were later added to the Codex Reuchlinianus text as *Targum Yerushalmi* or “Another (or Additional) Targum.”<sup>102</sup> Flesher identified four stages in targumic writing that were associated with four locations: first, the 1st century BCE to the 1st century CE Aramaic from Qumran targumim has no discernible links to the Rabbinic period. The following three stages belong to the Rabbinic period between the 2nd and the 7th centuries and sometime later. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries, several targumim to the Pentateuch were written in Galilean Aramaic. Seven such fragments were found in the Cairo Geniza alone. In the 2nd through the 4th centuries targumim were composed in Babylonia where TO and TJ were made authoritative. Here, a revision took place in Babylonian Aramaic. In the 4th century and beyond, perhaps with the movement of the Babylonian Talmud to the west, a reversed migration took place in which TO and TJ reached Syria, Palestine and Egypt.<sup>103</sup> Following Chilton, Flesher argued that both TO and TJ were written in two stages: originated in Palestine probably between 70 and 135 and revised in Babylonia in the third or fourth century, then secured as authoritative translations.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Cook, “A New Perspective,” 155–56.

<sup>101</sup> In his 1994 article of a similar name (“The Targumim in the Context of Rabbinic Literature,” in *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* Part 5 [ed. Jacob Neusner; NY: The Anchor Bible: Doubleday, 1994], 616–17), Flesher mentions two Palestinian targumim to the Prophets.

<sup>102</sup> Flesher (“The Targumim” [1995]), 49. Several *toseftot* are published in Sperber’s *The Bible in Aramaic*, vol. III: Isa 10:32–33 (pp. 23–25), Hab 3:1–5, 11 (pp. 462–65), Zech 2:14, 15 (pp. 479–80). Marginal glosses in Codex Reuchlinianus are published by Paul de Lagarde in *Prophetæ Chaldaice*. Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1967 (photocopy reproduction edition 1872) and studied by W. Bacher in “Kritische Untersuchungen zum Prophetentargum” *ZDMG* 28 (1874): 1–72; Rimon Kasher published and studied the targumic *toseftot* to the Prophets in *תוספתות תרגום לנביאים* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1996). Also Kasher, “התוספתות התרגומיות להפטרות שבת-חנוכה,” *Tarbiz* 45 (1975–76): 27–45; P. Grelot, “Une Tosephta Targoumic sur Zacharie, II, 14–15,” *RB* 73 (1966): 197–211; Smelik, *The Targum of Judges*, 75–85.

<sup>103</sup> Flesher, “The Targumim” [1995], 42–51.

<sup>104</sup> Flesher, “The Targumim” [1995], 46–47 and “The Targumim in the Context of Rabbinic Literature,” in *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* Part 5 (ed. Jacob Neusner; NY: The Anchor Bible: Doubleday, 1994), 616–17.



Smelik found difficulty in determining what constitutes a “Palestinian” Aramaism or origin, for at times the “Palestinian targum agrees with the Babylonian Talmud against the “Babylonian” TJ (e.g., f<sub>6</sub><sup>105</sup> to 1 Sam 3:14).<sup>106</sup> He concluded, among others, that there is no hard evidence in favour of the theory that there ever existed a complete Palestinian Targum of the Prophets other than proto-TJ.<sup>107</sup>

Much of the research concerning TJ Prophets focus on certain aspects of TJ to illuminate issues that had previously been raised: M.L. Klein examined the function of the “buffer preposition” קדם and concluded, against previous claims, that it was not used to avoid biblical anthropomorphism. It expresses a deference to man and God equally stemming from its literal understanding of the Hebrew.<sup>108</sup>

Another important topic of research has been in the meaning of *Memra*, ‘the Word.’ Churgin considered *Memra* of an early origin that simply aimed to establish a buffer for anthropomorphic expressions. It intended “to remind and evoke a higher reaction” with no implication to Greek influence. However, later when Greek Logos was identified with the Word, *Memra* acquired the meaning of an active “intermediary agency” that speaks, visits, etc.<sup>109</sup>

Sabourini associated *Memra* with “the Name” that represents God’s dwelling in the Temple as ascribed in Deuteronomy (e.g., 12:21).<sup>110</sup> The same divine reactions, actions and relations are attributed to the *Memra* as to God Himself. Using *Memra* is one way to de-anthropomorphize references to God.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Marginal notes in Codex Reuchlinianus preceded by ירושׁ or תרג ירושׁ (short for תרגום ירושלמי). Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (vol. III), x.

<sup>106</sup> The extant TJ is literal. The *Tosefta* adds ‘unless they study the Torah and do acts of benevolence’ which concurs with Abaye’s opinion in *Bavli*, *Rosh Ha-Shanah* 18a (and *Yevamot*, 105a). Radaq quotes the former. Corresponding Palestinian passages to the *tosefta* emphasize praying as expiating Eli’s curse. Smelik, *The Targum of Judges*, 76 note 431. *Bavli*, *Rosh Ha-Shanah* 18a discusses ways to expiate sins, one of which through praying. It seems that the two differing targumim drew from the same Rabbinic exchange of opinions, choosing one over the other, rather than presenting separate *halakhot*.

<sup>107</sup> Smelik, *The Targum of Judges*, 85.

<sup>108</sup> M.L. Klein, “The Preposition קדם (‘Before’) a Pseudo-Anti-Anthropomorphism in the Targums,” *JThS* 30 (1979): 502–07. For the contradicting, more common opinions, see Klein’s footnotes.

<sup>109</sup> Churgin, *Targum Jonathan*, 21–22.

<sup>110</sup> Leopold Sabourini, “The MEMRA of God in the Targums,” *BThB* 6 (1976): 79–85.

<sup>111</sup> Even though both Hayward and Sabourini focus on targumim to the Pentateuch, their studies and conclusions evenly apply to the rest of the HB. Many of the scholars who studied these subjects are listed in Hayward’s and Sabourini’s bibliography.

Hayward rejected this common interpretation and concluded that the *Memra* is not a substitute for the name of God but is related to the name אהיה associated with the God revealed to Moses in the burning bush (Exod 3:12,14). The essence of this name represents the nature of God who is the past, the present and the future. He makes His nature known through His Word. On the *Shekhinah*, he says, it is an entity on its own that defines the Glory of God.<sup>112</sup>

Aberbach studied the patriotic tendencies in TJ promoted in order to stand against forces that aimed to shake the faith of the Jews in light of the catastrophes of the times. But more so, they come to provide the suffering Israel hope for a better tomorrow. For example, while accepting that Israel sinned but when it comes to universalism (e.g., Isa 19:25), TJ expresses the opposite. The same is done to oracles against Israel (e.g., Isa 1:24; Amos 9:7) which are changed to oracles of comfort and punishment of the nations as God's enemies. Targum often reiterates the everlasting love of God for Israel, their chosenness, His Mercy and restoration of land and sovereignty (e.g., Isa 5:1ff, 28:9, 46:3; Hos 3:3).<sup>113</sup>

With Smolar, Aberbach studied three characteristics of TJ: The Halakhah, historical and geographical allusions, and theological concepts. They concluded that the Halakhah and theology of TJ agree with Rabbinic Judaism (mid 2nd century BCE and mid 2nd century CE), especially with those of R. Akiva. Historical events as recorded in the Bible are interpreted either homiletically or according to contemporary conditions and norms.<sup>114</sup>

Johannes de Moor studies the "love of God" in TJ (and Tg Song) and concluded that the lover of Israel, according to targumim, is the Messiah who both loves Israel and abolishes her sins.<sup>115</sup> De Moor ignores passages such as Isa 42:8, 43:1–4,11 that clearly indicate that God is the sole acting power who redeems Israel. The love for Israel

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<sup>112</sup> Robert Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence: The Memra*. Publications of the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies Series; Totowa, N.J.: Allanheld, Osmun, 1981. Hayward published several articles on this and the *Shekhinah* subjects. Further discussion on the *Memra* and the *Shekhinah* and other buffer words will be presented in the Commentary.

<sup>113</sup> Moshe Aberbach, "Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Jonathan on the Prophets," *WCJS* 6 (1977): 1–6.

<sup>114</sup> Smolar, *Studies in Targum Jonathan*, xxix–xxxii.

<sup>115</sup> Johannes C. de Moor, "The Love of God in the Targum to the Prophets," *JSS* 24 (1993): 257–65.

is direct and exclusive (cf Jer 2:2, 32:2; Hos 3:1). Targumim do not deviate from this theology.<sup>116</sup>

José Faur examined the nature of the targumic traditions and concluded that contrary to Albeck,<sup>117</sup> the *meturgeman* operated within the bet-midrash milieu and did not reflect a personal view. When the *meturgeman* erred in matters of *halakhah*, he was reprimanded and had to present the Rabbinic view, for the Rabbis realized the importance of targumim within the Jewish community.<sup>118</sup>

Willem Smelik observed the TJ's characteristic of combining translation and commentary. The pluses, he noted, are mostly un-detachable for otherwise the translation would lose its coherence. Pluses, substitutions and literal translation interplay within a certain targumic framework. Pluses are inserted to interpret, such as God's essence is revealed as Israel's savior in history (Joel 2:17) or false prophets are meant by "their mother" (Hos 2:7). Substitutions are often used in metaphors by disregarding semantic parity for the sake of interpretation (Isa 10:18). Pluses and substitution may occur side by side to achieve clarity (Joel 2:13). Often TJ's commentary follows Rabbinic opinions.<sup>119</sup>

Many studies were done particularly on TJ Isaiah, for Isaiah's consolations were not only highly poetical but were a rich source of hope for redemption.<sup>120</sup> For example, examining the book of Isaiah, Arie van der Kooij concluded that its final redaction was formed in 132 CE.<sup>121</sup> He traced a Priestly composition rather than a targum evolving within the liturgical needs of the synagogue. He also found such traces in the "Priestly" occupation of the Qumranites. Out of this interest he identified Eleazar of Modiin,<sup>122</sup> Bar Kokhba's uncle, as the possible author

<sup>116</sup> This is a major element in the Passover Haggadah: 'And He brought us out of Egypt. Not by a ministering angel, and not by a fiery angel, and not by a messenger, but rather, the Holy One, Blessed be He, He Himself ...'

<sup>117</sup> H. Albeck, "Apocryphal Halakha in the Palestinian Targums and the Aggadah," in *Jubilee Volume to B.M. Lewin* (ed. Rabbi Y.L. HaCohen Fishman; Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kuk, 1940): 93–104.

<sup>118</sup> José Faur, "The Targumim and Halakha," *JQR* 66 (1975): 19–26.

<sup>119</sup> Smelik, "Translation and commentary," 245–60.

<sup>120</sup> Chilton's *The Glory of Israel* (1983) has been already mentioned. Some of these studies are mentioned in the bibliography in Alberdina Houtman's "Doom and Promise in the Targum of Isaiah," *JJS* 49 (1998): 17–23. Isaiah is prominently analyzed in many of the studies.

<sup>121</sup> Arie van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches. Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments*. OBO 35; Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitaetsverlag, 1981.

<sup>122</sup> Apart from Bar Kokhba's engraved name on coins during the rebellion years of 132–35, the name of Eleazar the Priest is also engraved. Kooij follows Safrai (see

behind TO and TJ.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, Priestly involvement in the targumim is not surprising since beginning with Ezra, many of the religious and political leaders of the Jewish people in Palestine were Priests. However, it runs counter to all evidence that this Priestly involvement was distinct and separate from the communal tradition established by Ezra (Neh 8:1–8, 13–9:3). Kooij rejected a late redaction of TJ.<sup>124</sup>

Alberdina Houtman concentrated on the doom and promise in TJ Isaiah.<sup>125</sup> She noted the difficulty of the *meturgeman* who had to follow Rabbi Judah bar Ilai's statement: 'He who translates a verse literally is a liar, while he who adds anything thereto is a blasphemer' (*Tosefta Megillah* 3b).<sup>126</sup> However, he could circumvent these guidelines by employing exegetical rules and contemporary theological views. Houtman's examination of several passages resulted in the conclusion that TJ Isaiah was a patchwork, rather than the work of a single author. No theological framework could be discerned. Houtman agreed also with Churgin and Aberbach, who identified a targumic proclivity to tone down or render doom oracles as oracles of promise (except for 8:23).<sup>127</sup>

Focusing on Judg 5, Daniel Harrington looked for TJ's understanding of the Song and how its author applied it to his community. He found the "interpretative homiletics" to be TJ's way in responding to a difficult text. In addition, TJ used the Song as a didactic illustration of the fundamental principle that makes up the relationship between God and Israel: When Israel rejects the Law, the enemies prevail, and vice versa. This rule applies to the Targumist's generation (and beyond).<sup>128</sup>

Many other studies examined the relationship between Targum and other Witnesses. Grossfeld, for example, focused on the Hebrew פקד

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Shmuel Safrai, "Eleazar of Modi'in," in *EJ* 6:603) who equates this Priest with Eleazar of Modiin (*Die alten Textzeugen*, 205).

<sup>123</sup> Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 197–209, esp. 205–07.

<sup>124</sup> Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 196.

<sup>125</sup> Houtman, "Doom and Promise," 17–23.

<sup>126</sup> This is inaccurate. R. Judah added that the *meturgeman* may omit, add or change only if the sage who was guiding him was his father or teacher. The *sitz-in-leben* here concerns an apprentice learning to translate. A similar statement appears in *Bavli, Qiddushin* 49a where the prohibition concerns a *meturgeman* translating in the *synagogue*. In this setting he cannot translate as he pleases, but must follow "our Targum," namely, an authoritative version, TO and/or TJ. The last comment is also Smelik's conclusion (*The Targum of Judges*, 650). Overview of opinions concerning R. Judah's statement are presented on pp. 651–56.

<sup>127</sup> Houtman, "Doom and Promise," 17–23.

<sup>128</sup> Daniel J. Harrington, "The Prophecy of Deborah: Interpretive Homiletics in Targum Jonathan of Judges 5," *CBQ* 48 (1986): 432–42.

and its rendering in TJ, Peshitta, Vulgate and Septuagint.<sup>129</sup> He identified four major categories: Administrative-general, general, theological, and military/census. Each carries eight sub-categories which appear in all four Witnesses. However, 22 additional meanings to the basic range of meaning “to take note of, to notice, to consider, to attend to with care,” are rendered differently according to the translators’ own understanding of the context.

The issue of dating TJ, as we have seen, has occupied many scholars who came to their conclusions based on a variety of targumic elements. A different approach to determining the dating of TJ was taken by scholars who examined the Aramaic dialects of TO, TY and other Aramaic texts such as found in Qumran. Eastern versus Western dialects were taken as the barometers for dating. This was Abraham Tal’s approach in his 1975 dissertation on the TJ of the Former Prophets. Here he examined the lexicon of TJ on two levels: Grammatical words and words of meaning, their verbs and nouns. He compared TJ to other dialects such as Palestinian Jewish texts, Samaritan, Christian Aramaic, Egyptian Aramaic, Onkelos, Mandaic, and loan words. The Old Aramaic was considered as the language used in the West up to the 2nd century CE (including the Cairo Geniza and Qumran texts), and the Middle Aramaic included both Eastern and Western dialects used from the proliferation of the Christian Aramaic. In his 1980 article he examined Old Aramaic, Nabatean, Palmyrene and Qumran Aramaic. In both works Tal has concluded that TJ is essentially Judean Old Aramaic affiliated with other Palestinian Aramaic groups such as the Samaritan and the Christian. Its Eastern dialect is closer to Syrian rather than to the Babylonian Talmud Aramaic. In his major study he argues for a compilation to be dated no later than the defeat of the Bar Kokhba uprising, whereas in his article he dates TJ to no later than 70.<sup>130</sup>

However, in a 1978 study, such a criterion was rejected by Goshen-Goldstein saying that such elements could not be distinguished in a language that was essentially standardized.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>129</sup> Bernard Grossfeld, “The Translation of Biblical Hebrew פקד in the Targum, Peshitta, Vulgate and Septuagint,” *ZAW* 96 (1984): 83–101.

<sup>130</sup> Abraham Tal, *The Language of the Targum of the Former Prophets and its Position within the Aramaic Dialects* (Tel-Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1975), vii–xii, לִב-בֵּא, 140–143; “בירורים בארמית של ארץ-ישראל,” *Leshonenu* 44 (1980): 43–65.

<sup>131</sup> Goshen-Gottstein, “The Language of Targum Onkelos and the Model of Literary Diglossia in Aramaic,” *JNES* 37 (1978): 169–79. See survey of this approach in Smelik’s *The Targum of Judges*, 10–23. Smelik dates TO and TJ to 70–135 CE (p. 14).

In his examination of Jewish Aramaic, Philip Alexander concluded that TJ could not have originated after 135, and that the practice of translating the Bible into Aramaic began in the late Second Temple period.<sup>132</sup>

To sum the issue of dating, whether TJ is pre- or post-70, the finding of fragments of Tg Leviticus and Job in Qumran among the Dead Sea scrolls have definitely shown that the former is correct.<sup>133</sup> Most scholars agree that even if the bulk of TJ is attributed to the Common Era, its roots are to be found earlier. It is also commonly agreed that its roots are Palestinian with later revisions made in Babylonia.<sup>134</sup>

In recent years, the Theological University of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Kampen, has issued the Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets. Targum and the MT are set out in parallel to enable the reader to study the translation techniques. It also facilitates in the study of textual criticism, the history of interpretation of the HB, early Judaism, the New Testament and patristics. Each volume of the Concordance contains a Hebrew-Aramaic index. This immense work is a godsend to scholars in their study of the Aramaic text.

### 1.5 THE FUNCTION OF TARGUMIM

With time, explaining the text was not merely the transmission of the textual meaning but rather, served a variety of evolving micro and macro-level communal needs: How to deal with theological questions in light of new historical developments; how to criticize national and

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<sup>132</sup> Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic," 243–48. The practice of reading Tg in the synagogue is another dispute. Ze'ev Safrai ascribes the beginning of this custom to the Usha period, i.e., after the failure of Bar Kokhba's revolt ("The Origins of Reading the Aramaic Targum in Synagogue," *Immanuel* 24–25 [1990]: 187–93).

<sup>133</sup> Smelik does not find Job's translation in such an early period "a coincidental discovery" (*The Targum of Judges*, 73). Among the explanations he mentions is "the widespread tradition that Moses had written the book." However, the quoted passage from *Bavli, Bava Batra* 14b (and up to 15b) is actually a discussion among Rabbis who compete in identifying authors of scriptures by relating verses to a variety of men in a variety of periods. Job is identified as a man living at the time of the Patriarchs, the Wilderness, the Judges, David and Esther. He is recognized also as a Righteous Gentile and even as a parable, for 'he did not exist nor was born.' The book's popularity seems to evolve from its theological message and Job's power of faith. The Rabbinic discussion aims to give justification for its inclusion in the Canon.

<sup>134</sup> A survey on this question, from early 19th century to early 1990s, is found in Gordon's *Studies in the Targum*, 5–34; Smelik, *The Targum of Judges*, 41–75; Tassin, "Targum," 112\*–18\*.

international events such as military or messianic group activities, cruelty by non-Jewish neighbors and oppressive regimes, or injustice as perceived by a specific group (1QpHab). These needs demanded the use of a variety of approaches to the task of translating holy scriptures. They could be literal, *midrashic*, *halakhic*, polemic, critical, emotional, homiletic, and certainly a combination of these interpretations. Dialects of different locations or of different times are reflected in the text.

The variety of approaches to the task of translation depends greatly on their frequency of use (Torah and Prophets) and on their context, lexicology and popularity. The more judicial the text, the closest the translation will be expected. Difficult texts such as Job or poetry will have freer translation while popular texts, such as Esther will attract several versions.

Targumim are essentially translations to explain Scriptures. The literal translation better serves the precise aspect of legal and governmental documentation. The free translation aims to make the text readable so that it would be meaningful and applicable to any life situation. This type of translation is better suited to interpretations, modifications and changes from the original meaning. However, even translations whose intent is to be as close to the text as possible (e.g., TO) find ways to interpret words or phrases because of acquired tradition (e.g., Rabbinic), unknown words, forgotten locations, associative words, etc. Translations intend to convey the spirit and meaning of Scripture as their milieu understood it whether literally or expositively.<sup>135</sup> However, there are limitations to this intent.

When the language of the translator is within the same Semitic family of languages, a literal approach can be better maintained. Still, pluses and exegesis often find their way into the translation even when the text is apprehensible. Such amplifications to the basic meaning of the text were probably made for the sake of discussion in the synagogue, especially of a theological nature. Alexander,<sup>136</sup> in his study of Jewish Aramaic translations, designates this system to a type A Targum when the additions can be “bracketed out, leaving behind a viable one-to-one rendering of the original.” In type B Targum “a base translation cannot be recovered: the translation is dissolved in the paraphrase.”

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<sup>135</sup> E.R. Rowlands, “The Targum and the Peshitta Version of the Book of Isaiah,” *VT* 9 (1959): 178.

<sup>136</sup> Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic,” 229–37. The two samples for these Types are taken from P<sub>s</sub>J to Gen 4:3–16 and Tg Song 5:10–16.

Such types lend themselves to broad generalities with many exceptions. Smelik denies type A Targum to TJ for, he says, it is impossible to disentangle the translation and commentary from each other. No Targum belongs exclusively to type A or type B.<sup>137</sup>

Literal or *peshat*+exegesis is skewed when the intent takes on subjective considerations because of old or new ideologies that apply past prophecies to current situations. Difficulties in understanding archaic or unique words or phrases add to this deviation from the spirit or meaning of Scripture. The translator, thus, becomes the medium of communication between a holy text and a community that is willing to pledge allegiance to that text.

A translator uses several techniques to achieve his purpose when literal translation is not of utmost concern. For example, if cognates are not found, similar words—sometimes in sound, sometimes in meaning—are used. At other times some words are not translated or loan words come to the rescue; geographical names are updated; criticism of events or attitudes are added primarily for theological concerns; ambiguities gain clarity. This is often done by applying textual and conceptual considerations concerning the current text and other texts in the same book or in other books. Sometimes the translator's opinion, his wish to harmonize terms, or pure common sense dictate divergence from the MT.<sup>138</sup> Faith governs revision of text while seemingly offensive text is toned down.

The mere fact that the translator is handling a holy text determines his sensitivity. However, his allegiance to his faithful community often takes precedence to the basic goal of translation: to transfer a text as closely as possible and as faithfully as possible from one language to another. The choice of anomalous words reveal inner intent.

Isolating and recognizing this edition may help in identifying the concerns of the Jewish community through the translator(s). This is a difficult task, perhaps only partly achievable. This activity is doubly difficult when applied to TJ. Here, several intra-Jewish editions are

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<sup>137</sup> Smelik, "Translation and Commentary," 245–60. He also states (p. 260) that the definition of "targum" is a relative one, for if a community views a text as traditionally a translation, then we cannot deny this to that community. This is true when the text is coherent carrying no oddities that conflict with the MT or that are clearly "linguistic innovations."

<sup>138</sup> On these and more see Gershon Brin, "שיטת עבודתם של מתרגמי המקרא," *Tarbiz* 57 (1988): 443–49.



recognized. Dating Targum seems to be the most intriguing because same phenomena, events or behavior occur in every generation.

In closing this brief discussion let us remember Emanuel Tov's advice (1981): We should not rush to correct the MT, for different readings do not mean better readings. They may be a different version or a subjective translation. To determine a better reading that helps to understand a difficult Hebrew text, several determinants have to be met and several considerations have to be made.<sup>139</sup> No different *Vorlage* should be assumed or looked for.<sup>140</sup>

### 1.6 SOME NOTES ON THE YEMENITE TARGUMIC TRADITION

Being of Yemenite descent, the Yemenite tradition is close to my heart and therefore I dedicate a small segment to this tradition here and in the Conclusions.

Yemenite scribes were extremely careful in copying Scriptures, including accents and vocalizations of Babylonian and Tiberian traditions.<sup>141</sup> But centuries of copying did reveal mistakes reflected by erasures and scrapping of vowels or added missed words in the text or in the margins. This phenomenon is clearly presented in our ms. The Hebrew text is almost a mirror copy of Codex Aleppo (which the Yemenites have been proud to point out as their source of accuracy) with the Tiberian tradition of sublinear accents and vocalization,<sup>142</sup> while the TJ carries

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<sup>139</sup> On this and more see Tov's *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies, Jerusalem: Simor Ltd., 1981), esp pp. 35–38, 50–72.

<sup>140</sup> M.A. Sweeney states similarly: TJ “provides little basis for reconstructing a distinct Hebrew *Vorlage*” (*Zephaniah* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003], 32).

<sup>141</sup> Although the superlinear vocalization was rooted in Babylonia, it was used in other locations such as Egypt and Palestine, while Tiberian tradition was used in Babylonia as well. Albert van der Heide, *The Yemenite Tradition of the Targum of Lamentations* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981), 37–56. A comprehensive study on the Yemenite vocalization tradition is found in Shlomo Morag's *יהודי תימן שבפי העברית שבפי יהודי תימן*. Mehkarim, 4. Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1963 and many other works. Also G. Margoliouth, “The Superlinear Punctuation, its Origin, the Different Stages of its Development, and its Relation to Other Semitic Systems of Punctuation,” in *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* (vol. XV, 1893): 164–205.

<sup>142</sup> This shift took place as a result of Maimonides' announcement of Codex Aleppo as the authoritative text. The transition to Egyptian and Palestinian authority was natural due to the decline of Babylonian centers and the emergence of Palestinian academies. Here *Halakhic* matters, *Kabbalah* and *Sepharadi* culture evolved and developed.

the Babylonian superlinear tradition.<sup>143</sup> This latter tradition (until the invention of the Tiberian vocalization) was the only safe method of pronouncing the Aramaic targum properly. Colophons were written mostly in the beginning of the scroll. Colored designs and drawings, among them of birds and flowers, would adorn the spaces between *parshiot*.<sup>144</sup>

The transition from Babylonian to Tiberian tradition in Yemen was a gradual process of several centuries between the 11th and the 15th centuries, slower than the process of Tiberianisation of the Hebrew. Some Biblical texts, therefore, retained both traditions. The perseverance of these traditions is attributed to the academic language of the Babylonian tradition that has been retained to this day, to the continuity of use of the Babylonian vocalization in texts other than the Hebrew Biblical texts, and to the conservative characteristic of the Yemenites.<sup>145</sup> Since the pronunciation remained Babylonian, it was difficult for the scribes to notice its system and adapt to the Tiberian system. Also in schools, printed books utilized the new Tiberian system, while the teachers taught in the Babylonian tradition that continued to be used by the students as they matured.<sup>146</sup> As Ratzabi shows, the differences in the Babylonian system exist in all facets of the vocalization. Often the co-existence of both traditions escaped the scribe's correction and created an unusual system that did not always reflect the recognizable Babylonian system, for example: *dagesh* and *rafeh*, double signs for *hiriq* (קצות, Exod 28:26), *holam* and *tzereh* (וְחָמֵץ, Num 6:3), *holam* and *shuruq* (שְׁמַעוֹן, Num 2:12).<sup>147</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Some mss from the Cairo Geniza also carry this tradition. More on this tradition see Kahle, *Masoreten des Ostens: die ältesten punktierten Handschriften des Alten Testaments und der Targume* (Beiträge zur Wissenschaft von Alten Testament 15; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1913 [1966]), 219–32.

<sup>144</sup> Y. Ratzabi, “שרידי ניקוד בבלי ב”כתר תורה” תימני,” *Textus* 8 (1973), 6.

<sup>145</sup> Contrary to these characteristics, Heide concludes that because of the “Yemenite tendency to succumb to influences from abroad” the Yemenite version of Targum Megillot gradually assimilated to Western targumic texts “with the aim of achieving a closer resemblance to MT.” In this process the older Yemenite versions were impaired. He rejects Melamed’s theory that we witness independent targumic Babylonian and Palestinian targumic traditions (East and West). Heide, *The Yemenite Tradition*, 5–36. R.H. Melamed, “The Targum to Canticles according to six Yemen MSS,” *JQR* 10 (1919–20), 377–410.

<sup>146</sup> Ratzabi, “שרידי ניקוד בבלי,” 5.

<sup>147</sup> He painstakingly lists the Babylonian system that has been retained in one ms of the Torah from a private library. Several examples show both systems that occurred in the transition period. The differences are mostly in vocalization but several are accentual.

However, in some Yemenite mss of the Writings found in Berlin, Kahle traced another superlinear vocalization system under the typical Yemenite vocalization. On this basis he wrote a sketch of Hebrew grammar in accordance with the older system.<sup>148</sup> He believed that this older pronunciation is the one described by Saadia Gaon in his commentary on the Kabbalistic סֵפֶר הַיְצִיָּרָה (early 10th century). He calls this system Babylonian in contrast to the Yemenite system.<sup>149</sup> From his studies, Kahle concluded that the Babylonian vocalization system started with only points that changed into short-sized Hebrew letters and then into abbreviations of these letters, which were preserved in the Yemenite system.<sup>150</sup>

Margoliouth argued that the origin of the superlinear punctuation is to be sought in the Jewish Aramaic and more specifically, in the vowel-system of the combined Jacobite with Nestorian elements.<sup>151</sup> In some Yemenite mss the tetragrammaton is punctuated according to the HB system. He concluded that a different system was devised for the sacred texts, a system that was derived from the same vowel markers. Margoliouth dates the superlinear not before the end of the 7th century and the sublinear, to at least half a century later.<sup>152</sup>

A detailed examination of the Yemenite mss is found in the next chapter, the Manuscripts.

## 1.7 RESEARCH INTO TJ ZEPHANIAH

Only one instance of research has been dedicated to TJ to the Twelve Prophets including Zephaniah. Using comprehensive criteria of lexical, interpretative, historical allusions, and Rabbinic and Medieval literature, R. Gordon analyzed the divergences from the MT in footnotes.

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For more on the superlinear punctuation in the different stages of its development, see Margoliouth, "The Superlinear Punctuation," 164–88.

<sup>148</sup> Kahle, *Der masoretische Text des Alten Testaments nach der Überlieferung der babylonischen Juden*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1902.

<sup>149</sup> Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 41–44. In 1913 he published the mss of the Firkowitsch Collection in *Masoreten des Ostens* which he reprinted in 1966. He continued to study and publish over 120 Babylonian mss which he divided into six groups.

<sup>150</sup> Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 48.

<sup>151</sup> Margoliouth, "The Superlinear Punctuation," 196–205. These, in turn, are based on the Greek vowel letters on the one hand and on ancient diacritic signs of the 5th century, on the other.

<sup>152</sup> Margoliouth, "The Superlinear Punctuation," 202.

Though his notes are short, they are precise and profound with plenty of comparable references to other Biblical and Targumic citations.<sup>153</sup>

In a two-part apparatus along the lines of A. Sperber's *The Bible in Aramaic*, vol. 3, J.F. Ribera dedicates his study on TJ Zephaniah and notes the divergences between ms Or. 1474 (our Ms Z) and two Babylonian fragments, Eb 80 and Eb 88. Ribera's annotations to the targumic text mostly focus on the lexical meaning of the Aramaic. The interpretative notes do not reveal new thoughts beyond the typical criteria of Smolar and Churgin. Historical allusions are minimal. In his introduction, Ribera briefly notes Zephaniah in the Rabbinic tradition and the midrashic tendencies of TJ Zeph. He briefly compares TJ Zeph with the Massoretic Text in language such as in the semantic spectrum of usage, verbal forms, and morphology. He also briefly compares TJ with the primary versions and sees mostly points of similarity. He then finds a series of variants of which he is not certain whether they are evidence of a different *Vorlage* or a Jewish exegesis. He ends his introduction/summation with observations on differences in accents of ms Eb 80 with Babylonian and Tiberian Hebrew.

In 2003, Marvin Sweeney published a commentary on Zephaniah where TJ is but one element among the Witnesses of LXX, Peshitta and Vulgate. Characteristics (textual features) and theological and historical viewpoints guide the commentary.<sup>154</sup> However, the study of TJ is marginal.

Others, such as Gerleman, Sabottka, Rudolph, Ben Zvi, Ball and Vlaardingerbroek, mention TJ with little commentary.<sup>155</sup>

A crucial tool for this study, the *Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets, the Twelve*, has come to my attention half way into my study.<sup>156</sup> Its help has been immeasurable.

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<sup>153</sup> Robert Gordon, *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*. The Aramaic Bible 14. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989.

<sup>154</sup> M.A. Sweeney, *Zephaniah*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

<sup>155</sup> Gillis Gerleman, *Zephania: Textkritisch und Literarisch Untersucht*. Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1942; Liudger Sabottka, *Zephania*. Rom: Biblical Institute Press, 1972; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Micha-Nahum-Habakuk-Zephania*. KAT 13/3; Stuttgart: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1975; Ehud Ben Zvi, *A Historical-Critical Study of the Book of Zephaniah*. BZW 198; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991; Ivan Jay Ball, *A Rhetorical Study of Zephaniah*. Berkeley: BIBAL Press, 1988; Johannes Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*. Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Leuven: Peeters, 1999.

<sup>156</sup> Alberdina Houtman, ed. *A Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets*. The Twelve. 3 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2003.

There is a need for a *comprehensive* target study of TJ Zephaniah where linguistics, theological and historical concerns are addressed; a study which will reflect how an individual within the contemporary Jewish community interprets not just the Hebrew Scriptures but the Targum as the targumist(s) meant to convey their transmission of interpretation. It is no doubt a subjective exegesis that attempts to invade the time(s), the concerns and the emotional involvement of the targumist(s).

The aspect of literal translation is expected from a *meturgeman* who mostly operated within a synagogal community. Reliable transmission of holy Scriptures was paramount in a community that used them as a source of hope and meaning to life at times of tribulation, which were quite the norm. Yet, for those who seek to read beyond the Aramaic rendering of literalism, Tg's language, its interpretive, critical, emotive, *midrashic*, and *halakhic* system of translation framed by a set of identifying characteristics, attract academic interest and yield intellectual satisfaction.

Hopefully, the three chapters of Zephaniah present enough material in order to reveal the thoughts and concerns of the Jewish translator(s) and perhaps those of the scribes.

## 1.8 METHODOLOGY

This study has a variety of issues to consider beyond itself and beyond its basic guidelines. The significance of the divergences in linguistics, as well as the reasons behind omissions, pluses, and substitutions have to be explained. These might reveal the targumic concerns and the overt or covert social and historical conditions of the times. The relationship between Rabbinic exegesis, other versions and manuscripts may be sources for illumination.

What can be learned from targum to similar texts found in Zephaniah and in other books (e.g., Zeph 3:10b and Isa 18:1b)? In case of similarity, do they reflect the same hand or the same redactor? If they are not the same, what factors can be taken into consideration? Double pluses in one case may suggest redaction activity or presentation of two known traditions. On the other hand, we may find evidence that suggests separate translators for separate groups of books. For example, different translators to the Latter Prophets and to the Twelve.

This study is divided into four parts:

Chapter One: Introduction. This has been presented so far.

Chapter Two: The Manuscripts. The 21 mss examined here are divided along five locations: Palestinian, Babylonian, Yemenite, Ashkenazi and Sepharadi. The first part will focus on their physical condition (appearance) and the circumstances of their creation (the scribe, his patron, date, colophon and so on). The second part will analyze the Hebrew and Aramaic texts and their divergences. These include four criteria:

1. Omissions
2. Pluses
3. Substitutions
4. Metatheses

These criteria may illuminate upon the erudition of the scribe, the purpose of his work, the local textual tradition, the origin of that tradition, transmission dynamics, the importance of Aramaic in that community, as well as other factors such as putative dating. These criteria will also lead to the discovery of stemmas within each group. This, in turn, will shed light on the movement of transmission from Palestine to the East and West and the cross-textual traditions the Jews carried. Possible true variants according to set conditions will be presented at the conclusion of this part. The set conditions are as follows:

1. They occur in more than one group.
  2. They occur in at least two mss belonging to separate stemmas within the same group.
  3. They are supported by more than one commentator (such as Rashi and Radaq) of two separate groups.
  4. They serve an interpretative function, even though they may show a later hand.
  5. They occur in one distinct group versus other groups.
- Variants that fulfill these criteria but are clearly scribal errors, will be excluded.

Chapter Three: The Commentary. Each verse will be interpreted beginning with the Hebrew text. Commentary on major issues and difficulties of the MT by scholars will be presented, giving honorable voice to the traditional Medieval Jewish commentators. My own interpretation will be presented in conclusion. The analysis of TJ will follow, looking for a logical explanation for any deviation away from literal translation. In

this major part, the essence, character, concern, mood, hope or despair of TJ will come to light.

Chapter Four: Conclusions. The results of this study will be summarized.

Original reading is determined by its closeness and most literate rendering of the Hebrew text. Translation becomes interpretative when outside ideas, whether personal or external, enter into the process of lingual transmission.

The translation of the Aramaic into English is as literal as possible, in order to capture the differences and to highlight the interpretation, even to the detriment of proper English grammar or syntax. Literal translation appears in Roman style while additional material is indicated by italics.

Finally, the spelling of Hebrew names in this study follows that of the Encyclopaedia Judaica.

CHAPTER TWO  
THE MANUSCRIPTS

2.1 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The 21 manuscripts examined in this study come from a variety of sources, some from Sperber's apparatus,<sup>1</sup> others from various libraries. Since each source has its own identifying code system which is usually lengthy, I have simplified their designations to one letter. The MT is compared to Mordechai Brawer's edition (1989) that is based on mostly *Keter Aram Tzova* (Codex Aleppo) and Yemenite mss.

These manuscripts belong to five major traditions: Palestinian, Babylonian, Yemenite, Ashkenazi and Sephardi. Ms F (Reuchlin 3) is considered Palestinian.<sup>2</sup> The Babylonian texts, considered to be the earliest, carry pre-Tiberian *massorot* of vowel and accents systems.<sup>3</sup> The two texts used here, Eb 80 and Eb 88, have no date. They are fragmentary and quite damaged. Israel Yeivin examined them in 1964<sup>4</sup> and Josef Florit Ribera examined and published only their Aramaic text to Zephaniah.<sup>5</sup>

Yemenite mss are often called Babylonian-Yemenite.<sup>6</sup> Five are examined here. As noted above, Yemenite mss show the gradual Hebrew's move from purely Babylonian system to fully Tiberian, while retaining the old vowel system for the Targum. The best Yemenite mss were

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*. 3rd impression. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Shlomo Morag identifies Ms F as having the Fuller Palestinian system of vocalization (*The Vocalization Systems of Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic* [The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1961], 38 note 78).

<sup>3</sup> The earliest surviving ms, apart from the Ben Asher Codex, contains some fragments from the book of Nehemiah found in the Cairo Geniza, written in Da Gunbadan, Iran, in 903/4. Beit-Arié, *The Makings of the Medieval Hebrew Book* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), 55 note 17.

<sup>4</sup> Israel Yeivin, "קטעי־מקרא בבליים־תימניים חדשים בבית־הספרים הלאומי," *Qiryat Sefer* 39 (1964): 563–72.

<sup>5</sup> Josef Florit Ribera, "La versión aramaica del profeta sofonías," *EB* 40 (1982): 127–58.

<sup>6</sup> E.g., Alejandro Díez Macho, "Nuevos manuscritos bíblicos babilónicos," *EB* 16 (1957): 235–77.



written by professional scribes commissioned by wealthy<sup>7</sup> Jews from the capital San'a.

Of the five Yemenite mss (HVZJE), two are used by Sperber, one as the basic text (Ms V), the other is Ms Z. They range from the 14th to the 17th century. However, while Columbia University RBML (The Rare Book and Manuscript Library) dates Ms H (X 893 B 47) to the 14th century with a question mark, JNUL (Jewish National and University Library) dates it to the 16th–17th century. I, however, would date it to the 11th–12th century (see commentary below).

The seven Ashkenazi mss (TMAYURP), provenance unknown, range from the late 13th to the 14th century. The six Sepharadi mss (XSCWNQ) range from the 13th to the early 16th century, one from Italy.

Except for the mss Sperber examined, four are printed editions: *The First Rabbinic Bible*, Bomberg, Venice 1515/17 (FRB); *The Second Rabbinic* (= *The First Massoretic Bible*, Bomberg, Venice 1524/25 (SRB102). Both editions are considered Ashkenazi. They are denoted as ms B and ms G respectively.<sup>8</sup> *Miqraot Gedolot*, which is based on ms G, will be designated as MG.<sup>9</sup> The third printed edition is *The Antwerp Polyglot Bible*, 1569/73, and is considered Sepharadi. It is denoted ms O.<sup>10</sup> The fourth, Ms F, is the Karlsruhe 3 (see below). Other Testimonia used by Sperber are: Aruk of R. Nathan (according to Kohut's edition);<sup>11</sup> Rashi and Kimhi (here referred to as Radaq) according to MG.<sup>12</sup>

The 21 mss are here classified according to their origin and dating. Photocopies and most of the descriptive information were obtained from the Jewish National and University Library (JNUL), Institute

<sup>7</sup> The word "wealthy" is very relative where Yemenite Jews are concerned.

<sup>8</sup> Since they are not manuscripts per se, they are denoted here as 'ms' distinct from 'Ms.'

<sup>9</sup> There are two publications that do not always agree. The first was published in Jerusalem by Jacob Buch in 1964 (תשכ"ד). Apart from the usual commentators, it includes Malbim. The second was published in New York by Abraham Isaac Friedman in תשכ"ו (1966).

<sup>10</sup> The eight-volume Antwerp Polyglot Bible, like its predecessor the Complutensian Polyglot Bible (see below under Ms W), was a monumental opus, sponsored by King Philip II of Spain. It was carried out by several Spanish scholars and supervised by Benedictus Arias Montanus. It was printed in Antwerp by the well-known French printer, Christophe Plantin. Based largely on the Complutensian, it added the Syriac New Testament, Targum of Esther, Job, and Psalms, and the Salomonic writings. The last two volumes provide an apparatus criticus, lexicons, and grammatical notes.

<sup>11</sup> He is relevant to Zephaniah only in one case.

<sup>12</sup> Sperber uses Rashi according to ms G which seems to have numerous mistakes.

of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts.<sup>13</sup> Further descriptive information was obtained from The Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Columbia University; New York Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS); Oxford Bodleian Library; Budapest Magyar tudományos akademia; Paris Bibliothèque Nationale; Biblioteca de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid (former Universidad Central de Madrid); Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticana;<sup>14</sup> Nurenberg Stadtbibliothek; London British Library; Berlin Staatsbibliothek (Preussischer Kulturbesitz); Gottweig Stiftsbibliothek.

The numbered mss follow that of the JNUL, and the lettered mss follow Sperber's (FCOVZ) and my designation. The sequence of the mss follow their (at times, putative) dating.

<u>Palestinian</u>	<u>Babylonian-Yemenite</u>	<u>Ashkenazi</u>	<u>Sepharadi</u>
Reuch.=F	Eb 80	F 5066=T	F 33081=X
	Eb 88	F 10166=M	F 2816=S
	F 20615=H	F 726=A	F 3115=N
	F 6000=V	F 2929=U	F 4116=Q
	F 5982=Z	Barb. 163=Y	F 4531=C
	F 16010=J	F 27198=P	F 15661=W
	F 22664=E	F 30741=R	

### 2.1.1 *Palestinian Ms*

Ms F. Codex Reuchlinianus (Karlsruhe 3) of the Badische Landesbibliothek, Karlsruhe, Germany (Kennicott 154) is designated by Sperber and here as Ms F. It is the oldest dated Targum in Europe<sup>15</sup> and perhaps in this study. Since it was found in Europe, it is the oldest Ashkenazi biblical ms, along with Targum in Europe, that contains the Prophets.<sup>16</sup> Targum follows each Hebrew verse. Only its Targum was published in

<sup>13</sup> With deepest thanks and appreciation to Dr. Benjamin Richler and Yael Okun.

<sup>14</sup> Through the Pius XII Memorial Library, Saint Louis University.

<sup>15</sup> Beit-Arié, *The Makings*, 135, note 48.

<sup>16</sup> Related publications: Paul de Lagarde, *Prophetæ Chaldaice* (repr. 1872. Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1967), iii–v; Wolfgang von Abel and Reimund Leicht, *Verzeichnis der Hebraica in der Bibliothek Johannes Reuchlins*, Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2005: 97–103 and the bibliography there; Rimon Kasher, *תוספתות תרגום לנביאים* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1996), 15.

1872 by Paul de Lagarde, with no vocalization.<sup>17</sup> Alexander Sperber published its vocalized Hebrew text in 1969.<sup>18</sup> Its significance lies in its ancient Palestinian version of the Prophets in both Hebrew and Aramaic, in its vocalization, and the fact that it supplies an early and full text of the Prophets.<sup>19</sup>

Bacher identifies this ms as Targum Yerushalmi of the Prophets, from which Rashi and Radaq quote.<sup>20</sup> Ms F contains eighty extracts of this Targum. He finds traces of targumic variants on this targum in the margin of Codex Reuchlinianus, where it is often referred to “another copy.” Most of these quotations are aggadic additions, “frequently traceable to the Babylonian Talmud” hence its later dating.<sup>21</sup>

Written on parchment in 385 folios or 39 quires, it has two columns of 32 lines each with vocalization and accents. Folios 278 and 290 are shorter in dimensions than the rest. After fol. 11 one page is missing as well as six pages after fol. 66. Pages 74–83 were mutilated by a knife. There are lacunas in two places. The end of each quire (every 10th folio) is marked. At the top of the first page, one line away from the text, a heading in large characters reads: **בשם יי אלהים אלהי ישראל**. There is no marking at the beginning of all other books, but at the end of each book the sum of the words and verses are given, except for the Twelve, for which the number is given at the end of Malachi. The Hebrew name of the book is occasionally added by a later hand at the upper edge in small faint writing. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Obadiah and Jonah begin with a new leaf. This is unusual to grant two books in the Twelve such a distinction.

There are five poems in Aramaic in fol. 383a–b and the *haftarot* are listed in red ink in fol. 384b–385a. Over 110 fragments of Targum, some short, others long, that markedly differ from T<sub>J</sub>, appear on the margins. They are mostly identified as **ירושלמי** or **תרגום ירושלמי** whose

<sup>17</sup> Due to lack of financial backing, as he explains in the introduction of *Prophetiae Chaldaice*, iv.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander Sperber, *The Prophets according to Codex Reuchlinianus*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969. Other related publications: S. Landauer, *Die Handschriften der Grossherzoglich Badischen Hof- und Landesbibliothek*, vol. 2 (1892); Shlomo Morag, *The Vocalization* (1961) and “The Vocalization of Codex Reuchlinianus,” *JSS* 4 (1959): 216–37.

<sup>19</sup> Morag, “The Vocalization,” 216.

<sup>20</sup> We shall see later that this argument is inaccurate, at least in regards to Zephaniah.

<sup>21</sup> Wilhelm Bacher, “Targum,” *JE*, 61; “Kritische Untersuchungen zum Prophetentargum,” *ZDMG* xxvii: 1–58.

linguistics shows affinity with Palestinian Aramaic.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, fifty fragments that are marked ס"א (ספר אחר, 'another book') or ל"א (לישנא אחרנא, 'another language/version') show affinity with TJ.<sup>23</sup>

Upon examining Ms F in Karlsruhe, Sperber found several serious mistakes in de Lagarde's printed edition.<sup>24</sup> We would add that the divine name is marked by ״ and not by יהוה. This is similar to Mss R,T (Ashkenazi) and Mss S,N (Sepharadi).

The colophon appears in fol. 382b in 11 lines, of which the first 7 rhyme. Here it is in its entirety followed by my translation:

נשתלם זה ספר נביאים תרגומא וקרא  
 על ידי זרח בר יהודה זוטר ספרא  
 בשנת דאתתסו ליצירה  
 ובתתלח לחורבן בית הבחירה  
 שייבנה בימינו במהרה  
 ויזכינו ללמוד בהם וללמד בלי פגע וצרה  
 ויתקיים בי הכתוב לא ימוש ספר התורה  
 הזה מפידן והגית בו יומם ולילה למען  
 תשמור לעשות ככל הכתוב בו כי  
 אז תצליח את דרכיך  
 ואז תשכיל:

*This book of the Prophets, Targum and text has been completed  
 By Zerah bar Judah, a junior scribe,  
 In the year 4866 to the Creation  
 And in 1038 to the destruction of the Chosen House.  
 May it be built soon in our time  
 And merit us to study them and teach with no trouble and misfortune;  
 And may the Scripture be fulfilled in me: <sup>[Josh 1:8]</sup> Let this Book of the Torah not depart  
 From your mouth, and you shall study it day and night so that  
 You shall observe to practice all that is written in it, for  
 Then your ways shall prosper  
 And then you shall succeed.*

The first inscribed owner, Avigdor, purchased the ms in 1386, followed by Menahem, Isaac, Yequiel and Yehiel of the Mansi-Piatelli family of Rome. John Reuchlin Phorcensis purchased it in Rome, August 10th, 1498 for the price of eleven coins of Rhine gold. He rebound

<sup>22</sup> ירושלמי is not always ascribed to Palestinian Aramaic. Kasher, *תוספתות*, 15, note 18.

<sup>23</sup> Kasher, *תוספתות*, 15.

<sup>24</sup> Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic, the Latter Prophets according to Targum Jonathan* (vol. III. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962, III), 18–19.

it in wood and pig-skin coating with metal clasps. It was last restored in October 1979.

The Palestinian vocalization system of Ms F is complicated and carries many peculiarities. At times it neglects certain rules: Except for ‘ח’, ‘צ’ and ‘ג’, all the letters in the text have *dagesh* or *rafeh*, although this is done inconsistently. The *rafeh* is marked with a bar above the letter. The *dageshed* ‘כ’ denotes a consonant, a phenomenon used in some Babylonian MSS as well. ‘ה’ gets a *mappiq* when a genitive, and a *rafeh* when a *mater lectionis*. Since a geminated ‘ו’ will be confused with a *shuruq*, neither *dagesh* nor *rafeh* occur in ‘ו’. A *sheva* in a final position denotes a consonant and a medial *dageshed* ‘ו’ denotes gemination. ‘ו’ has rules similar to ‘ו’. The rest of the letters (15), apart from a *dagesh* when geminated, receive a *dagesh* in all positions, i.e., after a closed or an open syllable, or as an initial letter. However, a dot inside the ‘ש’ marks it as either Tiberian ‘ש’ (on the right) or ‘ש’ (on the left). A dot above, on either side, marks the *dagesh*.<sup>25</sup> While Sperber concludes that this vocalization system is pre-Massoretic,<sup>26</sup> Morag concludes that it is “distinctly *post-Masoretic*”<sup>27</sup> and calls it fuller Palestinian.<sup>28</sup>

The numerous peculiarities of Ms F (even though some are shared by other mss) encouraged Kahle to consider it as representative of the Ben Naphtali school. He nevertheless conceded that some characteristics are certainly not consistent with Ben Naphtali.<sup>29</sup> However, Morag has shown that only a small number of the Ms F features “can be defined as belonging to the school of Ben Naphtali” and instead represent a distinctly Palestinian system.<sup>30</sup>

All these considerations and the examination below point to a manuscript that originated in Palestine well before 1105 when it was copied in Europe.

<sup>25</sup> For further and fuller description of the vocalization of Ms F, see Morag, “The Vocalization,” 216–37; *The Vocalization*, 38–41.

<sup>26</sup> See his Introduction to *The Prophets*.

<sup>27</sup> Morag, “The Vocalization,” 229.

<sup>28</sup> Morag, *The Vocalization*, 34 note 61, 38–41.

<sup>29</sup> Paul Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens (MdW)* (vol. II. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1927–30), 55ff. Examining a Palestinian fragment, Revell came to the conclusion that the Palestinian system “shows relatively few and minor divergences from the bA (Ben Asher) tradition.” E.J. Revell, “A New Biblical Fragment,” *Textus* VII (1969): 74.

<sup>30</sup> Morag, “The Vocalization,” 236–37.

2.1.2 *Babylonian-Yemenite Mss*

Mss Eb 80 and Eb 88 have retained their Babylonian tradition within the Yemenite community. Their copies are not too legible for studying. Four of the five purely Yemenite mss contain the Latter Prophets (VZJE) and one contains only the Twelve (H). Their hand-writing is square and clear. Their *mise-en-page* is made up of either one or two columns and the pages are marked in Hebrew letters. The Hebrew carries the Tiberian sublinear vowels while the Aramaic uses the Babylonian superlinear. Accents and *massorot* are kept in most mss. Even though they are almost identical in text, vocalization systems, *massorot*, and orthography, several divergences are salient, especially the forms of the tetragram: either ם or ם with connecting horizontal lower lines and upper markers. Ms H seems to stand on its own in some ways. Alternate Hebrew and Aramaic verse is the method in all mss as well as abbreviations in the Aramaic.

1. Eb 80 is written on parchment, only five pages remain (pages 2–4 are damaged), showing Obad 19–Jon 1:16, Nah 1:12–3:2, Hab 3:14–Zeph 1:12, 3:12–Hag 1:9, Zech 1:1–2:1. It has one column with 24–25 lines. Israel Yeivin describes it as a demotic text with no *massorot* or marginal *ketiv* and *qere* notes (a later stage of the classic Babylonian pronunciation). The only *massorah* sign, ם, with three vertical lines on top (a ‘crown’), to indicate the beginning of a *sefer* in Zeph 1:1, reflects a Tiberian influence.<sup>31</sup> The divine name is marked by ם (or at times ם) with a supra horizontal line. Its script is mostly plene, with supralinear vowels mostly placed in the space between the voweled letter and the next, but with no *mappiq*. *Dagesh* and *Rafeh* signs appear mostly in בגדכפת letters. There is no consistency in the vocalization and the accents systems. Several scribal errors occur in both the Hebrew and the Aramaic texts. Contrary to Yeivin’s observation,<sup>32</sup> both mss do have *silluq*.

The letters vary in size, shape and thickness of strokes which may suggest the work of more than one scribe. Abbreviations are used, for example: אר for ארעא in Zeph 1:2, די ש for די שראל in 3:13.<sup>33</sup> The text favors the plene script.

<sup>31</sup> There was no division into *sedarim* in Babylonia.

<sup>32</sup> Yeivin, קטעי־מקרא, 571.

<sup>33</sup> Related publications: Yeivin, קטעי־מקרא, 563–72; מסורת הלשון העברית ומשנתקפת בניקוד הבבלי (Jerusalem: HaAqademia La’Lashon Ha’Ivrit, 1985), 140;

2. Eb 88 (Holon, Yehuda Levi Nahum 21,22,13,18) is damaged as well. It contains Jon 3:5–Mic 1:7, 4:13–6:10, Zeph 2:8–3:14, Zech 1:6–2:12. Unlike Eb 80 it has two columns, 27 lines, *massorot* but no accents. This is a plene script with only *dagesh forte*, mostly in בגדכפת letters but also in others such as אִי (Zeph 2:11) and שִׁרְקִים (Zech 1:8). However, the *dagesh* also appears after *shevah*, e.g., שְׂאֲגִים (Zeph 3:3). *Mappiq* is marked (אלהה, 3:2; שריה, 3:3). It carries an even, small script with abbreviations, e.g., ישר for ישראל in 2:9.<sup>34</sup> The text favors a deficient script.
3. Ms H of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Columbia University (X 893 B 47Q)<sup>35</sup> comes in two volumes: Vol 1 has 90 folios and contains only Ezekiel with several missing parts. Several of its parts are worn, especially ff. 43–50 which are in the worst state. A later hand marked the name of the books, chapters and folio numbers, as well as the sections which are read as *haftarot*. Toward the end a concise calendar gives the possible markings of the leap years and the days on which the first of each of the twelve months occurs. In a combination of Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic it is entitled חֲדֵי מְעוּבְרוֹת, על אמת אל מנן אל מעוברות, ‘rejoice concerning the truth about the counting of the leap years.’ It ends with the blessing ‘May the Lord be blessed for ever. Amen and Amen.’

Volume 2 carries the same characteristics as volume 1. It carries only the Twelve in 57 folios ending with the Aramaic version of Zech 5:6. It has one column with 23 lines. The name of the book, צַפִּינָה (sic), is marked at the top of the page.

Several unique elements attest to its early dating. For both the Hebrew and the Aramaic, the punctuation is superlinear and the only *massorah* provided is a *qere* noted in the margin by the last syllable of the word, instead of the word itself, and with a ק̄ below (e.g., Hag 1:8). The letter shapes differ from the typical skillful and mature

Josep Florit Ribera, “La versión aramaica del profeta Ageo,” in *Anuario de Filología* (Barcelona, 1973); “La versión aramaica del profeta Nahum,” in *Anuario de Filología* 6 (1980); “La versión aramaica del profeta sofónias,” *EB* 40 (1982): 127–58.

<sup>34</sup> Related publication: I. Yeivin, *מסורת הלשון העברית*, 142–43; Ribera, “La versión” (1982), 127–58. Henceforward, Ribera’s “La versión” refers to Zephaniah only.

<sup>35</sup> I thank Tara C. Craig of the Columbia University Manuscript Library for her help. Related publication: I. Mendelsohn, *Descriptive catalogue of Semitic manuscripts (mostly Hebrew) in the libraries of Columbia University* (typewritten PH 3857, F 17153, F 18337). This catalogue dates this ms to the 14th century with a question mark. The JNUL Record View dates it to the 16th–17th centuries.

Yemenite handwriting that follows that of the Aleppo Codex. Unlike Eb 80 and Eb 88, the triple ‘״’ for the tetragram, ‘״״״’, are connected thus displaying a ‘שׁ’ for ‘שׁדי’ or for the shape of a crown, symbolizing the Torah or the Kingdom of God. This is a unique form not found in other mss studies for this work. The basic form of ‘״״״’ that is found in ancient Babylonian mss<sup>36</sup> including Eb 80 and Eb 88 here gets a defined symbol whose developed, ornamental forms are found later in mss such as V and Z. The superlinear accents used in the Hebrew text are only those of the major pausal ones, that is, *etnahtah*, *zeqefim*, *revia*<sup>c</sup> and *silluq*. *Zaqef qaton* is a straight line slightly turned to the left above the accented letter. Sometimes it appears in the shape of a tiny ‘7’. No *segol* is found even in the Hebrew text, and instead, a *patah* is used. This is typical of the pre-Massoretic Babylonian vocalization system.<sup>37</sup> Once in Zephaniah a straight line tilting to the right appears to be a *pashta* (above גוים, 3:8).<sup>38</sup> Occasional *degeshim* and *mappiq* are kept due to a seminal stage of Tiberian influence. Its script tends to be deficient and it shows unique forms, especially verbal. It is also unrevised. Abbreviations occur very rarely.<sup>39</sup> Its קדם differs markedly from all other forms. All these elements suggest a much older dating than the suggested 14th century, closer to the 11th–12th centuries when the developing Massoretic systems of vocalization, accents, and Massorah systems began to reach Yemenite Jewry.<sup>40</sup> In addition to this, the physical condition of the ms must be considered as a factor for its antiquity. A sign for the scribe’s sloth is the short notation of the sum of verses at the end of a book by Hebrew letters.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Cf. early Babylonian mss from the Cairo Geniza as published by Yeivin in *A Collection of Mishnaic Geniza with Babylonian Vocalization*. Jerusalem: Makor Publishing Ltd, 1974.

<sup>37</sup> E.g., Morag, *The Vocalization*, 30–34; Paul Kahle, *Masoreten des Ostens*. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966. See, e.g., Table 6, Tiberian לרדת is vocalized לרדת (in two different symbols). In Ms H, e.g., Tiberian את is vocalized את, רשע is vocalized רשע (Hab 3:13).

<sup>38</sup> It is the only explanation I could come up with for this unique marker.

<sup>39</sup> The photocopy in my possession shows only one abbreviation, צב for צבאות, squeezed at the end of a line.

<sup>40</sup> I. Yeivin, *מבוא למסורה הטברנית* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1993), 86–87, 115. He dates the development of these systems of signs to between 600, upon the completion of the *Bavli*, and 750 (pp. 114–15).

<sup>41</sup> In a Massoretic Babylonian treatise to the Torah, after each *parashah*, the number of verses is spelled out. E.g., after *parashat Shoftim* it says פסוקי תישעין ושבעה and not



4. Ms V (Lon BL Or. 2211),<sup>42</sup> written on paper, contains the Latter Prophets, with alternate Hebrew and Aramaic. With 321 folios in 31 quires, its *mise-en-page* shows two columns and 24 lines and *massorot*. The Hebrew carries Tiberian vowel and accent systems, *degeshim* and *rafeh*. The Aramaic uses Babylonian vowel system with occasional *degeshim*, mainly in בגדכפת at the beginning of lemmas or after a short vowel. It has no *rafeh* and inconsistent *mappiq*. The vowelizing of קדם deviates from the Babylonian קדם (קדם).<sup>43</sup> Isaiah also has Rasag's Arabic targum in Hebrew letters. It has square characters in a fine bold Yemenite hand that closely resembles that of Codex Babylonicus of the early 10th century. Especially similar are the letters ש, ק, ל. *Sedarim* are marked in the margin by a large ornamental ס and *haftarot* sections are marked for the most part in red ink. *Massorah magna* fills between one and three lines; at times it continues upward in the margin. At the end of each book the number of verses is briefly marked by Hebrew letters. The tetragram is based on יי linked by a thick line to form a 'ש' with a 'tail' jutting down from the left י. Often, a supra *qamatz* occurs.

Written in San'a, a lengthy rhymed poetic colophon on fol. 320a, is made up of eleven circles in two parts. The first part is dedicated to the benefactor, Abraham the youngest son of Joseph, 'the guardian of the faith...who has the virtues of discernment' in the study of 'the divine laws and precepts.' The second part identifies the scribe as Benayahu,<sup>44</sup> the date of the completion of the scroll, praising his merits, and adds further blessings for the benefactor:

כתבתיה שנת את עם שמונים שלוש מאות חמשה לאמונים: למי  
 לו(?) נכבשה נחל עדנים לאור מערב אשר עיניו כיונים: חמוד  
 משביר אשר הרבה מלונים לכל עובר ושב מן ההמונים: אני  
 הקל צעיר ימים ושנים בניהו משרת הזקנים: אני סופר ועיטי הם  
 שנונים אני איני כדאי קל הקטנים: נשלם והלל ליי: נשלם זה  
 הנביאים בעזרת בורא הברואים יום שלישי שהוא עסרין וחד יומין  
 בירח אדר שלשנת אלפא ושבע מאה ותמנין ושית שנין לשטרית

ספר זכרון in קטע מחיבור מסורתי בבלי למקרא ולתרגום אונקלוס, I. Yeivin, צו simply (Tel-Aviv: Bar-Ilan, 1974), 128.

<sup>42</sup> A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (2004), v–vi (37–38).

<sup>43</sup> Eb 80. However, the typical Babylonian and Yemenite *shuruq* sign is ' or a straight line. For examples see Yeivin's *A Collection of Mishnaic Geniza*, especially mss type IV.

<sup>44</sup> He is known as Benayahu ben Saadia ben Zechariah ben Margaz. Numerous mss are known to have been copied by the Benayahu family.

במדינת צנעא תחרוב ותצדי: וירושלם תתבני ותשתכלל: יהא סימן טוב וברכה על מריה דאתעסק ביה אברהם שצ בן יוסף בן סעדיה בן אברהם ויזכה למהגו ביה הוא וזרעיה וזרע זרע זרעיה כדכ לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפיך והגית בו יומם ולילה ויזכה לכל מדה טובה ולשמחת בית השאובה ולחיי עולם הבא כן יאמר אל נערץ בסוד קדושים רבה: אנסלא<sup>45</sup>

*I wrote it in the year 4385 [1475–6] according to the faithful,<sup>46</sup> for whom the pleasant river was granted<sup>47</sup> to the western light, whose eyes are like doves; a pleasing benefactor who provided many a lodging to every passerby from among the multitude; I, the simple, the very young Benayahu, the elders' servant; I, who is a scribe and whose pens are sharp, am not worthy, the simplest of the young. It has been completed and praise to the Lord. This [book of the] Prophets has been completed with the help of the Creator of the Created, on Tuesday which is twenty one days in the month of Adar of the year 1786 years to the Shetarot<sup>48</sup> [February 25th, 1476], in the land of San'a, may she be ruined and destroyed. And may Jerusalem be rebuilt and strengthened. May there be a good omen and blessing upon his teaching, in which Abraham, the [religious] leader,<sup>49</sup> son of Joseph, son of Saadia, son of Abraham, is engaged. And may he merit to study it he and his seed, and the seed of the seed of his seeds, as it is written: 'Let not this book of the Teaching cease from your lips, and [may] you study it day and night.' And may he merit for every benevolent virtue and for the water-drawing festival<sup>50</sup> and for life in the World to Come. May God, holy in the great congregation of Holy Beings, decrees so. Amen, for perpetuity Sela, forever, Amen.*

The name of the benefactor is denoted also in a short inscription in Arabic noting his dedication of the scroll to his synagogue. Folio 2a and 321 have additions by two later hands. The first notes in a mixture of Hebrew and Arabic that the scroll was dedicated to 'the synagogue of our master the מהר"ץ, may his memory be for

<sup>45</sup> אמן נצח סלה לעד אמן.

<sup>46</sup> Euphemism ("politically correct") for those who keep the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>47</sup> This translation is not certain. It can be read also as 'who was bequeathed pleasures.'

<sup>48</sup> "אלפא ושבע מאה ותמנין ושית שנין לשטרית" (1786 years to the Shetarot). *Minyan haShetarot* was a calendar adapted by the Jews of the Second Temple period and has remained in use only among Yemenite Jews. It was a calendar used in dating contracts (*shetarot*) and other legal documents. This calendar started in 311 BCE to mark the beginning of the Seleucid Era. Another theory explains this dating as the year 170 according to the Greek calendar which was Simeon's first year as the High Priest and the Prince of the Jews.

<sup>49</sup> שליח צבור, in the context of the life in Yemen, can also refer to public advocacy.

<sup>50</sup> The festival celebrated on the second night of *Succot* during the Second Temple period.

life in the World to Come.<sup>51</sup> He then calculates the years passed since it was written to be ‘exactly’ over 400 years... and three years.<sup>52</sup> Thus the inscription dates to the second half of the 19th century, probably shortly before it was sold.<sup>53</sup> A partial list of the negative precepts shows a second hand.<sup>54</sup>

5. Ms Z (Lon BL Or. 1474) is written on paper and contains the Latter Prophets in alternating Hebrew and Aramaic. Isaiah also has Rasag’s Arabic translation in Hebrew letters. With 27 quires (originally) in 274 folios, its *mise-en-page* shows one column of 26 lines with *massorot*. The beginning and end, folios 2–4, 270–274, are by a later hand. This ms has a fuller *massorah parva* and a fuller summation of verses at the end of each book, except for Zechariah and Malachi. The *haftarot* sections are marked in the margin. Chapters are indicated in the margin with ם and the respective number, which does not always agree with the Christian division. The tetragram is based on ם yet it differs from Ms V: The right ם is slightly separated while the next ם are linked. The left ם juts down into a ‘tail.’ Above, a vertical marker indicates its abbreviated form. The Hebrew has the Tiberian *massorot* of vowels and accents, while the Aramaic carries the superlinear system. The Hebrew has *rafeh* above בגדכפת and ‘ה’ when it has no *mappiq*, whereas Targum has no *rafeh* or *mappiq* but occasional *degeshim*. The *massorah magna* generally occupies one line at the top and one or two lines at the bottom of the page. The end of Isaiah and the Twelve are marked by יתקק.<sup>55</sup> As a prefix to the Twelve on fol. 221b, a *siman*<sup>56</sup> is composed:

<sup>51</sup> The מהר״י, an acronym for **מורנו הרב יחיא צאלח**, was one of the greatest Rabbinic authorities in Yemen. He died at the age of 90 on Shabbat, 28th of Nissan 5565 [27th April, 1805].

<sup>52</sup> This exact date cannot be ascertained since a word or two are missing between ‘four hundred’ and ‘and three years.’

<sup>53</sup> In the 19th century many mss were sold to mostly British institutions in order to sustain the Jewish community.

<sup>54</sup> Related Publication: G. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts in the British Museum 1899–1935* (#138), 102–03; JNUL Record View.

<sup>55</sup> יתקק, an acronym for **ישעיהו, תרי עשר, קינות (איכה), and קהלת** indicates the custom of repeating the verse before last to end on a happy note.

<sup>56</sup> A *siman* is a mnemotechnical note composed by the scribe, not only to help him remember the sequence of a phrase or a list, but to show his artistic skill.

## סימן תרי עשר

הושע והואל עמוסיד: עבד ליונה וגם מיכה: נחם וחבק צפוניד: חגי זכריה וציריד. פיר הושע יואל עמוס עובדיה יונה מיכה נחום חבקוק צפניה חגי זכריה מלאכי שנ וציר בגוים שלח

On fol. 274a there is a list of *haftarot* in a modern hand with references to the leaves of the Ms in their original Hebrew foliation.

Two buyers are mentioned: On fol. 1a:

זכה וקנה יחיאל ׳ יוסף בנימין יצו בקרש חגר

*Yekhiel ben Joseph, may his Rock and Creator watch over him, merited and bought for a (full<sup>57</sup>) Rial.<sup>58</sup>*

On fol 1b:

אשתרא הדא אלחאג... צאחב כרבר סעואן בקרש ונצף... הקורא ישמח בעה"ז ובע"ה ואנא אלמשתרי לה יוסף דנן (or דכן?) בחצר אלדלאל סאלם יודא מנצורה

*I bought this Bible (name erased) resident of Hurbar Sa'wan for a Rial and a half... may the reader rejoice in This World and in the World to Come, and I who bought it, the above mentioned Joseph, in the presence of the mediator Salem Judah Mansura.*

The handwriting is very similar to that of Ms 2211, which suggests an association with the Benayahu school. However, its version differs in some important points such as *massorot* and text. קָדָם is voweled similarly (read *qothom*) but mostly it is abbreviated by ק with a vertical marker on top.<sup>59</sup>

Ms Z has been shown to be very close to Eb 80 and Eb 88 even though it is dated to the 16th–17th century.<sup>60</sup>

6. Ms E of the New York Jewish Theology Seminary (Lutzki 239) contains 171 pages with alternating targum. It is written on paper. Jeremiah (missing 1:1–4:21, 7:25–11:11) and Ezekiel precede Isaiah and it ends in Mal 1:9. However, at the top of the ms, Jer 1:1–15:9 and at its conclusion, Mal 1:9–3:24, are added with punctuation and accents by a later hand (18th–19th centuries). The ms is dated to the 16th–17th centuries and indeed it seems to be later than mss V

<sup>57</sup> בקרש חגר, literally 'in a stone coin' is an expression to denote 'a solid, full' value. קרש, or גרש (depends on the location) refers to a Rial. See next note.

<sup>58</sup> The Rial, so named after an Austrian coin with the portrait of Queen Maria Theresa, was used in Yemen as local currency.

<sup>59</sup> Related Publication: G. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts* (#139), 103–04; JNUL Record View.

<sup>60</sup> Ribera, "La versión," 127–58.

or Z, going by the marking of chapters at the top of each page and along the margin (unless a later *maggiah* added them). The sequence of the Twelve is marked between the books (for Zephaniah it notes on the margin, ‘the ninth of the Twelve’). Isaiah also has the Arabic translation of R. Saadia Gaon, copied by the scribe Saadia ben Joseph Alfayumi. In the margin of folio 97b there is a *Tosefta* to TJ Isa 10:32 (also Ms J).<sup>61</sup> Gaps are filled in by a modern hand without Targum and *massorot*. It shows Tiberian vocalization for the Hebrew and supralinear for Targum until folio 88b. *Massorot* and accents are provided with markers for *haftarot* in the margins. Its script is square and clear with some corrections in the margins. The tetragram has the exact form as that of Ms Z.<sup>62</sup>

7. Ms J of Manchester’s John Rylands University Library (Ms. Gaster 673) contains the Latter Prophets in 277 pages. Each page has a double column with *massorot* and accents, Tiberian for the Hebrew and Babylonian for the Aramaic. The name of the book is written at the top of each page and the page letters are written only on the left page. The beginning of each new chapter is marked on the inner margin. *Qere* is written in the margin. At the end of a book the sum of verses and their marker are noted. For Zephaniah the sum of verses are marked as 53 with the sign of נג. The scribe expresses his artistic skill in the *massorah magna*. He adds rules for the scribe concerning the *massorot*, as well as poems and several lists of astronomical, scientific, historical and personal notes. At the opening of the ms the scribe presents three poems, “צמאה אל אל בני אלים,” “לך נפשי,” and one composed by Ibn Ezra (“לאברהם בן עזרא”). He offers a Targumic *Tosefta* to Isa 10:32. At its end, the scribe notes ‘a hemistich from the Torah... from the Prophets... from the Writings, key to *haftarot*... according to the tradition of the scholars of Yemen.’ A *Mahzor* for the year 1655 (רפ”ה הרפ”ג אתתקיב) is also provided.<sup>63</sup> The scribe dates the completion of his work to *Marheshvan* of that same year. In a lengthy and emotional colophon, the scribe bemoans his dire circumstances and accentuates his faith and dedication:

<sup>61</sup> Found in MG, as well.

<sup>62</sup> I thank Sarah Diamant of the JTS Library for her help.

<sup>63</sup> JNUL dates it 1602 to the *Shetarot*.

גשלים בחדש מרחשון שנת אתתק"ב במאתא דרב אלחנשאת דעל  
 ביריא דמיא ביר אלקבור (מותכה?) תחרוב ותיצד וירושלם תתבני  
 ותשתכלל: ספרא חלשא ומסכינא הצריך לרחמי האל והנשען על  
 מקוה ישראל ומושיעו בעת צרה האל הגדול הגבור והנורא יוסף באר  
 יונה ישל בן עזרא רית בן סעדיה כעכ(?) בן חטר(?) זלהה בן מעטלף(?)  
 זצל הידוע אלפתיחי כתבית יתיה לי לנחמני השם יזכיני להגות בו  
 אני זרעי זרע זרעי עד סוף העולם ויקיים עלי מקרא שכתוב ואני  
 זאת בריתי אותם אמר יי רוחי אשר עליך ודברי אשבל ימוזוזוזאמוע  
 אמת נצח סלה לעד וכל המוצא בו טעות יתקנה וידון אותי לכף זכות  
 לפי שלא כתבתי אותו אלא מנוסחא שאינה מוגהת והגהתי אותו  
 מנוסחא אף היא שאינה מוגהת ולא כתבתי אותו אלא ואני נחבא מן  
 המלכות מבקשים אותי ואני מטלטל וגלי אלא מרוב חשיקותי לכותבו  
 ותאותי לקרות בו כי אני ערום מן המקרא ולא קראתי בספר כמו זה  
 לעולם שלא ימצא נוסחא מן לנביאים עמי אלא בצער גדול סכנתי  
 בעצמי וכתבתי אותו ואני בדוחק גדול מתירא ונחבא ונחפו ובהול  
 מן המלכות ומן היהודים היושבים בעירי שהיו רודפים אחרי למסרני  
 ביד המלכות המקום יריב ריבי מהם ואראה בנקמתם מהרה מלפני  
 אל נורא ונשתבשה דעתי מהם ולא היה בי כוח לה... (שלא היתה  
 מנחת דעתי מהם ומן הצרות ואני משביע לכל מי שקרא בו ומצא  
 בו טעות יתקנה וידין אותי לכף זכות וכל הדן אותי לכף זכות המקום  
 דיין אותו לכף זכות אמן:

*It was completed in the month of Marheshwan, in the year 1912 [to the Shetarot]<sup>64</sup>  
 in the city of Darb Alhanshat<sup>65</sup> near the water well of Bir Alqabur, may she be in  
 ruins and destroyed, but may Jerusalem be rebuilt and strengthened. I am a weak and  
 poor scribe, who needs the mercy of God and who trusts in the Hope of Israel who  
 saves him at time of distress, the great and mighty and awesome God, Joseph son of  
 [?] Jonah, may God watch over him for ever, son of Ezra [?], son of Saadia [?],  
 son of [?], may his memory be to life in the World to Come, son of [?], may the  
 memory of the righteous be for a blessing, the famous Alfatihi. I wrote it to comfort me.  
 May God merit me to study it, I and my seed and the seed of my seed to the end of  
 the world. And may the Scripture 'and this shall be My covenant with them, said the  
 Lord, My spirit which is upon you, and the words which I have placed in your mouth,  
 shall not cease from your mouth and from the mouth of your seed, and the mouth of  
 the seed of your seed, said the Lord, from now to eternity,<sup>Isa 59:21</sup> (truth eternity sela  
 forever) be ascribed to me. And whoever finds an error in it let him correct it and may  
 he judge me on the scale of merit, for I copied it from an unrevised text and I revised  
 it from a text that is unrevised as well. And I copied it while hiding from the Kingdom  
 that seeks me, and I roam and in exile, but rather out of my desire to copy it and my  
 wish to study it, for I have been away from Scriptures and I have never read from*

<sup>64</sup> Corresponding to October–November, 1601.

<sup>65</sup> According to Hayim ben Yihye Habshush, Darb Alhanshat was an ancient Jewish town, now in ruins and empty of its population. Its Jews owned fields and were skilled in making iron tools, silver and bronze jewelry. They also worked in leather, carpentry and especially pottery. *מסעות חבשוש* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1983), 61–62.

*such a book, for a text of the Prophets was not with me. But under a great distress I have put myself in danger and I copied it while under great distress. I worry and am hiding and in a hurry and confused from the Kingdom and from the Jews who live in my town who were seeking me to deliver me into the hand of the Kingdom. May God plead for me against them so that I shall soon witness their demise before the awesome God; and my mind is confused from them and I have no strength in me to [?] for my mind had no rest from the troubles. And I adjure whoever reads it and finds in it an error to correct it and judge me for merit. And whoever judges me for merit, may God judge him for merit. Amen.*

Another prayer is added: ‘May God redeem us from the yoke of kingdoms of the land, troubles and griefs and may He expedite the coming of the Redeemer. Amen and Amen. May the Lord be blessed for ever. Amen and Amen.’

### 2.1.3 *Ashkenazi Mss*

The seven Ashkenazi mss share the same *mise-en-page*, that is, three columns per page with *massorah magna* and *parva*, the same format of Codex Leningrad and Codex Aleppo. Five of them carry Tiberian punctuation for both the Hebrew and the Aramaic. The sixth does not have punctuation for the Aramaic. In most cases, when partial words fill the end of lines they are fully repeated in the next line. However, because of the narrow columns, some words are abbreviated, marked with a vertical line over the last letter. Aramaic קדם is abbreviated by either ק or קד. Five of the mss present one Hebrew verse followed by the Aramaic, in the Yemenite tradition. The divine tetragram is written by two or three ״ with a line above the last letter or two lines above and below it. One, Ms U, has a crooked line on the left side, in accordance with the current Yemenite custom. All show preference for plene script, have square lettering and use a *rafeh* sign. Scribal differences abound, mostly in verbal forms, but additions or deletions of words also occur in both Hebrew and Aramaic. In most cases they are corrected in the margin. Others are left unvoweled to mark their redundancy or are crossed out. Rarely are the missing words inserted above the line. All the Ashkenazi mss carry remains of the Palestinian vocalization system.

In the Ashkenazi tradition, Targum is also marked with the same accents as the Hebrew text. Among the seven mss checked here, only Ms T has no such markings due to the absence of vocalization in the Aramaic.

1. Ms T of the British Library (Add. 26879, Margoliouth Catalog 187), is dated to the 13th century and contains the Prophets in 268 leaves.<sup>66</sup> Written on both sides of the page, the ink is so thick that the writing is visible on the other side of the folio. Its *mise-en-page* is unique in that the Hebrew and Targum appear in two separate columns, the Hebrew in the middle and Targum in the inside. The third column, on the outside, has Rashi presented in various shapes to fit the size of the Hebrew text. This attention to artistic presentation reflects the scribe's pride in his holy endeavor. It seems to be the precursor of ms G where Rashi and Ibn Ezra columns embrace the two inside columns of the MT and Targum.

Each central column contains 37 lines. Only the Hebrew is vocalized and accented. Targum is partly pointed. Both languages are frequently corrected, mostly in the margins. The Franco-German square writing slants slightly to the left. The upper *massorah* has three double-indented lines and the bottom has four such lines above and below the Hebrew column. An additional *massorah* is inserted vertically on both sides of the Hebrew text. The beginnings of the *haftarot* are frequently marked in the margin. The *sedarim* are marked by ם. The opening word of each book is distinguished by large ornamental letters. Not all books end with their sum of verses. At the end of each book on Rashi's column, the scribe notes in Aramaic the completion of the book. The mark יתקק appears at the end of the Twelve. There, below Rashi's column, a prayer in Hebrew is added:

חזק ונתחזק הסופר לא יזק לא היום ולא לעולם  
עד שיעלה חמור בסולם אשר יעקב אבינו חלם:

*May we be strengthened, the scribe will not be harmed, neither today nor forever, until an ass<sup>67</sup> climbs the ladder, [of] which our father Jacob dreamed.*

<sup>66</sup> I thank Mr. Sutton Hedley and Ms. Ilana Tahan of the British Library for their kindness and support. Related publication: G. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts*, #187 (London, 1899–1935), 140–41; JNUL Record View.

<sup>67</sup> Symbol for the Messiah who will arrive riding on a white ass, a wishful saying. This phrase is a play on the proverb 'if an ass climbs the ladder' which expresses an unrealistic, improbable event. Even Shoshan, *המלון החדש*, 2:787.



Below Targum, a rhymed song in Aramaic is composed:

תקוף מבועי ביע יתרבי עלי ספרא  
 דידוהי רשימו פרישות ספרא  
 ורזי לחישת צפנת פענה גמרא  
 בגין כן במוחי יתנגיד ליה אגרא  
 מן הוא דעתיד למיתי בגברא  
 למיתן אגר שלים לכל גברא  
 ואנא לא אבהתת בביסורא  
 במיעל יומא דחילא ויקירא

*May the strength of rejoicing increase upon the scribe,  
 whose writing is that of the pious scribe,  
 and the secrets of the whisper of the learned Wise;  
 because of that my mind rejects its reward  
 from the One who is to come in strength,  
 to grant a full reward to all men;  
 and I am not bewildered of the good tidings  
 when the Day of the Fearful and the Honored One will come.*

A note of purchase on folio 2a is dated 5119 (1359) while on the left-hand upper corner of folio 3a is written **אשר חנן אלקים לעבדו** (‘Hosea Moses Levi whom God graced to serve Him’). It is very likely that this is the scribe’s signature. On folio 268a various entries of births and deaths are noted, some from the 16th century. On folio 267 a censor noted: “Revisto et spurgato per me Gio. Dom. Vistorini, 1609.” A similar note by the same censor appears on folio 2a.

A wide script, it has three Palestinian vocalization characteristics: A diacritic *mappiq* below the ‘ה’, *hataf qamatz* for a *qamatz qaton* and *rafeh*.<sup>68</sup> The tetragram is denoted יי

2. Ms M of the Nürnberg Stadtbibliothek Solg. Ms. 1–7. 2<sup>o</sup> (Kennicott 198) contains the whole Hebrew Bible in seven volumes, with some pages missing in each volume.<sup>69</sup> It differs in the sequence of the Writings: Ruth, Esth, Ps, Job, Qoh, Song, Lam, Prov, Dan, Ezra-Neh,

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Ms F. It should be noted that the *rafeh* sign, a bar over the letter, occurs in both the Tiberian and the Palestinian vocalization systems. In the latter it occurs in some mss. However, in the Tiberian system the bar is placed over **בגדכפת** only while in the Palestinian it is placed over the “majority group” plus ‘א’ to indicate a vowel letter, and plus ‘י’ to indicate semivocal. Morag, “The Vocalization,” 36.

<sup>69</sup> Related publications: Striedl, H. and Roth, E., *Hebraische Handschriften* (vol. II; No. 504–510; Wiesbaden 1965), 317–19; N. Aloni and D.S. Levinger, **רשימת תצלומי** (vol. I; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1957), #662; JNUL Record View; W.F. Smelik, *The Targum of Judges* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995),

Chron. The script is large and clear with 33 lines per column. The upper *massorah* has two or three lines, but the number of lines at the bottom is consistently five. They fit the width of the text. The ms carries Onkelos for the Torah and Yerushalmi for the end of Deuteronomy. Except for Proverbs and Chronicles, the rest of the text carries Targum. Esther comes with two Targumim. Ezra and Nehemiah are counted as one book. At the end of Deuteronomy in volume 2 the owner is named, יהודה בר אברהם עמריך. The beginning of volume 5 (Jer 24:1–Mal 3:24) opens with אבאר סכום... פסוקי אורייתא ונביאיא ('I shall explicate the sum of the Torah and the Prophets' verses...') and it ends with בטחו ביי עדי עד ('trust in the Lord forever'). At the end of Ezekiel the *maggiah* (or *massran*) wrote סכום פסוקי יחזקאל... יוסף בן גרשם אף פיהו נחסום לכן ישרק ('the sum of Ezekiel's verses... Joseph son of Gershom, his mouth we shall shut, therefore he shall whistle').<sup>70</sup> In volume 6, at the top of folio 4<sup>a</sup>, נפל בגורל לחלק מר' אידיל שתי ('came into the possession as inheritance from Rabbi Idil?'), perhaps an owner. Volume 7 is missing from Song 8:6 through Lam 1:9 (between folio 44 and 45). At the end of this volume the colophon reads in Hebrew:

אני שבתאי הלבירי כתבתי  
 זאת המקרא תרגומית לנדיב (... משה רפא...)  
 וסיימתי אותה בשנת נא לפרט<sup>71</sup> בד' לחדש  
 שבט בערב שבת של  
 שירה וכשם שזכה לכו'  
 לכותבה ולסיימה כן יהי  
 רצון שיזכה לכתוב ספרים הרבה לאין קץ ולקיים  
 מה שכתוב בהם הוא  
 ובניו ובני בניו כל זרעו  
 עד סוף כל הדורות כמו  
 שנ' לא ימוש מפיד ומפי  
 זרעך ומפי זרע זרעך  
 אמר יי מעתה ועד  
 עולם:

*I, Shabtai the Scribe, wrote  
 this Bible [and] translated [into the Aramaic], for the philanthropist  
 (... Moses Rafa...)*

123–24 and the bibliography there. I thank Dr. Christine Sauer of the Stadtbibliothek in Nürnberg for her help.

<sup>70</sup> Probably a remark indicating victory over adversaries.

<sup>71</sup> Probably meant קטן לפרט, a notation in the Hebrew date without the marker for the millennium.

and I completed it in the year 51, on the fourth<sup>72</sup> of the month  
of Shevat, Shabbat evening of [parashat]  
Shirah<sup>73</sup> [January 19th, 1291] and as he was merited  
to write it and to complete it, may it be  
[God's] pleasure that he will be merited to write many books to no end and  
to fulfill  
what is written in them, he  
and his sons and the sons of his sons, all his seed,  
to the end of all generations, as  
it is written: [And the words which I have placed in your mouth] shall not  
cease from your mouth, nor from the mouth  
of your seed, nor from the mouth of the seed of your seed,  
said the Lord, from now and  
forever<sup>[Isa 59:21]</sup>.

The previous owner's name was erased and instead, the name of Moses Rafa was filled in.

Both the MT and Targum carry rabbinic accents and Tiberian vocal signs. Only one Palestinian vocalization characteristic remains, that of *Qamatz qaton* for *hataf qamatz*. The *rafeh* in both languages are placed over בגדכפת only, an indication of the almost complete adaptation of the Tiberian vocalization system. Scribal errors of pluses, omissions and haplography are relatively high. Because of the narrow columns, partial words at the end of lines are often repeated in the next line, and many are the abbreviations especially for names (God's, Israel's, nations'). The scribe's tendency to a plene script (a Palestinian quality as in Ms F) is often corrected mostly in the Aramaic, by a bar crossing the 'י' or the 'ר'. But this is inconsistent. Corrections in the margins are frequent. It is clear that the *naqdan* was a person other than the scribe, as suggested by C.A. Fontela.<sup>74</sup> The tetragram has the sign יי׃.

3. Ms A of the Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticana, Urbinati collection ebr. 1 (Kennicott 228) contains the whole HB in 979 pages.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> According to the information from the JNUL, the 10th.

<sup>73</sup> Exod 15.

<sup>74</sup> C. Alonso Fontela, *El Targum al Cantar de los Cantares (Edición Crítica)* (unpublished Ph.D. Diss. University of Madrid, 1987), 54–55.

<sup>75</sup> Related publications: S.E. Assemanus et J.S. Assemanus, I, *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogues: Codices Ebraici Manuscripti Urbinates-Vaticani* (Codex I.: Romae 1756), 409–11; Smelik, *The Targum*, 122–23 and the bibliography there; N. Aloni and D.S. Levinger, רשימת תצלומי כתבי־היד העבריים במכון, The Vatican Collection (vol. 3. No. 614; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1968), 75; JNUL Record View.

The triple columns maintain 35 lines each. The sequence of books differs from the MT (Codex Aleppo): Jer, Ezek, Isa, The Twelve, Ruth, Ps, Job, Prov, Qoh, Song, Lam, Esth, with two interlocked targumim, is followed by Mordekhai's Dream, Dan, Ezra, Neh, and Chron. Hebrew and Aramaic alternate throughout the ms including Chronicles. In the Prophets some *Toseftot* are added. The settings of *massorah magna* are diverse. On some pages the lower *massorah* is made up in micrography of intricate geometric designs or animal shapes; such designs also appear at the beginnings or ends of certain books.<sup>76</sup> On others, the overflow continues on the left margin in geometric lines. The upper *massorah* always contains two lines, while the bottom contains three lines that fit the page width. In his colophon at the end of the ms on folio 976, the scribe writes:

אני יצחק ברבי שמעון הלוי מסרתי חצי הספר להנדיב ר' אליעזר  
בר' שמואל השם יזכהו להנות בו הוא ובניו ובני בניו עד סוף כל  
הדורות אמן סלה וסיימתי לשנת חמשת אלפים בחמשים וחמשה  
לפרט בחמשה עשר בכסליו

*I, Isaac son of R. Simeon the Levite,<sup>77</sup> handed over half of the scroll to the philanthropist R. Eliezer son of R. Samuel, may God merit him to read in it he, his sons and the sons of his sons to the end of all generations, Amen Selah. And I completed in the year 5055 on the fifteen of Kislev [December 12th, 1294].*

The scribe opens on the first folio with 'R. Isaac said, the Torah should have begun only from this month.' He also writes his name in folios 144a and 479b. Some claim that the *massorah* was written by two "of which the second, who is the scribe, dated his work."<sup>78</sup> Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch, with some changes and omissions, is added in the margin by one Moses who signs his name on folio 78b.

<sup>76</sup> On micrography of Biblical mss see, e.g., D. Gunzburg and V. Stassof, *L'ornement hébreu* (Berlin, 1905); Colette Sirat, *La lettre hébraïque et sa signification* and Leila Avrin, *Micrography as Art* (pp. 43–63) in *Etudes de paléographie ébraïque* (Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris; The Israel Museum, Department of Judaica, Jerusalem, 1981): 17–37 and 43–63, respectively; Thérèse Metzger, "Ornamental Micrography in Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts," *BO* 43 (1986): 377–88; J. Gutmann, "Masorah figurata: the Origins and Development of a Jewish Art Form," *Estudios masoreticos*, V Congreso de la IOMS, Madrid, 1983. According to Metzger (p. 386), the decorations in this ms appear in three areas: the initial panels, the lower and sometimes the upper *massorah*, and the lower ornamental *massorah* on the external pages of every quire; Jacob Bazak, *הקישוט המספרי בתהלים*, Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1999.

<sup>77</sup> Note that the possible scribe of Ms T is also a Levite.

<sup>78</sup> See Smelik, *The Targum*, 122 and the bibliography there.

Three Palestinian vocalization features are used here: A diacritic *mappiq* below the ‘ה’, *hataf qamatz* for *qamatz qaton* and a rare *shuruq* instead of a *sheva* (e.g., וִיֵת). *Rafeh* over בַּגְּדֹכְתָא (in both Hebrew and Aramaic) shows a Tiberian adaptation. Its propensity for deficient script in both languages is especially salient in the MT. The scribe’s effort to provide an accurate Aramaic translation is evident in the unique distinction between ךְ/ךְ for genitive and יךְ for Hebrew אֲשֶׁר. The infrequent unfinished words at the end of lines are marked and fully repeated in the next line. The tetragram is denoted ם, with markers above and below the left ם. Final letters do not extend below the line.<sup>79</sup>

4. Ms U, identified as Vol II of the Paris Bibliotheque Nationale (Heb 17–18, or ZB037), contains the whole HB, though its sequence is very different from what it is in other texts.<sup>80</sup> Volume I contains the Pentateuch, Job, Proverbs, and the five *megillot* starting with Ruth, Psalms, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles. Volume II contains all the Prophets in 373 pages, Ezekiel preceding Isaiah. All the books provide Aramaic targumim. At the end of Esther the dream of Mordekhai and the prayer of Esther are found in Aramaic. A *Tosefta* for TJ Judg 5 is provided. Both volumes are bound and decorated with rich clasps. The fine Ashkenazi writing has 41 lines per column, two lines in the upper *massorah* and three in the lower, both fitting the width of the text. Accents are provided for both MT and targumim.

At the end of each volume a colophon is added by the *massran* who edited it after the ms was purchased by Joseph Galigo. According to the first colophon, Menahem ben Peretz Trabot<sup>81</sup> completed the *haggahah*.

<sup>79</sup> This custom is also found in the Bologna Pentateuch of 1482 prepared by Abraham ben Hayyim di Tintori. Its format set the pattern for future editions including the Bomberg Rabbinic Bibles. Norman H. Snaith, “Bible: Printed Editions (Hebrew),” *EJ* 4:836–37.

<sup>80</sup> I thank M. Laurent Hericher of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France for his help. Related publication: H. Zotenberg, *Catalogue des manuscrits hébreux et samaritains de la Bibliothèque impériale* (Paris, 1866), 2–3; M. Garel, *D’une main forte. Manuscrits hébreux des collections françaises* (no. 117; Exposition Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris 1991), 160–61; Smelik, *The Targum*, 124–25; JNUL Record View.

<sup>81</sup> Originally, the Trabot family came from the French town of Trévoux (once Trévou) from which they were expelled in 1488. A long line of Rabbinic scholars, the family moved to Italy and continued their leadership activities in their communities. “Trabot,” *EJ* 15:1292 (written by an “editorial staff” member).

on Thursday, the second of the month of Av, in the year 272 [July 25th, 1512], the work of the haggadah was completed, in order to cleanse the dresses of errors in this [book of ] the Prophets, in the most accurate way and with accurate books in my possession at this time by the youngest in the thousand,<sup>82</sup> Menahem, son of the honorable, my teacher, the Rabbi, R. Peretz Trabot, may his memory be for life in the World to Come, in the fifth millennium here in the city of Governolo, in the house of the mighty,<sup>83</sup> the honorable teachers and Rabbis, Joseph and Moses and Samuel, may their Rock keep them and protect them, the sons of the honorable, teacher and Rabbi, Isaac Galigo, may his memory be for a blessing. I call to my God to grant you the merit of reading in it and in other holy books, son after son to eternity, and may the portion of the maggiah not faller in sustenance... and may God return the exile of Zion.

The second colophon is much shorter, written a few days later:

*'On the second day of Shabbat on the 20th of Av 5272 the haggadah of this book was completed by מ"ט"י יפ"ר"ח,<sup>84</sup> may his Rock keep and protect him, here in Governo Mantua [northern Italy]. Praised be God.*

A list of the *haftarot* follows the colophon. Trabot seems to have added the names of the books on the top left hand corner. The frequent errors are corrected in the margins in very clear handwriting. Corrections are also made over the line and by crossing out extra letters or words. Often, another version is offered with the marker סא for ספר אחר. The tetragram, ם, has a similar inverted ן' as in Ms Y but higher up around the left ן'. The final letter ף' does not extend below the line. It tends to use a plene script, especially in the targum.

The ms itself is dated to the 13th–14th century. However, a closer examination of this ms shows that its original copy was older and that it served Ms Y. Seven values of the Palestinian vocalization system have remained: *Hataf qamatz* is used for *qamatz qaton*, ץ' and ס' are dotted, *mappiq* is marked by a dot under the ך', occasional initial ך' is geminated, letters other than בגדכפת are geminated and have *rafeh*, and ך' occasionally has an inner *sheva*. Many words are abbreviated. The sum total of verses does not appear at the end of each book. When these numbers do appear, they seem to come from a different hand, probably Trabot.

The ms shows signs of a still-strong Palestinian influence. The unknown scribe of this ms reflects nescience in Aramaic which

<sup>82</sup> An expression of humility. Cf. Mic 5:1.

<sup>83</sup> An honorary expression.

<sup>84</sup> The acronym of Menahem's name.

presented Trabot the *naqdan* with an arduous task: Crossing out excessive letters, mostly ‘י’ and ‘ו’, often individual or a string of words, erasing and replacing, adding omitted words above the line or in the margin, or revocalizing. Some errors were still overlooked, however.

5. Ms Y or Ms Barb. Or. 161–164 (Kennicott 471), once of the Bibliotheca Barberina, now of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (ours is #163). Written on parchment in four volumes, it contains the Pentateuch, Former Prophets, Latter Prophets (Jeremiah and Ezekiel precede Isaiah), and the Writings. Targum alternates with Hebrew. Esther has only Targum *Sheni* and Chronicles has no targum. A *Tosefta* at the opening of *Parashat vaYigash* (Gen 44:18) is added in the margin. The first 22 folios (up to Gen 28:4) are of a different hand without *massorot*. Several inscriptions are provided. *Massorot*, punctuation and accents are present. Upper *massorah* is made up of two lines, the lower *massorah*, three lines with excess curving up the margin. Both fit the width of the three columns. With 33 lines per page, the first lemma of each book is written in large letters and covers the width of the column. It took the scribe 15 months to complete his work, as he documents in his colophon on folio 164v:

אני יחיאל הסופר כתבתי הספר הזה מתורגם מר"ח כסליו שנת נ"ו  
לפרט עד ר"ח אדר שנת נ"ז לפרט לר' יעקב בר יצחק הצור זכהו  
להגות בו וזרעו אחריו

*I, Yehiel the scribe wrote this book [and] translated, from the first of Kĕslev in the year 56 [November 17th, 1295] to the first of Adar in the year 57 [February 2, 1297] for R. Jacob son of Isaac, may the Rock merit him to read in it and his seed after him.*

Later owners signed their names on several folios. At the head of each volume the owner, Aaron son of Meshullam Zalman, signed his. At the end of the ms (vol IV, page 164b) an inscription describes its use as a security against a loan involving a scandal.

אמת כי הראש הקהל כמ"ר משה רופא יצ"ו הלוה עשרה שוק מיישנ'  
על זה הספר בלווי [?] הראשים פה פרגא יצ"ו אחר בלבול משה ירוחם  
גוקל [יוקל?] יצ"ו באופן זה כשיחזיר לי הר' יזופא חנוך או הבא בכחו  
העשרה שוק מיישנ' אז תקף יחזיר ליוזיפ [?] או להבא בכחו הספר הזה.  
נעשה היוי"ו א ר"ח אלול רצ"ה.

*True that the head of the community, our honorable teacher and Rabbi, Moses Rofe, may his Rock keep him and sustain him, borrowed ten schock meissnich against this book and with the notables' pledge, here in Prague, may their Rock keep them and*

*sustain them, after the scandal of Moses Yeruham Gokal (?), in this manner. When R. Yozefa Hanokh or his representative return to me the ten schock meissnich, I will then immediately return this book to Yozif [?] or to his representative. Prepared today, Sunday, the first of Elul 295 [August 11, 1535].*

In Volume I, first page, three sets of owners sign their names (the fourth is illegible). The first incipit carries an advice:

לעולם יחתום אדם שמו על ספרו כדי שלא יבא אחד מן השוק  
ויערער עליו ויאמר שלי הוא לכן כתבתי שמי וחתמתי עליו מאיר  
בר אשר הלוי שליט"א

*One should always sign his name on his book lest another person from nowhere comes to claim it saying "it is mine." Therefore I wrote my name and signed it, Meir son of Asher the Levite, may he live for long and good years, Amen. [no date]*

The second owner is 'Moses son of the martyr Uri, may the memory of the righteous be for a blessing, in the year 320 [1559]'. The third owner is 'Uri son of my master my father Joseph Arokh, may his memory be for a blessing, who is known as Lehman Arokh, in the year 357 [1596–97].'

Five Palestinian vocalization features are used here:<sup>85</sup> A diacritic *mappiq* below the 'ה', *hataf qamatz* for *qamatz qaton*, and an inner *sheva* in final 'ח'. The fourth feature is the use of *degeshim* in what Morag coined the "majority group," that is, in all letters other than רעיוהא.<sup>86</sup> This gemination sign occurs in letters regardless of their initial or medial positions in both Hebrew and Aramaic. The fifth feature is a dot inside the 'ש' to mark its being either 'ש' or 'ש', and is not indicative of a *dagesh*. However, while this is true for "Fuller Palestinian," the vocalization system in Ms Y differs in three major ways: One, *dagesh* often occurs in initial 'ר'; two, gemination occurs after both a closed or an open syllable; three, often, an absence of a *rafeh* signals gemination. When compared to Ms F of early 12th century, this heavily Palestinian influence on the vocalization system employed by our Yehiel the scribe, indicates a survival of the older system within a more prevalent late 13th century Tiberian system. The Palestinian influence had lessened a century later (e.g., Ms R).

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Ms F.

<sup>86</sup> Morag, "The Vocalization," 220–23.



The tetragram ם is unique in that an inverted ך is tangent to the left ך. Tiny horizontal lines denote grammatical dots. A great effort is made to flush the end of lines.<sup>87</sup>

6. Ms P of the Staatsbibliothek Zu Berlin—Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Or. Fol. 1–4 (Kennicott 150), contains the whole HB in four volumes with Onkelos and TJ to the Prophets with other targumim for the Writings.<sup>88</sup> Parchment. Large pages with large square writing and accents. Esther is followed by Mordekhai's Dream. Upper *massorah* has two lines and the bottom has three with occasional drawings, of animals for example. Both upper and lower *massorot* fit the width of the text which is made up of 35 lines per column. The *maggiah* seems to have added the chapter letters and the name of the book above the upper *massorah*. Summation of verses appears occasionally. Among the mss here examined, this ms is the first to mark the division into chapters alongside the text as well as at the top of the page, together with the name of the book. The page number is marked in Hebrew letters.

The short colophon at the end of Chronicles states in rhyme:

חזק ונתחזק הסופר ברוך בר אברהם לא יזק אמן סלה

*May we go from strength to strength, the scribe Barukh bar Abraham shall not be harmed. Amen Selah.*

Four owners are mentioned among them two sons, Isachar and Naphtali. The first owner, Judah son of the late R. Gershon bought the ms in the month of Sivan, the time of the Giving of the Torah [Shavuot] 5210 [May/June 1450]. The other two sets of owners bought the ms in 1678 and 1690. The fourth, Reizle, wife of Rabbi Benjamin Neumark, donated this ms to the Berlin Library in honor of 'our master the Duke...' on the first day of Nissan, תנב [April 1692]. The ms is dated to the 14th century though its punctuation is dated 1455.

Hebrew and Aramaic texts are replete with errors due to scribal inattentiveness and/or ignorance. Corrections are made in the

<sup>87</sup> Related publications: G.B. De Rossi, *Variae Lectiones* (vol. 1), lxxxiii; B. Kennicott, *Dissertatio Generalis*, 102; Smelik, *The Targum*, 129; JNUL Record View.

<sup>88</sup> I thank Dr. Hartmut-Orwin Feistel of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin for his help. Related publications: Moritz Steinschneider, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin. Hebraeischen Handschriften* (vol. 1, Berlin, 1878), 1; Smelik, *The Targum*, 122 and the bibliography there; JNUL Record View.

margins though obvious mistakes have been overlooked. Because of the narrow columns, many lines end with partial words that are fully repeated in the next line. While the Hebrew is a mixture of deficient and plene script, the Aramaic tends to be plene, as are all the Ashkenazi mss. The tetragram ם has upper and lower markers similar to those of Ms A. Sometimes these markers are linked to create an inverted ׳נ׳ as in Mss U,Y.<sup>89</sup> Final ׳ף׳ does not extend below the line (final ן,ן,ץ seem to be somewhat elongated). This being said, the penmanship is even, clear and beautiful. *Rafeh* is used only for בגדכפת. Palestinian influence is not overtly evident. This may be due to the dark background of the pages and the faint ink.

7. Ms R of the Gottweig Stiftsbibliothek (883) 11, contains two volumes in 778 pages with *massorot* and accents for both languages.<sup>90</sup> The upper *massorah* has two lines and the lower has three. Each of the triple columns has 32 lines in square writing on fine parchment. The beige leather binding is worn and damaged. The first volume contains not only the MT and Onkelos, but also Pseudo-Jonathan and commentaries by Maimonides and others. The second volume contains the Prophets in 468 pages. Rashi is added in the margin for Josh 1:1–4:17. No scribe is identified. The volume opens with copies of letters to the monk Gaspare Amann in the years 1513–1517. A different hand from 1516 wrote the table of contents of the volume. It is dated to the 14th century.

It seems to have preference for a deficient script for the MT and a mixture of deficient and plene for the Aramaic. Though meticulously and beautifully handwritten, errors and inconsistencies abound. *Deqeshim* are at times superfluous, at others, missing. A good number of words are truncated at the end of lines. Unique Aramaic forms and odd words demonstrate ignorance of the language. Pluses seem to outnumber omissions; when corrected they are placed in the margins or above the letter or word. When *rafeh* is denoted, it shows only above בגדכפת. Often, lack of *rafeh* signals gemination.

<sup>89</sup> See, e.g., the last page of Chronicles.

<sup>90</sup> I thank Mag. Michael Grünwald of the Gottweig Stiftsbibliothek for providing me with some of the descriptive information. Related publications: A.Z. Schwarz, *Die hebraeischen Handschriften in Oesterreich*, no. 2; Mag. Michael Grünwald, *Katalog der Ausgestellten Bibeln, in Unter der Führung des Evangeliums, Begleitschrijf und Katalog zur Ausstellung im Bibelfahr 2003*, Stift Götweig: 110–111; Vinzenz Werl, *Manuscripten-Catalog II* (1843, Nr. 883), 540–53; Smelik, *The Targum*, 121–22; JNUL Record View.

Final letters are short. Two Palestinian vocalization features have remained: *hataf qamatz* for *qamatz qaton* or for *holam*, and diacritic *mappiq* under the ‘ה’. The tetragram ״ is similar to that of Ms T.

#### 2.1.4 *Sepharadi Mss*

Between the 13th and early 16th centuries, the six Sepharadi mss obtained from the JNUL differ from the Ashkenazi mss in several points.<sup>91</sup> Mss X and W are unique in a variety of ways (see analysis below). Five mss carry only Targum. Four mss share the same *mise-en-page* of one column, but one has two and one has two columns of Hebrew and Latin. Each verse opens with the unvoveled first lemma of the Hebrew text with three triangular dots on top. The hand-writing is slanted and lacks the expertise and maturity of the Ashkenazi and Yemenite scribes examined here. Lesser competence is also indicated by the many scribal mishaps, the absence of the Hebrew text and *massorot* in two of the six mss, and by the lack of punctuation in two mss. The tetragram seems to be as inconsistently used in the Sepharadi tradition as it is in the Ashkenazi one. Four mss have ״, two have a curved line on the left side of the ״, and one has ״ with a curved line on its left. Because of the wide lines, there is no need to fill in ends of line with partial words. Yet abbreviations are common in some mss. The pitfalls of copying, such as mistakes, omissions and marginal corrections, occur here, too.

1. Ms X of the Oxford Bodleian Library (MS Opp. Add. Qu. 76) contains the Latter Prophets and the Twelve in 172 pages ending with Mal 3:8. Its volume I contains the Former Prophets in 158 pages. At the beginning of both volumes, differences between the readings of Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali are remarked upon. The last pages note massoretic variants. This ms differs significantly from the rest of the mss: bilingual with *two* columns of 37 lines each, it has clear, large and square letters with Tiberian punctuation, and very few abbreviations. The ink is dark and light brown. Many decorations are made in burnished gold. *Massorot*, two lines above and three-four lines below, are written often in micrography or interlaced. Both

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<sup>91</sup> Again, my profound thanks to Dr. Benjamin Richler and Yael Okun who provided me with photocopies, information and kindness.

languages carry accents. Corrections are minimal. Mistakes within the text are left unvoiced. To avoid repeating partial words at the end of a line, spaces are left before the last word. While the MT seems to keep to a deficient script more than Codex A or L, its Aramaic tends to be plene. The names of the books are written at the top of their first page in a later, unskilled hand. Several blotches smear the text. A rectangular framed in dark lines divides between books.

Several owners are marked: Don Abraham son of Don Isaac haLevi of Almaqasam sold the ms to Don Todros son of Don David Ibn Shoshan of Silla on the 7th of Elul 5242 [August 31st, 1482]. The latter sold it to Don Abraham son of Ban Banshat of Shoriah (Soria) on the 26th of Nissan 5251 [April 15th, 1491]. Witness is Moses Moriton. The names of other witnesses are illegible. Abraham Koronil bought it in Egypt on Tuesday the 18th of Tishrei 5351 [October 16th, 1590].<sup>92</sup> From the letter shapes and the micrography, and from comparison with other mss, this ms could have been written in the school of Joshua ben Abraham Ibn Gaon or by Ibn Gaon himself in Soria or in Tudela, Spain. Furthermore, on some folios, in the bottom *massorah*, invocations typical of Ibn Gaon's are incorporated.<sup>93</sup> Thus, this ms is dated to ca. 1300.

2. Ms S of the Budapest, Magyar tudományok akadémia, MS. Kaufmann A 13 (BUD 13), carries only TJ from Isaiah to Mal 1:5 with some illegible sections.<sup>94</sup> With 462 pages, the semi-cursive script tends to be plene yet deficient in accuracy, and carries no punctuation. No consistency in the shape of the letters. For example, a final 'ס' differs from the more common 'ס' yet a third form occurs as well. Beginnings of chapters are marked by the letter 'פ' with an upper dot. No colophon is provided, but it seems likely that two scribes

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<sup>92</sup> Don Abraham probably escaped to Egypt just before the Spanish expulsion of 1492.

<sup>93</sup> According to Malachi Beit-Arié, the Biblical text was not written by Joshua Ibn Gaon himself but by his school. *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to Vol. I*. Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to vol. I (A. Neubauer's Catalogue); no. 68\*–69. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1994; Bezalel Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles*, vol. I. The Spanish and Portuguese Manuscripts, #5 (Jerusalem and London, 1982), 33–34. Only No. 68 is described. According to Narkiss, if Ibn Gaon himself did not write it, he might have decorated the manuscript; JNUL Record View.

<sup>94</sup> I thank Judit Balazs for her help at the Budapest Library of the HAS and for keeping it open after hours.

wrote this ms. It has many corrections. It is dated to the 13th–14th centuries with a list of the owners in Hebrew and Ladino at the end of Chronicles.<sup>95</sup> Prof David Kaufmann notes that he bought this ms in 1893 through the mediation of Dr. J. Jare from R. Joseph (of?) Pirara ‘where this precious treasure was found.’

3. Ms N, of the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale (Heb 75), contains Onkelos to the Torah and TJ to Kings, Jeremiah, and the Twelve.<sup>96</sup> Genesis 38:25–26 and 44:18 are provided with Onkelos and Yerushalmi. Some folios in Genesis are missing. On folios 300b–302a there is a targumic *Tosefta* to רְנִי וְשִׁמְחֵי (haftarah Zech 2:14 for Hanukkah, the Aramaic *Megillat Antiochus*) followed by the incomplete and unpointed Testament of Naphtali, son of Jacob. In three places the manuscript carries three different and perplexing dates, 3250, 3577 and 4035 from Creation, corresponding with the years 510, 183 BCE and 275 CE.

It contains no *massorot*, but has Tiberian vowels and accents. Each page has 32 lines and each *pisqah* is given generous space, similar to the space allowed between books. Its punctuation is Tiberian. At the end of each book the sum of verses is provided. The scribe has attempted to refrain from punctuating the extra words. However, many omissions exist and they are corrected in the margins by the *maggiah*. The semi-cursive script is not even and closely resembles that of Ms Q. The divine name is written ךְ. The introductory Hebrew word is topped with three dots. It is dated to the 14th–15th centuries.

4. Ms Q of the Paris Bibliothéque Nationale (Heb 96), contains TJ to the Latter Prophets with 170 pages.<sup>97</sup> Its handwriting is similar to that of Ms N and so are other features, such as two dots over each extra word, generous *pisqaot* and numerous (but different) omissions. Nevertheless, the texts differ from each other and so does the masoretic division. No scribe is identified.

<sup>95</sup> I could not decipher the blurry writing. Related publication: M. Weisz, *Katalog der Hebraischen Handschriften und Bucher in der Bibliothek des Prof. David Kaufmann* (Frankfurt, 1906); JNUL Record View.

<sup>96</sup> I thank M. Laurent Hericher of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France for providing me with some of the descriptive information. Related publication: H. Zotenberg, *Catalogue des manuscrits hébreux et samaritains de la Bibliothèque impériale*, (Paris, 1866), 8; JNUL Record View; Smelik, *The Targum*, 127–28.

<sup>97</sup> Related publication: H. Zotenberg, *Catalogue des manuscrits hébreux et samaritains de la Bibliothèque impériale* (Paris, 1866), 10. Only one sentence is provided; JNUL Record View.

5. Ms C of the London, Montefiore Library (Lon Mon 7), the Halberstam Collection #116, is used in Sperber's apparatus. With 342 leaves, many damaged, it contains material from 1 Sam 5:11 to Prov 31:25 with some pages missing. It is the only ms known to contain only Targum for both Prophets and Writings (Psalms, Job and Proverbs). It also carries many *Toseftot* in eastern Aramaic, even though at times they claim to originate in the Land of Israel.<sup>98</sup> Its semi-cursive script in brown ink is immature and several letters are undefined, often smudged and thus illegible. Each page has 30 lines. For Psalms, Proverbs, and Job the opening Hebrew lemmas in each verse are written in unskilled calligraphy. Proverbs, in particular, differs in its division of 37 *parshiot*, some very short, others very long.<sup>99</sup> Unlike all other mss, its *silluq* is made out of two small *horizontal* dots and often short spaces are left between verses and even within verses. The ms rarely uses punctuation. The divine name is written " with a vertical curved line on its left side.

The colophon reads:

נשלם יום ראש חדש שבט שנת הרמ"ז וסימן תודה וקול ז'מ'ר'ה'  
 ונכתב ליקר הנכבד המשכיל הנעים נטע שעשועים ר' דוד שצ"ו<sup>100</sup>  
 בן כבוד ר' נסים הרופא נ"ע בן ביבש תנצב"ה<sup>101</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Kasher, *תוספתות תרגום*, 14–15. Other related publications: H. Hirschfeld, *Descriptive catalogue of the Hebrew mss. of the Montefiore Library* (London, 1904), 2; A. Berliner, *MWJ* 8 (1881), 116; JNUL Record View; David Samuel Luzzatto, *הליכות קדם* 39, 48–49; A. Geiger, *Wissenschaftl. Zeitschr.*, V, 132ff. I thank Nurit Harvey of the National Library of the Hebrew University for her help.

<sup>99</sup> The Brawer edition shows 43 *parshiot*. Luzzatto (see previous note) discusses this point noting 36 *parshiot* in his text. He examined Ms C and noted that its division of *parshiot* differs considerably from his text. He concluded that it was done haphazardly by a scribe. However, he later found a note by R. Judah ben Barzillai of Barcelona (late 11th–12th century) attesting to the division in Ms C. He deduced that these *parshiot* accord with the number of weekdays between Passover and Shavuot. Yet he could not explain the extreme differences in length of each (*הליכות קדם*, 48–49). On p. 39 Luzzatto deals with Targum Prov 6:7 in our ms that shows the faulty reading of the Hebrew קציר instead of קצין and an attempt to correct it on the margin with נ"א קצינא. Luzzatto describes this non-Aramaic word as an attempt by a later *maggiah* to explain the error. At the same time he notes that the Syriac carries the same variant. However, both קציר and קצין exist in Aramaic.

<sup>100</sup> The acronym for צורו וגואלו, 'שמרהו צורו וגואלו', 'may his Rock and Redeemer watch over him.'

<sup>101</sup> The acronym for תהי נשמתו צורה בצרור החיים. Bibas was a famous Spanish family. David Corcos and Getzel Kressel, "Bibas," *EJ* 4:813 and the bibliography there.

*It was completed on the first day of Shevat, in the year 5247 [January 4th, 1487],<sup>102</sup> and [its] sign is thanks and a sound of singing.<sup>103</sup> And it was written for the dignified, honorable, erudite, pleasant, plant of delight, R. David, may his Rock and Redeemer watch over him, son of the late honorable Nissim the physician, son of Bibas, may his soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life.*

Samuel David Luzzatto purchased it in North Africa (its probable origin) and sold it to Solomon Halberstam. Moses Gaster, the principal of the Montefiore College between 1890–96, acquired Halberstam’s Collection for the College. Montefiore Collection was transferred to Jews’ College, London, in 1899. There it remained until October 2004 when it was auctioned off in New York, among other “important Hebrew manuscripts from the Montefiore endowment,” for \$100,000–150,000.<sup>104</sup>

6. Ms W of the Biblioteca de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, MS Villa-Amil 4, contains the Prophets in two volumes. The first volume has 287 pages, the second, 194 with Esther and Song of Songs. It differs prominently from other mss in several significant ways. Its *mise-en-page* is divided into two columns: the outside column has the Aramaic and the inside column has a Latin translation. The page sequence goes from left to right. On the margins the scribe marked the roots of the Aramaic verbs together with a variety of markers replacing the *massorah parva*. The divine name is written ״״״ with a curved line on the left. The script is square and clear, similar to that of the Yemenite handwriting. At the bottom of the left page the next word is written, then repeated on the right page. It is dated 1517.<sup>105</sup> The division into chapters follows that of the Septuagint.

The scribe of this ms is Alfonso de Zamora from the Spanish town of Zamora who was born in 1474 and died in 1545. He was raised in Jewish schools and acquired great learning of Jewish traditions. With the anti-Jewish laws in his town as early as 1313, and the intensified persecutions in the late 15th century, the Zamora

<sup>102</sup> December 26th, 1486 according to the Auction publicity information (2004), 26.

<sup>103</sup> In a mnemonic-technical term, the sign ‘singing,’ זמרה, carries the same letters as the year,

<sup>104</sup> According to Sotheby’s catalogue.

<sup>105</sup> Related publications: N. Aloni and E. Kupfer, רשימת תצלומי כתבי-היד העבריים במכון, the Vatican Collection; vol. 3; no. 1058. Jerusalem: Ministry of Education, 1968; JNUL Record View; J. Villa-Amil y Castro, *Catalogo de los manuscritos existentes en la Biblioteca del noviciado de la Universidad Central* (no 5–6; Madrid, 1878), 3. I thank Mrs. Aurora Diez Baños of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid Library for her help.

family found a temporary refuge in Portugal after 1492. But the hand of the Spanish Inquisition reached there, too. The family returned to their hometown, where many of its Jewish inhabitants had converted to Christianity, and was baptized in 1506. For many years Alfonso de Zamora served as a professor of Oriental languages at the University of Salamanca. He was a prolific Hebraist with ties to the Church leaders of Spain. He was especially close to the Archbishop of Toledo, Ximenez de Cisneros, who suggested and commissioned the production of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible. This six-volume work bears the Hebrew text as well as Targum Onkelos, the Vulgate, Targum Jonathan, and the Septuagint with an interlinear Latin translation. The sixth volume is made up of a Hebrew and Aramaic dictionary. Even though it was completed in 1515, it received its papal sanction only in 1520. This first Polyglot Bible was used and reproduced in Europe and greatly revered as authoritative edition.

Among his many publications, Zamora wrote an Introduction to Hebrew Grammar (1526) whose second edition he dedicated to the next Archbishop of Toledo, Don Alfonso de Fonseca. He also wrote an Introduction to the Targum (1532), translations of and commentaries on portions of the Bible and on Onkelos, and notes on the commentary of Don Isaac Abrabanel on the Latter Prophets.<sup>106</sup> He also studied Radaq's commentary on the Bible and annotated on Radaq's "misunderstanding" of the Christian meaning of the Hebrew text (especially Isaiah).<sup>107</sup> He made several copies of Radaq's works on the Hebrew roots (ספר השורשים) and the Hebrew grammar (חלק הדקדוק).<sup>108</sup> Since his goal in copying Biblical texts was to serve his new faith, his division to chapters follows that of the LXX and all the Massoretic system is excluded, including the Hebrew text.

Among his numerous letters and correspondence is his famous "Letter from the Kingdom of Spain to the Jews in the Roman Community" (Alcalà de Henares, 1526) in which he urges the Jews

<sup>106</sup> See, e.g., Carlos Fontela Alonso's "Anotaciones de Alfonso de Zamora en un comentario a los Profetas Posteriores de Don Isaac Abravanel," *Sefarad* 47 (1987): 227–43.

<sup>107</sup> See, e.g., Giancarlo Lacerenza's "Il *Commento ai Salmi* di Dawid Qimhi in un manoscritto di Alfonso de Zamora," *Hebraica Hereditas* (2005): 67–93.

<sup>108</sup> Together, the two works are known as Radaq's מכלול.



to convert to Christianity. Several of the Biblical mss he copied are stored at the JNUL.<sup>109</sup>

The colophon appears at the end of Malachi in Hebrew, in a typical Jewish scribal style and is dedicated to his patron the Archbishop of Toledo, Don Ximenez de Cisneros. Since the page is partly stained, I tried to compensate by the interlinear Latin, which in itself is hard to decipher. The colophon is fully vocalized.

נשלם תרגום הנביאים  
בעזרת גואלנו שוכן מרומים: בצווי  
הנעלה דון פראי פראנסישקו גימיניץ  
אדון הפהנים: האל ברחמיו יאריך לו ימים:<sup>110</sup>  
ויקיים בו מקרא שפתוב תורת אמת  
היתה בפיהו ועולה לא נמצא  
בשפתיו. בשלום ובמישור הלך  
אָתִי ורבים השיב מְעוֹן: ונא' כי שפתי  
כהן ישמרו דעת ותורה יבקשו  
מפיהו כי מלאך ייי צבאות הוא:  
ונשלם בשבעה ועשרים יום לחדש  
ג'ול דשנת אלף וחמש מאות וי"ז לביאת  
גואלנו מלך המשיח: (?-----)

כי בו בחר אדני אלהים לכהונה:  
דון פראי פראנסישקו גימיניץ  
קרדינאל די אישפניא ארסיבישפו  
די טולידן  
בחסד אלהים:

*The translation of the Prophets has been completed  
with the help of our redeemer who dwells on high. By the request  
of the most honorable Don Fri Francisco Ximenez<sup>111</sup>  
Head of the priests. May God in his mercy prolong his days.  
And may the Scripture be affirmed in him, saying: A true Teaching  
was in his mouth and iniquity has not been found  
on his lips;<sup>112</sup> with perfection and honesty he served  
Me and many he has turned away from sin.<sup>Mal 2:6</sup> And it is written, for the lips of  
a priest guard knowledge and teaching they seek  
from His mouth, for the angel of the Lord of Hosts He is.<sup>Mal 2:7</sup>*

<sup>109</sup> See Cecil Roth, "Alfonso de Zamora," *EJ* 12:606–07; Haim Beinart, "Zamora," *EJ* 16:926; George A. Kohut, "Alfonso de Zamora," *JE*:378 and the bibliography there; John William Bradley, *Dictionary of Miniaturists* (New York: Franklin, 1958), 426; Adolf Neubauer, "Alfonso de Zamora," *JQR* 7 (1895): 398–417.

<sup>110</sup> See also the same in other colophons. See Lacerenza, "Il Commento," 72, note 13.

<sup>111</sup> Ximenez.

<sup>112</sup> The *etnahla* is preserved, as it is throughout this manuscript.

*And it was completed on the twenty seventh day of the month of July of the year one thousand and five hundred and seventeen<sup>113</sup> to the coming of our redeemer the King Messiah.<sup>114</sup> (---?)<sup>115</sup>*

*For him the Lord God chose for priesthood.*

*Don Fri Francisco Ximenez  
Cardinal of Spain, Archbishop  
of Toledo.*

*With the Grace of God:*

Below the colophon an official-looking, circular seal, perhaps that of the Cardinal, shows a shield. The rest of the seal is not clear.

## 2.2 EXAMINATION OF TJ ZEPHANIAH—STEMMATIC RESEARCH

In this section each manuscript is carefully examined in order to discern its uniqueness within its group, compared to other groups, while Ms V serves as the basic manuscript. Four criteria heighten and bring into focus a manuscript's uniqueness: omissions, pluses, substitutions, and metatheses. These criteria will also enable us to detect cross-transmission and thus to throw light on their possible source(s). These and a fifth element, that of the two vocalization systems among the manuscripts, will facilitate and lead to finding stemmas within each group and perhaps among the groups. This examination assesses the scribe's skills and, at times, his motivation(s) for his work. The work of the scribes as well as that of the proof-readers will reveal not only their skills as copiers, but also their erudition and knowledge of the bi-lingual texts. This, in turn, will uncover the place of Targum in the life of that community.

### 2.2.1 *Palestinian Ms*

#### 2.2.1.1 *Ms F*

The Hebrew text of Ms F was published by Alexander Sperber in a critical analysis.<sup>116</sup> Pre-massoretic Tiberian vocalization is made up of the scribe's signs that show, in Sperber's words, "disregard for (or should I rather say: ignorance of) the well-known rules of Masoretic

<sup>113</sup> 'Seventeen' is added above the line.

<sup>114</sup> Unclear. The Latin does not seem to translate it.

<sup>115</sup> Unclear. The Latin does not translate it.

<sup>116</sup> A. Sperber, *The Prophets according to the Codex Reuchlinianus*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1969.

Tiberian phonology.<sup>117</sup> However, the typical Palestinian vocalization system is used here as well: the *sheva* inside a final ‘ח’, the diacritic *mappiq* under the final ‘ה’ and the dots inside the ‘ש’ to distinguish between the ‘ש’ and the ‘שׁ’ sound. Final ‘י’, as in גוי, has a *hiriq* to indicate its consonantal value. To distinguish it from גוי (2:7), the ‘י’ is lengthened with an added ‘י’.<sup>118</sup>

The MT shows a tendency to use a deficient script: 16 times versus 6 cases of plene. נאם יהוה is omitted<sup>119</sup> at the end of 1:3 while an extra *vav* conjunctive is added to ציון in 3:16. Seven *pisqaot* are set, six of them are closed (1:8,10,12, 2:5,8, 3:8) and one is open (3:1). Remarkably, the unique *pisqa* in 3:8 is shared by the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E, a stemma that is distinct in its uniformity vis-à-vis Mss V,H. They also share the *pisqa* in 2:8, together with the Ashkenazi Mss A,U,P and the Sepharadi Mss X,N,C which are heavily influenced by the Palestinian textual tradition. Mss Z,J,E show other elements of a Palestinian connection.<sup>120</sup>

The Aramaic text which was printed as Codex Reuchlinianus by Paul Kahle, carries neither *pisqaot* nor vocalization and accents.<sup>121</sup> Contrary to its MT, its script is mostly plene. The inconsistency Sperber found in the Hebrew text reigns also in the Aramaic text. *Hiriq* and *tzere* are almost always followed by a ‘י’ (e.g., ואישׁצי, אינשא, דימלן, עים) and consonantal ‘י’ and ‘ו’ are usually duplicated (e.g., רעיין, לטעוותא, but קרויא, קרויון, כאריון, קרויא) thus facilitating in their pronunciation. Yet there are a few exceptions in Ms F such as שבטא, לבזא, בלבה, דקדשי,<sup>122</sup> בגוה.<sup>123</sup> The suffix of the plural second person feminine construct can be either תְּךָ (אֶלְהֶךָ, 3:17) or תְּךָ (דְּבַבְךָ, 3:15 and יְדִיךָ, 3:16). Similarly, the singular form appears as מוֹעֵדְךָ (3:18) and לְקִיבְלְךָ.

The absence of ‘א’ in words such as קתין and דען may suggest an affinity with Babylonian script as attested in all the Yemenite mss and Eb 88. However, these are also found in both Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Sperber, *The Prophets*, the first page of the preface.

<sup>118</sup> Sperber details Ms F’s ignorance of the Tiberian vowel-signs in two grammatical works: *A Grammar of Masoretic Hebrew* (Copenhagen, 1959) and *A Historical Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden, 1966).

<sup>119</sup> Its Aramaic equivalent exists. Does Sperber’s edition show a misprint?

<sup>120</sup> See above in the commentary on these mss under General Observations.

<sup>121</sup> For lack of financial sources.

<sup>122</sup> But קודשי in 3:4.

<sup>123</sup> But בגוה in 3:5.

<sup>124</sup> Rashi, for example, in his Talmud commentary quotes both ען (Bavli, *Shabbat* 32a) and עאן (Bavli, *Pesahim* 74a).

In cases of verbs, consonantal *vav* is usually not doubled so as not to confuse the root (e.g., וישׁוּי, הוּת). The prefix of first and second person imperfect usually carries a *hiriq*, e.g., אִיגְלִי (3:11), תִּדְחֲלִין (3:15) but this is not consistent, e.g., אִיגְלִי (3:15), תְּבַהֲתִין (3:11).<sup>125</sup> In the case of אִיתְרַחֲקֵת (3:18, אִתְרַחֲקִית in all the Yemenite mss), the prefix suggests an imperfect even though it appears as perfect in the rest of the mss. Both stems, the *itpa'el/itpe'el* and the *af'el* carry the meaning of a done act, however. A close form occurs only in the Sepharadi Ms W, אִיתְרַחֲקִית, which may be the pronunciation in Ms F. Except for the Ashkenazi Ms Y's אִתְרַחֲקִית, the prefix in the rest of the mss carries a *patah*. Yet this form can be found also in Ms F in אִצְדִּיאָה and אִתְרִיבָת (3:6) but the suffixes differ. The exact same verbal form is found in אִיתְרַחֲצֵת (3:2, אִתְרַחֲצִית in all the Yemenite mss and with similar inflections in the rest of the mss) in the third person feminine singular. It seems, then, that in Palestinian vernacular both prefixes were used for the perfect tense in the first and third person singular.

These inconsistencies in the text are especially prominent in the three cases of Aramaic 'woe!' in Zephaniah. Ms F makes a distinction between the MT הוּי and TJ's interpretation. In the first instance אִי (2:5, 3:1) is used whereas in the second instance, וּי (3:18) is used. However, it fluctuates between יי, וי and וּי throughout its TJ when it translates either הוּי or אוּי.<sup>126</sup> No apparent reason can be discerned.<sup>127</sup> אִי appears in the Palestinian sources of Tg Yerushalmi and PsJ Num 21:29, and in T. Yerushalmi, *Sukkah* 1b, *Moed Qatan* 11a, and *Sanhedrin* 52b. On the other hand, TO Num 21:29 has וּי and Palestinian *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* (e.g., 11,8, 19,1) uses וּי. Moreover, all the Yemenite mss, Eb 88 (for 3:1) and Eb 80 (for 3:18) have both יי and וי. We conclude, then, that all the Aramaic variations for הוּי or אוּי were used equally in both Palestine and Babylonia.

The unique expression דִּמְן לְמוּצָא instead of the common דִּמְן לְכִמוּצָא is indeed the right one. The simile marker should be either לְ-דִּמְן, 'be like' (e.g., Hos 3:1; Amos 8:13) or כְּ, 'like.' The double simile is influenced by the parallel וּכְטוּלָא with no 'be like.'

For the adverb 'perhaps' (2:3), Ms F has the conflation מֵאִים as in all the Sepharadi and the Ashkenazi mss (except R,U) and against מֵא

<sup>125</sup> Unless it is to be read תְּבַהֲתִין as in the Ashkenazi Mss M,A,R,Y.

<sup>126</sup> A good example is its rendition of Jer 22:18. See also Isa 1:4, 30:1.

<sup>127</sup> אִי is uttered against both Philistia and Israel. וּי is also uttered against an outside enemy.

אם in all the Yemenite mss. The latter form is found only in Palestinian texts such as *Yerushalmi*, *Sukkah* 4a, *Sifra* 11,3 (*Shemini* 10), *Tosefta Demai* 6,1, and in the Samaritan Gen 18:28,29.<sup>128</sup> However, TO consistently carries the מאים form (e.g., Gen 18:24; Exod 32:30). In addition, the conflated מאים reflects the vernacular pattern of speech which tends to abbreviate words, such as את ה-הוא, becoming ת- and מהו, respectively. Palestinian Ms F and TO answer to this propensity. These observations may suggest two separate transmissions of TJ to Yemen, on one hand, and to the West on the other. In Yemen, the Palestinian form survived in the textual tradition of the pre-Babylonian redaction.

a. *Omissions* There are ten omissions when compared to Ms V, of which seven agree with the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E. These reflect the Palestinian version that survived the Babylonian redaction, omissions carried into the Yemenite textual tradition in their first migration from Palestine. These are also faithful readings of the MT, and thus are indicative of a seminal literal translation:

Table 1

MT	Ms F	Ashkenazi Mss	Sepharadi Mss	Yemenite Mss
1:5	<ו>דמקיימין	all	S,N,Q,C,W	Z,J,E
1:12	<ית>בלושין	all	all	Z,J,E
	<יתבי>ירושלם	all	all	none
2:2	<למוצא>מאידרא <sup>129</sup>	all	all	Z,J,E
2:14	<ד>כל	U,Y	none	none
2:15	חייאת <ברא>	all	all	Z,J,E
	<ב>ידיה	all	S,Q	Z,J,E
3:2	<ו>לא קבילת	none	S	none
3:5	<ו>לא מתעכב	T,M,U,Y	all	Z,J,E
3:7	<ו>לא יפסוק	A,P	X,S,Q,W	Z,J,E

<sup>128</sup> Tal, *The Language*, 56,58.

<sup>129</sup> As for מאידרא, in Hos 13:3 it exists, together with the various similes found in all the mss examined here: ...כמוצא דנסבה רוחא מאדרא וכתננא... כענן צפרא וכטלא...like the chaff that wind blew from the threshing place and like the smoke...'). The Aramaic here follows the MT closely which suggests a seminal version. In our verse, the existence of מאידרא in Ms V is indicative of its secondary, late addition as is evidenced by the majority of mss including the Yemenite stemma of Z,J,E that do not carry it. Its existence may show an attempt by a scribe (then perpetuated by others) to present fuller similes based on Hos 13:3 so as to harmonize and connect the two prophecies. Targum Zephaniah warns Judah of the catastrophe Israel experienced as Hosea's words came true.

The omission of **ירושלם** <יתבי> ית (1:12) is clearly harmonious with the Hebrew and is followed by all the non-Yemenite mss. Its addition by the Babylonian editor is interpretative in function. Alternatively, the repetition of ית could have inadvertently caused its addition later by an individual scribe. The cases of **כל**<ד> (2:14) and **לא קבילת** <ו> (3:2) could be merely scribal neglect or lingual preference.

b. *Pluses* Out of the six pluses, only one is shared with the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E. The other five seem to be superfluous:

Table 2

MT	Ms F	Ashkenazi Mss	Sepharadi Mss	Yemenite Mss
1:6	(ו)ד(לא בעו)	all <sup>130</sup>	X,S,N,Q,W	Z,J,E
2:4	כיד (בטיהרא)	P	N,Q,W	none
2:7	כיד (ברמשא)	M	none	none
2:14	ו(אף)	M	none	none
3:5	ו(לית קדמוהי)	T	S	none
3:9	ו(למפלה)	A,R	Q,W	none

The use of the plus **ד** for the Hebrew **אשר** is legitimate in Aramaic and pervasive in the majority of mss, and therefore should be regarded as missing from the rest. Yemenite Jews today still use the added ‘ד’ in this sense but also as an embellishing element, especially before the negative **לית**, as in **בדלית ברירה**.<sup>131</sup>

The addition of **כיד** seems to precede a temporal term, ‘at noon’ (2:4) and ‘in the evening’ (2:7). The same occurs in Jer 15:8 before ‘at noon’ in both Ms V and F, but only in Ms F is it added in Amos 8:9 before ‘at noon.’ This plus is uncalled-for, whether in the meaning of ‘that,’ ‘when,’ ‘as, similar to,’ or ‘as though.’ Since it occurs in both

<sup>130</sup> Ms A has a lengthened form, **ודי לא**. The demonstrative **די** (vs -ד) does not occur in TJ to the Former Prophets in Tal’s conclusion. Yet, he explains its complete absence in TJ there by the effect of a lengthy transmission in Babylonia. **די** does not occur in any of the Yemenite texts but it does in Qumran Aramaic and the Bar Kokhba letters. Tal, *The Language*, 5–7. It also appears often in the Ashkenazi and the Sepharadi mss in this study (1:9,12, 2:15, 3:4,11) which adds support to their Palestinian origin.

<sup>131</sup> The more common use of the phrase is **בלית ברירה**, ‘with no choice, as there is no alternative.’

Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss, this plus constitutes a legitimate version of a Palestinian origin, regardless of its indeterminate function.<sup>132</sup>

The added *vav* conjunctives are insignificant as they are the result of a vernacular pattern of speech and are used to create an (unnecessary) smoother reading. They are not part of the Hebrew text.

c. *Substitutions* Out of the nine substitutions, none is unique.<sup>133</sup> They are found in the Ashkenazi and the Sepharadi textual traditions. When an affinity with Yemenite mss is found, it is reflected only in the stemma of Mss Z,J,E. The version of Ms V is in parentheses whereas “Yemenite Mss” refers to the other four mss:

Table 3

MT	Ms F Mss	Ashkenazi Mss	Sepharadi Mss	Yemenite
1:10	עופא (עופלא) עופא	all	S,N,Q,C X=עופלא	none
	מן גבשתא (מן גבעתא) מגבישתא	T,M	N=מגיבושתא	Z,J,E=מן גבשותא
1:11	בנחלון (בנחלון) בנחלא <sup>134</sup>	all	all	Z,J,E
1:13	ובתיהון (ובתיהון) ניכסיהון ...	all	X,N,C	Z,J,E
	ובירניתהון (ובתיהון)	all	S,Q,W	none
1:18	רשיעי (יתבי) רשיעי	M=רשיעי	S,Q	none
2:2	וכטולא (וכטולא) וכטולא	T,M,P	X,S,N,Q,W	Z,J,E
2:5	ואבדינכו (ואבדינכו) ואבדינך	all <sup>135</sup>	Q,W	none
3:14	יבעו (יבעו) ובעו	T,M,U	S,C,W	none

<sup>132</sup> This conjunction word, according to Tal, is found also in Eastern Aramaic and it expresses mode and condition (*The Language*, 37).

<sup>133</sup> The plural feminine טבון (3:7), instead of the more common טבון, is probably a Palestinian form as it appears in Palestinian sources, such as *Terushalmi*, *Sanhedrin* 51a, *Genesis Rabbah* 20,1, *Midrash Tehillim* 9,5, TO Gen 41:5,22; Deut 6:10. However, טבון seems to be designated by Onkelos for words such as אמת and חסד, ‘truth, kindness’ (e.g., Gen 32:11, Exod 34:6, Num 14:18), but not exclusively. Note that TJ Jer 24:3 uses both forms טבון and טבתא.

<sup>134</sup> Even though this case is not a pure substitution, it is added here as an example of an error made by one scribe (Ms H’s?) then copied mechanically by another (Ms V’s).

<sup>135</sup> All the Ashkenazi mss have the verb in second person singular, although it appears in a variety of forms. Mss U,Y, however, have a different verb, בדר, ‘to scatter.’

Since עופלא survived in Mss X,W, and since it appears in all the Yemenite mss, it seems that from an early stage of TJ development, both interpretations took hold for the ambiguous Hebrew המשנה עופא ('fowl') resulted from its association with fishes (הדגים), whereas עופלא ('the Ophel') resulted from its association with a geographical location (The Mishneh, 2 Kgs 22:14). However, a more mundane deduction should be considered: the possibility that at an early stage of the proliferation of TJ, a scribe simply dropped the 'ל' from עופלא, which resulted in two separate textual versions.

The reading of מגבישתא, instead of the literal—and therefore more likely—earlier version מגבעתא, is found in all three groups, including the Yemenite, Eb 80 and Radaq. Again, it suggests, an early stage of TJ development in which both versions co-existed. However, following our methodology, the original translation had the literal reading, מגבעתא/מן (still preserved in the ancient Yemenite Ms H) when harsh reality gave way to the later interpretative rendering, מגבישתא, in its added meaning of 'pile of stones' (see Commentary).

Similar likenesses exist between Mss F and Z,J,E in genitive forms, such as תרעה, בכוה, וטללה (2:14), דאלהה (3:2). The first three cases show singular forms although they come with plural verbs. The plural suffix 'הָא', is found in words such as תרעהא, רבבהא (cognates of כפתוריָה and שְׁרִיָה respectively). Does this observation suggest that עופה (2:14) in Ms F should be read in the genitive, making it unique among all the mss in this study? All other nouns, with the definite article, such as רמשא, צפרא, אינשא, ארעא, מלכא, בעלא, שמיא, and עופא end with an 'א'. Yet, עופה (1:3), like זכאה (3:5), carries the definite article. The presence of these duplicate suffixes constitutes one of the numerous inconsistencies found in Ms F.

The next cases are not considered true 'substitutions' but they differ from Ms V. In the case of דְּבִיךְ (3:15), the plural 'enemies' reflects the Hebrew אִיְבִיךְ making it a possible true variant.<sup>136</sup> The Aramaic plural occurs in all the non-Yemenite mss but one (Ms C).

As for the verbs, two cases are to be noted: first, יבזנון (2:9, also found in the Ashkenazi Mss U [before editing], A,Y and the Sepharadi

<sup>136</sup> That parallels 'your judgments.' Ms X has a marker over אִיְבִיךְ for ל.



Mss C,W) instead of the exaggerated יבוזונון, shows a correct form of the root בזי, ‘to despise, degrade.’ Similarly, the form יחסנונון (in most Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss and the Yemenite Ms Z) instead of the exaggerated יחסנונונון (found only in the Yemenite Mss V,H,J,E), is the correct verbal form of the root חסן, ‘take possession, inherit.’ Second, no verb ררב is used in 2:8,10, instead רברב is used. However, ררב is a valid alternative in other cases such as Isa 10:15,16, Ezek 35:13. These two verbs are used in all the three groups in this study and therefore both verbs must have been used simultaneously in Palestine, Babylonia and Yemen.

From Ms F, certain nouns can be defined as Palestinian rather than Babylonian, as the next list shows. The vocalization is based on the majority of the other mss. Two observations are made here: some mss differ in punctuation, yet the letters remain the same, and in other cases the punctuation is the same, yet vowel letters are missing:

Table 4. Palestinian Nouns

MT	Ms F	Ashkenazi Mss	Sepharadi Mss	Yemenite Mss
1:10	צוּחַתָּא (צעקה)	M,A,U,R	X,S,Q	H,Z,J,E
1:15	מְצוּקָה (עֵיִק)	all	all	Z,J,E
	רִיגוּשׁ (שׂאָה)	T,A,U,Y,R,P	all	Z,J,E
	אִתְרָגוּשׁ (משואה)	T	S,Q	none
1:17	סְחִיתָא (גללים)	T,M,R	X,S,Q	none
2:15	חִיָּתָא (חיה)	T,M,U,Y,P	X,S,Q	Z,J,E

The close affinity between Ms F and Ashkenazi, Sepharadi mss as well as Yemenite Mss Z,J,E indicate the transmission of Palestinian textual traditions in two opposite directions: Europe in the west and Babylonia in the east, probably before 1105, then on to Yemen. The survival of Palestinian traditions in Yemen attests to an early textual transmission.

## 2.2.2 *Babylonian Mss*

### 2.2.2.1 *Eb 80*

Within the fragments of Eb 80, the only *pisqah* found is in 1:12, shared in the majority of mss. Plene script is part of the ancient Babylonian writing and this is prevalent in this mss, such as בִּישְׂמָא, שִׁיבְטָא, פִּיתְגָם,

אִישִׁי, דִּימַהֲלֵכִין, יִידֵךְ, מִיבֵתֵךְ and countless others.<sup>137</sup> However, this is not so in the MT which has only one plene reading (דְּרִשׁוּהוּ, 1:6) and only one deficient reading (יִשְׁבֵּי, 1:4). Yet two unusual vocalizations take place both in 3:15. The first is uncertain: it is either מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ or מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ. The former version seems to be more plausible. The second is אוֹיְבֶיךָ. The plural form is very likely the original reading, as opposed to the singular אֹיֵבֶךָ. The plural form is the dominant reading of TJ in all the mss, whether דַּבְּבֵךְ/דַּבְּבֵךְ appears in the singular or the plural, for the determining factor is the plural בְּעָלֵי/בְּעָלֵי.

Unique readings that reflect Babylonian pronunciation as opposed to Tiberian or Yemenite systems are also numerous: *hiriq* replaces a *sheva* as in אִמְרֵיהֶן in the Hebrew and the Aramaic (or does it imitate הִזְקִיָּה?), and יִיטִיב in the Hebrew (this might be an error or a conflation of יִיטִיב and יִיטִיב), and יִידֵךְ in the Aramaic. *Hiriq* also appears instead of *gamatz* in the imperative וְעֲלֵזִי (3:14). Instead of Aramaic *shuruq* before a *sheva*, a *hiriq* is used, another unique phenomenon among all the mss. The four cases are: וְתִבְרָא (1:10), וּמַחֲסֵדִין (3:18), וּמְבַדְרִיא, וְלִשׁוֹם (3:19).<sup>138</sup> This *hiriq* is also used before a prefixed “י” with a *sheva* such as וְיִלְלָה (1:10) and וְיִהְיֶה (1:12). When the *vav* consecutive should have a *sheva* it is not always pointed, as in וַאֲסַעֲרֵךְ (1:9). No furtive *patah* is used as in יִרְעֵךְ in the Hebrew (1:12).<sup>139</sup> A *patah* under an “ע” replaces a *sheva* as in בְּעָלָא (Ms V, בְּעָלָא, 1:4) or it appears instead of a *tzere* as in אָסַף (1:2,3), לֵב (3:14) and בְּעַתָּה (3:19).<sup>140</sup> *Patah* also takes the place of *segol*, as in all Yemenite mss, e.g., וְשִׁבְרֵךְ (1:11), אֶתְכֶם, שְׂבוּתֵיכֶם (3:20).<sup>141</sup> A “י” with a *hiriq* in the beginning of a vocable is doubled as in יִתְפַּרְנְסוּן (3:13) and יִתְרַשְׁלֵן (3:16).<sup>142</sup> Where Ms V has a *sheva* above an “א”, Eb 80 has a lengthened *tzere*, whether in nouns (אִינְשָׁא)

<sup>137</sup> This is the norm in the Babylonian mss published by Yeivin in *A Collection* (1974) and Kahle, *MdO* (1966).

<sup>138</sup> Cf Kahle, *MdO*, 38, Hos 14:2, line 3: וְנִשְׁלַמָּה. See also וְלִשְׁעָרֵךְ and וְלִפְנֵי, Yeivin, *A Collection*, 34, line 10 from the top and line 5 from the bottom, respectively. Noted by Diez Macho (“Nuevos manuscritos,” 256) as a Babylonian characteristic that in most cases is corrected by the Yemenite scribes. On the other hand, he finds the *hiriq* in Babylonian-Yemenite mss that have lost other relics of Babylonian vocalization system.

<sup>139</sup> Cf וְהִמְדַּמְעֵךְ, Yeivin, *A Collection*, 29, line 10 from the bottom.

<sup>140</sup> Cf הֵן...וְהֵן, Yeivin, *A Collection*, 29, line 13 from the bottom.

<sup>141</sup> For more examples see Kahle, *MdO*, 195.

<sup>142</sup> Cf וְיִיטִיב, Yeivin, *A Collection*, 53, line 11 from the top; וְיִיטִיב (Jer 18:8) in Kahle, *MdO*, 38.

or in first person imperfect, **אִישִׁי** (1:3) which also occurs in most of the non-Yemenite mss.<sup>143</sup>

Unlike Ms V's and the vast majority of manuscripts' **קָדַם**, and Mss H's and Q's **קָדַם**, Eb 80 has a unique **קָדַם**.<sup>144</sup> **פָּל** is always vocalized **פַּל**. The Yemenite *hataf patah* in **הָאֲנָא** is rendered as a *patah* in the Babylonian **הָאֲנָא** (3:19).

The lack of a silent 'א' in the name **יוֹשִׁיָה** (1:1) may attest to a Babylonian system as the name **שְׁמַי** for **שְׁמַאי** in ancient Babylonian mss attests.<sup>145</sup> However, it may well be a scribal error caused by the silent consonant or by oral transmission.

Surprisingly, in the Hebrew text, **ירושלם** (3:16) is written once with a "י", **ירושלים**.

It is difficult to be certain of scribal mishaps in these blurry copied pages, but on one occasion a correction is clear: an omitted 'ד' from **תִּדְחֻלִּין** is inserted above (3:16). The only omission, **<ו>דַּמְקִימִין** (1:5) is the erroneous plus of Ms V. **גְּבִשְׁתָּא** (1:10) is the only substitution. Only one case of metathesis can be found, **נְבִרְתָּו** instead of **נְבִרְתָּו** (1:11).

**גְּבִשְׁתָּא** and **עוֹפְלָא** in 1:10 attest to their early development, originated in Palestine alongside **גְּבַעְתָּא** and **עוֹפָא** (see discussion above under Ms F). Very few deviations from T<sub>J</sub> of Ms V are noted, yet some readings are unique. In the next Table the version of Ms V is placed in parenthesis. The version of Ms F is based on its non-vocalized script:

<sup>143</sup> Díez Macho notes instead a (short) *tzere* in the Hebrew *pi'el* and the Aramaic *pa'el*, e.g. **אֲקַטְל**, where the Tiberian has a *hataf patah*, **אֲקַטְל** and the Yemenite, a *sheva*, **אֲקַטְל**. "Nuevos manuscritos," 257. However, what he and others read as a Yemenite *sheva* over the gutturals **ע,ח,ה,א** is in actuality pronounced by the Yemenites as a *hataf patah*. This was noted by Morag in "הארמית הבבלית במסורתם של יהודי תימן," *Tarbiz* 30 (1961): 121, note 4. Díez Macho discusses the Babylonian and the Yemenite *sheva* on pages 257–58. He concludes that the *sheva* and *patah* over gutturals coexisted in Babylonia vowel system from early times.

<sup>144</sup> Cf Kahle, *MdO*, 38, line 1. However, an alternative form, **קָדַם**, the prevalent reading in Ms H, was also in use. Cf Kahle, *MdO*, 39, lines 3 from the top and 4 from the bottom. Some of the examples given are mentioned by Yeivin, in **קטעי מקרא**, 464–67.

<sup>145</sup> Cf Yeivin, *A Collection*, 53. In his examination of a Babylonian massoretic manuscript, Yeivin has noted that in early Babylonian vocalization system there was no consistency in the inclusion of a silent 'א'. For example, **חט**, **יבה**, and **תסף** ("קטעי מסורת", 4 [102]).

Table 5. Divergences from Ms V

MT	Eb 80	Ms F	Yemenite Mss	Ashkenazi Mss	Sepharadi Mss
1:1	קָדָם (קָדָם)	?	none	none	none
	אֲמַרְיָה (אֲמַרְיָה)	?	none	none	none
	יֹאשִׁיָּה (יֹאשִׁיָּה)		none	none	none
1:2,3	אִישִׁיָּי (אִישִׁיָּי)	✓	none	T,A	all
1:3	אִנְשָׁא (אִנְשָׁא)	✓	none	T,M,U,Y <sup>146</sup>	X,S,N,C,W
	דְּאִסְגִּיָּא (דְּאִסְגִּיָּא)	✓	Z,E	M	X,N
1:5	<ו> דְּמַקִּימִין	✓	Z,J,E	all	all
	פְּתַכְרִיהוּן (פְּתַכְרִיהוּן)		None	none	none
	תִּיבִין (תִּיבִין)	?	none	none	none
1:9	דְּמָלוֹן (דְּמָלוֹן)		H,Z,J,E	none	Q <sup>147</sup>
1:10	צֹחָתָא (צֹחָתָא)		H,Z,J,E	M,A,R <sup>148</sup>	X,S,Q,C <sup>149</sup>
	וֹתְבָרָא (וֹתְבָרָא)		none	none	none
	גְּבַשְׁתָּא (גְּבַשְׁתָּא)	*	Z,J,E*	T,M*	N*
3:14	לָב (לָב)		none	none	none
3:15	אֲגִלִּי (אֲגִלִּי)	?	none	T,M,P	X,N,W(S,C?)
	בְּעִלִּי (בְּעִלִּי)	?	none	none	none
3:16	יִידָד (יִידָד)		none	none	none
3:17	בְּרַחְמִתִּיהָ (בְּרַחְמִתִּיהָ)		none	Y <sup>150</sup>	none
3:18	וֹמְחַסְדִּין (וֹמְחַסְדִּין)	?	none	none	none
3:19	הֵהוּא (הֵהוּא)		none	M,Y,R <sup>151</sup>	N,Q,C,W <sup>152</sup>
	וֹאִיפְרוֹק (וֹאִיפְרוֹק)	✓	none	T(?),U,Y,P	Q,C(?)
	וֹמְבַדְרִיא (וֹמְבַדְרִיא)		none	none	none
	וֹלְשׁוֹם (וֹלְשׁוֹם)		none	none	none
	בְּכָל (בְּכָל)		none	none	none
	מְטַלְטְלִיא (מְטַלְטְלִיא)	✓	H	all	X,S,N,C,W
3:20	אִיקְרִיב (אִיקְרִיב)	✓	Z,J,E	all <sup>153</sup>	all <sup>154</sup>
	גְּלוּתְכוּן (גְּלוּתְכוּן)	✓ <sup>155</sup>	Z,J,E	all <sup>156</sup>	all <sup>157</sup>
	אִיתִין (אִיתִין)		none	none	none <sup>158</sup>

\* These mss share the variations.

<sup>146</sup> Mss A,R have אִנְשָׁא.

<sup>147</sup> It has דְּמָלוֹן.

<sup>148</sup> Mss M has צֹחָתָא and Mss A,R have צֹחָתָא.

<sup>149</sup> Ms X has צֹחָתָא.

<sup>150</sup> It has a similar form, בְּרַחְמוֹתִיהָ.

<sup>151</sup> They have הֵהוּא.

<sup>152</sup> They have הֵהוּא.

<sup>153</sup> With variations, they all use the verb קָרַב.

<sup>154</sup> See previous note.

<sup>155</sup> Though with a double *vav*, גְּלוּתְכוּן.

<sup>156</sup> With a single or a double *vav*.

<sup>157</sup> See previous note.

<sup>158</sup> Since the 'א' in Eb 80 is not pointed, it is impossible to know whether it was pronounced א, א, א or even א. אִיקְרִיב (3:19) is not a sure benchmark. The only exact orthography is אִיתִין in Ms U.

All the unique forms may be attributed to a local dialect in Babylonia, to pure Babylonian pronunciation, or in some cases to errors. A case in point is the vocalization of the Babylonian כָּל as opposed to the Tiberian כָּל. Díez Macho noted that *qamatz hatuf* (*qaton*) does not exist in the Babylonian system and that כָּל is always vocalized with a *holam*. Unlike the Tiberian system, the Babylonian *holam* does not change into a *hataf qamatz* when it is connected to the following word. The Yemenites corrected all the “primitive” *holam* of their Babylonian mss according to the Tiberian system.<sup>159</sup>

This Table shows that on the whole, Eb 80 diverges slightly from the Yemenite tradition, and when it does, it reflects the Babylonian system and the majority of the transmitted texts.<sup>160</sup> Thus, Yemenite mss show their isolation and local development, through such forms as מְטַלְטְלִיא<sup>161</sup> and verbal forms such as וְאֵאֶפְרוּק.<sup>162</sup> At times, as in לָב, the Babylonian *patah* takes the place of a Tiberian *tzere*.

No unique Targumic version is revealed.

#### 2.2.2.2 Eb 88

The holes in the parchment of Eb 88 are original and the scribe copied around them. The condition of the copied pages is quite illegible and the following observations are no doubt incomplete.

This fragmentary ms has three *pisqaot*, in 3:1, 3:8 and 3:14 in Zephaniah. Among the Yemenite mss, only Mss Z,J,E has a *pisqa* in 3:8. Ms F has this as well. Thus, it seems, that from early times the oracle against the nations was considered to be part of the prophecy of comfort that concludes in v. 20. It also attests to Ms Z’s source being older than that of Ms V, through the Palestinian source-text that reached Babylonia before it went through a systematic redaction.

<sup>159</sup> Díez Macho, “Nuevos manuscritos,” 259.

<sup>160</sup> The Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss in this study reveal strong connections with the Palestinian textual tradition. However, Palestinian and Babylonian systems show interconnections. See Díez Macho, “Nuevos Manuscritos, 262 and “Tres nuevos Mss. ‘palestinsenses,” *EB* XIII (1954): 247–65.

<sup>161</sup> The change from *patah* to *shuruk* in nominal forms is found in גְּבִרִין/גְּבִרִין (3:4) and מְטַלְטְלִיא/מְטַלְטְלִיא (3:19) which is preferred by the Yemenite tradition. An exception among all the mss, וּמְבַדְרִיא, is found in mss Z,J,E which adhere to a Palestinian textual and phonetic tradition. As one of the conclusions reveals, Mss J,E seem to have copied Ms Z’s text, which suggests a free adjustment of the form for the sake of its parallel מְטַלְטְלִיא.

<sup>162</sup> In general, the Hebrew *segol* becomes a *patah* in Yemenite pronunciation such as this case and, e.g. מְלֹךְ for מֶלֶךְ.

All the observations concerning the vocalization system noted in Eb 80, are true for this ms as well. The absence of a furtive *hataf* is found in שְׁמִיעַ (2:8); consecutive *vav*, where the Tiberian has a *shuruq*, is pointed with a *hiriq* whether in Hebrew or in Aramaic. There are four such cases, וּבְנֵי וְשָׂרָר (2:9), וְטַלְלָה (2:14), [וּמְקַבְלֵי] (3:12). But this is inconsistent as in וּמְחַפְּרִין (2:9) and וּמְתַפְּרָקָא (3:1). In most cases the *vav* takes a *sheva* as in, וַיְבַעֲזוּ (2:11), וַיִּט (2:13), וַיֹּאפְסִי (2:15), but sometimes it is left unpointed, as in וְאֶת־רַבְּרוֹת וְאֶת־רַבּוֹ (2:8) and וְלֹא (3:5).

Where the Tiberian has a *tzere*, this ms has a *patah* as in וַיִּט for וַיֵּט, and הֶמָּה for הֵמָּה (2:12), and where the Tiberian has a *qamatz qatan* this ms has a *holam*. The case of כָּל (here in numerous instances including the Aramaic דְּכָל in 2:14) was already noted in Eb 80. The second case is רְנִי instead of רְנִי. קְדָשִׁי is pointed by a *shuruq* only once but in the Aramaic דְּקְדָשִׁי (3:11) it is pointed by a *holam*. All four times קָדַם occurs (קְדַמוּהִי in 2:11, 3:5 and קְדַמִּי in 2:8, 3:7), 'ק' is not pointed. If it is to be read קָדַם as in Ms H, then this gives further support to the hypothesis of Ms H's antiquity.

*Mappiq* is marked by a supra 'ה' and a 'שׁ' is marked by a supra circle.

The MT follows Aleppo Codex (as well as Ms V and Codex Leningrad) with almost no deviations except for a double 'י' in הַגּוֹיִים (2:11) and a *dagesh* in שְׂאֲגִים (3:3), a unique and superfluous phenomenon. הַיִּשְׁבַּת (2:15) in a deficient script is similar to Mss V,H but not to Codex Aleppo, Leningrad or Babylonicus. This similarity points again to the later Babylonian source of Mss V,H and to the earlier Babylonian version, which retained some of the Palestinian version visible in Mss Z,J,E. There seem to be notations by a *massorete* over some lines. For example, above לְקַבְּצִי (3:8) the letters כַּת וְחַס seem to be marked ('its *ketiv* is in the deficient script') and further on the inside margin a Tiberian style לְקַבְּצִי seems to be added. We may discern here the later hand of the Yemenite *maggiah*.

As for TJ, differences are minimal. The Yemenite *hataf* over gutturals takes a *patah* as in אֲרִי, אֲנָא, אֲמַרִית, אֲעִלְהוֹן or a *tzere* as in אֲשֵׁנִי, אֲיִנְשׁ. Sometimes the Yemenite *shuruq* takes a *holam* as in עֹזְבֵדִיהוֹן. The four cases of genitive in 2:14 follow the Palestinian version of Ms E, Mss Z,J,E and others which show singular forms rather than the Yemenite plural forms: תַּרְעָה (2x), בְּכוּהַ, וְטַלְלָה. The suffix of the second person and the form of דְּאֲלֵהָהּ (3:2) differ from those of Mss V,H, דְּאֲלֵהָהּ (Mss Z,J,E differ from Mss V,H only in the suffix, דְּאֲלֵהָהּ). The former suffix is that of a singular form, the latter—of a plural form. The

genitive **כהנהא**, the reading of the majority of the mss, is correct as opposed to the plural noun **כהניא** found in Mss V,H. The latter is an error, inattentively copied and perpetuated.

There are eight cases where Eb 88 has a deficient script compared to Ms V: **בעמרה**, **גגות**, **קפדין**, **ולפלחנא**, **אלפון**, **טבון**, **בקרבנין**, and **דקדשי**. Only one case is rather plene, **ציפונא**.

Most of the cases that differ from Ms V are shared with Mss Z,J,E, showing the early version of the transmitted text from Palestine to Babylonia. The orthography of some mss differ but they share the same pronunciation. The pronunciation of Ms F and the unvocalized mss is assumed. The version of Ms V is in parentheses:

Table 6. Divergences from Ms V

Eb 88	Ms F	Yemenite Mss	Ashkenazi Mss	Sepharadi Mss
2:9: מלוחין (מלוחין)	?	None	T,U,Y,R	Q
2:14: דמנצ'יף (דמנצ'יף)	?	H,Z,J,E	T,U,Y	Q,N
2:15: חיות) חיתא (כלי') יכלי	חיתא ?	Z,J,E H,Z,J,E	T,U,Y none	X,S,Q none
3:1: דמוחיא) דמוחיא	?	None	none	none
3:4: שקרא (שקרהון) גברין (גברין)	שקרא	Z,J,E none	all T,M,U,R	all N,C,W
3:6: בירניתהון) בירניתהון	?	none	none	none
3:7: תדחלין (תדחלון) תקבלין (תקבלון)	תדחלין תקבלין	none none	M,U,P U,P	N,C,W N,C,W
3:8: יסופון) יסופון	?	none	T,A,Y,R	Q
3:9: אשני) אשני	אישני	none	T,M	X,N,Q
3:10: יתובון) יתובון		Z,J,E	none	none
3:11: דאתגליאה) דאתגליאה	דאיתגליאה	Z,J,E	all	all
3:11: תוספין) תוספין	תוספון	Z,J,E	A,U,R	X,S,C,W

The three odd verbal forms are unique to Eb 88 and could be a local dialect, errors or due to faded ink. Verbs such as **יכלי** and **איתי** suggest an alternative form of the *af'el* stem similar to the plural suffix of **יתובון/יתובון**. Likewise, **גברין/גברין** constitute two legitimate alternatives. The second feminine singular reading of **תדחלין** and **תקבלין** in 3:7 reflects the literality of the MT, and thus, its earlier version. The singular feminine **דאתגליאה** is the predicate of 'the daughter of My scattered' rather than of 'My scattered ones' and shows the earlier

Palestinian rendering. This also reveals that the addressee in the verse is considered to be Israel rather than the nations, and thus Israel is linked to the next verse. Within a midrashic context, the use of either singular or plural makes no change in the meaning of the return of Israel from exile.

This Table exposes Ms V's isolation by its reading of *דְּמַנְצִיף* in the *af'el* (the lone Ms P can be a coincidental case), *שְׁקֵרָהוֹן* (with its source of Ms H) and *תִּיסְפִין*, a poetic form instead of *תּוֹסְפִין*.

a. *Omissions* The four omissions are shared by the majority of mss and therefore tend to indicate additions by Mss V,H. They also agree with the MT:

Table 7

Eb 88	Ms F	Yemenite Mss	Ashkenazi Mss	Sepharadi Mss
2:15: <ו>יניד		Z,J,E	T	C,W
<ב>ידיה	✓	Z,J,E	all	S,Q
<ברא>	✓	Z,J,E	all	all
3:5: <ו>לא (מתעכב)	✓	Z,J,E	all	X,S,Q,C,W

No pluses, substitutions or metathesis are found.

On the whole this ms, as Eb 80, is very close to the Yemenite textual tradition but even closer to the stemma of Mss Z,J,E. They are evidence of the early version that was transmitted from Palestine to Babylonia before the establishment of the text of Mss H,V.

### 2.2.3 Yemenite Mss

All the Yemenite mss carry alternating Hebrew and Aramaic text with accents, of which Ms H has the least. Two of the five mss (H,E) have no *massorot*. Ms H is unique in that both Hebrew and Aramaic texts are punctuated in the Babylonian superlinear system. From the outset, the examination of the MT, compared to the Aleppo and Leningrad Codices, yields two major groups: Mss V,H and Mss Z,J,E. However, some overlapping occurs as well despite the uniqueness of each. The differences are mostly orthographic, plene versus deficient. All the mss read *ישבי* (1:4), four read *שואה* (1:15), *כמוץ* (2:2), *ויגדילו* (2:10), *קפוד* (2:14), *עלילותיך* (3:11), and *תוסיפי* (3:11). Most of the deviations are made by Ms H (32) and by Ms V (26). Out of these 26 deviations, 22 are shared by Ms H. The Tables below will illuminate this division.



Mss Z,J,E share the readings **כְּרוֹת** and **מִמְשֶׁק**. However, Mss Z,J are much more closely affiliated: They are the only mss which read an odd **וְאֶפְסִי** instead of **וְאֶפְסִי**. Mistakes in Ms Z are mostly avoided in Ms J. Moreover, the single column per page of Ms Z is divided into two columns in Ms J. They have the same marginal remarks and the same page number. Evidence for the lateness of Ms J is inherent in its *mise-en-page*: the name of the book is written at the top of the page, a more “modern” **פְּסוּקִים** than the earlier **פִּיטוּקִים** is used, the Christian division of chapters is noted with a marker on top *without* the circle for a new *seder*, and the *massorah magna* on *both* sides of the page carries added and corrected material from Ms Z. The major difference between the two mss is the tetragram symbol: even though Ms Z has a triple “ן”, the left “ן” are connected by a lower line and the left “ן” is elongated. A marker is placed on the middle “ן”. The tetragram in Ms J is made up of two “ן” connected at the bottom but the right “ן” is the elongated one. A marker is placed between the two “ן”. Ms E has the same divine symbol as Ms Z.

The tetragram in Mss V,H is written by a triple “ן” in the shape of a “שׁ” for **שְׁדִי** or a crown, a symbol of God’s Kingdom and the Torah. However, Ms H does not have the elongated tail.

All the mss share six *pisqaot*, 1:12, 2:1,5, 3:1,14,16, that match those of Codex Aleppo.<sup>163</sup> Beyond these six, Mss V,H have also 1:8 and 3:5 whereas Mss Z,J,E have also 2:8 and 3:8 thus each group has eight *pisqaot*.

### 2.2.3.1 Ms H

The uniqueness of this ms is reflected in the dispute over its dating. The JNUL dates it to the 16th–17th centuries whereas the MLCU dates it to the 14th century with a question mark. However, there is mounting evidence for its earlier dating which was noted in the previous section. Here are some further observations for its uniqueness: The vocalization tends to be plene. Both Hebrew and TJ are punctuated by Babylonian supralinear vocalization system. Moreover, both languages reflect the Babylonian/Yemenite pronunciation: morphologically, *maqṭal* nouns (e.g., **מִשְׁמַט**, 2:9) are used rather than *maqṭel*;<sup>164</sup> *patah* for the

<sup>163</sup> Codex Leningrad does not have a *pisqa* in 3:16. The Yemenites pride themselves on being the keepers of Codex Aleppo.

<sup>164</sup> Survived in Mss X,N,Q.

later *tzere* (e.g., לַעֲדִי, 1:13); *patah* for a Tiberian *segol* (e.g., חַרְפָּה, 3:18, אַתְּכֶם, 3:20); a lengthened *tzere* (e.g., מִיֵּאתֵרִיהָ,<sup>165</sup> 2:11); קֶדֶם<sup>166</sup> rather than קָדָם; when a double *sheva* appears in the middle of a lemma the first one takes on a vowel (e.g., תִּדְחֻלִּין, 3:15); *dagesh* and *mappiq* are infrequently and inconsistently used, and mostly in *בגדכפת* letters; no sign for *rafeh* is made. Only the four major pausal accents are used, i.e., *etnahtah*, *zeqefim*, *revia* and *silluq*, which accord with the Tiberian system, and they are all placed above the text. The sign of *zaqef qaton* is the Babylonian *ukumi*.<sup>167</sup>

The script is simple and not as square and skillful as that of the later Yemenite mss V,Z,J,E. This includes the simple sign of the tetragram which is made up of a triple ‘ו’ connected at the bottom by a simple line. This ‘ש’ sign may have been the first stage of the more elaborate tetragram seen in Mss V,Z,J,E.

The pages are small. *Massorot* are absent, and the letters are uneven. These characteristics may point to an inexperienced scribe who may have lived outside the capital San‘a, the center for Jewish learning. Moreover, since the comparison with Ms V shows a complete agreement with readings unique to Ms V (e.g., גְּבַעְתָּא, עוֹפְלָא, בְּנַחְלוֹן, מְאִידְרָא, וְכַטְלָא), it is therefore suggested that we have identified the ms (or its proto-type) on which Ms V was based. It should be noted that only these mss agree exclusively with the *pisqaot*. In addition, the MT is almost identical in both mss. Out of 32 deviations from the MT in Ms H, 22 accord with Ms V. The rest is corrected in Ms V.

All these elements suggest a much older date than the 14th century. They suggest a late Babylonian phase of pronunciation, when the vocalization and accent systems were developing.<sup>168</sup> It is probably later than

<sup>165</sup> We find the exact form, מִיֵּאִבֵּר (‘from the limb’) in the ancient Babylonian Mishnaic text (*Eduyyot* v,7–vi,3) published by Yeivin, *A Collection*, 37. Many other lengthened vowels are found in this ancient collection, such as: הַיְעִיד, מִיֵּזִידִים, אֵלָא (p. 28), אַחִיר, אִיפְשִׁי, אֵתְחַבֵּל (p. 29), עִידִים (p. 34).

<sup>166</sup> This form is found in Eb 88 and among the ancient Babylonian mss published by Kahle, *MdO*, 39, line 3 from the top and line 4 from the bottom.

<sup>167</sup> For these and many other Babylonian systems see Yeivin, *קטעי מקרא*, and the bibliography there. In this article Yeivin studies Ms Eb 80. Examples of some of the ancient Babylonian scriptural characteristics described here, but in a more skilled hand, can be viewed in Yeivin’s *A Collection*, up to p. 64 (types V and IV).

<sup>168</sup> Yeivin, *מבוא למסורה*, 86–87, 115. On pp. 114–15 he dates the development of these systems of signs to some time between 600, upon the completion of the *Bavli*, and 750.

Eb 80 (which still carries the full Babylonian accent system).<sup>169</sup> It could be from the 11th–12th century, for Ms H adopts some characteristics of the Tiberian system (*mappiq*, *dagesh*, and *vav* conjunctive according to the Tiberian rules).

If this theory is correct, then when Ms H differs from Ms V we may conclude that the latter either erred (e.g., it omits **וַיִּמֶן** in 1:5) or was corrected according to a Yemenite tradition (e.g., **מְטַלְטְלִיא** rather than **מטלטליא**),<sup>170</sup> a more normative pronunciation (e.g., **קָדָם** rather than **קָדָם**),<sup>171</sup> local dialect or lengthened vowels (e.g., **לְבִיָּא**).<sup>172</sup> With two cases, a noticeable variation is found in the plural suffix. Ms H has **רַעֲזִין** and **וּמַחְפּוּרִין** whereas Ms V has **רַעֲזִין** and **וּמַחְפּוּרִין**, two variations of legitimate Aramaic suffixes.

Except for these six divergences, there are nine other cases of unique readings which mostly appear in non-Yemenite mss. They are: **לְטַעוּתָא** (1:8), **דְּשִׁלֹן**<sup>173</sup> (1:12), **וְעַקְרוֹן** (2:4), **אֶתְרַבְּרַבְּנוּתְהוֹן** (2:10), **קְדָמוּהִי** and **מִאֲתַרְיָה** (2:11), **עוֹלִיָּא** (3:5), **תִּדְחַלּוֹן** (3:7), **מְלַכּוּתָא** (3:8), **גְּלוּת** (3:10), **תִּדְחַלּוֹן** (3:15,16), **חּוּבָךְ** (3:17), **מְטַלְטְלִיא** and **וּלְשׁוּם** (3:19). The reading of **מְטַלְטְלִיא** attests to a pre-Yemenite origin for Ms H, namely Babylonian or Palestinian. The dark background of the page that contains 3:8bβ (עליהם)–3:15bα (יהוה) makes it difficult to read the fine vowel signs. Two signs above the ‘נ’ in **אֲשַׁנִּי** (3:9) seem to show *patah* and *tzere*. It could be a correction from a *patah* to a *tzere* to read **אֲשַׁנִּי** or **אֲשַׁנִּי**. Since other verbs of first person singular carry the *aqtel* form (e.g., **אֲפַקִּיד**, **אֲעִיק**), it is likely to read **אֲשַׁנִּי** here, too, which corresponds to no other reading. Alternatively, it could read **אֲשַׁנִּי** as in Mss Z,J,E.

<sup>169</sup> Neither Yeivin, nor Ribera offers a date.

<sup>170</sup> As in the Babylonian Ms Eb 80 and in all the Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss, where this Palestinian form survived. *Shuruq* was not a stable vowel in Babylonian Hebrew and Aramaic. See, for example, the inconsistencies Yeivin finds in Eb 80 (**קטעי מקרא**, 566–70). He mentions **בְּשׁוּם** and **וּלְשׁוּם** (the same occurs in Ms V) and **גְּבִשְׁתָּא**. The last example appears in three other forms: **גְּבִישְׁתָּא** (Mss T,M), **גְּבִיּוּשְׁתָּא** (Ms N), and **גְּבִישׁוּתָא** (Mss Z,J,E). It should be noted that Mss Z,J,E present another example of the same Yemenite form, **מְבַדְרִיא** that parallels **מְטַלְטְלִיא**, whereas all other mss, including Ms H, have **מְבַדְרִיא**.

<sup>171</sup> And similarly **קְדָמוּהִי** (2:11).

<sup>172</sup> Ms H has **לְבִיָּא**. In all other 10 instances, TJ has **לְבִיָּא**. Cf Alberdina Houtman, *A Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2003), XVIII: 134. See also the noun **בִּיּוּיָא** (Nah 2:13) on p. 133. **אֶתְרַבְּרַבְּנוּתְהוֹן** is corrected by **אֶתְרַבְּרַבְּנוּתְהוֹן** as **מִאֲתַרְיָה** is corrected by **מִאֲתַרְיָה**.

<sup>173</sup> Even though this is a correct form of the imperfect, the MT shows the participle which is reflected in Ms V’s **דְּשִׁלֹן** or in Ms Z’s **דְּשִׁלֹן**. The first two forms, **דְּשִׁלֹן** and **דְּשִׁלֹן** are found equally in the Ashkenazi and the Sepharadi mss.

When compared with Ms V, there are neither omissions nor pluses. The only prominent substitution is the correct reading of **עוֹלִיאַ** rather than **עוֹלִיאַ**. No metathesis and no corrections are found.

### 2.2.3.2 Ms V

The fact that it is the basic text in this study does not automatically render it the most accurate or the most “original.” This manuscript had to withstand a thorough examination on its own as well as in relation to all other mss.

To be sure, this beautifully written ms by the skilled hand of a member of the Benayahu family is clear in presentation, as it carries minimal errors. Out of 23 divergences from the Aleppo MT, ten cases are deficient and twelve are plene. **יִיטִיב** differs from **יִיטִיב** (1:12).<sup>174</sup> Unique **קְרוֹאָיו** (1:7) and **הַבְּצוּרוֹת** (1:16) are noted in the margin as *ketiv*.<sup>175</sup>

Only eight corrections are found, seven of them in the Hebrew text. Six concern the matter lexionis: five *vavs* are inserted to render the words plene: **הַדּוֹלָג**, **יוֹשְׁבֵי** (1:18, unnecessary), **וּקוֹשׁוּ** and **בַּגְּדוֹת**, **וּקוֹשׁוּ** and **תְּבוֹשִׁי**. The letters **דִּי** in **וַיְגַדִּילוּ** are connected to render it deficient (2:10, unnecessary), and the omitted **תְּרַאֲי** (3:16) is added in the margin. An attempt to erase a second **מַכְלֵ** (2:11, Aramaic) is unsuccessful. All the corrections are made by the scribe himself.

It offers 18 unique readings among the Yemenite mss. Only three can be considered odd and are undoubtedly errors: **לֹאֲתַרְא** instead of **לֹאֲתַרְא** (1:6), **עוֹלִיאַ** instead of **עוֹלִיאַ** (3:5), and **עַם** instead of **עַם** (3:12). This last case may result from its proximity to the next **עַ** of **עַנְוֹתָן**. **עוֹלִיאַ** may be a personal interpretation by the scribe, but it is most likely an error as a result from copying from a non-voweled **עוֹלִיאַ**. **שְׁבַחֲי** rather than **שְׁבַחֲי** (3:14) could be influenced by the Hebrew imperative. Others are: **דְּמַלְן** (1:9), **צֹחַתַּא** (1:10), **בְּנִבְרֶשְׁתַּא** (1:12), **לְעַדִּי** (1:13), **רְעִין** (2:6), **מִשְׁמַט** and **וּמַחְפּוֹרִין** (2:9), **דְּמַנְצִיף** (2:14), **יְכִלִּי** (2:15), **שְׁקַרִּין**, **מְלִכּוֹתַא** (3:8), **אַשְׁנִי** (3:9), **תִּיסְפִין** and **עוֹבְדָד**<sup>176</sup> (3:11; correct for the plural suffix). **מְלִכּוֹתַא**, as it disagrees with the MT, seems to be a later alteration to harmonize with the Rabbinic theology of the Kingdom of Heaven, that is so prevalent in Rabbinic literature and is often expressed in the

<sup>174</sup> Yeivin mentions an uncertain reading **יִיטִיב** in Eb 80 (**קטעי מקרא**, 565).

<sup>175</sup> Ms Z imperfectly erases the extra *vav*.

<sup>176</sup> Mss H,Z,J,E have **עוֹבְדָד**.

context of prayers and blessings (e.g., *Bavli*, *Berakhot* 2b, 58a; *Yerushalmi*, *Berakhot* 13b; *Pesikta Rabbati* 15,10; the *Aleinu* prayer). שְׁקֵרְהוֹן (with Ms H) constitutes a one time reading created probably by the scribe of Ms H and copied by Ms V. No other ms carries this reading.

The change from the plural ‘hills’ to the singular גְּבַעְתָּא (1:10) suggests a specific hill where ‘a major disaster’ took place. This reading also appears in Ms H. The singular גְּבַשְׁתָּא in Eb 80 suggests the co-existence of two versions stemming from the same event in Palestine and later transmitted to Babylonia (see Commentary).

Like Ms H, this ms tends to add *vav* conjunctive unlike the MT, perhaps due to a Babylonian influence, such as וּדְמַקִּימִין (1:5), וַיִּנִּיד (2:15), וְלֹא (3:5,7). A unique double vocalization is found in the superlinear פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן and the sublinear פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן (1:5),<sup>177</sup> showing knowledge of both versions that are also part of the Ashkenazi and the Sepharadi textual traditions. The sublinear reading is absent from the rest of the Yemenite mss examined here.

*Degeshim* in the Aramaic are inconsistent. When a *rafeh* sign does not appear over בַּגְּדַכְּפַת it is to be read as geminated. *Hatafim* are symbolized by the same sign for a *sheva* or a *rafeh*, a horizontal line above the letter.

This fine manuscript was commissioned by the patron Abraham ben Joseph.

### 2.2.3.3 Ms ζ

As mentioned above in the General Observations, this ms could have been affiliated with the Benayahu family of scribes. The letters are similar and some of the errors in Ms V are corrected here. Only ten divergences from the MT are found compared to the 23 in Ms V: one is deficient, יִשְׁבִי (in all the Yemenite mss), five are plene (כְּמוֹן, שׁוֹאָה, כְּרוֹת, עֲבִיר, עֲבִיר); a participle עֲבִיר replaces the perfect עֲבִיר (2:2); a geminated ‘מ’ in מְמִשֶּׁק (2:9) suggests the meaning of ‘from the noise’ (of the thistles) as commented by Ibn Ezra. Two divergences are

<sup>177</sup> As in the Sepharadi Ms X and the Ashkenazi Mss R,Y. This is probably a Palestinian reading. Eb 80, according to Ribera, has a third reading, in the singular, פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן (“La Versión,” 13). Yeivin is uncertain of the vowels and reads either פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן or פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן. The singular, he posits, accords with the MT ‘in their King’ (קִטְעֵי מְקֵרָא, 571).

a result of Yemenite pronunciation: זָבַח (pronounced זֹבַח) and וּאֶפְסִי (pronounced וּאֶפְסִי). Interestingly, the next זֹבַח in v. 8 is correct.

Twelve corrections are made in a variety of ways, eight are in the MT and four in the Aramaic: five times omitted words are restored, המִשְׁתַּחֲוִים (1:5) and וּלְלֵה מִן עוֹפְלָא (1:10) are added in the margin whereas רַבָּא (1:14), לִי (3:8), and רַע (3:15) are inserted above the line. Remarkably, correction of the same vowels occurs in both Ms Z and V: originally, קְרוֹאוּ (1:7) was written plene, but the 'י' was erased and the 'ר' was attached to the upper tip of the *vav*. The result is קְרָאִי. The second case is similar in that דִּי in וּיְגַדִּילוּ (2:10) are connected to render it deficient. To safeguard this reading, a note in the margin reads "ל חס יוד" ('no other case of a deficient וּיְגַדִּלוּ exists, yet a "י" is missing here'). In the third case, רִי are connected to read לְאַפְרֵשׁ (3:5). A sign above the first "י" in מִיְגוּדִי (3:15) points to its redundancy. A *vav* is inserted in שׁוֹאֵה (1:15) and וּקוֹשׁוּ (2:1) and a "י" is inserted above סַפּ to read תּוֹסִיפִי (3:11). On the left margin of שְׁבוּתָם (2:7) its *qere* שְׁבִיתָם is noted. All the corrections are made by the scribe himself.

The majority of the deviations from Ms V are those shared with Mss J,E and this aspect will be listed in Tables 8–13. In another Table, unique readings and readings that agree with mss other than the stemma Z,J,E will be noted. Lengthened vowels will not be included. In this category there are very few cases. Only three readings are unique: דְּשָׁלוֹן (1:12, a participle form, along with דְּשָׁלוֹן in Mss V,J,E), יַחְסוֹנוֹנוֹן (2:9, all others have יַחְסוֹנוֹנוֹן), and סִבְרוֹ<sup>178</sup> (3:8, all others have סִבְרוֹ). Eleven other cases agree with other mss against Ms V: דְּסִגְיָאָה (Mss J,E) and וְיִתִּיב (Ms E), the plus עוֹד (תּוֹסִפִּין) (Ms J), יְכָלִי, דְּמַנְצִיף, שְׁקָרִין, עֵן(ו)לִיָּא, יְכָלִי, דְּמַנְצִיף, עוֹד (תּוֹסִפִּין) (Ms J), עוֹבְדָד, אֶשְׁנִי, שְׁבַחִי (Mss H,J,E). There are no odd forms, only legitimate Aramaic alternatives.

Some of these alternatives are shortened genitive forms that are shared with Mss J,E: תְּרַעָה (תְּרַעָהָא), בְּכֹהָא (בְּכֹהָא), וּטְלָהָא (וּטְלָהָא), and דְּאֶלְהָהָא (דְּאֶלְהָהָא).

a. *Omissions* Twelve omissions are faithfully perpetuated by Mss J,E (see Table below). Five of them harmonize with the MT and with all or most of the mss examined in this study except for Ms H: <ו>דַּמְקִימִין (1:5), <ברא> חֵיתָא, <ו>יְנִיד and <ב>יְדִיהָ (2:15), <ו>לָא

<sup>178</sup> סִבְרוֹ is also the rendering of the Sepharadi Mss X,W which incorporate many Eastern and Western readings.

(מתעכב) (3:5). Six cases are scribal errors: <ית> (1:4),<sup>179</sup> <מתת> גבורתי (3:5), <ולא יפסוק> (3:7), <ומחפורין, תמן> (1:14),<sup>180</sup> <ולא יתכון ובעדנא ההוא> (3:20). The last omission resulted from the double בעדנא ההוא. The absence of מאידרא (2:2) could be evidence of another scribal error, or more likely, it could be an echo of an ancient Palestinian version that had טולא rather than טלא, the version which survived here and in Mss J,E, the Ashkenazi and the Sepharadi mss.

b. *Pluses* Only two words are superfluous to Ms V. The plus of וימן is in fact an omission in Ms V as it appears in all the other mss examined here. The only true plus is the redundant עוד added automatically after the *hif'il* verb יסף (e.g., 2 Kgs 24:7, Isa 23:12; also in Ms J). Superfluous single letters, two (דל) in 1:6 and a double 'ו' in עווליא (3:5) are also legitimate in that they agree with the MT and are widely present in other mss. The double 'ו' guarantees its reading against the significant error of עוליא in Ms V. In turn, עוליא makes an unintentional substitution.

c. *Substitutions* All six substitutions, that are shared by Mss J,E, point to an alternative version: first, מְזַמְנוּהִי instead of מְזַמְנוּהִי (1:7) purports to translate the MT 'His guests' rather than 'from His time' (Hebrew מְזַמְנוּעָדוֹ)<sup>181</sup> which is shared only by Ms H. Even though this form seems to be incorrect, מְזַמְנוּהִי shows an alternative Aramaic passive form that correctly transmits the MT passive tense קראיו.

<sup>179</sup> It exists in all other mss except J,E. It is TJ's tendency to translate God's hand as 'the stroke of My/His might' (e.g., Amos 1:8; Zeph 2:13, Zech 2:13, 13:7). It is therefore an error by the scribe of Ms Z (or his predecessor?) carried over into mss such as Mss J,E. The 'stroke' appears in other places such as Isa 1:25; Jer 6:12, 15:6; Amos 1:8.

<sup>180</sup> Usually, TJ consistently translates the Hebrew direct object אַת. For example, Amos 9:3 shows the same pattern, when אַתְּ אַפְקִיד בְּלוֹשִׁין translate (ולקחתים) אחפש. When the translation is literal, as in Hos 2:23 אַתְּ אַתְּ הַשָּׁמַיִם, or close as in Amos 9:4 אַתְּ אַתְּ הַחֶרֶב, the Aramaic follows with ית as well. Since in our case אַחְפֵּשׁ is followed by an אַתְּ, and the much older Ms H carries ית, it is more likely that ית was erroneously omitted. Yet Ms F, all the Sepharadi mss, and five out of the seven Ashkenazi mss carry it, so we may conclude that the absence of ית was a Palestinian version. It was added in Babylonia.

<sup>181</sup> See Commentary under 1:7.

Second, **גְּבֻשׁוֹתָא** instead of **גְּבֻעָתָא** (1:10) seems to be of a commensurate value first in Palestine then in Babylonia, **גְּבֻעָתָא** being the original translation.<sup>182</sup>

Third, **נְכֻסְיָהוֹן**, ‘their property,’ instead of **בְּתִיָּהוֹן**, ‘their homes’ (1:13) usually describes ‘wealth,’ cognate to the Hebrew **חֵיל** (e.g., Isa 30:6; Jer 15:13; Ezek 26:12; Obad 11,13; Zech 14:14). No other case renders **חֵיל** by **בֵּיתָא**, and **בֵּיתָא** is almost always the cognate for the Hebrew **בֵּית**.<sup>183</sup> The version of Ms Z probably reflects an attempt to restore the correct translation of **נְכֻסְיָהוֹן** by **חֵילָם**. On the other hand, the Yemenite rendition of **בִּירְנִיתָהוֹן** for the common **בְּתִיָּהוֹן** suggests a later emphasis on property rather than on general ‘wealth.’ 1:9b makes this distinction clear when describing the wealth accumulated into the homes of the ‘masters.’

Fourth, **וּכְטוֹלָא** ‘and like shadow,’ instead of **וּכְטֵלָא**, ‘like dew’ (2:2) occurs in Ms F and in both Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss. The difference is inherent in the interpretation of ‘that passes from before the day’ as either the approaching evening, when shadows disappear, or early morning, when dew evaporates as the sun rises. The ‘shadow’ metaphor probably originated in Palestine and altered in Babylonia to read **וּכְטוֹלָא**.

Fifth, **מְגִוִּיד** for **מְגִיִּד** is a synonym that occurs in all other mss. Therefore, the version of Mss V,H is the odd one out, initiated by a scribe who was striving for textual uniformity (2:14, 3:3,4,5,11,15,17).

Sixth, **אֶקְרִיב ית גְּלוֹתָכוֹן** instead of **אֶכְנִישׁ יתָכוֹן** is the dominant version in all the mss examined here (including Mss F, Eb 80, and mss B,G,O) and undoubtedly the original one. It also transmits the essence of the MT **קָבְצִי**, ‘gather’; the object of such a gathering is always construed as ‘the exiles’ (e.g., Isa 56:8; Hos 8:10; Zech 10:8).

No metathesis occurs.

This fine ms was probably commissioned by a patron or a synagogue, as was Ms V according to its colophon.

#### 2.2.3.4 Ms 7

Even though the scribe, Joseph ben Jonah Alfatihi, copied this ms for his own study (in the hope of eventually finding a buyer) under much stress, this fine ms is almost flawless. This mirror copy of Ms Z reflects

<sup>182</sup> See discussion under Ms F and in Commentary under 1:10.

<sup>183</sup> Cf Houtman, *Bilingual* XVIII:153–58.



the scribe's eventful life (see his colophon in the Observations above) in its uneven letters and the occasional accidental error. It repeats seven of Ms Z's divergences from the MT and adds four more: two are plene and two miss an important *hiriq* in the *qere* of שְׁבוּתָם (2:6) and in גּוֹי (2:9).

This ms is the closest to Ms Z. In the Aramaic when compared to Ms V, 18 deficient readings are found; 17 of them are shared with Ms Z. Out of the remaining 70 divergences, 54 replicate the exact text of Mss Z,E. These cases include four different genitive forms (two are repeated. See above under Ms Z). Thirteen cases agree also with Ms H, and present the correct version where Ms V errs (see Table below).<sup>184</sup> Two cases agree only with Ms Z (the plus עוֹד in 3:11 and יָדִיךָ in 3:16), and one, וְחֲטָרִין in 2:6, agrees with only Ms E. Two plene readings, יֵאֲשִׁיחוּ (1:1) and מְעִיבֵר (3:10), and one verbal form, דְּאֶסְתָּחֲרוּ (1:6, others have דְּאֶסְתָּחֲרוּ) are unique to Ms J.

The number of divergences seems high, but most of them are legitimate alternatives of Aramaic forms.

a. *Omissions* The same 12 omissions cited above (see Ms Z) occur here as well.

b. *Pluses* The only plus, as noted above, is עוֹד (3:11) following Ms Z.

c. *Substitutions* The same six substitutions found in Ms Z occur here as well. The only unique substitution is בהתתכון ('your shame') instead of בהתתהון ('their shame') in 3:19. This could be due to the second person plural address in the verse or a scribal error rather than an intentional change in meaning. It can therefore be disregarded. No other ms among those studied here carries this reading.

No metathesis occurs.

Four corrections are made within the text: A marker over the 'ו' of ויניד (2:5) calls for its deletion. A similar marker is placed over the 'ד' of דשקרין (3:4). The first 'י' of תיספין (3:11) is elongated to read תוספין,

<sup>184</sup> Even here, legitimate forms of Aramaic are offered. For example, שְׁקָרִין (Ms V) and שְׁקָרִין (the rest); צְוֹחְתָּא (Ms V) and צְוֹחְתָּא (the rest); יְכָלִי (Ms V) and יְכָלִי (the rest).

and the letters 'ד' in מועדיך (3:18) are connected to read מועדך. All corrections are compatible with Ms Z.

### 2.2.3.5 Ms E

Ms E follows Mss Z,J almost to perfection, but it is the only Yemenite ms with no summation of verses at the end of each book, but instead, it marks its sequence within the Twelve. It corrects their mistakes but adds its own. Out of ten deviations from the MT (mostly deficient or plene script), five agree with Mss Z,J including the unique reading ממשק. There are only three omissions in the MT: כי הכין יהוה (1:7) is added in the margin, a 'י' is inserted between דל to read ויגדילו (2:10), and the same is done between גל to read יגיל (3:17). Out of 19 deficient readings in the Aramaic, 17 correspond with Mss Z,J. However, the three plene readings are unique among the five mss: חיסודי (2:8), מיגויך (3:15), and בעידנא (3:19). Similarly, only one deficient reading, גבך (3:17), is unique. One more deficient reading, לתשבחא (3:19), is harmonious only with Ms J. There are four corrections: ודלא (1:6) and אעיק (1:17) are added in the margin. ויללה מן עופלא (1:10) is added in the margin after being repeated and a haplography occurs in 2:15 when בית משרי was copied one line too early. It is crossed out.

Ms E is well anchored within the Z,J stemma in its congruity of script and readings as opposed to Mss V,H. However, it shows some readings distinct from Mss Z,J: לאיגריא instead of על איגריא (1:5), which could be a case of an omitted 'ע',<sup>185</sup> מנטלתא instead of מנטלתא (1:16, also Ms H), תוספין without the added עוד (3:11), and ידך rather than ידך (3:16). In three cases it is in harmony with Ms J as opposed to Ms Z: דשלן (1:12, also Ms V), וחטרין (2:6), an abbreviated ק (2:7, also Ms V), יחסנונונון (2:9, also Mss V,H), and סברו (3:8, also Mss V,H), and לתשבחא (see previous paragraph). Only in four marginal cases is Ms E in exact agreement with Ms Z as opposed to Ms J: דאסתחרו (1:6, also Mss V,H) vs דאסתחרו, ויתבי (2:7) vs ויתבי, דאתגליאה vs דאתגליאה (3:10), and מיגויך vs מיגויך (3:15, also Mss V,H). Some of these divergences may be attributed to a different dialect.

<sup>185</sup> The same, with a slight difference, occurs in the Ashkenazi Ms M, לאיגריא. Both are correct readings for 'roofs.'

a. *Omissions* To the twelve omissions shared with Mss Z,J, Ms E adds two more, both unique among all the mss examined here, and therefore are considered errors: the first,  $\langle \text{ית} \rangle$  יתבי (1:12)<sup>186</sup> resulted from the dittography of ית. The second is  $\langle \text{ית} \rangle$  גְּלוֹתְכוֹן אַקְרִיב (3:20). The consistent affinity among Mss Z,J,E as well as יתכוֹן in the alternative stemma of Mss V,H exclude such a Yemenite version.

b. *Pluses* There are no additional pluses to the three found in Mss Z,J (excluding עוֹד in 3:11): the first, וַיִּמְן (1:5), should be considered an omission by Ms V. The next two, (ו)ד(לֹא בַעו) and (ו)ד(לֹא בַעו) (1:6), appear in non-Yemenite mss and are a legitimate version and an accurate Aramaic translation of the Hebrew וַאֲשֶׁר, which is carried over to the second, paralleled verb. As mentioned previously, the addition of -ד, especially before a negative word, is considered a florid speech by Yemenites.

Table 8. *Pisqaot* in Yemenite Mss

Ms H (8)	Ms V (8)	Ms Z (8)	Ms J (8)	Ms E (8)
1:8	1:8			
1:12	1:12	1:12	1:12	1:12
2:1	2:1	2:1	2:1	2:1
2:5	2:5	2:5	2:5	2:5
		2:8	2:8	2:8
3:1	3:1	3:1	3:1	3:1
3:5	3:5			
		3:8	3:8	3:8
3:14	3:14	3:14	3:14	3:14
3:16	3:16	3:16	3:16	3:16

This table shows beyond doubt the decisive division between Mss H,V and Mss Z,J,E. However, all the mss carry the same number of *pisqaot*. Each differing *pisqa* comes at a turning point. One version (Mss H,V) separates the punishment of those whose sins involve religious transgressions (1:3–7) from the punishment meted out against those guilty of social sins (1:8–11). The *pisqa* in 3:5 highlights the profound

<sup>186</sup> No other ms omits this. On the other hand, all non-Yemenite mss omit יתבי.

difference between the sinners and God. The other version considers the beginning of God's speech a new unit which highlights the approaching good fortune of Judah in contrast with the approaching devastation over Moab and Ammon. The new unit in 3:8 is viewed as an announcement against the nations after chastising Judah.

In spite of the striking unity among the Yemenite mss, some differences in pronunciation and use of verbal stems can be noted. These variations depend on the idiosyncracies of individual schools in various locations and the scribes' personal knowledge. In the Yemenite tradition, use (or knowledge of) Aramaic was an integral part of Jewish education, hence the minuscule number of disagreements. No odd forms occur, namely there is no evidence of ignorance of Aramaic in these mss.

Differences in deficient/plene script will not be included. There are only four differing verbal forms:

Table 9. Differences in Verbal Forms

MT	Ms H	Ms V	Ms Z	Ms J	Ms E
1:3	דָּאֲסִיָּאת	דָּאֲסִיָּאת	דָּסִיָּאָה	דָּסִיָּאָה	דָּסִיָּאָה
1:6	דָּאֲסִתְּחִרוּ	דָּאֲסִתְּחִרוּ	דָּאֲתְּסִחִרוּ <sup>187</sup>	דָּאֲסִתְּחִרוּ	דָּאֲסִתְּחִרוּ
1:12	דְּשִׁלֵּן	דְּשִׁלֵּן	דְּשִׁלֵּן	דְּשִׁלֵּן	דְּשִׁלֵּן
3:9	אֲשַׁנִּי	אֲשַׁנִּי	אֲשַׁנִּי	אֲשַׁנִּי	אֲשַׁנִּי

Table 10. Differences in Nominal Forms

MT	Ms H	Ms V	Ms Z	Ms J	Ms E
1:5	עַל אֵיגְרִיאַ	עַל אֵיגְרִיאַ	עַל אֵיגְרִיאַ	עַל אֵיגְרִיאַ	לְאֵיגְרִיאַ <sup>188</sup>
2:6	רְעִין	רְעִין	רְעִין	רְעִין	רְעִין
3:5	עוֹלִיאַ	עוֹלִיאַ	עוֹלִיאַ	עוֹלִיאַ	עוֹלִיאַ
3:8	מְלִכּוֹתָא	מְלִכּוֹתָא	מְלִכּוֹתָא	מְלִכּוֹתָא	מְלִכּוֹתָא

<sup>187</sup> Unsure vocalization. The sign for *patah* is very close to that of *sheva*, and the *hiriq* is placed on the left of the alef.

<sup>188</sup> An omission of 'ע'?

2.2.3.6 *Stemmas*

Table 11

MT	Mss H,V	Mss Z,J,E
1:1	יִי	
1:3	דָּאָסְגִיָּאָת	דסגיאָה
1:4	מַחַת גְּבוּרְתִּי	<מחַת> גְּבוּרְתִּי
1:5	וּדְמַקִּימִין	<ו>דְמַקִּימִין
1:6	וּלֹא בָעוּ / וּלֹא תַבְעוּ	וּלֹא בָעוּ / וּדְלֹא תַבְעוּ
1:7	מִזְמָנוּהִי	מִזְמָנוּהִי
1:10	גְּבַעְתָּא	גְּבַשׁוּתָא*
1:11	בְּנַחְלוֹן	בְּנַחְלֹא
1:12	לֵאֲטַבָּא / יַת בְּלוּשִׁין	לֵאֲיִטְבָּא / <יַת> בְּלוּשִׁין
1:13	בְּתִיהוֹן... וּבִירְנִיתְהוֹן	נְכִסְיָהוֹן... וּבִירְנִיתְהוֹן
1:14	תַּמָּן גִּיבְרִיאָ / קָרוּב	<תַּמָּן> גִּיבְרִיאָ / קָרִיב
1:15	רְגוּשׁ / וְעִיק	רְיָגוּשׁ / וְעִיק
1:16	מְנַטְלָא	מְנַטְלָא
1:17	פְּסָחוּתָא	פְּסָחוּתָא
1:18	פּוֹרְעַנּוּתִיה / יְכוּל	פּוֹרְעַנּוּתִיה / יְכוּל
2:1	חָמִיד	חָמִיד
2:2	לְכַמוּצָא מֵאִידְרָא... וּכְטָלָא	לְכַמוּצָא... *וּכְטָוּלָא
2:3	יְתַגָּן	יְתַגָּן
2:5	אַרְע	אַרְע
2:9	וּמַחְפּוֹרִין	*189 <ו>מַחְפּוֹרִין
2:14	וּטְלָלָהּ / בְּכֹהָא / בְּפִיתוּחַ תְּרַעָה	וּטְלָלָהּ / בְּכֹהָ / בְּפִיתוּחַ תְּרַעָה
2:15	בִּידֵיהּ / וַיְנִיד / חֵיתָא בְּרָא	<ב>בִּידֵיהּ / <ו>יְנִיד / חֵיתָא <בְּרָא>
3:2	דְּאַלְהִיהּ	דְּאַלְהִיהּ
3:4	נְבִיָּא / שְׁקָרְהוֹן / כְּהִנְיָא	נְבִיָּא / שְׁקָרָא / כְּהִנְיָא
3:5	<sup>190</sup> עוּלִיאָ / וְלֹא (מַתְעַכֵּב)	עוּלִיאָ / <ו>לֹא (מַתְעַכֵּב)
3:7	וְלֹא (יַפְסוּק)	<ו>לֹא (יַפְסוּק)
3:10	דְּאִי תַגְּלִיאָו / יְתוּבּוֹן	דְּאִי תַגְּלִיאָהּ / יְתוּבּוֹן
3:11	אַגְלִי	אַגְלִי
3:14	חַדָּא	חַדָּא
3:18	מוֹעֲדֵיךָ / מְגִיָּד	מוֹעֲדֵיךָ / *מְנִיָּד
3:19	וּמַבְדְּרִיאָ	וּמַבְדְּרִיאָ
3:20	אֲכַנְיֵשׁ יְתַכּוֹן / לְשׁוּם	*191 אֲקָרִיב יְתַגְּלוּתְכוֹן / לְשׁוּם

\* A possible true variant.

<sup>189</sup> וּמַחְפּוֹרִין occurs in the majority of the Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss. No deletion of the *vav* conjunctive takes place in any of these mss. Since the MT has it, its omission is but an error carried over by scribes.

<sup>190</sup> Ms H's עוּלִיאָ was misread in Ms V as עוּלִיאָ. Perhaps it was originally unpointed.

<sup>191</sup> Ms E has no יְתַכּוֹן.

The unique reading of **מֵאִדְרָא** in Mss H,V is a version which reflects an attempt to harmonize as fully as possible with Hos 13:3. The 49 differences between the two groups clearly indicate two stemmas and two versions. All the marked possible variants on the Z,J,E stemma occur also in the Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss, indicating survivals of Palestinian TJ in Yemenite tradition. The dual forms of the genitive (cf 2:14) happen also in the Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss and therefore reflect valid forms in the Aramaic of Palestine and Babylonia. The omissions are found only in the second group (Mss Z,J,E) which more accurately reflect the MT (cf 1:5, 2:15, 3:5) but not in all cases (cf 2:9, 3:7).

As for 3:20, it is evident that the original TJ had the two *hif'il* verbs **כָּנַשׁ** and **קָרַב**; only **כָּנַשׁ** survived in Ms V. However, Mss H,Z,J,E lack the first part of the clause. This makes it difficult to determine whether Ms V's unique **אֵעִל יִתְכוֹן** has any textual validity or whether it is merely the choice of one scribe. Moreover, Mss Z,J,E are very much part of the Babylonian versional tradition. The similarity between the two Yemenite stemmas is unparalleled among non-Yemenite mss. Apart from a few omissions compared with Ms V, there is only one case of a serious plus in Mss Z,J (Ms E corrects this), which is an added **עוֹד** after **תּוֹסַפִּין** in 3:11, and is, as noted above, typical to Hebrew. The substitutions fall within the range of valid versions supported by non-Yemenite texts. No metathesis is found in any of the Yemenite mss.

To highlight the distinct stemmas, even the only five cases of plene versus deficient script will be shown, when Mss H,V consistently carry the plene version:

Table 12. Plene and Deficient Script

MT	HV	ZJE
2:6	דִּירוֹת	דִּירוֹת
2:7	דּוּכְרָנְהוֹן	דְּכְרָנְהוֹן
2:11	נְגוֹת	נְגוֹת
3:7	טְבוֹן	טְבוֹן
3:11	תִּיבְהֵתִין	תִּבְהֵתִין

Very few exceptions occur outside the two stemmas and they should not be considered sub-stemmas, but rather cross versions. No differences in full or deficient script are listed in the next Table.

Table 13. Cross Versions

Mss H,Z,J,E	Mss V,Z,J,E	Mss V,H,J	Mss V,H,J,E	Mss V,H,Z
1:5: וַיִּמְזוּ ( < > )	2:2,7, 3:15: קָדָם ( קָדָם )	2:7: וַיִּתִּיב ( וַיִּתִּיב )	3:8: סָבְרוּ ( סָבְרוּ )	2:6: וַחֲטָרִין ( וַחֲטָרִין )
1:6: לֹא־חָרָא ( לֹא־חָרָא )	2:4: וַעֲקָרוֹן ( וַעֲקָרוֹן )			
1:9: דְּמִלּוֹן ( דְּמִלּוֹן )	2:8, 3:7: קָדְמִי ( קָדְמִי )			
1:10: צֹחֲתָא ( צֹחֲתָא )	2:10: אַתְרַבְּרוּתְהוֹן ( אַתְרַבְּרוּתְהוֹן )			
1:12: בְּנִבְרִשְׁתָּא ( בְּנִבְרִשְׁתָּא )	2:11: קָדְמוּהִי ( קָדְמוּהִי )			
1:13: לְעֵדִי ( לְעֵדִי )	3:15,16: תִּדְחִלִין ( תִּדְחִלִין )			
2:9: מְשֻׁמֵּט ( מְשֻׁמֵּט )				
2:14: דְּמִנְצִיף ( דְּמִנְצִיף )	3:17: חוּבְדָּ ( חוּבְדָּ )			
2:15: יְכֻלִי ( יְכֻלִי )	3:19: מְטֻלְטְלִיא ( מְטֻלְטְלִיא ); וּלְשׁוּם ( וּלְשׁוּם )			
3:4: שְׁקָרִין ( שְׁקָרִין )				
3:5: עוֹן(ו) לִיא ( עוֹלִיא )				
3:8: מִלְכוֹ(ו)תָא ( מִלְכוּתָא )				
3:9: אֲשׁוּנִי ( אֲשׁוּנִי )				
3:11: עוּבְדָּד ( עוּבְדָּד )				
3:12: עָם ( עָם )				
3:14: שְׁבָחִי ( שְׁבָחִי )				

Within the parenthesis in the first column the errors of Ms V are shown, whereas in the second column the divergences of Ms H are listed. However, most of these errors are actually legitimate alternate Aramaic forms (e.g., רָעִין, לְעֵדִי, רָעִין and מַחְפּוּרִין, רָעִין, מַחְפּוּרִין). Some are found also in non-Yemenite mss. Some are mere errors (e.g., לֹא־חָרָא, עוֹלִיא, עָם), or a theological redaction (e.g., מִלְכוּתָא vs מִלְכוֹתָא). The cross versions also show the distinct agreement within the two major

stemmas, Mss V, H versus Mss Z, J, E. At the same time, the divergences are mostly insignificant and minute.

a. *Omissions* The omissions in the next Table are compared to Ms V even though some of them are harmonious with the MT:

Table 14

MT	Ms V	Ms H	Ms Z	Ms J	Ms E
1:4			<מחת>	<מחת>	<מחת>
1:5	<וימן>		<ו>דמקיימין	<ו>דמקיימין	<ו>דמקיימין
1:12			<ית> בלושין	<ית> בלושין	<ית> יתבי <ית> בלושין
1:14			<תמן>	<תמן>	<תמן>
2:2			<מאידרא>	<מאידרא>	<מאידרא>
2:9			<ו>מחפורין	<ו>מחפורין	<ו>מחפורין
2:15			<ברא>	<ברא>	<ברא>
			<ו>יניד <ב>ידיה	<ו>יניד <ב>ידיה	<ו>יניד <ב>ידיה
3:5			<ו>לא	<ו>לא	<ו>לא
3:7			<ו>לא	<ו>לא	<ו>לא
3:20			<אעיל יתכון ובעדנא <ההוא>	<אעיל יתכון ובעדנא <ההוא>	<אעיל יתכון ובעדנא <ההוא <ית> גלותכון

Ten out of the twelve omissions in Mss Z, J, E are found also in other mss and indicate true variants. The omission of **אעיל יתכון, מחת, והוא** **ובעדנא**, the two **ית** and the lone omission of Ms V are most likely scribal errors.

b. *Pluses* The pluses in the next Table found in Mss V, H are those compared to the MT. The pluses in Mss Z, J, E are compared to Ms V:

Table 15

MT	Ms V	Ms H	Ms Z	Ms J	Ms E
1:5	(ו)דמקיימין	(ו)דמקיימין	וימן	וימן	וימן
1:6			(ו)ד(לא)	(ו)ד(לא)	(ו)ד(לא)
			(ו)ד(לא)	(ו)ד(לא)	(ו)ד(לא)
2:15	(ויניד) ב(ידיה)	(ויניד) ב(ידיה)			
3:5	(ולא מתעכב)	(ולא מתעכב)			
3:11			עוד (תוספין)	עוד (תוספין)	עוד (תוספין)



The pluses of Mss V,H serve to facilitate the flow of the sentence. The first plus of Mss Z,J,H is the correct reading whereas the last is redundant. The two genitives correspond to the Hebrew **ואשר** which appears only once in the MT. It is carried over to the next phrase.

No metathesis takes place in either of the five Yemenite mss.

### 2.2.3.7 *Summary*

All the Tables show a clear division among the Yemenite mss, namely, two distinct stemmas. The divergences within each group are minor and immaterial, caused by the pitfalls of scribal activity and by the influence of local dialects. Similarly, the number and combinations of sub-stemmas are insignificant and almost non-existent. The Yemenite mss have none of the odd, nonexistent Aramaic forms which are so prevalent in the Ashkenazi and Sepharadi groups. Divergences are Aramaic alternatives such as verbal suffixes (Table 4, e.g., 2:9, 3:2, 3:18). Both groups show some survivals of a Palestinian version left intact by the Babylonian edition. These survivals are found mostly in Mss Z,J,E and are shared with non-Yemenite mss. This is especially true regarding the shared omissions (Table 14) and the pluses (Table 15). In the first group, Mss H,V, we have identified an ancient text that preceded our basic Ms V and is closer to the Babylonian version of TJ. Ms V copied it faithfully yet updated it for the contemporary Yemenite community (Table 13, second column). A similar activity is shown by Ms Z with the change from **וּמְבַדְרִיא** to **וּמְבַדְרִיא** adopted by its adherent scribes of Mss J,E.

The number of scribal errors is very minimal, the smallest in all the mss in this study. Except for two (the omission of **מחת** and **אעיל יתכון** **ובעדנא ההוא** in Mss Z,J,E), all errors are corrected.

Unique to the Yemenite mss is the demarcation between each book, whether by the summation of the number of verses (Mss H,V,Z,J), or by a notation on the sequence of the particular book within the Twelve (Ms E).

The accuracy and uniformity of the Yemenite version(s) of TJ is credited to the importance of tradition in Yemenite culture, this community being somewhat isolated from other Jewish centers, and often persecuted by Muslim rulers. In this study, this is reflected not only by the level of accuracy with the MT, but also by the accuracy of the Aramaic text of Scriptures. Aramaic has always been part of Jewish learning and it has been used not only in Torah study but also in daily communication, whether written or verbal.

Targum has not been only a matter of tradition, but has served as commentary and elucidation on Scriptures alongside the midrash.

#### 2.2.4 *Babylonian and Yemenite Mss—Comparison*

Josep F. Ribera has already found a strong affinity between Eb 80, Eb 88 and Ms Z.<sup>192</sup> Here, four more mss are added and a comparison will be made between Eb 80 and Eb 88 on one hand and the two Yemenite stemmas of Mss HV and ZJE on the other. Placing these divergences in a Table will sharpen the comparison.

Table 16. Eb 80, Eb 88 and Mss H,V,Z,J,E

No	MT	Eb 80	Eb 88	Mss H,V	Mss Z,J,E
1.	1:3	דסגיאָה		דאַסגיאָה	דסגיאָה
2.	1:4	מחת גבורתי		מחת גבורתי	<מחת> גבורתי
3.	1:5	<ו>דמקיימין		ודמקיימין	<ו>דמקיימין
4.	1:6	ולא תבעו ולא בעו		ולא תבעו ולא בעו	ודלא תבעו ודלא בעו
5.	1:10	גבשתא		גבעתא	גבשתא
6.	1:11	בנחלא		בנחלון	בנחלא
7.	2:9		ומחפורין	ומחפורין	<ו>מחפורין
8.	2:14		בפיתוח תרעה וטללה / בכוה	בפיתוח תרעה וטללה / בכוהא	בפיתוח תרעה וטללה / בכוה
9.	2:15		חיותא <ברא> <ו>יניד בידיה	חיות ברא ויניד בידיה	<חיותא> <ברא> <ו>יניד <ב>ידיה
10.	3:2		דאלהיה	דאלהיה	דאלהיה
11.	3:4		(גביי) שקרא כהנהא	(גביי) שקרהון כהניא	(גביי) שקרא כהנהא
12.	3:5		<ו>לא (מתעכב) עוליא	ולא (מתעכב) עוליא	<ו>לא (מתעכב) עווליא
13.	3:7		ולא (יפסוק)	ולא (יפסוק)	<ו>לא (יפסוק)
14.	3:10		יתובן דאתגליא	יתובן דא(י)תגליאו	יתובן דא(י)תגליאה
15.	3:11		אגלי	אגלי	אגלי
16.	3:14	חדא		חדא	חדא
17.	3:16	ייד		ייד	ייד (Z,J) ייד (E)
18.	3:19	מטלטליא ומבדריא		מטלטליא (V) מטלטליא (H) ומבדריא	מטלטליא ומבדריא
19.	3:20	אתין אקריב גלותכון		אתין אכניש יתכון	אתין תת גלותכון

<sup>192</sup> Ribera, "La Versión," 127–58.

This comparison shows an even number of cases in which the two Yemenite groups show a Babylonian origin. It also shows dialectical changes in the inflections of verbs (#14,15,19) and genitives (#8,10,17). The similarity with Mss Z,J,E is especially reflected in the interpretative phrase (#19), the omissions (#3,9,12) and the substitution (#5) but is offset by the shared absence of omissions in Mss H,V (#2,7,13). The two nominal suffixes (#7) as well as the two verbal suffixes (#14,17) are legitimate Aramaic forms. The substitution **גבשתא** reveals its secondary, critical version that was adopted by the (later) branch of the stemma of Mss Z,J,E. In this Table we see again (#18) the older origin of Ms H as opposed to the rest of the Yemenite mss. Ms H presents a version which reflects the transition between Eb 80, Eb 88 and Mss V,Z,J,E of the 15th to early 17th century.

### 2.2.5 *Ashkenazi Mss*

#### 2.2.5.1 *Ms T*

Ms T has no word abridgements because of its wide columns, yet filled-out end of lines do occur. It has the least number of *pisqaot*, four. It differs from the MT in 39 cases, 27 of them phonetically: 10 cases are deficient and 17 are plene; second person masculine singular **וְהֶאֱבַדְתִּיךָ** replaces **וְהֶאֱבַדְתָּ** (2:5), thus referring to the nation rather than to the land. The infinitive **קַל לְקַבְּצִי** takes on the *pi'el* **לְקַבְּצִי** (3:8) with no change in its meaning. However, change in meaning may be deduced from other cases: Twice *dagesh* is either absent, **וְקָשׁוּ** (2:1) or added, **מִמְשֶׁק** (2:8). **וְקָשׁוּ** suggests the reading of the root **קָשָׁה**, namely, a call (to continue) to be difficult (reference to **עָרְף קָשָׁה עָרְף**?) so as to underline Israel's sinful state. However, it might be simply an oversight; **מִמְשֶׁק** reads 'from the rustle' of the thistles which suggests, incongruously, that the ruin of Moab and Ammon will be caused by the noise of the thistles; the *nif'al* **יִבְזֹם** suggests the root **בָּזָה**, 'to despise,' rather than **בָּזָז**, 'to despoil.'

Five times omitted words reappear in the margin: A superfluous **וְ** (**וְאֵת**) and a plus **אֵת** (1:4); **מוֹאָב** (2:8); **שָׁפָה** (2:9); **אֶל תִּירָאִי** (3:16). An unattested **בת** (**ירושלם**) denotes the alternative reading for **בת** (**ירושלם**). The hapax **גֹּי** is written **גֹּי**, a serious oversight, and **מִרְאָה** is written **מִרְאָה** perhaps because the scribe knew **מִרְאָה** of Lev 1:16. However, the context does not allow this.

The only possibility of a true variant may be the plural feminine **אֵיבִיךָ** in 3:15 instead of the singular **אֵיבֶיךָ** which appears also in Mss

T,M,U,Y,R,P, in MurXII, T<sub>J</sub> and the LXX.<sup>193</sup> It allows for a better parallel with ‘your judgments’ and makes better sense concerning ‘enemies’ rather than an enemy which is specified nowhere. Whether the word refers to the nations of ch. 2 or the sinners of chs. 1 and 3, ‘enemies’ is more fitting.

Only two corrections are found within the text: An ‘ע’ is inserted above **ההרים** to read **הערים** (1:17). The plus **ההוא** after **ביום** in 1:8 is not punctuated to mark it as a mistake, a known scribal technique.

As in other mss, the Aramaic is written in full script (e.g., **בידיין**) perhaps because it is not punctuated. Therefore, it can be compared with other mss only consonantly. In general, the text is well preserved and the number of typical scribal errors are minimal. A serious consonantal mistake is **כל** instead of **קל** in 2:14. In place of **ואתרברבות** in 2:8 the scribe repeats the Hebrew **וגדופי**. Like Ms C, this one, too, shows the more common **טעותהון** in 1:5 instead of the unique **פתכריהון** (both mean ‘their idols’).

a. *Omissions* Several omissions occur, three of them are whole versets: 1:18b is missing, with a vacant space and the mark ‘a verse is missing’ in the margin (Ms P also deletes this); 3:6 is missing half a verse even though a space is available. A notation of this absence is made in the margin. It seems that this specific scribe did not have them in his basic text though he was alert to this flaw. However, in 1:14 he misses 10 vocables which have neither space nor a notation. This could have happened either because he did not have it or because he was forced to skip them to fit the Hebrew column. This mishap was somehow carried over, again, by Ms P (or vice versa?). Twelve other individual omissions occur in the Aramaic: **דארעא** (1:11), **ית** and **יתבי** (1:12), **רבא** (1:14), **בית** (2:6), **ית** (2:13), **עדרין** and **ברא** (2:14), **באוריתא** (3:4), **בגוה** (3:5), **מן (קדמי)** (3:7), **ליום** (3:8). A missing **לאוטבא** (1:12) is noted in the margin.

b. *Pluses* Four pluses occur: **מן קדם (רוחא)** (2:2) repeats the following **מן קדם (יומא)**. This might interpret the ‘wind’ as divine spirit that is associated with the ‘divine decree.’ This addition is found also in the Sepharadi Ms C which is replete with errors; **י (אלהים)** (3:8); **ו (יחדי)**, and a double **עלך** (3:17).

<sup>193</sup> The scribe of Ms M initially wrote the plural then corrected it.

c. *Metathesis* Two transpositions occur: פּשְׁלַחַאי for פּלְשְׁתַּאי (1:9) and דחילא יי אמר instead of דחילא אמר יי (2:11) which misses the meaning of נורא according to TJ.

An interesting phenomenon occurs in 2:2 where the similes מוֹצֵא and טוֹלֵא have a third variant תְּנַנֵּא in the margin without the marking ג"א.<sup>194</sup> This was no doubt due to the influence of Rashi whose commentary appears in the outside column.

Most of the errors indicate inattentiveness and ignorance of the language: The singular רְשִׁיעָא (1:3) should be in the plural; מן הדא replaces מן הדין (1:4); יתגן for ייתגן (2:3); וגדופי (influenced by the Hebrew on its right column) replaces ואתרברבות (2:8); וארים...גבורתיה (2:13); וניד (ידיה) (2:15); imperfect third person feminine איתרחצתא (3:2); participle plural נהמן (3:3), imperfect ממלון (3:13). The errors in 3:8 render the verse senseless.

Unique readings: מן הדא (1:4), מרד וצרח (1:14), די יעיבר (1:15).

As in other mss, Ms T is at times influenced by the Hebrew. There are six such cases: דמהלכים (1:9), עזה (2:4),<sup>195</sup> חית (2:14), דאמרה and דיתבה (2:15), אתן (3:20).

The above errors indicate ignorance of the Aramaic language, most probably, due to lack of use.

#### 2.2.5.2 Ms M

Ms M is the best witness to the MT with eight *pisqaot* (1:8, 1:10, 1:12, 2:1, 2:5, 3:1, 3:14, 3:16). Out of only 19 deviations, 15 are phonetic. גוי (2:5) is dropped with no correction, as is לְטָבֵא (2:7); שְׁבוֹתָם (2:7) is written in *qere*; עוֹל (3:5) seems to replace עוֹל with no grammatical or contextual justification; עֲלִיָּה (3:18) is crossed out and עֲלִיָּד is noted in the margin. This has no support elsewhere but it goes well with מִמֶּד in the previous verset.<sup>196</sup> הַגְּנוֹת replaces הַגְּנוֹת (1:5).

The Aramaic, too, constitutes an excellent text. As in other mss, here, too, the tendency is a plene script, but the *maggiah* often crosses out a full *hiriq*. Otherwise, correction is minuscule: He twice corrects the text

<sup>194</sup> We see תננא replacing טולא later in Ms R.

<sup>195</sup> עזה ends with a 'ה'; this could be a Palestinian pattern as it is found in Ms F, *Yerushalmi* (8x), and in other Palestinian literature, such as *Safra*, *Sifrei*, Mishnah and *Tosefta*, and in numerous Palestinian midrashim. No עזא (the city) appears in these same sources.

<sup>196</sup> MurXII supports the MT.

in the margin, דהבהון for דהבון (1:18) and עלִיָּד for עליה (3:18). Once he notes an alternative version (that of Ms V), מגבעתא for מגבישתא (1:10). An unclear sign (מ?) is written above a corrupt וימן (1:5). It is the only Ashkenazi ms with י״י for the divine name, perhaps a survival of a Babylonian influence.<sup>197</sup> In some cases it agrees with Ms V against other mss.

Even though the text is noticeably accurate, it still demonstrates the scribe's nescience, especially by unique readings, such as: לְאִגּוּרְיָא (1:5), דִּישְׁלֹן and נְכִסְהוֹן (1:12), וַיִּבֶד (2:13), דִּיעֵיבֶר (2:14), דְּמִסְגֵּיא (3:1), דִּינִי (3:15).

Some Hebrew influence is found: יוֹכָל and רִישְׁעֵי (1:18), אִיתְכַּנְשׁוּ and וְאִיתְקַרְבוּ (2:1), תִּבְעוּ (2x, 2:3), עָזָה (2:4),<sup>198</sup> חִיּוֹת and תְּרָבוּ (2:14), גְּלוֹת (3:10).

These and other divergences, especially verbal forms, are typical of scribal activity and are found in other mss.

a. *Omissions* The only omission, יְתַבִּי (ירושלם) (1:12), differs from Ms V but fully agrees with all other Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss.

b. *Pluses* Only two pluses are found, כָּל (דִּיתְבִּין) (1:11) and כַּד (בְּרַמְשָׁא) (2:7). The latter addition is also found in Ms F and therefore comes from a Palestinian source. As the Tables above indicate, under Ms F, the similarity between these two mss (and Ms T) is quite stark.

c. *Substitutions* The only significant difference occurs in TJ 2:1 where עִים replaces עִם (found in other mss). The call to draw near to God ‘with the generation that does not yearn to return to the Torah’ defeats the intent of the targumist and therefore can only be a glaring scribal error.

### 2.2.5.3 Ms A

Ms A (and Ms U) differs from the other Ashkenazi mss in isolating 1:7 by a *petuhah* and thus considering this verse to be an introduction to vv. 8–11, as many modern scholars do. 37 deviations from the MT

<sup>197</sup> According to the classification of I. Yeivin (Ribera, “La Versión,” 133).

<sup>198</sup> See note 195.

have been noted, mostly phonetic in nature, e.g., זְאִיבִי, פְּעֵלוּ, יָבֵא, לְעֵבְדוֹ, בְּת־פּוֹצִי, לְעֵבְדוֹ. A differing version is denoted once in the margin when הַהוּא replaces the MT הַזֶּה (1:4). No textual significance should be credited.

Unique to this ms is the deficient script dominating the Aramaic text. There are 47 differences in the Aramaic, mostly phonetic with no particular value. Scribal pitfalls are minimal.

There are but three corrections: The second יי מן קדם in 1:14 confused the scribe. The first expression was followed by רְבָא but the second one was to be followed by דְּבִיָּה. He wrote the right consonants but punctuated to read רְבָא again. Uncertain of the correct text, he added an 'א' above the 'ה' and reshaped the 'ד' to a 'ר'. This resulted in a hybrid רְבִיָּה. The other two corrections are an insertion of a 'י' in כְּסִמְיָן (1:17, an Aramaic alternative to the more common, סָמָן, 'blind ones') and בְּאִישִׁין (3:4).

Prominent divergences from Ms V, although at times they agree with other mss, include vocables and phrases such as: דִּי־הֵוָה (1:1); בְּתִיאָ (1:13); דְּבִיָּה מְרִיר וְצוּחַת (1:14); כְּסִמְיָן (1:17); (רְעוּתִיָּה) (2:3); גְּבֵר (פְּרִיק), '(God) is a *man* who redeems' instead of גִּבֹּר, 'valiant, warrior,' and בְּדִרְחֻמְתִּיָּה (3:17). The metathesis in דְּמַנְפִּיץ, 'that scatters, shakes out,' (should be דְּמַנְצִיף) appears also in group-member Ms R as דְּמַנְפִּיץ.

No omissions are found.

a. *Pluses* Two exegetical additions are the pluses in this ms: אוריתא (אולפון) specifies the 'instruction' (3:2) and לרוחצון (וישרון) describes in exalted terms the safe life awaiting the remnant of Israel (3:13) as opposed to the delusional belief of Nineveh (2:15). Another plus is the *vav* consecutive in 3:9, ו(למפלח). These pluses occur also in Ms R.<sup>199</sup>

b. *Substitutions* Three substitutions are found: דבית (יהודה) is a substitution for the more common אנש (1:4) and the insensible עם for עם (2:1) has already been noted in Ms M (but occurs in other mss). Only one case of substitution occurs also in Mss R,U,Y, when (אישני)

<sup>199</sup> There are many more similarities between the two mss as they constitute one stemma.

כָּל is substituted for עַל (3:9). However, it seems that originally כָּל was added after עַל to emphasize the inclusion of all nations in the Day of Conversion. At one point of transmission, עַל was accidentally omitted and so a substitution took effect. Mss A,R are also affiliated with Mss U,Y. These four mss have several similar readings and might therefore have originated from the same source.

In two cases an influence of the Hebrew over the Aramaic is noted: לְאַחֲרָא (1:6) and אֶתֶן (3:20).

Even though the text has parallels with other mss, it nevertheless shows some ignorance of Aramaic. The oddest form is רְבִיָּה. Other examples: עֲנוּתְנִיָּא אַרְעָא and דְּדִינִי רְעוּתִיָּה (2:3), וְאַבְדִּיָּךְ (2:5), second person feminine perfect קְבִילְתָּא (3:2), שׁוֹקִיָּהוֹן (3:6), תְּדַחֲלוֹן (3:7), עוֹבְדִיָּךְ and מְרִידְתָּא (3:11), בְּדִרְהֻמְתִּיָּה (3:17). On the whole, the text has minimal anomalous readings and is highly accurate.

#### 2.2.5.4 Ms U

Ms U has a clear, large handwriting. With its survivals of Palestinian vocalization integrated into the Tiberian system, it is replete with errors and corrected errors by both the scribe and the skilled hand of the *maggiah* Menahem Trabet.

The ms has seven *pisqaot*: 1:7,12, 2:1,5,8, 3:1,14. Even though there are 55 divergences from the MT, they are mostly minor and insignificant, such as a change between *tzere* and *segol* (4x), *patah* and *qamatz* (5x), lack of a *dagesh* (2x) or an extra *dagesh* (2x). Nine words are deficient and 12 are plene. Twice a *vav* conjunctive is superfluous, and three times it is missing. On three occasions a *mappiq* is missing. Serious errors are few: Omitted 2:2b in both Hebrew and Aramaic is corrected only in the Hebrew text; second גַּם in 2:14 and לָא in 3:2 are inserted above but כְּזָב in 3:13 is overlooked. וְהֶאֱבַדְתִּיךְ in 2:5 replaces the feminine form וְהֶאֱבַדְתִּיךְ, a well attested version in other mss, and possibly a true variant. An odd אֵיבִיךְ (3:15, perhaps a Palestinian plural form) is corrected by אוֹיְבִיךְ. A confusion of כ/ב results in כְּאֵשׁ instead of בְּאֵשׁ (3:8. It is correct in 1:18). A number of these errors are corrected by the *maggiah*. It is interesting to note that the divine name יהוה is vocalized in several ways: יְהוָה, יְהוֹה, יְהוּה, יְהוּה.

Putting these myriad yet marginal divergences aside, the MT consonantal text is amazingly accurate when compared with the 10th century Codex Leningrad or Aleppo. The majority of deficient readings is kept faithfully.



The Aramaic text contains many divergences from our basic text Ms V and on the whole prefers a plene script. In numerous places the original scribe corrected the text on top of erasures. The similar letter shapes attests to this. Some examples: in 3:5, the common זכאה is corrected by inserting a 'י'. The 'א' is voweled with a *hiriq* to read the masculine זכאי, 'innocent,' which may have confused the scribe with its feminine form זכאה.<sup>200</sup> The ambivalence of the scribe is reflected in his attempt to erase the 'י'. Another correction is made in 3:7 where the original 'י' of תידחלון is corrected for a 'י'. The next singular תקבלין justifies this change. In 3:15 מלכא (also in Ms Y) is skillfully changed into the more common מלכיה, thus harmonizing the Aramaic with the Hebrew. While the MT attaches 'the King' to God, TJ attaches 'the kings' to the enemies of Israel, thus blaming the kings of Israel for Israel's exile. The reading of 'the King' could have been the original text where it was in apposition to YHWH, the redeemer of Israel. Thus the 'enemies' are distinguished from God.

A few odd lemmas attest to the scribe's poor knowledge of Aramaic. For example, ממשט (2:9) for משמט or משמט, unknown in Aramaic, seems to be influenced by the Hebrew מממשק; twice תרעהא is not fully vocalized perhaps because the scribe had two versions, one with a *hiriq* the other with a *patah* under the 'ת' (2:14). Other odd words: איתגליתי (3:8), עופא (1:10, ואיבדריניך and לשחציא(ה) בליבא (2:15) is not corrected and a construct form (טבנות, 3:7) is not recognized; ומחסרין (3:18) instead of ומחסדין is a confusion between ד/ר rather than a substitution.

However, corrections by a later hand (Trabot) are extensive. Some are made on top of erased letters, others by diagonally crossing out the superfluous letter or horizontally over more than one letter. Omissions and corrections of full words are usually made in the margin with or without a marker (a circle with or without a 'tail'). Sometimes individual letters or full words are inserted in or above the text. Some examples: an erased הוא is replaced by זה (sic) while the definite article 'ה' remains intact (1:4); the 'א' of an original (רוגזא) ביומא is crossed out and the 'מ' is skillfully changed into a 'ס' to read ביום (2:3); ארעא is changed to ארע by crossing out the 'א', erasing the *qamatz* and turning the

<sup>200</sup> See, e.g., *Bavli, Sanhedrin* 45a.

*sheva* into a *qamatz* (3:19). However, in two cases words are not crossed out: first, when a divine name needs correction our *maggiah* circles the superfluous ם (2:2), and cages the last א in דאלהא (should be דאלהיה). A corrected ה is placed above the א. Second, when three words need to be replaced by one, each is marked by a circle (2:4).

A small א is squeezed between ד and ס, the final ן is crossed out and the original *patah* under the ת is turned into a *qamatz* in order to achieve דאסתחרו (1:6).

Examining the pre-*haggahah* text, one notices the omissions, pluses, substitutions and metathesis by the unknown scribe.

a. *Omissions* There are six omissions by the original scribe: <אינש> יהודה (1:4); <קריב> ומוחי (1:14); 2:2bβ is missing in the Hebrew text, but 2:2aα is missing in the Targum, evidence of the scribe's inattentiveness.<sup>201</sup> However, while the former is restored, the latter is not, which indicates the inessentiality of Targum for that community. Others are: <ד> כל (2:14); <ב> ידיה (2:15); <נביא> (3:2); <הא> (3:19); <ומבדריא> (3:19); <זמני> מועדך (3:18); <ן> לא (3:5); <לשום ולתושבחה> (3:20; also in Ms Y). All these omissions are restored by the *maggiah*. He also adds כד after אשקלון (2:7),<sup>202</sup> which is absent in all other mss. For unfathomable reasons, כד is sometimes added before a temporal word.

b. *Pluses* Only one marginal plus: (בל) ו (3:7).

c. *Substitutions* There are nine substitutions: עים instead of עם (2:1), which indicates an automatic copying, and (ועקרון) תיתמני לבית (ועקרון) replaces the more faithful תתעקר (2:4). The latter case might reflect a later deliberate change. The fate of Eqron, to 'be uprooted,' is replaced with 'she will be ordained for the House of Israel' (2:4). An echo to this prayer may be found in *Bavli Megillah* 6a where Eqron is identified with Caesarea 'the daughter of Edom' (read 'Rome'). Yose bar Hanina prays for the time when 'leaders of Judah will teach Torah

<sup>201</sup> Indeed, many scribes are confused by the similar versets in 2:2b.

<sup>202</sup> Mss F,N,Q,W and P add כיד after אשדוד in 2:4. See discussion above under Ms F and Commentary on 2:4.

there to the many.’ For support he quotes Zech 9:7 ‘and it (Philistia) shall become like a clan in Judah and Eqrn shall be like the Jebusites,’ that is, be taken over by Judah as Jerusalem was taken over by David. Rashi explains that Edom shall be (ordained) for the leaders of Judah; Both versions occur in other mss; עוֹלֵיָא for עוֹלֵיָא (3:5), in a variety of punctuations, is the frequent version and might be the original, Palestinian targum. However, to be true to the Aramaic, it should be עוֹלֵיָא; יִיְתִי replaces דִּינִי (3:8) as a result of a misreading and ignorance. If the verb אַתָּא was a true variant, and keeping with the first person of the verse, the verb should be אֵיְתִי; כָּל replaces עַל (3:9); פְּנִי, ‘to clear, empty, remove’ rather than פְּלִי remains close to the MT פְּנָה, which suggests a primary text. פְּלִי as ‘remove’ is secondary. It carries the meaning of ‘split, cut open’ which suggests a harsher fate for Israel’s enemy (or enemies); עֲלֵהוֹן (וּוִי) instead of עַל (3:18); אִיכְנוּשׁ...אִיקְרִיב instead of אִיכְנוּשׁ...אִעִיל and גְּלוּתְכוֹן instead of יְתְכוֹן (3:20). This last reading reflects the original Palestinian targum as this is the prevailing version in all the mss except for Mss V,H.<sup>203</sup>

d. *Metathesis* Three cases of metathesis occur: גִּבְרִיא תִמֶן (1:14); אִיתְרְגוּשְׁתָּא וְרִיגוּשׁ (1:15); תִּבְעוּ קוּשְׁטָא תִבְעוּ עֵינֹתְנוּתָא (2:3).

Hebrew influence upon the Aramaic is found several times, e.g., זְאִיבִי (3:3), וּמְקַבֵּל (3:12), פְּנִי (3:15), בְּחֻדָּה (3:17).

Since the provenance and the scribe are unknown, we cannot determine whether Trabot brought it from France or acquired it in northern Italy. However, the pre-corrected Ms U seems to be based on an ancient text with roots in Palestinian tradition.

On the whole, it is obvious that the scribe did his best to transmit as accurate an Aramaic text as possible from a much older ms, even though his knowledge of Aramaic was limited and Targum had little or no relevance to his community at that point. Based on this text, this ms might have been the basic text of Ms Y. The similarities will be noted in Tables 21,27,28 below.

#### 2.2.5.5 Ms Y

Ms Y has nine *pisqaot* (1:10,12, 2:1,5,8,9, 3:1,14,16), the largest number among the mss examined here (Ms A shares the same number but

<sup>203</sup> The rest of the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E, although missing the first verset, attest to the Palestinian version.

not the same verses). Disregarding the indiscriminate use of *degeshim* (a Palestinian vocalization pattern) and the sign of *hataf qamatz* for *qamatz qaton*, the number of divergences from the MT is 33. Most of them (24) are minor, phonetic differences, including the use of ‘א’ in lieu of ‘ע’ (2:2) with no correction or notation. The rest is more significant: twice a *vav* conjunctive is added (3:2) and twice it is omitted (3:7,11). Genitive differs in three cases: וְהָאֲבֹדָתֶיךָ (2:5) refers to the nation (גּוֹי) rather than to the land (אֶרֶץ), which is also reflected in the Aramaic; אֲרִיעִי (3:14) accords with the rest of the feminine imperatives; אֲרִיעִי (3:15) is an unjustified Hebrew form that could have been intended as feminine plural. In one case (2:13), ‘כ’ and ‘ב’ exchanged (בְּמַדְבָּר) even though TJ has it right. שְׁבוּתָם has no *ketiv*.

Only one omission in the MT occurs, יִשְׁתּוּ in 1:13, which is added in the margin.

A unique notation by the *maggiah* (found also in Ms P) is written in the right margin of 3:8: אֵת בַּפְּסוּק אֲלֵפָא בֵּית (‘the verse contains [all] the [Hebrew] alphabet’).

The Aramaic errors are countless. Many are mirrored in Ms U and some are oddities unique to this ms which stem from Ms U. They all indicate poor knowledge of the language. Examples: בְּמַבְרֵשֶׁתָא<sup>204</sup> (1:12); תַּעֲבַר and עֵיוֹק (1:15); וּנְבִילְתְּהוֹן (1:17); וּכְטָלָא (2:2); תַּבְּעוּ (3x. 2:5); מְהָא (2:3); קְטוּלִי (2:12); וְאָרִים instead of the third person singular and גְּבוּרְתִּיהָ instead of the second person singular genitive (2:13); קַפְדִּין (2:14); וַיִּימַר (יְדִיה) <sup>205</sup> (2:15); לְאַרְגָּזָא for לְאַרְגָּזָא (3:1); כְּאַרְוִין and דְּיִינְהָא (3:3); בִּירִינִיִּתְהוֹן (3:6); טְבוּוֹת (3:7). כְּנִישְׁתָּא, a well-known name for Israel, is vocalized twice כְּנִישְׁתָּא (3:14). The affinity with Ms U is most obvious in the automatic copying of the widely-known theological term שְׁכִינָה as שְׁכִינָה in 3:7 but correctly vocalized in both mss in 3:5,15,17; עֵינְוֹתָן (3:12). Ms U seems to vocalize אֲרַחֲקִית (3:18) but a close examination shows that the dot is in fact the edge of a *patah*. However, Ms Y copies this exactly the way it looks, even though the correct Aramaic is אֲרַחֲקִית or אֲרַחֲקִית. There are other mistakes in this verse that can be related to Ms U such as בְּיָד from בִּיד and וִינְהוֹן from זִינְהוֹן. Above מְטַלְלִיא there might be an insertion of a ‘ט’ but it

<sup>204</sup> נִי can be mistaken for מ as happened in the next footnote. מְבַרֶשֶׁת is a modern loan word from ‘brush.’

<sup>205</sup> This is clearly a misreading of וַיִּינַד found in Ms U.

is more likely that the scribe did not notice this omission. There are no corrections in the text of Zephaniah.

a. *Omissions* Three omissions reflect the scribe's inattentiveness. The rest, thirteen cases, correspond to the basic ms (postulated here to be the pre-corrected Ms U). The former cases are: **מבּתּר** <פּולחנא> (1:6); <אַרִי קריב יומא דעתיד למיתי מן קדם יי> (1:7b $\alpha$ ); <יבעו ישראל> (3:14). The latter cases are: <אַנש> יהודה (1:4); <עַד לא ייתי עליכון> (1:5); <קריב> ומוחי (1:14); <ברם שיצאה> (1:18); <ברא> (2:15); <תקוף רוגזא די> (2:2b $\alpha$ ); <נבייא> (3:2); <הא> (3:5); <אַנּון> (3:13); <עַל דְהוּז><sup>206</sup> (3:18); <אַקְרִיב> (3:19); <לשום> ולתושבחתא (3:20).

b. *Substitutions* Substitutions are consistent with the pre-corrected Ms U: **ישראל** (ועקרון) תיתמני לבית ישראל (2:4); a misreading of **וְאַבְדִּינְךָ**,<sup>207</sup> 'and I shall destroy you,' concerning Philistia, resulted in **וְאַיְבְדִּינְךָ** (2:5), 'and I shall exile/scatter you' (cf **מְבַדְרִיא** in 3:19); **דְעַדִי** instead of **דְעֵבֵר** (2:15). The verb **עַדִי** could be the surviving Palestinian version for 'pass by'; **בִישִׁין** (3:4) describes the prophets as 'evil' and thus mitigates the secondary meaning of **בְּאַשִׁין**, 'evil', as 'smelling bad, decaying' (3:4). Yet, this substitute could be a scribal error or could be due to his ignorance of the less common root **בַּאש**: **עַלִיהוּן** for **לְהוּן** (3:7); **יִיתִי**, 'will come' for **דִינִי**, 'My decree' (3:8); **עַל** for **כָּל** (עממיא) (3:9). In 3:15 two cases occur. The first, **אַעְדִי**, that faithfully translates the MT **הִסִיר** (3:15), may have retained the original Palestinian reading instead of **אַגְלִי**, 'He has exiled.' The interpretative nature of the latter reading fits better with a later development. The reuse of the verb **עַדִי** (2:15) in its second meaning may point to its original (Palestinian) version. The second, **פְּנִי**, 'to clear, empty, remove' replaces **פְּלִי**. As suggested above under Ms U, **פְּנִי** is the cognate for the Hebrew **פָּנָה**, which suggests a primary targum (cf Hos 3:1; Nah 2:9; Hag 1:9; Mal 2:13, 3:7). **פְּלִי** as 'split, cut open' suggests a bloody fate for Israel's enemy (or enemies); **בְּיָד** for **בִּיָד** is clearly a misreading; **מְנִיָד** for **מְגִוִיָד** is found in other mss, not only in 3:18, in

<sup>206</sup> **עַל** alone is missing from Ms U.

<sup>207</sup> A variant of **וְאַבְדִּינְכוֹן**.

a variety of forms. In 3:20 **איכנוש... איקריב** instead of **אעיל... אכניש** shows the original and correct verbs, **כנש** and **קרב**, which appear in the vast majority of mss; **גלוותכון** instead of **יתכון**.

c. *Metathesis* Three metatheses occur: **גְּבַרְיָא תְּמִן** (1:14), **אִתְרְגוּשְׁת** **וְרִיגוּש** (1:15), and **תבעו קושטא תבעו ענותניתא** (2:3). All these cases appear also in Ms U, where only the last case is corrected.

The influence of the Hebrew has crept into this ms as seen in other mss. Examples: **דְּאָמְרוּ** (1:12); **אִיתְכְּנְשׁוּ** (2:1); **זְאִיבִי** (3:3); **כְּהֵנְיָא** (3:4); **יְדִיָּךְ** (3:16).

As seen above, evidence for the dependence of this ms on the pre-corrected Ms U is overwhelming. Moreover, differences in vocalization reveal that they have resulted from an un-vocalized text, for the letters remain the same. Yet, Yehiel the scribe seems to have made some independent decisions, probably based on his prior meager knowledge of Aramaic. This is indicated, for example, by the persevering choice of the feminine **הֵהִיא** for **עֲדָנְיָא** and the number of *pisqaot*: three extra (1:10, 2:9 3:16) and one less (1:7).

Upon the completion of this ms for Jacob bar Isaac, no *haggahah* was performed.

#### 2.2.5.6 Ms R

Ms R is written in very clear and neat hand-writing. There are five *pisqaot*: 1:10, 1:12, 2:1,2:5 and 3:14. It carries 43 deviations from the MT, of which 34 differ phonetically, mostly in cases of deficient (14) and plene (7) writing. Three times a *vav* consecutive is added (1:4, 3:2) and twice a plus occurs (1:8, 2:2). Three words are omitted, two of which are corrected in the margin (1:6, 2:2) while one is overlooked (1:13). Nine times an error is corrected either by crossing out the extra letter (1:7, 2:9, 3:5), inserting the missing letter (2:12, 3:7) or restoring it in the margin (1:6, 2:2). The 'א' in **אליכם** (2:2) is crossed out and an 'ע' is replaced. Of the two pluses, **כָּל** remains (1:8) and **חרון** (2:2) is left unpointed. Once, a change in the accent reflects a different reading: In 1:14 the *zaqef qaton* is placed above **מַר** rather than above **יהוה**, thus rendering the 'voice/sound of the Day of YHWH' as bitter, not the agony of the falling warriors. This provides the 'sound' with an adjective to heighten the effect of anguish. However, this does not affect its targum which further rereads the difficult second stich by attaching **צִרְחָה** to **מַר** while reading it as a noun. In this way **קָל** is further described as

a ‘sound *that in it* bitterness and shriek.’ The second person feminine singular (וְהֶאֱבַדְתִּידְךָ, 2:5) is vocalized in the masculine (וְהֶאֱבַדְתִּידְךָ), thus referring to the nation (גּוֹי) rather than to the land.<sup>208</sup> In 3:15 the plural אֲבִיבִידְךָ replaces the singular אֲבִיבִידְךָ.<sup>209</sup> This could be the only true variant as it occurs also in Mss T,U,P and is thus reflected in TJ in all the mss except for Ms C.<sup>210</sup>

Targum, on the other hand, has many dissimilarities from Ms V. The Aramaic is notable for its numerous word abbreviations, e.g., אָמַּ for אָמוֹן for קָדְמוֹ, קָדְמוֹהִי for קָדְמוֹהִי. Many are the phonetic variants with unique forms, such as מְגַבְעָתָא, אִישִׁי, דְּמַרְדָּתָא, סָפוּ, לְכוּמְצָא, וּמְבַדְרִיאִי, וּמְבַדְרִיאִי. In several important variants this ms resembles Ms A, e.g., בְּתִיאַ plus בְּהוֹן after יִתְבוֹן in 1:13; the similes מוּצָא and תַּנְנָא in 2:2 (also Rashi), דְּמַנְפִּיךְ/דְּמַנְפִּיךְ (vs the correct verb נִצַּף); the substitution of the noun שִׁיעָא for the verb אֲצִיאָא in 3:6 (thus reducing somewhat God’s direct action against the Nations, which defeats the context); /דִּי מְרִידָתָא/ דְּמַרְדָּתָא in place of דְּמַרְיָדָתָא, and others. Characterizing Israel as מְרִיד, ‘rebellious,’ and/or the common exchange between ד/ר, results in דְּבִיָּה מְרִיד (1:14b) instead of דְּבִיָּה מְרִיד (מְרִיד appears in other mss). This reading portrays the sound of the Day as ‘rebellious.’

Three other readings change the meaning of TJ: the plural רְבוּנֵיהוֹן (1:9) agrees with the MT and points out that human masters are involved rather than God, thus distancing the Temple from ‘violence and deceit.’ Similarly, the plural מְדוּרֵיהוֹן (3:7) suggests private homes, national sovereignty in the land of Israel as opposed to the singular that infers the Temple. A change from ‘islands’ to ‘idols’ emphasizes the submission of the objects of faith rather than the submission of people, thus creating a parallel with ‘the gods of the land’ (2:11).

The few corrections seem to be made by the scribe himself as the orthography indicates, but obvious mistakes are not corrected: the miss-

<sup>208</sup> This reading is unique to the Ashkenazi mss except for Ms P, where the text is faded.

<sup>209</sup> Occurs in other mss.

<sup>210</sup> Before correction, Ms M has אֲבִיבִידְךָ and so do Mss Y,F and Codex Babylonicus of 916. This vocalization confuses or combines singular אֲבִיבִידְךָ and plural אֲבִיבִידְךָ. It is very likely that the “” signals the original plural form ‘enemies’ that parallels ‘your judgments.’ The plural also is needed to distance the ‘enemy’ from the singular ‘King’ (= God) that follows immediately. This plural form gave rise to TJ’s apposition of the ‘enemies’ with the ‘kings of Israel’ and thus to a completely different interpretation of the verse.

ing י after קִד is added (1:8); 'א' is crossed out and a 'י' is inserted to read חֲרָבִי (2:12). The same correction is made in וְאָרִים (2:13) and in חֲדָא ('to be glad') to read חֲדִי ('be glad!', 3:14). This imperative form is the correct one; 'ה' is inserted to read תִּרְעָהָא (2:14); 'א' is crossed out and a 'ה' is added to read בְּלִיבָה (2:15); caught in time, 'י' is crossed out in מְלָכִיָה (it is not pointed) to read the singular מְלָכָה (3:15), thus the apposition between 'King of Israel' and YHWH is retained; 'ה' is crossed out and a 'כ' is written above to read גְּלוֹתְכוֹן (3:20).

Yet several errors and inconsistencies cloud this textual masterpiece and attest to mechanical copying with little knowledge of Aramaic. Examples: בְּעֵדְנָא הֵהוּא (1:9) and בְּעֵדְנָא הֵהִיא (3:20);<sup>211</sup> אִישִׁיָּי (1:2) and אִישִׁיָּי (1:3,4); וְאָסְעָר (1:8,9) but וְאָשְׂאָר (3:12); דְּמִנְצִיָּי for דְּמִנְצִיָּי (2:14); כְּבִיהוֹר for כְּנִיָּהוֹר (3:5); צְדִיאָה for צְדִיאָה (3:6); וּמְבִדְרִיאִ instead of וּמְבִדְרִיאָ (3:19); שְׂבַחִי (3:14); אִיכְנִישׁ (3:19,20); וְאִישִׁינוֹן (3:19).

a. *Omissions* Omissions are very few: <שְׁבֹטָא דְּבֵית> (1:1), <אִנְשׁ> יהוּדָה (1:4), <בְּ> יוֹם (2:3), and <דְּ> כָּל (2:14).

b. *Pluses* Pluses are twelve, seven of them are full words: בְּעֵדְנָא הֵהוּא (1:9); (יְתָבוֹן) בְּהוֹן (1:13), יוֹם (תְּקוּף) (2:2); the addition of עֲמִמִּיא (דְּאֶרְעָא) (2:11) points out that the idols are associated with their worshipers rather than with the land thus focusing on the consequence of the punishment upon the nations; אֹרִיתָא, 'Torah,' specifies the nature of the 'instruction' and is redundant (also Ms A); (וְיִשְׂרוּן) לְרַחֲצֹן reflects the nuance of a prayer (also Ms A). Three of the other five pluses are *vav* conjunctives, (וְ) כָּל (3:7), (וְ) לְמַפְלָח (3:10) and (וְ) יָת (1:4), and two are genitives, (דְּ) אֶרְעָא (2:3) and (דְּ) לֵיתָא (3:5).

<sup>211</sup> This difference may stem from the attempt to agree with the Hebrew עַת which is feminine while עֲדָנָא is masculine. This situation occurs in other mss. However, we may witness here the struggle between the older, Palestinian vocalization and the later, Tiberian system. In the former, the underneath dot signifies a *mappiq* in the 'ה', though the *shuruq* in the 'י' is not evident. The latter reflects a typical Tiberian pointing system.



c. *Substitutions* They are: דְדָמָן for דְדָמָן<sup>212</sup> (1:5). The second 'ד' is tightly written because of lack of sufficient space, and therefore looks like a 'ז'. The result, 'that resemble in the name of their idols,' makes no sense and is clearly a mistake; בְּמִסְמוֹסֵי<sup>213</sup> for בְּנִימוֹסֵי (1:9); (מִן קִדְמֵי) יִי (2:2) for יוֹמָא is the result of the ubiquitous יִי מִן קִדְמֵי; עִנְוֹתָנִי for עִנְוֹתָנִי (2:3); טַעוֹת for נְגוֹת (2:11) may be either a misreading or a deliberate substitute to emphasize at this point in the verse the consequence of the punishment upon the idols, which was mitigated earlier. However, at the time of this change, the belief in the existence of idols, albeit powerless, alongside YHWH, was long gone. Idols cannot pray. Therefore, this has to be a result of a scribal error. Moreover, a tightly spaced writing of נגו can resemble טע. Since טעוֹת serves the meaning of אלהי in our verse, the word was accepted as legitimate; דְמוֹחָא<sup>214</sup> for דְמוֹחָא (3:1). The noun שִׁצְאָה (3:6) has no justification as a replacement for the verb אֲצַדִּיאָה and could point to two possibilities: an effort to create a passive verb to agree with the MT,<sup>215</sup> or the reading of a different syntax: 'I have destroyed nations (in a great) destruction, their palaces I have wasted...'<sup>216</sup> However, it seems that the answer lies in the effect of the Aramaic phrase in 1:2, אִישִׁי אִישִׁי שִׁצְאָה. It is hard to tell when this reading originated. This also occurs in Ms A, which has other shared renditions as the next substitute of כָּל instead of עַל (3:9). מִמֵּד for מִגִּיּוּד (3:18) is close to מִגִּיּוּד which variably occurs in all other mss except for Mss V,H. Only the last case justifies a true variant status.

d. *Metathesis* There are only three inner-vocable metatheses: לְכוּמַצָּא instead of לְכוּמַצָּא (2:2); תַּעְרָא instead of תַּרְעָא (2:14),<sup>217</sup> and תּוּקָא instead of תּוּקָא (3:8). The last case may be influenced by the Hebrew.

In one case, it seems, the scribe hesitated and left the word partly unvocalized: מְטַלְטְלֵיָא. He might have known both versions of מְטַלְטְלֵיָא

<sup>212</sup> This lemma does not appear in Ms V and was probably accidentally omitted. It appears in the rest of the Yemenite Mss H,Z,J,E, and in Eb 80 as well as in Ms F.

<sup>213</sup> A clear case of verbiage.

<sup>214</sup> דְמוֹחָא, if taken as a verb, root מַחֵי, describes the city as 'striking, destroying,' which renders the simile senseless, for the city is not in the position of strength.

<sup>215</sup> It is used as a verb also in Obad 14.

<sup>216</sup> The same intensity is found also in Amos 9:8.

<sup>217</sup> It is possible that the word סְקָל (metathesis) is marked in the margin.

(Palestinian) and מְטֻלְטְלִיא (Yemenite) and could not decide. However, he may have simply overlooked the *patah*.

Some of the irregularities stem from the influence of the Hebrew, such as: מְשַׁעְבְּדִיךְ, לְשֵׁם, אֲתִין, דִּיתְבו, חֶשֶׁד, עֲזָה.

In spite of the few serious errors in Aramaic, that bear witness to the lack of mastery of the language, most of the errors found in this ms are insignificant and they do not diminish the excellent text produced with diligence and careful work. Many of the unique errors occur also in Ms A which suggest that the scribe of this ms knew and consulted Ms A of 1294, or shared the same textual tradition.

#### 2.2.5.7 Ms P

Ms P can barely be read for the faded ink, yet the extensive sloppiness of the scribe, Barukh bar Avraham, can be easily recognized. Even the horizontal lines failed to govern the position of the written text. The 73 errors in the MT are mostly cases of deficient and plene script but cases of omissions (4), pluses (12), substitutions (5) and transpositions (1) demonstrate the poor quality of this ms. Some examples: 1:4 is confused; an odd והנשארתי (3:12); omissions: ולא before ישובו (written erroneously וישבו in 1:13; כל before הארץ (3:8); ירעו before רבצו (3:13); additions: an extra לא in 1:12, לְשֶׁאֲרִית before הם (2:6), את before כל (3:8); substitutions: כל את instead of בכל (3:19), יי instead of יהוה (3:20). 2:12 and 2:13 are combined. The scribe's uncertainty of the right punctuation for שבותם (2:7) regarding its *qere* or *ketiv* has resulted in no punctuation at all. The work of the *maggiah* is minimal. Only five cases of correction are noted in the margin, though letters, mostly vowel letters, are more often inserted (16x) or crossed out (10x). A Massoretic note in the margin next to 3:8, אב' פשוטות וכפולות, teaches that the verse contains all the Hebrew alphabet 'some once others more than once.' There are seven *pisqaot*: 1:12, 2:1, 2:1, 2:5, 2:8, 2:9, 3:1, 3:14.

The Aramaic is in a worse state. The scribe freely adds *vav* consecutive and shows many odd and faulty renderings, e.g., דיסגאה (1:3); איגוריא (1:5); צורחתא (1:10); אפקיד בלשין ויבלשון (1:12); פורענותהון, 'their retribution,' instead of 'His retribution' (1:18); דחיתבין (2:5); שפר (ימא) (2:6); קטולאי (2:12); וכוללה (2:14); דיאנא דחייבין (3:15). The unusual איתאמר (3:16) is the result of the duplication of the previous 'א' (ההוא). Vocalization is partial. The only remnant of a Palestinian vocalization is the *mappiq* under the 'ה' in הֶהוּא (e.g., 2:15). The occasional corrections concern additional or the absent letters, mostly vowels. The

'כו' in the odd **וּכּוּלְלָהּ** (2:14) are crossed out but not corrected to read **וּטְלָלָהּ**. Similarly the error **דיני** (**דיינהא**) in 3:3 is corrected ineptly by inserting an 'א' to read **דאיני**. There is an unsuccessful effort to dilate the upper line of the 'נ' to read **דאיבי**. An unusual correction is made in the erroneous **דייתבין** (2:5) where one of the two 'י' is made into a 'ח' to read, again erroneously, **דחיתבין** instead of **דחייבין**. The initial mistake was probably made as a result of the double **דיתבין** appearing before and after **דחייבין**.

There are many abbreviations, such as **עמו** for **עמון**, **צפר** for **צפרא**; evidence of the scribe's ignorance of the Aramaic he copied is found in the grammatical and contextual confusion in places such as 1:5, 2:2, 12b, and 3:15, 17, 20. It is also evident in the metathesis of **ישתאר** instead of the elementary **ית שאר** (1:4). In 1:14b Judah is described as **דביה** **מרד**, 'that in her rebelliousness,' instead of **מרר**, 'bitterness, trouble' probably due to her depiction as rebellious (3:11). But the more likely explanation is mundane: an exchange between **ד/ר**.

a. *Omissions* The entire verset **רבא קרוב ומוחי לחדא קל יומא** (1:14) is omitted out of haplography between two 'י'; another verset, **ארי גמירא ברם שיצאה יעביד עם כל יתבי ארעא** (1:18b) is overlooked between two **ארעא**. These exact apocopes occur also in Ms T which suggests an affinity between the two mss, whether direct or indirect. Similarly, the verset **עד לא ייתי עליכון יום רוגזא דיי** (2:2bβ) is omitted out of haplography between two **דיי**; **רוגזא דיי** is deleted before **ויניד** (2:15); 'י' before **אלההון** (2:7) and before **אמר** (3:15); **לא** <ן> (3:5,7).

b. *Pluses* **ד** (בית יהודה) (2:7); **קדמו** (**אקדימו**) (3:7) could be an error caught in time but not erased or crossed out. The same thing occurs in **כוש** (**הודו**) (3:10); **לא** (**לא**) (3:11); **עם** (**גמירא**) (3:19), an obvious case of confusion.

c. *Substitutions* The only case, **פלי** for **פני**, suggests an earlier reading.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>218</sup> See notation in Mss U,Y.

d. *Metathesis* The two cases are: ישתאר for ית שאר (1:4); אשראי אמר (3:17). Should be אמר לאשראה.

The scribe of this ms exhibits carelessness and ignorance of both the Hebrew and the Aramaic texts, and his text should not be taken to ascertain a different version by any measure. Serious omissions occur as well as many errors, which point to a haphazard undertaking. In some ways this ms is affiliated with Ms T, especially in regards to the same omissions and the marker **D** next to each *Seder*. Both scribes fail to identify their benefactor and therefore it is possible that they copied for their own use or for a potential sale. In fact, the scribe of Ms T, in a poem, states that he is opposed to selling the ms. However, he leaves this possibility open for the future.

Table 17. *Pisqaot* in Ashkenazi Mss

Ms T (6)	Ms M (6)	Ms A (9)	Ms U (7)	Ms Y (9)	Ms R (5)	Ms P (6)
		1:7	1:7			
	1:8	1:8				
1:10		1:10		1:10	1:10	
1:12		1:12	1:12	1:12	1:12	1:12
2:1	2:1	2:1	2:1	2:1	2:1	2:1
2:5	2:5	2:5	2:5	2:5	2:5	2:5
		2:8	2:8	2:8		2:8
				2:9		
3:1	3:1	3:1	3:1	3:1		3:1
	3:14	3:14	3:14	3:14	3:14	3:14
3:16	3:16			3:16		

Ignorance of Aramaic is reflected mainly in grammatical forms of verbs. Here are three examples from each chapter. Ms T has no punctuation for TJ and the ink of Ms P is quite faint:

Table 18. Ignorance of Aramaic Verbs

MT	Ms T	Ms M	Ms A	Ms U	Ms Y	Ms R	Ms P
1:3	דאסגאָה	דְּסִגְיָאָה	דְּסִגְיָאָת	דְּסִגְיָאָה	דְּסִגְיָאָת	דְּסִגְיָאָת	דְּיִסְגְיָאָה
1:12	דשִׁלֵּן	דִּישְׁלֵן	דִּישְׁלֵן	דִּישְׁלֵן	דִּשְׁלוֹ	דִּשְׁלֵן	דִּישְׁלֵן
1:17	וּישְׁתַּפֵּד	וּישְׁתַּפִּיד	וּישְׁתַּפִּיד	וּישְׁתַּפֵּד	וּישְׁתַּפֵּד	וּישְׁתַּפִּיד	וּישְׁתַּפִּיד
2:5	וּאבְדִינְד	וּאַבְדִּינְד	וּאַבְדִּינְד	וּאִיבְדִּינְד	וּאִיבְדִּינְד	וּאַבְדִּינְד	וּאַבְדִּינְד
2:14	דְּמִנְצֵף	דְּמִנְצֵף	דְּמִנְפִיף	דְּמִנְצֵף	דְּמִנְצֵף	דְּמִנְפִיף	דְּמִנְצִיף
2:15	דִיעִיבֵר	דִיעִיבֵר	דִיעִיבֵר	*	*	דְּעֵבֵר	דִיעִיבֵר

Table 18 (*cont.*)

MT	Ms T	Ms M	Ms A	Ms U	Ms Y	Ms R	Ms P
3:5	לְמִעֵבֵד	לְמִעֵבֵד	לְמִעֵבֵד	לְמִעֵבֵד	לְמִעֵבֵד	לְמִעֵבֵד	לְמִעֵבֵד
3:9	אִישׁוֹ	אִישׁוֹ	אִישׁוֹ	אִישׁוֹ	אִישׁוֹ	אִישׁוֹ	אִישׁוֹ
3:11	דְּמַרְיֵדָת	דְּמַרְיֵדָת	דִּי מְרִידָתָא	דִּי מְרִידָתָא	דִּי מְרִידָתָא	דִּי מְרִידָתָא	דִּי מְרִידָתָא

\* Substituted by the verb עָדִי.

The knowledge of nouns and their inflections is poor as well. Here are three examples from each chapter:

Table 19. Ignorance of Aramaic Nouns

MT	Ms T	Ms M	Ms A	Ms U	Ms Y	Ms R	Ms P
1:5	*	פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן	פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן	פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן	פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן	פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן	פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן
1:13	חַמְרִיהוֹן	חַמְרִיהוֹן	חַמְרִיהוֹן	חַמְרִיהוֹן	חַמְרִיהוֹן	חַמְרִיהוֹן	חַמְרִיהוֹן
1:15	אִיתְרְגוּשׁ	אִיתְרְגוּשׁא	אִיתְרְגוּשׁתָא	אִיתְרְגוּשׁתָא	אִיתְרְגוּשׁתָא	אִיתְרְגוּשׁתָא	אִיתְרְגוּשׁתָא
2:3	דְּחַלְתָא	דְּחַלְתָא	דְּחַלְתָא	דְּחַלְתָא	דְּחַלְתָא	דְּחַלְתָא	דְּחַלְתָא
2:12	קְטִילִי	קְטִילִי	קְטִילִי	קְטִילִי	קְטִילִי	קְטִילִי	קְטִילִי
2:15	חִיתָא	חִיתָא	חִיתָא	חִיתָא	חִיתָא	חִיתָא	חִיתָא
3:15	דְּבַבְךָ	דְּבַבְךָ	דְּבַבְךָ	דְּבַבְךָ	דְּבַבְךָ	דְּבַבְךָ	דְּבַבְךָ
3:17	בְּרַחְמֵתִיה	בְּרַחְמֵתִיה	בְּרַחְמֵתִיה	בְּרַחְמֵתִיה	בְּרַחְמֵתִיה	בְּרַחְמֵתִיה	בְּרַחְמֵתִיה
3:18	זִינְהוֹן	זִינְהוֹן	זִינְהוֹן	זִינְהוֹן	זִינְהוֹן	זִינְהוֹן	זִינְהוֹן

\* Substituted by טעותהון.

### 2.2.5.8 *Stemmas*

Three major stemmas are found among the Ashkenazi mss: AR, MP, and UY. The next Table contains text and forms that occur only in each group, except in the cases of substitutes (e.g., U,Y in 3:15; M,P in 1:12). Many of verbal and nominal forms vary in large measure among the mss. Yet some carry the exact same forms and vocalization. These will be included in the components that make up the three stemmas found here. Also included are unique consonantal structures even though punctuation differs (e.g., A,R in 2:2).

*Mss A,R* Mss A,R share similar readings and other aspects of copying. For example, the three columns on the pages are narrow and tight; final letters are short, especially ‘ך’; the tetragram is written by two ‘י’ with a thick line above and below the left ‘י’; *mappiq* is marked under the ‘ה’, a Palestinian survival.

With no colophon, Ms R is dated the 14th century while Ms A is dated December 12th, 1294. And indeed, from the substitutions, pluses and omissions, this chronology seems to be justified. For example, Ms R does not copy the plus **דבית** in Ms A (1:4), it corrects **חדא** to read **חדי** (3:14). Ms R also attests to the decline of Aramaic use (e.g., odd words such as **מסמוסי**, **כביהור**, **צדיאה**, and **אישיני**) and carelessness in copying the MT.<sup>219</sup>

Table 20

MT	Mss A,R
1:3	אָנְשָׂא; דְּסִגְיָאָת (2x)
1:5	דְּקִימִין
1:6	דְּחֻלְתָּא; לְאַחְרָא
1:10	צְוֹחְתָּא
1:12	אַפְקִיד
1:13	תְּמַרְיָהוּן; +(וּלְא יתבון) בְּהוּן; בְּתִין
1:15	אַתְרֵגוּשְׁתָּא
1:17	אָנְשָׂא
2:1	לְמַתְב; וְאַיְתְּקִרְבוּ
2:2	לְכַמוּצָא... וְכַתְנָנָא; תְּפֹק <sup>220</sup>
2:3	<ב> יוֹם רוּגְזָא
2:4	שְׁבִיקְתָּא
2:9	דְּמִלֹן
2:11	+ (דְּחֻלְת) עַמְמִיא דְּ(אַרְעָא) / (דְּחֻלְת) עַמְמִי (אַרְעָא)
2:14	דְּמַנְפִּיץ
2:15	בֵּית מִשְׁרֵי חַיּוּתָא
3:2	+ (אוּלְפֹן) אוּרִיתָא
3:6	שִׁיעִיתִי... שִׁיעָאָה... צְדִיאָה <sup>221</sup>
3:9	+ (וּלְמַפְלַח)
3:10	דְּאַיְתְּגִלְיָאָה
3:13	+ (וְיִשְׂרוּן) לְרוּחְצֹן / לְרַחְצֹן
3:14	יְבִיבוּ (יִשְׂרָאֵל)
3:15	דִּי בְּגוּיֵד
3:16	גְּבַר; יְדִיד
3:17	בְּדִיִּץ
3:18	לִיד; נְטָלִין; אַרְחִיקִית
3:19	וְאַפְרוֹק

<sup>219</sup> See Observation on Ms R above.

<sup>220</sup> Ms R has a metathesis in **לְכַמוּצָא**.

<sup>221</sup> In Ms R **שִׁיעִיתִי** is squeezed in at the end of the line in the form of **שִׁיעִי**.

In spite of the closeness of Mss A,R, there are still dissimilarities that can be accounted for by the reliance on a pre-vocalized or partly vocalized ms, by the use of other manuscripts, reliance on the personal knowledge of Aramaic, and typical scribal mishaps. Examples: על דבית יהודה (Ms A) and על יהודה (Ms R) in 1:4; איגריא (Ms A) and איגורא (Ms R) in 1:5; בנימוסי (Ms A) and במסמוסי (Ms R) in 1:9; נגות (Ms A) and טעות (Ms R) in 2:11.

*Mss U,Y* Ms U has many corrections. The difference in the *maggiah's* handwriting attests to the presence of a secondary hand. Ms Y shows the pre-correction of Ms U. For example, איגריא was changed into איגריא ('heathen altars; heaps; hills,' Ms U) but Ms Y reflects the original vocalization of איגריא ('roofs') in 1:5; in Ms U דאסתחרו was originally דיסתחרון which is the reading in Ms Y. This affinity is especially salient in the omissions in Ms U (later corrected) which do not appear in Ms Y, in unique readings and in shared metathesis. The pre-corrected text will be listed together with consonantal and vocalized readings. This stemma is the closest among the Ashkenazi mss:

Table 21

MT	Mss U,Y
1:2	שיצאה שיצי
1:3	ואישיצי ית אינשא
1:6	דיסתחרון
1:8	מלכיא
1:9	דימלן
1:10	מגבעתא
1:12	דמבלשין; <ואף>
1:14	גבריא תמן/גיבריא תמן <sup>222</sup>
1:15	איתרגושת וריגוש/איתרגושתא וריגוש <sup>223</sup>
1:17	אינשא
1:18	<ברם שיצאה>
2:1	למיתב; נאתיו/ואיתיו
2:2	+מן קדם יי יומא; לכמצא... ובטלא/לכמצא... ובטלא <sup>224</sup> ; פוק <על לא ייתי עליכון תקוף רוגוא דיי>

<sup>222</sup> Metathesis.

<sup>223</sup> Metathesis.

<sup>224</sup> All other mss have the feminine form.

Table 21 (*cont.*)

MT	Mss U,Y
2:3	תבעו עֲנוֹתֵינִי תֵא (עֵינֹתְנוֹתָא) תבעו קושטא; בִּימָא רוגזא <sup>225</sup>
2:4	ועקרון תיתמני לבית ישראל <sup>226</sup>
2:5	ואיבדרינד/ואיבדריניד
2:9	חסנון; יבזונן; <ד>מלח <sup>227</sup> ; ממשט
2:12	קטולי
2:14	וטללהא; דמנצף בכוהא חרובו; קפדין; <ד>כל חיות/ <ד>כל חות
2:15	ייכלי <sup>228</sup> ; דעדי
3:2	קבילת; <נבייא>
3:3	זאיבי
3:4	שיקרין; בישין
3:5	דאזיל ותקין; <הא>; שיקרא
3:6	אינשא <sup>229</sup> ; שיצתי/שיציתי... איצטדיאה... צדיאה
3:7	טבוות; שכינתי
3:8	ארי <דיני> <sup>230</sup> ייתי
3:11	עובדיד
3:12	בגונד
3:15	מלכא <sup>232</sup> ; אעדי/אעדי... מגנד
3:16	פני <sup>233</sup>
3:18	לד; <זמני> מועד; לקיבלד; <על> דהוו/ <על> דהוו <sup>234</sup> ; בחידוה/בחידוה
3:19	ומבדריא <אקריב>
3:20	בכל עמי ארעא; <לשום ולתושבחה>; איכנוש יתכון... איקריב גלוותכון

Despite the strong affinity between Mss U,Y, several readings are dissimilar, most likely as a result of Ms U being originally a non-vocalized (or partly vocalized) text. Other possibilities are the use of more than one manuscript, reliance on personal knowledge of Aramaic, or inattentiveness. Examples: לֹאֲחֶרָא (Ms U) and לֹאֲחֶרָא (Ms Y) in 1:6, an unknown form in Aramaic; גְּבִרְיָא (Ms U) and גְּבִרְיָא (Ms Y) in 1:12;

<sup>225</sup> Metathesis.

<sup>226</sup> Substitution for תתעקר.

<sup>227</sup> Metathesis.

<sup>228</sup> Substitution.

<sup>229</sup> The sacrifice of a “י” is due to lack of space at the end of the line.

<sup>230</sup> Plus.

<sup>231</sup> Substitution.

<sup>232</sup> Even though מלכיה is quite clear in Ms U, traces of a change from מלכא can be detected.

<sup>233</sup> This substitution also occurs in Ms P.

<sup>234</sup> The rest of the mss end the lemma with an ‘א’.

<sup>235</sup> The rest of the mss have ליד.



םָא אָ (Ms U) and מָהָא in 2:3; מוּעַדָד (Ms U) and מוּעַדָד (Ms Y) in 3:18.

Finding three major stemmas does not rule out overlapping of mss. The numerous cross versions among the Ashkenazi mss bear witness to the active proliferation of mss among Ashkenazi Jews. Elements of commonality occur among mss that do not share strong affinities overall.

*Mss M,P*

Table 22

MT	Mss M,P
1:6	דְּחַלְתָּא
1:12	דִּישְׁלוֹן <sup>236</sup> ; גִּיבְרִיא
1:15	וְאִתְרְגוּשָׁא / וְאִתְרְגוּשָׁא
2:5	וְיִ; לַאשְׁתַּצֵּאָה
2:15	דִּיעִיבֵר
3:4	דְּבִנְוָה
3:6	שִׁיצִיתִי... אֶצְדִּיאָה
3:12	עִינְוֹתָן
3:14	חֲדִי וּבּוּעִי

The exclusive resemblance of mss M,P is not striking, yet affinity is noticeable. Ms M far surpasses Ms P in quality. Disagreements do occur as is the case among other Ashkenazi mss. For example, the omission of a large part of 1:12 in Ms P; ײ (Ms M) versus ײ (Ms P); the plus of בִּיד in 2:4 (Ms P); דְּאֶלְהָא (Ms M) and דְּאֶלְהִיה (Ms P) in 3:2.

#### 2.2.5.9 *Sub-Stemmas*

The consonantal structure of the un-voweled Ms T is sometimes identical with that of Ms P, with Ms M or with both as opposed to the rest of the Ashkenazi mss. These three Mss should then be considered a sub-stemma:

Table 23

MT	T,M,P	T,P	T,M
1:10			גְּבִישְׁתָּא
1:14		>רְבָא קְרוּב וּמוּחִי לְחַדָּא קַל <יּוּמָא דְּעַתִּיד לְמִיתִי מִן קְדָם ײ	דְּבִיה מְרַר וְצוּח

<sup>236</sup> Same consonantal structure also occurs in Ms T.

Table 23 (*cont.*)

MT	T,M,P	T,P	T,M
1:17			כיסמן
1:18	/רִישְׁעִי/רִישְׁעָא/ <sup>237</sup> (רִישְׁעִי אַרְעָא)	<אַרִי גְמִירָא בְרַם שִׁיצָאָה יַעֲבִיד עִם כָּל יִתְבִי אַרְעָא>	
2:2	אֵל וּכְטוּלָא	תִּיפּוּק; לְכַמוּצָא... וּכְטוּלָא	
2:3	מְאָיִם		
2:4		תִּיתְעַקֵּר	
2:5	וּאֲבַדִּינָךְ		
2:6	דַּעַן; וְחוּטְרִין		
2:8			תְּחוּמָהוֹן
2:9	יְבִזּוּנְוֹן		
2:14			בְּכוּה; דְּכָל חַיּוֹת בְּרָא וּטְלָלָה וּלְפֹלְחָן
3:2			
3:4	דְּבַגְנָה		
3:8		<לְיוֹם>	
3:5	עוּלְיָא		לְמִיעֲבַד
3:9	אַיִשְׁנִי עַל		
3:11		עוּבַדְדָךְ	דְּמַרִידַת; אִיגְלִי
3:15	אַגְלִי... מְגוּיָךְ		
3:16	יָדְךָ		
3:17	גִּיבְרָא		
3:18	מִיָּדְךָ	לְקִיבְלִיךָ	

2.2.5.10 *Cross Versions*

Table 24a

T,Y	M,A	A,P	U,R	U,P
1:14: <עֲדַרִין>	1:15: תְּעִבּוּר 2:1: וְאִיתּוּ 3:7: מְדוּרָהוֹן 3:10: מִיָּתָן	3:7: (יִפְסוּק) 3:11: הָהוּא	1:17: כְּסָמָן 2:3: מֵא/מֵאָה אִם	1:12: לְאִיטְבָּא 3:7: תְּקַבְלִין

<sup>237</sup> Substituting יתבי.

Table 24b

Y,P	R,P	T,A,R	M,A,R	A,Y,R
3:8: Note: All alphabet letters are found in the verse.	2:5: וַיִּ	2:12: חַרְבָּא	2:13: וַיְרִים	1:12: לְאֹתָבָא

Table 24c

U,Y,R	U,Y,P	Y,R,P	M,A,U,Y	A,U,Y,R	U,R,Y,P
1:14: כַּל <ד>	3:15: פָּנִי	1:14: מַרְדָּל	2:1: עִים/עִם	3:9: אִישֵׁי בַל	1:4: אַנְשֵׁי

### 2.2.5.11 Text Shared by all Ashkenazi Mss

Regardless of the formal varieties, some similarities are shared by all the Ashkenazi mss such as: <ית> בלוֹשִׁין (1:11); בַּנְחָלָא (1:5);<sup>238</sup> וַיִּמֶן תִּיבִין (1:12); וַיְרִים יְרוּשָׁלַם (1:16); וַיְבַבָּא (1:13); גִּיכְסִיהוֹן... וּבִתְיָהוֹן (2:6); וַתְּהִי (2:6); <ברא> חַיִּיתָא and יָדִיהָ (2:15); הָא אַנָּא rather than הָאנָא (3:19); the paralleled verbs כִּנְשׁ and קִרְב in 3:20 (as against Ms V's עֲלַל and כִּנְשׁ). In 3:20 all the mss also read (קִרְב) ... יְתַכּוֹן (כִּנְשׁ) יְתַכּוֹן. Ms V has יְתַכּוֹן (כִּנְשׁ) ... יְתַכּוֹן (עֲלַל).

a. *Omissions* Out of 41 cases of omission, eight are individual letters: either conjunctive 'ו', genitive 'ד', or indirect object 'ב':

Table 25

MT	Omissions	Mss
1:1	<שבטא דבית>	R
1:4	עַל <אַנְשֵׁי>	URY P
1:6	מִבְּתַר <פִּלְחָנָא>	Y
1:11	עֲמָא <דְאַרְעָא>	M
	עֲמָא <דְאַרְעָא>	T
1:12	<לְאַטְבָּא>	T
	<וַאֲפִי>	UY
1:13	עֲמָא <דְאַרְעָא>	M
1:14	<קִרְיָב וּמוּחִי>	Y
	״ <רַבָּא קִרְוּב וּמוּחִי לְחַדָּא קַל יוּמָא דְעַתִּיד לְמִיתִי מִן קַדָּם י״	TP

<sup>238</sup> A scribal error of דַּמְן occurs in ms R. וַיִּמֶן is missing from Ms V, but occurs in other Yemenite mss. It is, therefore, an error.

Table 25 (*cont.*)

MT	Omissions	Mss
1:18	<ברם שיצאה> <ארי גמירא ברם שיצאה יעביד עם כל יתבי ארעא>	UY TP
2:2	<עד לא ייתי עליכון תקוף רוגזא די> <עד לא ייתי עליכון יום רוגזא די>	UY P
2:3	<ב-יום רוגזא>	R
2:6	<בית-מישרי>	T
2:7	<לטבא>	M
2:9	<ד-מלח>	UY
2:14	<עדרין> <ד-כל חיות>*	TY AU YR
2:15	<יכלי-ויניד>	P
3:2	<עובדוהי >נבייא>	UY
3:4	<ב-אוריתא>	Y
3:5	<הא-כניהור> <ו-לא מתעכב>	UY UY
3:6	<עדי צדיאה קרויהון מבלי אנש מבלי יתיב>	T
3:7	<ו-לא יפסוק>	AP
3:8	<ליום-איתגליותי> <ארי-דיני>*	TP UY
3:9	<אישני-על>	AU YR
3:13	<ארי-אנן> <דברו-כזב>	Y U
3:14	<יבעו ישראל חדא-ובועי>	Y
3:15	<אמר-יי> <ד-מלכיה-ישראל>	P P
3:18	<זמני-מועדיך>* <על-דהו-נטלין> <על-דהו> <ו-מחסדין>	UY Y U T
3:19	<ומבדריא-אקרב>	UY
3:20	<לשום-ולתושבחה>*	UY

\* Corrected by the *maggiah* of Ms U.

This Table shows that the greatest number of omissions occur in Mss U,Y, while the fewest occur in Ms M, the excellence of which is supported by other criteria as well. Clearly, the omissions of Ms Y are dependent on the pre-*haggahah* of Ms U. Several cases are a result of haplography when words are repeated. It also shows an affinity between Ms T and P and the cross influence among the mss.

b. *Pluses*

Table 26

MT	Pluses	Mss
1:4	(מן אתרא) מן (הדא) (וית שום)	T MAYR
1:6	(ו)ד(לא תבעו) (ו)די(לא תבעו)	MUYRP A
1:11	(אילילו) כל (דיחבין)	MY
1:12	(לא)	Y
1:13	(ולא יתבון) בהון	AR
1:14	(למיתו) ו(מן קדם)	P
1:18	גמירא (גמירא)	A
2:2	(דנסבא) מן קדם (רוחא)	T
2:2	(מן קדם) יי (יומא) <sup>239</sup>	UY
2:4	אשדוד) ביד <sup>240</sup>	P
2:7	ד(בית יהודה)	P
	כד <sup>241</sup> (ברמשא)	M
2:11	ד(חילא) ד(יי) <sup>242</sup>	YP
	ד(חלת) עממיא ד(ארעא) <sup>243</sup>	R
	ד(חלת) עממי (ארעא)	A
2:14	ו(אף)	M
3:2	אוריתא (אולפן) <sup>244</sup>	AR
3:5	ו(לא מתעכב)	P
	ו(לית קדמוהי)	T

<sup>239</sup> The correct text is **יומא** מן קדם.

<sup>240</sup> This addition is inexcusable. It could have derived from **כיד** or **כד** ('when, that, as, as though'), which scribes sometimes take the liberty to add as a missing link (see, e.g., in 2:7). But in our verse, this explanatory addition is unwarranted. However, this particular scribe, Barukh bar Abraham, could have known the Sepharadi tradition of **כיד** following **אשדוד** found in, e.g., Mss Q,N,W,O. Despite the possibilities for speculation, however, it remains an enigma.

<sup>241</sup> This addition divides the syntax differently than in the MT and TJ. By so doing, it separates 'the houses of Ashqelon' from 'they shall dwell in the evening.' What emerges is a scenario in which sustenance will be found only in the evenings. 'Upon them' is, thus, associated with the houses of Ashqelon and not with the previous description of the sheds for the shepherds and their flock.

<sup>242</sup> This addition shows that the scribe did not understand the translation of **נורא** as a substitute name for God, but rather as the divine nature in action.

<sup>243</sup> This reading of 'the fear of *the nations* of the earth' instead of 'the gods' comes to reject the notion of the legitimation and existence of deities other than YHWH. This translational tendency is typical of TJ and would be expected, but this reading is not found elsewhere and therefore must be the act of this one particular scribe.

<sup>244</sup> The addition of 'Torah' to 'instruction' is intended to clarify, but it ends up being redundant.

Table 26 (*cont.*)

MT	Pluses	Mss
3:7	ו(כל טבוון) קדמו (אקדימו)	AUYR P
3:8	(ארי) <דיני> ייתי	UY
3:9	ו(למפלח)	AR
3:10	(מעיבר לנהרי) כוש (הודו) <sup>245</sup>	P
3:11	לא (לא תבהתינ)	P
3:13	(וישרון) לרוחצן <sup>246</sup>	AR
3:15	ו(לא תדחלון)	R
3:17	(ויחדי)	T
3:18	עם גמירא (גמירא)	P

The number of pluses is minute and insignificant compared to the number and significance of omissions. As in other cases, these are the result of the liberties taken by the scribes to create a flowing text, a conflation of texts, and to express wishes and interpretation when the text seems to need clarification. Mss P,T in particular have a high rate of additions with no attempts to correct the errors. At other times, the pluses show inattentiveness and pure ignorance of the Aramaic text.

c. *Substitutions* In the Table of Substitutions, versions that are distinctly scribal errors are not listed (e.g., בניברשתא and במברשתא, מריד and מריד) as well as two legitimate Aramaic alternatives (e.g., בתין and יתבון, בתיא and ישובן) or differences in number when the addressee is concerned with no qualitative value (e.g., תדחלון or תדחלין). Since forms often vary, one is chosen for demonstration:

Table 27

MT	Version 1	Mss	Version 2	Mss	Version 3	Mss
1:4	על אינש הדין	TM MAUYRP	על <אינש> הדא	UYR T	על דבית	A
1:5	פתכריהון אִיגריא וימן	MAUYRP TAY TMAUYP	*טעותהון אִיגריא דדמן	T MRP R	אִיגריא	U
1:10	גבעתא	AUYRP	*גבישתא	TM		

<sup>245</sup> The scribe shows ambivalence about the rendering of Kush by India and presents them both.

<sup>246</sup> A wish that occurs in 3:12 and contrasts 2:15.

Table 27 (*cont.*)

MT	Version 1	Mss	Version 2	Mss	Version 3	Mss
1:12	גְּבִרִיא	AUR	גְּיִבְרִיא	TMYP		
1:18	יִתְבִּי	AUYR	רִישְׁעִי <sup>247</sup>	M		
2:1	עִם	RP	עִם <sup>248</sup>	MAUY		
2:2	וּכְטוּלָא	TMUP	*וּכְתַנְנָא	AR	וּכְטוּלָא	Y
	קִדְמַס יוֹמָא	TMAP	יִי קִדְמַס	R	קִדְמַס יִי יוֹמָא	UY
2:4	תַּתְעַקֵּר	TMARP	תִּיתְמַנִּי לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל <sup>249</sup>	UY		
2:5	וּאִבְדִּינָךְ	TMARP	וּאִיבְדִּינָךְ <sup>250</sup>	UY		
2:8	וּאִיתְרַבְּרוּת	MAUYRP	וּגְדוּפִי <sup>251</sup>	T		
2:11	נְגוּוֹת	TMAUYP	טְעוּוֹת <sup>252</sup>	R		
2:14	דְּמַנְצִיף	TMUYP	דְּמַנְפִּי <sup>253</sup>	AR		
2:15	וּיְנִיד	MAURP	וּנִיד	T	וּיִימַר	Y
3:4	גְּבִרִין	MAUYR	גְּבִרִין	P		
	בְּאִשִּׁין	TMARP	בִּישִׁין <sup>254</sup>	UY		
3:8	*מְלַכּוּתָא	AUYRP	מְלַכּוּתָא <sup>255</sup>	M		

<sup>247</sup> An attempt to harmonize with (ארעא) רשעי earlier in the verse.

<sup>248</sup> In some Ashkenazi mss, a *hiriq* looks like a *patah*, which can explain the error that continued to be transmitted, even though the text is quite clear, and עִם and עִם are two very common words. This senseless mistake indicates the dismal degree of the scribes' ignorance. Even an attempt to rationalize its interpretative value, does not fully excuse the error.

<sup>249</sup> This version is unique and expresses a wish. The root for this version may have resulted from the interpretation of Zech 9:7, where Eqrone is said to become like 'the Jebusite,' namely Jerusalem, which was taken over by David and populated by Judah. Eqrone, in this verse, parallels Judah. This wish indicates the scribe's improvisation in approaching Targum and does not constitute a true ancient variant.

<sup>250</sup> Having no evidence outside Mss U,Y for this version, it should be considered a scribal error. 'And I shall scatter you without an inhabitant' is meaningless, for the verse wishes Philistia to perish, not to be scattered.

<sup>251</sup> וּגְדוּפִי appears on the right in the Hebrew column and could be a result of a fleeting inattentiveness.

<sup>252</sup> נְגוּוֹת could be a distortion of נְגוּוֹת.

<sup>253</sup> Clearly a metathesis of נְצַף, 'to chirp,' and the more common נְפִץ, 'to scatter, shake out,' that has nothing to do with a bird's singing.

<sup>254</sup> This unique reading by Ms U (later copied by the scribe of Ms Y) is derived from its closeness to בְּאִשִּׁין. Both בִּישִׁין and בְּאִשִּׁין mean 'bad, evil,' the former being more common. However, Mss U,Y miss TJ's point in the choice of בְּאִשִּׁין which connotes more than simply 'bad.' It indicates 'displeasure; being insolent; to harm; to slander; bad smell' (e.g., Hos 7:16; Jonah 4:1; Mic 3:2, 4:6, 7:3). Cf Houtman, *Bilingual* XVIII:122. See Commentary on 3:4.

<sup>255</sup> This is also Ms V's reading, which alludes to the Kingdom of Heaven, a Rabbinic theology, in contrast to the plural מְלַכּוּתָא, which translates the intent of the MT, kingdoms of man. Those who reflect the MT miss TJ's point. On the other hand, the literal translation could indicate an early stage of the Aramaic translation.

Table 27 (*cont.*)

MT	Version 1	Mss	Version 2	Mss	Version 3	Mss
	אָרִי	MAUYRP	יֵת	T		
	דִּינִי	TMARP	יֵיתִי <sup>256</sup>	UY		
3:9	עַל (אִישְׁנִי)	TMP	כָּל (אִישְׁנִי) <sup>257</sup>	AUYR		
3:14	וּבֹעוּ	TMUP	יִבְּבוּ <sup>258</sup>	AR		
3:15	אֲגִלִּי	TMARP	אֲעֲדִי <sup>259</sup>	UY		
	פְּלִי	TMAR	פְּנִי <sup>260*</sup>	UYP		
3:17	גִּיבֵר	TMAUYR	גִּבֵּר	A		
3:18	וּמְחַסְדִּין	TMAYRP	וּמְחַסְרִין <sup>261</sup>	U		
3:19	מְטַלְטְלֵיא	TMAURP	מְטַלְטְלֵיא <sup>262</sup>	Y		

\* Possible true variants.

<sup>256</sup> In this case it is likely that Ms U either caused the deletion of דִּינִי or copied from a ms that had already carried the deletion. At one point in the transmission, יֵיתִי was added to read ‘for My decision *will come* to gather...’ The addition is made to emphasize that the act of judgment will indeed come. No other ms attests to this addition (or substitution) which indicates a free approach to Targum.

<sup>257</sup> Not found elsewhere. This change could have occurred as a result of a scribal activity: either by confusing ע/כ or by deleting עַל from the combination of עַל כָּל, which was meant to emphasize that all nations will convert.

<sup>258</sup> TJ uses both verbs יִבְּבוּ and יִבְּבוּ to translate the Hebrew verb רוּע in the *hif'il* (Joel 2:1; Zech 9:9). However, while יִבְּבוּ expresses ‘shout for joy’ (Zeph 3:14; Zech 9:9), יִבְּבוּ expresses a shout of anxiety (Joel 2:1). The noun יִבְּבוּ denotes the ‘sounding of an alarm, trembling, crying’ (Jastrow, 560). Mss A,R failed to make this distinction, and so did the Sepharadi Ms C and ms O. See Commentary on 3:14.

<sup>259</sup> This unique reading by Mss U,Y is somewhat suspicious. גִּלִּי, ‘to banish,’ is TJ’s interpretation of the MT הַסִּיר concerning the ‘false judges.’ עֲדִי is an exact translation of the MT הַסִּיר, ‘to remove.’ Ms U seems to have changed the word to be in concert with the MT, as it has done in other cases. However, it is possible to find here an early version of TJ which attempted to be a literal version of the MT. With the choice of פְּנִי, both synonyms could be early.

<sup>260</sup> The appearance of פְּנִי outside of Mss U,Y is surprising but not impossible. Ms P crosses readings with Mss U,Y, e.g.: with Ms U it reads לְאַיְטְבָא (1:12), תְּקַבְּלִין (3:7). With Ms Y it reads דִּי דְחִילָא (2:11), מְפַסְטִין (3:4), and both carry the notation of having the full alphabet in 3:8. While Mss U,Y omit 2:2bα, Ms P omits 2Bβ. The threesome read תְּרַבֵּי in 2:12 (also Ms M) and וְאַרִים in 2:1 (also Ms T). Both פְּנִי and פְּנִי mean ‘to remove.’ It is possible, though with some reservations, that פְּנִי was an early version of TJ, which tended to be more literal in its attempt to imitate the Hebrew פְּנָה.

<sup>261</sup> Clearly an exchange between ד/ר.

<sup>262</sup> Clearly one ‘ט’ was accidentally dropped. A small ‘ט’ is inserted above. Incidentally, מְטַלְטְלֵיא/מְטַלְטְלֵיא exist in Aramaic in the meaning of ‘shelter, booth,’ which has no bearing on our verse.



Most of the substitutions are the result of scribal errors due to a long period of transmission, free hand in transmitting texts, interactions, influences, or survivals from other communities such as the Sepharadi and the Palestinian.<sup>263</sup> In several cases Mss A,R and U,Y share readings.

d. *Metathesis*

Table 28

MT	Metathesis	Mss	Correct Text
1:9	פּשְׁלַתְאִי	P	פּלְשַׁתְאִי
1:14	גִּבְרִיא תִּמּוֹן	UY	תִּמּוֹן גִּבְרִיא
1:15	אִיתְרַגּוּשְׁתָּא וּרִיגוּשׁ	UY	רִיגוּשׁ וְאִיתְרַגּוּשְׁתָּא
2:2	לְכֹמְצָא	Y	לְכֹמְצָא
2:3	תְּבַעו קוּשְׁטָא תְּבַעו עֵינֹתְנוּתָא	UY	תְּבַעו עֵינֹתְנוּתָא תְּבַעו קוּשְׁטָא
2:9	מִמְשֵׁט	UY	מִשְׁמֵט
2:11	(דְּחִילָא) אִמְרֵי יִי	T	מִי יִי אִמְרֵי
2:14	תְּעֵרָא	R	תְּרַעָא
3:3	כְּאַרְיִין	Y	כְּאַרְיִין
3:17	אִשְׂרָאִי אִמְרֵי <sup>264</sup>	P	אִמְרֵי לְאִשְׂרָאִי

Though the number of metatheses is low, they occur, as in other criteria, mainly in Mss U,Y, P and T.

2.2.5.12 *Summary*

No two mss are exactly alike. None share the same *pisqaot* or the same artistic expressions. The only shared *pisqaot* are 2:1 and 2:5. Those in 1:8, 1:9 and 2:9 have no contextual or formal critical justification, and are probably the result of an artistic choice. However, three sets of mss have been identified that seem to belong to the same stemma. They share the same errors and the same peculiarities as well as the same odd verbal forms. Especially prominent is the shared third variant **תננא** (2:2) in Mss A, R that Rashi mentions, Ms Y's textual closeness to the pre-corrected, and pre-vocalized Ms U, and the same omissions in Mss P,T.

<sup>263</sup> **גבשתא**, for example, appears in the Palestinian Ms F, as **גבשותא** in the Yemenite Ms Z, and as **גיבושתא** in the Sepharadi Ms N; **טעותהון** occurs also in the Sepharadi Ms C; **על דבית יהודה** (1:4) appears in Ms A and in the Sepharadi Mss C,N; the clause **עד לא ייתי עליכון יום רוגזא דיי** (2:3) is missing in both Ms P and in the Sepharadi Ms C.

<sup>264</sup> Metathesis and a serious error where a common word such as **לאשראה** is bungled.

Yet, they differ in other important readings. Here the individual scribe expresses his own artistic talent and scholarship. While in most cases the MT is fairly accurate, Aramaic does not seem to be known, practiced by or essential to that Ashkenazi community or to that particular individual scribe, student or scholar. This decline can be deduced from Ms T, the oldest text, which dedicates a separate column for TJ, notes the completion of each book in Aramaic, and composes (or copies) a poem in Aramaic at the end of the Twelve. This 13th century ms still retains some pride and interest in Aramaic, which gradually diminishes with every succeeding ms.

Even though three major stemmas have been discerned, the extremely frequent occurrence of cross-usage of mss among the Ashkenazi communities points not only to inner geo-cultural influence but to outside interaction. Scribal families or individuals who produced these close texts, also produced varied readings as a result of many factors, internal or external, such as stereotypical mishaps due to inattentiveness, sloppiness, ignorance, fatigue or mood, reliance on personal scholarship that enabled individual expression of the Aramaic text, and most of all, on the deterioration of the use and relevance of Aramaic in the Ashkenazi community. Inherited models were not closely maintained which is prominently reflected even in the discrepancy of the MT's *pisqaot*. Yet the mere fact of preserving TJ and the relative commonality among these mss attest to a concerted effort to maintain and transmit holy scriptures, not only in text but also in handwriting.<sup>265</sup> This effort is further expressed by the uniformity of the *mise-en-page* and full *masorot* and by the consistent prevalence of square script. The very unique three-column page of Ms T with its added commentary of Rashi indicates a free approach to transmission of Scriptures, in which better understanding of the text becomes paramount. The goal of this unique and dedicated scribe is to disseminate true learning.

Some of the Ashkenazi mss went through *haggahah* by a later scribe.

When vocalization is disregarded for the sake of comparison, a stronger affinity among the mss is established. The large variety of verbal forms can be explained by copying from unvocalized text and by being unfamiliar with Aramaic grammar. A *naqdan* would add the punctuation according to his understanding of Aramaic grammar. For example: Mss M,A,U,Y

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<sup>265</sup> On Medieval scribes see M. Beit-Arié, *The Makings*, 77–92. Beit-Arié, who evokes the phenomenon of “inherited models,” concedes their limitations.



same consideration is given to **לא מתעכב** (3:5) which appears in Ms S. *Vav* conjunctive is often added to create a better flow in the sentence. The third and fourth are **ירושלם** <יתבי> and **בלושין** <ית> (1:12). The fifth is **מאידרא** (2:2) and the sixth is **ברא** (2:15). Except for <יתבי>, the rest are also absent from the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E and therefore are considered errors by Mss H,V, or reflect a separate, pre-redacted branch originated, probably, in Palestine.

Similarly, two pluses should not be considered superfluous. The first, **וימן** (תיבין) in 1:5 is most likely an accidental omission by the scribe of Ms V, as it occurs in all other mss, including the Yemenite ones. The second and the only legitimate plus is the genitive **ד(לא תבעו)** in 1:6. Ms C does not have this plus and it should be dismissed as an accidental omission, since this ms is well established within the Sepharadi textual tradition.

There are three substitutions, or differing versions, in the Sepharadi textual tradition. The first is **ובטולא**, ‘like shadow, shade,’ instead of **ובטלא**, ‘like dew’ (2:2). Since shadow does not disappear when the day breaks but rather begins to appear, the correct and probably original metaphor concerns the dew that evaporates in the morning sun.<sup>268</sup> However, if ‘from before the day’ was interpreted as the evening, then ‘shadow’ would be appropriate. These are three valid true variants. Ms C has an unvocalized **ובטלא**, probably to be read **ובטלא**, since it tends to prefer a plene script. The second, **מיניך** (other variations are **מינך** and **מניך**) instead of **בגויך** (3:18) (both mean ‘within you’), is common to all the Sepharadi and the Ashkenazi mss, as well as in the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E. It is therefore a valid true variant. The third substitution concerns the phrase **איכניש יתכון... איקריב גלוותכון**. Our basic text, Ms V, has **אעיל יתכון... אכניש יתכון**. Since both the Sepharadi and the Ashkenazi mss carry the same version, it is to be considered a true variant. Further support for this version comes from the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E which, though they miss the first part of the phrase, do show **ית אקריב ית גלוותכון**.

<sup>268</sup> **טלא** is found also in the Ashkenazi mss T,M,U (**טלא**), P and in the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E. But Mss A,R show the second correct possibility, **ובתננא**, ‘like cloud, smoke, vapor,’ that is similar to the imagery of dew. This version is quoted by Rashi, while Radaq mentions it as another version, i.e., an Ashkenazi one. See Commentary on 2:2.

2.2.6.1 *Ms X*

Ms X is unique among the Sepharadi mss in that it is the only ms with the Hebrew text followed by T<sub>J</sub> as found in the Ashkenazi and Yeminite mss. It is also the only ms with a two-column page, large and clear square script and full *massorot*. With 37 lines, it has the highest number of lines per page. It is the only ms ascribed to the Soria School of Joshua Ibn Gaon. These and the intricate *massorah magna* attest to the scribe's reverence and the importance he gave his work.

Surprisingly, its five *pisqaot* are identical to those of Ms N.<sup>269</sup> The name of the book, **צפניה** (and later **חגי**), seems to have been added later by an unskilled hand.

Three blotches cover some of the text: 1:12 T<sub>g</sub> and part of 1:13; parts of 2:15 T<sub>g</sub>-3:1-2 T<sub>g</sub>; 3:9–10. Except for two cases, the Hebrew text carries mostly minimal and insignificant divergences from Codex Aleppo and Leningrad: six deficient readings and seven plene. *Dagesh* in **בגדכפת** letters is inconsistent, e.g., **בֵּית** (1:9) and **פְּנֵה** (3:15), while extra *degeshim*, survivals of Palestinian vocalization system, occur, such as in **כעמרה** (2:9) and **לגבהה** (3:12). This system is also reflected in the lower *mappiq* in **ההוא** (3:19,20).<sup>270</sup> A differing vocalization occurs twice, **בִּגְדוֹת** (3:4) and **לְעֵד** (3:8). An extra 'י' ends **פְּשַׁעְתָּ** (3:12) while an extra 'ו' (**קרואי**, 1:7) is crossed out.

However, two mishaps occur: the opening of 1:7, **הס מפני אדני יהוה**, is repeated in the next verse with a marker to note the error. Still, the opening of 1:8, **והיה ביום זבח יהוה**, is elided even though its Aramaic translation is present. To fit a tight space, two lines in the Aramaic seem to have been redone in a tighter script by a different hand, but without remedying the mishap. The phrase is not added in the margin, which indicates momentary inattention and perhaps automatic copying of the original scribe. *Haggahah* may have not been performed, or perhaps the *maggiah* was unskilled. When a conscientious mistake is made, as in the doublet above, the scribe marks an inverted *segol* above the word, or as in the plus **לנו** in 1:12, he refrains from adding punctuation. The second serious error is the omission of 2:2b $\beta$ , a pitfall for several scribes. As in the previous case, here, too, a doublet of 2:2b $\alpha$  is added after T<sub>g</sub>, yet 2:2b $\beta$  is present in the targum. Again, two lines seem to be redone

<sup>269</sup> A rare phenomenon among the Western mss.

<sup>270</sup> It also occurs in the T<sub>g</sub>, e.g., 3:19,20. Here, though, it could result from the confusion between the Hebrew feminine **עַת** and its Aramaic cognate masculine **עֵידנא**, whose form is feminine. Found also in T<sub>g</sub> Ashkenazi Ms A.

without eliminating the confusion. No correction is offered in the margin. Other refashioning of individual or multiple lemmas dot the text. A concerted effort is made not to exceed the left margin.

The Aramaic text is of the finest quality with minimal flaws. In its alternate Hebrew and Aramaic and fine square script, it is more in tune with the Ashkenazi and Yemenite mss rather than with the rest of the Sepharadi mss. The precision of the scribe's work is evident in the lone elision of a 'ת' in רַמְתָּא (1:16). Abbreviated words are rare and appear only at the end of the line, e.g., אַמְרִי for אַמְרִית (3:7), בְּשֶׁמְ for בְּשֶׁמָא (3:10). The *naqdan* (whether the scribe himself or someone else) seems to be skilled in the grammatical rules of the Tiberian vocalization system and presents a meticulous text. For example, יַמְלִלֹן, בְּגִיִּד, אִישֵׁי, עַמְמִיא. However, the influence of the Palestinian vocalization system is well represented. For example, gemination is placed after a long vowel, e.g., בּוּמְרִיהוֹן, מִיגִיִּד, עִידְנָא, אִינוֹן or in letters such as 'ר' in אַרִי. Nonetheless, it has several odd forms: אֶדּוּ, דִּיבִי, הָא, קוּרְבָּנִין, עִינוֹתָן,<sup>271</sup> אִיתִי, and בְּהִתְהוֹן. The unique combination of two contrasting genders, בִּישְׁתָּא עוּבְדִי, could be excused due to the misleading feminine address.

The tetragram made by ם with a curved line on the left side resembles somewhat that which appears in Ms C, and resembles none of the Ashkenazi or Yemenite symbols.

a. *Omissions* There are only four omissions, among them three resulting from inattentiveness: אַרְעָא <ד> עֵמָא (1:11), יוֹם <שׁוֹפֵר ו> יַבְבָּא, אַרְעָא <ו> לֹא יַפְסוֹק (1:16),<sup>272</sup> and בְּרַם (3:7).

b. *Pluses* Three of the four pluses are shared by Ms C. The first, (אִישׁ) דְּבִית (יהודה) in 1:4, appears also in the Ashkenazi Ms R, and without אִישׁ in Mss N,C. Since this addition is absent from the majority of the mss and particularly from early mss such as EB 80 and Ms F, it should be regarded as instigated by a later scribe who, on one hand, referred to TJ's superscription 'The king of the tribe of the *House of Judah*' and on the other, to TJ's "improved" parallel to 'the inhabitants of Jerusalem.' The second plus, (מִן עוֹפָא) עִפְלָא in 1:10, close to the

<sup>271</sup> Also in the Ashkenazi Ms Y.

<sup>272</sup> Also in Mss S,Q,W.

Yemenite version עופֵלָא, presents both versions. Evidence for the knowledge of the Yemenite reading is found in Ms W where עופֵלָא is the only rendering, as well as the combination ובירניתהון... בתיהון (1:13).<sup>273</sup> The third plus, וְדָחִיל (קריב ומוֹחִי) in 1:14, appears also in Ms C as a substitution וְדָחִיל (קריב). The fourth plus is a *vav* consecutive added in 2:13 to וְאִישׁתַּמְמוֹ and is found in Mss S,C.

c. *Substitutions* Five of the ten cases are hapax legomena among the Sepharadi mss: מרר for מרר (1:14), a clear exchange of ד/ר, and a possible influence from Ashkenazi mss such as R,Y,P; in lieu of יַחְסָנוֹנוֹן (2:9), יבזוננון is repeated with no vocalization and over an erased word. This error is not corrected in the margin; מְלֻכָּא (דישראל) for מְלֻכִּיהַ (3:15) is a version found also in the Ashkenazi Mss U,Y. This reading restores the MT from TJ's interpretation in which the enemies of Israel are identified as their former kings, thus attaching מלך ישראל (God) to its apposition YHWH. It is difficult to determine its dating for it could be an early and original literal rendition or the act of a later scribe (or scribes) who wished to restore the intended meaning and syntax of the MT and saw no logic or purpose in TJ's translation. The early Babylonian Ms Eb 80 is torn after מל, where 'מ' is vocalized by a Babylonian *patah*, which is not helpful. However, the literal translation and its existence in other mss could indicate a true variant.

The next two substitutions occur in 3:20 and are most likely a result of temporary inattentiveness. The third person plural יתהון (אִיכְנִיש) instead of the second person plural יתכון is out of place in a verse which uses second person plural throughout; the reading of לְכוֹן (אֲתִין) for יתכון is also unjustifiable especially when it is followed by the preposition 'to'.

Four out of the next five substitutions are shared only by Ms C: First, פְּלִי (3:15) for שִׁיעִי (בעלי דבבד) foresees the destruction of Israel's enemies rather than their removal. In this way the 'corrupt judges' are distinct from the 'enemies.' Perhaps there is an attempt by a scribe to link this ending to that of the 'entire' mankind that opened the book (1:2–3), thus equating the character of these enemies with that of the wicked at large. The difference between our ms and Ms C is that the former reads 'enemies' whereas the latter reads 'enemy' according to

<sup>273</sup> Shared by Mss N,C.

the MT. Second, **עַל** (כָּל) instead of **עִם** (3:19) is a scribal error with no change in meaning. Third, **אֲרַעָא** (דָּא) for the distinct **קִרְתָּא** (2:15) is to be construed as a case of scribal neglect or perhaps a wish by a scribe to encompass the entire “land” of Assyria when addressing Nineveh. Fourth, the rendering of **וּלְדַחְלָתָא** instead of **וּלְפֹלְחָנָא** (3:2) seem to make a subtle statement. Both words serve as a buffer when referring to the worship of God and do not necessarily translate a specific Hebrew word.<sup>274</sup> While **דַּחְלָתָא** emphasizes ‘fear, reverence’ for the deity as well as God’s attributes such as glory, knowledge and justice, **פֹּלְחָנָא** emphasizes the ‘worship’ itself. It is difficult to surmise that Mss X,C focus here on the reverence for God and His attributes over actual ritual practices, for in TJ **דַּחְלָתָא** and **פֹּלְחָנָא** are often exchanged.

No metathesis takes place.

From the examination so far, the two mss, X and C, seem to have crossed paths at one point and thus should be considered as belonging to the same stemma. A particularly corrupt text, Ms C is of the late 15th century, and over a century later than Ms X.

Apart from the link between Mss X and C, Ms X shares the same *pisqaot* with Ms N, an unknown phenomenon among the Ashkenazi mss. They also share other exclusive similarities within the Sepharadi mss: **עֵיִרְיִן**, **בְּגוּוּה**,<sup>275</sup> **חֵית בְּרָא**.<sup>276</sup> Exclusive readings occur also with Ms Q: **תִּידְחִלּוֹן**, **תְּקִיפְתָּא**, **מְזִמְנוּהִי**, **דְּאִיסְתְּחָרוּ**, **בְּסַחִיתָא**, **קָרִיב** וּמוּחִי, **אִיפְקִיד**, **מְשַׁעְבְּדִד**.<sup>277</sup> **אִישְׁנִי**, **וְאִישְׁנִי**, **לָא** (פְּסוּק)

As already shown above, in many cases Ms X shares inflections of verbs and nouns with all the Ashkenazi mss, but often with Mss A,R,U,Y against Ms V. For example, **אִינְשָׁא** (T,U,Y), **אָסִיף** (U,R), **אִיתְכְּנָשׁוּ**, **בְּסַמֵּן** (U,R), **צְוֹחְתָּא** (A,R), **פַּתְכְּרִיהוֹן** (U,R), **וְאִישְׁי** (A,U,R), **וְאִיתְקָרְבוּ** (R), **חֲמִיד** (A,Y,R), **קְטִילִי** (T,A,R), **דְּמִנְצָף** (M), **וּוִי** (T,M,U,Y), **אֲרַחִיקִית** (T,A,R). At the same time, other forms are identical with Ms V against all the Ashkenazi mss and sometimes the Sepharadi mss as well. For example, **בְּתִיהוֹן** (also N), **וּבִירְנִיתְהוֹן** (also N,C), **בִּידִיה** (also N,C), **דְּמוֹחִיָּא**, **בְּדִיִּין**,<sup>280</sup> **בְּרַחְמֵתִיה**, **בְּרַחְמִין**,<sup>279</sup> **וְתַקִּין**,<sup>278</sup> **שְׁקִרִין**, **אִיתְרַחִיצַת**, **קְבִילַת**

<sup>274</sup> See, e.g., **דַּחְלָתָא**, Houtman, *Bilingual* XVIII:228, **פֹּלְחָנָא**, XX:70–71.

<sup>275</sup> Ms N has **בְּגוּוּה**.

<sup>276</sup> Ms N has **חֵיתִית**.

<sup>277</sup> Ms Q has **מְשַׁעְבְּדִד**.

<sup>278</sup> Ms V has **שְׁקִרִין**.

<sup>279</sup> Ms V has **וְתַקִּין**.

<sup>280</sup> Ms V has **בְּדִיִּין**.



These observations show that Ms X has an affinity with both the Ashkenazi and the Eastern textual traditions, formed through centuries of transmission of preserved texts from both Palestine and Babylonia. As the earlier text, it must have been consulted by others. The influence of Babylonian tradition has to be sought in direct or indirect (Yemenite?) cultural exchange. The careful transmission of the Hebrew and T<sub>J</sub>, and the graphic decorations attest to the scribe's dedication and erudition, and the pride he took in his work. The manuscript could have been copied for his own use, for a patron or for synagogue use.

### 2.2.6.2 Ms S

The raw Ms S, with no *naqdan* to vocalize and *maggiah* to correct errors in this document of T<sub>J</sub> alone, is damaged in several places. Its semi-cursive script shows inconsistent morphology. For instance, the letter 'א' is written in three ways. The numerous abbreviated names begin in the superscription except for Amariah and continue with אשקלון, אשדוד, עקרון (2:4), יהודה (2:7), צבאות (2:9,10), ישראל (2:9, 3:14,15), סדום, עמורה (2:9), ציון (3:14), and ירושלים (3:14,15). Orthography is inconsistent, e.g., דאמן/דמן, ייתי/יתי, and odd and unique forms, such as דיסגאה, מגבעאתא, וייביד, דאילהיא, דייעיבר<sup>281</sup> and טבין instead of טבון,<sup>282</sup> are manifold. Writing נפלין ('falling') instead of נטלין ('carrying [weapons]'), causes the reader to doubt the scribe's erudition in Aramaic. Plene and deficient scripts are equally used. Each *pisqa* is granted the space of 3–4 letters, and the seven of them differ from any other combination. On the margin alongside 1:12, פ probably marks a *petuha*. סדר on the margin of 3:20 may note its recitation in the daily morning prayers.<sup>283</sup>

Corrections are few and it seems that the scribe had no means to erase errors, which he appears usually to have caught on time. When a letter is omitted, it is inserted above the appropriate space: 'י' is marked above the 'ג' in דיסגאה (1:3); 'י' is marked above the 'ר' in פתכרהון (1:5); another 'י' is added between 'מ' and 'ת' in מיתן (3:10); מן is inserted

<sup>281</sup> Also in Mss F and C. Probably a combined די יעיבר as in the Ashkenazi Ms T (Ms M has דייעיבר). Mss N,W have a similar form, דייעיבר.

<sup>282</sup> Both forms are correct in the meaning of 'good' in the plural, in opposition to 'bad' in plural. E.g., *Yerushalmi. Berakhot* 68a; TO Gen 32:11. Ms F shows a third legitimate form, טבן. Cf TO Gen 41:35.

<sup>283</sup> *Siddur Sim Shalom* (ed. Rabbi Jules Harlow. New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 1985), 14.

between רשיעיא and ק (short for קדם) in 1:7; דמן is added above the 'ד' in דעובדיהון (1:11) to read דדמן עובדיהון. When the mistake in ביום (3:8) is noticed, the scribe first tries to turn the 'ב' into a 'ל'. Unsatisfied, he writes ליום without marking ביום an error. The 'ב' of בקורבנין (3:10) is rounded to read a 'כ'. The 'ד' in ביד (3:18) is not corrected to read ביך (which could be done effortlessly), but a dot is placed above it instead.

Very few vowels are marked to ensure the right reading: on only one occasion, a letter is vocalized to guarantee the reading of עם rather than (the correct) עם (2:1). Other words seem to be punctuated arbitrarily: דבגוה (3:4), לאשראה (3:5), בגויך with a *rafeh* above the 'ג' (3:12), בפומהון, and דמניד (3:13). Other dots seem to be faults in the paper and not an intended punctuation.

a. *Omissions* Only two serious omissions take place: the doublet יומא יי קדם in 1:14 caused the accidental omission of eleven words from the first יי to דביה (1:14aβ–bα). Even though this exact omission occurs in Mss T,P, it does not prove dependence or affinity, for this phenomenon is common. Several mss make the same mistake in 2:2 where two similar clauses follow each other. In addition, the entirety of 2:12 is missing without any marking. Three *vav* conjunctives are absent when compared to Ms V: <ו>לא קבילת (3:2) is exclusive to Ms S, and except for Ms T, <ו>מחסדין (3:18) occurs nowhere else; <ו>לא יפסוק (3:7) is found also in Mss X,Q. No significance should be given as to the versional value of these omissions.

b. *Pluses* One out of the three pluses, (דיי) דחילא in 2:11, misses the apposition of God and His attribute 'The Awesome.' This plus appears also in Ms Q and the Ashkenazi Mss Y,P. The other two pluses are *vav* conjunctives: ו(לית קדמוהי) in 3:5 is unique among all mss, except for Ms T, and ו(אישתממו) in 2:13 which is shared only with Mss X,C.

c. *Substitutions* There are only two substitutions: 'ט' is exchanged with 'פ' thus creating a unique and meaningless reading of נפלין, 'falling,' instead of נטלין, 'carrying [weapons]' (3:18). עם rather than (the correct) עם is shown also in Ms N and the Ashkenazi Mss M,A,U,Y. There is logic in this rendering only if the scribe understood the addressee, who are called to gather and draw near, as the righteous

among Israel. By mixing *with* the people, the righteous can affect those who do not desire to repent (see note 248).

d. *Metathesis* Only one metathesis takes place: כומרִיהון עים פלחיהון in 1:4.

Several factors point to a poor scribe who copied a targumic ms for his own study. No effort is made to correct omissions or errors professionally. Space is precious: many abbreviations;<sup>284</sup> short spaces for *pisqaot* as well as the absence of space between books; no summation of verses; the traditional opening of each verse with the first or two words of the corresponding Hebrew verse is absent; small papyrus, a cheaper writing material than parchment. The Aramaic-only text might show its secondary importance in the community, yet it still held interest for the individual student or scholar.

### 2.2.6.3 Ms N

The first striking observation in Ms N is the unusual reading in 1:5 of פת כומרִיהון (also in Ms W) quoted by Radaq instead of פתכרִיהון.<sup>285</sup> כומרִיהון is squeezed into an insufficient space and is not vocalized. This might show doubt concerning the validity of this rendition. Yet, no suggestion of another reading is offered. The presence of accents in the Aramaic text is also quite unusual (also in Ms X).

The semi-cursive script is mostly unified and clear. However, the letters ב/כ, ד/ר are at times indistinguishable and many of the letters, especially נ,כ,ו,ב vary in size. It is very similar to the orthography of Ms Q and indeed many readings are similar, but not all. They share three *pisqaot* (2:1, 3:1, 3:14) but Ms N has also *pisqaot* in 2:5 and 2:8, and the five agree with those of Ms X. Coming from the same period of the 14th–15th century,<sup>286</sup> both mss N,Q could have originated from the same scribe using two different mss at two different times, or from a scribe of the same school.

<sup>284</sup> The phrase פתגם נבואה מן קדם יי (Hag 1:1) is notable in that only the first letter of each vocable is written with a dot above each letter.

<sup>285</sup> However, this is not the version Radaq uses, but rather one of several (he quotes two or more versions): out of his 36 quotations only six are precise. This reading could be a corrupt conflation of two unusual terms within the same context, כומרִיהון, ‘their idol priests,’ in the previous verse and פתכרִיהון, ‘their idol garments, idols.’ There is no Aramaic word פתכומר.

<sup>286</sup> The dates given in the ms are three confusing and conflicting dates: 3250, 3577 and 4035 to Creation, which correspond to 510, 183 BCE and 275 CE.

Apart from typical scribal errors (e.g., במדברא instead of כמדברא), errors in grammatical forms and omissions, questionable forms exclusive to this ms occur, which raise some doubt as to the scribe's erudition in Aramaic: מלך (1:1) instead of מלך; מגיבושתא (1:10) is a blunder from either מגיבושתא or מגיבושתא; באישה (1:18, 3:8); אַתּוּן, a feminine form for the masculine plural 'Cushites' (2:12); כְּהֵנָּא without the genitive (3:4); לְאַפְרָשׁ ('to separate, set aside') instead of לְאַפְרָשׁ, 'forever' (3:5); the clumsy phrase דְּאַרְעָא רְשִׁיעֵיאַ (3:8); *pe'al* יְתִיבֹן instead of *haf'el* יְתוּבֹן (3:10), and מְרִידָתָּ (3:11). The unique use of the participle דְּמִסְתַּחֲרֵן instead of the perfect and common דְּאַסְתַּחֲרוּ could have been derived in the course of transmission from an earlier scribe, who wished to harmonize with the participles in the previous verse, and link those who turn back from the worship of YHWH with those who worship the hosts of heaven and swear by the names of both YHWH and the idols. However, דְּמִסְתַּחֲרֵן is a feminine plural form that does not agree with the previous masculine plural form. Rather, דְּמִסְתַּחֲרֵין is the correct form. We see here additional evidence for the decline of Aramaic in the Sepharadi community. However, both רֵן and רִין are alternative plural masculine suffixes.

The doublet יי מן קדם in 1:14 caused the verbosity קריב ומריר לחדא מרר and צווחתא מרר דביה before מרר. מרר וצוח is not punctuated. The phrase מארע בית שכינתיה (3:7) corrects the previous לעיניכון אמר יי with no vowels, and the misplaced אמר יי (3:20) is not corrected except for a two-dot marker above אמר.<sup>287</sup> Some inconsistencies occur: יהוה is symbolized by יי (1:1), אַדְנֵי (1:7), or יהוה (1:8); ווי and ווי; אַיְנְשָׁא and אַיְנְשָׁא; רְשִׁיעֵי אַרְעָא and רְשִׁיעֵיאַ. The Palestinian *mappiq* found also in Mss X,Q and in the Ashkenazi mss A,R,Y finds its survival here in יהוה but only in 1:9.

a. *Omissions* A few omissions are made, five are added in the margin with a small marker above the missed words: <דמן> (2:2); <עבדו> (2:3); <ההוא> (3:16); <עם כל משעבדיך> (3:19) and <לעיניכון> (3:20). There are five exclusive omissions in Ms N: haplography occurs between the two אַרִי in 1:7; <דארעא><sup>288</sup> (1:11); <דביה> (1:14); the adverb לרוחצן is left without its verb דיתבא (2:15); the dropping of ברחמן (3:10) leaves out the very important Targumic characteristic

<sup>287</sup> Though לעיניכון is inserted in the margin in the next and last line.

<sup>288</sup> Also in Ms T.

which depicts the exiles as returning to the land of Israel through the divine attribute of mercy.

b. *Pluses* The ten pluses are insignificant. Two genitives, (וְדָלָא בְעוֹן) in 1:6 and (רְשִׁיעֵיָא) דְּ(אַרְעָא) in 3:8; dittography in (בְּכָל טַבּוּן) . One *vav* consecutive is added, (וְאִיפְקִיד) (1:12) and four words: (מִן קִדְמָא) in 1:12, a ubiquitous phrase, found also in Ms W, that might be original; (עַל) כָּל- (קִירוּיָא) in 1:14 was somehow influenced by 1:10; (אַשְׁדוּד) בֵּיד in 1:16 is an addition of exaggeration; the superfluous בֵּיד occurs also in Ms P (and ms O) and is another form for בְּד, ‘when, as, as though.’

c. *Substitutions* Only four substitutions are noted in Ms N: (עַל) דְּבֵית for (עַל) אִינֶשׁ in 1:4 appears also in Ms C<sup>289</sup> and the Ashkenazi Ms A. These are two interpretations for ‘Judah’ and its parallel ‘the inhabitants of Jerusalem.’ Since אִינֶשׁ exists in the Babylonian (Eb 80) and in the Yemenite texts, and דְּבֵית exists in the Palestinian tradition preserved in the Sepharadi (N,X,C) and Ashkenazi (A) mss (note the Palestinian *mappiq*, for example), it is safe to suggest the latter may be a Palestinian version. This interpretation links this ‘Judah’ with the superscription ‘King of the tribe of the House of Judah,’ thus focusing on both the tribe of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem against whom God will raise His hand. There is no need to equate ‘the house’ with the House of David, for TJ protects David and his dynasty and will not call for its destruction.

The second case is the reading of תְּרַבָּא instead of תְּרַבֵּי in 2:12 found also in Mss Q,T,A. There is no justification for this change since clearly the Hebrew has the first person singular. A mere ‘sword’ diminishes the divine involvement in universal justice. The third case is exclusive to Ms N when אַרְעָא (בְּפִיתוּחַ) replaces תְּרַעָא (בְּפִיתוּחַ) in 2:14, a clear case of scribal inattentiveness and ignorance. The fourth case, וּלְדַחְלָא instead of וּלְפֹלְחָא, appears also in Mss X,C (none in the Ashkenazi or Yemenite mss). The two terminologies are interchangeable and could be made by a scribe who felt that drawing near to ‘the fear’ of God is more appropriate than to ‘the worship’ of God. We witness another case of the liberty scribes took in the transmission of the Aramaic.

No metathesis is observed.

<sup>289</sup> Ms X has a conflation of both versions: (עַל) אִינֶשׁ דְּבֵית.

Ms N is mostly affiliated with Mss X,Q,C and less so with Mss S,W. Some of the common readings have been noted above. However, some common divergences should be further noted among Mss N,X,Q,C: the Palestinian *mappiq* in הָהוּא (Mss N,X,Q); the plus (אִיפְקִיד) וְקָאֲתִין, לחִיּוֹתָא, דְאִיבִי, וְלֹא יִפְסוֹק, the singular verbs תִּדְחַלִּין and תִּקְבְּלִין,<sup>290</sup> אֲרַעָא<sup>291</sup> (Mss N,C); the plus בִּיד, תְּרַבָּא, בְּמַדְבְּרָא, אֲצִדְיָא... אֲצִדְיָא<sup>292</sup> and verbal forms such as לְמַתְב, אִישְׁנִי,<sup>293</sup> שְׂבַחִי<sup>294</sup> (Mss N,Q);<sup>295</sup> בְּתִהוֹן בְּתִהוֹן... and the use of the root רַב rather than רַבְרַב in וְאִתְרַבְּבוּ,<sup>296</sup> דְאֵלֵהָא, the substitution וְלִדְחַלְתָּא (Mss N,X,C); וְאִוְבְּדִנְכוֹן, חֲתִית, חֲדָא וְבוּעִי,<sup>297</sup> וּמְקַבְּל<sup>298</sup> (Mss N,X). A unique reading that Ms N shares with Ms S is the substitution עֵם instead of עָם in 2:1. It is one of the few words vocalized in Ms S. For all these combinations of agreement among the mss, see Tables 32–38 below.

With the various combinations of shared readings, it becomes clear that all the Sepharadi mss share unusual readings in small or larger groups, and that their inter-textual reciprocities occur at a high rate.

The occasional unvocalized words left within the text, the corrections, especially the added כּוּמְרִיהוֹן within the left-out narrow space, and the failure to correct errors, even lengthy clauses, indicate that the manuscript was originally written without *haggahah* for personal use or commissioned for a scholar. The slightly different letter shapes in the margins suggests a later *maggiah* other than the scribe.

Even though the number of errors is relatively small, the quality of the errors indicate lack of erudition in Aramaic, as well as automatic copying. It seems that the focus of the scribe is placed on the skill of handwriting.

#### 2.2.6.4 Ms Q

The semi-cursive script of Ms Q is very similar to that of Ms N as noted above. They share uneven and inconsistent letter forms, especially those of ב, ל, ג, ו, and the almost indistinguishable כ/ב and ר/ד. They both

<sup>290</sup> Also in Ms W.

<sup>291</sup> Also in Ms W.

<sup>292</sup> Also in Ms S.

<sup>293</sup> Also in Ms X.

<sup>294</sup> Also in Ms W.

<sup>295</sup> Also in Ms W.

<sup>296</sup> Also in Ms S.

<sup>297</sup> Also in Ms S.

<sup>298</sup> Also in Mss S,W.

read the unique **במדברא** instead of **כמדברא** (2:12), and have the plus **כיד**.<sup>299</sup> Otherwise the two mss differ greatly in every other aspect. The *mise-en-page* of Ms Q has 24 lines in each page, Ms N has 32. Each column in Ms Q is narrower in width than Ms N's and lacks the summation of verse numbers after each book. Each Hebrew word that precedes the Tg lacks the marker of three dots. Instead, it has a *siluk*. Unlike Ms N, Ms Q marks the first word of the following page at the bottom of each right page, but it does not carry accents. Its number of *pisqaot* is only three (2:1, 3:1, 3:14), whereas Ms N has two more, in 2:5 and 2:8.

It is very likely that the two texts were copied from two different mss. Some salient examples: **דאסתחרו** (Ms Q), **דמסתחרו** (Ms N) in 1:6; **י אלהים** (Ms Q), **אדני יהוה** (Ms N) in 1:7; **מגבעתא** (Ms Q), **מגיבושתא** (Ms N) in 1:10; **בניברישתא** (Ms Q), **בנברשתא** (Ms N) in 1:12; **דאלהא** (Ms Q), **דאלהא ולדחלתא** (Ms N). Whether it was the same scribe is difficult to determine.

Similarly, it is hard to determine whether the two texts had the same *naqdan*. Vocalization differs when consonantal structure is the same. For example: **קדם** vs **קדם**, **מלך** vs **מלך**, **דסגיאָה** vs **דסגיאָה**, **דחלתא** vs **דחלתא**, **ומחפורין** vs **עם**, **ההוא** vs **ההוא**, **קטלא** vs **קטלא**, **דחלתא** vs **אינש** vs **אינש**, **ותקין** vs **ותקין**, **גברין שקרין** vs **גברין שקרין**, **ומחפורין** vs **אינש**. On the other hand, many are vocalized similarly especially some unusual renderings. For example, **אינשא**, **אינשא**, **עובדיהון**, **ואסער**, **אינשא**, **משמט**, **וחטרין**, **וכטולא**, **איתכנשו**, **למתב**, **יכול**, **בסמן**, **גבריא**, **ותברא**, **איכניש**, **מועדך**, **בדיין**, **אתגליותי**, **עובדיך**, **אצדיאה**... **צדיאה**, **איתקרבת**, **איכניש**, **לעיניכון**, **לעיניכונ**, **איקריב**. The reason for the differences, assuming the two mss had the same *naqdan*, can be explained in the time elapsed between the two works and the lack of mastery of Aramaic grammar and language. Again, as in Ms N, the focus of the scribe and the *naqdan* (if two different people were at work here) seems to be placed on the calligraphy and correct copying, rather than on correct Aramaic.

In addition to this conclusion, a number of odd forms occur in this ms. For example, **לאיתרברבא**, **אירחיקת**, **עויליא**, **ואבדינד**, **איפקיד**, **לעיניכון**, **לעיניכונ**, **דוקרניכון**, **דיעבר**, **בניברישתא**, **דוקרניכון**.

The activity of the *naqdan* in this ms is quite diverse. He vocalizes words against their orthography that fit Ms N. For example, **לחוטרין**, **תוספון**, **דמרדיף**. The extra 'ד' in **דחילא** (2:11) is erased. An 'א' is added to the original **חרב** to read **חרבא** (2:12); **בפיתח תרעא** is cor-

<sup>299</sup> Also in Mss W and P.

rected to read **בְּפִיתוֹחַ תִּרְעָהָא** (2:14); the unvocalized **קדם** is corrected in the margin to read **קַיִים** (2:9); the ‘א’ and the *qamatz* under the ‘ע’ of the original **ארעא** are erased to read **ארע** (3:19).

Two cases of redundant, unvocalized clauses are marked with two horizontal dots over *each* word. In the first case (1:3), five words are repeated from the previous verse. From the similar shape of letters it seems that the scribe himself corrected the mishap with the right **אסף אינשא** **ובעירא אסף עופא דשמיא**. In the second case (3:3), between **כְּאַרְיוֹן** and **נְהַמִּין**, for unfathomable reasons, five words from the previous verse are repeated. The same hand added in the margin a large portion of 3:17 that had been dropped. A marker, a circle with a tail pointing to the margin, similar to that in the Ashkenazi Ms U, is placed between **אַמַר** and **חֻבְדָךְ**, where the omitted words should have been. A missing **יומא** (2:2) is added in the margin.

a. *Omissions* Three omissions are not corrected: **ו>לא יפסוק** (3:7), which occurs in Mss X,S,W; **<כל> עובדיהון** (3:7) and **>יבעו ישראל** **<חדא** (3:14).

b. *Pluses* Ms Q has two pluses: with a trace of **כיד** (**אשדוד**) in the Ashkenazi Ms P (it has **ביד**) and its appearance in Ms F and Sepharadi mss (N,Q,W,O), it seems that **כיד** (‘when, as, as though’, 2:4) was a Palestinian original.<sup>300</sup> Its existence makes no contribution to the text. The second plus, (**ו>למיפלא**) in 3:9, is found also in Ms W and the Ashkenazi Mss A,R. This addition is superfluous.

c. *Substitutions* Only three substitutions occur within the text of Ms Q: **רְשִׁיעֵי (ארעא)** replaces **יְתִבֵי** (1:18), which is influenced by the similar phrase in the same verse; **חֲרָבֵי תְהוֹן אָנוּן** replaces **חֲרָבֵי תְהוֹן**, thus lessening the direct involvement of God’s judgment and at the same time harmonizing with the MT third person plural;<sup>301</sup> the change from **קַל (עופא)** (‘sound’) to **כָּל** (‘all,’ 2:14) shows a serious flaw in the scribe’s knowledge of both Hebrew and Aramaic. If it was an innocent mistake, it could easily be mended.

<sup>300</sup> See Commentary on 2:4.

<sup>301</sup> The Ashkenazi Ms P also attempts to change the person by reading **יְתְהוֹן**, the Hebrew direct object **אוֹתָם**.



No metathesis is found.

From the similar script of the corrected text, it seems very likely that the scribe noted most of his errors in time and corrected them. From the unvocalized redundant phrases it seems quite likely that originally the text was unvocalized and that a *naqdan* was someone other than the scribe. He had to adjust his knowledge of Aramaic to the orthography (e.g., וְחוֹטְרִין, וְדַמְרִדִּית). The mistakes throw doubt on the scribe's erudition in Aramaic grammar and language. The small folios and narrow columns, the one-sided paper, the liberal space for *pisqaot* and between books suggest that this ms was commissioned by and for a scholar or a synagogue.

#### 2.2.6.5 Ms C

The 30 lines-per-page Ms C, the sporadic spaces between and within verses, the indented opening of each book, the many *Toseftot* throughout the ms, and the flowery colophon was a commissioned undertaking for the honorable physician David ben Nissim of the Vivas family of Northern Africa. In one of its transmigrations it belonged to Samuel David Luzzatto, the noted Italian scholar, who expressed his amazement at the untraditional division of *pisqaot* in Proverbs.<sup>302</sup> Kasher expressed his surprise at the Babylonian Aramaic *Toseftot*, which our ms claims to be of Eastern (Palestinian) origin.<sup>303</sup> Here, we express surprise at the use of a double-sided paper, as well as at the unvocalized and faulty text prepared for the honorable physician. The oddities and divergences in Ms C have already been published in Sperber's apparatus.

The six *pisqaot* also differ from those in the other Sepharadi mss and the *pisqah* in 3:8 is exclusive among all mss (see Table 29 below). Also unique is the repetition of the last word (on the right page) at the top of the next (left) page.

The many divergences in this ms are derived from odd and unique readings, omissions, pluses and substitutions. Since the text is unvocalized, the odd and unique readings are based only upon its orthography. Yet, five words are vocalized to guarantee their reading according to the scribe's opinion: לְעָדִי (1:13), וּבְאִשָּׁת (1:18), מְעַבֵּר (2:10), וַיֵּאבֵד (2:13), and אֵתָן (3:20).

<sup>302</sup> Luzzatto, *הליכות קדם*, 48–49.

<sup>303</sup> Kasher, *תוספתות תרגום*, 14–15.

There are many unique readings (excluding pluses and substitutions) in Ms C which are also found among the other Sepharadi mss, of which a few agree with Ms V (with asterisk): **זמינוהי**, \***ולא תבעו**, **דסגיאין**; **דסגיאין** (masculine instead of feminine), **דימלן**, **דיתבו**, **דיתבא**, **דיתבא** (singular instead of plural), **ואיתקרב**, **ואישפוך**, **דמוחאה**, \***תראהא**,<sup>305</sup> **וכל** (חיות),<sup>304</sup> **ויבעי**, **אררבותהון**, **ממשט**, **ואיתררבות**, **ובעידן**, **על דנטלין**, **חדדי**, **די מרדת**, **ב/ב** (ב/ב) **בקורבנין**, **אצדיאת**. An original reading in Mss C,X is the replacement of **שיצי** for **פלי** (3:15) that attests their belonging to the same textual stemma. With **לאוטבא** (1:12) and the unique **אתן** (3:19, one of the few vocalized words in Ms C), it shows an affiliation with Ms Q. It shares the following, exclusively with Ms W: **ההיא** (1:12), **יבזונן** (2:9), **בית משרי לחיותא** and **תקיפא** in 2:15, and the perfect form **נפק** instead of the participle **נפיק** (3:5). Unvocalized, this last divergence may show a deficient participle form. In the case of Ms W, where **נפק** is vocalized, it seems instead to arise from a theological position (see below).

As noted above in Mss X,N, Ms C also reads the combination of **ובירניתהון... בתיהון**, which is typical to the Yemenite mss. Of the three exclusive agreements with Ms V mentioned above, the reading of **ובכטלא** (2:2) is the most surprising. These points of commonality indicate cross-traditions at some point in the course of Scriptural transmission. The existence of Babylonian *Toseftot* in this ms lends support for the possibility of some affinity with the Babylonian/Yemenite tradition. However, it is more likely that a 'ו' was accidentally omitted.

Only three corrections are made by three different methods: a 'י' is added to **ואתו** to read **ואיתו** (2:1); **עליהון** is corrected to **עליכון** (2:3); in the margin, **וירימ** is noted as 'another version' for **וארימ** (2:13), even though the latter contradicts the MT and clashes with the rest of the third person singular.<sup>306</sup> On both **ואתו** and **וארימ** a dot is placed to mark the change.

<sup>304</sup> The singular verb harmonizes with the singular '(every) man from his place.'

<sup>305</sup> This change from **דכל** could be intentional. The scribe understands the 'flocks' to describe domestic animals distinguishable from 'all the wild animals.' **וכל**, therefore, may be considered a substitution.

<sup>306</sup> The reverse happens in Ms U where the 'א' is crossed out and a 'י' is added above. There are five other cases of contact between the two mss: **בסחותא**, **גברין**, **תדחלין**, **תקבלין**, and **ובועו**.

a. *Omissions* Thirteen omissions occur, eight of them are individual words: <דהוה> (1:1), <כל> יתבי (1:4), <יום> שופר (1:15), <כעפרא> (1:18), <חסידו> (2:10), <ותקין> (3:5), <דהו> (3:18), and <ההיא> (3:20). The drop of the perfect דהו forced a change into the participle על דנטלין. Half of 2:2β was dropped as a result of a repeated formula (see under Ms P). The preposition 'ב' in בבתי (2:7) and two *vav* conjunctives, <ו>ינוד (2:15) and <ו>לא (ידעין) in 3:5, are missing. With one letter omitted, ויהון becomes ויהון (1:17), which diminishes the imagery of the affected sinners, walking dazed like the blind. All these cases are as a result of inattentiveness and ignorance of the language. It is possible that if the scribe had had the Hebrew text while copying only the Tg, fewer mistakes might have occurred.

b. *Pluses* Of the nine pluses, only three may intensify the context: (ויי" זכאה) in 3:5 enhances the already understood contrast between the evildoers in the previous verse and God, the Righteous; the added לרוחצן after וישרון in 3:13 is unique among the Sepharadi mss, but appears also in the Ashkenazi mss A,R. It carries the nuance of a prayer and a contrast to Nineveh that sat 'securely' but no longer exists; the added מן קדם ('from before') between לכמוצא ('like chaff') and רוחא 'wind' (2:2, also Ms P), suggests that the chaff blows 'from before' the wind. The added phrase might have been made to parallel with 'from before the day' without taking into consideration the change in imagery. Alternatively, the scribe interpreted רוחא as the divine spirit behind the decree.

Four other added *vav* conjunctives take place without any added meaning: (ויית שום) (1:4), (ואיפקיד) (1:12),<sup>307</sup> (ואשדוד) (2:4), (ואישתממו) (2:13).<sup>308</sup> The addition of the preposition 'to' in לחיותא (2:15) strives to avoid two consecutive constructs in the Aramaic and at the same time harmonizes with the MT לחיה thus making a better reading (probably made in the source text); a dittography occurs in בבית (1:9).

The absence of a connective particle in the Hebrew text between 'flocks' and 'all types of animals' brought about the addition of a genitive in TJ, דכל. The scribe of Ms C in turn added a *vav* conjunctive to read וכל, which separates the 'flocks' from the 'wild animals.' In this

<sup>307</sup> Also in Ms N.

<sup>308</sup> Also in Mss X,S.

way, domestic animals are included among the animals that will inhabit the ruins of Nineveh. This interpretation could be irrelevant in light of the ignorance this particular scribe exhibits. It could be simply a misreading of ‘ד’ as a ‘ו’.

c. *Substitutions* Ms C has the most number of substitutions. Out of twenty, twelve, mostly individual words, are unique to this ms: טעוותהון replaces פתכריהון (1:5), two synonyms for ‘idols,’ the former being the more common. A most nonsensical and baffling substitution is מיגוכושכא for the common Aramaic מגבעתא (or מן גבעתא).<sup>309</sup> Perhaps it is somehow derived from מגבשותא, the parallel version found among the four traditions.

ומוחי ‘and hastening’ is replaced by ודחיל, ‘and fearful’ (1:14), a personal assessment of the Day; the change from ואיתרבו, ‘and they boasted’ or ‘and they claimed to be great’ to ואיתרדפו, ‘and they were pursued’ (2:8), perhaps attempts to describe the grievance against Moab and Ammon in terms of chasing away the Israelites from their land. The scribe expresses a personal interpretation. However, there is no such grammatical form for the root רדף. Alternatively, the scribe may have confused רב with דפ, which in the semi-cursive script can easily happen. The odd אררבותהון instead of אתרברבותהון does not reflect only the mix-up between the roots ררב and רברב found in many mss, but also the possible confidence of the scribe as to the existence of the noun אררבות.

Even though changing בגוה to בה (2:14) makes no change in meaning, it reflects the influence of Hebrew. However, בגוה that replaces בכוה or בכוהא could be a misreading of ‘ג’ as a ‘כ’ resulting from the unfamiliarity with the unusual word;<sup>310</sup> instead of שמעת, ‘heard,’ Ms C repeats קבילת, ‘accepted’ (to the voice of His servants the prophets). A similar case is the repeated לישון כדבין (לישון) in 3:13 instead of דנכלין (סברו) לי, ‘(hope) for Me’ instead of ‘for My meimra’ (3:8) was probably substituted

<sup>309</sup> Sperber reads it as two separate words, מיגו כושכא. *The Bible in Aramaic* (2004), 468. מיגו, ‘from within’ (or as a legal term ‘since, because,’ Jastrow, 216) is a common word. כושכא holds no meaning in Palestinian or Babylonian Aramaic. However, in Syriac it occurs as an alternative to כרשכא, ‘a thick woolen thread’ (Babylonian Aramaic כרפכתא, tassels). J.N. Epstein, *Studies in Talmudic Literature and Semitic Languages* (ed. E.Z. Melamed; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1983), 32. Either one or two words, it is clearly an error.

<sup>310</sup> In the Twelve, כותא, ‘window,’ occurs only once more (Mal 3:10). In Hos 13:3 כות נורא means ‘chimney.’ Houtman, *Bilingual* XIX:124.

in haste under the influence of the Hebrew text; another possible influence of the MT is found in the reading of **אֲשַׁפּוּד**, 'I shall pour,' which is a conflation of the MT **אֶהְפֹּךְ**, 'I shall turn into, change,' and TJ's **אֲשַׁנֵּי**, 'I shall cause to change.' 'I shall pour over the nations one language' is a meaningless image; the replacement of **כַּד (אֲתִיב)**, 'when,' by **אֲרִי**, 'for' (3:20), does not change the meaning or intent of the text. It could have occurred under the influence of the previous phrase **אֲרִי (אֲתִי)** in the same verse.

The reading of **וּיָתוּב**, 'be back,' in *pa'el* instead of **וּיָתִיב**, 'return, restore,' in *af'el* (2:7) is oblivious of the subtle difference in meaning between the two verbs.

Ms C shares five substitutions with Mss N, X. Like Ms N, Ms C reads in 1:4 **דְּבִית (יְהוּדָה)** instead of **אֲנֹשׁ**. Ms C also does this in Zech 2:2,4. In addition, it omits **יְרוּשָׁלַם <וּיָתִיב>** in Zech 2:2. However, no change is made in Joel 4:1 and Mal 3:4. The substitution, therefore, seems to be inconsistent and devoid of interpretative value; **וּלְדַחֲלֵתָא** that replaces **וּלְפֹלְחָנָא** (3:2) occurs also in Mss X,N. Even though the former means 'and to the fear' while the latter means 'and to the worship' both words are interchangeable and act as synonyms.<sup>311</sup> However, in this case, one *draws near* to God by rituals of worship rather than by 'the fear of God.'

The next and last two cases are shared exclusively with Ms X: in 2:15 Ms C substitutes **אֲרַעָא** for **קִרְתָּא** thus referring to Nineveh as the 'mighty land' rather than the 'mighty city.' A scribe interpreted Nineveh as a symbol for Assyria; the two legitimate Aramaic cognates, **פְּלִי** and **פְּנִי**, for the Hebrew **פְּנָה** (3:15) have been noted among the Ashkenazi mss. Mss X,C offer a third version, **שִׁיְצִי**, that usually translates Hebrew verbs of destruction such as: **כָּלָה** (e.g., Amos 7:2), **אָכַל** (e.g., Nah 1:10), **כָּרַת** (e.g., Obad 14), and **כָּחַד** (e.g., Zech 11:8).<sup>312</sup> The choice of **שִׁיְצִי** is outside the semantic range. However, in Zech 9:7 **שִׁיְצִי** translates the verb **סוּר**, 'to remove,' which in our verse parallels **פָּנָה**. 'Removal' does not necessarily mean 'destruction, death.' A stronger punishment is wished for Israel's enemy.

d. *Metathesis* Three cases of metathesis are found in Ms C: **מִמְשֵׁט** for **מִשְׁמֵט** (2:9), probably an unfamiliar hapax, **דְּעוּבְדִּיהוֹן דְּמֶן** (1:11), and **אֲמַר יִי** (2:11).

<sup>311</sup> E.g., In Hos 3:5, **דַּחֲלֵתָא** in some mss, among them Ms C, is replaced by **פְּלַחְנָא** and the opposite occurs in Hos 10:12.

<sup>312</sup> See Houtman, *Bilingual XX*:222–25 for a more complete list and citations.

The many errors in this ms indicate the ineptitude and the over-confidence of the scribe in transmitting a treasured tradition. The many cases of substitutions attest to a presumptuous scribe who took the liberty to change the Aramaic text with no grounding in correct Aramaic.<sup>313</sup> His attitude also reflects the decline of Targum in the life of the Sepharadi community.

#### 2.2.6.6 Ms W

Ms W is unique among all the mss examined here. The most immediately noticeable trait of Ms W is its fine square hand-writing, which resembles that of Ms X's, at a time when semi-cursive script was predominant. The second impression is the very unique *mise-en-page* in which the page is divided into two columns:<sup>314</sup> the outside column has the Aramaic text, the inside column has its Latin interlinear translation. The pages are read from left to right. On the outside margin of almost every line the vocalized roots of verbs *and nouns* are given. For example, פִּרְעַע, פִּרְעַעוּתִי, פִּרְעַעוּתִי, פִּרְעַעוּתִי, פִּרְעַעוּתִי, פִּרְעַעוּתִי. The scribe Alfonso de Zamora made use of his Jewish upbringing to produce an educational manuscript for Christian study, hence the division into chapters rather than into *pisqaot*. As we shall see, his scribal activity served the Church and its doctrine. For this purpose, no *massorot* or Hebrew text were needed. However, the *etnahta* is the only remaining diacritic from the missing accent system.

Several unique readings link this ms with Ms X in particular, but with others as well. The most notable link with Ms X is עִיפְלָא in 1:10 (Ms X has עִיפְלָא), the ancient Babylonian version transmitted either directly or through the Yemenite textual tradition, or perhaps through one Palestinian version. All other mss, including the Ashkenazi ones and Ms F, read עִוְפָא. Other links with Ms X are: the verbal form אִישְׁתַּצִּיאֵו (1:11); גּוּבְרִיא (1:12; also Ms C); the plural חֲמִרְיָהוֹן (1:13); the combination of אֲצִדִּיתִי... אֲצִדִּיתִי that harmonizes three first person verbs; the omission <ו> לֹא יִפְסוֹק (3:7; also Mss S,Q); the Hebrew form וּמְקַבֵּל (3:12; also Mss S,N).

Ms W has several affinities with Ms C: the plene יֵאשִׁיָּהוּ (1:1); כִּסְחוּתָא (1:17; also Ms N); יִבּוּזוֹנוֹן (2:9); לַחִיּוּתָא and חֲקִיפָא (2:15); גַּבְרִין

<sup>313</sup> This scribe takes the liberty to add remarks into the Tg. For example, on Hos 1:1 he adds: 'proclaimed by the prophet Hosea, he is the prophet Hosea who prophesied the first of four prophets Hosea and Isaiah Amos and Micah.' Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (2004), 164. There are many other *Toseftot* in Ms C, some of which may be the scribe's own remarks and compositions.

<sup>314</sup> Ms X, unlike the rest of the Sepharadi mss, also has a two-column page.

(3:4; also Ms N); the perfect tense נפק (3:5);<sup>315</sup> the singular verbs in 3:7; (לְיִשְׂרָאֵל) וּבִעֲוֵי (3:14; also Ms S); ארעא (3:19).

Other notable affinities with Ms N are found in the odd phrase פת כומריוון mentioned by Radaq; in the orthography of ווי (2:5, 3:1,18) and די בגוה (3:4); in the infinitive לְאַיְטְבָא (1:12) and in the plus כיד (2:4. Also Ms Q).

Apart from עופלא, Ms W is also linked to Ms V by מן גבבתא (1:10), a reading that carries several variations. In addition, the triple “” for the tetragram follows the Babylonian and Yemenite tradition (found also in Ms M).<sup>316</sup> גובריא (1:12) is close to Ms V’s גבריא (1:12). Like Mss S,Q, this ms reads in 1:4 על אינש. Otherwise, all other exclusive readings of Ms W are at odds with Ms V.

Zamora has many odd and unique readings not found elsewhere or among the Sepharadi mss, especially verbal forms: the prefix of *ithpa’el* is rendered sometimes by a “” rather than by an ‘א’. For example, ויתרברבו, ויתרברבא, ויתקריבת, ויתקריבא. Other odd, unique, and inconsistent readings are: שצאה (1:2,18) and ויאשצי (1:3) are based on the root שצי<sup>317</sup> rather than שיצי, while in the next verse it is vocalized ויאשצי; ית (1:3) and ית (1:5 and passim); רשיעיא (1:3) but רשיעיא (1:12); ואתרגשא (1:15); ואבדינד (2:5); נביאיא (3:2); דובי (3:3); הא (3:10); חדאי (3:14); איתרחיקית (3:18); גלוחכונ (3:20). Usually the tetragram is written by a triple “” with an undefined marker on its left, but at other times it appears as a double “” with different left markers plus an extra marker above, and sometimes as the Hebrew יהוה. These observations indicate the multiple sources of manuscripts that were available to the very learned Hebraist Zamora.

An interesting *etnakh* is placed between וישראל and “” (3:15) to guarantee the reading, in which the enemies of Israel are identified with the kings of Israel. This expresses well TJ’s intent despite of the absence of an *etnakh* in the Hebrew text.

The most startling reading is found in 3:5 which may shed light on the scribe’s state of mind, eleven years after his conversion to Christianity while working as a Professor of Oriental Languages in Salamanca, Spain.<sup>318</sup> Targum reads: ‘As the light of morning that grows in strength, so His judgment goes out (emanate) forever.’ Zamora’s Aramaic pro-

<sup>315</sup> This is a conjecture based on its liberal use of matrix lexionis. Yet, it is possible to read a deficient, present tense נפק, ‘goes out.’

<sup>316</sup> See, e.g., Yeivin, *Collection*, 8, 62.

<sup>317</sup> Noted as such in the margin.

<sup>318</sup> Among his many writings is “An Introduction to Targum” of 1532.

foundly differs. Instead of the participle **נִפְיֵק**, ‘goes out,’ he reads the perfect **נִפְקַ**, ‘went out’ and instead of **לְאֶפְרָשׁ**, ‘forever,’ he reads **לֹא פִרַשׁ**, ‘(He) did not explain, expressed clearly.’ Whereas TJ glorifies God’s laws as just, timeless, and forever increasing in power, Zamora’s version throws doubt as to their validity and clarity. In other words, laws accepted and cherished by Jews are ambiguous and open to interpretations. The roots of neither **נִפְקַ** nor **פִרַשׁ** are cited in the margin. The Latin reiterates his theological position by ‘His Law was gone forever.’

A similar change may be found in 2:3. TJ reads: ‘Perhaps He *will* protect (יִתְגֹן) you on YHWH’s Day of wrath.’<sup>319</sup> Ms W has a grammatically clumsy change: ‘Perhaps He protected (תִּגֹן) you on YHWH’s Day...’ No verbal root is noted in the margin. Both translations repudiate hope and Divine protection of Israel so as to provide scriptural asseveration for Zamora’s new faith.

A unique addition, **וְיִסְגְּדוּן לֵה** (‘and they shall bow to/worship Him’) before **וְיִבְעִוּ** (‘and they shall pray’) in 2:11 seems to perfunctorily harmonize with the MT. However, for Zamora, so it seems, this extra ritual of adoration is essential for a true believer. Ms O of 1569/73 adapts this plus from Ms W.<sup>320</sup>

a. *Omissions* Only three omissions occur. Two are found in other mss: **<וּיִנִיד** (2:15; also in Ms C) and **<וּלֹא יִפְסֹק** (3:7; also in Mss X,S,Q). The only unique omission is **יִי** **<אמר>** (2:9) which makes the names of YHWH part of God’s speech. The divine vow flows better this way.

b. *Pluses* The pluses also reveal the scribe’s personality. In the superscription, Zephaniah’s ancestors, Cushi, Gedaliah and Amariah, are described as prophets. This reflects his knowledge of Jewish literature. In *Aggadot Bereshit* of the 10th century, chapter 14, it is stated that Zephaniah was ‘a prophet, son of a prophet.’<sup>321</sup> Leaving Hezekiah

<sup>319</sup> On the difficulty of the grammar and syntax of this clause see Commentary on 2:3.

<sup>320</sup> Ms O, the Antwerp Polyglot Bible, is dependent on Zamora’s texts. Many of Ms W’s unique readings reappear in ms O. See notes above on the two Polyglot Bibles.

<sup>321</sup> In *Bavli, Megillah* 15a Zephaniah is described as ‘righteous son of a righteous.’ Radaq, who was known to Zamora, explains the lengthy genealogy as evidence that ‘indeed his ancestors were great.’ Zamora copied six of Radaq’s books: one, **חֶלֶק**, **הַדְּקָדוֹק**, titled Paris—Bibliothèque Nationale heb. 1229; two, *Commentary on Isaiah* titled Escorial—Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial G-11-18. The next two compositions are at the Madrid de la Universidad: one, **סֵפֶר הַשְּׂרָשִׁים** titled MS Villa-Amil



without a title may reflect the debate among the Rabbis concerning his identity. Ibn Ezra held the opinion that Hezekiah meant the King, whereas Radaq rejected this possibility. Here, we witness Zamora's work of integrating Jewish traditions into the Targumic text.

Another addition was already cited by Radaq. In 1:12 Zamora reads: '... there is no desire from before YYY to do good to *the righteous* nor do evil to *the wicked*.'<sup>322</sup> This unique reading suggests that apart from Ms X and the basic text of Ms C, he had other mss to consult.

With the added **כיד** after **אשדוד** in 2:4, Ms W is linked to Mss Q,N. With the reading of **(ל)חיותא** in 2:15 and **ית** (sic) in 1:4,<sup>323</sup> it is linked to Ms C, and with the reading of **ו(ל)מיפלח**, it is linked to Ms Q. Four other pluses are exclusive to Ms W: **מן קדם יי** (1:11); **מ(ע)ובדיהון** (1:12); a ubiquitous phrase; **ו(י)ב(ע)ון** (2:11); **ו(י)סגדון ליה** (2:11); **ו(י)תבילו** (3:7).

c. *Substitutions* Only two cases of substitutions are considered legitimate in Ms W:<sup>324</sup> **הדא (עמא)**, 'this people,' instead of **דרא (עם)**, 'people of the generation' (2:1). This change can be perceived as theological in nature, in which the Jews *at any time* (the verb 'desire' is in the present tense) are portrayed as rejecting God's teaching.<sup>325</sup> The emphasis is put on 'this people,' Israel, not to be mistaken with any 'generation' at random.

The second case is **עליהון (איתי)**, '(I have brought) upon them,' instead of 'to them.' No substantial deviation takes place.

Zamora, the scholar, produced this ms (and others) as a theological text for the purpose of teaching and compiling material for his studies in Aramaic. The absence of the Hebrew Text and the elevation of the Aramaic for the study of the Prophets suggests an intent to marginalize the MT in Christian scholarship and shift the focus to Aramaic and Latin. Zamora could thus manipulate the Aramaic for his apologetic and interpretative agendas.

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21; two, *Commentary on Isaiah and Ezekiel* titled MS Villa-Amil 10. The next two mss contain also annotations by Zamora: MS Villa-Amil 19 and MS Villa-Amil 20. See also Ms W above under the General Observations.

<sup>322</sup> This version appears also in MG (1964), 287.

<sup>323</sup> Also later in ms O.

<sup>324</sup> Three cases are part of the Sepharadi textual tradition: **ובטולא** instead of **ובטלא** (2:2). Only the unvocalized Ms C differs with **ובטלא**; **ובטלא** instead of **ובטלא** (3:18), and **ובטלא** instead of **ובטלא** (3:20). These cases were noted above.

<sup>325</sup> Repeated mechanically in ms O.

Table 29. *Pisqaot* in Sepharadi Mss

Ms X (5)	Ms S (7)	Ms N (5)	Ms Q (3)	Ms C (6)	Ms W (2)
	1:12			1:12	
2:1	2:1	2:1	2:1	2:1	2:1*
2:5	2:5	2:5		2:5	
2:8		2:8		2:8	
	2:9				
3:1	3:1	3:1	3:1	3:1	3:1*
				3:8	
	3:11				
3:14		3:14	3:14		
	3:16				

\* The scribe Zamora did not follow the Massoretic tradition but opened each new chapter on a new line, not to confuse it with a *pisqah*.

The congruity in *pisqaot* among the Sepharadi mss concerns only two, where chapters are delimited. Only Mss X and N are congruous. As noted above, these two mss share some exclusive similarities. Even though the similarities among Mss X,S,C have been established, their exact *pisqaot* are not shared. Still, except for Ms W, they all overlap in one way or the other. Ms W, written for educational purposes and for a Christian readership, is not concerned with *pisqaot*.

The importance of TJ greatly diminished within the Sepharadi community and with it its knowledge. As in the Ashkenazi mss, here, too, this ignorance is found in grammatical forms of verbs. Here are three examples from each chapter. Mss S,C have no vocalization.

Table 30. Ignorance of Aramaic Verbs

MT	Ms X	Ms S	Ms N	Ms Q	Ms C	Ms W
1:3	אָסִיף דְּסִגְיָאָה	אסיף דיסגאה	אָסִיף/אָסִיף דְּסִגְיָאָה	אָסִף דְּסִגְיָאָה	אסיף דסגיאין	אָסִיף דְּסִגְיָאָה
1:17	וַיִּשְׁתַּפִּיךְ	וישתפיך	וַיִּשְׁתַּפִּיךְ	וַיִּשְׁתַּפִּיךְ	ואישפוך	וַיִּשְׁתַּפִּךְ
2:1	וְאִיתוֹ	וואיתו*	וְאִיתוֹ	וְאִיתוֹ	וְאִיתוֹ	וְאִיתוֹ
2:14	דְּמַנְצָף	דמנצף	דְּמַנְצָף	דְּמַנְצָף	דמנצף	דְּמַנְצָף
2:15	דִּיעֵבֵר	דייעיבר	דִּיעֵבֵר	דִּיעֵבֵר	דייעיבר	דִּיעֵבֵר
3:2	אִיתְקַרְבַּת	איתקרבת	אִיתְקַרְבַּת	אִיתְקַרְבַּת	איתקרבת	יְתְקַרְיַבַת
3:11	דְּמַרְדָּא	דמרדת	דְּמַרְדָּת	דְּמַרְדָּת	די מרדת	דְּמַרְדָּת
3:14	חָדָא	חדא	חָדָא	-----	חדי	חָדָא

\* Inserted 'י'.

The Aramaic nouns fall under the same observation.

Table 31. Ignorance of Aramaic Nouns

MT	Ms X	Ms S	Ms N	Ms Q	Ms C	Ms W
1:5	פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן	פתכריהון	פַּת *כּוּמְרִיהוֹן	פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן	טעוותהון	פַּת כּוּמְרִיהוֹן
1:10	מְגַבְעָתָא	מגבעאתא	מְגִיבּוֹשְׁתָא	מְגַבְעָתָא	מיגו כושכא	מִן גְּבַעְתָּא
1:15	אַיְתְּרִגּוּשָׁא	אתרגוש	אַיְתְּרִגּוּשׁ	אַתְרִגּוּשׁ	אתרגושתא	אַיְתְּרִגּוּשָׁא
2:3	עִינּוּתְנִי	ענותני	עִינּוּתְנִי	עִינּוּתְנִי	ענותני	עִנּוּתְנִי
2:6	דִּירוֹת	דירות	דִּירוֹת	דִּירוֹת	דירות	דִּירוֹת
2:14	עִדְרִין	עדרין	עִדְרִין	עִדְרִין	עדרין	עִדְרִין
3:3	דִּיבִי	דיבי	דִּאִיבִי	דִּיבִי	דאיבי	דוֹבִי
3:6	בִּרְיַנְתְּהוֹן	ברנית**	בִּרְיַנְתְּהוֹן	בִּרְיַנְתְּהוֹן	בירנתיהון	בִּרְיַנְתְּהוֹן
3:8	בְּאִישַׁת	באישת	בְּאִישַׁת	בְּאִישַׁת	באישת	בְּאִישַׁת

\* Unvocalized

\*\* End of line

### 2.2.6.7 *Stemmas*

Unlike the Yemenite and the Ashkenazi mss, clear stemmas do not emerge. All the Sepharadi mss overlap in some readings, which suggests, therefore, more than one tradition, freer approach to Targum, and mobility of scribes among the dispersed Jewish communities espousing Eastern and Western traditions. Indeed, some readings are congruous with both Palestinian and Babylonian traditions. Yet this might indicate, rather, Palestinian versions that circulated prior to their Babylonian editing as noted above. Exclusive readings between two or three mss are minuscule. Only pluses and substitutions can attest to closer affinity.

Since agreements between two mss are found in 12 sub-groups, they will be divided into three Tables:

Table 32a. Agreement Between Two Mss

XS	XN	XQ	XC
1:11: אִתְבַּר	2:5: וְאוֹבִידִנְכוֹן 2:14: חֵית; עִדְרִין	1:10,12: הָהוּא 2:8: רַבְרַב <sup>327</sup> 2:9: יְבִזּוֹנוֹן <sup>328</sup> 3:4: גְּבַרִין	3:15: שִׁיעִי <sup>326</sup>

<sup>326</sup> This substitution to פלי is unique among all the mss examined here.

<sup>327</sup> Whereas Ms Q uses the same root in both 2:8 and 2:10, Ms X is inconsistent.

<sup>328</sup> This reading in the *nifal*, rather than in the *qal* (same root), is found also in the

Table 32b

XW	SN	SQ	NQ
1:10: עופלא/עיפלא <sup>329</sup>	2:1: עם <sup>330</sup>	1:15: ואתרגוש	2:1: למַתב
1:13: חמריהון (pl.)	3:12: ההוא	2:11: (דחילא) ד(י)	2:6: וְחֻטְרִין <sup>331</sup>
3:6: שְׁצִיתִי.... אַצְדִּיתִי חַצְדִּיאָה		2:15: חִיתָא; <ב>ידיה	2:12: חֲרְבָא <sup>332</sup>
			2:13: בְּמַדְבְּרָא <sup>333</sup>

Table 32c

NC	NW	QC	QW	CW
1:12: ו(איפקיד)	1:5: פת כומריון <sup>334</sup>	1:12: לאוטבא	1:5: אַגְרִיא <sup>335</sup>	1:1: יאשיהו
2:14: קאתין	1:12: לאִיטבא	1:18: ובאֶשֶׁת <sup>336</sup>	אֶגְרִיא/ דֶּאלֶהָא	2:9: יבזונון
3:3: דְאַיְבִי	2:5, 3:1, 18; ווי	3:20: אַתָּן <sup>337</sup>	3:9: ו(למיפלח)	2:15: לַחֲיוֹתָא; תְּקִיפָא
	3:4: בְּגוּהָ/בְּגוּוּהָ <sup>338</sup>		3:11: הֶהִיא	

To further identify sub-groups among the Sepharadi mss, here are groups of three mss that share readings. Thirteen such groups, that will be divided into four Tables, have been discerned:

Ashkenazi Mss A,R,U,Y. The *nif'al* carries the meaning of a repeated act which enhances the state of humiliation that Israel will bring upon Moab and Ammon.

<sup>329</sup> Most mss have עופא. Ms X knows both versions, עיפלא, עופא.

<sup>330</sup> This substitution to עם is not only a gross mistake but a change in meaning. When read עם, the blame upon Israel is shifted onto the contemporary generation that is unwilling to accept God's Law. This view or wish is especially poignant at times of forced conversions, whether by Muslims or Christians. It is also found in the Ashkenazi Mss A,M,U,Y.

<sup>331</sup> As against וְחֻטְרִין, which is the Ashkenazi reading and the Yemenite Mss H,V,Z. With an extra *vav* Ms Q may be alluding to both correct forms.

<sup>332</sup> Should be in first person singular as part of God's speech.

<sup>333</sup> The confusion between כ/ב was carried over by the same scribe or scribes of the same school.

<sup>334</sup> Quoted by Radaq who also mentions the פת כריהון version. The latter appears in MG (Jerusalem, 1963) even though ms G, on which it is based, shows פת־כְּרִהוֹן (also ms B).

<sup>335</sup> Corrupt for אַגְרִיא/אֶגְרִיא, 'roofs.' Their closeness to אַגְרִיא/אֶגְרִיא, 'heathen altars; hills' has resulted in erroneous vocalizations in Mss X,S,N,C and the Ashkenazi Mss U,R. The idolatry context further perpetuated this error.

<sup>336</sup> Vocalized in Ms C. The 'א' is usually vocalized with a *hiriq*.

<sup>337</sup> Vocalized in Ms C. The 'א' is usually vocalized with a *segol*. The Yemenite pronunciation is with a *patah*.

<sup>338</sup> Compared to דְבְּגוּהָ. Also in the Ashkenazi Mss A,U,Y,R.

Table 33a. Agreement Between Three Mss

XSN	XSQ	XSC	XNQ	XNC
3:14: חדא	1:17: כסחיתא 3:7: תידחלון; תקבלון (pl.) 3:19: ארע	2:13: ן(אישתממו)	3:9: אישני	1:4: דבית (יהודה) 1:13: ...בתיהון <sup>339</sup> ובירניהון 3:2: דאלהא;ולדחלתא

Table 33b

XQC	SNQ	SNW	SQC
1:12: דמבלשין	1:12: גיבריא 3:6: צדיאה...אצדיאה	1:12: דבלשין 2:2: וכטולא	2:5, 3:1,18: וי

Table 33c

SQW	SCW	NQW	NCW
1:13: ובתיהון...נכסיהון	3:14: ובועו	2:4: (אשדוד) ביד 3:14: שבחי	1:17: כסחותא 3:4: גברין 3:7: תקבלין;תדחלין (sg.) 3:19: ארעא

Table 34. Agreement Between Four Mss

XSNC	XSNW	XSNC	XSQW	NQCW
1:5: איגוריא	3:12: ומקבל	2:8,10: ררב√	3:7: לא יפסוק	3:19: ההיא <sup>340</sup>

Most of the mss are linked mainly to Ms N, which seems to be the center of the Sepharadi basic text. However, when the substitutions and the pluses are taken into account, Mss XNW seem to be the most connected. Moreover, Ms W shows the most diverse readings which supports its distinguishable agenda and circumstances of existence. The numerous cross-textual traditions, with their links to both the Ashkenazi and the Eastern traditions, do not give rise to decisive stemmas.

<sup>339</sup> These two nouns appear also in the Yemenite Mss H,V. However, they have two other combinations: Mss S,Q,W, as well as all the Ashkenazi mss, have ובתיהון...נכסיהון. On the other hand, the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E have ובירניהון...נכסיהון. Different traditions have crossed paths here preserving two basic versions, which are reflected in the Yemenite and the Sepharadi texts.

<sup>340</sup> The *vav* conjunctive is essential to the structure of the sentence. It is absent also in the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E and the Ashkenazi Mss A,P.

2.2.6.8 *Text Shared by All Sepharadi Mss*

The next Table constitutes the core of the Sepharadi textual tradition.

Table 35

MT Text	Remarks
1:5 <ו>דמקימין	the added <i>vav</i> occurs only in Yemenite Mss H,V
1:12 <י>תבי< ירושלם	exists only in Yemenite mss
<ת>בלושין	exists only in Yemenite Mss H,V
1:17 אינשא; כְּסֶמֶן/כְּסֶמֶן/כְּסֶמֶן	as against אינש
2:2 <מ>אידרא	not in Ashkenazi mss, either
2:3 מֵאִים/מֵאִים	as against מא אם
2:14 וטללה סתרו; נִצְפָן	as against נִפְצָן
2:15 <ב>רא	not in Ashkenazi mss, either
3:5 <ו>לא מתעכב	not in Ashkenazi mss, either
3:10 דאיתגליאה	feminine singular; as in all Ashkenazi mss
3:16 תִּדְחֹלִין; יִדְד	תִּדְחֹלִין in singular
3:19 מטלטליא	as against מטלטליא
מִשְׁעָבֵדֵד/מִשְׁעָבֵדֵד	as against מִשְׁעָבֵדֵד
וְאִישׁוּיָנוּן	as against וְאִישׁוּיָנוּן/וְאִישׁוּיָנוּן
3:20 כְּנִשְׁלֵךְ יִתְכּוֹן... קַרְבֵּן גְּלוּתְכּוֹן	as against עֲלֵלֵךְ יִתְכּוֹן... כְּנִשְׁלֵךְ יִתְכּוֹן

a. *Omissions* The list of omissions below does not include cases common to all the Sepharadi mss (Table 35). The corrections in the margin of Mss N,Q were most likely made by the scribes themselves.

Table 36a

Ms X	Ms S	Ms N
1:5: <דמקימין>	<ו>דמקימין	<ו>דמקימין
	1:7: <קריב יומא דעתיד למיתי> <מן קדם יי ארי>	
1:11: עמא <ד>ארעא	1:14: <רבא קרוב ומוחי לחדא> <קל יומא דעתיד למיתי מן קדם> <יי>	עמא <דארעא> <דביה> מרר
1:16: <שופר ו>יבבא		2:2: <ותהון דמן> <sup>341</sup> 2:3: <דיני רעותיה> <sup>342</sup> <עבדו>

<sup>341</sup> Added in the margin.

<sup>342</sup> Added in the margin.

Table 36a (*cont.*)

Ms X	Ms S	Ms N
	2:12: <אף אתון כושאי קטילי <חרכי תהון>	2:14: <ד>כל חיית 2:15: <דיתבא> לרוחצן
3:7: <לא יפסוק <ברם> תדחלון	3:2: <ו>לא קבילת <ו>לא יפסוק	3:10: <ברחמין> 3:14: <ההוא> <sup>343</sup>
	3:18: <ו>מחסדין	3:19: <עם כל משעבדיך> 3:20: <ית> גלוותכון <sup>344</sup> <לעיניכון>

Table 36b

Ms Q	Ms C	Ms W
1:3: <אסף אינשא ובעירא <אסף עופא דשמיא>	1:1: <דהוה>	
2:2: <יומא> <sup>346</sup>	1:4: <כל> יתבי 1:5: <תייבין> ויימן 1:16: <שופר> 1:17: <כעפרא> <עד לא ייתי עליכון <יום רוגזא דיי>	
3:7: <ו>לא יפסוק <כל> עובדיהון	2:7: <ב>בתי 2:9: <חסידו> 2:15: <ו>ינוד 3:5: <ו>לא ידעין דאזיל <ותקין>	<אמר> ייי <ו>יניד
3:14: <יבעו ישראל חדא> 3:17: <לאשראה שכניתיה בגויך> <sup>347</sup> גיבר פריק יחדי עלך בחדוא יכבוש על	3:18: על <דהו> נטלין 3:20: ובעידן <ההיא>	<ו>לא יפסוק

<sup>343</sup> Added in the margin.<sup>344</sup> Added in the margin.<sup>345</sup> Added in the margin. The last word is redundant.<sup>346</sup> Added in the margin.<sup>347</sup> Added in the margin.

Most of the omissions are found in Ms C which is heavily corrupted and sloppily written. However, those in Mss N,Q are mostly corrected skillfully and clearly with full punctuation, most likely by the scribe himself. The least omissions are made by the scholar of Ms W and by the scribes who produced the fine and almost flawless Mss X,S. This last remark, though, does not reflect on their ignorance of the Aramaic language but on their skills as scribes. The earliest Ms X shows the better text.

b. *Pluses* Among the pluses found in the Sepharadi mss, one reading, when compared to our basic Ms V, is common to all mss. Another reading is common to all, except for Ms C, which is probably a mistake rather than a loan from another tradition. The first case is the plus **וּיִמֵן** following **תִּיבִין** in 1:5. However, this plus, which is absent in Ms V, occurs in all other mss regardless of their provenance. Thus, this should not be considered a plus but rather an omission by Ms V. The second case is the addition of the genitive 'ד' in **(ו)ד(לֹא תִבְעוּ)** in 1:6. Again, this addition is a valid version which appears in all mss except for Ms C and the Yemenite Mss H,V. Its parallel phrase **(ו)ד(לֹא בִעוּ)** is less consistent among the Sepharadi mss (Mss X,N), among the Yemenite mss (Mss Z,J,E), yet absent in all the Ashkenazi mss:

Table 37a

MT	Ms X	Ms S	Ms N
1:4	(אִינֵשׁ) דְּבֵית (יְהוּדָה)		
1:6	(ו)ד(לֹא בִעוּ)		(ו)ד(לֹא בִעוּ)
1:10	קָ(ו)ל... עִיפְלֹא <sup>348</sup>		
1:12			(ו)אִיפְקִיד
1:14	(קְרוֹב וּמוֹחִי) וּדְחִיל		(קַל) צוּחַתֵּא
1:16			(עַל) כֹּל (קִירוּיָא)
2:4			(אֲשֻׁדוּד) כִּיד
2:11		(דְּחִילֹא) ד(י)	
2:13	(ו)אִישְׁתַּמְמוּ	(ו)אִישְׁתַּמְמוּ	
3:5		(ו)לִית קְדַמּוּהִי	
3:8			(כֹּל טְבוּן) ... (רְשִׁיעִיָּא) ד(אַרְעָא)

<sup>348</sup> The added *vav* could be influenced by the Hebrew. **עִיפְלֹא** is a plus if compared to the majority of the Sepharadi mss, which carry **עופא**, but **עופא** would be a substitute if compared to the Yemenite mss.



Table 37b

MT	Ms Q	Ms C	Ms W
1:1			... נבייא (גד) ... נבייא (כושי) ... נבייא (אמ)
1:4		ית (מחת) ... (ו)ית (שום)	ית (מחת)
1:9		ב(בית)	
1:12		ו(איפקיד)	מן (קדם ייי לאיטבא) לצדיקיא (לאבאשא) לרשיעיא... <sup>349</sup>
1:14		קריב) <ומוחי ודחיל> <sup>350</sup>	
2:2		(דנסבא) מן קדם (רוחא)	
2:4	כיד (אשדוד)	ו(אשדוד)	כיד (אשדוד)
2:11			ויסגדון ליה (ויבעז) <sup>351</sup>
2:13		ו(אישתממו)	
2:15		ל(חיותא)	ל(חיותא)
3:5		ו(י זכאה)	
3:7			ו(חבילו)
3:9	ו(למיפלח)		ו(למפלח)
3:13		ו(ישרון) לרוחצן	

Most of the pluses in Ms W are either midrashic or based on other readings. The majority of the pluses in all the mss are marginal, stemming from the natural flow of speech. As for the plus **כיד** in 2:4, it appears also in the ancient Ms F as well as in the Ashkenazi Ms P, hence it is a valid reading though superfluous.

c. *Substitutions* When compared to Ms V, three substitutions among the Sepharadi mss reflect a common tradition: the simile **וכטולא** ('and like shadow') instead of **וכטלא** ('and like dew') depends on the interpretation of **דעדי**. If it is understood as 'pass away', then 'shadow' is appropriate (Ps 144:4), but if it is understood as 'cease,' then morning 'dew' is more appropriate (the third simile 'and like cloud' is known to Radaq and the Ashkenazi Mss A,R). These two versions are valid as they are part of the Yemenite tradition as well. 'Shadow' seems to be the Palestinian reading as found in Ms F of 1105.

The second common substitution is the use of **מיניך** instead of **מגויך** (3:18), which is the prevalent reading in all the mss except for the

<sup>349</sup> Quoted by Radaq.

<sup>350</sup> Ms C either substitutes **ודחיל** for **ומוחי** or adds **ודחיל** after omitting **ומוחי**. Since this ms is badly copied, both possibilities are to be considered.

<sup>351</sup> This unique addition is copied from by ms O.

Yemenite Mss H,V (the Ashkenazi Ms R has מִמֶּךָ). The third common substitution is the phrase גְּלוּתֵיכֶם... אֵיכָנִישׁ יִתְכּוֹן (3:20). This is also the Ashkenazi version as well as the Yemenite (Mss Z,J,E, at least the last part). For the first part, Ms V reads אֵעִיל יִתְכּוֹן (Ms H has a lacuna where אֵעִיל should be) and for the second part it has אֵכְנֹשׁ יִתְכּוֹן (same as Ms H).

In the next Table, Version 1 presents the basic text of Ms V:

Table 38

MT	Version 1	Mss	Version 2	Mss	Version 3	Mss
1:4	על אנש	XSQW	על דבית	NC		
1:5	פתכריהן	XSQ	פת כומריתהן	NW	טעוותהון	C
1:10	גבעתא	XSQW	מגיבושתא*	N	מיגו כושכא	C
1:13	... בתיהון ובירניתהון	XNC	*נכסיהון... ובתיהון	SQW		
1:14	מרר	SNQCW	מרד	X		
	ומוחי	XWQ	ומריר	N	ודחיל	C
1:17	ויהכון	XSNQW	ויהון	C		
1:18	יתבי	XSNCW	רשיעי	Q		
2:1	עם	XQCW	עם	SN		
	דרא	NSXQC	הדא	W		
2:7	ויתבי	XSNQW	ויתוב <sup>352</sup>	C		
2:8	ואתררבו	XSNQW <sup>353</sup>	ואיתרדפו	C		
2:9	יחסנונון	SNQCW	יבזונונון	X		
2:12	חרבי	XCW	חרבא	NQ		
	תהון	XNCW	אנון	Q		
2:14	בגוה	XSNQW	בה	C		
	תרעהא	XSQCW <sup>354</sup>	ארעא	N		
	קל	XSNCW	כל	Q		
	בכוהא	XSNQW <sup>355</sup>	בגוה	C		
2:15	קרתא	SNQW	ארעא	XC		
3:2	שמעת	XSNQW	קבילת	C		
	ולפולחנא	SQW	*ולדחלתא	XNC		
3:7	להון	XSNQC	עליהון	W		
3:8	למימרי	XSNQW	לי	C		
3:9	אשני	XSNQW	אשפוד	C		

<sup>352</sup> *Pe'al* vs. *haf'el*, the correct form.

<sup>353</sup> Whether using the root ררר or ררבר.

<sup>354</sup> Or תרעא.

<sup>355</sup> Either בכוא or בכוה.

Table 38 (*cont.*)

MT	Version 1	Mss	Version 2	Mss	Version 3	Mss
3:13	דנכלין	XSNQW	כדבין	C		
3:15	מלכיה פלי	SNQCW SNQW	מלכא שיצי	X XC		
3:18	נטלין	XNQCW	נפלין	S		
3:19	עם כל	SNQCW	על כל	X		
3:20	כד (אתין) יתכון	XSNQW SNQCW	ארי לכון	C X		

Even the corrupt Ms C, which carries the brunt of the substitutions, attests to at least five differing readings (1:5,14, 2:15, 3:2,15). Some seem to be a theological spin, such as **עם** for **עם**, **הדא** for **דרא**, **ארעא** for **קרתא**, **שיצי** for **פלי/פני**. However, most of the substitutions are probably pitfalls of scribal practice.

d. *Metathesis* The number of metathesis is minuscule and insignificant. Again, Ms C leads the list with three cases whereas Ms S has only one. Metathesis occurs inter-words and inter-letters in a word:

Table 39

MT	Ms X	Ms S	Ms N	Ms Q	Ms C	Ms W
1:4		כומריוהון עים פלחיהון				
1:11					דעובדיהון דמן	
2:9					ממשט	
2:11					(דחילא) אמר יי	

### 2.2.6.9 Summary

The study of the Sepharadi mss reveals no clear stemmas but cross-versional texts anchored in both Eastern and Western textual traditions. Mss X,N are the only mss that share *pisqaot*. The Eastern influence is reflected in readings such as **עופלא** **ובירניתהון** **בתיהון**... use of the root **ררב**, the simile **טלא** in Ms C (unpointed in a script which is usually plene), the verbs **קרב**...**כנש** in 3:20, **יי** for the tetragrammaton, the *patah* prefix in first person imperfect in some mss, ancient **קדם** rather

than קָדָם (Ms Q), forms such as בְּעֵלֵי דְבָבִיד, דְּחָלָתָא, and אֵיתוּ (second person plural imperative).<sup>356</sup>

The Western (Palestinian) influence seems to be more prevalent. It is especially so in the survivals of its system of vocalization: *mappiq* under the 'ה', *degeshim* in letters other than בגדכפת and after long vowels. Readings such as מְנַטְלָתָא, מְאִים, דִּירוּת, דִּירוּת, אֵיתַרְגּוּשׁ, ... נכסיהון, ובתיהון, וּבְתִיָּהוֹן, סְחִיתָא, גְּבִישָׁתָא, all the common substitutions as well as רְשִׁיעִי (instead of יְתִבִּי); the plus כַּד/כִּיד (2:4,7); <ו> לֹא יִפְסוּק; the second person singular תִּדְחַלִּין (3:7); the second person singular וְאַבְדִּינָךְ (2:5); the use of the root רַבַּר; the treatment of the word קְרָנָא ('city') as masculine by attributing to its adjective the masculine form בְּרִיכָיָא; and the prevailing plene script.

Influence of the Hebrew over the Aramaic is very minimal, such as אֶתְּנִין, מוֹעֲדֵיךְ, בְּחֻדְוָה, וּמְקַבֵּל, דְּאֵיבִי.

On the whole, the scribes attempted to copy faithfully, but because of their ignorance of the Aramaic, they produced many errors and often odd readings and forms. Of the six mss, only one (and the earliest, Ms X) presents both Hebrew and Aramaic texts contemporaneous with the Ashkenazi and Yemenite tradition. A hundred years earlier, Rambam described a community that was still reading Onkelos and TJ (*Hilkhot Tefillah* 12). With time, this tradition faded away and the two languages were separated as texts. The scribe Alfonso di Zamora tried to preserve the Aramaic use by focusing on TJ and its verbs in a systematic study, albeit for a non-Jewish community. However, Aramaic was no longer an essential or a useful language within the Sepharadi community. Only scholars sought to retain it for personal study and, ultimately, out of respect for scriptural tradition.

The *mise-en-page* of the oldest Ms X (ca 1307) may show that a hundred years after Rambam this custom was still preserved. The separation of the MT from Targum in later mss from the late 13th century on, may indicate the cessation of this custom. As the turmoil in Spain increased and more Jews scattered to safer places, Targum became marginal and, ultimately, an echo of the past.

To maintain the link to the MT, and to give a semblance of authenticity and authority, some scribes inserted the same Massoretic accents into the Aramaic text. It seems that the task of *haggahah* was performed by the scribes themselves, who, having noticed their mistakes, used

<sup>356</sup> Such examples are found also in Kahle, *MdO*, 38–39.

diverse methods to correct them. Except for Ms N, no other ms demarcates the separate books of the Twelve.

The quality of the manuscript was determined by the commission earmarked for the task of copying. When the scribe copied for himself, no vocalization and accents were used, the paper was small and the result was sloppy. It is a plausible hypothesis that such a scribe often hoped to complete his work when the right patron came along.

Among the numerous deviations in the Sepharadi mss, they share 27 of the 30 cases of true variants listed below. Only in one case do the Sepharadi mss alone reveal a true variant when compared to Ms V, as well as to all Yemenite or Ashkenazi mss, which is: רשעי (1:18, Ms Q and Ms F).

### 2.2.7 *True Variants*

The criteria are based on the notion that in early stages of Aramaic translation, the tendency was to focus on cognate words close to the Hebrew in meaning and verbal roots, and to be as faithful to the MT as possible. Interpretational translation developed later with the depression and upheavals that befell the Jewish community post 70, and especially post 135 when commentary, wishes and prayers, heightened reverence for Scriptures, and new approaches in matters of theology found their expression and dissemination pipe-line through Targum.

True variants are determined by the following criteria:

1. They occur in more than one group.
2. They occur in at least two mss belonging to separate stemmas within the same group.
3. They are supported by more than one commentator of two separate groups.
4. They serve an interpretative function, even though they may show a later hand.
5. They occur in one distinct group against other groups.

Variants that are clearly perpetuated mistakes, such as וארים instead of וירים (2:13), will be rejected as true variants even if they occur in two distinct groups. Omissions that occur in one stemma but are absent in others, and are indicative of a perpetuated mistake, such as <מחת> (2:13), will be rejected as well. Likewise, variants that are clearly corrupted readings with no interpretative value, such as, פת כומריון (1:5),

are dismissed from this list. A close case is **מִזְמַנֹּהִי**, ‘from His times,’ that occurs in only Mss V,H and is clearly a misreading of **מִזְמַנֹּהִי**, ‘His guests,’ that all other mss carry. Such instances are clearly cases of “mistaken identity.” A putative blind copying, such as a plural **מַלְכֵיָא** (1:8) or **בְּנַחְלוֹן** (1:11) with no justification, will be dismissed.

The full list of true variants and a short discussion follows below. Fuller discussions are presented under the appropriate ms and in the Commentary under the pertinent verse. The list of mss and their affiliation are presented at the beginning of this Chapter. It should be emphasized, again, that the following list belongs in the realm of possibilities and conjectures based on the criteria laid down here and the examination above. The majority of the true variants originated most likely in Palestine.

1. **עַל דְּבֵית יְהוּדָה** (1:4). Mss A and X,N,C. **דְּבֵית** that replaces **אֲנָשִׁי** functions on two levels: it links the House of Judah with that mentioned in the superscription on one hand, and on the other it makes a stronger case for the totality of sinners. The House (of Judah) and the inhabitants (of Jerusalem) make up the Tribe mentioned as an information item in 1:1. The awkward expression **עַל דְּבֵית** is indicative of its later change. **עַל ד-** means ‘concerning’ as in TJ Zech 11:7, 12:7. If the scribe, who had instigated the change, meant ‘concerning the House . . .,’ he should have used the same expression for ‘and on all the inhabitants . . .’. No ms has this.
2. **טְעוֹתֵהוֹן** (1:5). Mss T and C. The more unusual **פְּתַכְרִיהוֹן** (‘idols’) was probably the original rendering for either **בְּמַלְכָּם** or **בְּמַלְכֵם**, which stands in contrast to **לִיהוּה** (cf Amos 5:26). However, when TJ proliferated and was read in public, the more common **טְעוֹתֵהוֹן** was exchanged for the benefit of the audience.
3. **אֵיגוֹרְיָא** (1:5) or any like form. Mss U,R,P and X,S,N,C. Out of a misreading of **אֵיגְרָיָא**, ‘roofs,’ the variant of **אֵיגוֹרְיָא**, ‘altars, hills,’ took root. Since worship on altars or hills lies within the parameter of idol worship, this variant became legitimate.
4. **רְבוֹנֵיהוֹן** (1:9). Mss T,M,Y,R and W. It retains the MT and must have preceded **רְבוֹנָהוֹן**, which lays the blame upon Temple functionaries, especially those of the late Second Temple period. The context of idolatry provides an extra justification for the Temple association whether in the singular or the plural.
5. **עוֹפָא** (1:10). Mss F,T,M,A,U,R,Y,P, and X,S,Q,C. ‘Fowl (gate)’ began most likely with the elision of **לִי** from **עוֹפְלָא**, ‘the Ophel.’

Alternatively, from early stages of transmission, both attempted to respond to the difficult *המשנה*, ‘the Secondary.’ Each could be justified based on a variety of considerations.

6. *מגבישתא* (1:10) or any variations. Mss F, Eb 80, Z, J, E, T, M, N and Radaq. The added political interpretation to the original plural *מגבעתא* resulted in the co-existence of both readings. The same cause also brought about the singular *מגבעתא* found in Mss H, V.
7. *גבריאי* (1:12). Mss T, M, Y, P and S, N, Q, C (?). The agnostic and the apathetic are described as ‘warriors, mighty’ rather than ‘men,’ *גבריאי*. It seems that initially an honest misreading of the unvoveled word *גבריא* gave birth to the variant in Europe. However, when it was so read, it acquired an interpretative value in which a tone of mockery entered the scene.
- 8–9. *ובתיהון... נכסיהון* (1:13). Mss F, T, M, A, U, Y, R, P, and S, Q, W. These parallels are true to the MT. Other combinations evolved which gave further emphasis to the wealth of the sinners, and thus to the intensity of the punishment: *ובירניתהון... בתיהון* (Mss H, V and X, N, C), and *ובירניתהון... נכסיהון* (Mss Z, J, E). They fit the last century or two of the Second Temple period.
10. *(עם כל) רשיעי* (1:18). Mss F, M, P and S, Q. The majority of mss show the equivalent *יתבי* for the Hebrew *יושבי*, the very typical and original translation. The change into ‘the evil doers’ is a developed targumic characteristic, which focused on the theology of reward and punishment. Therefore, only the wicked sinners are targeted for punishment among the population. This is reiterated three more times in Zephaniah: 1:3, 7, 18b.
11. *עם* (2:1). Mss M, A, U, Y and S, N. This is a clear misvocalization of the common, and MT’s *עם*, that took place in Europe. The usual preposition attached to the verb *קרב* in the *hitpa’el* is /-לְ אֶל in both Hebrew and Aramaic. However, its persistence in the two groups forces its inclusion in this list as having a viable interpretative value. If correct, then a call is sent out to the righteous to join in with those who reject the Torah so as to influence them to change their way. The reading helps to identify the audience in the next verse.
- 12–13. *וכתננא* (2:2). Mss A, R (Ms T notes it in the margin as ‘another version’), Rashi and Radaq. *וכטולא* (2:2). Mss Z, J, E, T, M, U, P and X, S, N, Q, W; Rashi and Radaq. These two variants substitute *וכטלא* (Mss H, V), ‘and like dew’ that evaporates before sunrise. The three metaphors parallel ‘chaff’ that ‘goes away before

- the wind.’ The most common version is **ובטולא**, ‘and like shadow,’ which ‘passes away’ (**דעדִי**, cf Ps 144:4) at sunset. The metaphor of dew, also exemplifies ephemeral existence. Originally written **ובטלא** with no vowels, a scribe mistakenly read it **ובטלא** which ‘ceases’ (**דעדִי**, cf Zech 10:11) to materialize at sunrise. The two metaphors, expressing two opposing times of day, interpret equally well ‘from before the day.’ The third metaphor, **תַּנְנָא**, ‘smoke, cloud,’ was substituted at a much later date, post Babylonian edition, by a European scribe who preferred the parallels ‘chaff’ and ‘smoke’ adopted from Hos 13:3. This variant portrays a metaphor of a morning cloud that disappears before sunrise, thus harmonizing with ‘dew.’<sup>357</sup>
14. **כִּיד** (2:4). Mss F, P and N,Q,W. Preceding ‘at noon,’ **כִּיד**, either in the meaning of ‘when,’ ‘as,’ ‘as though’ or ‘that,’ is unclear as to its place in the verse. It precedes another temporal term ‘in the evening’ (2:7). **כִּיד** is superfluous in both cases. It is clearly a Palestinian variant.
15. **תתעקר לבית ישראל** (2:4). Mss U,Y. This substitution for **תתעקר** reflects a period between the first and late third century C.E. when Jewish life in Caesarea (a code-name for Eqron) was in constant danger from its pagan and Christian population. An expression of a prayer for the return of Jewish control over the land of Israel and the fall of Rome (represented by Caesarea). It is probably a survival of an alternative Palestinian variant before TJ was adopted by the Babylonian Jews.
16. **ואבדינך** or any other second person singular form (2:5). Mss F, T,M,A,U,Y,R,P, and Q,W. It is harmonious with the MT where the *land* of the Philistines is the subject of destruction and therefore must be the original translation. The plural verbal form found in the rest of the mss addresses the ‘inhabitants’ instead, thus focusing on the enemies rather than on their land, where a Jewish population resided well into the 6th century.
17. **חרבא** (2:12). Mss T,A, and N,Q. At first glance, ‘A sword’ vitiates the theological importance of the first person **חרבי**, ‘My sword.’ However, since God is nowhere else portrayed as bringing death upon people with His sword, a change was made to harmonize with all other scriptures where God decrees death by the sword.<sup>358</sup>

<sup>357</sup> Cf **בענן בקר**, Hos 6:4, 13:3.

<sup>358</sup> E.g., Hos 1:7, 7:16; Amos 9:1; Mic 6:14.



- 18–19. **תקבלין** (3:7). Mss F, EB 88, M,U,P and N,C,W.<sup>359</sup> Mss F, Eb 88, U,P and N,C,W.<sup>360</sup> The second person singular agrees with the MT and is most likely the original version. The addressee is Judah from vv. 1–5. Verse 6 interrupts this unit by using a third person plural concerning the nations. Verse 7 has both persons plus a third person singular, and therefore creates confusion as to the true addressees. The choice of the singular acknowledges Judah as the addressee. The third person plural attempts to present the nations as the object of hope, warning and condemnation. This is justified by the decision to punish the nations in the next verse. However, the change to the plural may be simply the result of a wish to harmonize all the verbs, for the context (at least v 7a) no doubt is attributed to Judah.
20. **מְדוֹרֵיהוֹן** (3:7). Mss T,U,Y,R,P and X,Q,C,W. The plural reading interprets the threat of destruction as pertaining not to the Temple, but to the homes, and therefore focuses on the displacement and exile of Judah. It is a rendering initiated in Europe where the subject of exile was more urgent than the destruction of the Temple. Yet, it could very well have been a scribal error that acquired an interpretative value.
21. **מְלִכְוֹתָא** (3:8). This plural reading is harmonious with the MT and must have been the original targum in Palestine. The singular version appears in all the groups (Mss F, Eb 88 (?), V, M, S(?), and reflects a later Rabbinic theology which developed and promoted the idea of “the Kingdom of Heaven.” When this Kingdom comes, God will pour His wrath over the wicked among the nations so that the remaining righteous will call Him in unified devotion (v. 9).
22. **עֵם** (3:12). Mss V, N. This variant for another common word **עֵם**, if not an instance of blatant neglect, might be an intentional change. The change meant to read the verse as a divine promise to stay on with the humble remnant. To do so, **וְהִשְׁאֲרֵתִי** was read **וְנִשְׁאֲרֵתִי** and its Aramaic cognate **וּאֲשָׂר** (both in *hif'il*) was read in the same meaning of ‘stay on, remain.’ A borrowed idea from Zech 2:14,15, **וּשְׁכַנְתִּי בְתוֹכְךָ**, is associated with Zeph 3:14–20 in a lengthy *Tosefta*. The original **עֵם** and the interpre-

<sup>359</sup> Also mss B,G,O.

<sup>360</sup> Also ms O.

- tative עַם had to be circulated in Palestine before being transmitted to the East and West.
23. לְרוּחָצֵן (3:13). Mss A,R and C. ‘Securely’ after ‘and they shall dwell’ is added as a note of confidence and a prayer wishing Israel to dwell securely, with no external force to uproot her again. It stands in contrast to Nineveh’s trust in her own strength to ‘dwell securely’ (2:15). This plus originated in Europe.
24. פָּנִי (3:15). Mss U,Y,P. Etymologically, this verb is closer to the MT than פָּלִי and should have been the original version. However, its presence only in Ashkenazi tradition is suspicious. It seems, therefore, that at one point in the transmission process in the Ashkenazi community, a scribe preferred an Aramaic verb that seemed to describe the MT more appropriately. However, פָּנִי and פָּלִי seem to have originated in two Palestinian versions, which found their way to Europe.
25. מַלְכָּא (3:15). Mss U,Y (Ms R is corrected) and the Sepharadi Ms X. The reading in the singular is true to the MT and to its syntax. Thus, YHWH is the King of Israel. The rest of the mss use the plural, ‘the kings of,’ with its theological spin that equates the Kings of Israel with its enemies. It is possible that at the first stage of Targum the literal version constituted the original, but with the political reality of the Herodian period it changed to accuse the Kings of Israel as the enemy. The destruction of Israel and Judah was already blamed on the Kings during the First Temple period (e.g., 2 Kgs 17:8,21, 21:9–16, 23:26–27).
- 26–27. כְּנִשְׁלֵךְ יִתְכּוֹן... קִרְבֵּי גִלּוּתֵיכֶם (3:20). Mss F, T,M,A,U,Y,R,P, X,S,N,Q,C,W. Mss Eb 80 and Z,J,E show only the second part. This variant has to be considered original to a Palestinian milieu. The affinity of Mss V and H is indisputable as concluded above. The version of Ms V (and partly of Ms H) עֲלֵלֵךְ יִתְכּוֹן... כְּנִשְׁלֵךְ is secondary and probably Yemenite, created by one scribe then copied by another.

### 2.2.8 *Rashi and Radaq as Witnesses on Tj*

Bacher’s claim, that the Reuchlinianus ms (Ms F) was known from quotations by Rashi and Radaq, is not substantiated, as their quotations often diverge from this and from all other mss (e.g., 1:3,4,11).

2.2.8.1 *Rashi and Tj*

Rashi presents 15 direct quotations and 5 indirect ones in three ways: first, he prefaces the quotation with either ת"י or וכן תרגם יונתן. In one case (1:11, for 'the dwellers of the Makhtesh') יונתן תרגם follows the quotation. Second, no preface is given. Three, Tj's translation into the Hebrew is the commentary. In two cases, Rashi quotes Tj of other books as relevant to explain the current verse. Of the 15 direct and indirect quotations, 40% (6) agree with Ms V exactly, and 60% (9) disagree.

a. *Rashi agrees with Ms V and other mss*

1. 1:4: פלחיהון (= all mss)
2. 1:9: דמהלכין בנמוסי פלשתאי (= all Yemenite mss)
3. 1:10: מתרע נוניא (= all mss except Eb 80; Radaq)
4. 1:11: ארי איתבר כל עמא דדמן עובדיהון לעובדי עמא דארעא דכנען  
(= V,H; F; Eb 80; U,R,P)
5. 1:11: כל עתירי נכסיא (= F; V,H,Z,J,E; M,A,R; Q,S,W; B,G;  
Radaq)
6. 2:5: ספר ימא (= all mss)

b. *Rashi disagrees with Ms V and other mss*

1. 1:11: בנחלון<sup>361</sup> נחלא דקדרון
2. 2:1: דלא חמיד למתב לאורייתא<sup>362</sup> דלא חמד למיתב לאורייתא
3. 2:2: ותהון דמן<sup>364</sup> כמוצא דנשבא ביה רוחא<sup>363</sup> ככתננא דעדי מן  
קדם יומא נ"א<sup>365</sup> וכטולא דעדי  
(ותהון דמן לכמוצא<sup>367</sup> מאידרא<sup>366</sup> דנסבא רוחא וכטולא דעדי מן קדם  
יומא)
4. 2:5: עמא דחייבין לאשתיצאה<sup>368</sup> עמא דחייבין לאשתיצאה

<sup>361</sup> All other mss except for Ms H.

<sup>362</sup> This exact version does not agree with any other text.

<sup>363</sup> Except for Rashi and Mss A,R, no other targumic source shows this illogical version. Radaq mentions it as 'another version.'

<sup>364</sup> Unique to Rashi. Most mss read לכמוצא. Ms F has a unique למוצא. למוצא is a conflation of the correct forms of either למוצא or כמוצא.

<sup>365</sup> This reading, no doubt, emanates from the misreading of the unvocalized, consonantal טלא, 'shadow,' that ceases (עדי) as the night falls. טלא, 'dew,' on the other hand, disappears with the first rays. טולא occurs in most of the mss. This "popularity" is perhaps influenced by the phrase כצל עובר in Ps 144:4.

<sup>366</sup> Some texts use 'ש' (Mss A,U,Y,R; MG; Radaq).

<sup>367</sup> Unique to Mss V,H.

<sup>368</sup> A variety of orthography is used.

5. 2:7: (ויהי עֲדָבָא לְשֹׂאֵרָא דְבֵית יְהוּדָה) וְיְהִי עֲדָבָא<sup>369</sup> לְשֹׂאֵרִית דְּבֵית יְהוּדָה  
 6. 2:14: (וּטְלָלָהּ סַתְרוֹ) וּטְלָלָהּ סַתְרוֹ<sup>370</sup>  
 7. 3:12: (עִם עֲנוּתָן וּמִקְבִּיל עוֹלְבָן) עִם עֲנוּתָן וּמִקְבֵּל עוֹלְבָן  
 8. 3:17: (יִכְבוֹשׁ עַל חוּבְךָ בְּרַחֲמֵתִיהָ) יִכְבוֹשׁ עַל<sup>371</sup> חוּבִיךָ בְּרַחֲמֵתִיהָ  
 9. 3:19: (הָאֲנָא עֲבִיד גְּמִירָא) הָאֲנָא עֲבִיד גְּמִירָא<sup>372</sup>

c. *Rashi's comments are derived from Tj*

1. 1:10: מִן עוֹפָא = 'From the Gate of Fowls'  
 2. 2: 8: וְאֵתְרַבְּרוּ עַל תְּחוּמֵהוּן = 'And they were arrogant concerning their border'  
 3. 3:5: אִמְרַן לְאִשְׂרָאָה שְׂכִינְתִיהָ בְּגוּהָ = 'He has rested His Shekhinah in her midst'  
 4. 3:7: וְלֹא יִפְסוּק מְדוּרָהוּן = 'So that her dwellings will not be destroyed'  
 5. 3:7 כֹּל טְבוּוֹן דְּאִמְרִית לְהוֹן אִתִּי לְהוֹן = '(So that) all the blessings which I said to bring upon her will not be taken away'

d. *Rashi quotes Tj outside of Zephaniah*

1. 1:12: Rashi explains הַקְּפָאִים as 'who watch over (their lees).' He then quotes TJ 2 Kgs 6:6 וְיִצְפֶּה הַבְּרִזָּל וּקְפָא פְּרִזָּלָא ('and the iron [tool] floated'). Rashi introduces the quote with the Rabbinic term מִתְרַגְּמִינָן, 'as we translate.'<sup>373</sup> Apart from sharing the same root, קְפָא, they do not share the same semantic field. Both possibilities of פְּרִזָּלָא and בְּרִזָּלָא are correct. However, Rashi uses פְּרִזָּלָא when he quotes TJ even though TJ has בְּרִזָּלָא (e.g., Jer 6:28, Amos 1:3).  
 2. 2:5: Rashi explains כְּרֵתִים as a nation in Philistia named in I Sam 30:14 as נְגַב הַכְּרֵתִי. He bases this explanation on TJ's עַל דְּרוֹם כְּרֵתִי ('upon south of Crete'). Even though he prefaces the quote with ת"י, this case is a translation rather than a quote. The actual Aramaic, according to Ms V, is עַל דְּרוֹם כְּרֵתִי (MG has עַל דְּרוֹמָא כְּרֵתִי).

<sup>369</sup> Unique to Rashi where the influence of the Hebrew is reflected. All other mss have לְשֹׂאֵרָא.

<sup>370</sup> This form of genitive accords with Mss Z,J,E, all the Sepharadi mss, The Ashkenazi Mss T,M and mss B,G.

<sup>371</sup> Rashi has a plural form חוּבִיךָ while all other mss show the singular forms.

<sup>372</sup> This separated הָאֲנָא is shared by all mss except for the Yemenite Mss and the Sepharadi Ms S.

<sup>373</sup> E.g., *Bavli*, *Nazir* 39a.

From the above study it is evident that Rashi used TJ as an alternative, supplementary commentary and as a source for his own interpretation. At times, his quotation was influenced by the Hebrew. He worked on more than one ms (2:2) and he most likely followed the source texts of mss B,G (e.g., 1:10, 1:11, 2:2, 2:5, 3:17, 3:19). Rashi's quotations do not exclusively match those of Ms F, though in many cases Ms F matches Ashkenazi mss, including the later mss B,G, which further supports the link between the Palestinian and the Ashkenazi textual traditions. Even though 60% disagree with Ms V, when viewing the plene orthography as insignificant, the agreement rate with Ms V and other mss would be much higher. The one unique reading, כתננא (2:2), shows that he had a different version, known only to other Ashkenazi mss (A,R). Radaq knew of it, very likely from Rashi's citation.

When evaluating the overall contribution of Rashi's targumic citations, it is very clear that his sources emanate from one traditional text. All his differences can be explained mostly by scribal preferences in orthography and dialectical verbal and noun forms. Unlike the Talmudic Rabbis (כדמתרגמינן), Rashi presents the reader with authoritative TJ.

### 2.2.8.2 *Radaq and TJ*

Radaq prefaces all his targumic quotations either by ת"י or תרגום. Of the 35 quotations of TJ, he only once agrees exactly with Ms F against all other mss (עמא דחייבין לאישתיצאה, 2:5). Once, in 3:15, Radaq has the plus of ארי and the rest of the citation agrees with all other mss (including Ms F). In only 9 cases does Radaq agree exactly with Ms V (26%). The majority of them (6 cases) accord with an ancient text from which all other mss emerged. He misquotes TJ of Ms V in 26 cases (74%). However, some parts of the quotations agree with other mss. Since Radaq's commentary has no vocalization, and the plene script is a scribal choice of convenience for proper reading, the agreement rate might be much higher. Radaq quotes TJ outside of the book of Zephaniah only once.

#### a. *Radaq agrees with Ms V and other mss*

1. 1:8: ועל כל דמתרגשין למפלח לטעותא (= V,Z,J,E; B,G,MG; O; [Eb 80]<sup>374</sup>)

<sup>374</sup> [ ] denotes a probability since the scroll is incomplete.

2. 1:11: כל עתירי נכסאי (= F; V,H,Z,J,E; M,A,R; S,C,Q,W; O; B,G, MG; Rashi)
3. 1:18: ארי גמירא ברם שיצאה (= all mss)
4. 2:2: עד לא תפוק עליכון גזירת בית דינא (= F; V,H,Z,J,E; A,R; S,Q; MG)
5. 2:5,6: ספר ימא<sup>375</sup> (= all mss)
6. 2:7: עדבא (= all mss)
7. 2:7: ברמשא יביתון (= all mss)
8. 2:9: משמט מלוחין (= all mss except for U,Y)
9. 2:11: ארי אמאיך (= all mss)

b. *Radaq disagrees with Ms V and other mss*

1. 1:3: דאסגיאת... רשיעיא<sup>376</sup> (דאסגיאת תקלת רשיעין)
2. 1:5: דמקיימין בשמא דה' תייבין ויימין בשום פת כומרין. נ"א, פת,<sup>377</sup> (ודמקיימין בשמא דיי<sup>378</sup> תיבין בשום פתכריהון)
3. 1:9: (בנמוסי) על כל דמהלכין בנימוסי פלשתאי<sup>379</sup>
4. 1:10: קל צוחתא מתרע נוניא<sup>380</sup> ויללה מן עפלא ותברא רבא מן גובשתא. נ"א, מן גבעתא (קל צוחתא מתרע נוניא ויללא מן עופלא ותברא רבא מן גבעתא)
5. 1:11: (דיתבין, <sup>382</sup>all other mss; בנחלון)<sup>381</sup> יתבי בנחלא דקדרון
6. 1:11: ארי אתבר כל עמי<sup>383</sup> דעובדיהון דמן לעובדי עמא דארעא דכנען<sup>384</sup> (ארי איתבר כל עמא דדמן עובדיהון לעובדי עמא דארעא דכנען)
7. 1:12: אפקד בלושין ויבלשון ית ירושלם<sup>385</sup> כמו שמבלשין בנברשתא (אפקיד<sup>386</sup> ית בלושין ויבלשון ית יתבי ירושלם כמא דבלשין בנברשתא)

<sup>375</sup> To be precise, Radaq refers in v. 7 to the previous two translations of חבל noting that there TJ read ספר ימא. TJ's בספר ימא in v. 5 is, then, not indicative of a misquotation.

<sup>376</sup> This reading of דאסגיאת is unique to Mss V,H. Ms T has דאסגיאה.

<sup>377</sup> נוסח אחר (another version).

<sup>378</sup> Since ויימין, in a variety of spellings, appears in all mss but Ms V, it is clear that a haplography occurred.

<sup>379</sup> This defective reading occurs in all the Yemenite mss and the Sepharadi Ms Q.

<sup>380</sup> The suffix of 'ה' in nouns is influenced by the Hebrew. In all other mss, the word ends with the appropriate Aramaic suffix 'א'.

<sup>381</sup> Probably under the influence of the Hebrew ישבי.

<sup>382</sup> בנחלון is unique to Mss V,H.

<sup>383</sup> This plural form is unique to Radaq and is probably a response to the plural noun 'their deeds,' but contradicts the singular verb 'broken, hit.'

<sup>384</sup> The transposition of דעובדיהון creates a better syntax and it occurs also in Ms C.

<sup>385</sup> Radaq uses instead the Hebrew expression כמו ש-.

<sup>386</sup> The plus of ית is unique to Mss V,H.

8. 1:12: (דשלן שליוא על נכסיהון) דשלן<sup>387</sup> שליא על נכסיהון  
 9. 1:12: לא רעוא קדם ה' לאוטבא לצדיקיא ואף לא לאבאשא לרשיעיא<sup>388</sup>  
 (לא רעוא קדם ייי לאטבא ואף לא לאבאשא)  
 10. 1:14: (תמן גיבריא מתקטלין) תמן<sup>389</sup> גבריא מתקטלין  
 11. 2:1: (דלא חמיד למתב לאוריתא) דלא<sup>390</sup> חמיד למיתב לאוריתא  
 12. 2:2: ותהון דמן לכמוצא דנשבא ביה רוחא וכטולא דעדי מן קדם יומא  
 נ"א<sup>391</sup> וכתננא דעדי מן קדם יום  
 (ותהון דמן לכמוצא מאידרא דנסבא רוחא וכטולא דעדי מן קדם  
 יומא)  
 13. 2:5: (עמא דחייבין לאשתיצאה) עמא דחייבין<sup>392</sup> לאישתיצאה  
 14. 2:7: (ומחפורין דמלח) ומחפורין<sup>393</sup> דמלח  
 15. 2:11: (דחילא ייי אמר למפרקהון) דחילא<sup>394</sup> דה' אמר למפרקהון  
 16. 2:14: (בפיתוח תרעהא) בפיתוח<sup>395</sup> תרעהא  
 17. 2:14: (קל עופא דמנציף בכוהא) קל עופא<sup>396</sup> דמצפץ בכוהא  
 18. 2:14: (וטללהא סתרו) וטללהא<sup>397</sup> סתרו  
 19. 2:15: (ולית בר מיני עוד) ולית<sup>398</sup> בר מיני עוד  
 20. 3:1: ווי דמוחיא ומתפרקא קרתא דמסגיא לארגזא  
 (יי דמוחיא ומתפרקא קרתא דמסגיא לארגזא)  
 21. 3:8: (למדן) למדן<sup>399</sup>

<sup>387</sup> Unique to Radaq. However, it is most likely a printing error. In the MG of the NY publisher, it is שלוא. Defective שלוא does not occur elsewhere.

<sup>388</sup> The pluses of לרשיעיא and לצדיקיא are found also in Ms W and MG.

<sup>389</sup> This deficient orthography occurs also in Mss A,R, W and MG.

<sup>390</sup> This exact orthography occurs in Mss U,Y, W,C and MG.

<sup>391</sup> Since no other Sepharadi ms knows this version, Radaq probably quotes it from Rashi. יום is under the influence of the Hebrew.

<sup>392</sup> This form agrees with Mss F, X,N,Q,C.

<sup>393</sup> All other mss show the plural based on the singular reading of מחפורא. There is no Aramaic noun מחפיר. The participle in the meaning of 'causing shame' is incompatible with 'of salt.' Radaq's reading may have been ומחפירין, 'and from pits (of salt),' which attests to his reading of משמט, 'from abandoning (salt-plants)' (*Pesikta Rabbati* 20,2; Jastrow, 1594). חפיר (in Hebrew) or חפורה/חפירה (in Aramaic and Hebrew) mean 'a pit' (*Bavli, Moed Qatan* 5a; Jastrow, 490). This reading of 'from' is found also in ms B, ומחפורין... משמט

<sup>394</sup> Also in Mss Y,P, S,Q and mss B,G,MG.

<sup>395</sup> Occurs also in MG.

<sup>396</sup> Unique to Radaq. The verb צפץ in the meaning of 'to chirp' (like a bird) is more common in Hebrew than in Aramaic. Radaq may have intended to explain Targum's uncommon מנציף. Also, it is very likely that Radaq was influenced by Rashi's commentary קול העופות מצפצים בחלונות.

<sup>397</sup> This is a Palestinian genitive form.

<sup>398</sup> This transposition of עוד is unique to Radaq and probably inspired by the Hebrew עוד אין (e.g., Deut 4:35,39; 1 Kgs 8:60; Isa 45:14,21,22; The *Aleinu* prayer).

<sup>399</sup> This infinitive form is also used in Mss M,A,U,Y,X,C,W and mss B,G.

22. 3:10: מעבר לנהרי הודו ברחמין יתובון גלות עמי<sup>400</sup> דאיתגלאה ויהון  
 מייתין להון הא<sup>401</sup> כקרבנין  
 (מעבר לנהרי הודו ברחמין יתובון גלות עמי דאתגליאו ויהון  
 מיתין להון הא כקורבנין)
23. 3:12 ענותן ומקבל עולבן  
 (ענותן ומקביל עולבן)
24. 3:15: ארי אגלי ה' דיני שקרא מגויך<sup>403</sup>  
 (אגלי יי דיני שקרא מגויך)
25. 3:19: אנא עביד גמירא<sup>404</sup>  
 (האנא עביד גמירא)
26. 3:20: ובעדנא ההיא  
 (ובעדנא ההוא)

c. *Radaq quotes Tj outside of Zephaniah* Radaq explains הַמְשָׁנָה (1:10) as בית המדרש by translating Tj to בְּמִשְׁנָה in 2 Kgs 22:14 and repeating the Rabbinic midrash.

Except for one (#12), all the differences show no significant deviations from TJ. These differences can be explained either by typical scribal activity and preferences (plene versus defective, no consistency, cf #4,14,22), or by variations on verbal and noun forms stemming from lack of knowledge of the language, or dialectical in nature). Hebrew is a factor in Radaq's quotations: syntax reflects the patterns of common speech in Hebrew (#5,19) and Hebrew influences the quoting of the Aramaic (#4,7,17). The only unique reading (#17) can be explained by either Hebraism and/or Rashi's influence. Radaq also works on more than one manuscript as shown in three cases (#2,4,12), and his closest affinity is with Sepharadi mss (#9,11,13,15,21,22). There is no concrete evidence he followed Ms F, though his tradition is Palestinian. There is no evidence that Radaq knew Ms V either, but he certainly made use of Rashi's commentary.

As a source for the study of TJ, Radaq does not add anything new or significant to Ms V, our basic text, and therefore does not constitute another version.

<sup>400</sup> Also in Mss Eb 80; T,U,Y,P; S,W. However, other forms in the singular occur in the rest of the mss except for Mss V,H.

<sup>401</sup> Also Mss Eb 88 and Z,J,E.

<sup>402</sup> This form also appears in Ms U.

<sup>403</sup> The plus of ארי is unique to Radaq and is contextually called for.

<sup>404</sup> Radaq quotes אנא but notes that his text is missing the 'ה'.



Rashi and Radaq do not quote from the same Targumic text, as their differing sources for 2:2 show: Rashi quotes two similes, *chaff* that is blown by the wind, and *smoke* that passes away before the day. Radaq's text mentions *chaff* and *shadow*. One cannot tell if their "another version" actually existed in a written form (on the margin?) or was known orally. Radaq's admiration of Rashi's commentary can be seen in our book, too. For both, Tg is an important part of their commentaries.

### 2.3 THE SCRIBES

Most of the manuscripts in this study originate from the Middle Ages and reflect a cross-cultural book-writing practices, from the Islamic (Arabic) and the European Christian (Latin) worlds. Each block was further divided into clearly defined sub-divisions through schools and academies. The dispersion of Jews throughout the contemporary world resulted in the mutual adaptation of local customs of writing, calligraphy, iconography, decorations of initial letters, the use of colors and so on. Even though Jews adopted the language of their native land, Jewish culture ruled particularly when documents and literary and religious works were written in Hebrew or in Hebrew transcriptions. The copying of Biblical texts as well as Rabbinic texts continued to be performed by scribes, mostly for personal use. Among our manuscripts one Yemenite ms (Ms V) was dedicated for the use in the synagogue. Mss were copied for teaching or school tutorials as well.

Each location developed its own writing customs, which can be seen by the similarities in orthography, notations, methods of *haggahah*, and the like. When scholars migrated from one location to another because of persecutions and discriminations, they brought with them their scriptural traditions. This inter-cultural reality can be seen, for example, in the work of Menahem Trabot in Italy on the Ashkenazi Ms U.

Schools of scribes produced skilled artisans who practice their metier with great pride, even under great stress (e.g., the persecuted Joseph ben Jonah of the Yemenite Ms J). Not all scribes left colophons (or perhaps these pages were lost), but those who did, provided information—some more, some less—about their circumstances. The majority would identify themselves by name and by the name of their fathers and, if possible, provide further genealogy as a sign of respectable lineage. They would state their location, date of completion of the copying, and/or the time it took to complete the task, the name(s) of their benefactor(s)

who commissioned the work, and praises and blessings upon them. In the Yemenite tradition, especially, the scribes would express humility, compose poems of praise to God and benefactors, and add other literary works of famous composers and a variety of lists.

The methods of *haggahah* employed by the scribe or by a separate professional are shared by almost all. Attempting to be most conspicuous in their task, corrections would be made in clear handwriting: if possible, wrong letters would be erased and the corrected ones inserted. Often missing letters or words would be inserted above the appropriate space or in the margins. Tiny markers, whether circles or circles with a 'tail,' would direct the reader to the corrections. Pluses would be crossed out except for divine names, which would be fenced in. If other versions are known, they would be noted in the margin with or without the marker **⌘** or the like. Whether one, two or three columns per page, the aspiration to present an esthetically pleasing text is reflected in the attempt to create a unified script with even margins. Pages would be marked in Hebrew letters and at times, the name of the book would be inscribed at the top of the page. Usually, the sum of verses would be noted at the end of books. The annotation of chapters in Hebrew letters can be found from the late 13th century.

However, many variables determined the shape and transmission of mss, such as time, mood, the vicissitudes of life, poverty, the type of pen, the ink, the location. Since copying of scripture (here, the Prophets) was often geared for personal use, with the hope to eventually sell them, scribes expressed their artistic and scholarly individuality within their work, by drawings of animals, or floral or geometrical illustrations. These illustrations also reflected the culture in which they lived. These personal expressions, in the absence of authoritative organizations to dictate conformity, shaped the transmission of Biblical texts and allowed the introduction of multi-columned texts other than that of the MT, such as commentaries by Rashi, Radaq, Ibn Ezra, or texts which deviated from the "norm" by separating the MT and Targum into two individual columns and shaping these texts into a variety of images (Ms T). The addition of commentaries propagated their popularity throughout the Jewish world and promoted scholarship.<sup>405</sup> Another way to show scholarly erudition was the addition in the margins of various elements,

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<sup>405</sup> Except for the scribe of Ms W, Alfonso de Zamora, whose scholarly motive served his new faith. See discussion under Ms W above and his colophon.

such as *Toseftot*, *haftarot*, commentaries and other versions. Often they would embellish their work with their own poetry or with poems by famous authors, or add lists, such as intercalated years, *sedarim*, *haftarot*, lunar cycles, and colophons. Some Yemenite scribes would add Rasag's Arabic translation of Isaiah.<sup>406</sup> Others would describe their trials in life and ask God for help based on the merit of their scribal activity.

Some techniques were specific to local influence such as writing material, *mise-en-page*, type of script, and lined folios which, because of political circumstances, had to be transferred to new locations. Examining the mss in this study, two major types of script are discerned, which appear in all three major groups of mss (Yemenite, Ashkenazi and Sepharadi): square and semi-cursive. The former reflects meticulous and time-consuming composition, while the latter is a sign of inattentiveness and hurried oeuvre. The semi-cursive script of Sepharadi Mss N,Q resembles "Rashi's script" and seems to be written by the same scribe or the same school.<sup>407</sup> Ms S, which is one century later, is similar but not exact. These last three mss carry only Targum. Different cursive scripts developed within Sepharadi, Ashkenazi and Italian scribal communities at different times.<sup>408</sup>

In each location or school, the name of the tetragrammaton varied between two and three "̣". In ancient times the number may have been four, in concert with the Hebrew יהוה, as it was marked in Qumran mss with four dots.<sup>409</sup> Our mss show a variety of markers that accompany the Name. Except for the Yemenite mss, no one symbol is repeated exactly by any of the rest, which points to individual choices.<sup>410</sup> The Yemenite Mss Z,E are the only ones that share the same symbol with three "̣", the first detached and the other two are connected by a lower line. The third and left "̣" is elongated to indicate, perhaps, a "̣". However, the earliest Yemenite graphic symbol was probably made up of ""̣ connected at the bottom to create a ך for שדי, or as a symbol for the Heavenly crown (Ms H). This was modified by the scribe of Ms V who

<sup>406</sup> The Arabic translation of the Torah has been part of the Taj for centuries.

<sup>407</sup> A sample of this script is found in Malachi Beit-Arié's *Hebrew Manuscripts of East and West* (The Panizzi Lectures. The British Library: London, 1992), 50 (Fig 17a).

<sup>408</sup> On the Medieval Hebrew manuscripts as cross-cultural agents see Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Manuscripts* and *The Makings*, 77–92.

<sup>409</sup> Beit-Arié, *The Makings*, 87, note 9 and "The Munich Palimpsest; a Hebrew Scroll Written before the Eighth Century," *Kiriath Sepher* 43 (1967–68): 415. See, for example, 4Q196, frag. 6 line 9; 4QSam<sup>c</sup>, lines 30–31.

<sup>410</sup> This is also Beit-Arié's conclusion in *The Makings*, 87.

added a ‘tail’ emanating from the left ‘ו’. Ms J of the early 17th century has already two connected ‘ו’, which is today’s custom. Nowadays, in private writing, this has further truncated to one letter with a marker, ‘וּ or ‘וּ.

The tradition of Hebrew alternating with Targum was adopted from the midrashic form of lemma + comment, when the text was read with its commentary.<sup>411</sup> However, this custom faded away in Europe in the early 14th century upon the decline of Targum there. Whereas Targum continued to serve the role of commentary for the Yemenite and Babylonian community, its role in Europe was taken up by the commentaries of giant luminaries such as Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Radaq, Ramban and Abrabanel. In Yemen, these commentators acquired importance as well, but as an additional medium for scholarship.

Aramaic was spoken and written from early times among Jews in Palestine and the diaspora.<sup>412</sup> While the elite used “high” Aramaic for communication, “low” Aramaic was used by the population, with different dialects and vernaculars developed in various regions. This multiplicity is visible in mss which originated at distinct locations, whether Palestinian (Judean, Galilean), Babylonian, or Yemenite. Among our mss, this diversity is mostly expressed by the variety in verbal forms even within the religious community of Yemen (Mss H,V versus Mss Z,J,E), and by the great variety among the Western mss. Aramaic remained vital and continued to be learned in Eastern Jewish culture, where earlier literature was heavily influenced by it. However, as the West was distant from Aramaic dominance, it greatly declined in use and knowledge.

This decline in the use of Aramaic translation caused a decline in the need to be accurate, which allowed the scribes to feel free to change or omit not only individual letters, but often whole words and phrases. Unfamiliar words were corrupt and left uncorrected (typical of Ms C), especially by scribes who were not associated with prestigious schools. Unfamiliar or unique words were replaced by common words familiar to the audience or the scribe himself. But still, the very existence of

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<sup>411</sup> Philip S. Alexander, “Targum, Targumim,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (eds. David N. Freedman et al.; vol. 6: New York: Doubleday, 1992), 329. A similar tradition, in which commentary on *massorot* and Onkelos to Pentateuchal texts follows a few lemmas at a time of the Hebrew, is found in a Babylonian composition published by I. Yeivin, “קטע מחיבור מסורתי,” 123–63.

<sup>412</sup> See, e.g., M.O. Wise, “Accidents and Accidence,” *ABR-NAHRAIN*, Supp 3 (Louvain: Peeters Press, 1992), 131–38, and the bibliography there.

unskilled copying of mss attests to the various individuals' motivation, even when they were sloppy scribes, to hold on to the tradition of learning and not abandon Targum Jonathan altogether.

The liberties taken by the scribes in embellishing and adding to the scroll was also visible in the *Massorot*, but rarely in the Hebrew text itself. The changes in the Aramaic seen in this study evolved in the early stages of transmission, possibly in the 2nd–3rd century, which corresponds with the time of Rabbi Judah and the writing of the Mishnah after Bar-Kokhba's revolt. Targumic interpretations reflect in the main the Hellenistic and the Roman period (see Commentary).

## CHAPTER THREE

### COMMENTARY

#### 3.1 PROLOGUE

The discussion and observations on the identification and meaning of terms such as כדמתרגם, כדמתרגמין, תירגם, כדמתרגם and כדמתרגם in the Introduction illustrate that the act of translation is not without challenges.<sup>1</sup> A literal translation such as Onkelos and Neofiti left unanswered questions born by the text that gave way to “fill-ins” (e.g., P<sub>s</sub>J and Yerushalmi on Gen 4:8a), interpretations (*midrashim* including the Qumran *Pesharim*) and Rabbinic *halakhot* and theology (e.g., P<sub>s</sub>J Gen 14:18–20, *Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 43,7–8; *Tanhuma, Aharei Mot* 9; *Aggadat Bereshit* 13//P<sub>s</sub>J 14:22; *Midrash Tehillim* 19,2). Literal translation cannot always retain accurate rendering even between languages as close as Hebrew and Aramaic (e.g., TO Gen 41:56) and therefore has to resort to other means such as explanation of the intent, rephrasing, change from active to passive, and so on. Changes such as in lexemes, syntax, grammar, and sentence, had to be made for the sake of stylistic variety, clarity and didactics, and were not necessarily a sign of multiple hands and times in every case. It is imperative to realize that “the Targum has a Style of its own, a way of presenting the idea and the meaning of the Hebrew phrase, rather than slavishly adopting a literal rendition into Aramaic.”<sup>2</sup>

This view is well attested in the varied targumim for the Pentateuch, Prophets and the Writings (even though the basic intent of transmitting the text is maintained throughout). Whereas Onkelos of the 2nd century adhered mostly to literal transmission, others incorporated

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., for the preparation of the *Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of Prophets* (BCTP) its editors had to reach a system to outline the presentation of their project. See, e.g., J.C. de Moor, “A Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets,” in *Dutch Studies in the Targum* (ed. I.E. Zwiep and A. Kuyt; Amsterdam: Juda Palache Institute, 1993), 104–17, and in his volume on Joshua, vii–ix; Willem F. Smelik, “Concordance and Consistency: Translation Studies and Targum Jonathan,” *JTS* 49 (1998): 286–305 and the bibliography there; “Translation and Commentary in One: The Interplay of Pluses and Substitutions in the Targum of the Prophets,” *JST* 29 (1998): 245–60.

<sup>2</sup> Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (vol. IV B), 17.

midrashic *aggadah* and *halakhah* whether of Rabbinic teaching or not.<sup>3</sup> The inconsistencies among books within the same corpus or even within individual books<sup>4</sup> raise questions as to these targumists. Were the three major corpuses composed by one person or several? Was one book or one corpus composed in succession, at different times, reviewed and revised repeatedly until reached a final redaction?<sup>5</sup> Inconsistencies can be shown but a solid and final conclusion cannot always be drawn.<sup>6</sup>

Yet, the meturgeman was confined to some guidelines of what he could not do. For example, no translation of one verse is rendered by a succeeding verse, and no textual sequel is disturbed. The freedom the teacher had in interpreting the Massoretic Text eluded the meturgeman's handiwork.<sup>7</sup> When expressing a Rabbinic opinion, he could not identify the authoritative sayers(s).<sup>8</sup> In this way, he promulgated and disseminated Rabbinic viewpoints to its adherents as well as to an audience ignorant or even hostile to the Rabbinic *halakhah*.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, A. Shinan's *The Embroidered Targum: the Aggadah in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992 [in Hebrew]; M.M. Brayer, "The Pentateuchal Targum Attributed to Jonathan ben Uzziel—A Source for Unknown Midrashim," in *The Abraham Weiss Jubilee Volume* (New York: Abraham Jubilee Committee, 1964), 201–31 [in Hebrew]. For *halakhah* in TJ see L. Smolar and M. Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* (New York: KTAV, 1983), 1–61.

<sup>4</sup> As whether the targumist follows the *qrei* or the *ketiv*, e.g.: 1 Sam 2:16, אֵל (qrei), לוֹ (ketiv), TJ sides with the *ketiv* (לֹי). However, in 10:19 the same *qrei* and *ketiv* occur but TJ reads the *qrei*, לֹיִת. Y. Komlosh, *The Bible in the Light of the Aramaic Translations* (Tel Aviv: Bar-Ilan University, 1973), 299. [in Hebrew]

<sup>5</sup> Such questions are posed by Paul Flesher who offers three positions. The first position by Walter Aufrecht holds that the copyists took creative initiatives to alter the targumim to fit their own purposes. The second position by Bruce Chilton holds that in Isaiah two stages are identifiable (see a further discussion in the Introduction of this study). The third position by Flesher himself argues for a basic proto-Palestinian Targum which provided additional material for the four Palestinian targumim of the Pentateuch. Pseudo-Jonathan contains extra material which attests to its two-stage process ("The Targumim," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity*; ed. Jacob Neusner; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 55–56. Flesher develops his theory in "Exploring the Sources of the Synoptic Targums to the Pentateuch," *Targum Studies* (1992): 101–34.

<sup>6</sup> This study, for example, found several lexical inconsistencies between TJ Zephaniah and the Former Prophets, which leads to the possibility of two different targumists or groups of targumists.

<sup>7</sup> A. Shinan, "The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Rabbinic Aggadah: Some methodological considerations," in *The Aramaic Bible; Targums in their Historical Context* (eds. D.R.G. Beattie and M.J. McNamara; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 212.

<sup>8</sup> Flesher, "Targumim" (1994), 626–27.

<sup>9</sup> Flesher, "Targumim" (1994), 627. In remote villages, away from centers of learning, Scripture carrying Targum provided a major access to Rabbinic teaching.

Such and other responses to problems in translation demonstrate methodologies (“translation techniques” or “Targumic characteristics”) found in all translations.<sup>10</sup> But often, intentional variations supercede the text’s integrity out of historical and more so, theological concerns. Here, too, a methodology emerges when the text becomes the where-withal for warning or exhortation and reverence to YHWH and the Patriarchs (e.g., Ezek 13:5,9; P<sub>s</sub>J Gen 22:9–10): avoidance from what might be perceived as anthropomorphism of God takes on specific codes, such as a change into the passive tense,<sup>11</sup> or a “substitute” for a body part.<sup>12</sup>

The problem for the scholar is deciphering these methodologies, codes, allusions, intent and so on that are part of the targumic activity.<sup>13</sup> The scholar tries to discern a pattern then draws conclusions. However, since neither the MT nor the targum comes with footnotes, one’s interpretation may be considered speculative.<sup>14</sup> This is especially true concerning the dating of that targumic rendition which often is compared to known Rabbinic opinions.<sup>15</sup> However, Talmudic discussions are not linear. Rather, opinions are oblivious of chronology. It is impossible for a modern scholar to determine whether the targumist

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<sup>10</sup> According to S.A. Kaufman, no methodologies can be discerned because of the inconsistencies among all Palestinian and Babylonian targumim be it in grammar, orthography, or lexicon. These inconsistencies affect the attempts of dating texts (“Dating the Language of the Palestinian Targums and their Use in the Study of First Century CE Texts,” in the *Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context* [ed. D.R.G. Beattie and M.J. McNamara; Sheffield: JSOT, 1994. Supplement Series 166], 118–41).

<sup>11</sup> God does not hear or see or know but rather ‘it is revealed before Him’ or ‘it was heard before Him’ (e.g., P<sub>s</sub>J Gen 22:12; TJ Isa 57:18; TJ Zeph 2:8).

<sup>12</sup> E.g., ‘the strike of (My/His) strength’ serves as a metonymy for God’s “hand” thus promoting, at the same time, God’s attribute (e.g., Ezek 13:9; Zeph 2:13). Among the studies written on these aspects of translation, see, e.g., A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (vol. IVB), 37–41; Michael L. Klein, *הגשמת האל בתרגומים הארמיים לתורה*, Jerusalem: Makor, 1982; “The Translation of Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopathisms in the Targumim,” *VT* 32 (1981): 176–77; Smelik, *The Targum*, 357–59.

<sup>13</sup> This is apart from plain intertextual activity in which the targumist copies the same translation from a previous book in the MT. E.g., Micah 4:6//Zeph 3:19, Micah 4:4//Zeph 3:13; Isa 18:1//Zeph 3:10, Isa 30:6//Zeph 1:15; Ezek 38:19//Zeph 1:18, 3: 8.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., Zeph 2:12. According to my interpretation, the prophecy against the Cushites concerns a massacre of northern Egyptian towns by Ashurbanipal around 664–663 on his second campaign against the rebelling Tirhaqah. For TJ Zeph 1:10 on ‘the hill,’ see Commentary there.

<sup>15</sup> E.g., TJ Zeph 1:10, 3:3. See the Commentary. Severe criticism of judges in the 2nd century does not have to be the dating of TJ Zeph 3:3, for corrupt judges (or any other high officials) exist in every generation.



follows a Rabbinic opinion or midrash, or vice versa,<sup>16</sup> or whether the targumist presents an original exegesis out of his own appraisal of the situation (socio-cultural, historical, religious or even personal).<sup>17</sup> The targeted audience, the goals of the targumist and the politics of the time are major components in the targumic activity.<sup>18</sup> It is therefore difficult for the modern scholar to interpret any ancient translation in general and TJ in particular with complete accuracy.<sup>19</sup>

The general tendency of scholars to give the right of primogeniture to Midrash (either *Aggadah* or *Halakhah*) over Targum, stimulated Avigdor Shinan to offer a “criteria of determination” by which scholars would address this issue more accurately.<sup>20</sup> Even though Shinan studies targums to the Pentateuch, his criteria are applicable to other targumim. His study of midrashic material shared by both Targum and Rabbinic sources resulted in four criteria that determine midrash as the primary source:

1. Considerations of language and vocabulary
2. Structural pattern
3. Literary genre
4. Translation reflecting a midrash founded on a word-play that is perceptible only in the Hebrew language.

To these four criteria, Smelik adds two more: elliptical exegesis and exegetical intention. In the first case the listeners would recognize the tradition by heart, whereas in the second case the meturgeman used unnecessary exegesis “in the context of a rabbinic discussion concerning a completely different topic.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> E.g., TJ Mal 2:16 and *Bavli, Gittin*, 90b; Smelik, “Concordance,” 296–97.

<sup>17</sup> Cf, for example, M.M. Brayer, “The Pentateuchal Targum Attributed to Jonathan ben Uzziel—A Source for Unknown Midrashim,” in *The Abraham Weiss Jubilee Volume* (New York: Abraham Weiss Jubilee Committee, 1964), 201–31 [in Hebrew]. This position is usually derived from the absence of paralleled material in Rabbinic literature. The only certainty for an individuality in exegesis, according to Shinan, occurs when the translation reflects a word-play perceptible only in the Aramaic tongue (“Aggadah,” 211–12).

<sup>18</sup> A good example for this point is the two very diverse introductions to Esther by Targum (*Rishon* and *Sheni*) and the Septuagint.

<sup>19</sup> Shinan reaches a similar conclusion (“The Aggadah,” 208).

<sup>20</sup> Shinan, “Aggadah,” 203–17.

<sup>21</sup> Smelik, *Judges*, 323–24.

On the other hand, Shinan argues that when targumic traditions find no Rabbinic parallels, their primogenitary position is still not secured, for they might have been infused from oral transmission or folk tradition, or from yet undiscovered literature.<sup>22</sup>

Whether these evaluations are applicable to this study is to be seen in the Commentary below.

### 3.2 TWO TARGUMIC *TOSEFTOT*

Before commencing the commentary, we need to introduce two other targumic sources that will be used in this part of the study. Two Targumic *Toseftot* on Zech 2:14–15, one published by Alexander Sperber as Additional Tosefta (AT),<sup>23</sup> the other by Rimón Kasher,<sup>24</sup> are relevant to Tg Zeph. The latter's source is Ms Parma 555 (PT) which provides a midrashic expansion and revision of AT, including also vv. 14–17. This ms contains all the *Toseftot* to Zech 2:14–4:7 known from other mss. They are associated with Targum-*haftarah* for the first Sabbath of Hanukkah. Kasher finds further evidence for the association between Zech 2:14–17 and Zephaniah in *Pesikta Rabbati* 8 where one of the *haftarot* for Hanukkah is based on Zeph 1:12. The association between this verse and Zech 2:14–4:7 is inherent in the subject of candles and candelabra that are a key motif in Hanukkah. Kasher locates the source of these *Toseftot* in the land of Israel and classifies them into three categories: independent targum, elaboration on TJ, and the

<sup>22</sup> Shinan, "Aggadah," 211, 213. On the relationship between Targum and Midrash, see also Robert P. Gordon, "Targum and Midrash: contemporizing in the Targum to the Prophets," in *WCJS* 9, Panel Sessions: Bible Studies and Ancient Near East (1988), 61–73, and R. Le Déaut, "The Current State of Targumic Studies," *BTB* 4 (1974), esp. pp. 18–22.

<sup>23</sup> Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (vols. I–III. 3rd impression. Leiden: Brill, 2004), 479–80 (69–70). This AT of Zech 2:14–15 was found in the margin of Codex Reuchlinianus. Other additional targumim on Isaiah and Haggai were found in the margins as well; P. Grelot examines this *Tosefta* on Zech 2:14–15 and compares it to the MT and TJ. He concludes that an original Tg, close to the MT, preceded this *Tosefta* which then expanded it. The current TJ is a short version of that *Tosefta* ("Une Tosefta Targoum sur Zacharie, II, 14–15," *RB* 73 (1966): 197–211). Robert P. Gordon posits the opposite as I do (*Studies in the Targum to the Twelve Prophets*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994: 96–107).

<sup>24</sup> Rimón Kasher, *תוספתות תרגום לנביאים*, Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1996. Kasher's *Tosefta* (for our discussion) is found on pp. 213–14. The study of these *Toseftot* is published in his article "התוספתות התרגומיות להפטרות שבת-חנוכה," *Tarbiz* 45 (1975–76): 27–45.

infusion of two or more traditions. He shows their affinity with collections of midrashim for *haftarot* from which targumists drew inspirations for their free compositions.

Indeed, the nature of this lengthy *Tosefta* is an infusion of midrashic targumim while elaborating on TJ. But it does more than that.<sup>25</sup> It reorganizes Zephaniah's diffused oracles within a larger treatise and redefines them. For example, for 2:14 the *Tosefta* raises the subject of obedience to God's Law and conjoins several elements from TJ Zeph 2:3,7, 3:12, and 13. For 2:15 it clarifies the vision of the converted nations vis-à-vis Israel's redemption by using TJ Zeph 3:7,8,10,11, and 15. It changes the 'thought' of God into direct speech with a conditional promise. It explicates the difficulty in Zeph 3:8a and 8b by associating Israel's repentance with the judgment of the nations. Three notable editorial activities can be observed here: the harsh criticism 'but they hastened to corrupt their acts' is omitted in order to mitigate the indictment of former generations,<sup>26</sup> it widens the scope of the MT גוים to include 'nations, peoples, and tongues' and it harmonizes with the MT plural 'kingdoms'.<sup>27</sup> For 2:17 it conjoins several groups of sinners from TJ Zeph 1:8,9, and 12, and it lumps together otherwise unrelated groups, such as Priests and King's sons, by calling them חשיבי ארעא, 'the VIPs of the land.'

AT and PT create a commentary on Zech 2:14–17 with the material taken from Zephaniah which played a significant role on Zech 2:14–17. They share linguistics and content. The opening of v. 14 is taken almost verbatim from Zeph 3:14 and so it is with TJ; God's promise to dwell in Israel's midst (while using the parallel בתוכך) appears twice in each text as do the conversion of nations and Judah's inheritance of her portion, and finally, both use הַס and 'from the face of YHWH.' All these elements leave no doubt as to the dependency of Zech 2:14–17 on Zephaniah.

Kasher theorizes that the *Toseftot* are midrashic targumim for Shabbat-Hanukkah *haftarah* based on the formula ממה שהשלים בנביא ('from that which is complemented by the Prophet').<sup>28</sup> The quoted source is *Pesikta Rabbati* 8,1. However, examination of other cases of the same

<sup>25</sup> A comprehensive study is not intended here, only some preliminary observations.

<sup>26</sup> This exists in the AT. See Grelot, "Une Tosephta," 203.

<sup>27</sup> This elaboration exists in the AT. See note above.

<sup>28</sup> Kasher, תוספתות, 29–30, 39.

formula reveals that it does not refer to a *haftarah* in the Prophets, but to a source in the Prophets that “complements, completes” a missing proof in the discussion.<sup>29</sup> There are five such formulas, including **ממה שמשלים בנביא** in *Pesikta Rabbati* 8,1. The question **מניין** (‘from what source? How do we know that?’) always precedes the formula and thus places it in context. For example: one states that whatever God created in Heaven and on earth was done by virtue of the 12 tribes. Several quotes are offered as evidence. It is followed by the statement that Elijah came to bring Israel under the protecting wings of the *Shekhinah* by building an altar made from twelve stones. The question follows: ‘From what source?’ The answer: ‘From that which is complemented by the Prophet: And Elijah took twelve stones, corresponding to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob’ (1 Kgs 18:31).<sup>30</sup>

The passage brought by Kasher deals with God’s promise that as the candles used to burn in the Holy of Holies, so He will cause them to burn when He rebuilds Jerusalem. ‘How do we know that? For it is complemented in the Prophet, I shall search Jerusalem by candles’ (Zeph 1:12). All Rabbinic interpretations of this clause are positive, as against the negative intent of the Biblical text.<sup>31</sup> Here, the vision of God using candles again in Jerusalem is proof for the statement in the passage Kasher cites. Moreover, the *Pesikta* continues: From Prov 20:27 one learns that God’s candle means man’s soul, spirit. This is an added proof that God will restore his people in Zion.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The expression **להשלים בנביא** refers to the order of the Sabbath services, when one starts the Torah services with the reading of the weekly *parashah* and another “completes” the services with the reading from the Prophets. Cf *Bavli*, *Rosh Ha-Shanah* 32a. The reading from the Prophets is usually marked by specific words such as **מפטירין** **בנביא**, **מפטירין**, or **ומפטיר**. Cf *Bavli*, *Megillah* 21a, 31a. Another formula is **מתחיל בתורה ומשלים בנביא**. For example, *Mishnah Rosh Ha-Shanah* 4; *Bavli*, *Rosh Ha-Shanah* 32a; *Yerushalmi*, *Rosh Ha-Shanah* 20b.

<sup>30</sup> *Pesikta Rabbati* 4,2.

<sup>31</sup> E.g., *Pesikta Rabbati* 8,1–8,5; *Bavli*, *Pesahim* 7b.

<sup>32</sup> Other such formulas in *Pesikta Rabbati* are in 1,2, 13,1, 41,2. A similar formula is **ממה שקראו בנביא** which also looks for evidence from the Prophets but with no reference to *haftarot*. For example, *Pesikta Rabbati* 6,2, 40,9, 44,2.

## 3.3 CHAPTER 1

1:1: Word of prophecy from before YYY which was with Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah in the days of Josiah son of Amon who ruled (over) the tribe of the house of Judah.

The MT presents a typical superscription for a prophetic book with one exception: a lengthy genealogy that goes back to four generations. Targum translates these names faithfully.<sup>33</sup> The differences revolve around the genealogy: was Cushi a non-Judean or a proper name? Was Hezekiah the King or not?

Whether in a superscription or not, Targum always translates the Hebrew דְּבַר־יְהוָה in the same manner: the word of prophecy from before YYY (e.g., Jer 1:2,4,11; Hos 1:1; Joel 1:1).<sup>34</sup> Its propensity to remove all suggestions (or at least keep a “safe distance”)<sup>35</sup> of God’s direct association with man is evident here.<sup>36</sup> When the Word reflects exhortation, God’s ‘decree’ is added as a buffer (2:5; cf 2:2). Other intermediaries between God and man in Zephaniah are: (God’s) ‘stroke of power’ for God’s hand (1:4, 2:13) and God’s ‘Fear,’ ‘Reverence’ or ‘Truth’ that must be sought ‘before Him’ (1:6, 2:3), for God has no body or form to see or to touch (cf 3:7). Similarly, God does not ‘visit’ men but rather their memory comes up before Him (2:7). ‘Hearing’ intimates physical proximity which is replaced by a passive form of ‘it was heard’ (2:8).<sup>37</sup> Another perceived instance of physical closeness is ‘waiting’ for someone, which is changed to ‘hoping for My Memra’ (3:8).

<sup>33</sup> LXX skips three ‘son’ but by using the genitive, the ‘son of’ is inferred. Peshitta reads חזקיה for חלקיה. LXX, Peshitta and Vulgate read the names as proper names.

<sup>34</sup> Gordon quotes 11QPs<sup>a</sup>DavComp XXVII:11: “All these he spoke through prophecy which was given to him from (before) the Most High” (DVD IV 92). *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*. The Aramaic Bible 14. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989: 165, note 1.

<sup>35</sup> Smolar, Leivy and Moses Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* (New York and Baltimore: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1983), 137.

<sup>36</sup> E.g., TJ translates Jer 1:9 ‘And YYY put out the words of his prophecies and arranged (them) in my mouth.’ For more on distancing God from man and their relationship in other texts, see Smolar, *Studies*, 137–50 and Gordon, *Targum* (1989), 4–9.

<sup>37</sup> Or it may suggest obedience to man’s demands as in, e.g. Josh 10:14; Judg 13:9; I Kgs 17:22 (*Studies*, 139, n. 64). Positioning intermediary agents between God’s depiction in human terms and literal translation is also TO’s characteristic. Rambam and Ramban, as many other Medieval Jewish commentators, tried to find consistency in Onkelos’ inconsistent pattern. See Rambam’s *Moreh Nevukhim*, part 1, ch. 27, and Ramban to Gen 46:1–4, Exod 20:16.

In the same vein is the belief that man does not hear God's voice directly but rather the voice of the prophets, His messengers (3:2).<sup>38</sup> Also similar is the idea of bowing down to Him in worship, suggesting an act before a deity, is replaced by 'praying before Him,' an act that can be performed at any location other than a sanctuary (2:11, 3:9). This characteristic is especially evident in three cases: first, God appoints searchers to flush out the sinners with a lamp (1:12) rather than God Himself performing the search and thus coming into contact with man. Second, physically God does not dwell in the midst of man, rather His *Shekhinah* does (3:5,15). Third, man does not come near God but rather approaches Him through Worship (3:2). However, in the era of redemption, God will bring man close to Him physically and spiritually (3:8,19).

The prophet receives the words of his prophecies through God's presence and not directly from God Himself.<sup>39</sup> This presence, (מִן) קֹדֶם ('(from) before (YHWH)'), is one term that avoids anthropomorphism.<sup>40</sup> This is the acceptable view of its function. It appears not only in Targum Jonathan but also in other targumim<sup>41</sup> as well as in Jewish Aramaic literature outside of targumic texts.<sup>42</sup> However, Klein opposes the theory of its anti anthropomorphic function. He describes קֹדֶם as the "buffer preposition" that replaces the accusative אֶת and "other more direct prepositions" as well as other Hebrew prepositions containing פְּנֵי, which are עַל פְּנֵי, בְּפְנֵי, לְפְנֵי, or the prepositions לְ, אֶל, עַל. In addition, the related semantic expression לְעֵינַי and the causal preposition מִפְּנֵי are all translated by the same קֹדֶם. This term, he says, is an expression of deference that is applied not only to God but also to respectable people like the king and to institutions.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup> In the case of the Sinai experience, TO uses another medium, 'the voice of the *Memra* of YY' (Deut 4:33, 5:21,22).

<sup>39</sup> This interpretation is similar to that of Josep Florit Ribera who notes the distinction between פְּתִיגָם and מִיִּמְרָא: the former expresses the content of the *prophet's* message while the latter indicates the *divine* communication ("La versión aramaica del Profeta Sofonías," *EB* 40 [1982]: 150).

<sup>40</sup> The buffer term קֹדֶם is attached to religious acts such as בַּעַה מִן קֹדֶם ('pray from before,' 1:6, 2:11), דָּחַל מִן קֹדֶם ('fear from before,' 3:7,15), or פִּלַח קֹדֶם ('worship before,' 3:9).

<sup>41</sup> M.L. Klein offers four such examples from Gen 17:18, Exod 10:8, 16:8, and Deut 1:41 where TO, P<sub>s</sub>J and N share the same קֹדֶם ("The Preposition קֹדֶם ('before') a Pseudo-Anti-Anthropomorphism in the Targums," *JThS* 30 [1979]: 503–04).

<sup>42</sup> As shown by Étan Levine's study *The Aramaic Version of Ruth* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1973), esp. p. 90.

<sup>43</sup> Klein, "The Preposition," 502–07.

To be sure, Klein's observations are factual. Yet, the use of קדם for serving leaders or nations is not consistent (e.g., Judg 3:8; Isa 60: 12; Jer 27:12,17; Dan 3:1). However, the targumim make a clear distinction between serving gods (no קדם) and serving YHWH (with קדם), e.g., Deut 29:25; Judg 2:11,12,13, 10:6; 2 Kgs 10:18. The קדם used by PsJ in Exod 20:5 (Klein's example) is a rarity (cf PsJ Deut 29:25). The mere use of Aramaic קדם for the Hebrew לפני, בפני, על פני, and not the literal cognate אפני (e.g., PsJ, TO Exod 10:28,29), indicates a conscious choice to show reverence. But one may deduce that a reverent term originally used for leaders, nations and idols was later modified by Israel to exclude the idols in favor of the one God.<sup>44</sup> With the solidification of monotheism post 586 BCE, the Targumists added a sense of anti-anthropomorphism to קדם as other buffer means mentioned above were employed. They are part and parcel of TJ characteristics that are noted throughout this study.

The Word of God, the divine message transmitted to the prophets, is meant to be verbally uttered to people, sometimes directly (usually attached to the preposition אל, e.g., 2 Sam 7:4–5), at other times indirectly (usually attached to the preposition על, e.g., Jer 46:1). The Word that is a part of the superscription elements informs the reader that the following text is indeed a divine message. It also covers the whole work of the prophet.<sup>45</sup> However, the Word as used by TJ, is not transmitted from one entity to another (not 'to' but *with*).<sup>46</sup> It is achieved by mystical transference through the divine spirit.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Note TJ's קדם (2x) in 2 Sam 16:19 כִּנְיָן אֱהִיָּה לְפָנֶיךָ.

<sup>45</sup> Gene M. Tucker, "Prophetic Superscriptions and the Growth of a Canon," in *Canon and Authority. Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 62–64, 69. He agrees with Lescow that the title of 'the Word of YHWH' may be Deuteronomistic. When in the plural, 'the words' can connote any "sayings" in any literary genre. When in the singular, 'the word' is almost exclusively connected with the communication between God and prophet. Erik Eynikel observes the Deuteronomistic redaction in similar prophetic titles when he examines the shared phraseology between 1 Kgs 13 and 2 Kgs 23 (*The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* [Leiden-New York: E.J. Brill, 1996], 279–83).

<sup>46</sup> So in other scriptures such as Jer 1:2; Ezek 1:3 (2x); Hos 1:1; Jon 1:1; Zech 1:1.

<sup>47</sup> *Midrash ha-Hefetz* describes prophecy as "an expression for the outpouring of knowledge [or 'science'] from Him to the heart of the prophet, by the agency of the 'engraving pen,' that is, the active intellect. His speech is the 'intimate angel.' The prophet encounters the divine secret through the agency of the angel. The transcendence of the Word is described as a 'divine efflux.' *Yemenite Midrash, Philosophical Commentaries on the Torah* (Trans. Yitzhak Tzvi Langermann. NY: Harper Collins, 1996), 186.

Another typical characteristic of T<sub>J</sub> in a superscription concerns the information on the Judean king. When the king is mentioned alone, he is endowed with the title ‘king of the tribe of the house of Judah’ (e.g., Jer 1:2,3; Amos 1:1). However, when several kings are mentioned in a row, the addition of *the tribe* is absent (e.g., Isa 1:1; Hos 1:1; Mic 1:1) but *of the house* remains (e.g., Hos 1:1; Mic 1:1. Cf Hag 1:1). The reason behind this, it seems, is to emphasize the connection between the Davidic dynasty and its people over its connection with the land. In a time when most of the Jews lived in the diaspora, this point was essential for national unity. It is not clear why ‘the tribe’ is missing when the kings appear in a row.

Of the four names of Zephaniah’s ancestors, two have been much debated. Cushi has been understood as either a name designating a non-Judean origin<sup>48</sup> or a personal name.<sup>49</sup> The second name, Hezekiah, is viewed as either referring to King Hezekiah<sup>50</sup> or not.<sup>51</sup> The conclusions of such a debate primarily concern the social background of Zephaniah: was he of royal blood or rather an outsider, a foreigner?

Targum Jonathan treats כּוּשִׁי or הַכּוּשִׁי in the same manner. When כּוּשִׁי clearly signifies a personal name as in our verse, it is so translated

<sup>48</sup> E.g., J. Heller, “Zephanjas Ahnenreihe,” *VT* 21 (1971): 102–04; S. Yeivin, “Topographic and Ethnic Notes, II. E. The Five Kushite Clans in Canaan,” *Atiqot* 3 (1960–61): 176–79; Roger W. Anderson, Jr. “Zephaniah ben Cushi and Cush of Benjamin: Traces of Cushite Presence in Syria-Palestine” (In *The Pitcher is Broken*, Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström, edited by S. Holloway and L. Handy, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 45–70; E. Lipiński, (Review of A.S. Kapelrud’s “The Message of the Prophet Zephaniah,” *VT* XXV, Fasc. 3, 1975), 689; G. Rice, “The African Roots of the Prophet Zephaniah,” *JRT* 36 (1979): 21–31.

<sup>49</sup> E.g., Arvid Kapelrud, *The Message of the Prophet Zephaniah* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1975), 44; Gillis, Gerleman, *Zephania: Textkritisch und Literarisch Untersucht* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1942), 2; Carl-A. Keller, *Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonie* (Commentaire de l’Ancien Testament. Xib. Neuchél: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1971), 187; M.A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets* (Vol. 2. Berit Olam. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 495.

<sup>50</sup> E.g., Ibn Ezra; S.R. Driver, *The Minor Prophets: Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. Introductions* (Vol. 2. The New-Century Bible. Edinburgh: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1906), 103; Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 279; Charles E. Taylor Jr. and Thurman, Howard, “Zephaniah,” *IB* 6:1009; Klaus Seybold, *Nahum Habakuk Zephania* (Zürcher Bibelkommentare; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1991), 91; Wilhelm Rudolph, *Micha-Nahum-Habakuk-Zephania* (KAT 13/3. Stuttgart: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1975), 258.

<sup>51</sup> E.g., Rashi, Radaq, Abrabanel; Conrad V. Orelli, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (trans. J.S. Banks. Edingurgh: Clark, 1897), 260; Kapelrud, *The Message*, 44; Keller, 187; A. Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze Petits Prophètes* (Études Bibliques. Paris: J. Gabalda & C<sup>ie</sup>, 1908), 507; Ehud Ben Zvi, *A Historical-Critical Study of the Book of Zephaniah* (BZAW. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 46–47.



(e.g., Jer 36:14). Joab's servant, **הַכּוּשִׁי**, 'the Cushite,' is treated in its eight occurrences as a personal name even though seven times it is clearly an ethnic designation (2 Sam 18:21 [2x], 22, 23, 31 [2x], 32 [2x]). However, a different treatment is given to Zedekiah's servant **הַכּוּשִׁי** in its four occurrences (Jer 38:7, 10, 12, 39:16). **הַכּוּשִׁי** is ignored and instead, the servant is identified as 'the servant of King Zedekiah.' These last two cases indicate that the *meturgeman* refused to admit the service of an Ethiopian in the court of a Davidic king.

However, according to the Rabbis, **כּוּשִׁי** means 'different' in a positive sense. *Bavli, Moed Qatan* 16b (also *Midrash Tehillim* 7, 18) explains that just as a Cushi is different by virtue of his skin, so is Zedekiah by virtue of his acts, for 'different' means 'good.' The same explanation appears in *Pirkei de-R. Eliezer* 52 but the Cushi here is identified with Barukh ben Neriah. Further, TJ follows the Rabbis' view in *Bavli, Megillah* 15a stating that when the text praises a person even though his deeds and the deeds of his forefathers are unknown, as in 'the word of YHWH that was to Zephaniah, son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah...', it is evident 'he was righteous, son of a righteous man.'

A very different rendition is given to Cushi when it is clearly an ethnic title as in Jer 13:23. Surprisingly, TJ identifies this Cushi as an Indian. On this, Rashi to *Bavli Kiddushin* 22b remarks that **הַנְּדוּאָה** means from the land of Cushi and so Cush is translated. Rashi probably is influenced by Isa 18:1 and Zeph 3:10 even though in all other cases TJ translates **כּוּשִׁי** literally, as Cush or Cushites (e.g., Isa 20:3, 21:6).

The closing of the superscription is rendered differently than the Hebrew. Josiah, 'King of Judah,' is described as the king (**מֶלֶךְ**) of the tribe of the house of Judah.<sup>52</sup> As for the 'King of Israel' or any other king, TJ always uses **מֶלֶךְ אֱדֹמִי**.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, for no king other than that of Judah does TJ expand on the ethnic identity of the kingdom or its royal family. There is no difference between Aramaic **מֶלֶךְ** and **מֶלֶךְ** in the construct state. However, the two odd cases of **מֶלֶךְ** in TJ Isa 37:10 and Jer 1:2 may have been simply the result of misvocalization.

<sup>52</sup> And so in all other occurrences where 'king of Judah' appears (e.g., Amos 1:1; Isa 6:1, 38:9; Jer 15:4, 21:7, 22:1, 2, 6, 11 and Zech 14:4), except for two places where the Aramaic for 'king' reads **מֶלֶךְ** (Isa 37:10 and Jer 1:2).

<sup>53</sup> E.g., 2 Kgs 3:9; Isa 37:9; Hos 1:1; Amos 1:1, 2:1; Jonah 3:6; Nah 3:18.

The observation that מֶלֶךְ or מְלֶכֶךְ are used only for the kings of Judah, as opposed to מְלִכָא for everyone else, should be noted.<sup>54</sup> It is very clear that a deliberate distinction is being drawn between Judah and the rest of the world, and between a Judean king and any other king. It probably originated with the Deuteronomistic teaching of Israel in the late monarchic period as a unique, separate, and holy community (see, e.g., Deut 4:5–8, 32–34, 6:14, 7:1–6, 14a, 14:2, 21aβ, 17:14–15, 18:9, 23:4, 8, 18–19, 21a, 26:17–19, 32:8–9). This view is also well attested in the Qumranite literature that maintained strict rules of separation for its members.<sup>55</sup> Specifically concerning the king, the rules as spelled out in The Temple Scroll (LVI, 12–LIX, 23) direct him into a God fearing life. They forbid him to be in contact with other nations or to imitate the ways of foreign kings lest he turn away from God’s laws. For example, the rules forbid the appointment of a foreigner, but rather he must be “from among your brothers.” He shall not take a wife from among the nations, but only from his own father’s family. A new copy of the Law shall be presented to him to study. Twelve thousand warriors shall surround him at all times so that he will not go astray (physically and spiritually) and be captured by foreigners. When he goes out to war, he shall avoid everything unclean.<sup>56</sup> Holiness has to be maintained.

This shift in theological focus, in which king and Judah must be holy, is expressed in the need for separation, according to TJ, not only from foreign nations but from the historical northern kings of Israel as well. The disappearance of the Kingdom of Israel from God’s given land is proof of its complete failure, and that should not be associated with the descendants of Judah and the House of David. Sweeney discusses

<sup>54</sup> In the Prophets, מְלִכָא in relation to a Judean king is used only when the Hebrew מֶלֶךְ with the definite article precedes the name of the king (e.g., Isa 36:1, 2; Jer. 21:1, 26:12, 41:9, 52:20). The Aramaic for a mere מֶלֶךְ is always מְלִכָא. In only one case (וַיִּמְלֶכֶךְ־מֶלֶךְ, Jer 37:1) מֶלֶךְ precedes the king’s personal name instead of מְלִכָא. This is probably because it is not in the definite article and is in itself preceded by an imperfect verb with a conjunctive *vav* and a connective hyphen. The phrase וַיִּמְלֶכֶךְ־מֶלֶךְ is a hapax legomenon. Similarly in the Former Prophets TJ for ‘King of Judah’ is almost always מֶלֶךְ (e.g., II Kgs 9:21, 12:19) while מֶלֶךְ is in the minority (II Kgs 14:11 and 15:1). However, מְלִכָא continues to be used for any other king, with an exception in II Kgs 9:16 and 27, that may simply show a temporary error of inattention.

<sup>55</sup> Especially precepts in The Community Rule, The Damascus Document, The Messianic Rule, and The Temple Scroll. See Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (The Penguin Press: NY, 1997 [1962]), 97–156, 190–219.

<sup>56</sup> Vermes, *The Complete*, 212–15.

this same idea in his overview of the composition of the Book of the Twelve.<sup>57</sup> He emphasizes the shift in focus from the effect of the fall of Israel in the theology in Judah to Jerusalem as the holy center of Jews and Judaism. It reflects a theological view of post-exilic Jewry that focuses mainly “on the role of Jerusalem at the center of creation and the nations.”<sup>58</sup>

The same view is reserved for God Himself. However, this view is found only once in the Twelve. God is named מְלִיךָ who carries the title of ‘YHWH of Hosts’ in Zech 14:16–17 where TJ uses מְלִיךָ in the construct state. In the only case in the Twelve where God is named מְלִיךָ יְשׂרָאֵל (Zeph 3:15), TJ changes the syntax to portray the kings of Israel as the enemies of Israel (see Commentary). And in the only occurrence in the Twelve where an idol is described as king (Amos 5:26), TJ translates disparagingly, בּוֹמְרִיכוֹן, ‘your idol-priests’ (cf Zeph 1:4b).<sup>59</sup> Outside of the Twelve, Tg Prophets employs the same guideline as for a Judean king: when the name of YHWH is defined as the King of Israel, He is מְלִיכָא ד-י, ‘the King of’ (Isa 44:6).

With this distinction in the translation of ‘King,’ TJ conveys to the reader its theological viewpoint that YHWH, Judah and the House of David are symbiotically connected and are to be separate from other nations.

The second point, that of the persistent addition of ‘king of *the tribe of the house of* Judah,’ propounds the same theological viewpoint. It specifies the division between Judah and Israel and identifies the tribe of Judah as the House of Judah, an endearing portrayal that conveys intimacy.<sup>60</sup> Also, ‘House’ may imply the Davidic dynasty, for why else would this apparent redundancy be added.<sup>61</sup> ‘Dynasty’ or ‘Royal Family’ connotes one of the meanings of Hebrew בֵּית (e.g., 2 Kgs 16:8, Saul’s; 1 Kgs 13:34, Jeroboam’s, 16:11, Baasha’s).

<sup>57</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve*, esp. xxxv–xxxix.

<sup>58</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve*, xxxvii.

<sup>59</sup> As for the claim that from early stages of transmission, מְלִיךָ (the Ammonite god) and its inflections were repointed to the noun מְלִיךָ to avoid the thought that Israel worshiped a foreign god (e.g., Abraham Geiger, *המקרא ותרגומו*, 197–99), one should note that in all occurrences of מְלִיךָ (1 Kgs 11:7, 23:10; Jer 32:35), TJ translates מוֹלְךָ.

<sup>60</sup> This intimacy is well portrayed in the report on the relationship between young David and the people of his tribe who enthroned him (1 Sam 2:4–11. See also TJ I Kgs 22:2).

<sup>61</sup> ‘House’ is often a synonym for ‘dynasty’ (cf 2 Sam 2:4, 3:19).

An unusual addition is offered by the scribe of Ms W, Alfonso de Zamora. The first three of Zephaniah's ancestors are titled prophets. Zamora finds an opportunity to show his knowledge of Rabbinic literature. According to *Aggadat Bereshit* of the 10th century chapter 14, Zephaniah was 'a prophet son of a prophet.' This is echoed by Abrabanel who noted that 'according to the Sages... (Zephaniah's ancestors) were prophets.' Earlier, in *Bavli, Megillah* 15a, Zephaniah is described as 'righteous son of a righteous.' Radaq, whose commentary Zamora most probably knew, explains the lengthy genealogy by saying that 'indeed his ancestors were great.' In this way, Zamora enhances and elevates Zephaniah's pedigree as a true spiritual messenger. Depriving Hezekiah of the prestigious title of 'prophet' reflects Zamora's knowledge of the debate among Jewish commentators concerning his identity. Ibn Ezra held the opinion that Hezekiah meant the King whereas Radaq and Abrabanel rejected it (probably the source[s] for Zamora). Thus Zamora integrates Jewish traditions into the Targumic text.

1:2–3: *A destruction!* I will destroy everything from upon the face of the earth, said YYY. I will consume man and cattle, I will consume the bird of the sky and the fishes of the sea, *for the snare/offense of the wicked has increased*; and I will destroy man from upon the face of the earth, said YYY.

The unusual combination of the MT  $\text{הָסַף הָסַף}$  has been hotly debated as to their forms, and a variety of emendations have been offered.<sup>62</sup> Most commentators agree that they are derived from two differing roots,  $\text{הָסַף}$  ('to gather') and  $\text{הָסַף}$  ('to destroy'). However, this is not how TJ translates the double verbs. Both noun  $\text{הַשְׁפָּטָה}$  and verb  $\text{הַשְׁפִּיט}$  come from the same root of  $\text{שָׁפַט}$ .<sup>63</sup> The *shafel* verb is clearly a first person which indicates two things: first, either  $\text{הָסַף}$  or  $\text{הָסַף}$  was understood as first person where the *aleph* in the Hebrew text was elided, or as  $\text{הָסַף}$ ; second, Zephaniah opens his mission with God's direct Word. Thereupon TJ opens its translation with a shocking statement that sums up the next divine message in one word: 'Destruction.' Opening the oracle with a noun gives the announcement a stronger sense of

<sup>62</sup> See a comprehensive discussion in Sweeney, *Zephaniah* (ed. Paul D. Hanson. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 58–62.

<sup>63</sup> Some scholars read here an exact rendition of the MT, 'I will utterly destroy.' For example, Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 55,60; Gordon, *Targum*, 165.

certainty and drama. Targum translates the same in Jer 8:13 using a noun first and the *shaf'el* יצא second. It uses יצא in *shaf'el* to translate other verbs of destruction such as: הרץ (Isa 10:23), כרת (Hos 8:4; Zeph 1:3b, 3:6), שםם (Zeph 3:6), שמד (Isa 48:19), כלה (Isa 29:20), אבל (Ezek 34:28), נקה (Jer 30:11), and אסף (1 Sam 15:6. Sometimes the meaning of 'gathering' is deliberately preferred as in the case of the fate of the righteous in Isa 57:1). However, for the Hebrew סוף, TJ uses the same root as in Isa 66:17 and Zeph 1:3. Usually its noun is translated as גְּמִירָא, 'end, cessation, destruction,' e.g., Jer 30:11.

Another serious problem for scholars has been the verbless clause וְהַמְכָּשְׁלוֹת אֶת־הָרָשָׁעִים, literally 'and the obstacles with/the wicked (ones).'<sup>64</sup> As it stands in the MT, it is an odd entry within a list of living creatures to be destroyed. Targum solves the problem by making it a causative clause with a connecting עַל־דְּ, 'for.' Thus, TJ presents the clause as expressing the reason for this total destruction of these living creatures. מְכָשְׁלוֹת is read in the singular מכשול (*takla*, 'obstacle, snare') and a verb is added to eliminate the difficulty of the MT.<sup>65</sup> The evil ones do not deserve to continue to enjoy God's world He created for mankind (Gen 1:28). If we retrovert TJ's translation into Hebrew, the result would be בִּי הִרְבָּתָה מְכָשְׁלַת הָרָשָׁעִים ('for the obstacle of the wicked has increased...').<sup>66</sup> The use of *af'el* instead of the *pa'el*, as some mss and Radaq show, may be influenced by Jer 46:16 הִרְבָּה בּוֹשֵׁל and Ezek 21:20 וְהִרְבָּה הַמְכָּשְׁלִים, where TJ uses the *af'el*. This form needs a direct object. However, the meaning in Jer 46:16 and here calls for a *pa'el*, רִבְּתָה, 'has increased.' Targum's translation here is inherent in the Flood story. In Gen 6:5, God decides to sweep away all the living

<sup>64</sup> LXX simply omits it. See, for example, Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 58–60; Johannes Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah* (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament. Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 55–56.

<sup>65</sup> Ribera, "La versión," 150. He also views the addition of the verb as a parallel to Ezek 21:20.

<sup>66</sup> Several mss, such as J, M and W, have the *pe'el* participle עַל דְּסִגְיָא that corresponds to the Hebrew כִּי רִבְּתָה. Ms C has the plural participle עַל דְּסִגְיָאִין that corresponds to the plural כִּי רִבּוּ. This is unjustified next to a singular noun. Sperber retroverts the phrase differently, וְהַמְשָׁלוֹת הָרָשָׁעִים ('and the rising to power of the wicked'—my translation). A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic, The Targum and the Hebrew Bible* (vol. IVb; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 82. He does it probably by reading the verb סִגַּי as 'to make great' in *af'el*. This reading perhaps assumes that Jonathan's Hebrew text וְהַמְכָּשְׁלוֹת had a missing כִּי. Nonetheless, he fails to notice that TJ's translation here is exegetical, not literal. Yehezkel Kauffmann suggests reading וְהַמְשָׁלוֹת אֶת (=עַם) הַמוֹשְׁלִים after the LXX and וְהַמְשָׁלוֹת after Isa 3:6 (תולדות האמונה הישראלית), vol. 6–7. 6th edition. Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik Ltd., 1964), 349, note 2).

creatures He created ‘for the wickedness of man is great,’ רַבָּה. Onkelos translates: ‘for the wickedness of man has increased.’ The same idea and syntax is expressed in our verse. The majority of mankind of the Flood era was evil. However, TJ tends to focus on the destruction of the evil ones only, for they constitute the obstacle for righteous living (e.g., Zeph 1:7; Isa 57:14).

The Rabbis reflect this Targumic perception: ‘(Rabban Gamliel said)... If people worshiped useless objects, God would obliterate them [the objects], but they worship the sun and the moon, the stars and the constellations, the brooks and the valleys! Should He destroy His world because of fools? ... and because the wicked stumble by them, should He cut them off from the world? For they worship man [as well]!’<sup>67</sup>

The use of *af’el* is limited to Mss H,V and T while Mss F, Eb 80, Z,E, X,N, and M read the *pa’el*, הַרְסִינָאָה. The difference in meaning is marginal. However, Mss J, U,A,R, and Q,W read the participle הַרְסִינָאָה, which views the evil as current.

A second meaning may be found in *tekalta’* II according to Jastrow (p. 1691) in the context of taxes (cf TJ Isa 58:3, Ezek 45:9).<sup>68</sup> With this *double entendre* of offenses and imposed taxes, TJ expresses the Jews’ economic suffering under the yoke of Roman taxation. Heavy taxation by Herod and the Romans and the confiscation of Jewish land before and after 70 brought the Jewish population into poverty and much tribulation.<sup>69</sup> Churgin, in his discussion of TJ Hab 3:17, posits that the census of 6–7 CE by the second Procurator Quirinius that was followed by a tribute inflated the rage of the Targumist more than any other past barbarities.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, R. Gordon dates this taxation to pre-70.<sup>71</sup> Discussing the possibility of a reference to Roman taxation in TJ Hab 3:17, he concludes that if this was the case, it could refer only to the

<sup>67</sup> *Bavli, Avodah Zarah* 54b–55a; Jacob Neusner, *The Theology of Oral Torah* (McGill-Queen’s University Press: Montreal, 1999), 160–61.

<sup>68</sup> Targum’s translation of ‘remove your taxes’ is the result of the odd גרשתיכם, literally ‘lift your divorced ones’ within a call to do social justice. Targum probably read the root גרס/גרש, ‘to crush,’ and hence, ‘remove that which crushes.’

<sup>69</sup> See, e.g., Menahem Stern, “The Reign of Herod and the Herodian Dynasty,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (vol. I; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 259–61; “The Province of Judaea,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (vol. I; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 330–36; “Economic Life in Palestine,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (vol. II; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 692–99.

<sup>70</sup> Pinchos Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* (New York: KTAV publishing, 1983 [1927]), 22–23.

<sup>71</sup> Gordon, *Studies*, 48–49.

period before 70 CE when Jews still lived in Jerusalem. It could not refer to Hadrian's taxation on the annual visit of Jews to Jerusalem after the Great Revolt of 132–135 CE.<sup>72</sup> Sweeney, who reads here 'taxation,' assigns the Targumic historical reference to both first and second century CE.<sup>73</sup>

Conflating both allusions, to the Flood and to Roman taxation, TJ views Rome as the reincarnation of that evil generation that caused the death of all living creatures (sauf those saved by Noah). This devastation could happen again, TJ warns.

However, if *takla'* refers to Roman taxation, it most probably referred originally to the first century CE. Still, it could have nothing to do with taxation but with a rumination on the evil state of mankind. The choice of *takla'* rather than *tikla'* (Ezek 21:20) comes to distinguish between מְכִשְׁלָה and מְכֹשׁוֹל.

A similar concern for and a depressive view of the state of mankind is also expressed by the Rabbis. They, too, read וְהַמְכִשְׁלוֹת אֶת־הַרְשָׁעִים as a causative clause interpreting the subject of those obstacles as the animals. They, therefore, try to ascertain what are the obstacles animals pose to man. One *aggadah* brings an example for this man/animal sinful relationship: there was a hunter who caught a bird. He commanded the bird to go, get fat and return. The bird obeyed, got fat and returned.<sup>74</sup> Blind obedience and gluttony caused the disasters. Another lesson learned from this midrash is that since the wicked pollute the world, there is no point in keeping their sources of sustenance alive. We see here a very melancholy view of mankind and of its chances of improvement.

Yet, the Rabbis' perception of a link between man and animal as sinful objects is exactly the opposite of TJ's position. With the connecting causal על־ד ('for'), TJ states that in this divine decree of devastation, the animals are totally innocent. Mankind in general is the only true target as Zephaniah's words intend.

<sup>72</sup> On the heavy taxation post-70, Rendel Harris quotes Jerome in his Commentary on Zeph 1:15 that even the right to lament over the "perforated stone" in the ruined Temple was taxed ("Hadrian's Decree of Expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem," *HTR* 19 [1926], 200).

<sup>73</sup> Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 65.

<sup>74</sup> *Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 28,7.

1:4: And I shall raise *the stroke* of My *might* upon *the man of* Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will destroy from this place the rest of the Baal, the name of *their worshippers* together with *their* pagan priests.

Verse 4a is clear and poses no problems for commentators. However, the second part has attracted lengthy discussions.<sup>75</sup> Does ‘this place’ refer to the Temple, to Jerusalem, or to the land of Judah? Is it a gloss? Does ‘the rest of the Baal’ point to a pre- or post-Josiah reform? Who are the כמרים and the priests and how they are related to the Baal, if they are? The versions clearly reflect confusion: LXX reads ‘the names of the Baal and the names of the priests,’ skipping the enigmatic כמרים; Peshitta reads ‘and the name of the כומרֵא with all those of the priests’; Vulgate reads ‘the rest of Baal and the name of the temple servants with the priests,’ thus it identifying ‘this place’ with the Temple.

By replacing ‘My hand’ with ‘the stroke of My might,’ TJ avoids portraying God in human terms. מַחַת, ‘stroke,’ serves as an allegorical buffer between the deity and man, for God does not raise His hand, but His might.<sup>76</sup> This is an important element of theological emphasis for TJ.<sup>77</sup> To omit it, as Mss Z,J,E do, is a gross mistake.<sup>78</sup>

Mss C,W add ית before מַחַת where Hebrew אֶת is assumed to have been missing. Indeed, out of nine cases where first person ידִי + נְטִיתִי occur, five have no direct object אֶת (Ezek 14:13, 16:27, 25:13, 35:3; Prov 1:24) and four do (Jer 51:25; Ezek 6:14, 14:9, 25:7).

Targum adds the common formula אֲנָשׁ, ‘the man of,’ in order to create a better parallelism with יְתָבִי, ‘the inhabitants of’ (cf Jer 4:3, 11:12), and to be more specific lest the land of Judah be construed as the target of punishment. Ribera notes the different Targumic words for ‘man’: אֲנָשׁ is the cognate for the Hebrew אָדָם, the general term for ‘human being’ (e.g., Isa 2:11; Jer 2:6).<sup>79</sup> For Ezekiel’s בְּנֵי-אָדָם (e.g., 11:2) the translation is literally בְּרֵי אָדָם. For אִישׁ the translation is גְּבִיר (e.g., Zeph 1:12, 2:11; Hag 1:9). However, ‘Son of man’ is viewed as

<sup>75</sup> E.g., Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 62–72; L. Sabottka, *Zephanja* (Rom: Biblical Institute Press, 1972), 15–18; Vlaardingerbroeck, *Zephaniah*, 62–66; Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 509–10; Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 66–69.

<sup>76</sup> E.g., Jer 51:25; Ezek 6:14; Amos 1:8; Zeph 2:13; Zech 2:13, 13:7. ‘The hand’ in Amos 9:2 is exchanged for ‘My Word.’

<sup>77</sup> E.g., Nah 1:2. Smolar, *Studies*, 134.

<sup>78</sup> Which it probably is. This mistake is not repeated in 2:13.

<sup>79</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 150.



a specific name given to Ezekiel by God. There is never a case where God addresses a prophet by his personal name.<sup>80</sup>

Mss A and N,C replace על אנש 'upon the people of' with על דבית, 'concerning the house of.' The phrase על ד- does not mean 'upon the' but "concerning the" (e.g., TJ Zech 11:7, 12:7) and therefore attests to its later addition and ignorance of Aramaic. If 'concerning the House...' was meant by the initiating scribe, then he should have applied this to parallel 'and concerning all the inhabitants...'. No ms suggests this. Ms X, the earliest among the Sepharadi mss, knows of the two variants but tries to remedy this problem by conflating the two versions with על דבית אינש, 'upon the people of the House of.' Even though על דבית was created by ignorance, since it occurs in more than one group of mss, it is considered a true variant.

If בית was added intentionally, the reasons could function on two levels: first, it alludes to the House of Judah mentioned in the superscription, and second, it encompasses a larger number of sinners. The House (of Judah) and the inhabitants (of Jerusalem) make up the Tribe mentioned as an information article in 1:1.

The second half of the verse carries attempts to make sense of the MT ambiguity. 'The rest of the Baal' is translated literally. The clause אַת־שֵׁם הַכֹּמְרִים עִם־הַכֹּהֲנִים poses a challenge. The syntax of both TJ and the MT recognizes the apposition of 'the rest of the Baal' and the 'worshippers with their pagan-priests.' In order to not miss the two objects of the 'name,' pagan priests and Priests, TJ adds a parallel for the pagan priests and omits 'the Priests.'<sup>81</sup> In this way it extends the element of apostasy by adding pagan worshippers and thus eliminates the embarrassing possibility of Judean Priests being associated with the Baal.<sup>82</sup> The result is that 'this place' refers to Jerusalem and Judah

<sup>80</sup> God uses the name Ezekiel in the third person in 24:24.

<sup>81</sup> The common interpretation is that TJ replaces 'the pagan priests' with the 'worshippers' and 'the Priests' with 'the pagan worshippers.' For example, Ribera, "La versión," 150–51; Gordon, *Targum*, 165, n. 7. According to Smolar, 'the Priests' are understood by TJ to be "non idolatrous priests" by the sheer contrast with כֹּמְרִים. Targum needed to distinguish between good and idolatrous Priests. Targum's problem is solved by designating them as "idolatrous priests" (*Studies*, 38). However, the Priests are not mentioned at all and כֹּמְרִים no doubt designates idolatrous priests. Sweeney explains the 'emendation of the text' by TJ as an "attempt to eliminate the problem by eliding (כֹּהֲנִים) in favor of כֹּמְרִים" (*Zephaniah*, 65). The reason is not given. Ben Zvi views the aim of this translation as making explicit what was implicit in the MT (*A Historical*, 70).

<sup>82</sup> In Zephaniah's time this possibility was fact. Cf 2 Kgs 21:3, 23:4–5, 12; 2 Chron 33:3–4.

and not to the Temple. The addition of ‘their’ further strengthens this link to the idol priests. This addition of suffixes is characteristic of TJ.<sup>83</sup> Targum maintains the awkward syntax of the Hebrew verse except for a deliberate change to third person plural for both ‘worshippers’ and ‘pagan priests.’ These pagan worshippers come from among the Judeans and are not imported. Thus the people, the remnant of the Baal, and those involved with its cult are all connected.

The Baal ‘worshippers’ may also allude to the Hellenized Jews who imitated and adopted the Hellenistic culture of the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century CE.<sup>84</sup>

For TJ, any priest other than the legitimate Levite-Priests at the Temple in Jerusalem, is considered a בְּמִר, especially those of the Baal (2 Kgs 10:19), even כְּהֵנִים of questionable priestly activity (2 Kgs 23:8).<sup>85</sup> This includes Israelites appointed as priests by Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:32), by Ahab (2 Kgs 10:11)<sup>86</sup> or even Jonathan the Levite and his sons who officiated at the Dan sanctuary (Judg 18:30).<sup>87</sup> MT Priests who are clearly pagan-priests are rendered ‘servants, worshippers’ (Jer 48:7, 49:3). Targum’s characteristic of protecting the holiness and exclusivity of the Temple and its priesthood is here expressed.

Alternatively, by the additional suffixes, TJ maintains that v. 4b does not target the Judeans, who were addressed in v. 4a. On this reading, God vows to eliminate from Jerusalem (or Judah or both) what is left of the Baal cult, their (foreign) worshippers along with their priests.

A slightly different syntax is offered by Mss M,A,Y,R and C by adding a *vav* conjunctive to יַת שׁוֹמ and thus raising the number of the targets of destruction to three: the ‘rest’ of the Baal, the name(s) of the worshippers, and their priestlings. The rest of the Baal suggests the physical remnant of that cult, whereas the ‘name’ suggests the memory of the people involved. On the other hand, as the MT and TJ have it, what is left to be erased is the memory of the cult and its people, which reflects a time shortly after Josiah’s reform. What both sources convey

<sup>83</sup> Sperber, *The Targum*, 71.

<sup>84</sup> See, e.g., Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (trans. by S. Applebaum. Philadelphia: JPS, 1966), 152–74.

<sup>85</sup> Cf Smolar, *Studies*, 36–38. Pagan priests are the self-nominated Samaritans (2 Kgs 17:32), whereas the Israelite priests brought from Babylon to teach YHWHism to the Samaritans are rendered כְּהֵנִים (2 Kgs 17:27–28).

<sup>86</sup> To put them down, TJ denominates these priests ‘(Ahab’s) friends, associates.’

<sup>87</sup> Until Jehonathan set the statue in the newly built sanctuary at Dan and officiated there, TJ continued to call him כְּהֵן (Judg 18:27, 30).

is that even though the reform was complete, the idolatrous psyche of the people needed a reform. The added *vav* does not seem to be the intent of the scribes but rather a lingual act of speech.

Explaining ‘the pagan priests with the Priests,’ Rashi quotes TJ using the Hebrew plural suffix form, **בומריהם**, instead of the Aramaic plural suffix form, **בומריהון**.

1:5: And those who bow on the roofs to the hosts of heaven, and those who bow *and* swear by *the name of* YYY and *do it again* (-) *by the name* of their *idols*.

Verse 5a is clear-cut. With the direct object **תָּאָת** opening the verse, it formally continues the list of targets to be punished that started with the first **תָּאָת** in ‘the rest of the Baal.’<sup>88</sup> However, the second part poses some problems. The metric imbalance that some scholars observe in v. 5, and the absence of the second ‘those who bow down’ in some LXX mss, have motivated them to suggest the deletion of v. 5b.<sup>89</sup> Others suggest that either the first ‘those who swear’ or ‘those who swear to YHWH’ need to be deleted.<sup>90</sup> One asserts that some words are missing

<sup>88</sup> However, this rule is not always kept and **תָּאָת** can be omitted from the syntax. The list in fact starts with v. 2 and the trajectory moves from the general (‘all’) to the individual groups (the warriors), then back to ‘man’ to close the circle of living creatures.

<sup>89</sup> E.g., J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel* (ICC. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1911), 192; Ivan Ball (*A Rhetorical Study of Zephaniah*. Berkeley: BIBAL Press, 1988), 25; H. Irslinger (*Gottesgericht und Jahwetag. Die Komposition Zef 1,1–2,3, untersucht auf der Grundlage der Literarkritik des Zefanjabuches*. ATSAT 3. St. Ottilien: EOS, 1977), 23. Arnold B. Ehrlich blames the imbalance on scribal activity. According to him, a scribe wrote ‘those who bow down’ instead of ‘those who swear’ when his pen slipped after writing the first participle. An editor restored ‘those who bow down’ and the mistake became part of the text in perpetuity. Another excessive letter is the ‘ה’ in **מְקַרְא כַּפְשׁוּטוֹ וְהַנְּשָׁבְעִים** [New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1969], 456). However, why would an editor restore a word that supposedly was not in the original text in the first place?

<sup>90</sup> Among those who belong to the first group are, for example, A. Deissler, *Les Petits Prophètes* (La Sainte Bible. Tome VIII. Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1961), 443; G.A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets: Commonly called the Minor* (Vol. 2. The Expositor’s Bible. New York: A.C. Armstrong, 1898–99 [A revised edition by Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1929]), 55; J.J.M. Roberts, *Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (The Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1971), 167–168; Keller, *Nahoum*, 188; van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 510; Friedrich Horst, *Die zwölf Kleinen Propheten* (3rd edition. Handbuch zum Alten Testament 14. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1964), 190. Among those who belong to the second group are, for example, Seybold, *Nahum*, 93,95; BHS; Edler (*Das Kerygma des Propheten Zefanja*. Freiburger Theologische Studien. Vol. 126. Freiburg: Herder, [1984], 15) and Rudolph omit only ‘those who swear’ (*Micha*, 262); Elliger (*Das Buch der zwölf Kleinen Propheten*. Das Alte Testament

after the second וְאֵת־הַמִּשְׁתַּחֲוִים, which he restores as וְאֵת־הַמִּשְׁתַּחֲוִים לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת.<sup>91</sup> Yet others support the integrity of the MT, saying that the MT reflects a fusion of variants,<sup>92</sup> or a rhetorical device to reach a climax of religious aberrations.<sup>93</sup>

Targum resolves the problems by using several means which result in the augmentation of Judah's sins. First, criticism over Judean apostasy is expressed by the plural 'hosts.' Second, unlike the two different prepositions in the MT attached to the two 'those who swear,' TJ uses בְּנִשְׁבַּע ב for both, in order to express the equation Judeans made between God and idols. Third, those who bow down *and* swear in God's name *repeat* (literally, 'return') the swearing and bowing in the name of their idols. The addition of 'repeat' comes to emphasize the second 'those who swear' and expresses well the MT sense of the *vav* conjunctive in the meaning of 'and at the same time, while.' However, against all other mss (except for H), the second 'those who swear' is omitted.<sup>94</sup> It must be an omission by the scribe (most likely of Ms H) who was then copied mechanically by the scribe of Ms V. The missing word וְיָמֵן (root יָמַי) is a synonym for וּמִקְיָמִין. Again we see another way to indicate the great gap between God and the idols. Targum's translation, then, conveys to the audience two major lessons: first, that God is incomparable to the idols, and second, that syncretism begets catastrophe. The same people bow down and vow in the name of YHWH and the idols at the same time.

Within the equation of deities, a clear distinction is made by using two different words for swearing *in the name*. While the usual word associated with 'the name' of YHWH is בְּשֵׁמָא (3:9), 'the name' associated with idols is שׁוֹם as in the previous verse (cf 1 Kgs 18:24–25; Isa 8:21). Targum conveys to the reader and the listener in the synagogue that this distinction must be maintained. In no way God can be compared with idols.

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Deutsch 25/2. 3rd edition. Göttingen: Bandenhoect & Ruprecht, [1956], 58,62); BHS and Marti (*Das Dodekapropheton*. Kurzer hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament XIII. Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, [1904], 362–63), among others, read יָרַח instead of יְהוָה based on Deut 17:3, 2 Kgs 23:5, and Jer 8:2, while Horst replaces לַיהוָה with לְעֵשֶׂת־רָת (Die *Zwölf*, 190).

<sup>91</sup> Orelli, *The Twelve*, 264.

<sup>92</sup> Gerleman, *Zephanja*, 7.

<sup>93</sup> Sabotka (*Zephanja*, 21–27) is seconded by Kapelrud (*The Message*, 23,103).

<sup>94</sup> It is not omitted in its MT. LXX makes the same mistake.

In some mss (U,R,P, X,S,N,C), אִיגֹרִיָא, ‘roofs,’ is misread אִיגֹרִיָא, ‘altars, hills.’ This haphazard error became a legitimate reading because it carried a meaning within the perimeters and the semantic field of idol worship, even though the Hebrew shows otherwise. The worship on the roofs was exchanged (primarily unintentionally) for worship on altars or hills, two common idolatrous locations (cf Jer 2:20, 11:13, 19:13; Amos 2:8). It is very plausible that the later scribes of these mss assumed that אִיגֹרִיָא indeed meant ‘roofs.’ Moreover, אִיגֹרִיָא, a word designated by TJ for idols’ altar, distinguishable from מִדְבַּח, a legitimate altar, is one of the Old-Aramaic (Western) words which survived only in the Eastern Mandaic dialect.<sup>95</sup> These considerations point to an early, pre-Babylonian redaction, that was carried over to the East and West.<sup>96</sup>

The translation ‘idols’ rather than ‘king,’ as the MT appears in the ms itself, demonstrates TJ’s continued view concerning the perpetration of sins committed by segments of the Judean society. Targum understood that the righteous Josiah could not have been meant. פְּתִכְרִיָא in particular is a contemptuous expression for idols (Jastrow, 1254).<sup>97</sup> The more common word is טְעוֹתָא (e.g., Isa 2:8; Amos 2:8). This view is apparent again in TJ Isa 8:21 where the MT describes a ‘depressed and hungry’ Judean who curses ‘his king and his God.’<sup>98</sup> Targum reads: ‘and he shall spurn the *name of his idols and his gods* and turn upward to pray for redemption.’ We see a triple-tiered Targumic principle: the rejection of the possibility of cursing Judean kings (Davidic, after all) and God; the emphasis on the sins of the people in power who brought the exile and the destruction of the Temple (and later, both Temples); and swearing by the *name* of the deities and not by them, with an emphasis on the distinction between the two entities, using two different words

<sup>95</sup> Tal, *The Language*, 97–98. On the various Aramaic dialects in his study see pp. לִב-ל.

<sup>96</sup> This confusion is found also in the Yemenite Ms V in Jer 11:13 and 19:11 where ‘roofs’ are rendered by אִיגֹרִיָא.

<sup>97</sup> According to Sperber, it simply reflects a variant of vocalization (*The Targum*, 357). Yet, on p. 347 he detects the *vorlage* of בְּמִלְכָם. Gordon posits the same opinion (*Targum*, 165, n. 11). However, the Hebrew text of our ms proves differently.

<sup>98</sup> Churgin, *Targum*, 59. Radaq explicates TJ’s פְּתִכְרִיָא for ‘his king’ as pagan worship. Not referring directly to TJ, Rashi explicates ‘his king and his gods’ as cursing ‘the (golden) calves and the Baals whom they (the Israelites of the Northern Kingdom) worshiped.’

for ‘name.’ The name is perceived to carry magic power by invoking it to grant wishes, whether for good or for evil.

In our case, the more unusual term was the original version with its loaded meaning.

Ribera explains that the origin of the word **פתכריהון** is Persian and that TJ employs it to refer to the name of the (Ammonite) god *Molekh*, as in Isa 8:21 and Amos 5:26.<sup>99</sup> However, these two scriptures have clearly ‘king’ with no allusion to *Molekh*. Moreover, TJ uses **פתכריכון** for the Hebrew ‘king’ in Amos 5:26 as well.

Two other versions for **פתכריהון** are known: **פת כומריהון** and **פת כריהון**. Both are known to Radaq who quotes **דמקיימין בשמא דה’ תיבין ויימין בשום פת כומריהון, נ”א פת כריהון**<sup>100</sup>. They seem to have evolved from an accidental (perhaps a conflation of **כומריהון** and **פתכריהון**) or intentional division of the word in the hope of finding some clue to its meaning. Both versions are senseless, for the first, **פת כומריהון**, would mean ‘the food of their pagan priests’<sup>101</sup> and the second, **פת כריהון**, would mean ‘the food of their meal.’ **פת כומריהון(ו)**, quoted by the Sepharadi Radaq, is also extant in the two Sepharadi Mss N,W. The version in Ms N is squeezed into a tight space with no vocalization, which shows uncertainty and lack of knowledge as to its meaning.<sup>102</sup> There is no **פתכומר** in Aramaic.

The more common Aramaic cognate for the Hebrew ‘idols,’ **טעותהון**, is found in two mss of two distinct groups, Mss T and C. **טעותהון** usually translates the Hebrew **עצבים** or **אלילים**, ‘idols’ (e.g., Hos 14:9; Hab 2:18). The change from the unusual **פתכריהון** was probably made for the benefit of the readers or audience in Europe.

Except for our Ms V, all other mss have ‘and swear’ which shows an accidental omission by the scribe Benayahu ben Saadia. On the other hand, Ms C is the only ms which omits ‘return,’ again an omission in a ms that is replete with textual problems.

<sup>99</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 151. This is also Sweeney’s interpretation (*Zephaniah*, 56).

<sup>100</sup> Out of Radaq’s 36 quotations only six are precise.

<sup>101</sup> In Amos 5:26 it would suggest that the idol *Sikkuth* is the food of its priests.

<sup>102</sup> In Ezek 13:18 and 21 the Hebrew **מספחות** (‘head scarves’) are translated by MG **פת כומרין**, fancy clothing used for idols. However, Mss F and V translate as one word, **פתכומרין**.

1:6: And those who turned back to a place from after the worship of YYY, and have not sought the fear of YYY, and have not inquired/prayed from before Him.

The MT is simple and clear. It continues to list the groups of Judeans designed for punishment. The cultic indictments here pertain to those who distance themselves physically and spiritually from God. Targum transmits the prophet's words with several distinctive targumic signatures.

Before going into the Targumic characteristics we have to discuss the oddity of **לְאַתְרָא** ('to a place'). Since it is unique to this ms, the first response would be to view it as most likely a scribal error for **לְאַחְרָא** (Hebrew **לְאַחֹר**, 'backward') exchanging 'ת' for 'ח' (all other mss reflect the MT). However, such an unusual reading when the Hebrew text is so clear calls for an explanation. Two possibilities may exist: one might say that it is an original reading that criticizes other sanctuaries that were built outside Israel, such as the temple of Onias in Heliopolis, Egypt. If this conjecture is correct, then the past tense points to a time before 73 when that temple ceased to function.<sup>103</sup> This is even more likely if we posit a fuller derogatory epithet to that or to any sanctuary other than Jerusalem—**לְאַתְרָא אַחְרָא** which was the original Targumic exegesis. **אַחְרָא**, the feminine form of **אַחֵר**, in its secondary meaning, is a euphemism for idolatry or for an apostate.<sup>104</sup> One translator in the second century, when some notable Rabbis left Judaism upon the failure of the Bar Kokhba revolt, or when Jews joined early Christians, expressed his interpretation of 'those who turned away from behind YHWH.'<sup>105</sup> These apostates are added to those who swear in the name of their idols in the previous verse. The use of the perfect indicates specific offenses on TJ's mind. Turning backward is perceived as going back in time to paganism. Because the two words are similar, at some later point, the wrong word was deleted.

These explanations might be too forced and imaginative. A simpler one may be that it is merely a scribal error as suggested above.

<sup>103</sup> M. Stern, "The Jewish Diaspora," in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (vol. I; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 123, 133.

<sup>104</sup> Jastrow, 41.

<sup>105</sup> For example, the famous Elisha ben Abuyah was called **אַחֵר** or **אַחֹר** (*Bavli, Hagigah* 15a).

The other three additions ('from after the worship of,' 'the fear of,' and 'from before') serve as expressions of reverence to God as well as an explanation for the meaning of the three actions (cf TJ Jer 29:13 and Isa 59:13). Turning away from God is abandoning Jewish worship, where praying is an essential part. Praying (בעי) is a religious element emphasized by TJ.<sup>106</sup> With sacrifices no longer practiced in the Temple, and with the dispersion of the Jews and the importance of the synagogue in their lives, prayer took center stage. The Rabbis devised prayers for every occasion and discussed their timing in many Talmudic passages.<sup>107</sup>

Targum regards the worship (or service) of God, פולחנא, as essential as praying, for worship brings God's glory to Israel, and with it grace and protection (e.g., Jer 2:11,13). Worshipers are the righteous who will be rewarded, and conversely (e.g., Hos 5:8), those who forsake God's service will be punished by a variety of afflictions, among them infertility (Hos 4:10). Worship is associated with actual attendance at the Temple, and later at the synagogue, as a paramount expression of national unity and preservation, a major concern of TJ. פולחנא suggests the leadership of Priests. Its elimination from the life of the people seems to be an indictment against the relinquishing of duty by the Priests.

For TJ, the 'fear of God,' דחלתא, is the wisdom of God and hence "the best antidote to idolatry."<sup>108</sup> Seeking God, דרש, is seeking His wisdom (Isa 65:10). One acquires spirituality and closeness to God through the 'fear' and the lack of it causes one to draw away from the Creator and incur retribution. Therefore, TJ warns in our verse that not seeking the 'fear of God' will result in death (v. 7).<sup>109</sup> The use of both פולחנא and דחלתא in our verse clearly delineates the difference between the two terms: the former concerns actual participation in community worship, whereas the latter concerns spiritual closeness to God through certain social behavior and adherence to the Law.<sup>110</sup>

Some mss add the relative pronoun -ד to either לָא in the verse or both. However, there is a distinct division in Zephaniah between the Yemenite stemma Z,J,E and the other two groups. The former's -ד is

<sup>106</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 164–69.

<sup>107</sup> For example, *Bavli*, *Berakhot* 32b, *Menahot* 36a; *Sanhedrin* 43b; *Yerushalmi*, *Berakhot* 2a, 8a; *Bavli*, *Tosafot Berakhot* 3a.

<sup>108</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 156. Cf Isa 65:1.

<sup>109</sup> On the 'fear of God' see Smolar, *Studies*, 156–59.

<sup>110</sup> Ms F notes in the margin that another ms has twice פולחנא.



always an integral part of the negative (וּדְלֵא) while the latter shows this and a detached דִּי.<sup>111</sup> דִּי is probably an Old Aramaic Palestinian that later went through a diphthong. It is mostly used in the European texts. The existence of both forms in the East and West suggests a pre- and post-Babylonian influence.

The last addition, ‘from before Him,’ replaces the direct object suffix of דְּרִשְׁהוּ and balances the turning away ‘from behind’ the worship. In this way TJ contrasts the negative and the positive approaches to God as it often contrasts reward and punishment, the righteous and the wicked.

Targum’s additions may reflect the need of the time for communal cohesiveness. This could apply to any national upheaval from the Hasmonean revolt of the 2nd century BCE and beyond. For example, such a need may have arisen because of infighting for control during the last days of the second Temple or because of the separation of the Palestinian Jews from their exiled brethren; because of the multiple ascetic groups that were established such as the Qumranites, the Zealots and the Sicarii,<sup>112</sup> or because of the national trauma that ensued following the failure of the second Revolt.

1:7: *All the wicked have perished from before YYY Elohim, for the day that is going to come from before YYY is near, for YYY has prepared a slaying, He has proclaimed/determined from His (destined) times.*

The prophet opens his message with a wide statement of destruction (vv. 2–3) followed by a description of the punishment upon specific groups announced by God through the prophet (v. 4–6). Verse 7 changes the descriptive speech and begins with a command. With an imperative ‘be silent!’ the prophet introduces the major theme of the book: the Day of YHWH. This Day is symbolized by a well-prepared sacrifice. This introduction is also acknowledged by the scribes of the Ashkenazi Mss A,U by inserting here a *pisqa*.

<sup>111</sup> In 1:6,9,12, 2:15, 3:4. See Chapter 2 for detail. In Ms V the detached דִּי occurs on rare occasions. See also Tal, *The Language*, 5–7.

<sup>112</sup> On the extreme groups in the first century see, e.g., Josephus, *תולדות מלחמת היהודים עם הרומאים* (trans. by Y.N. Simhoni; Tel Aviv: Massada Press, 1957), 7. 8,1; M. Stern, “Aspects of Jewish Society: The Priesthood and other Classes,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (vol. II; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 576–80.

Targum ignores the command speech and the sacrifice imagery. It approaches the verse in typical targumic fashion and sees it as the apex connecting the previous verses with the following exhortative prophecy that pertains to both Israel and the nations (1:8–3:8,11). With a statement, TJ announces God's purpose: the elimination of the wicked idol worshipers by the ravages of war. We have already noticed this type of summary statement in 1:2, **שיצאה**. The link is even stronger by Targum's **ספו**, 'have perished,' and **שיצאה**, 'end, destruction,' that correspond to the Hebrew **סוף**. Clearly, TJ ties these wicked to those in 1:3 who increased the obstacles of mankind from obtaining redemption.<sup>113</sup>

**הס**, 'be silent!' is translated as a descriptive state: Silence will indeed come because 'all the wicked have perished.' The perfect tense does not indicate an act in the past, but a state in the future, the nature of the Day. As the prophet says in vv. 10–11a, it will be a day of great noise coming from the screaming wicked, followed by silence (v. 11b).<sup>114</sup> This picture of death for **הס** is retained also in Zech 2:17 and Hab 2:20 where TJ renders the same 'all the wicked have perished from before YHWH,' and in Amos 6:10 'they have perished.'<sup>115</sup>

Targeting the wicked for ruin is a recurrent theme in TJ, for the wicked delay the salvation of Israel.<sup>116</sup> In God's just scheme, only the wicked are to be punished on that Day.<sup>117</sup> The word 'all' has to be "suitably qualified."<sup>118</sup>

Except for two instances (Ezek 13:5, 48:35), TJ translates the Day of YHWH in the same formulaic manner (e.g., Isa 13:6; Joel 1:15; Amos 5:18; Mal 3:23): 'the day that is going to come from before YYY.'<sup>119</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Sweeney, rather, links the wicked in our verse with the destruction of "the humans" (**אסוף אדם**) in 1:3 (*Zephaniah*, 82).

<sup>114</sup> TJ Amos 6:10b suggests that the silenced wicked died because they did not pray in the name of YHWH, a very important Targumic theological concept. Smolar, *Studies*, 194, note 417.

<sup>115</sup> However, in Amos 8:3 there is no such translation. Ribera notes the translation of **הס** in all cases by the Aramaic **סוף**, 'to perish' ("La versión," 151). He nevertheless does not remark on its absence in Amos 8:3. In his opinion, TJ's rendering may have been inspired by Zech 2:17 where the subject is explicit, **כל בשר** ('all flesh').

<sup>116</sup> E.g., Isa 1:31, 40:6b,7a, 57:14b; Zech 2:17a. Smolar, *Studies*, 189–90. Jesús María Ruiz Asurmendi ascribes this moral theme to the theological ambiance of the targumist's time to conform to the Law. This he associates with the targumist's call in 2:1 to return to the Law ("Sophonic," *DBSup* 13:18).

<sup>117</sup> Cf TJ Isa 65:13 (Smolar, 174). Also Gordon, *Studies*, 89–90.

<sup>118</sup> Gordon, *Studies*, 90.

<sup>119</sup> In Joel 2:1 the word **דעתיד** is missing but the sense of a future event remains.

This shows that TJ does not view the Day as a definite day but as a time in the future, the way it was viewed by most Jewish traditional commentators.<sup>120</sup> Targum's concept is close to that of the Rabbis. For example, in *Yerushalmi*, *Shabbat* 9a the Day of YHWH is the time when the prophet Elijah will come and usher in the era of the resurrection. In *Yerushalmi*, *Sheqalim* 14a it is the day when the prophet Elijah will inaugurate the era of the World to Come. It is a "day" of redemption or retribution (often they are perceived as occurring simultaneously) concerning events of the time. Therefore, this formula can be applied to any period.

An eschatological view may be reflected here, but not necessarily.<sup>121</sup> The Day of Judgment did not conclude with the destruction of the first and second Temples, or so TJ infers. The people of Israel may incur a third such Day if they do not turn to God. Targum expresses fear for such an eventuality. Leaving the possibility open is TJ's way of influencing each generation to avert the decree.

Another Day is coming soon, as TJ foresees a day in which God is the planner and executioner. God has prepared a slaying, קטול, a word usually employed for the Hebrew הָרַג ('killing, slaying,' e.g., Isa 30:25, 27:7; Jer 12:3). Targum distinguishes between animal sacrifice (e.g., Jer 33:18 נִבְסָא; Hos 6:6 מִדְּבַח) and the metaphor for a human sacrifice (e.g., Isa 34:6; Jer 46:10 קטול). With this choice of word, TJ conveys its understanding of the sacrifice as human and neither cultic

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<sup>120</sup> Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Radaq who refer to Isa 5:19 seem to interpret the Day as a time of salvation while Altschuler seems to interpret it as a challenge to God by the people of Judah to bring the time of judgment. Meir Weiss also views the Day as a non-defined term understood by the context of the prophecy ("The origin of the "Day of the Lord—reconsidered," *HUCA* 37 [1966], 41–45). Abrabanel, on the other hand, understands the Day in Zeph 1:7 as a specific historical event when the Babylonians came to Jerusalem to punish the evil Judeans. Another specific event is suggested by Sweeney, that of the "day of retribution against the Romans for their destruction of the temple" (*Zephaniah*, 33). Y. Hoffmann sees the Day as a concept that changed and evolved with time. Before Zephaniah, it was an eschatological yet undefined term with salvific and punitive elements. Zephaniah's Day ushers in a totally eschatological concept ("The Day of the Lord as a Concept and a Term in the Prophetic Literature," *ZAW* 93, [1981], 37–50).

The subject of the Day of YHWH has been inordinately discussed by modern scholars. The majority concede that Zephaniah's topic is not original but rather based on previous prophetic visions (see, for example, Kapelrud, *The Message*, 80–87). Asurmendi emphasizes the cosmic dimension and the development afforded by Zephaniah's vision, showing not a mere borrowing but new visions to an ancient theme ("Sophonic," 13).

<sup>121</sup> Ribera, "La versión," 151; Smolar, *Studies*, 226.

nor associated with Temple services.<sup>122</sup> This continues in the next verse and in 1:14 where the killing is portrayed as the death of Jewish warriors in battle. The targumist has the luxury of a historical perspective and therefore he interprets the text in the light of events he knew of and/or witnessed.

In the next verset TJ presents a completely new twist: the enigmatic **קראַי** **הקדיש**, literally ‘He has sanctified His guests,’ gives way to a theological exegesis. There is no sense of sanctification or guests, since the sacrifice has been interpreted as a human slaying that is devoid of a holiness setting.<sup>123</sup> Further, the wicked cannot be ‘sanctified.’ However, the root **קדש** in the *hif’al* primarily means ‘to designate, dedicate’ which is reflected in TJ’s rendition. The verb **עראע** (**ארע**) means ‘to meet,’ ‘to proclaim’ and ‘to happen,’<sup>124</sup> but not ‘to invite.’<sup>125</sup> Similar is the choice of **מזמנוהי**, ‘from his (destined) times’ (Hebrew **ממועדו**), stemming from the noun **זמנא**, ‘time.’ The combination of these two words points to the belief in God as a supreme planner who appoints a time for every historical event. Even the slaughter of the wicked among His own people has been determined.<sup>126</sup> However, since this occurs only in the stemma of Mss V,H, it might be taken as a mis-vocalization of one scribe subsequently copied by Ms V.

The rest of the Yemenite Mss Z,J,E provides another version, **מזמנוהי**, whose form suggests the active mode ‘the one who invites them’ (Jastrow, 756) i.e., the host, which defeats the intent of the MT. The Hebrew suggests ‘His guests.’ For this, the correct vocalization should be either **זמנינוהי** (Ms C?) or **מזמנוהי**,<sup>127</sup> ‘the invited ones.’ If this version is meant to convey ‘His guests,’ then the vocalization should be in the *pa’el* **מזמנוהי**.<sup>128</sup> However, TJ Isa 48:12 has a very similar form, **מזמני** (Ms V) or **מזמני** (Mss Z,C) that translates **מקראי**, ‘the one who

<sup>122</sup> Ribera interprets the choice of **קטול** as Tg’s removal of the cultic sense from its original intent as it does in 1:8 and 2:3 (“La versión,” 151). However, the absence of cultic sacrifice stems from the absence of holiness from slain humans. See Gordon, *The Targum*, 166, notes 18,19.

<sup>123</sup> Cf Gordon, *The Targum*, 166.

<sup>124</sup> It is the exact cognate of the Hebrew verb **קרא/ה**, not **קדש**.

<sup>125</sup> The next root, **זמן**, has the meaning of ‘to invite’ mostly to a meal.

<sup>126</sup> Cf the decree in 2:2 and the double imagery there concerning the coming Day of Wrath.

<sup>127</sup> Rashi cites TJ to Isa 48:12 **מזמני**, **מקראי**, ‘the one called by Me’ in the participle passive *hu/hof’al*.

<sup>128</sup> Most of the Mss, M,R,Y,P, X,N,Q,W (and mss G, MG), have a similar form, **מזמנוהי**.

is called by Me.<sup>129</sup> This form evidences an alternative passive tense and thus מְזַמְנֹהִי transmits faithfully the MT passive tense קָרְאִי. Ms F seems to echo this reading with its unpointed printed מְזַמְנֹהִי. If it were meant to be read מְזַמְנֹהִי, it would have מְזַמְנֹהִי following its preferred plene script.

The earlier possibility of a mis-vocalization might have been too precipitate. Rather, we may witness here a play on the words מְזַמְנֹהִי (cf 3:18) and מְזַמְנֹהִי which reveals that one version of TJ understood the original intent but preferred to express a theological concept. According to Ms V, the text refers only to the wicked who are being targeted at a divinely designated time for retribution.

If these two readings expose two different interpretations, the later Yemenite mss supported by Ms F of 1105 and all the non-Yemenite mss studied here have retained the literal translation of the Palestinian tradition, the more ancient one.<sup>130</sup>

The revised TJ reveals its historical and theological interpretations that the other Days of YHWH had already taken place when the two Temples were destroyed together with the sinners (v. 7a). If God appoints an event, it comes to pass. It is a lesson to the Targumist's community as well as to all generations to come.

1:8: And it will be on the day of the *slaying that is going to come from before* YYY, and I shall visit upon the officers and upon the sons of the king, and upon all who *rush to worship the idols*.

In terms of content, this verse is clear. It elaborates on the 'sacrifice' introduced in the previous verse. The objects of the sacrifice are revealed as specific groups who are accused of religious sins. Social sins are considered religious infractions based on the HB, and this interpretation is carried on by TJ. The exact identity of the 'officials' and the 'sons of the King' is not TJ's concern. However, 'those who wear a foreign attire' receives commentary.

Targum continues to interpret the sacrifice as a human killing that is mostly associated with the Hebrew הָרַג or the verb הִרַג, a word in a war setting (Isa 27:7, 30:25). By using קָטֹל (v. 7), קָטֹלָא (v. 8) and מִתְקַטְלִין (1:14), TJ identifies the three references with one event, most

<sup>129</sup> See Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, (2004), 98 (451).

<sup>130</sup> Unfortunately, Eb 80 is torn here.

likely the slaughter of Jews in the years 68–70, or perhaps in the years 132–135 as well.

Targum ascribes a variety of meanings to פקד according to the context.<sup>131</sup> The verbs סער and its cognate פקד lie within the meaning of a special intervention of God, whether in favor or against (also in vv. 9, 12).<sup>132</sup>

The denouncement concerning the wearing of foreign garments is interpreted in cultic terms. נכרי is understood as ‘pagan, non-Israelite’ as the root נכר is often understood by the HB (e.g., Deut 17:15; Isa 28:21). The wearing of pagan clothes is but a symptom or a paradigm of idol worship as Rashi notes in his commentary, ‘jewelry of idol worshipers.’ Targum may have 2 Kgs 10:20–22 in mind, where Jehu assigns clothes מלבוש to the Baal priests to make them easily distinguished for slaying.<sup>133</sup> Many of the elements in our text also occur in the Jehu story. Priests, sacrifices, invitations (וִיקְרְאוּ) and sanctification (קִדְשׁוּ) of the ‘great sacrifice’ are also part of the scene in which the Baal cult is completely eradicated (vv. 19, 24–28).<sup>134</sup> If this link is made, then Jehu’s zeal for God serves as a model for TJ. This zeal is captured by TJ’s midrashic rendering of the foreign dress. This, TJ explains, alludes to those who are eager to worship the idols, those who rush to apostasy. For in TJ’s day, idol worship was not paganism *per se*, but any activity contrary to *halakhic* Judaism. Hellenization in dress or behavior was considered ‘rushing to worship idols.’<sup>135</sup>

A further association with Jehu’s religious and political revolt may be made in TJ’s description of the *carcasses* as dung (1:17b). The source for this interpretation may have been derived from 2 Kgs 9:37: ‘And the carcass (גְּבִילָה) of Jezebel shall be like dung (בְּדָמָן/בְּגִלְלִים) on the ground...’

The use of רגש in the *hithpa’el* conveys the sense of people rushing in droves to congregate while in a trembling state of religious ecstasy. This should be the ardent passion of Jews when coming to the synagogue

<sup>131</sup> Cf Bernard Grossfeld, “The Translation of Biblical Hebrew פקד in the Targum, Peshitta, Vulgate and Septuagint,” *ZAW* 96 (1984), 83–101.

<sup>132</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 151.

<sup>133</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 166 note 21; Gerleman, *Zephanja*, 13.

<sup>134</sup> Which Zeph 1:4 portends. In 2 Kgs 10:25 TJ adds ‘and the valiants are being slain קָטְלוּ,’ almost verbatim to TJ Zeph 1:14.

<sup>135</sup> Sabotcka reads TJ’s rendering as those who lament for the respect of the idols (*Zephanja*, 38). Rudolph follows with those who ‘lament’ or ‘gather in crowds’ with a question mark, in order to serve the idols (*Micha*, 262, 8b).

for services. There is a sense of mockery for misdirected religious conviction that will not save the apostates on the soon-to-come day of killing. The overzealous fervor of idol worship further justifies God's decision to rid the world of the wicked.

Targum follows the Rabbinic interpretation of wearing foreign garments as a threat to self-identity.<sup>136</sup> Among the sins that God 'remembers,' פְּקִידָה, *Pesikta Rabbati* 42,16 counts the wearing of garments made of two different kinds of material (כְּלָאִים), which is understood to be 'the foreign garment' of our verse. The wearing of כְּלָאִים is considered a non-Israelite, anti-Covenant custom that is comparable to forgoing circumcision, which threatens the loss of self-identity. Wearing כְּלָאִים may seem trivial, but it is symptomatic of cultural deviation that opens the way to further acts of "separation from the community."

Idolatry was and is the cause for punishment. From worshiping the Baal (v. 4) and bowing and swearing in the name of God and idols (v. 5) to the adoption of Hellenistic and Roman cultures (vv. 8–9), the full picture of aggravation is taking shape. Targum's fear is the loss of Jewish self-identity.

1:9: And I shall visit upon all who *walk in the customs of the Philistines* at that *time*, who fill the house of their master violence and deceits.

The first part of the verse has attracted much commentary. The 'leaping over the threshold' has commonly been associated with the superstitious practice based on 1 Sam 5:3–5 where the priests in Ashdod avoided stepping over the threshold of Dagon's temple.<sup>137</sup> Some point to an expression of respect for the deity,<sup>138</sup> fear of demons at the entrance to private homes,<sup>139</sup> a foreign rite whether connected with Philistine custom

<sup>136</sup> Smolar finds here a mitigation from a divine threat to punish those dressed in foreign attire to retribution for being excited about worshipping idols. This tendency to tone down divine proclamations which seem to be unfair is found elsewhere, e.g., Jer 2:9; Ezek 14:10b (*Studies*, 190) Ribera states that TJ surely reflects rabbinic interpretation but offers no reference ("La versión," 151).

<sup>137</sup> E.g., Rashi; Keller, *Nahoum*, 192; Roberts, *Nahum*, 179; Seybold, *Nahum*, 97; Gerleman, *Zephanja*, 9–13.

<sup>138</sup> E.g., Maria E. Széles, *Wrath and Mercy: a Commentary on the Books of Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (Trans. George A.F. Knight. International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 82.

<sup>139</sup> E.g., J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 198; Theodor H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 682; R.L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (World Bible Commentary; vol. 32; Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1984), 130. This is

or not.<sup>140</sup> Others see here the social evil of the servants of the powerful who rush with glee to rob the poor.<sup>141</sup> ‘Ascending a platform,’ whether in the Temple or the palace, is yet another conjecture.<sup>142</sup> Sperber finds here a proof for Targumic familiarity with the Jewish Tradition.<sup>143</sup>

Targum’s interpretation, too, is influenced by 1 Sam 5:5.<sup>144</sup> It builds on that imagery in its typical targumic characteristic. The cultic setting is maintained. Instead of leaping over, literally, Judeans were walking, better harmonizing the connotation with the inspirational verse ‘stepping over.’ Only a verse earlier TJ exaggerated with ‘rushing’ where no action verb existed, yet a cultic context was given also to ‘foreign garment.’ With no literal link to v. 9a, TJ’s exegetical reading has multiple configurations.

The expression ‘to walk/go in the ways/customs/laws of’ means ‘to imitate, to follow a certain behavior’ (cf. Jer 31:8; Ps 101:6). Walking in the ways of other nations is also used when Philistines are mentioned as people who engage in another pagan custom, that of soothsaying (TJ Isa 2:6). *דְּמָה־לָּכִין*, ‘who walk,’ has the participle form in the plural that is in accordance with the MT ‘who fill’ and TJ’s ‘who rush.’ Keeping the participle portrays to the readers/listeners the on-going state of sinful behavior. Four parallel elements appear in both verses: a Philistine pagan custom, the verb *מלא* (‘to fill’), the word *נְכַרִּים* (‘foreign[ers]’) and a cultic allusion. Targum’s hostile attitude toward the Philistines could also be derived from historical views concerning the expansion of Philistia over a large portion of Judah upon its destruction. These views are alluded to in 2:5 and in TJ’s translation, where the people of the Coast are described as dwelling in Canaan, now called the land of the Philistines.<sup>145</sup> Targum indirectly blames Philistia for the religious

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also my conclusion based on Deut 32:16–17, which describes a foreign ‘new fad’ of sacrificing and reverence for demons. The strong association between Zephaniah and Deut 32 was presented as a paper, “Did Zephaniah write Deut 32?” at the 14th World Congress of Jewish Studies; Jerusalem. August 3, 2005.

<sup>140</sup> E.g., Ambrose Edens, *A Study of the Book of Zephaniah* (Ann Arbor: Univ. Microfilms, 1971), 142, 146.

<sup>141</sup> Ibn Ezra, Radaq, Abrabanel, Alchuller, Malbim; Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 512–13; Ben Zvi, *A Critical*, 100; Elliger, *Das Buch*, 58.

<sup>142</sup> E.g., Sabottka, *Zephania*, 41–42; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 445–46.

<sup>143</sup> Sperber, *The Targum*, 42–43.

<sup>144</sup> Ribera contends that TJ’s interpretation is a gloss motivated by *מפתן* of 1 Sam 5:5 (“La versión,” 151). Rudolph correctly notes that TJ is the only version that indirectly refers to 1 Sam 5:4ff (*Micha*, 262, 9a-a). Also Vlaardingerbroeck, *Zephaniah*, 87.

<sup>145</sup> See also TJ Jer 47:4 (2x).



deviations of Judah, and accordingly interprets Philistia's demise in 2:4–6 as punishment for this influence. However, the Philistines are but one symbol or a code for the Greek culture which TJ reveals with his choice of the Greek νόμος, 'laws, ways.' Νόμος is the law of the pagans in opposition to Torah.<sup>146</sup> The Sadducees, the officials, and the royal members are here condemned for their "walking" in the ways and customs of Hellenism, which may date this targumic phraseology to between early 1st century BCE and 70 CE. Behind TJ's interpretation is the fundamental belief, led by the Rabbis, that apostasy was the cause for the destruction of both Temples and the exiles. Targum expresses here a profound criticism of and concern for the erosion of Jewish self-identity, the same concern that motivated Zephaniah and the Rabbis.

Radaq learns from TJ that Israelites did not step upon the threshold of the pagan temples like the Philistines. It is TJ's way to protect Israel's honor, contrary to R. Jeremiah's argument that the Israelites bestowed more holiness upon the threshold by leaping over it. Moreover, while the Philistines made one temple threshold holy, Israel created many such holy thresholds. Resh Lakish, on the other hand, opposes this interpretation, saying that the Philistines' custom was despised by Israel and they did not follow it.<sup>147</sup> Radaq seems to interpret TJ according to Resh Lakish's opinion.

There is no reason to assume that TJ did not understand the meaning of דלג. Isaiah and Song of Songs were very popular.<sup>148</sup> Both 2 Sam 22:30 and Isa 35:6 are metaphors which TJ uses to offer an exegetical translation.

מִפְתָּן is another familiar word to TJ which it usually translates by סְקוּפָה (e.g., 1 Sam 5:5, Ezek 9:3, 46:2). Here it has no role in the targumic chastisement and is not translated.

'At that *time*' in place of 'on that *day*' appears in several other cases (e.g., v. 10) and reveals TJ's perception of an era rather than a certain day 'that is to come from before YHWH.'<sup>149</sup> This is the Rabbinic view

<sup>146</sup> Ribera, "La versión," 151.

<sup>147</sup> *Yerushalmi, Avodah Zarah* 19a and *Midrash Samuel* 11,5.

<sup>148</sup> Especially when it is accepted that TJ was originally written in Palestine. LXX skips 'the leaping.' Identifying rare Hebrew words may not have been LXX's strong suit. Peshitta replaces the clause by what might be the Hebrew חַמְסִים וְגוֹלִים, 'acts of violence and robberies.'

<sup>149</sup> This latter expression is understood by Ribera to refer to a specific day of the eschatological intervention of God ("La versión," 151).

on the messianic era.<sup>150</sup> This view allows Jews to maintain their mission of “repairing the world” and to be cautious of occasional “messiahs.”

In the second part of the verse, scholarly discussion revolves around the identification of **בֵּית אֲדֹנֵיהֶם**, ‘the house of their masters.’ ‘The house,’ some argue, may be identified with the Temple that was attached to the palace. The kings controlled the Temple treasuries to where property taken by deceit and by force was brought.<sup>151</sup> Others identify ‘the house’ with the palace.<sup>152</sup> ‘Their masters,’ some claim, is the plural majesty of the king himself<sup>153</sup> or “a plural of excellence” corresponding to Baals as a title. From the Phoenician Adonis it is evident that **אֲדֹן** was a divine appellation in Hebrew as well.<sup>154</sup> Another proposal is ‘idoltrous images’ which stand in apposition to ‘violence and deceit,’ namely, deceptive idols.<sup>155</sup>

Targum reads ‘their master.’ The seeming interpretation of the singular concerns God, **רַבּוֹנְהוֹן**, and perforce the Temple, as LXX and Vul do.<sup>156</sup> This indeed may reflect TJ’s evaluation of the political and social state in the late Second Temple period, assuming a pre-70 translation.<sup>157</sup> That was a time when Priests, often led by the High Priests themselves, perpetrated crimes such as seizing tithes by force, thus filling the Temple, their patrons’ homes and their own homes with ill-gained sundries.<sup>158</sup> These Priests and their supporters are the same Hellenized Jews targeted in the first half of the verse. On the other

<sup>150</sup> E.g., *Midrash Tehillim* 90,17; *Pesikta Rabbati* 15,10; *Bavli, Sanhedrin* 99a.

<sup>151</sup> Kapelrud, *The Message*, 103; Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 70.

<sup>152</sup> E.g., Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, 364.

<sup>153</sup> E.g., Rudolph, *Micha*, 262, 9b; Bernard Renaud, *Michée–Sophonie–Nahum* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1987), 207.

<sup>154</sup> H. Ferguson, “The Historical Testimony of the Prophet Zephaniah,” *JBL* 3 (1883): 42–59.

<sup>155</sup> Sabotka, *Zephania*, 43–44.

<sup>156</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 151. Peshitta reads ‘their warehouses,’ referring to those mentioned in v. 8 who do acts of violence and robbery. A. Gelston finds here an example for a case where the translators found unintelligible words. They would use similar sounding words even though the meaning changes. Filling storerooms with stolen goods, he claims, makes better sense than filling houses (*The Peshitta of the Twelve Prophets* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987], 145). However, ‘מַדְנִיָּהוֹן’ is better explained by an intra Syriac error between ‘ר’ and ‘ד’, which are distinguished by the placement of a dot. **מַדְנִיָּהוֹן** was originally **מַרְנִיָּהוֹן**, ‘their masters.’

<sup>157</sup> **רַבּוֹן** can refer to a person and to God as in Mal 1:6. Here, too, the plural of ‘masters’ for God is translated in the singular.

<sup>158</sup> See, e.g., M. Stern, “Aspects of Jewish Society: The Priesthood and other Classes,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (vol. II. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 568–69, 584–86.

hand, the ‘master’ may refer to king Herod, whose Hellenized officials, their sons and the elite were engaged in filling the king’s house with wealth through thievery and heavy taxation.

While 14 other mss carry the singular ‘master,’ among them the two earliest (Mss F, Eb 80, A,U,P, X,S,N,Q,C and H,Z,J,E), five others have retained the literal plural, ‘their masters.’ Since the singular suggests an unethical master, i.e., a king or a High Priest, it could refer to the situation existing during the late Second Temple era as mentioned above. Embedded in the context of religious perversion (v. 9a), the plural ‘masters’ may allude to Temple functionaries. Both readings were already established, therefore, in the first century CE.

The MT singular מַרְמָה as well as תַּרְמִית (3:13) are translated in the plural נִבְלִין to augment the sinful behavior in this verse, and to emphasize its absence in 3:13. In this way TJ poses the two eras of the present (and/or past) and the future in contrasting positions.

According to TJ, the cause of the future killing is idol worship that is conducted enthusiastically and with passion. Adopting foreign culture and laws involves not only idolatry but criminal activity as well. They stand in opposition to YHWH’s laws.

1:10: And there shall be at that *time*, said YYY, a sound of outcry from the Fish Gate, and a howling from the *Ophel*, and a great crash from the hill(-).

This verse opens the description of the punishment meted out to the groups mentioned above. As the prophet’s message opened with a general statement in a *descending* pattern (vv. 2–3), here, too, the verse opens with a general picture of retribution made up, this time, of nouns in *ascending* force of sounds and of ascending locations: a sound of shout, a sound of howling and a (sound of) great anguish; a gate, a quarter, and hills. The scholarly discussion here focuses on the identification of the gate and the quarter. The consensus locates the Fish Gate in the northwest, following 2 Chron 33:14, which maps Manasseh’s wall. Over 200 years later, Nehemiah (3:3, 12:39) rebuilds the Jerusalem gates where the Fish Gate is mentioned between the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, and therefore considered to be on the northern side.<sup>159</sup> In addition, the fish would be brought from Tyre to

<sup>159</sup> Cf Radaq and Rashi.

that gate (Neh 13:16). The Mishneh (literally, ‘the secondary’) is identified as the expanded quarter built, probably, by Hezekiah with the influx of the Israelites upon the fall of the northern kingdom. It is to be found in the west of the city which today covers mostly the Jewish quarter. Huldah the Prophetess lived there (2 Kgs 22:14).

Yet, the Alexandrian Septuagint, whether deliberately or not, read הַהֲרָגִים, ‘the slaying,’ and the Peshitta, הַדִּיגִים, ‘the fishers.’<sup>160</sup> Targum, on the other hand, translates correctly. As for the Mishneh, the Vul, LXX and Peshitta clearly do not identify it as a geographical area but give it its meaning of ‘the secondary’ (gate). Targum in Ms V offers an interpretation probably based on 2 Chron 33:14, where the Ophel is mentioned second to the Fish Gate. Similarly is Rashi’s explanation that the Fowl Gate עופא was situated second to the Fish Gate.

It seems that TJ did not know the geographic location of the Mishneh, for in 2 Kgs 22:14 it prefers a *midrashic* translation ‘the house of study’ (משנה = ‘the study of Scriptures’). An echo of this interpretation is retained in *Yalkut Shimoni* (Zephaniah, 1:1) where Hulda the prophetess, who lived in the Mishneh, is said to have taught among the women while her contemporary Zephaniah taught in the synagogues and the schools. Here, however, it is identified with the Ophel,<sup>161</sup> meaning ‘an ascent.’<sup>162</sup> The Ophel is the hill between the City of David and the Temple Mount on the *south*. If there was a gate there, it would be parallel to the Fish Gate.<sup>163</sup>

Both עופלא and עופא attempt to respond to the long-forgotten and ambiguous meaning of המשנה. Finding them in all groups of

<sup>160</sup> The reading of ‘slaying’ for ‘fish’ can simply be explained on the common misreading of ‘ר’ for ‘ד’. That is, LXX follows a pattern of participles (ההרגים makes it the eighth) in vv. 5–6, 8–9. A. Kaminka lists several such cases in the Twelve (e.g., Hab 3:12; Zech 1:8; Mal 2:15). Ms L62 offers the synonym ἀποκτενοῦντων while A26 offers εκκεντοῦντων, ‘stabbing.’ The verb ἀποκεντεῖν is also used in Hos 9:13 (הרג) and in Num 25:8, 1 Sam 31:4 (דקר) (*Studien zur Septuaginta, an der Hand der Zwölf Kleinen Prophetenbücher* [Schriften der Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums, Nr. 33. Frankfurt A.M.: J. Kauffmann Verlag, 1928], 24). J.M.P. Smith translates erroneously ἀποκεντοῦντων also as הַדִּיגִים, ‘the fishers’. Ms L86 and BasN correct with ἰχθυῶντες (*A Critical*, 209). However, this may also show that the translator did not know of the existence of The Fish Gate in Jerusalem, nor its mention in the Writings. The Syriac צידא, here in plural, is a noun meaning ‘huntings,’ ‘fishings,’ ‘hunters’ or ‘fishermen.’

<sup>161</sup> As for the Mishneh, scholars still argue as to its location. Most point to an area west of Jerusalem.

<sup>162</sup> Hence, it could not be adjacent to the Mishneh west of the Temple Mount as Gordon states (*Targum*, 166, note 23).

<sup>163</sup> Suggested by Ribera, “La versión,” 152.

mss suggests that from the early stages of targumic development and transmission they circulated contemporaneously. The former is found in Eb 80, in all the Yemenite mss and in the Sepharadi Mss X,W and Radaq. The latter is found in Ms F, in all the Ashkenazi mss and in the Sepharadi Mss S,N,Q,C (also in mss B,G). Ms X knows of both versions. Each version has its interpretative justifications.

Clearly, עופלא ('the Ophel') resulted from its association with a geographical location (The Mishneh, 2 Kgs 22:14). עופא ('fowl'), though, resulted from a variety of causes: first, its association with fishes (הדגים) that are linked to 1:3; second, a later scribe, who did not make the association with 2 Chron 33:14, linked the fish with its closest popular food item (cf Gen 1:26,28, 9:2; Deut 4:17–18; 1 Kgs 5:13; Ezek 38:20; Hos 4:3; Ps 8:9; Job 12:7–8, 40:29–31; Qoh 9:12).

However, the existence of these two variants may have a much simpler explanation: inattentively, a scribe elided the 'ל' from עופלא, and thus עופא was born together with its justifications.<sup>164</sup>

Since עופלא is found mostly in Eastern texts, it is reasonable to ascribe them to a Babylonian textual tradition based on the original Palestinian text. The fact that it appears also in non-Babylonian mss, that is, in the Sepharadi Mss X (עִפְלָא) and W (עופלא) and Radaq (עפלא) indicates an early transmission of a Palestinian text before it became corrupt. Alternatively, some of the Western mss show an affinity with Babylonian texts (this is especially so concerning Ms W).

Smolar offers a midrashic reason for the change from 'the Mishneh' to another geographical location. He argues that here, too, as in 2 Kgs 22:14, TJ read Mishnah ('a house of study'), but since wailing could not come from studying the Torah, the location was changed.<sup>165</sup>

The prophecy of doom to four locations in the land of Israel allowed the Rabbis to compare them to the horrific fate that came upon four major Jewish towns centuries later (two will be mentioned in the next verse). The four cities are also mentioned by Rashi and Radaq. According to *Pesikta Rabbati* 8,3, the Mishneh symbolized the city of Lod whose prominence in the life of the Jews (before the calamities befell them) had been 'secondary to Jerusalem.'

Lod (Lydda) was considered secondary to Jerusalem in its greatness and divine light (*Pesikta Rabbati* 8,3, 32,7). Demetrius II granted Lod to

<sup>164</sup> Similarly, Rudolph suggests correcting to עופלא according to the London Polyglott (*Micha*, 262, 10b).

<sup>165</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 30 and notes 175,112.

Jonathan the Hasmonean in 145 BCE and the city developed into a purely Jewish town. However, in 43 BCE Cassius sold its inhabitants into slavery. A few years later, upon the murder of Jewish pilgrims by Samaritans and the riots that ensued, the Syrian governor Quadratus executed in Lod eighteen of the Jewish participants.<sup>166</sup> In 66 Cestius Gallus, the Roman proconsul of Syria, burned Lod on his way to Jerusalem.<sup>167</sup> Most of its Jews had gone to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of Succot. Yet, he found in the town fifty people whom he murdered by sword.<sup>168</sup> After 70, by Roman law (the *sikarikon*), many lands owned by the Jews of Lod, among other towns, were confiscated. The land owners were either expelled or left as tenants on their own lands.<sup>169</sup>

But the execution of ‘the martyrs of Lod’ became fixed in the memory of the Jews. In several places the Rabbinic Literature mentions a most atrocious execution of two brothers named ‘the martyrs of Lod.’ When a princess was found slain, the non-Jews of the town blamed the Jewish population for her death. The Roman ruler (emperor Trajan [98–117] or the governor of Judea Lusius Quietus) planned to kill the Jews of Lod in retaliation. According to Rashi<sup>170</sup> to *Bavli, Pesahim* 50a, *Ta’anit* 18b and *Bava Batra* 10b, two brothers, Pappus and Julianus, pleaded guilty in order to save the Jews from slaughter. Rashi describes them as ‘thoroughly righteous.’ The execution of these innocent brothers evoked so much outrage that *Otzar ha-Midrashim* (*Gan Eden Geihinom* 13) says: ‘And the Blessed Holy One vowed to wear the garments of vengeance and take their vengeance from the nations, as it is written: ‘He shall judge nations, heaping up bodies’ (Ps 110:6). Because of their holiness, ‘no one can stand in their presence in *Gan Eden*.’ The same source equates the martyrs of Lod with the famous ‘Ten Martyrs’ who reside in the holiest place in Heaven, the Eastern Temple. Here God Himself, together with the Messiah, the Patriarchs, and the Wheels continue to weep for them.<sup>171</sup>

<sup>166</sup> Josephus, *תולדות*, 2.12,6; M. Stern, “The Province,” 312–13.

<sup>167</sup> M. Avi-Yonah, “Lydda,” *EJ* 11:619–20; S. Applebaum, “Economic Life in Palestine,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (vol. II; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 693.

<sup>168</sup> Josephus, *תולדות*, 2.19,1.

<sup>169</sup> Applebaum, “Economic,” 695–97.

<sup>170</sup> See also Lea Roth, “Pappus and Julianus,” *EJ* 13:69.

<sup>171</sup> Even though the Mishnah, the Talmud and the *Amora'im* do not mention the term Ten Martyrs, most scholars accept this event as historical. Zeitlin considers the torture of the ten Jewish scholars by the Romans to be a legend. The lists of the ten vary and the names are not contemporaries. The Talmud mentions only three sages who were tortured and killed by the Romans, but does not associate them with the Ten Martyrs.

Apart from the two brothers, others were slaughtered. *Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 9,10 mentions ‘the 2000 martyrs of Lod’ and *Midrash Ecclesiastes Zuta* 9,8 mentions ‘the 3000 martyrs of Lod.’

The ‘hills’ is identified with the town of Zippori<sup>172</sup> (Sepphoris) ‘for she sits at the top of the mountain like a bird’ (*Bavli, Megillah* 6a). The city is first known from the time of Alexander Jannaeus (100 BCE), when it served as the administrative capital of the Galilee. To shift the center of battle against the supporters of Antigonus away from Jerusalem, Herod diverted his army to the Galilee. Among the Jewish towns he took by force was Zippori. Upon his death in 4 BCE, the Jews of Zippori revolted. Varus, the governor of Syria, sent an army headed by Caius, who burned the city and made the Jewish inhabitants slaves.<sup>173</sup> Early on in the first revolt of 66–70, Zippori prepared its walls to withstand a war against the Romans, but soon the Jews decided to accommodate the Romans.<sup>174</sup> Following the second revolt, Hadrian (117–138) ejected the Jewish city council, thus ending Jewish authority in Zippori, but not for long.<sup>175</sup>

Since Jerusalem is surrounded by hills (cf Ps 125:2), the designation of ‘the hills’ is self-explanatory. The mss, though, reflect two major translations, though in eight different Aramaic forms (mostly corrupt) for ‘hills.’ The first is the literal cognate of גְּבֵעָתָא (singular, Mss V,H,U,Q), גְּבֵעָתָא (plural, Mss R,Y,P,X,W) and גְּבֵעָתָא (Ms S). The second is גְּבוֹשָׁתָא (Mss Z,J,E), גְּבוֹשָׁתָא (Mss F,T,M,B), גְּבוֹשָׁתָא (Eb 80), גְּבוֹשָׁתָא (Ms N), and גְּבוֹשָׁתָא (Radaq). This state indicates an early stage of TJ development in which both versions co-existed concurrently. None of the mss use the common Targumic rendering for the Hebrew ‘hill,’

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Two others are mentioned as Rabbis who met a violent death, but they are not connected with the Romans. The idea that the righteous can redeem with his blood a sin committed in the past by ancestors is drawn from several Jewish sources, mostly by Jewish Apocalyptists. Though this idea was strongly rejected by the Rabbis, it was nevertheless popular among the Jews post 70. From this milieu the legend of the Ten Martyrs arose, in which these righteous people redeemed the sin of Joseph’s ten brothers for selling him into slavery. Solomon Zeitlin, “The Legend of the Ten Martyrs and its Apocalyptic Origins,” *JQR* 36 (1945–46), 1–16.

<sup>172</sup> In Hebrew, ‘my bird.’

<sup>173</sup> M. Avi-Yonah, “Sepphoris,” *EJ* 14:1177–78; M. Stern, “The Reign,” 223–24; Josephus, *תולדות*, 2.5,1; Mark Chancy and Eric M. Meyers, “How Jewish was Sepphoris in Jesus’ Time?” *BAR* 26, no. 4 (July–August 2000): 18–33, 61.

<sup>174</sup> Josephus, *תולדות*, 2.5,1, 3.2,4.

<sup>175</sup> See also M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, the Hebrew University, 1984), 47.

רמָא,<sup>176</sup> plural רמָתא (e.g., Isa 2:2; Hos 4:25; Joel 4:18; Mic 4:1, 6:1; Hab 3:6), which may eliminate any possibility of such an original version. גבֿעֿתא may have been the original translation as it is the closest sounding cognate to the Hebrew. There may have been a more significant reason for the choice of גבֿשוֿתא in the singular than a mere scribal preference. It (and so גבֿשוֿשית or גבֿשוֿשיתא) also means ‘a mound’ of stones. The translator may have alluded to a specific hill where ‘a great disaster’ took place and where many graves were marked by heaps of stones, as was the Jewish custom. This ties in with the ‘day of killing’ in v. 7 that portrays the great sacrifice God had proclaimed to take place at a chosen time. The singular גבֿעֿתא in our ms points to the same allusion.<sup>177</sup>

If this conjectural reading holds true, then we witness here TJ’s critical and painful allusion to the fate of the multitude of Jews who fought and died over Jerusalem and the Second Temple. What is left from those days of slaughter are hills covered with burial stones.

The reading in the singular conjures up the hill of Beitar. Beitar was the last stronghold of Bar Kokhba in 135 and the place of his death. It is located on a steep hill overlooking the Sorek Valley, seven miles southwest of Jerusalem. Upon their defeat in Jerusalem, Bar Kokhba’s rebels withdrew to Beitar where they withstood several months of siege by three Roman legions. Remains of the fortified walls, fortress and towers, as well as rounded stones, were found on the hill. The city fell not only because of hunger and thirst but also because of internal disputes.<sup>178</sup> For the Rabbis, the fall of Beitar was considered equal to the destruction of the First and Second Temples (e.g., *Yerushalmi, Ta’anit* 22b).<sup>179</sup> The massacre of its defenders and population is remembered in several sources. *Midrash Lamentations Rabbah*, 2,4, for example, speaks of 80,000 killed and horses standing deep in blood up to their noses, 300 babies’ skulls smashed on one stone, and hundreds of scribes burned wrapped in Bible scrolls. In this same source (and in many others) the reasons given for the defeat were the murders of Rabbi Elazar of

<sup>176</sup> Peshitta reads רמָתא.

<sup>177</sup> Ribera, too, notices the singular ‘hill’ versus the MT plural ‘hills’ and asserts that the single ‘hill’ refers to a specific hill (“La versión,” 152).

<sup>178</sup> E. Feldman, “Bar Kokhba,” *EJ* 4:235–37; E. Orni, “Bethar,” *EJ* 4:733–36.

<sup>179</sup> Beitar fell on the 9th of Av. The Romans allowed the corpses to be buried on the 15th and because of that the Rabbis declared the 15th of Av to be one of the blessed days in the Jewish calendar. The attributes of הַטּוֹב וְהַמֵּיטִיב were added to the daily prayer.



Modiin (Bar Kokhba's uncle) and of a Samaritan by Bar Kokhba out of arrogance and suspicion. Also, the Rabbis blame him for causing the slaughter of so many Jews who, until he arrived at this major town, had been living there peacefully. Targum echoes the Rabbis' sentiments on the fate of Beitar on account of Bar Kokhba.

Furthermore, the change from the original plural **גְּבַעְתָּא** to the singular **גְּבַעְתָּא** did not happen to **גְּבִישְׁתָּא**. Here, the singular form existed from the outset of the change, whether **גְּבִישְׁתָּא**, **גְּבִישְׁתָּא** or even **גְּבִישְׁתָּא**. These readings in the singular add support to the theory of a deliberate modification based on a historical criticism made at a later time.

Summarizing the development of both versions, this theory claims that the early Aramaic translation of **מִהַגְּבִעוֹת** was rendered by **גְּבַעְתָּא**. After the event of Beitar, a singular reading emerged, **גְּבַעְתָּא**. A scribe who wished to enhance the allusion made the final change, that of **גְּבִישְׁתָּא**.

Although not a translation but an interpretation, TJ captures the intent of the text that the catastrophe will envelop the whole periphery of Jerusalem; while the Fish Gate is on the north side, the Ophel is on the south, the Hill is on the west, and Wadi Qidron on the east.

1:11: Wail (*ed*) those who are sitting in the *Qidron Wadi*, for all the people, whose deeds resemble the deeds of the people of the land of Canaan, shall be broken; all the rich in property shall be destroyed.

This verse has attracted much discussion. It continues to describe, in general terms of sounds of distress, the wide scope of geographical areas where God's punishment will reach. The identification of the fourth location, **הַמְּכִתֵּשׁ**, is debated as were the previous two. Does **נְדָמָה** mean 'destroy' or 'resemble, be like'? Who are 'the people of Canaan' and what does 'laden with silver' refer to?

**הַמְּכִתֵּשׁ**, literally 'the mortar, crater,' is a geographical depression surrounded by hills or mountains in the shape of a mortar.<sup>180</sup> Since 'the hills' surround Jerusalem on (mostly) three sides, the **מְכִתֵּשׁ** can be any of the valleys in between. The Central Valley (or 'the Tyropoeon') on the west and the Qidron Valley on the east meet at the southern tip of the City of David at the Hinnom Valley. From the time of Hezekiah,

<sup>180</sup> A small such area, 'the Spring of the Caller,' is mentioned in Judg 15:19.

the direction of Jerusalem's expansion was to the west. Trade activity was in the west close to the main arteries that led to the Coast and the Negev. This is also the link made by the MT with the merchant Canaanites. It is therefore more likely to locate **הַמְּכַתֵּשׁ** in the Central Valley between **הַמְּשֻׁנָּה**, 'the new quarter,' and the Hinnom Valley. Targum locates it with the Qidron valley on the *east*.<sup>181</sup>

Other locations and explanations are offered: it is 'the business district' in the southern part of the New City marked by the noisy activity of the artisans;<sup>182</sup> it is between the palace and the new quarter, in the vale of the cheese-makers;<sup>183</sup> it is in the north of the city "in the same neighborhood" as the Fish Gate;<sup>184</sup> it is the road within the city for merchants and money changers;<sup>185</sup> it is a name of a place in Jerusalem deep as a mortar in which spices are pounded.<sup>186</sup> All these observations in actuality point to the Central Valley that stretches to the north and south of the Temple and the City of David. Specifically, it is the depression in front of today's Jaffa Gate.

Zephaniah includes this area in a double entendre: to target the most active quarter in the area and at the same time to allude to its fate. The pestle that will crush its vessel is the hand of God (cf v. 4).<sup>187</sup>

<sup>181</sup> This is also Theodotion, 'in the valley/deep.' Ribera, "La versión," 152. However, LXX read the word as a *pu'al* verb in the feminine singular, **הַמְּכַתֵּשׁת**, 'the crushed, broken one' (cf Isa 27:9; Mic 1:7, 4:3; Zech 11:6) referring to Jerusalem, the city.

<sup>182</sup> Deissler, *Les Petits*, 445; Maxwell J. Miller, "Jerusalem," *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. D.N. Freedman et al. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), map on p. 696; Orelli, *The Twelve*, 265; Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 24; J.H. Eaton, *Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 129.

<sup>183</sup> That is, the Tyropocon valley. Keller, *Nahoum*, 193, after Josephus.

<sup>184</sup> J. Simons, *Jerusalem in the Old Testament* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1952), 291. However, on p. 53 note 2 Simons states that "Mahtech may . . . be . . . the basin formed by the junction of the Central Valley and the Cross Valley . . . a firm localization is hardly possible." He describes the Central Valley as a branch of the Cross Valley. From his description, the Cross Valley seems to be the modern-day main road leading from David Citadel to the Church of the Sepulcher, the Via Dolorosa (pp. 20–21).

<sup>185</sup> Ibn Ezra.

<sup>186</sup> Altschuler.

<sup>187</sup> Or in other words, the name **הַמְּכַתֵּשׁ** points to "the fate that was awaiting its dwellers." G.G.V. Stonehouse, *The Books of the Prophets Zephaniah and Nahum* (London: Methuen & Co, 1929), 38; S.M. Lehrman, S.M. *The Twelve Prophets* (Bournemouth: Soncino, 1948), 237; S.R. Driver, *The Minor Prophets: Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. Introduction* (vol. 2; The New-Century Bible. Edinburgh: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1906), 117; Adele Berlin, *Zephaniah* (The Anchor Bible; NY: Doubleday, 1994), 87.

Targum continues its exegetical and critical view of past and present society and history. We cannot ascertain whether or not TJ knew the location of **הַמְּכָתֵשׁ** but its meaning serves its interpretation. Several reasons can be found for its identification with the Qidron Valley in the *east*, although it more likely stems from the theological perspective articulated in the previous verse. Many of the wealthy citizens of Jerusalem built their tombs and graves on the slopes of the Qidron valley,<sup>188</sup> and this tradition continued for centuries. A large Jewish cemetery still exists to this day on its eastern slope. A detailed survey of the village of Silwan revealed a necropolis of about 60 tombs differing in size and shape cut into the rock of the eastern bank of the Qidron valley, dated mostly to the 8th–7th centuries BCE. At least one was reused in the Second Temple period. However, most of the Second Temple period tombs were built north and south of this necropolis, still on the same eastern cliffs.<sup>189</sup> The choice of ‘Qidron Wadi’ augments the sense of death, for **קָדַר** in Hebrew means ‘dark, somber.’ In addition, **קָדַר** is the potter and **קְדֵרָה** is a pot or bowl whose shape is similar to that of a **מְכָתֵשׁ**. The choice of Qidron, then, plays well with the MT and the somber message TJ wishes to impart.

The choice of the Qidron Valley is also logical: since the Fish Gate is in the north-west, the Ophel is in the south and ‘the hills’ are in the west, the east would be the Qidron valley. As mentioned above concerning v. 10b, the entire periphery of Jerusalem is intended, which adds a sense of a complete catastrophe with no opening to escape.

According to Smolar (p. 111), “ancient locations in Jerusalem were by and large well remembered” by TJ. Its identification of **הַמְּכָתֵשׁ** with the Qidron Valley is correct as the commercial suburb of the city.<sup>190</sup> To the contrary, Gordon (1989, p. 166) posits that by choosing the Qidron rather than the Tyropoeon valley, TJ “more or less obliterates the commercial factor.” Indeed, TJ does not directly allude to com-

<sup>188</sup> T. Kollek and M. Pearlman. *Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Steimatzky’s Agency Ltd., 1975 [1968]), 38,196; Z. Greenhut, “Burial Cave of the Caiaphas Family,” *BAR* 18, no. 5 (September/October 1992): 29–36; G. Avni & Z. Greenhut, “Akeldama, Resting Place of the Rich and Famous,” *BAR* 20, no. 6 (November–December 1994): 36–46. L. & K. Ritmeyer, “Akeldama, Potter’s Field or High Priest’s Tomb?” *BAR* 20, no. 6 (November–December 1994): 22–35, 76.

<sup>189</sup> David Ussishkin, *The village of Silwan* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1993), 320–38.

<sup>190</sup> However, Smolar deems TJ’s identification of ‘the Second Quarter’ with the Ophel doubtful. There is no evidence that the Qidron valley was ever a commercial center (*Studies*, 112).

mercial activity even though the subject of silver is clearly raised. This stands in contrast to R. Johanan's statement that 'Canaanites' in the HB always means 'merchants.'<sup>191</sup> The choice of the Qidron riverbed is, then, understandable when it is devoid of a trade connotation and in light of its hidden message of punishment to all areas surrounding Jerusalem.<sup>192</sup>

בְּנַחְלוֹן, 'in the river, creek,' is found only in the stemma of Mss V,H. All other mss have בְּנַחְלָא, which is the common cognate for Hebrew נַחַל (e.g., 2 Kgs 23:6,12; Jer 31:39). This oddity could be influenced by the form of קְדְרוֹן and not by the intention to minimize the size of the riverbed.<sup>193</sup> Another consideration may be given to the context of 'dwelling.' People do not dwell in rivers or river-beds and נַחְלוֹן comes, perhaps, to suggest 'valley.'

The Hebrew הַיְלִילוֹ can be read in the imperative or the imperfect. The past tense may convey the sense of events that have been happening up to recent times. In addition, the Hebrew יְשֻׁבֵי, which is usually translated as 'the dwellers of,' is here read in the participle.<sup>194</sup> Since no people lived on the Qidron cliffs, the verb יָתַב can only mean literally 'to sit.' The reason given for this 'sitting' is that the wealthy have died. The scene given by TJ is that of people sitting in mourning for the dead, 'those rich in property.' The reason for their death is explained in the verb עָבַד, for they 'worshipped idols' like the Canaanites.<sup>195</sup> This brings us to the function the Qidron wadi played at times of religious revivals: there, King Asa cut and burned the idol his mother had made for the Asherah (1 Kgs 15:13); there, King Josiah burned the Asherah Manasseh had placed in the Temple, and into the wadi he threw the ashes of the pagan vessels and altars Manasseh had built (2 Kgs 23:4–6).<sup>196</sup> We must draw attention to the expression וַיִּדְקוּ לְעֵפֶר,

<sup>191</sup> This is in reference to Job 40:30, Hos 12:8, and Isa 23:8 (*Bavli, Bava Batra* 75a).

<sup>192</sup> Gerleman posits that TJ wants to give above all a concrete interpretation based on a tradition that identifies המכתש with the Qidron valley (*Zephanja*, 15). He offers no references for this tradition. Rudolph, on the other hand, contends that TJ conveys the wrong interpretation (*Micha*, 263, 11b). Sweeney offers the possibility that TJ read vv. 10–11 "as an address to all the quarters of Jerusalem" (*Zephaniah*, 74).

<sup>193</sup> By the suffix of וֹן-

<sup>194</sup> Radaq's quote also shows the participle יְתֻבֵי בְנַחְלָא which reflects the MT יְשֻׁבֵי. No other source has this reading. Mss R and C read the imperfect דִּיתְבוּ.

<sup>195</sup> Note the Hebrew expression עֲבוֹדַת זָרָה for 'idolatry.'

<sup>196</sup> Sweeney notices the connection of TJ's choice of Qidron to this latter scripture, too. He adds support to this by noting TJ's later rendition of Canaanites (2:5) not as merchants but rather as a pagan population (*Zephaniah*, 91).

‘and he crushed to dust’ (v. 6), a synonymous verb for **כתש**, and hence a possible mental association for TJ motivating the replacement of **מכתש** with Qidron. The Qidron valley was, then, a symbol for idolatry, the cause of retribution and national catastrophes. There, the idolaters are now buried and mourned. Their wealth could not save them (cf 1:18).

Not certain of the prophet’s intent with the verb **גְדַמָּה**, TJ employs the double meaning of **דמה**, by repeating the root **תבר** (‘break,’ in the meaning of ‘destroy’)<sup>197</sup> from the previous verse, and adding ‘resemble.’ In this way, TJ gives a religious reason for the disaster: it is the imitation of Canaanite religious practices, **עובדיהון**.<sup>198</sup> Those ‘laden with silver’ are identified as Judean property owners who are accused of idolatry.<sup>199</sup> In this way a direct correlation is made between wealth and apostasy which is clearly expressed in vv. 8–9. This state of estrangement from Judean identity by the upper classes was especially widespread in the first century BCE until the fall in 70.<sup>200</sup>

**נטילי כסף** is an expression for the wealthy, literally those who are ‘laden with silver.’ This is also TJ’s translation without being literal. Wealth (power, strength, possession) for TJ equals property (1:12,13; Hos 7:9; Obad 17).

The sinners are clearly the Judeans, not the people of Canaan.<sup>201</sup> The specific location of ‘*the land* of Canaan’ indicates a wider religious

<sup>197</sup> Sweeney identifies this meaning in the word **אשתציאו** (*Zephaniah*, 92). However, **אשתציאו** corresponds to the MT **נְכַרְתּוּ**.

<sup>198</sup> Gordon draws our attention to TJ’s similar treatment of Isa 1:10, where TJ compares Israel’s evil acts to those of Sodom and Gomorrah. Targum Yerushalmi to Deut 32:32 elaborates on this comparison by adding that ‘their thoughts resemble those of the people of Gomorrah who do evil acts.’ Gordon, *The Targum*, 166, n. 26. LXX opted to read **נדמה** in the meaning of ‘to resemble’ (‘for all the people of Canaan resembled’), but in this way the comparison is left incomplete. Peshitta and Vulgate, on the other hand, chose the root **דמם**, ‘be dazed, dumb, silent’ probably out of fear and loss.

<sup>199</sup> LXX and Peshitta interpret **נטילי** closer to the Hebrew: the former read **נוטלי**, ‘those who carry, lift.’ **Επισημεύοι** often translates the Hebrew **נשא**, ‘lift, lift up’ (Isa 6:1; Hab 3:10; Zech 2:4); the latter read **נטילים** in the meaning of ‘coins.’

<sup>200</sup> Herod liquidated many of the old upper class Jewish families and replaced them with his family members, some Jewish supporters from Judea and the Galilee, people he attracted from the diaspora, and non-Jewish families. They continued to exert power up to the Great Revolt. Most of them did not care about the heavy taxation imposed upon the Jewish peasantry or about the brutality with which Herod treated the Jewish population. See, e.g., M. Štern, “The Reign,” esp. 270–77.

<sup>201</sup> Radaq’s quote **ארי אתבר כל עמי** instead of **עמא** clarifies the identification of ‘the people’ as ‘My people,’ the Judahites. However, **עמי** can be read as ‘the peoples of,’ thus portraying a world-wide warning to all peoples whose behavior is similar to that of the Canaanites. Since the context is Judah, the former explanation is preferable.

influence outside of Judean borders. This heightens the culpability of Judah as a nation that did not discriminate in imitating other religious practices. The addition of *land* also points to the Canaanites who inhabited the land of Israel prior to its conquest. In this way the sins of Judah are made accumulative and lengthy. The Canaanites no longer exist, yet their pagan deeds have been carried on by the Judeans. Canaanites are here used as a derogatory symbol for all non-Judean pagans whom Judeans imitate in dress, thought, or behavior.

1:12: And it will be at that time, I will *appoint searchers and they shall search the inhabitants of Jerusalem as searching with a candle*; and I shall visit upon the *men who repose at ease upon their properties*, who say in their heart ‘there is no *desire before YYY to do good nor to do bad.*’

The MT depicts God as searching Jerusalem with candles so that none can escape. This personal involvement breaks the general depiction in vv. 10–11 and functions as an intermediate announcement to return the focus to the specific groups of vv. 8–9. The only difficulty in the verse is the unique phrase **הַקְּפָאִים עַל־שְׁמֵרֵיהֶם** which is commonly translated ‘who congeal on their dregs’ or the like. The overall message concerns people who are inactive and apathetic to their surroundings; people who do not believe ‘in their heart’ that God intervenes in man’s life, for He ‘neither does good nor evil.’ God is as inactive in His world as they are in theirs.

This, of course, the targumist cannot accept, nor can he convey it to his audience/readers. He, then, treats the two parts of the verse exegetically, following his targumic characteristics. In avoiding the portrayal of God as actively walking about Jerusalem, TJ assigns the search to others (people or angels) appointed by God Himself.<sup>202</sup> As TJ Amos 9:3 attests, when the subject of ‘search’ is God Himself, TJ uses this expression.<sup>203</sup> The *inhabitants* of the city are the target of the search, not the city itself.<sup>204</sup> The search will be conducted with *a candle*, conjuring up the night before Passover tradition of punctiliously looking for

<sup>202</sup> Vlaardingerbroek contends that the addition of “investigators” comes to address the plural of ‘candles’ (*zephaniah*, 98).

<sup>203</sup> TJ Amos 9:3 translates **אֶחְפֹּשׂ** similarly to our verse, ‘I shall appoint searchers and they shall search.’

<sup>204</sup> The people are also Amos’ target on his depiction of the Day of YHWH (9:1–4).

leavened bread with a candle throughout the house.<sup>205</sup> Based on Exod 12:19, the sinners, by implication, are a defiled element to be removed from a holy community or location.

The association the reader/listener makes between Tj's depiction of the search with candles and the night before Passover is nearly the same made by the Rabbis.<sup>206</sup> Among other lessons, our verse serves as a means to teach how to conduct the search at home for leavened bread. However, the accusative metaphor becomes a message of mercy, forgiveness and redemption. This the Rabbis do in two stages: in the first stage they interpret the four locations in vv. 10–11 as four cities (Acre, Zippori, Tiberias and Lod) that greatly suffered from the pagan population and their benefactors the Romans. *Pesikta Rabbati* 8,3 states that at the time when God will take vengeance for what the pagans did to the four Jewish towns, He will search Jerusalem with candles (to cleanse it from its pagan occupants). Zephaniah 1:10–12 gave the Rabbis of post-70 the hope for the restoration of Jerusalem as the political, religious, cultural, and spiritual capital of the free land of Israel. Together with Jerusalem, the rest of the land will be freed from pagans and foreign oppression. Living in such proximity to pagans threatened Jewish self-identity and the Jewishness of the land of Israel, two major concerns of the Rabbis and Tj.<sup>207</sup>

In the second stage of the reinterpretation of our verse, the Rabbis read אֶחָפֵשׂ אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַם, 'I shall set Jerusalem free,' instead of אֶחָפֵשׂ, 'I shall search,' by changing שׁ to שׁ (e.g., *Pesikta Rabbati* 8,4). This new reading opened the way for the Rabbis to reaffirm other midrashic readings.<sup>208</sup>

<sup>205</sup> The singular 'candle' is also the reading of LXX and Peshitta, perhaps thus alluding to the same Passover scene.

<sup>206</sup> *Pesikta Rabbati* 8,3; *Bavli*, *Pesahim* 8a; *Tosefta*, *Pesahim* 1, and *Pesikta Rabbati* 8,1; *Midrash ha-Gadol*, 199.

<sup>207</sup> On the political, religious, national and economical struggles between the Jewish community and Rome see Avi-Yonah, "The Jews," esp. 54–136. These concerns have been relevant throughout the centuries to this day.

<sup>208</sup> E.g., the candles are a symbol for the restoration of Jerusalem (*Pesikta* 8,1, 8,3; *Otzar ha-Midrashim*, *Yelamdenu* 5) among the seven Hannukot (this includes both the festival and dedication events) celebrated with lights is 'the Hannukah of the world to come.' This unparalleled interpretation reads Zeph 1:12a as an eschatological event; the candles are an allegory for Israel (*Pesikta* 8,5); the candles are also an allegory for the good deeds and the merits of the forefathers, that will bring about the redemption of Jerusalem and Israel (*Pesikta Rabbati* 8,5); the candle is a symbol for the Torah by whose light the righteous walk (*Pesikta Rabbati* 8,7); there is no place where sinners can hide from God (*Tanna de-Vei Elyahu* 18,38).

*Midrash Ecclesiastes Zuta*, second version, 2,14 (also in *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 16,8) reaffirms the positive perception given to our verse. From this midrash it is clear that searching Jerusalem by candles was perceived as an oracle of salvation in which God will methodically look for His people to save and protect.

The unusual choice of **נְבִלְשֶׁתָא**, ‘lamp, candle,’ instead of the more common **בוּצִין/בוּצִינָא**<sup>209</sup> (e.g., 1 Kgs 7:49; Mal 4:2 and cf 1 Sam 3:3; Jer 25:10) may have come about for two reasons. The most important reason concerns the differing meaning of **בוּצִין** in the East and the West. Whereas in Palestinian Aramaic it meant ‘candle, lamp,’ in Babylonian Aramaic it meant ‘pumpkin.’<sup>210</sup> This change, in turn, created an inner Aramaic wordplay of shared assonance with the root **בלש** used here three times. Moreover, **נְבִלְשֶׁתָא** is another dialect for **נְבִלְשֶׁתָא**.<sup>211</sup> By shying away from the more common **שְׂרָגָא** (e.g. *Bawli*, *Shabbat* 26a, 35b, 45a, 116b), ‘candle,’ the Babylonian redactor revealed his intention. This wordplay, according to Shinan’s criteria of determination, suggests an exegesis independent of an external midrashic interpretation.

The Hebrew verb **פקד** in *hif’il*, ‘to appoint,’ may have influenced TJ to use **אִפְקִיד** which carries the same meaning and thus serves two purposes: the removal of anthropomorphism<sup>212</sup> and the appointment of searchers. MT **וּפְקִדְתִּי** connotes ‘retribution.’

The direct object **יְת** before ‘searchers’ is absent in Ms F, Yemenite Mss Z,J,E, all the Ashkenazi and the Sepharadi mss including Radaq and is probably superfluous. **יְתִבִּי** before ‘Jerusalem’ is absent in Ms F and in all the Ashkenazi and the Sepharadi mss including Radaq, and is probably the original reading of TJ. It was added for clarification

<sup>209</sup> Can be used in either singular or plural.

<sup>210</sup> See Rashi to *Bawli*, *Berakhot* 48a and the humorous anecdote in *Bawli*, *Nedarim* 66b. *Tosefta Nedarim* 66b explains **בוּצִין** as ‘watermelons.’ To add to the confusion, **בוּצִינָא** in Babylonian Aramaic meant ‘light,’ to describe often ‘a luminary, a wise man’ (e.g., *Bawli*, *Ketubot* 17a, *Sanhedrin* 14a). **בוּצָא**, the singular of the plural **בוּצִין** is not used as ‘lamp’ but rather as in the Hebrew for ‘a fine cloth,’ **בוּץ** (e.g., TO Exod 28:5, Lev 16:23). According to Tal, **בוּצִין** is common in all Palestinian sources (*The Language*, 104–05).

<sup>211</sup> Jastrow, 871. According to Ribera, **נְבִלְשֶׁתָא** is Eastern Aramaic (“La versión” 152). It occurs in Dan 5:5 and as **נְבִרְשֶׁת** in both *Bawli* (*Yoma* 37a) and *Yerushalmi* (*Yoma* 19a) in their shared story of Queen Helleni who donated a golden lamp to the Temple. In the *Yerushalmi* version an attempt is made to translate this Babylonian word, **נְבִרְשֶׁת**. One calls it **מְנִרְתָא**, the other calls it **קוֹנִיחָא** (‘a vessel for oil, a bowl,’ Jastrow 1335). A third translation, this time to Greek, is added: ‘Aquila translated [Daniel’s] **נְבִרְשֶׁתָא** by **לִמְפָרַס**,’ that is, *λαμπράς*, ‘lamp, torch’ (Jastrow, 713).

<sup>212</sup> Targum could use other media for God Himself, such as **מִימְרָא** (‘the Word’).



in Babylonia. R. Nathan omits ‘the inhabitants of Jerusalem’ probably accidentally.<sup>213</sup>

The second part of the verse delves deeper into exegesis. The Hebrew phrase **עַל-שְׁמֵרֵיהֶם הַקִּפְּאִים** presents a metaphor for the point in the process of wine-making when the sediment ‘congeals’ at the bottom of the barrel. This sediment, the lees or dregs, has no use anymore and is devoid of its initial yeast activity that produced the fermentation. The picture is that of people who are not only inactive but who watch over (root **שָׁמַר**) the sediment in the hope of further fermentation. They are fools and ignorant, yet they think they *know* that God is inactive and ignorant. The irony is obvious.

However, TJ ignores the wine-making metaphor but retains the sense of complacency. ‘Those who congeal on their dregs’ is understood as those whose wealth and power gave them the self-assurance which resulted in their rejection of God as supreme judge. Wealth is the source of heresy (in v. 11 it is the source of idolatry and criminal activity).<sup>214</sup> People put their trust in false security instead of in God. They are ignorant of their fate (v. 11b) and of God’s power and nature. Others interpret the imagery loosely: the targeted people are those ‘who enjoy their wealth in a carefree way’ as a matter of speech.<sup>215</sup> Based on this, Vlaardingerbroek describes them as “those who are carefree, quiet(ly trusting) in their possessions.”<sup>216</sup>

The similar metaphor in Jer 48:11 allowed TJ to offer both literal and allegorical hermeneutics: ‘they are at ease upon their properties’ and ‘they are at ease like the wine that is kept upon its lees.’ TJ translates there **שְׂאֵנָן** as **שָׁלוֹן**, ‘at ease’ and **נְכִסֵיהוֹן שְׁמֵרָיו** as **שְׁמֵרָיו**, ‘their properties.’<sup>217</sup> The exegetical choice points the accusing finger for the destruction of both the First and Second Temples at the complacent, agnostic and

<sup>213</sup> Nathan ben Yehiel, *Sepher Arukh HaShalem* (Ms Paris BN hébr 1219).

<sup>214</sup> Both LXX and Peshitta read it similarly. The former reads ‘those who despise their laws.’ The latter reads ‘the men who despise their safeguarded (laws)’ thus changing the vocalization from **שְׁמֵרֵיהֶם** to **שְׁמֵרֵיהֶם**.

<sup>215</sup> Rudolph, *Micha*, 263, 12c.

<sup>216</sup> Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 97.

<sup>217</sup> The similarity in translation is noted by Ribera who also notes that **נְכִסִין** usually translates the Hebrew **חֵיל** in, e.g., Jer 15:13, 17:3 (“La versión” 152). This is not so in the next verse. Sweeney explains TJ’s translation of **שְׁמֵרִים** as an expression of the root **שָׁמַר**, ‘to watch,’ that is, “in reference to guarding of possessions” (*Zephaniah*, 94). As for **הָאֲנָשִׁים הַשְּׂאֵנָנִים**, Ribera associates the phrase with **הָאֲנָשִׁים הַשְּׂאֵנָנִים**, ‘the people at ease,’ as is translated in Amos 6:1. Rudolph translates ‘who enjoy their wealth in a carefree way’ as a matter of speech (*Micha*, 263, 12c).

assimilated rich. Are the Sadducees, who rejected the Law for the Hellenistic and Roman culture, on TJ's mind?

Interestingly, as in the first part, TJ does not reflect a Rabbinic reading. *Pesikta Rabbati* 8,6 reads **על-שומריהם הקופאים** ('congealed upon their guardians') and links this verse with the eschatological vision of Zech 14:6–7, when 'at that time' the world order will freeze for a day, and will reemerge at dusk with divine light for the righteous.<sup>218</sup>

Instead of 'people,' TJ translates 'men.' There may be an intent to exclude 'the mothers' of the nation from punishment. However, seven mss (T,M,Y,P and S,N,Q) as well as ms G read **גבריא**, 'warriors, mighty, heroes.' This phenomenon could have happened when the text was unvocalized, and an honest mistake was made. Even though this is a 'mistaken identity,' it acquired an interpretative value in the Ashkenazi and Sepharadi communities and should be considered a true variant. The value added is that of mockery in which the agnostic and the apathetic are described as 'warriors, mighty' rather than 'men.' Those who are "frozen" by inaction, who hide behind their immobility, and who talk themselves into believing the absurd, view themselves as "mighty"! **גבריא** also carries a sexual connotation of virility, further ridiculing the self-image of the "mighty."

Whether a misprint or a misquote, Radaq reads **דשן שליא על** **נכסיהון** which can be interpreted as a double entendre: **שליא** means both 'dregs' and 'quiet.' The verb **שלי** captures both the idea of the inactivity, the "sitting" upon acquisitions and wine-drawing.<sup>219</sup>

Grelot's Additional *Tosefta* (AT) includes only the two verses from Zech 2:14–15. Kasher's *Tosefta* (PT) contains also vv. 16–17. In v. 17, PT rephrases TJ and expands on those 'who congeal on their lees.' The clause is preceded with 'and I shall visit upon the men':

MT: **הקפאים על שמריהם**, 'who congeal on their lees.'

TJ: **דשן שליא על נכסיהון**  
'Who lie at ease on their properties.'

PT: 'who lie at ease *and upon* their properties; *and who do not tremble and who do not fear from the Day of Judgment that I am going to rid Myself of.*'

<sup>218</sup> Unlike Rashi and Radaq, Ibn Ezra opposes the eschatological interpretation and prefers the literal reading.

<sup>219</sup> This reading is according to the Jerusalem MG (publisher Jacob Buch, 1964). However, the NY MG (publisher Abraham Isaac Freedman, no date is provided) shows **שליא** corresponding with our Ms V **שליא**, 'quiet, secure.' It may simply be a confusion between 'י' and 'ו'.

First, PT separates the men from their wealth for destruction. Second, the psychological passivity of the men suggests a physical inactivity in which men abstain from religious fervor.

Apart from avoiding anthropomorphism, the choice of רְעוּא ('will, pleasure') is also telling. In Jewish prayers, God finds delight in rewarding the righteous who study Torah. The supplicant asks God to grant him his wishes by His will and pleasure. Such a time is called עַת רְצוֹן. For example, the בְּרִיךְ שְׁמֵהּ prayer during the Torah service ends with the words: ... יְהֵא רְעוּא קִדְמָךְ דְּתַפְתַּח לְבִי בְּאוּרִיתָא ('May there be pleasure before You so that You open my heart in the Torah...'). Many prayers open with these three words in either Aramaic or in the Hebrew יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ. The agnostics who find pleasure in their wealth deny this divine attribute, and thus they deny the essence and power of God.

Vlaardingerbroek wonders if this rendering is "an effort to soften the somewhat disrespectful sounding phrase" (by the agnostics). He adds that perhaps the change in focus may have been made because "so little of the deeds of God can (as yet) be perceived."<sup>220</sup> However, there is no "softening" of the statement, but instead a sharp criticism for sacrilege plus a theological dictum.

Radaq quotes a typical targumic exegetical note which Rashir re-phrases: לְאוֹטְבָא לְצַדִּיקָא... לְאַבְאֵשָׁא לְרִשְׁעִיא ('to do good to the righteous... to do bad to the wicked'). Very few sources carry this addition (Ms W, MG and Radaq). The first such dilatation is found in Rashi, who expounds that 'God does not do good to those who do His will, and He does not do evil to those who transgress His will.' This explanation is adapted by Radaq, who ascribes it to TJ, then it is picked up by Zamora the scribe and MG.<sup>221</sup> This theological position is typical of the Targumic view of divine reward and punishment (cf 1:18b, 3:8b).<sup>222</sup>

1:13: And their *homes* will be for spoil, and their *palaces* for *plunder*; and they shall build homes but will not dwell, and they shall plant vines but will not drink their wine.

The MT reflects the Deuteronomistic phraseology and theology that value homes and the fruit of the land (e.g., Deut 20:5–6, 28:3,11–12, 16–17,30,33,38–40). It mostly uses this view in the context of curses and

<sup>220</sup> Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 101.

<sup>221</sup> We have seen probable influences of Radaq on Zamora in 1:1.

<sup>222</sup> See Smolar, *Studies*, 169–87 and the many helpful explanatory and elaborate notes.

warnings against deviation from following the divine Law. This sense of futility and frustration is expressed similarly or paraphrastically also in the Prophets (e.g., Hos 4:10; Amos 5:11; Hag 1:6). The word חֵיל is a general term for ‘wealth, power, success’ (e.g., Deut 8:18; Isa 60:5) as well as for ‘military might’ (e.g., 2 Kgs 6:14). The text foretells a total loss of wealth by those powerful groups who use their social and political might and property to commit acts of injustice and apostasy (vv. 8–12).

There is not much room in this clear verse for TJ to offer reinterpretation. What is left is to present an improved parallelism for חֵילם, ‘their wealth,’ and בְּתֵיהֶם,<sup>223</sup> ‘their homes,’ in order to emphasize the guilt of the wealthy.<sup>224</sup> It reiterates the accusation in v. 9b where violence and deceit fill the homes of these powerful people with wealth. Now these same homes will incur the same violence.

An added emphasis on the wealth and power of this apathetic and agnostic group is made by the rendition of בִּירְנִיתֵהוֹן, ‘their palaces, fortresses’ instead of בְּתֵיהוֹן, the typical translation for בְּתֵיהֶם. Thus, ‘homes and palaces’ designates these people as the wealthiest among the wealthy. As TJ is careful to single out the wicked among the populace (vv. 7,18), so it is careful to single out the richest among the Judeans. This implies that excess wealth is the source for evil. Earlier, the subject of accumulated “stuff” was criticized, then, in this verse, property, and lastly, in v. 18, silver and gold.

The “improved” parallelism, as suggested by TJ, is found in Mss V,H and the Sepharadi Mss X,N,C: וּבִירְנִיתֵהוֹן... וּבְתֵיהוֹן. When introverted into Hebrew, the parallelism would be: וְהָיוּ בְתֵיהֶם לְמִשְׁסָה וְאֶרְמֹנֹתֵיהֶם לְבָזָה.

However, there are two other combinations of parallelism. A good number of mss (the Palestinian Ms F, all the Ashkenazi mss, and the Sepharadi Mss S,Q,W as well as mss B,G,O) have וּבְתֵיהוֹן... וּבְתֵיהוֹן, ‘their properties and their homes.’ Hebrew חֵיל is usually rendered by נְכָסָא and never by בֵּיתָא (e.g., Isa 30:6; Jer 15:13; Ezek 26:12; Obad 11,13; Zech 14:14).<sup>225</sup> בֵּיתָא is almost always the cognate for the Hebrew בֵּית.<sup>226</sup> This accurate rendering is therefore, to be considered the earliest.

<sup>223</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 153. See the variants in The MSS, Tables 3, 6, 9.

<sup>224</sup> Gordon attributes this divergency to the influence of the next colon (*Targum*, 167).

<sup>225</sup> חֵיל as ‘wealth’ is described in Mic 4:13 by מִמּוֹן יְקָרָהוֹן, ‘their precious wealth.’

<sup>226</sup> Cf Houtman, *Bilingual XVIII*:153–58.

The third combination of parallelism, *וּבִירְנִיתָהוֹן... נְכִסֵּיהוֹן*, is carried by only Mss Z,J,E and is a combination of the previous two. These mss have been shown to have links with the earlier Palestinian text. The two other combinations attest to the development of a variety of parallelisms already extant in Palestine before moving on to Babylonia.

In three prophetic occurrences (Isa 42:24; Jer 30:16; Hab 2:7)<sup>227</sup> *מִשָּׁפָה* is translated as it is here, *עָדִי* (interchangeable with *עָדִי* or *עָדִי*, that which is removed and carried away), or ‘spoil.’ However, in Isa 42:22 it is translated *בָּזָא* (‘plunder’), usually used for the Hebrew *בָּז*, ‘plunder.’ The emphasis is put on the people’s false sense of security in their homes and palaces, as well as on acquired goods or power. This has been clear from the previous verse. A criticism of the arrogant and the godless wealthy in pre-70 times may be advanced here, as noted earlier. We may also note here a mitigation of fate in which instead of a complete desolation, T<sub>J</sub> settles for plundering. A complete desolation is reserved for Israel’s enemies (e.g., 2:4,9). The rest of the verse is faithfully translated.

1:14: Near is the day *that is going to come from before the great YYY*, near and rushing exceedingly; the sound of the day *that is going to come from before YYY*, *which in it is bitter (trouble) and cry*; there, warriors *are being killed*.

While vv. 8–13 address the punishments to specific groups and locations on the Day of YHWH, with an introduction in v. 7 to that Day, v. 14 reconnects to v. 7 by directly referring to that concept as a Day that is swiftly approaching. The description of the Day is not only personal, but general, for man’s sins affect nature. The Day of Wrath is painted in Sinaitic terms. It will end only with fire consuming man and land (v. 18).

The verse has syntactical as well as lexical problems which T<sub>J</sub> solves by clarifying the syntax. In the first part of the verse the question concerns the function of the adjective *הַגָּדוֹל*. Does it describe the Day or YHWH? The consensus of opinions reads it as the Day.<sup>228</sup> Some

<sup>227</sup> Targum 2 Kgs 21:14, probably from a different hand, translates *תִּבְרַח* (‘misfortune, break’) for *מִשָּׁפָה*.

<sup>228</sup> For example, J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 203; Keller, *Nahoum*, 195; Roberts, *Nahum*, 181, 183; John D.W. Watts, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah* (The Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975),

find the common adverb **מִהֵר**, ‘fast, soon,’ in need of emendation to **מִמְהֵר**, ‘coming fast,’ with no justification.<sup>229</sup> In two other times **קרב** and **מהר** appear as verbs together. In Isa 5:19 sinners challenge God to prove His power or existence in a speedy fashion, which is similar to Zephaniah’s depiction of those who *know* in their heart that God is in fact powerless (1:12b).<sup>230</sup> In Jer 48:16 the prophet foresees the speedy approach of Moab’s destruction by God’s intermediaries. The emphasis on the urgency of the event there and in our verse is augmented by the word **מְאֹד**, ‘very, exceedingly.’<sup>231</sup>

Adding the definite article to **יום** and the formula ‘that is going to come from before YYY’ makes it possible to present God, rather than ‘the day,’ as ‘the great.’ It is typical of the targumist to elevate the attributes of God when a definite article is missing, e.g., ‘the Awesome,’ (2:11), ‘the Righteous’ (3:5). The appellation of God as ‘the great’ is typical in psalms (e.g., 96:4, 99:2, 135:5) and prayers (e.g., Neh 9:32; 1 Chron 16:25) and is probably Deuteronomistic in origin (e.g., Deut 7:21, 10:17; Jer 10:6, 32:18). By Tj’s day this appellation opens the daily *Amidah* prayer.<sup>232</sup> The emphasis is placed on God being in charge of the Day, for He plans awesome events to take place.

In the first part, both possibilities of **קָרִיב** (1:7; Joel 1:15, 2:1) and **בְּקָרוֹב** appear here, in the same meaning of ‘near,’ which is probably a stylistic preference. As for the second adverb of the Day, the Aramaic cognate for **מִהֵר** is usually **בְּפָרִיעַ**<sup>233</sup> (e.g., Exod 32:8; Josh 2:5; Judg

161; Renaud, *Michée*, 212; Seybold, *Nahum*, 100; Rudolph, *Micha*, 261,263.; Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 73; LXX and Peshitta.

<sup>229</sup> For example, John Haupt, “The Prototype of the Dies Irae,” *JBL* 38 (1919): 148,150; Edler reads this way too, pointing to a haplography of one ‘מ,’ or an abbreviation of **וּמְהֵר** (*Das Kerygma*, 16). So Horst, *Die Zwölf*, 190. See, e.g., Ben-Zvi’s discussion and the bibliography there (*A Historical*, 117–18).

<sup>230</sup> In 5:26 Isaiah retorts to those sinners saying that with a mere whistle God will summon far-away nations to come swiftly, **מהרה**. He then paints the picture of this swift response (vv. 27–30). Cf Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 98. The Deuteronomistic redactor in particular uses **מִהֵר** in the context of punishment (e.g., Deut 4:26, 7:4, 9:3,12, 28:20; Judg 2:23).

<sup>231</sup> Zephaniah was probably inspired by Isa 5:19, 5:26–30 and 13:22b. However, in paraphrasing our verse, the author of Deut 32:35 is much closer. He rebuts our verse and reverses its prophecy by portending to the closeness and swiftness of the Day in relation to the nations who abuse Israel.

<sup>232</sup> *Siddur Sim Shalom* (ed. Jules Harlow. New York: The Rabbinic Assembly, 1985), 168.

<sup>233</sup> An Old Aramaic adverb common in the Palestine Aramaic and found also in Egyptian Aramaic. Occurs in *Numbers Rabbah* 9,44 and *Yerushalmi, Kiddushin* 7b. Not used in Eastern dialects (*The Language*, 47,53,60). However, it is used by Onkelos as well (e.g.,

2:17, 23; Isa 5:26; Jer 27:16) or סָרְהַב<sup>234</sup> (e.g., Pss 100:3, 143:7). The choice of the verb יָחַי in the participle<sup>235</sup> (Hebrew מְמַהֵר) indicates a conscientious interpretation to augment the urgency of time, perhaps to associate this verse with 3:1. The Day is fast approaching. It may reflect the Targumist's mood and concern before and during the First or the Second Great Revolt.

The second part of the verse has presented some difficulties. According to the Massoretic accents, this part has two clauses, literally: 'the Day of YHWH (is) voice/sound' and 'a warrior is screaming bitterly there.' However, scholars find the referent of מַר in קוֹל and so attach the 'sound' either to the Day or to the warrior.<sup>236</sup>

Targum tries to make sense of the difficulty exegetically and with a historical criticism. It changes the adjective מַר and the participle צָרַח into nouns that describe the nature of the *sound* of the Day, adding 'that in it' as a copulative. The usual cognate for מַר is מְרִיר (e.g., Isa 33:7; Amos 8:10).<sup>237</sup> מְרִיר is used once more in the Twelve (Mic 1:11), again in the context of slain warriors in a state of mourning, this time

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Exod 32:8; Num 17:11; Deut 9:3). Onkelos, according to Tal, is basically a Western compilation with some Babylonian redaction similar to that of TJ.

<sup>234</sup> More typically used by the Syriac. Tal concludes that the closest Eastern dialect to the language of TJ is Syriac and not the Babylonian Aramaic. Tal, *The Language*, xi and 109.

<sup>235</sup> Same in Mal 3:5. In Nah 2:6 the verb is used in the imperfect. In Hab 1:6 the phrase והַנְּמָהֵר is translated as though written הַמְּהֵר, 'the swift' (correct Hebrew is הַמְּהִיר). הַנְּמָהֵר is understood as 'light,' probably referring to horses. In the HB, נְמָהֵר mostly refers to decision making (cf Isa 32:4, 35:4; Job 5:13). The odd Ms C has וְדַחִיל 'and fearful' instead of וּמוֹחִי, perhaps expressing the personal impression of the scribe.

<sup>236</sup> E.g., "...the day of Yahweh, the bitter, A hero there (?) roaring," (G.A. Smith, *The Book*, 57); "...the Day of YHWH. Fierce is he who roars a battle cry, Appalling is the Mighty One" (Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 78,80); "...the Day of the Lord bitterly shrieks," (Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 89–90); "Listen! The Day of YHWH! How bitter! The warrior cries aloud there" (Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 102, 106–07). קוֹל is always a substantive in the HB and forcing it to be anything else shows utter disrespect for and ignorance of the Hebrew language. See also NIV; NIB; NAS; NAB; Robert Bennett links קוֹל to hymnic texts where it signifies the voice, sound or noise of God (Ps 29:3–4) ("The Book of Zephaniah," *The New Interpreter's Bible* [vol. VII; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994], 682); Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Radaq, Altschuler. LXX reads: 'The sound/voice of the day of YHWH is bitter and distressful; a warrior is being placed/designated,' thus reading שָׁם as מָשָׁם, 'is placed.' Peshitta reads: 'Sound/voice (is) the day of YHWH, bitter and distressful and mighty.' Vulgate is the closest to TJ in meaning with 'the mighty (one) will be troubled there,' probably reading צָרַח rather than צָרַח.

<sup>237</sup> It may also be מַר (Isa 38:17), בְּמַרְר (Isa 33:7) or בְּמַרְרָ (Ezek 27:30).

as an added comment. However, the noun מָרָר means ‘trouble.’ Thus the intention is to depict the sound as one of ‘bitter trouble’ with an apposition of a cry of distress צוֹח. Targum’s interpretation would be, then, ‘in the day that is fast approaching (using the formula ‘that is going to come from before YYY’), there will be a sound of bitter distress and screaming.’ Retroverted into the Hebrew, TJ’s rendition would be: קול היום... שבו מר וצוֹחָה.<sup>238</sup>

With this Targumic division of v. 14b, the phrase שָׁם גְבוֹר is left incomplete, without a verb. Targum provides a verb and with it, an implication of a change in scene. It interprets the warrior’s cry of distress in terms of a battlefield, where *they* (in plural) are being killed.<sup>239</sup> The bitter battle scene, using a participle for a verb, gives the sense of either a near past or a current event. There is a sense of worry for the loss of life and fear for a greater disaster. The word שָׁם enables the targumist to tie this scene to the one in v. 8a, but more so to v. 10 where the singular ‘the hill’ was proposed. ‘Being killed’ further describes the massacre of the Jews on the hill of Beitar as suggested in 1:10.

Four mss (Y,R,P and X) show מרד, ‘to rebel,’ instead of מרר, ‘bitterness, trouble,’ in a clear case of an exchange between ד/ר. This is evident especially in Ms U, the source text of Ms Y, which has a *qatil* form, מריר. Ms Y has the same form but מריד (also mss B,G). To have a verb where a two-noun phrase is expected reveals ignorance of the text. Moreover, at the time of the killing, any form of rebelliousness is out of place or context. Mss P and X have מרד וצוֹח as two nouns even though both are verbs in the imperfect. Again, the nescience of Aramaic in the late 13th–14th century comes through.

1:15–16a: A day of anger is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of *tumult and noise*, a day of darkness and fog, a day of cloud and heavy mist, a day of horn and (sounding an) alarm...

<sup>238</sup> Sperber contends that Targum’s Hebrew *vorlage* shows מר צוֹח (*The Latter Prophets*, 347).

<sup>239</sup> Only the stemma of Mss Z,J,E is missing ‘there,’ probably out of a scribal negligence. It is also absent in LXX and Peshitta because they probably did not know how to translate it. Sweeney understands מקטלין (sic) also as “are being killed/are killing themselves.” This, he suggests, presupposes the metathesis of the root צרח, ‘to shriek,’ with רצח, ‘to murder’ (*Zephaniah*, 98). He does not explain, though, why the warriors would kill themselves.



The great Day is now delineated in six consecutive phrases starting with **יום**, five of them in couplets of nouns. The first phrase introduces and defines the following couplets as a Day of Wrath. Five couplets are created with assonance in mind (cf 2:4) for a stronger and lasting effect on the listeners.<sup>240</sup> These (and others) were probably common expressions for a time of distress (cf Deut 28:53,55,57; Isa 8:22, 30:6, 37:3; Jer 15:11, 17:16–18, 19:9; Ps 78:49; Job 30:3, 38:27). The description of the Day as a day of darkness and fog, cloud and mist, with the sound of alarming horn blasts is reminiscent of the Sinai experience (Exod 19:16,18–19; Deut 5:18,19). The Day of Judgment is on its way.

Targum captures the paronomasia of the MT with great success. For example, **תַּעְבוֹר**, ‘wrath,’ for the Hebrew **עֲבָרָה** is preferable to **רוּגְזָא** (Zeph 1:18; Ezek 7:19) and **חִימְתָא** (Hos 5:10, 13:11),<sup>241</sup> **עָקָא וְעִיק** (‘distress and anguish’), or **רְגוּשׁ וְאַתְרְגוּשָׂא** (‘tumult and noise’). It seems that the phrase **יום שָׂאָה וּמְשׂוֹאָה** remains an enigma for TJ, which reads here a sense of a great noise, deriving probably from the anguish of a crowd in distress (cf vv. 10–11,14). The solution is taken from Isa 17:12,13 and Jer 25:31 where **אַתְרְגוּשָׂא** is used for **שָׂאוֹן**, ‘noise.’<sup>242</sup> Both **שָׂאָה וּמְשׂוֹאָה** are understood as deriving from the root **שָׂאָה** that is shared by the noun **שָׂאוֹן**. The *nifal* form of **שָׂאָה** in Isa 17:12,13 in the meaning of ‘is agitated, shaken’ is one way to interpret Zephaniah’s expression, which TJ chose. The other way, the more common meaning of the root **שָׂאָה**, ‘be desolate,’ is more likely Zephaniah’s intent (cf Isa 6:11, 37:26).<sup>243</sup>

Targum to Isa 22:5 uses **רְגוּשׁ** for the MT **מְהוּמָה**, another word for ‘tumult, commotion.’ This picture complements the scene of the great silence on the Day of YHWH upon the death of the wicked (v. 7). Hence, these are the wicked alone who will create the noise and be affected on that Day.

<sup>240</sup> On the rhetorical structure of vv. 15–16, see Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 84–93.

<sup>241</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 153. Rudolph notes that the translation of the London Polyglot (called the Walton Polyglot by Ribera), instead of the noun **תַּעְבוֹר** understood it wrongly as a verb ‘(the day) will pass.’ More accurately, it was read as Hebrew **תַּעְבוֹר** (*Micha*, 263, 15a).

<sup>242</sup> In Ezek 39:16 **אַתְרְגוּשָׂא** is also used to describe MT **הַמִּוֶּן**, ‘a multitude.’

<sup>243</sup> Cf Isaiah’s ‘Day of Remembrance’ (**יוֹם פְּקֻדָּה**) when a ‘disaster’ (**שׂוֹאָה**) will come (10:3) is redefined and re-emphasized as **יום שָׂאָה וּמְשׂוֹאָה**, ‘the Day [of YHWH] is a Day of destruction and disaster.’

There is a great sense of fear from the sounding of the alarm amidst a day unexpectedly turning into thick darkness. It is clear that the horn blasts are viewed as coming from within the cities to summon the people for action, as is described in Num 10:9 (cf TO there). The message is that no action will save the sinners.

The sixth and last strophe uses the Aramaic **יִבְבָּא** for the MT **תִּרְעָה**, ‘shout, blast of trumpet.’ **יִבְבָּא** carries a double meaning of the sound of the trumpet and the sound of lamenting people. Both meanings are closely associated with fear and war. This choice of word, then, well describes Zephaniah’s intent in describing the coming of the Day of wrath.

1:16b: ...upon the fortified cities and upon the *raised heights*.

The six strophes that describe the distressful nature of the Day are ascribed to the fortified cities with their ‘raised heights,’ **רמתא מנטלתא**. It is the exact translation for **הַגְּבְעוֹת הַנִּשְׂאוֹת** (‘the high hills’) in Isa 2:14 which serve as a metaphor for the arrogant and the lofty.<sup>244</sup> The Targumist may have sensed the interdependency between the two texts and portrayed the divine wrath as pouring over the arrogant sinners rather than literally over the hills (cf 3:11). This is further affirmed by the choice of **רמתא** (‘heights’) for **פְּנֹת**, (‘corners’), rather than **בִּירְנִיתָא** (‘fortresses’) as it does in 3:6, or **מִגְדָּל** (‘tower’) as in Isa 2:15. In the three cases where ‘the corner gate’ occurs (2 Kgs 14:13; Jer 31:37 and Zech 14:10), TJ translates literally. Moreover, looking at the overall targumic translation, this may be another association with the hill of Beitar (1:10b,14), thus viewing the last rebels as arrogant.

Another explanation for the choice of **מנטלתא**, “high/uplifted,” is the pun between this Aramaic word and the Hebrew **נטילי** (v.11b), “those bearing money.”<sup>245</sup>

The Aramaic verb **נטל** is usually used to translate the Hebrew **נשא**. Both mean ‘to carry, lift’ (Zeph 3:18 and 13 other cases in the Twelve

<sup>244</sup> Hebrew **נשא** is usually translated by **מנטל/א** and **גבה** by **רם** (e.g., Isa 30:25, 57:7). On the other hand, at times **גבה** is translated by **מנטלא**, too (e.g., Jer 3:6, 17:2).

<sup>245</sup> Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 74.

alone).<sup>246</sup> Mss V,Z,J use a Yemenite form, מְנַטְלֵמָּ, rather than the Palestinian מְנַטְלָמָּ found in all other mss. This is also the case with מְטַלְטְלֵמָּ versus מְטַלְטְלֵמָּ (3:19).

An alternative to the interpretation presented here: the use of passive tense for ‘high’ suggests any artificially raised area, including ramparts, walls, towers, and hills for the purpose of defense. The reason, perhaps, is to include any measure man can take to feel safe against an enemy. The same is predicted about silver and gold that will not save the lives of the wealthy (v. 18). This alternate interpretation finds the translator more zealous than the prophet himself to see the irreligious people punished. Frustrated, the Targumist is either worried about the continuing irreligiosity of his generation that could lead to a second destruction and exile, or is looking back with anger at those sinners who caused the destruction of the Second Temple (including those on Massadah?).

1:17: And I shall bring distress to the *sons of* man and they shall walk like (the) blind, for *before* YYY they have sinned; and their blood will be spilled like dust, and their *corpses* like *dung*.

Several issues are raised here by scholars. For example, the change into first person address with the explanatory clause in the third person, ‘for they sinned to God,’ is viewed as glossatory. The comparison between pouring blood and soil is also considered odd.

Some view מְדָאָ, ‘mankind,’ as a change of focus from the wicked of Judah to the wicked of the world, hence the later insertion of vv. 17–18. Targum seems to have noted this association with the universal opening of vv. 2–3 by incorporating several elements. It gets its cues from the shared ‘all,’ ‘man,’ ‘the wicked,’ ‘soil, earth, land,’ and the sense of ‘end, destruction.’ In addition, ‘the inhabitants of the land’ and the repetition of the formula in 3:8 concerning the nations complete the universal identification. Accordingly, TJ redirects the punishment from being visited totally upon Judah to more broadly upon the nations. However, the expression ‘for they sinned against YHWH’ indicates that TJ understood the verse as applying to both Judah and the nations. Targum adds ‘sons of’ before ‘mankind’ to agree with the following

<sup>246</sup> Houtman, *Bilingual XIX*: 256–57.

plural verbs and the ‘corpses’ and ‘inhabitants.’<sup>247</sup> This is not unique. This addition is found in other instances such as Judg 16:7; 1 Sam 16:7 (2x), 2 Sam 7:19; Isa 2:20, 6:12; Jer 33:5, 47:2.<sup>248</sup> In almost all cases TJ is consistent in translating אָדָם by אַנְשָׁא (e.g., Mic 7:2; Zeph 1:3; Zech 8:10, 11:6).

The combined Judean and universal scene of our verse is also the perception of *Otzar ha-Midrashim*, Simeon ben Yohai 6. וְהִצַּרְתִּי לְאָדָם וְהִלְכוּ בְעוֹרִים describes the state of mankind at the eschatological era of world-wide wars. This chapter describes in detail a long history of turmoil and ultimate salvation of Israel and the nations of the world. At one point, after Israel and Jerusalem will be saved, nation will fight nation and city will fight city. People will wander in this chaotic world for three years like the blind, as is written in Zeph 1:17.

The expression חוב קדם describes the Hebrew ליהוה, ‘to sin against God.’ חוב, ‘to be found guilty’ and ‘to be legally bound,’ is used whenever the sinning is against God, expressed in Hebrew by the verbs חטא or פשע (e.g., 2 Sam 14:33; 1 Kgs 8:33; Jer 33:8 [2x]). The addition of ‘before’ creates a distance between man and God, for man’s sins cannot affect God Himself, but only the world outside the divinity. Targum states that the sinners had been found guilty before the punishment was proclaimed.<sup>249</sup>

Concerning וְיִשְׁתַּפֵּיךְ, ‘will be spilled,’ TJ uses *itpe’el*, so it seems, for all passive tenses, not only for the passive of *qal*<sup>250</sup> (e.g., Hos 10:14; Isa 50:1; Jer 4:20, 9:18, 51:8).

The Hebrew לֶחֶם, ‘flesh, meat’ is a rare word found as a noun once more in Job 20:23.<sup>251</sup> Even though its meaning is quite clear, especially when compared to the Arabic, scholars suggest emendations or other interpretations. The difficulty is inherent in the imagery of pouring, spilling or raining meat or flesh (cf Ps 78:27). Scholars therefore look for

<sup>247</sup> So does Peshitta.

<sup>248</sup> There is no consistency in this addition. See, e.g., Isa 2 where ‘sons of’ are added in v. 20 but not in vv. 17 and 22.

<sup>249</sup> On קדם see Klein, “The Preposition קדם,” 502–07.

<sup>250</sup> Cf Ribera, “La versión,” 153.

<sup>251</sup> The appearance of לֶחֶם as a verb in Deut 32:24 reveals the link between this poem and Zephaniah. Even though the meaning there is ‘devoured,’ the famine described concerns the emaciated *bodies*.

part of the body that can be spilled.<sup>252</sup> Others see here a euphemism for ‘bowels, guts’ and so read לְחַם, “their sap of life.”<sup>253</sup>

Targum’s נְבִילָתָא, ‘corpse, carcass,’ is the cognate for the Hebrew נְבִילָה (Jer 7:33, 9:21). This choice of word assumes the meaning of ‘flesh, meat’ the way *Midrash Exodus Rabbah* 42,4 understands it. R. Levi explains Zephaniah’s לְחַם thus: ‘in Arabic בְּשָׂרָא is called לְחֶמָא.’ Moreover, the pair בְּשָׂר וְדָם is a merism where ‘blood’ represents life, soul, and ‘flesh’—the physical form. It is very common in Rabbinic literature with the meaning of a ‘human being.’<sup>254</sup> The choice of ‘corpses’ brings home the ghastly picture of undignified death.

As we have suggested in vv. 7–8, TJ associates that scene to Jehu’s religious and political revolt when he called the priests of the Baal, dressed in distinguished attire, to a holy feast. In our verse another aspect of that revolt may be conjured up, and that is the murder of Queen Jezebel whose carcass (or what remained of it) was literally strewn in the field, devoured by animals fulfilling the prophecy of Elijah. In 2 Kgs 9:37 it is said: ‘And the carcass (נְבִילָה) of Jezebel shall be like dung (כְּדֹמָה) on the ground, in the field of Jezreel, so that none will be able to say: “This was Jezebel.” This gruesome picture portends not only that the wicked sinners will be slaughtered for their religious sins, but

<sup>252</sup> Keller suggests to read לְחַמָּם, ‘their vitality, soul,’ that parallels ‘their blood’ (*Nahoum*, 196). Others, reading לְחַם as “compressed,” suggest the meaning of intestines that the human entrails “will flow forth like excrement” (Szeles, *Wrath*, 88; BDB, 535f; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 449; Lehrman, *The Twelve*, 240; Edler, *Das Kerygma*, 8,17). Similarly, with ‘bowels, intestines’ is Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 103. Van Hoonacker bases his interpretation on LXX and the Arabic لְחַם, ‘to hit someone with a sword; being killed’ (*Les Douze*, 515). An imaginative, yet implausible reading is suggested by Haupt who transposes ‘מ’ and ‘ח’ to read וּלְחַמָּם in lieu of וּלְחַמָּם and so he translates: “ay, their marrow like dung.” He explains מַחֵם on the basis of Job 21:24 and ‘ל’ as emphatic, ‘verily’ (“The Prototype,” 147–51). However, blood is never associated with marrow, but only with flesh, body, e.g., Lev 15:19, 17:14; Deut 12:27; Ezek 39:17, 44:7. The most common emendation is לְחַם (‘their sap,’ Deut 34:7), reading the second ‘מ’ either enclitic or haplographic (Sabottka, *Zephaniah*, 56–58; Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 130; Rudolph, *Micha*, 261,264). Radaq explains that their flesh will be spilled (שָׁפַךְ) like garbage, whereas Altschuler explains that their bodies will be thrown (שָׁלַךְ) everywhere like dung. Incorrectly, Altschuler quotes Hos 9:4, where לְחַמָּם refers to the inappropriate bread that defiles its eaters, and thus renders them impure to enter the Temple.

<sup>253</sup> E.g., Taylor, “Zephaniah,” 1020; Watts, *The Books*, 163; Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, 366 (following Schwalley and Nowack); Horst, in the name of Eitan, reads uniquely וּרְחֵמָהּ in the same meaning (Horst, *Die Zwölf*, 192). However, רָחַם always means ‘a womb’ and it is never described as ‘poured’ or associated with dung. Even if we read רָחַם figuratively as ‘birth,’ the same arguments hold.

<sup>254</sup> E.g., Bawli, *Berakhot* 40a; *Yerushalmi*, *Berakhot* 63a; *Mekhilta*, *beHodesh* 6; *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 6,5, and hundreds more.

also that the prophecy of Zephaniah will be fulfilled. The phrase ‘pour blood’ clearly points to murder (Gen 9:6) and to sacrifice (Lev 17:13). The main difference between the treatment of a slaughtered animal and the prophecy here is that one must pour the blood of the animal *onto* the ground and cover it to prevent defilement of the land, whereas here no such concern is expressed, for the blood is *likened* to the soil in terms of quantity, not reciprocity.

The Hebrew נְבִילָה often refers to animal corpses (e.g., Lev 22:8; 1 Kgs 13:25) that if touched, will render one unclean. This suggests that the human carcasses will be abused by animals, for no man will touch them to give them proper burial.

סְחוּתָא for ‘dung’ already occurs in Isa 5:25 in its Hebrew variations סוּחָה and סְחִי (Lam 3:45). In all other three occurrences of גָּלָל (1 Kgs 14:10; Ezek 4:12,15), TJ uses the same Hebrew word, גָּלָל, ‘excrement.’ The change here is probably influenced by Isa 5:25 where both נְבִילָה and סוּחָה appear. In our verse, גָּלָל would be more appropriate, for סְחוּתָא is more associated with house refuse that is generated by everyday living. Corpses lying in their blood and waste is a very gruesome picture.

Verses 17–18, pertaining to Judah and the nations, allow TJ to vent its wrath on the nations that caused the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and on the exile that brought so much anguish. Now the reversal has occurred, as TJ sees their corpses strewn and their blood spilled like slaughtered animals.

1:18: Neither their silver nor their gold *can* save them on the day of YYY’s anger, and in the fire of His *retribution* all *the wicked* of the land will perish, for He will make a (total) end, *indeed a (decreed) destruction with* all the inhabitants of the land.

Verse 18a constitutes no exegetical problem for commentators. The expression ׀...׀ is a merism to indicate totality (cf 2:14).<sup>255</sup> In our case it conveys the message that no bribe, be it silver or gold or everything in between, would enable the sinners to buy their way out of retribution. This expression is literally translated by TJ. However, whereas MT uses the imperative, ‘(neither their silver nor their gold)

<sup>255</sup> Notice יָחַד in Ps 49:3 that explains this form. Ezekiel echoes Zephaniah in 7:18–19, 36:5 (cf Ps 79:5), 38:19 (also 21:36, 22:21,31).

will not be able (to save them),’ TJ uses the participle, perhaps to note that this is forever true.

רוּגְזָא usually translates any ‘wrath’ in Hebrew such as אַף (e.g., 2:2,3 [3x]; Jer 36:7), עֲבָרָה (above v. 15; Isa 13:9), חֲמָה (Isa 34:2), קֶצֶף (Josh 9:20), רִגְזוּ (Hag 3:2), and כַּעַס (1 Sam 1:6; 1 Kgs 21:22; Ezek 20:28).

The formula ‘the fire of His jealousy/zeal’ expressing God’s attributes takes us back to the Sinai revelation,<sup>256</sup> which is the foundation on which Deuteronomy was composed. The Covenant at Sinai is very much in Zephaniah’s mind and TJ’s. However, there may be three reasons why קִנְיָאָה is not translated as ‘jealousy.’ First, jealousy is a human emotion that cannot be attributed to God. For TJ, the divine attribute of jealousy executes ‘retribution’ (same in 3:8; Isa 63:15; Ezek 23:25, 36:5). Smolar contends that this theological position dismisses God as being “jealous.” Instead, TJ transforms this “jealousy into descriptions of punishment for those who deserve it.”<sup>257</sup> Or in Ribera’s words, פּוֹרְעֵנוּת serves to avoid anthropomorphism when the Hebrew קִנְיָאָה (‘jealousy’) is attributed to God.<sup>258</sup> Second, פּוֹרְעֵנוּת, ‘retribution, trouble,’ here may be influenced by a Rabbinic statement. Bar Kappara, a disciple of Judah the Prince, said that whoever fulfills the tradition of eating three meals on Shabbat will be saved from three פּוֹרְעֵנוּת. One of them is ‘hell’ which is based on יוֹם עֲבָרָה in Zeph 1:15 and 18.<sup>259</sup> On this basis, TJ perceives God’s fire as the fire of hell (can we date this particular translation to the third century?). Third, ‘retribution’ is a fitting response to ‘for they sinned to YHWH’ in the previous verse.

This retribution, TJ reminds us, will fall on ‘the wicked’ alone. This addition allows TJ to refer back to the beginning (v. 2–3) while serving as an opening to the oracle against Judah and the nations. With this addition, TJ leaves the door open for the survivors among Judah and the conversion of other nations, as foreseen in ch. 3. The focus on the ‘wicked’ as the targeted group stems from אֶת־הַרְשָׁעִים וְהַמְכַשְׁלוֹת (v. 3),

<sup>256</sup> God comes down in fire (Exod 19:18; Deut 9:10) and He is a jealous God (Exod 20:4, 34:14; Deut 4:24). Jealousy is the state in which God executes judgment (Num 25:11; Deut 29:19; Isa 42:13; Zech 1:14–15). This state of zeal propels men of God to do the same (Num 25:11,13; 2 Kgs 10:16). It is a consuming state (root אכל). See, e.g., Deut 9:3; Isa 30:27.

<sup>257</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 147.

<sup>258</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 153.

<sup>259</sup> *Bavli, Shabbat* 118a. Rabbi Johanan links Prov 11:4, ‘wealth is of no avail on the day of wrath’ to our verse (*Bavli, Bava Batra* 10a).

where TJ states its position: ‘for the offenses of the wicked have increased.’ Targum’s sense of justice prevails (cf 1:7, 3:8; Ps 145:20).

The change of subject, from ‘the land’ to ‘the wicked of the land,’ forces a change from the feminine single passive ‘(the land) *will be* consumed’ to the masculine plural active ‘(the wicked of the land) *will* perish.’ Since fire does not ‘consume’ people, the verb had to be replaced. The choice of the root סוף rather than אבד (cf 2:5) further evidences TJ’s intent to associate this retribution with the world at large (cf 1:2–3). It is a wordplay on the opening of Zephaniah’s oracles concerning the destruction of the world, אָסַף אָסַף (1:2). There, the emphasis is put on ‘all,’ while here, it falls on the *wicked* of the world. The use of סוף emphasizes the intensity of the retribution.

The second part of the verse presents an expression that has caused problems for commentators.

From its parallel to ‘destruction,’ נְבִהָלָה is understood as another noun rather than as a passive verbal form. Therefore, some read it as בְּהִלָּה after Isa 65:23.<sup>260</sup> Van Hoonacker (p. 515) approaches it in two ways: one, as a statement saying “*la ruine absolument soudaine*” and two, by dividing it into two clauses by using כָּלָה as both verb and noun: “*car il consommera la ruine, la perte soudaine.*” Rudolph (pp. 261, 264), like several others, on the other hand, finds the utterance from וּבִיאַשׁ קִנְאָתוֹ to the end of the verse a gloss, for it changes from first to third person speech.<sup>261</sup>

Zephaniah’s אֲדֹ-נְבִהָלָה כָּלָה, ‘destruction, indeed, sudden terror’ is based on Isaiah’s כָּלָה וְנִחְרָצָה (10:23, 28:22), ‘destruction and that which was decreed.’<sup>262</sup> Zephaniah’s נְבִהָלָה for נִחְרָצָה carries the meaning of both ‘terrifying, alarming’ and ‘hastening, coming suddenly.’<sup>263</sup> This

<sup>260</sup> Radaq; Alchuler; Haupt, “The Prototype,” 149,151. Horst also suggests בְּהִלָּה but without an explanation (*Die Zewölf*, 192).

<sup>261</sup> According to his logic, vv. 14–16 should also be considered a gloss. Also, e.g., Vlaardingerbroeck, *Zephaniah*, 103,113; Renaud, *Michée*, 216–17; Seybold, *Nahum*, 102. On the coherence of v. 18 with v. 17 which validates its authorship, see Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 103–05.

<sup>262</sup> The root חרץ means ‘to cut,’ ‘to decree (a verdict),’ ‘to determine,’ ‘to hasten.’

<sup>263</sup> E.g., Exod 15:15; Ps 48:6. Many commentators, such as Calvin, Deissler and R.L. Smith follow LXX and read here a “hastened, sudden” end. They note that the root בהל in the meaning of ‘to hasten’ is originally Aramaic and appears in late texts (e.g., Qoh 7:9; Esther 2:9, 2 Chron 26:20). Also, the expression עשה כלה את is late (e.g., Jer 5:18; Ezek 11:13; Neh 9:31). John J. Calvin (*Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*; vol. IV; trans. John Owen. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), 227–28; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 448; R.L. Smith, *Micah*, 129; Ben Zvi, *A Historic*, 133. Others choose its older meaning of ‘terrible’ (Ball, *A Rhetoric*, 44; Kapelrud, *The Message*, 105) or



word choice cannot be more pertinent to the prophet's two major messages of terror and nearness.

Targum does not convey any of these meanings, but rather uses the word **שיצאה** to explain and reiterate **גמירא**, 'end, destruction, decision.' It is the exact translation in Isa 10:23 and 28:22, leading to the conclusion that T<sub>J</sub> perceived Zephaniah's **נְבִהָלָה** to have the meaning of **נְחָרְצָה**, 'decreed (end).'

The problematic **אך** is not read as 'but,' but rather as asseverative **אִכֵּן**, 'truly, indeed.' In this way **שִׁיִּצְאָהּ** confirms the total destruction already expressed in **גְּמִירָא**.

Mss F, M,P and S,Q replace 'the inhabitants' with 'the wicked' so as to agree with the earlier statement (v. 18a) that only the sinners will deserve the universal death. This targumic characteristic is reiterated two more times in Zephaniah: 1:3,7. This substitution is very plausibly affected by the previous **רְשִׁיעֵי אֶרֶעָא** in 18a. Nevertheless, since it occurs in three different major groups, it is considered a true variant.

### 3.4 CHAPTER 2

2:1: Gather and *come and come closer*, a nation (of) a generation who does not desire to return to the Torah!

This verse is one of the more difficult verses in the book of Zephaniah in textual and thematic meanings as well as in intent. The first part is made up of two imperatives in *hitpolel* **הִתְקוּשְׁשׁוּ** and *polel* **וְקוּשְׁשׁוּ**, both of the root **קשש** (unlike **אסף אסף** that open ch. 1 but are derived from two different roots). The second part is the identity of the addressee of the command **הַגּוֹי לֹא יִבְקֹשׁ**. The difficulties mostly stem from the "unnatural" association between the roots **קשש**, 'to gather straw/wood,' 'get old' in the first colon and **בסף**, 'to turn pale,' 'to be ashamed,' 'to long for, desire,' 'to turn gray/silver,' 'to overlay with silver' in the second. All agree that the genre is that of exhortation by the repeated imperatives in vv. 1–3, especially the triple call to seek God and His teaching. The exhortation can be seen either as a harsh criticism and

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'be terrified' (Roberts, *Nahum*, 183). Orelli offers both meanings (*The Twelve*, 267). With reservation, Ben Zvi suggests "terror" or "sudden terror," reading **נְבִהָלָה** as a noun. This is justified by Isaiah's similar verbal form **נְחָרְצָה** (*A Historical*, 134).

rejection of an undesired nation, or as stretching out a forgiving, merciful hand to give a certain group a way out of punishment.

Emendations and interpretations abound, often based on other Semitic languages.<sup>264</sup> Some examples: from the Aramaic verb קוּשׁ, ‘to be bent’ and its semantic association with קֶשֶׁת (‘bow’), read ‘bow yourselves’;<sup>265</sup> similarly, from the meaning of ‘to have a crooked or bent back,’ read ‘bow yourselves and bend [your] back’;<sup>266</sup> from קוּשׁ or קישׁ in the meaning of ‘to conform to what is correct,’ read ‘conform to the Law’;<sup>267</sup> the verb should be read from Aramaic קִשִּׁישׁ, ‘old’ and as a verb ‘to become old, wither.’ This leads to the reading of ‘listen to reason and be sensible’;<sup>268</sup> in Hebrew, as the by-form of נִקְשׁ/יִקְשׁ, קוּשׁ means to ‘lay a snare’ as in Isa 29:21, and so read ‘lay snares and be caught in them’;<sup>269</sup> the root is קִשָּׁה (‘hard’), so read “stiffen yourselves and stand firm.”<sup>270</sup> From the Akkadian verb קוּשׁ ‘to consecrate,’ one offers וְקִדְשׁוּ וְקִדְשׁוּ, ‘consecrate yourselves and consecrate’ or from the Arabic קִישׁ, ‘to compare’ and so ‘reflect and compare.’<sup>271</sup> The reading of הִתְבּוֹשְׁשׁוּ וּבּוֹשׁוּ, a double ‘be ashamed,’ is based on the reading of נִכְסָף, in its Arabic בְּסָף, ‘be pale’ and hence, ‘be ashamed.’<sup>272</sup>

As for the second part of the verse, לֹא נִבְכָּרָה, it is commonly interpreted as a further criticism of an “unabashed people,” “unloved, undesired people,” “people who do not desire/long for,” “nation that is not ashamed,” “undisciplined people,” and the like.<sup>273</sup> Some find a connection with Hebrew בְּסָף, ‘silver,’ literally or metaphorically. For

<sup>264</sup> See, e.g., discussions by Stonehouse, *The Books*, 43–44; Roberts, *Nahum*, 186–87, 189; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 450; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 211–13, 221–22; Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 117–18; Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 516–17; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 211–12; Irsigler, *Gottesgericht*, 62; Rudolph, *Micha*, 271–73; Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 114–15.

<sup>265</sup> Haupt, “*Qas*,” 161–63.

<sup>266</sup> Rudolph, *Micha*, 271, 1a-a.

<sup>267</sup> Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 516.

<sup>268</sup> Joseph Lippl, *Das Buch des Propheten Sophonias* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1910), 97–98.

<sup>269</sup> Sabottka, *Zephaniah*, 60.

<sup>270</sup> John Gray, “A Metaphor from Building in Zephaniah II 1,” *VT* 3 (1953): 404–07.

<sup>271</sup> Keller, *Nahoum*, 197.

<sup>272</sup> E.g., S.R. Driver, *The Minor*, 121; Ehrlich, *מקרא כפשוטו*, 458.

<sup>273</sup> Radaq; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 211–13 (directed against the Philistines); Taylor, “Zephaniah,” 1021; RSV; NIV; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah* (The New International Commentary of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 289; Lehrman, *The Twelve*, 240; Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Nahum*, 74; S.R. Driver, *The Minor*, 121; Roberts, *Nahum*, 185–87; Renaud, *Michée*, 216; Marti, *Das Dodekapropheten*, 368.

example, the people are ‘worthless,’ ‘they do not coin/pound silver’ or ‘they are so unbroken’ (in spirit).<sup>274</sup>

Some emendations are suggested: **לֹא נִכְפָּס** ‘without cohesion,’ based on LXX’s ἀπαίδευτον, (‘bound’) in the first colon, even though such a verb does not exist in Hebrew;<sup>275</sup> **לֹא נוֹסָר**, ‘undisciplined,’ which is also Peshitta’s reading;<sup>276</sup> **לֹא נֶאֱסַף**, ‘straw not gathered,’ parallel to the previous colon.<sup>277</sup>

Most commentators identify the ‘nation, people’ as Judah who is here chastised and demeaned. Its occurrence within the context of Judah (1:2–2:3) calls for this identification. However, as noted above, J.M.P. Smith identifies the subject with the Philistines as part of the lengthy oracle against them.

Another difficulty lies in the missing object of **לֹא נִכְפָּס**: For whom do they not long? By whom are they undesired? In what are they undisciplined? Often, the answers are found in the context of theology: They do not long for God and His Torah, God desires them no more.<sup>278</sup>

The verse poses problems for Tj, too, problems whose solutions are found in theological exegesis. The double **קָשַׁשׁ** in the first colon is translated by three different verbs: **כָּנַשׁ**, **אָתָּא** and **קָרַב**. Targum imitates the reflexive (*hitpa’el*) and the *polel* form and adds another *hitpa’el*, which may suggest either emphasis or a conflation of two versions. Targum offers a Rabbinical exegetical translation in which the purpose of the gathering is clearly for communal repentance by fasting and praying in a cultic setting.<sup>279</sup> The goal of the gathering is to persuade God to avert His decree (vv. 2–3). The verb **כָּנַשׁ** becomes associated with gathering for religious purposes, hence **בֵּית כְּנֻסָּתָא** for ‘synagogue.’ The double *hitpa’el* **אֲתִכְנִישׁוּ** and **אֲתִקְרַבוּ** points to a call for self motivation. The

<sup>274</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve*, 511, *Zephaniah*, 110,115; Rudolph, *Micha*, 271, 1b; Seybold, *Nahum*, 102.

<sup>275</sup> Gray following Sellin, Cheyne and Graetz (“A Metaphor,” 404–07). There is no such verb in the HB either in Hebrew or Aramaic. The noun **כָּפִיס**, ‘a wooden beam,’ occurs only in Hab 2:11. Aramaic **כָּפִיס** means ‘a tie, a knot.’ However, Aramaic **כָּסַף** means ‘be ashamed’ (e.g., Tg Ps 35:4).

<sup>276</sup> Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 517. He interprets the verse in terms of conforming to the Law.

<sup>277</sup> H.L. Ginsberg, “Some Emendations in Isaiah,” *JBL* 69 (1950): 57, note 5. He contends that **לֹא** was originally **הִגַּל** (Aramaic *gel/gilla* = straw).

<sup>278</sup> Kauffmann wonders if a ‘ל’ is missing and thus reads **הַגּוֹי לְאֵל נִכְפָּס**, ‘the nation who longs for God’ (*תולדות*, 352).

<sup>279</sup> The context and the triple imperatives are very similar to Tg Est 4:16. There, instead of the MT **לֵךְ בָּנוּס**, ‘go, gather,’ Tg renders ‘go, leave, gather.’ Bernard Grossfeld, *The First Targum to Esther* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1983), 21.

triple action verbs ‘gather, come and come closer’ in the imperative emphasize the intent to reach and motivate as many people as possible, as well as an urgency that is further expanded in the next two verses.<sup>280</sup> Targum lacks the mockery and debasement that are implicit in the Hebrew, and instead exhibits a concern for the well-being of Israel.

Targum’s call for self-motivation is based on the Rabbinic exegesis of this strophe (see Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Radaq, Abrabanel and Altschuler) retained in a variant in Codex Reuchlinianus (ms f<sub>7</sub>): ‘accept reproof and reprove (others).’ There are several lessons the Rabbis learned from the *hitpolel* (passive) and the *polel* (active) of **וְהִתְקַוְּשׁוּ וְקוּשׁוּ**, and by reading **קִשְׁט** (‘truth’ in Aramaic) rather than the verb **קִשְׁשׁ** (‘to gather’). One of them is a basic teaching concerning the need to search first for one’s own truth before correcting others, or to take responsibility before demanding the same from others. Similar is the teaching that one should verify the truth before jumping to conclusions and that one should take stock of one’s own failures before blaming others. This formulaic teaching (in two variations) is attributed to both Rabbi Josiah and Rabbi Resh Lakish and is applied to several cases.<sup>281</sup>

This teaching is brought in support of the *Mishnah*’s statement (*Bavli, Sanhedrin* 18a) that a High Priest may judge and may be judged. Says Resh Lakish: First correct yourself and then correct others. From this it follows that only a person who is subject to correction may correct others. Thus, considering that a High Priest may judge others, it is obvious that he may be judged. The same ruling applies to a Davidic king (*ibid.*, 19a).

In *Tosefta, Sanhedrin* 18b the basic teaching above is reinforced by the statement that an Israelite king is not permitted to sit in the Sanhedrin (the Jewish Legislature), for since we cannot judge a king, he cannot judge others.<sup>282</sup>

In another case a man refused to clear a path on his property along a river. His reaction was: ‘Let the owners of the upper and lower parts of the forest cut (a path) and then I shall do likewise,’ to which Resh Lakish retorted: ‘Do your part first, then request the others to do the

<sup>280</sup> See Joel 4:11. Ribera finds here a gradual ascent in order to interpret the repeated Hebrew radicals, which Tg usually avoids doing (“La versión,” 154).

<sup>281</sup> E.g., *Bavli, Bava Metz'ia* 107b.

<sup>282</sup> This source does not mention the author of the teaching. The question remains whether or not the Hasmonean kings, or anyone since, is considered an “Israelite king.”

same (*Bavli, Bava Metzia*, 107b. A slightly different version is told in *Bava Batra*, 60b).

Even though these Rabbis lived in the 3rd century, it is not evident that the source for this interpretation of **הַתְּקוּשָׁיו וְקוּשָׁיו** did not reflect an earlier tradition.

The second part of the verse receives a midrashic translation as well: A nation (of) *a generation who* does not desire to return to the Torah!<sup>283</sup> Targumist's implied audience is any generation in the past, present or future, upon whom the retribution will fall; but more so to his own generation. The missing object for desire in the MT is filled in by the Law, for TJ, as the prophet, sees the only chance for salvation to be through a willing passion to return to the source of life. As Churgin has noted, TJ gives the Torah prominence in the Prophetic books. Nouns or verbs associated with knowledge, ways of behavior, faithfulness or trust in God are understood in the context of Torah.<sup>284</sup>

To refute TJ's theology, Zamora, the scribe of Ms W, makes sure that the text refers to Israel alone, and not to any generation. He then reads **הָדָא (עַמָּא)**, 'this people,' with an emphasis on 'this.' This change portrays the Jews *at any time* as rejecting God's teaching.<sup>285</sup>

A perplexing change is found in several mss (M,A,U,Y and S,N) where **ע** replaces **ם**, two common words. At first glance it seems to be a clear case of misvocalization. The usual preposition that goes with the verb **קרב** in the *hitpa'el* is **לְ-לֵא** in both Hebrew and Aramaic. However, its persistence in the two groups with no overt affinity within or outside them forces a second look into a possible interpretative value. If indeed there is such value, the call for the unclear audience may be interpreted as a call for the righteous to join in with those who do not wish to walk in the path of Torah. The scribe theorizes that the righteous could affect the attitude of the strayers by either action or role-modeling. The question mark in the next verse concerning the

<sup>283</sup> Gordon posits that the addition of Aramaic **-ךְ** is "possibly to limit the extent of the judgement being pronounced" (*Targum*, 168). This is also Sweeney's interpretation that TJ ascribes to only the wrongdoers (*Zephaniah*, 115). It should be noted that the verb is a participle.

<sup>284</sup> Churgin, *Targum*, 350–51. I fail to see in TJ of this verse a concept in which "Israel forsaking the Torah ceases to be God's people." TJ Hos 1:9 *may* suggest this. See TJ Zech 2:16, 9:16 and Gordon, *Studies*, 130–31. Gerleman finds in **נכסף** a targumic characteristic reproach to return to the Law (*Zephaniah*, 24). He offers no explanation or citations.

<sup>285</sup> The later ms O of 1569/73 repeats this version, as Ms W served as one of its basic mss. Ms O originated in the same cleric milieu as that of Ms W.

‘possibility’ of divine protection (אולי) is here explained. It concerns those who are given the chance to repent. The reading ‘with’ instead of ‘people’ also eliminates the putative duplication of ‘the *people* of the *generation*.’ Since this variant occurs only in Western mss, it is safe to suggest a European origination.

In saying ‘to return to the Torah,’ TJ evinces that its generation has distanced itself from Judaism. Especially in mind is Hellenism led by the Sadducees in the 1st century BCE–1st century CE.

The use of חָמַד expresses the strong spiritual and emotional passion with which to seek God. This root expresses also the inner joy that such strong passion evokes, as well as the negative emotion of coveting. Targum could use other verbs for ‘desire,’ such as רָעַי, רָגַג, רָעַי, אָוִי, and בָּעִי, but these could not capture the passion of zeal and joy, nearly ecstasy, the way חָמַד does.<sup>286</sup> In its emotive intensity, חָמַד is associated with the Aramaic רָגַשׁ of 1:7 where the people are portrayed as congregating in excitement to worship idols.

The translation of this verse evokes a deep concern for the translator’s generation lest they again ignore Zephaniah’s message. At the same time it gives comfort in the belief that God is patient and allows the non-righteous time to repent. This generosity is spelled out in the next verse. Yet, the time is pressing.

2:2: Before the decree of the Court issues upon you, and you shall be like chaff from a threshing place that the wind carries away, and like dew that passes from before the day; before the power of the wrath of YYY will come upon you; before the day of the wrath of YYY will come upon you,

This verse in the MT has difficulties in syntax that cloud its meaning. It is divided into three parts by the opening word בְּטָרָם, ‘before.’ 51 out of 56 occurrences of טָרָם in the HB is followed by a verb in the imperfect. It is usually translated as ‘before, not yet.’ Out of these, 35 cases have an added temporal morpheme, בְּטָרָם, which usually incurs the same translation. However, our verse has two anomalous syntactical

<sup>286</sup> Since the verb כָּסַף does not appear in the Prophets, we cannot verify its use by TJ. However, the synonymous Hebrew root חָמַד is translated either by the verb חָמַד (e.g., Isa 1:29; Mic 2:2) or רָגַג (e.g., Josh 7:21; 1 Kgs 20:6; Ezek 24:16,25). The Hebrew verb כָּסַף is translated by TO by the verb חָמַד (Gen 31:30) and in the Writings—by the verb רָגַג (Ps 17:12, 84:3; Job 14:15). The Hebrew noun חֲמֻדָּה, ‘pleasure, joy,’ is always translated by TJ with חֲמֻדָּתָא (e.g., Ezek 26:12; Hos 13:15; Nah 2:10).

structures: one, the first בְּטָרָם is followed by an infinitive construct לָדַת, ‘birthing,’ without its infinitive marker ל. <sup>287</sup> Two, the next two בְּטָרָם are followed by the negative לא plus an imperfect. Furthermore, חַק never comes with the imagery of birth. Contextually, what is the connection between the birth/creation of the Law with chaff, time, divine anger, or an undesiring nation?

There have been countless of attempts to explain the text. The first part (v. 2a) has evoked highly imaginative textual emendations that defy Hebrew linguistics or logic. <sup>288</sup> Some corrections recreate לא plus second person plural such as לא תִדְחֶקוּ and לא תִרְחֶקוּ, <sup>290</sup> or add the verb ‘to be,’ לא תְהִי־וּ <sup>291</sup> and לא תְהִי לְדַק. <sup>292</sup> To force an infinitive, the short clause is “restored” to read בַּטָּרָם לִרְדַת חַלֵּק. <sup>293</sup> Another prefers בְּטָרָם <sup>294</sup> לא תִדְקֶכֶם כְּמוֹץ עֲבָרָה which pulverizes the syntax and the content, and reshuffles, adds and invokes letters remote from the MT. The reconstruction בְּטָרָם יִלְדוּ/יִלְדוּ יוֹם, נִדְקוּ כְּמוֹץ עֲבָרָה attempts to respect the text <sup>295</sup> and computes with Biblical syntax and phraseology (cf Prov 27:1; Isa 28:28, 29:5). <sup>296</sup>

<sup>287</sup> A similar structure is found once more in Hag 2:15 מִטָּרָם שׁוֹם in the meaning of ‘long before placing.’

<sup>288</sup> See, e.g., the survey by Barthélemy, *Critique*, 886–87; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 213, 222; Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 518; Gerleman, *Zephaniah*, 25–26; Irsigler, *Gottesgericht*, 62–64; Rudolph, *Micha*, 271–72; Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 115–18; Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 143–44.

<sup>289</sup> BHS and Roberts, *Nahum*, 188. ‘Before you are driven away’ finds support from Arabic but דחַק in the meaning of “to drive away” does not exist in Hebrew. The verb דחַק appears in the HB only twice. Even if we accept the readings ‘before you are not crowded’ (cf Joel 2:8), or ‘before you are not oppressed’ (cf Judg 2:18), neither fits the following phrase. The verb דחַק, according to Joel, describes a situation contrary to walking on a straight path in an orderly fashion. If we associate this reading with ‘gather together’ in v. 1a, logic will require the omission of ‘not.’ The second reading, according to Judges, would require the same, and its context would be even more untenable.

<sup>290</sup> Horst, *Die Zwiölf*, 192. רחַק is understood in the meaning of ‘be removed, taken away.’

<sup>291</sup> E.g., Peshitta; Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, 368.

<sup>292</sup> “Before ye become fine dust” (J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 213, 222).

<sup>293</sup> “Bevor die Feldflur zertrampelt ist” (‘Before the arable (land) is trampled down?’). Seybold, *Nahum*, 102.

<sup>294</sup> “avant que ne vous pulvérisé, comme de la menue paille, la colère” (Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 518). How can fine straw pulverize anything, let alone people?

<sup>295</sup> Stonehouse, *The Books*, 45. This is my Hebrew reconstruction based on “Before the day brings forth (or is brought forth), we shall be pulverized like passing chaff.” It is more likely to look for a second person plural תִדְקוּ rather than a first person plural נִדְקוּ.

<sup>296</sup> There are more contact points between Isa 28–29 and Zephaniah as noted in the analysis of 1:17.

The anomalous **בְּטָרָם לֵדָת** has to be understood as a veridical statement in which the prophet asseverates that indeed his message shall come. This intent is well captured by Ibn Ezra who explains: **בטרם בא יבא העתיד**.<sup>297</sup> It is not surprising to find this syntactical structure and intent in Zephaniah that shows a strong affinity with Isaiah. Isaiah 17:14 and 28:4 have already been mentioned. The pericope of Isa 17:13–18:7 is an inspiration for Zephaniah, especially relevant to our verse is 17:13.<sup>298</sup> In Isa 7:16 and 8:4 a similar syntactical structure in which the opening three words are the same (**בטרם ידע הנער**) followed by the infinitive construct **מָאָס** and **קָרָא** respectively. The last two verses are associated with the birth of a child.

Literally, the first verset reads, ‘Before the issuance of law/command, like chaff a day has passed.’ LXX and Peshitta tend to simplify the text. LXX’s ‘Before you become like a passing flower’ is picked up by Peshitta, ‘Before you become like a passing chaff.’ The Vulgate tries to make sense of all the words by ‘Before judgment comes forth like dust passing (in a) day.’

Targum not only employs all the Hebrew words, but it offers two distinct midrashic similes. In its rendition it captures the prophet’s intent of the veridical use of **בְּטָרָם**. All three **בְּטָרָם** are associated with God: the decree issued from the divine court, the strength of God’s anger, and the day of God’s anger. This iterant warning combined with two heavy reminders, ‘decree’ and ‘might, force,’ add weight to the seriousness and imminence of the prophecy. Those who do not desire to return to Torah should better take heed. As in its translation of v. 1, here, too, TJ alludes to the generosity and patience of God in withholding punishment.

The syntactical problem concerns the subject in v. 2a: is it **חֹק**, ‘the law, decree’ or **יוֹם**, ‘day’? Radaq offers two ways to read the clause: one attaches ‘day’ to the ‘decree’ (‘before the decree of the day is born’) and the other attaches ‘day’ to the ‘birth, issuance’ (‘before the day [in which] the decree is born’). Reading the complete translation of v. 2a, it is clear that **לֵדָת חֹק**, ‘the issuance of the decree,’ is the subject

<sup>297</sup> In her recent article, Galia Hatav has reached the same conclusion. She also notes that **בטרם**, unlike **לפני**, “may be complemented only by clauses” and unlike **בטרם** + infinitive, the infinitive construct **לֵדָת** is considered a nominal as in **בטרם בקר** (Isa 17:14) and **בטרם קיץ** (Isa 28:4). “The Modal Nature of **טָרָם** in Biblical Hebrew,” *Hebrew Studies* XLVII (2006): 40–41,47.

<sup>298</sup> Cf Isa 17:14 with Zeph 1:18, 3:3,5 and Isa 18:1,7 with Zeph 3:10.



and central focus, to which all other parts of the verse are related. The ‘day’ is employed as an adverbial clause in the simile plus a definite article that may suggest a double function: the day as sunrise and the Day in its theological intent.

The verb that comes with גזירה, ‘decree,’ in almost all cases is גזר<sup>299</sup> and not יצא (in Aramaic נפק). When יצא is related to גזירה, it is usually associated with בַּת קוֹל, the divine comforting voice.<sup>300</sup> The use of נפק, ‘come out,’ responds to the Hebrew לָדַת, ‘be born.’ It is used to describe the birth of a child (Gen 17:6, 25:25; Isa 39:7) or the issuance of a law in the late Biblical period (Dan 2:13). By using both ‘court’<sup>301</sup> and גזירא+נפק TJ makes its point: between the issuance of the decree and its execution, a small window of time exists. Though God is willing to wait for the non-righteous to repent, He is also willing to issue punishment. The decree will be declared by His messenger’s voice. It can be averted if they return to Torah.

One may opine that the Targumist read לָדַת, ‘for law/judgment,’ rather than לָבֵא, ‘to bear.’ In this way the decree is emphasized, on the one hand, to link with the role of the divine decree in the book, and on the other, to point to the following threat of what will become of the people if they remain passive.<sup>302</sup> However, the syntactical structure of לָדַת בְּטָרָם defies the Hebrew language and does not advance clarity. It does not produce the desired conclusion the prophet and the Targumist wish their audience to draw. As noted above, in the majority of cases בְּטָרָם is followed by a verb, but can also be followed by an absolute state.<sup>303</sup>

In the Hebrew, the phrase כְּמִזְ עֵבֶר יוֹם may present another syntactical problem in which the subject is uncertain. If the chaff is the subject, then the verb is read in the participle, ‘like chaff passing in a day.’ But chaff is not described in association with ‘day,’ but rather with wind and storm (e.g., Isa 29:5–6, 41:15–16; Ps 1:4). If day is the subject, then it would read ‘like chaff, a day is passing.’ Both chaff and day symbolize impermanency. There may be here a conflation of two

<sup>299</sup> E.g., *Bavli, Yoma*, 11a; *Tanhuma* (Warsaw), *Bo* 9.

<sup>300</sup> E.g., *Midrash Deuteronomy Rabbah* (Margalioth) 8,1.

<sup>301</sup> Usually the divine court in Rabbinic literature is called either ‘the Great Court’ (e.g., *Midrash Deuteronomy Rabbah* 11,10) or ‘the Upper Court’ (e.g., *Bavli, Temurah* 3b).

<sup>302</sup> Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 117.

<sup>303</sup> Onkelos and P<sup>s</sup>J make no differentiation between טרם and בטרם. Both are translated by the negative phrase לא עד. In one case (Exod 1:19) P<sup>s</sup>J conflates two equivalents, קדם עד לא.

variants from Isaiah: כָּמֶזְזַח הַרִים (17:13) and כָּמֶזְזַח עֵבֶר (29:5) resulting in כָּמֶזְזַח עֵבֶר יוֹם.<sup>304</sup>

Targum solves the difficulty in כָּמֶזְזַח עֵבֶר יוֹם by separating ‘chaff’ from ‘day’ and so offering two parallel analogies for ephemeral existence: ‘Chaff’ is put into its milieu of wind and threshing places, while ‘day’ is clarified as the early morning hours *before* sunrise when dew evaporates. Alternatively, but unlikely, the two analogies to chaff and dew may indicate a conflation of two variants. No evidence for this is found in Rabbinic literature.

Sweeney finds here a targumic play on the roots מוּצַץ/מוּצָא, “to suck dry,” which refers to water or plants, alluding to both chaff and dew.<sup>305</sup> However, there is no Hebrew root מוּצָא. Chaff and dew are two paradigms for temporal elements linked to בְּטָרָם, another temporal marker. It is more likely that an associative thought resulted from a link between מוּצָא and מוּצָא, an appellation for the East, where the sun rises in the morning (e.g., Ps 75:7), and hence the addition of another simile for an ephemeral phenomenon, the dew, that evaporates as the sun rises. This associative thought is tied in with TJ’s source for the two additions, Hos 13:3.

The repetitive nature of v. 2b has caused confusion by some scribes who omit one part or the other. Mss U,Y omit the first part whereas Mss P,C omit the second part. Only Ms F shows a better simile, דָּמָן לְמוּצָא, ‘(you shall) resemble chaff’ rather than the common דָּמָן לְכִמוּצָא in which the particle כִּי is superfluous to fit the paralleled וּכְטוֹלָא.

Four similes occur in Hos 13:3 where apart from the three similes for ephemeral phenomena, dew, chaff from the threshing place/floor (אֵידָרָא) and smoke, a fourth one is evoked, that of the morning cloud. These four paradigms seem to be prophetic formulas for fleeting elements such as life or even righteousness (cf Isa 17:13, 18:4, 29:5, 41:15–16; Hos 6:4; also cf Ps 1:4, 35:5, 110:3; Job 21:18; Prov 19:12). The unique אֵידָרָא in our ms evidences the personal initiative of the initiating scribe to conform even closer to the inspirational source of Hos 13:3. Except for Ms H, the putative source of Ms V, אֵידָרָא is missing in all other mss, in Rashi and in Radaq.

<sup>304</sup> Roberts, *Nahum*, 189. He does not explain the change from הַרִים to יוֹם and whether “MT” means the prophet or a later editor.

<sup>305</sup> Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 117. More accurate is to find the synonym for מוּצַץ in מוּצָא rather than in מוּצָא (e.g., Judg 6:38).

The addition of similes is a targumic trait found also in Isa 57:13. Here, the prophet states that none will save the evildoers, for ‘the wind will carry them all, vanity (will) take them.’ Targum renders: ‘And the wind will carry them all, they *will be like* vanity.’ A further link with Isa 57:13 is noted later in Zeph 3:5 and 12.

The parallel simile for ‘chaff’ is טלא, ‘dew.’ Dew evaporates at sunrise. The factor of early morning is also relevant to the earnestness of the call to repent which is expressed by the triple ‘before, unless’ and לְדָת that symbolizes beginning. It is also relevant to the justice meted out in the early hours of the morning, for as the dew is a natural phenomenon that occurs daily, so is God’s justice and reliability (3:5).

However, ‘dew’ is not the most common variant (it occurs only in Mss H,V, and perhaps in the unpointed Ms S and the odd וּבְטֵלָא in Ms Y), rather, טולא, ‘shadow, shade’ is. However, ‘shadow’ disappears at *sunset* (cf Jer 6:4)! This metaphor vitiates the intent and intensity of the message concerning the eleventh hour. To reconcile this contradiction, one might perceive the simile as expressing a merism, the totality of the day: from the morning activity of threshing chaff to the night phenomenon of fading shadows.<sup>306</sup> But for what reason? The time is running out!

Since טולא appears in most mss, in Palestinian F, Yemenite Z,J,E, Ashkenazi T,M,U,P and Sepharadi S,N,Q,W, as well as being quoted by Rashi and Radaq, it must have originated in Palestine. טולא was originally written טלא but with no vowels. The confusion began when the deficiently-written טלא was misread as טלא, still in the early stages of transmission. Even though ‘shadow’ never parallels ‘dew’ or ‘chaff,’<sup>307</sup> the metaphors took hold since they both represent ephemeral and daily phenomena.<sup>308</sup> And in this state of Targumic alternatives, TJ passed to the East and to the West as legitimate variants.

A third variant, וּבְתַנְנָא, developed in Europe sometime after TJ received its redaction in Babylonia. ‘Smoke’ was initiated by one scribe under the influence of Hos 13:3 where ‘smoke’ and ‘chaff’ parallel. Moreover, since תַנְנָא also means ‘cloud’ and since it occurs also in Hos 13:3, it served well to place the ‘morning cloud’ within the meta-

<sup>306</sup> This explanation is espoused by Ribera saying that ‘passing shadow’ describes יוֹם עֶבֶר יוֹם ‘passing day,’ namely, the evening, עֶרֶב through the transposition in עֶבֶר (“La versión,” 154).

<sup>307</sup> Rudolph also insists on ‘dew’ rather than ‘shadow’ for it so appears in the London Polyglot (*Micha*, 272, 2b).

<sup>308</sup> As a metaphor for impermanence it parallels, among others, grass (Ps 102:12), breath (Ps 144:4) and locust (Ps 109:23).

phor of sunrise, when it dissipates with the heat of the day.<sup>309</sup> The European roots of תננא are evident in the Ashkenazi tradition (Mss A,R, in the margin of Ms T as ‘another version’ and in Rashi) as well as in the Sepharadi, for Radaq knows it as ‘another version’ (perhaps from Rashi).

Rashi explains כמץ עבר as short for ‘like chaff that passes before (the) wind and like smoke that passes before the sun’ and states this is the meaning of עבר יום. He then quotes TJ that translates as he explains: ‘You will be like chaff that the wind *blew into it*, and like *smoke* that passes from before the day,’ namely, before sunset. He further notes that another version has ‘like shadow’ instead of ‘like smoke.’ The plus of ביה (‘into it’) is absent in all other mss examined here but appears in mss B,G and Radaq (again, probably taken from Rashi).

Radaq quotes TJ in a combination of Rashi and the mss: ‘And you shall be like chaff that the wind *blew into it*, and like *shadow* that passes from before the day,’ that is, because of the sun. He then notes another version, ‘and like smoke that passed from before the day’ without referring to Rashi.

Ashkenazi Ms P and Sepharadi Ms C show an added (רוחא) מן קדם. If intentionally added, then the ‘wind’ may be interpreted as the divine spirit that is associated with the ‘divine decree.’ Perhaps it is an allusion to the primordial God’s spirit (רוח) that is described by TO as ” מן קדם ” מנשבא רוחא מן קדם. Taken literally, the chaff is portrayed as ‘blowing from before the wind.’ Likewise, the added phrase may have been made to parallel with ‘from before the day’ without taking into consideration the change in the imagery. If the phrase was added out of haplography (the most likely scenario), then the next (”ומא) מן קדם served as the trigger for the mistake.

In the translation of v. 2a we see multiple targumic techniques and dynamics in action which evidence not only exegetical concerns but perhaps a redactional hand where conflation of traditions may have taken place as well.<sup>310</sup> The end result is multiple equivalents stimulated by enigmatic words and structures in the source text.

<sup>309</sup> Cf בענן בקר Hos 6:4, 13:3.

<sup>310</sup> On the many targumic techniques and categories see, e.g., Willem Smelik, “Concordance and Consistency: Translation Studies and Targum Jonathan,” *JTS* 49 (1998), 245–60 and the bibliography there.

All the above targumic elements heighten the urgency of time. Because human life is but a speck in time, man must choose wisely. God is willing to wait, but not for too long.

The second part of the verse is prosaic and superfluous. The phrase **חַרְוֹן אֶף** is in itself tautological, delineating ‘a great anger,’ which is reflected in TJ’s consistent addition of ‘strength’ to ‘anger’ (see, e.g., 3:8; Jer 4:8; Hos 11:9. Also Zeph 1:4). Moreover, the Targumic propensity to distance God from man is shown here by adding a ‘power’ that will emanate from God, rather than wrath emanating God Himself. By analogy as is typical of Talmudic homiletics, one might parallel **חַרְוֹן** to **יוֹם** and look for a lesson to be learned. Since the ‘day’ is the object and the means of divine delivery, **חַרְוֹן** is interpreted in a like manner, that is, divine power.

2:3: seek the *fear* of YYY, all the humble of the land who have done the laws of His *will*; seek *truth*, seek humility, perhaps you will be *protected* on the day of wrath of YYY.

In terms of grammar or syntax, the verse is clear. The discussion revolves around the identification of **עֲנִי הָאָרֶץ** and the theological questions. If they are the righteous, who have been committed to God’s Law, why do they have to continue to seek God and why is their divine protection questionable? None of the versions answer these questions. LXX eliminates the doubt of ‘perhaps,’ skips the second ‘seek!’ and changes from **עֲנוּה** to **עֲנוּם**. It reads: ‘Do the law *and* seek justice and respond to them, so that you shall be hidden.’ The Vul reads literally except for the last clause: ‘*whether anyone* will be hidden.’ Peshitta turns the verse into an evangelical call to ‘Seek *Him*, the Lord, all of *you*, the humble of the land *and do* the law *and* seek justice *and* humility.’

Targum attempts to address the theological problems by offering several ways to avoid the wrath of God even as the uncertainty is unavoidable. To seek the *fear* (see 1:6) or the *worship* of God (TJ Jer 50:4) is TJ’s way to show reverence and to avoid anthropomorphism. But more, it is perhaps TJ’s way to teach that true adherence to God’s Law is a deeper perception of His essence (has this been missing from the faithful?). This point is repeated in the call to seek Truth (instead of ‘justice’). One should look into what is behind the written word of the Law.<sup>311</sup>

<sup>311</sup> Is there an allusion to the two exegetical means of **רְמוּז** (allusion) and **סוּד** (secret)?

עָנָוִים is defined in terms of character (also Isa 61:1 and similarly 29:19), though in Amos 2:7 and Isa 11:4 it is a social class, the poor—הַשִּׁכְיָא. In 3:12 TJ interprets the expression עָנִי וְדָל not as ‘poor and few people’ but ‘a humble people who submits to humiliation/reproach.’ ‘Humility’ may indicate submission and obedience<sup>312</sup> in contrast to God’s ‘protection’ that comes from above. It points to lowliness versus height (root גָּדַל [cf 2:8] and גָּאוּה [3:11]). Thus TJ teaches the reassessment of how one should perceive God to escape His wrath on the Day of judgment.

Usually TJ translates מִשְׁפָּט as ‘judgment,’ דִּין, and often ‘judgment of truth’ (Jer 7:5; Ezek 45:9; Mic 6:8) as though written מִשְׁפָּט צְדָק (Isa 1:21). The usual translation of צְדָק is ‘truth’ (Isa 11:4, 16:5; Jer 11:20; Hos 2:21). In another Aramaic translation from *Pesikta Rabbati*<sup>313</sup> the verse is translated exegetically using participles for the imperatives: ‘Seek YHWH’ is explained as those ‘who are seeking the ways of the King of the Universe’; ‘seek justice’ is explained as those ‘who are doing the truth’ (the same reading as TJ); and ‘seek humility’ as those ‘who are walking humbly before the Master of the Universe.’<sup>314</sup> ‘Those who have observed His Law’ are also rendered as those ‘who are doing justice.’ The definition of character is expressed in both targumim, but the *Pesikta* is more didactic and uses different ways to show reverence to God. It reaffirms the existence of righteous people among the Jewish community in every generation and offers a further hope by adding, ‘furthermore, there is a scripture that refers to them.’ ‘Perhaps... God’ is read as a reward (probably a heavenly reward is meant, too) stating that God ‘is going to prepare their graves before the time/hour of wrath’ comes. ‘Perhaps’ is stripped of its faint doubt. In both TJ and the *Pesikta* the emphasis on the nature of the righteous is focused on their behavior in the observance of God’s Laws. The right action safeguards divine protection in times of distress.

Another didactic lesson is proposed through the clarification of the nature of the Law. רְעוּא or רְעוּתָא means either ‘will, desire’ or ‘delight, pleasure’ (see 1:12b). This addition reflects the idea that God willed His laws to Israel, an element in the theology of chosenness. God acts according to His wish and delight.<sup>315</sup> Many of the prayers in the

<sup>312</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 154.

<sup>313</sup> Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, *Fragments of Lost Targumim* (Part I, II. Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, [1983], 1989), 30–31.

<sup>314</sup> This seems to be influenced by Mic 6:8 וְהִצַּנַּע לְכַת עִם־אֱלֹהֵיךָ.

<sup>315</sup> E.g., Isa 60:10; Pss 30:6,8, 51:20.

daily liturgy reflect this concept. For example, in the *Amidah* prayer one prays that one's prayers and worship be accepted with divine pleasure because *Shabbat* was granted to Israel with divine pleasure.<sup>316</sup> The use of רְעוּאָ may, then, allude to prayers as a means to ensure divine protection. In 1:12b TJ castigates those who deny this divine attribute and theology.

Targum renders the prophetic understanding of 'hiding' as divine protection by using רְתַגְּנָ, root גַּנָּ (see TJ Jer 36:26). The *Shekhinah* is the divine protecting attribute (Hos 13:14).<sup>317</sup> The common Aramaic verb for סָתַר is טַמַּר (Isa 28:15; Jer 23:24; Amos 9:3) or סָתַר (Isa 49:2; Jer 16:17). The righteous cannot rescind God's decree; they can only find shelter when He unleashes His wrath. Good deeds will protect the righteous when God renews His Covenant with Israel (TJ Zech 8:4).<sup>318</sup>

The ways to avoid the wrath of God are not certain, but one should nevertheless attempt to deepen one's perception of God's fear, to be humble in character, to continue performing God's Law, to do good deeds, and to seek the truth. When man does what is right on earth, his protection from above may be secured. One cannot determine one's own destiny.

The phrase מַא אַם in Ms V translates the Hebrew אֲוֹלִי in all its occurrences in the Twelve (Hos 8:7; Amos 5:15; Jon 1:6).<sup>319</sup> It also occurs in the Ashkenazi mss U,R. However, its Hebrew equivalent מַה אַם constitutes a ubiquitous expression within the context of *qal va'homer* (how much so) in all Palestinian sources (e.g., *Sifra*, *Shemini* 10,3 and 4; *Yerushalmi*, *Sukkah* 4a; *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 12,17) in the meaning of 'what if, what about, if you say, as...so.' At the same time, its elided form מַאִים occurs in all the Sepharadi mss and in three Ashkenazi mss.<sup>320</sup> It is clear, then, that the influence of the Hebrew מַה אַם determined its Aramaic form מַא אַם, and that both morphologies of the Palestinian מַא אַם and the Babylonian מַאִים reached European Jews in two separate temporal transmissions.<sup>321</sup> The Yemenite tradition has retained the ancient form.

<sup>316</sup> *Siddur Sim Shalom*, 434–36, 440. A variety of prayers open with 'may it be Your will/desire before You...' In one *Akdamut* the worshipers state that 'we will do Your will/desire in all the places' (p. 528). See also p. 238 above.

<sup>317</sup> On the *Shekhinah*, see discussion on 3:5 below.

<sup>318</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 168, note 12.

<sup>319</sup> As well as in the Former Prophets (e.g., Josh 14:12; 2 Sam 14:15) and the Samaritan Gen 18:28,29. Tal, *The Language*, 56.

<sup>320</sup> And exclusively in Onkelos.

<sup>321</sup> Cf the similar deduction by Tal, *The Language*, 56,58,215.

A theological slant by Zamora (Ms W) changes TJ to read ‘Perhaps He protected (תִּגַּן) you on YHWH’s Day...’ rejecting the possibility of protection in the future. The passive tense תִּגַּן is difficult within the Aramaic syntax. The subject in the MT is the second-person-plural righteous who might be protected (the verb is in the passive tense) on the Judgment Day. The Aramaic uses a passive form but in the third-person singular. The subject, then, is to be found in ‘the fear of God.’ It seems that both TJ and Zamora use the verb in an active mode where God is the actant who will protect the righteous. However, Zamora understands the root of תִּגַּן as being תִּגַּן. His uncertainty of the root may be the reason for its absence in the margin. The Latin *protegat* may be either third-person singular subjunctive (which affirms the meaning of the MT) or third-person singular present active.

2:4: For Gaza shall be abandoned, and Ashkelon for desolation, Ashdod at noon they shall drive her out, and Ekron shall be uprooted.

Scholars discuss whether or not this verse belongs to the previous oracle or to the next, but this question does not concern TJ. For the Massorete and for TJ alike, our verse functions as the culmination of the previous exhortative message: the fate of four Philistine cities is but one illustration of God’s decree (v. 2. Cf Tg 2:5). A similar fate will fall on those Judeans who do not seek God. The conjunctive כִּי plays not only the role of reason and explanation but more so, an asseverative particle: Indeed, that is what will happen.

Otherwise, the verse does not pose any exegetical difficulties. All versions translate literally except for LXX, which creates a different paronomasia when retroverted into the Hebrew: instead of MT עָזָה עֲזוּבָה, ‘Gaza (shall be) abandoned,’ it reads עָזָה בְּזוּזָה, ‘Gaza (shall be) spoiled.’ Targum captures the paronomasia only in regards to Ekron, ועקרון תתעקר.

And yet, some emend יִגְרְשׁוּהָ ‘they shall expel her,’ because the verb שָׁדַד, ‘to plunder, rob,’ creates a better wordplay with Ashdod. Hence, יִשְׁדְּדוּהָ, יִשְׁדוּהָ, שָׁדַד.<sup>322</sup> Bacher proposes יִרְשׁוּהָ בְּצַהֲרֵם, ‘they shall inherit her at noon,’ after noting Abulwalid’s variant reading. He

<sup>322</sup> Cf Rudolph, *Micha*, 276, 4b. If this was indeed the prophet’s original text, why would a scribe change such a perfect choice? Yet, Ashqelon has no paronomasia and none has suggested an “improved” text.



adds that the verb **ירש** refers to towns whereas **גרש** refers to people (Mic 1:15).<sup>323</sup>

As for Ashqelon, the preceding verb ‘she shall be’ serves it as well. Its fate is **שְׁמָמָה**, ‘desolation.’ Zalcman ascertains the integrity of the verse, finding in it a composition based on a primary rhetorical usage expressed by a double entendre and a secondary one expressed by assonance. Moreover, the verse presents four positions in which a woman can find herself: abandoned (**עֲזוּבָה**), deserted by her fiancé before marriage (**שְׁמָמָה**), driven out (**גְּרוּשָׁה**), and barren (**עֲקָרָה**). As for **יְגַרְשׁוּהָ**, Zalcman maintains that the prophet had to choose ambiguity over assonance since the root **שדד** does not serve “the triple duty of paronomasia and double meaning.”<sup>324</sup>

In the majority of cases **שְׁמָמָה** is translated **צָדוּ** (2:4,9; Isa 17:9; Jer 4:27; Mic 7:13). In 1:13 the word used is **עָדִי** (‘spoil’) because it relates specifically to houses, not to land.

Several mss (F, P and N,Q,W) add **כִּיד** before ‘at noon’ for no apparent reason. It also precedes another temporal term, ‘in the evening’ in 2:7. It may perhaps be an allusion to this verse or merely to a folkloric expression, **שֶׁדֶד בצהריים**, ‘a robber at noon,’ used in Jer 15:10, that also carries a preceding **כִּד**.<sup>325</sup> Either in the meaning of ‘when,’ ‘as,’ ‘as though’ or ‘that,’ the place of **כִּיד** in the verse is unclear.<sup>326</sup> It is superfluous in both verses, and judged by its occurrence, it is clearly a Palestinian variant.

Ribera notes that Ekron, at the time of the targumist, stood for Caesarea, the daughter of Edom (read, Rome), and that it was then one of the greatest hopes to see Rome destroyed like Ekron.<sup>327</sup> Indeed, Caesarea was the capital of the Roman procurators of Judea and of the Roman and Byzantine Palestine. Its population was mostly pagan. The Rabbis were concerned because the city enticed the “unaffiliated” with colorful pagan rituals and attractive entertainment.

<sup>323</sup> W. Bacher, “Zu Zephanja 2,4,” *ZAW* 11 (1891): 185–86.

<sup>324</sup> Lawrence Zalcman, “Ambiguity and Assonance at Zephaniah II 4,” *VT* 36 (1986): 365–71. Winton Thomas notes that the verb **שדד** carries the meaning ‘to drive away’ in both the HB (Prov 19:26) and in Ethiopian *sadada* (“A Pun on the Name Ashdod in Zephaniah ii. 4,” *ET* 74 [1962–63]: 63). However, he does not explain why Zephaniah uses its equivalent verb **גרש** rather than the more appropriate **שדד**.

<sup>325</sup> It occurs also in Amos 8:9 before ‘at noon.’

<sup>326</sup> In Ezek 25:19 **כד** translates **אשר** with no questionable grammar or syntax.

<sup>327</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 154.

Since its population had nearly equal numbers of Jews and gentiles (mostly Greek-Syrians), many disputes erupted, mostly concerning citizenship, some violent and deadly. The Greek procurators supported and protected the gentile population against the Jews. The clashes between the two ethnic groups brought about the first revolt against Rome in 66 CE. The pagan population massacred most of Caesarea's Jews. During the war, Vespasian raised the status of Caesarea to the rank of an independent Roman colony. Its population grew more gentile and later became Christian. In the late 2nd century Jews returned to the city because of economic opportunities. From the third century on, Caesarea became a center of great Jewish learning.<sup>328</sup> If TJ relates in our verse to Ekron as Rome, then it has to be dated before the 3rd century.

This targumic interpretation is further supported by a substitution found in two Ashkenazi mss, U and Y, that replace תתעקר, 'be uprooted,' by the entreaty תתמני לבית ישראל, 'will be ordained to the house of Israel.' This *Tosefta* fits the political, social and religious conditions in Ekron of the first to second century. It carries a Palestinian origin which somehow survived in the Ashkenazi milieu. Such a prayer had no relevancy in Europe.

This verse served to yearn for the center of Greek and Roman power over Judah to be uprooted and returned to Jewish territory and majority. The source and inspiration for this equation may have come from Zech 9:7, וְעֶקְרוֹן כִּיבוּסִי, two opposite cities: Jebusite alludes to Jerusalem, and Ekron to Caesarea.<sup>329</sup> Targum there clarifies its intent even further by reading 'and Ekron shall be filled by the house of Israel like Jerusalem.' The fate of Caesarea, the prayer goes, will be like that

<sup>328</sup> *Bavli, Megillah* 6a. For more information on Caesarea see, e.g., M. Avi-Yonah, "Caesarea," *Ej* 5:6–11; M. Stern, "ימי הבית השני," in *תולדות ישראל בימי קדם* (ed. H.H. Ben Sasson; vol. 1 of *תולדות עם ישראל*, ed. H.H. Ben Sasson; Tel Aviv: Dvir Co., 1969), 287–88; Tcherikover, *Hellenistic*, 92–93, 113, 246; Kenneth G. Holum and Avner Raban, "Caesarea," *NEAEHL* 1:270–71; John S. Kloppenborg, "Ethnic and Political factors in the Conflict at Caesarea Maritima," in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima* (ed. Terence L. Donaldson. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 127–52; Ephrat Habas-Rubin, "The halachic status of Caesarea as reflected in the talmudic literature," in *Caesarea Maritima* (eds. Avner Raban and Kenneth G. Holum. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 454–68; Josephus, *תולדות*, 2.13,7, 14.4, 18.1–3.

<sup>329</sup> The association was made perhaps by similar anti-Jewish clashes initiated by the increasing gentile population, and by the paronomasia found between עקרון and קיסריה (e.g., *Yerushalmi, Demai* 8a).

of the Jebusite city that David brutally conquered. The blood of the massacred Jews will be avenged.

This same equation is reflected in Rabbinic statements. Rabbi Yosef bar Hanina explains that עֲקֵרוֹן is an allusion for Caesarea, ‘the daughter of Edom.’ He expresses a prophetic vision in which the contemporary theaters and circuses in Caesarea shall one day become centers of Torah learning. And indeed, his disciple, Rabbi Abbahu, turned Caesarea into a center for Jewish learning. Abbahu repeats his teacher’s statement and comments that under the Greeks the city was like ‘a stake driven into Israel’ (*Bavli, Megillah* 6a).

2:5: Woe to those who dwell in the sea district, a people *who are guilty (deserved) to be cut off*, the decree of the word of YYY is upon you *who dwell in Canaan*, land of Philistines, and I shall destroy *you* without a dweller.

Scholars find several difficulties in this verse, mainly in the identification of the geographical and the ethnographical terms. The unique phrase תְּבֵל הַיָּם, ‘the sea region,’ namely, the coastal area, is understood as a political and/or as a geographical designation.<sup>330</sup>

The relationship between ‘Canaan’ and ‘the land of Philistines’ is the subject of discourse. In Zephaniah’s time the land of Philistia was named Canaan neither by Judah nor by other nations.<sup>331</sup> Later Canaan became limited to the coastal land of Phoenicia (2 Sam 24:7; Isa 23:11), whose people were famous for their trade and industry. As such, Canaan, it seems (Isa 23:11; Hos 12:8; Zeph 1:11), became an epithet for merchants.<sup>332</sup> The structure may be similar to ‘Babylon...land of

<sup>330</sup> E.g., M. Delcor bases his position on the meaning of תְּבֵל as ‘confederation’ in “Les Kéréthim et les Crétois,” *VT* XXVIII (1978): 413. Renaud views the designation as indeed geographical taking into consideration the naming of four Philistine cities, the specific ‘sea-coast’ and its apposition ‘Canaan, the land of the Philistines,’ and the territorial aspect in v. 6 (*Michée*, 222).

<sup>331</sup> On Canaan and Canaanites see, e.g., Oded Bustanay, “Canaan,” *EJ* 5:98–101; Anson F. Rainey “Canaan, Canaanites,” *EDB* 213–15 and the bibliography there; Benjamin Mazar, “Canaan and the Canaanites,” in *Biblical Israel* (ed. Shmuel Ahituv. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), 16–21; Nadav Na’aman, “The Canaanites and Their Land”: a rejoinder in *Ugarit-Forschungen* 26 (1994): 397–418; Robert Drews, “Canaanites and Philistines,” *JOT* 81 (1998): 39–61; Lawrence E. Stager, “When Canaanites and Philistines ruled Ashkelon,” *BAR* 17 (March/April 1991): 24–43.

<sup>332</sup> Cf. *Bavli, Bava Batra* 75a: ‘Canaanites’ always means merchants. To this argument, Gerleman adds that the prophet considers the Philistines greedy merchants the same as the people of Jerusalem (*Zephaniah*, 30).

Chaldeans' (Jer 50:1,45; Ezek 12:13),<sup>333</sup> with perhaps the same meaning: Canaan was taken over or replaced by the Philistines.<sup>334</sup> According to Num 13:29 and Josh 5:1, 'the Canaanites dwell by the sea.' More specific is Josh 13:2–3, where the Philistines are said to dwell within the Canaanite borders. Zephaniah uses this archaic name to raise a theological sensitivity. Referring to the Philistines as גוי, 'Crethites' and 'Canaanites' underline their foreign presence in the region. At a time when Josiah begins to adhere to the Book of the Torah, Zephaniah urges him to fulfill the Covenant he had promised to uphold (2 Kgs 23:3) and to complete God's command to rid the land of Canaanite elements (cf the didactic Levite/Priestly Ps 106:34).<sup>335</sup>

Another commentator argues for a punitive message: God warns Philistia that as He had done to the Canaanite nations, so He would do to her.<sup>336</sup> Another argues that כְּנַעַן is not a geographical designation, but is rather a general term for those who oppose Israel. In this view the hostilities between Israel and Philistia symbolize the conflicts with other regional nations.<sup>337</sup>

Since neither Philistia nor Phoenicia were considered Canaanites, the phrase כְּנַעַן אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים denotes scorn and perhaps a "demotion" of class and status.

Here are some of the many emendations offered: כְּנַעַן is replaced with a verb, נִכְנַע, 'down with you!' even though no such an imperative exists in Hebrew;<sup>338</sup> read אֶכְנַעְךָ, 'I shall subdue/humble you';<sup>339</sup> read

<sup>333</sup> Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 105.

<sup>334</sup> Shlomo Bunimovitz argues that one cannot speak of the Philistines as an "ethnic" group because they exhibited a mixture of cultural assemblages. Only the first phases of their settlement can reveal their original ethnic culture. What we usually find is the result of their accelerated assimilation with the Canaanite culture ("Problems in the "Ethnic" Identification of the Philistine Material Culture," *Tel Aviv* 17 [1990]: 219–20). See also Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible 10,000–586 BCE* (NY: Doubleday, 1992), 265–80 and Gabriel Barkay, "The Iron Age II-III," in *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* (ed. Amnon Ben-Tor; Tel Aviv: The Open University of Israel, 1992), 334–35.

<sup>335</sup> Note the comparison made between Josiah and the Judges period in 2 Kgs 23:22, depicting the former as the one to have completed the unfulfilled tasks of the latter.

<sup>336</sup> Ehrlich, *מקרא כפשוטו*, 459. Also Abrabanel.

<sup>337</sup> Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 520–21.

<sup>338</sup> Deissler, *Les Petits*, 454. He quotes 1 Sam 7:13 for support.

<sup>339</sup> Edler, *Das Kerygma*, 18; Horst, *Die Zwiölf*, 194; Rudolph, *Micha*, 277; BH3; NAB; NJB. Taylor offers "I will destroy you" without offering the Hebrew emendation ("Zephaniah," 1024).

כִּי נֶעְנָה, “for the land of the Philistines shall be afflicted”,<sup>340</sup> it should be omitted altogether;<sup>341</sup> כְּנַעַן should be transposed after וְהָאֲבֹדְתִיךָ, ‘and I shall destroy you.’<sup>342</sup>

As it stands, the syntactical structure of אָרָץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים parallels גּוֹי כְּרִתִים. What is the relationship between the nation of כְּרִתִים and the Philistines? All agree that the Philistines came from the Aegean Sea, whether directly from Crete or secondarily through it. Scholars base their positions on the HB, LXX, and the archaeology of the Late Bronze Age.<sup>343</sup>

The use of כְּרִתִים indicates Zephaniah’s intent to create a word-play on the verbs כְּרַתִים (‘cut off’), וְהִכְרַתִי (1:3b, 4b) and כָּתַת (2:6), namely, an inference of death. For Zephaniah the origin of the Philistines is secondary.<sup>344</sup> He is more interested in their demise as a people who pose political, economic and religious danger to Judah.<sup>345</sup> Moreover,

<sup>340</sup> Julius A. Bewer, “Textual Suggestions on Isa. 2<sub>6</sub> 66<sub>3</sub>, Zeph. 2<sub>2-5</sub>,” *JBL* 27 (1908): 166. Italics are his. נֶעְנָה can be either a perfect verb (none in the HB) or a participle (Isa 58:10) in the *nif'al*, not imperfect. It will render the clause an opposite intent for punishment, suggesting that the land of Philistia was (or is) suffering and abused (cf Exod 1:11; Nah 1:12; Ps 119:107). Moreover, it has a masculine form, whereas אָרָץ is feminine. The verb עָנָה usually evokes sympathy with the sufferer and is never applied to an enemy.

<sup>341</sup> BHS; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 217; Marti rationalizes its deletion by saying that Canaan did not mean Philistia, but rather the whole pre-Israelite land. He also transposes v. 5bβ before כְּנַעַן (*Das Dodekapropheten*, 368). A fuller list of the corrections is found in Dominique Barthélemy’s *Critique Textuelle de L’Ancien Testament* (vol. 3. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 888.

<sup>342</sup> Stonchouse, *Zephaniah*, 48 and so Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 520 and Elliger, *Das Buch*, 69. However, Elliger deletes ‘Canaan’ and reads ‘the Philistine’ in singular.

<sup>343</sup> E.g., J. Prignaud, “Caftorim et Kerétim,” *RB* 71 (1964): 228–29; Gary A. Rendsburg, “GEN 10:13–14: an Authentic Hebrew Tradition Concerning the Origin of the Philistines,” *JNSL* 13 (1987): 89–96; A. Mazar, *Archaeology*, 264–65; Othniel Margalith, “Where did the Philistines come from?” *ZAW* 107 (1995): 101–09; Trude Dothan, “What we know about the Philistines,” *BAR* 8, no. 4 (July/August 1982): 20–44; Tristan Barako, “One: by Sea...” and Assaf Yasur-Landau, “Two: by Land,” *BAR* 29, no. 2 (March/April 2003): 26–33, 64,66, 34–39, 66,67.

<sup>344</sup> For LXX, this point is primary, calling the Philistines ‘strangers’ and the land of Canaan, ‘land of foreigners.’

<sup>345</sup> On the importance of Philistia, especially of Ekron, to the Assyrian empire see, e.g., Trude Dothan and Seymour Gitin, “Miqne, Tel (Ekron),” *NEAEHL* 3:1051–59; T. Dothan, “Ekron of the Philistines,” *BAR* 16, no. 1 (January/February 1990): 21–36; Seymour Gitin, “Incense Altars from Ekron, Israel and Judah: Contest and Typology,” *EI* 20 (1989): 52\*–67\*; Moshch Eilat, “The International trade in the Assyrian Empire and its traders,” *EI* 24 (1993): 12–15; Israel Eph’al, “Assyrian Dominion in Palestine” in *The World History of the Jewish People* (ed. Abraham Malamat; Jerusalem: Massada Press Ltd., 1979), 276–89; Oded Bustenai, “Neighbors on the West,” in *The Age of the*

identifying the Philistines as ‘a Crethite nation’ where ‘Crethites’ functions as an adjective, shows that the initial purpose is rather cultural.

Targum, too, has the death of the Philistines in mind. Its rendering fits with that of the Rabbis’ interpretation. **כְּרַתִּים** is translated as a verb, in the passive **כְּרַתִּים**, ‘cut off, destroyed,’ according to *Genesis Rabbah* 28,5.<sup>346</sup> The Aramaic **חַיִּיב**, ‘guilty, bound to’ precedes the addition of ‘the decree’ to mean ‘who deserve to be destroyed,’<sup>347</sup> thus declaring the decree to be legally binding. The punishment of **כְּרַת**, death by divine decree for infringements of the Law (Lev 7:20; Num 9:13), is here applied to the nations. ‘The guilty ones’ seem to be all the people who dwell in the Coastal areas and not only “the wicked.” Targum exposes here an interpretative rendering of **גּוֹי כְּרַתִּים** based on Rabbinic exegesis.<sup>348</sup>

The punishment of death is also expressed by the addition of the ‘decree’ that expounds the Word of YHWH. God’s decree cannot be rescinded in the case of the Philistines because they have taken over part of the land of Israel. The emphasis is put on the ‘dwellers’ who are destined for destruction. Targum turns the singular into the plural for uniformity of subject.

The Word of YHWH is usually translated literally or as ‘a prophetic word from before YYY’ (Isa 39:5; Jer 2:31; Joel 1:1; Hos 7:16). With the plus of ‘the decree,’ TJ turns it into a legal case with no revocation, and it ties in with the same decree concerning the Day of YHWH (Tg 2:2). The major difference is that the decree concerning Israel is still pending, while the decree concerning the Philistines has already been issued. The latter have been found guilty.

According to all the Yemenite mss and Mss X,N, the decree of destruction targets the foreigners ‘who live in Canaan, the land of the

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Monarchies; Political History (ed. Abraham Malamat; vol. 4 of *The World History of the Jewish People*. Jerusalem: Massada Press Ltd., 1979), 222–46.

<sup>346</sup> Same in Ezek 25:16. Targum does not translate **כְּרַת** in v. 6. The same rendering is found in the Vul, Aq, Simm and Theod. Two other interpretations are suggested in *Midrash Genesis* 28,4. Rabbi Levi (or Rabbi Judah), looking for a positive interpretation, suggests that **גּוֹי כְּרַתִּים** refers to God **כּוֹרֵת הַבְּרִית** who made a Covenant with Israel. Another version finds the reference in Israel, a nation who made a Covenant, **גּוֹי שְׁכַרְת בְּרִית**, to be given the land of Canaan, as is written in Neh 9:8.

<sup>347</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 168 note 13.

<sup>348</sup> Churgin, *Targum*, 109. This reading, Sweeney contends, “may have been a deliberate wordplay in the Hebrew” as the word **חבל** in the meaning of ‘to destroy’ (*Zephaniah*, 127). This is also Vulgate’s translation. However, the wordplay is borrowed and **חבל** neither in v. 5 nor in v. 6 is read in the meaning of destruction.

Philistines,' and not the land,<sup>349</sup> which adheres to the command to rid Canaan of its idolatrous population. Consequently, the verb 'to destroy,' אבד, takes on a plural form, ואבדינכון. The rest of the mss, including mss B,G,O, have retained the MT's singular, albeit in a variety of corrupt second person singular forms, referring to the land. Therefore, we conclude that the singular form was the original targum.

In historical perspective, the coastal regions of Palestine from the time the Greeks took over the land in the late 4th century BCE, became populated by Greek and Hellenized groups. Greek migrants and retired Greek mercenaries established colonies in Egypt and along the Palestinian coastline with land granted to them by the Greek empire. Many Hellenized people joined them to form extensions of existing ancient towns and villages. These colonies were juridically classified as villages whose inhabitants had all the rights of Greek citizens, with the urban way of life of their origin. They became the symbol of the Greek culture. About 30 Greek towns were established in Palestine and Transjordan, among them eleven along the coast.<sup>350</sup> Since our verse deals with Philistines who had emigrated from the Aegean islands, the Targumist wishes the complete demise of the Greeks of the coast (and beyond). Not only did they control Jewish lands, but they constituted a source for the proliferation of the Hellenistic culture. Other coastal cities with growing Hellenistic populations also posed physical and religious threats to the Jewish population there. Many clashes between Jews and Hellenists erupted in these cities, for example in Caesarea and Antioch. This situation caused the change from the singular ואבדינך (the land) to the plural ואבדינכון (the inhabitants).

The stemma of Mss U,Y proposes ואיבדינך, 'and I shall scatter you,' instead of 'and I shall destroy you.'<sup>351</sup> Since the text calls for the Philistines to perish so that their dwellings will be inherited by Judah (v. 7), the vow to scatter them contradicts the intent of God's vow and is thus incongruous. The added 'ר' is either a mistake (most likely) or one scribe's wishful thinking concerning the occupiers of the land of Israel at his time.

<sup>349</sup> Also LXX. Cf Lev 25:23.

<sup>350</sup> Tcherikover, *Hellenistic*, 20, 90–116.

<sup>351</sup> A later *maggiah* corrected ואיבדינך to read ואבדינך. Ms Y copied from the pre-corrected Ms U.

2:6: And the sea district shall be *sheds, a house* (where) shepherds prepare meals and enclosures for sheep.

The feminine form *והיתה* clashes with its subject *חֶבְלֵי* (always masculine). Commentators explain this grammatical discrepancy by perceiving the phrase *חֶבְלֵי הַיָּם*, ‘the Sea District,’ as a name of a city *עִיר* which is feminine (Yefet ben Ely), while Radaq attributes it to the land, *אֶרֶץ*, another feminine form. However, some modern scholars emend to *וְהִיא*<sup>352</sup> or *וְהִתָּה*,<sup>353</sup> which complicates the verse. LXX solves the problem by deleting *חֶבְלֵי הַיָּם*<sup>354</sup> and making *כְּרֵת* (Crete, assuming *אֶרֶץ*) the subject.<sup>355</sup> The answer may be found in the influence of the preceding four cities and their attached feminine verbs.

Targum corrects the Hebrew grammar by choosing *וְהִיא*, ‘and it shall be,’ which also accords with masculine *סִפְרָה*, ‘region, district.’ Peshitta does the same. However, all the Ashkenazi mss and the Sepharadi Q,W (and mss B,G,O) harmonize with the MT by *וְהִיא* even though it clashes with the masculine *סִפְרָה*.

A more complicated problem is posed in the next clause, *נֹת כְּרֵת רְעִים*, seemingly made up of two verbal constructs of similar vocalization. Scholars usually have offered emendations.<sup>356</sup> Some omit *נֹת*<sup>357</sup> or *כְּרֵת*.<sup>358</sup> Some emend *נֹת כְּרֵת* to *כְּרֵת נֹת*, reading “Kereth (shall be) for the cots (of shepherds),”<sup>359</sup> or *כְּרֵת נֹת רְעִים*, ‘and Crete shall be

<sup>352</sup> A fuller list of the numerous correctors is found in Barthélemy’s *Critique*, 888–91.

<sup>353</sup> John S. Kselman, “A Note on Jer 49,20 and Zc 2,6–7,” *CBQ* 32 (1970): 579–81. Duane L. Christensen concurs (*Prophecy and War in Ancient Israel* [Berkeley: BIBAL Press, 1975], 157).

<sup>354</sup> Followed, e.g., by Edler who also omits *כְּרֵת* to fit his metric scheme (*Das Kerygma*, 69); Rudolph’s emendation and deletions result in one line instead of two: *וְהִיא לְנֹת רְעִים* (*Micha*, 275,277). Also Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, 369.

<sup>355</sup> On this basis, BHS calls for the deletion of the phrase *חֶבְלֵי הַיָּם*; Taylor states that it was a case of dittography from v. 7, and following the Vul he also omits ‘cottages/caves’ (*כְּרֵת*) (“Zephaniah,” 1024); J.M.P. Smith finds here rather a case of haplography (*A Critical*, 218); Stonehouse argues that the phrase was a marginal variant on *חֶבְלֵי* in v. 7 which was erroneously inserted into the text (*The Books*, 48). The same thought is expressed by Vlaardingerbroek (*Zephaniah*, 132). The same happened to *כְּרֵת* in the LXX. Other suggestions are listed in Barthélemy’s *Critique*, 889.

<sup>356</sup> For Vlaardingerbroek this phrase is not problematic “because we are dealing with synonyms,” that is, *כְּרֵת* is the plural of *כֶּרֶת*, pastureland. He adopts this reading from Sabottka (*Zephaniah*, 140).

<sup>357</sup> E.g., Keller, *Nahoum*, 201; Gerleman, *Zephanja*, 31.

<sup>358</sup> E.g., BHS; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 218; Calvin, *Commentaries*, 242; Rudolph follow the Vulgate (*Micha*, 275,277).

<sup>359</sup> G.A. Smith, *The Book*, 62.



pastures for shepherds,<sup>360</sup> and נֹתֵקֵי כְרֵת, ‘pastures like those where shepherds tend their flocks.’<sup>361</sup> Stonehouse (p. 48) suggests וְהִתְהַנְּוֹת עֲדָרִים noting the easy change from רְעִים.<sup>362</sup>

כָּרַת has been explained in eight ways: first, from the root כרה, ‘to dig’ (a well, a grave, a pit).<sup>363</sup> It is the natural preoccupation of shepherds to dig wells for themselves and their animals. Second, from the same root, but in the meaning of ‘to prepare a meal’ as in 2 Kgs 6:23, and thus the temporary habitation where shepherds prepare their meals.<sup>364</sup> Third, denominative of כָּר, ‘meadow, pasture land’ as in Isa 30:23; Ps 65:4.<sup>365</sup> The plural כְּרִים was changed to rhyme with נֹתֵקֵי, both defective.<sup>366</sup> Fourth, כָּרַת, as the plural of כָּר, can also mean ‘caves’ that shepherds dig for shelter.<sup>367</sup> Fifth, read כָּרַת, the feminine by-form of כְּרִים, ‘pastures.’<sup>368</sup> Sixth, analogous to Job 40:30, כָּר may be ‘assembly, meeting’ of the shepherds.<sup>369</sup> Seventh, Ibn Ezra reads the root כרת, saying ambiguously ‘that they (the shepherds) cut for themselves (a covenant? A pit?).’ He connects the Sea District to the shepherds. Eighth, כָּרַת “is the ancestor of the *krtym* of vs. 5.”<sup>370</sup>

The synonymous double constructs are possibly indicative of a conflation made by a later editor. He inserted the marginal explicative notation כְּרִי into the legitimate נֹתֵקֵי רְעִים (corruption of נֹאוֹתֵי רְעִים, cf Amos 1:2), and changed it to כָּרַת for a rhythmic effect. The marginal notation was probably made after the faulting of נֹאוֹתֵי. It could also be the opposite, where נֹתֵקֵי was in the margin, and כָּרַת רְעִים was the original because of its assonance.<sup>371</sup>

Although this last observation sounds plausible, this phrase of a double genitive has no grammatical oddity requiring a great mental

<sup>360</sup> Deissler (*Les Petits*, 454) is seconded by Vlaardingerbroek (*Zephaniah*, 132).

<sup>361</sup> Ehrlich, *מקרא כפשוטו*, 459.

<sup>362</sup> This is my understanding from “The substitution of *herds* for *shepherds* . . . should probably be restored thus: And she shall become pastures for herds . . .” The change is indeed easy in English.

<sup>363</sup> As in Gen 26:25, 50:5, Num 21:18, and Jer 18:20; Radaq; Barthélemy, *Critique*, 891.

<sup>364</sup> Rashi, Abulwalid, Abrabanel.

<sup>365</sup> Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 106; Lehrman, *The Twelve*, 242. Ben Zvi argues that correct grammatical relationships between words are not always maintained in the HB (*A Historical*, 158). Does he propose the existence of כְּרוֹת?

<sup>366</sup> Orelli, *The Twelve*, 269.

<sup>367</sup> Calvin, *Commentaries*, 242–43; Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 104; Robertson, *The Books*, 300.

<sup>368</sup> Kselman (“A Note,” 581) followed by Christensen (*Prophecy*, 157).

<sup>369</sup> David ben Abraham, II, 129, 44–49 in Barthélemy’s *Critique*, 890.

<sup>370</sup> Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 132.

<sup>371</sup> Similarly is Ben Zvi (*A Historical*, 158).

effort.<sup>372</sup> The word **נֹת**, ‘homes for shepherds,’ juxtaposes **בְּתֵי**, ‘homes for the Judean remnant to live in’ in the next verse. Both words appear in the construct form. Furthermore, the ‘א’ was most likely omitted in **נֹת**,<sup>373</sup> (**נְאוֹת**) ‘pastures for flocks’ (Amos 1:2; Joel 1:19), and figuratively, dwelling places (Song 1:23). This corresponds to Akkadian *nawûm*, a type of a tribal encampment in the desert. As in the rest of the oracles against the nations that devastated Judah (also 3:6), the prayer here is to see the collapse of their culture and cities.

Targum continues to use the text to fight off Hellenism. It wishes the Greek towns to turn into a desert where shepherds tend their flocks. **דִּירוֹת**, ‘sheds,’ for **נֹת** suggests nomad life, flocks. The reason may stem from the notion that ruined cities cannot turn into pasture land, but only into protective locations. **נֹת**, like **נְאוֹת** in Jer 9:9 and Joel 2:22, is understood to derive from **נָוָה** (‘dwelling place’) and not **נְאוָה** (‘pasture’).

Instead of the double MT constructs, TJ seems to have made an unusual series of three such forms. **מְשָׁרֵי** poses a difficulty in identifying its form and meaning. Is it a verb or a construct noun in the plural? The solution is found in the secondary meaning of **שָׁרַי**, ‘to sit down for a meal’ (Jastrow, 1630b, [3]). This reveals that TJ read **כְּרַת** as deriving from the root **כָּרַה**, ‘to prepare a meal’ (2 Kgs 6:23), and therefore used a construct noun meaning ‘a place where food is prepared.’<sup>374</sup> For this purpose, the addition of **בֵּית**, ‘a house, room, place’ was necessary. The scene of desolation is preparatory for the return of Israel from exile into these deserted towns and their rebirth (v. 7). Targum applies its exact translation of Jer 33:12 to our verse because of the similar context in which God promises to bring back the exiled Judah and restore her name and glory (cf Zeph 3:19–20). The ruined cities will be rebuilt with happy and joyous sounds (cf Zeph 3:14). In Jeremiah’s vision, the multitude of flocks led by shepherds is a symbol

<sup>372</sup> Cf **בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ בְּשָׂתֶם** in 3:19bγ and the similar structure in Deut 32:5,24,43.

<sup>373</sup> Omission of ‘א’ occurs mostly in verbs of either **פִּ׳א** or **לִ׳א** roots, e.g., 2 Sam 19:14, 20:9; 2 Kgs 2:22, 13:6; Jer 51:9; Mic 1:15, and in nouns, e.g., Job 41:17; 1 Chron 12:39. In our case the omission could happen from elision when someone was reading the text to the scribe.

<sup>374</sup> Gordon is not certain that TJ’s **בֵּית מְשָׁרֵי** attempts to correspond to the MT **כְּרַת**. He translates **בֵּית מְשָׁרֵי** as ‘camp’ (*Targum*, 169). Followed by Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 129. The addition of **בֵּית** is not addressed. ‘Camp’ does not need an explanatory addition of ‘house.’ In all cases in the Latter Prophets, the Hebrew **מַחֲנֶה** (Aramaic **מְשָׁרֵיָא**) is never translated as **בֵּית מְשָׁרֵי** (Isa 37:36; Ezek 1:24, 4:2; Joel 2:11; Amos 4:10; Zech 14:15).

of prosperity and renewal. This suggests that TJ in our verse identifies these shepherds and flocks with the blessed Judeans as reaffirmations of Jeremiah's prophecy (cf 3:13).

Targum's **בֵּית מְשָׁרֵי** for **מְרִבָּץ** in 2:15 seems to carry the primary meaning of the root **שָׂרַי**, 'to dwell,' but it might as well be 'a lodging where (the wild animals) prepare their food,' a macabre note on the future fate of the ruined Nineveh. Sperber (1973, p. 48) finds the translation **דִּירוֹת בֵּית מִשְׁרֵי רַעִיין** (according to Ms F orthography) as a "free translation, conveying only meaning." He retroverts the phrase to read **נוֹת הַנוֹת רַעִים** ('pastures where shepherds camp'), which is clever but not necessary.

Mss B,G wrongly divide **דִּירוֹת** into **דִּי רִוּוֹת**, identifying **דִּי** as 'that, which.' The new meaning, 'that saturated, filled,' connotes wine overconsumption, thus alluding to blessings for the returning Judeans.<sup>375</sup> However, this division very likely was made out of ignorance and not out of a new interpretation.

2:7: And there shall be a portion for the remnant of the house of Judah; upon them they shall *find sustenance*; in the houses of Ashkelon in the evening they shall *dwell*, for *their memory shall come up for good before* their God YYY, and He shall restore their *exiles*.

This verse continues the previous verse in that it elaborates on the 'district' of the Philistines that will be inherited by the returning Judeans. A word play on the 'district,' **חֶבְלָה**, that now is used in its meaning of 'inheritance, portion,' enhances the poetic element of the text. While v. 5 addresses the inhabitants of the 'district' who are destined for death, and v. 6 addresses the land of that district, v. 7 addresses the land and the deserted homes. Verse 5 (and 4), then, function as a historical background for the fulfillment of vv. 6–7. This is also TJ's understanding.

A point of conflict concerns the structure of the very common word **עֲלֵיהֶם**, 'upon them.' Because the object of 'upon them' is not clearly stated, some scholars look for one, and the most agreed-upon emendation is to reread it **עַל הַיָּם**, 'upon the sea.'<sup>376</sup> However, sheep do not

<sup>375</sup> Cf Jastrow, 1459.

<sup>376</sup> If one reconstructs and retroverts into the Hebrew, Marti's reading would be **יָרַעוּ בְּחַרְבְּתֵיךָ יִרְבְּצוּן עַל-הַיָּם**, 'in your ruins they shall lie down, on/by the sea they shall pasture.' He combines **בְּתֵי** and **בְּעֵרֵב** to achieve **בְּחַרְבְּתֵיךָ**. In this way his idea of

pasture upon or by the sea. Following LXX, others<sup>377</sup> emend to חֶבֶל הַיָּם which is unjustified poetically or theologically. Rudolph (pp. 275, 277) leaves חֶבֶל with an added definite article and an added verb “*wird zufallen*” to read, ‘but the (sea) district shall fall (to the remnant...).’<sup>378</sup> This structure of the ‘gloss’ allows him to begin the verse with עַל הַיָּם ‘on the sea’ as others do. Another emendation is to read עֲלֵיהֶם, ‘their young, children,’<sup>379</sup> which does not solve the problem of the “missing” object. The object is most probably the depopulated Philistia (the coastal region) mentioned in vv. 4–7.

This point does not concern TJ since חֶבֶל is perceived as the intended text, in the meaning of apportioned land upon which the remnant shall find sustenance. This follows the theological position that the land of Canaan was Israel’s lot from God (Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Radaq). This portion, in association with sustenance, is ascribed not only to the coastal area, but to a larger territory.<sup>380</sup> It is also linked to the shepherds preparing meals in a pastoral life setting (v. 6). This ‘sustenance’ is likewise expressed in Jer 33:13b in the same pastoral context, when ‘the flock will pass by one who counts,’ that is, the number of the sheep will be so great that their owner will have to assign a special person to count them (Altchuler). This abundance is translated in terms of ‘sustenance.’

The animal scene of the MT projected on people is replaced by TJ out of respect for mankind in general and Israel in particular: People do not pasture (רעה) but *make a living*; they do not crouch like sheep (רבץ) but *lodge* in homes. When Judeans are depicted as ‘grazing’ in salvific oracles, TJ reads it as finding provision (e.g., Isa 30:23; Ezek

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the right meter is achieved and all prosaic allusions to a future salvation are obliterated (*Das Dodekapropheton*, 369).

<sup>377</sup> E.g., KJV, ASV, NAS, RSV, NRS, NKJ; BHS; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 454; Keller, *Nahoum*, 201; Watts, *The Books*, 168; Calvin, *Commentaries*, 242; Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 521; Elliger, *Das Buch*, 69. See Barthélemy, *Critique*, 891–92. This becomes preposterous when the NJPS reads: “The seacoast Cheroth...”

<sup>378</sup> Since he deletes ‘the sea district’ in v. 6, the ‘district’ here is left undefined. The added verb is an intrusion on the Hebrew.

<sup>379</sup> E.g., Sabotcka, *Žephanja*, 80. He bases his reading on the repointing and changes in the syntax and the accents of Jer 15:8a which result in ‘הַבְּאֵתֵי עֲלֵיהֶם, עַל עֵלְאִם, בְּחֹר שִׁדְדִי’ instead of ‘הַבְּאֵתֵי לְהֵם עַל-אֵם בְּחֹר, שִׁדְדִי’. He quotes Kselman who came up with the same interpretation in our verse where he views עַל-נֹהַ as carrying the features of a pair of words. This association between ‘youth’ and ‘herd/animals’ suits Sabotcka who reads חֶבֶל as ‘flocks’ and who states that this association is well proven.

<sup>380</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 169. Cf Radaq who explains TJ’s distinction between the two חֶבֶל: in v. 6 it refers to the coastline and in v. 7, to the inheritance of that land.

34:14,18,23; Zeph 3:13). The shepherds mentioned in the previous verse are identified here as the remnant of the house of Judah who will take over the land and houses of the Philistines, the symbol for the contemporary Greeks.

The use of the verb **בית**, ‘to go in, to lodge, spend the night’ for ‘lying down’ rather than the usual verb **שרי** (‘to dwell,’ e.g., Isa 17:2; Ezek 34:14; Zeph 3:13) fits the text better where ‘houses’ are specifically mentioned. Targum shows patriotic tendencies by portraying the return of Israel not only to their former lands but also to extended territories (Zech 9:6–7; Mal 1:5).<sup>381</sup>

Radaq cites a unique targumic version that carries a combination of the MT and Tj’s interpretative ‘sustenance’: **עליהון ירעון ועליהון יתפרנסון**, ‘upon them they shall pasture and upon them they shall find sustenance.’ No such targumic version is found elsewhere.

Targum comments on the reason for the return to the land of Israel. The expression ‘the memory/merits come up for good’ is an echo of a prayer found in several variations in 2 Kgs 20:3; Jer 18:20; Neh 5:19, 13:31 (cf 13:14,22), and in the High Holy Days Prayer Book. When God “remembers” it portends a decision to act. In other instances when **פקד** carries a salvific connotation, Tj encourages praying by using the same expression (e.g., Isa 23:17; Jer 15:15, 27:22, 29:10). It is based on the belief that one is rewarded or punished according to his deeds and that the merits of ancestors may be transferred to their descendants (e.g., Exod 32:13; Deut 9:27; Jer 15:1; Ezek 3:20, 18:4–28; Pss 25:7, 109:14). The combination of the ‘good’ merits and the return of the *exiles* refers again, as in the previous verse, to Jeremiah’s prophecy (33:6–18). ‘The good’ is what God is keeping in store for Judah (twice in v. 9, once in v. 14), for God is ‘good’ (v. 11). Judah will return and be restored (vv. 7,11).

Whether vocalized with a *ketiv* **שבותם** (root **שבה**), ‘their capture,’ or *qere* **שבותם** (root **שוב**), ‘their return, restoration,’ scholars on the whole view v. 7bβ as a gloss, for it refers to a post-exilic period, to a time of a ‘remnant’ (v. 7a).<sup>382</sup> Targum follows the massorete’s revocaliza-

<sup>381</sup> For the patriotic tendencies in Tj see Moses Aberbach, “Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Jonathan on the Prophets,” *Proceedings of the Sixth WCJS* III (1977): 1–6.

<sup>382</sup> E.g., Christensen deletes **שבותם ושב אליהם** “as an expansionary gloss which disturbs the metrical structure” (*Prophecy*, 157). Keller finds the later hand responsible for both **עליהם... והיה חבל** and **שבותם... בי יפקדם**, leaving v. 7 with only **ירעון, גבתי ירעון, אשקלון בערב ירבעון** as authentic (*Nahoum*, 201–02). Also, Taylor, “*Zephaniah*,” 1024–25; Rudolph, *Micha*, 275,280; Gerleman, *Zephania*, 35; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 219–20; Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 132,141.

tion to render ‘captivity,’<sup>383</sup> expressing a prayer for the return of the exiles. The end of exile will in due course restore better conditions. The return of the captives is associated with the ‘apportioned’ land by the temporal כּד, ‘when,’ thus stating that the land of Philistia is part of the promised land.

The question of whether or not the land of Philistia was part of the promised land was raised by the Rabbis, who presented arguments for and against. However, the conclusion was that it was not (*Pirkei de-R. Eliezer* 35). Malbim, on the other hand, thinks differently.

Mss F and M add an explanatory כּיִד, ‘when’ (כּד in mss B,G,O), before ‘in the evening’ to read: ‘they will find sustenance upon them in the houses of Ashqelon, *when* they will dwell (in them) in the evening.’ In this way these mss differ from the MT syntax by putting the pause after Ashqelon. This division of the verse suggests that sustenance will be found only in the evenings and in the newly occupied houses of Ashqelon. Thus, it replaces the indirect object ‘upon them’ that refers to the sheds and enclosures of pasture living (previous verse) with sedentary living. The added כּיִד/כּד before a temporal term is Palestinian in origin and was already noted in 2:4.

2:8: *It was heard before Me* the disgraces of Moab and the *boast* of the sons of Ammon, who disgraced My people and *boasted* upon their border.

God returns in a direct speech presenting the indictment of Moab and Ammon for verbal abuse and a probable encroachment into Judean

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<sup>383</sup> So LXX, Peshitta and Vulgate. It is mostly agreed that in pre-exilic times שׁבוֹת, and שׁוֹב שׁבוֹת, meant both ‘return’ and ‘return to better times.’ Some ascribe to it eschatological intent. Later it was confused with שׁבִּית, ‘captivity’ which is reflected in the numerous Massoretic combinations of *qeri* and *ketiv*. See, e.g., Dietrich, “שוב, שׁבוֹת, Die Endzeitliche Wiederherstellung bei den Propheten,” *BZAW* 40 (1925): 1–62; Irsigler, *Gottesgericht*, 180–81; Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 131–32; John M. Bracke, “šub šbūt: A Reappraisal,” *ZAW* 97 (1985): 233–44. Bracke’s conclusion that the phrase has to be studied in its literary context and not on etymology is certainly valid; Gordis concludes that the verb *shub* means, among others, to “be at rest,” and hence שׁוֹב שׁבוֹת would mean ‘return to a time of rest’ vis-à-vis Philistia (that is, to the time of David and Solomon). The proper noun for ‘captivity’ in monarchic era was שׁבִּיָּה and the act, לְשׁבוֹת שׁבִּיָּה (Deut 21:10–11). Robert Gordis, “Some Hitherto Unrecognized Meanings of the Verb *SHUB*,” in *The Word and the Book, Studies in Biblical Language and Literature* (NY: Ktav Publishing House, 1976), 218–27.

territory. In the first colon two nouns parallel, חַרְפָּה, ‘insult,’ and גְּדַפִּים, ‘revilements, jeers.’ In the second colon two verbs parallel, חָרְפוּ, ‘they insulted,’ and וַיִּגְדִּילוּ, ‘and they vaunted.’ However, since the vaunting, וַיִּגְדִּילוּ, is here related to ‘their border,’ rather than people or God (e.g., Isa 10:15; Jer 48:26,42; Ps 55:13),<sup>384</sup> two differing interpretations have emerged. First, Rashi,<sup>385</sup> Radaq, Abrabanel, Altschuler and Ibn Ezra associate the expression with a verbal insult, and except for the latter, also with the exile of Judah passing through the land of Moab and Ammon. Radaq adds that the verbal taunting was aimed at the destroyed Judean land.<sup>386</sup> The common translation by modern scholars is: ‘(they) vaunted/magnified themselves against/concerning their borders.’

Altschuler and Abrabanel present the second interpretation: territorial expansion.<sup>387</sup> Scholars who hold this approach point to the historical enmity between Israel/Judah and Moab and Ammon that began before Israel entered Canaan (Num 22–24). Clashes erupted throughout Israel’s history (Judg 3:12–30; 1 Sam 11:1–2, 2 Sam 10:1–11; 2 Kgs 3:4–5; the Mesha stone of the 9th century BCE; Jer 40:14, 48:29–30, 49:1; Ezek 25:1–11; Neh 4:1–2:5). Some modern commentators, like Altschuler before them, find here a double play, with the Moabites and Ammonites engaging in insolent utterances and attacks to gain territory when the occasion arose.<sup>388</sup> This is supported by v. 9b where both themes are projected on Judah, who, upon the destruction of Moab and Ammon, will not only despise<sup>389</sup> them (a verbal expression), but will take over their land.

<sup>384</sup> הַגְדִּיל פֶּה, ‘enlarged mouth,’ is presumed (Ezek 35:13; Obad 12), namely, to challenge with the intent to bring shame, to exaggerate, to boast. Also Lippel, *Das Book*, 106. He quotes Cheyne’s reading here and in v. 10 of לַעֲיֹגוּ, which has no justification whatsoever. Berlin’s ‘gloating’ translates this well (*Zephaniah*, 109). However, Rashi had preceded her. Further, in Job 19:5, הַגְדִּיל עַל and חַרְפָּה occur together, where the former seems to mean ‘to feel superior.’

<sup>385</sup> Rashi portrays a scene in which the Moabites and the Ammonites are taunting the Judeans passing through their lands to exile, groaning and crying out, saying: ‘Why are you crying? Are you not going to the land of your father, for “your forefathers had lived beyond the river for a long time”’ (Josh 24:2).

<sup>386</sup> Modern scholars such as Stonehouse (*The Books*, 50), Deissler (*Les Petits*, 455), Keller (*Nahoum*, 202), J.M.P. Smith (*A Critical*, 225–26), and Robertson (*The Books*, 301–04), hold this approach.

<sup>387</sup> Modern scholars such as R.L. Smith (*Micah*, 133–35) and Roberts (*Nahum*, 199–200) hold this approach.

<sup>388</sup> Such as Lehrman (*The Twelve*, 243), Orelli (*The Twelve*, 270), and Ben Zvi (*A Historical* 165–66).

<sup>389</sup> By revocalizing יְבֹזֵם (root בֹּזַע in *nif'al*) to יְבֹזֵם (root בֹּזַע in *pa'al*), probably an intentional double entendre.



Targum takes on the first interpretation using only two roots, חסד for Zephaniah's חרף and רברב for גדף and גדל (note the common first two letters). It also exchanges the singular חרפת (חסודי) with the plural (אתרברבות) גדפי.<sup>390</sup> For ויגדילו TJ reads ואתרברבו (should be ואתרברבו) as in Mss F, T, A, U, Y, R, P, X, Q, W and O).<sup>391</sup> The choice of the verb רברב/רר in the *hithpa'el* captures Zephaniah's *double entendre*, for it means both 'to magnify oneself'<sup>392</sup> and 'to boast.' This meaning for the *hif'il* גדל is kept by the Aramaic root רברב only when it relates to demeaning Israel. However, when the *hif'il* גדל relates to God's relation to Israel, TJ uses the root סגי, 'to multiply (goodness)' upon Israel (e.g., Joel 2:21 [Ps 125: 2–3 with the additional 'blessings']). על here can mean 'concerning' or 'against' which contextually makes no difference. With this choice, the sense of 'reviling, vilifying' (גדוף) God's people is toned down, and strikes a balance with the plural of 'boasts.'<sup>393</sup> Demeaning Judah vis-à-vis their borders suggests the devaluation of Judah's apportioned land alluded to in the previous verse, and is thus an indirect challenge to God's authority concerning Israel's land (cf Deut 32:8–11). It seems that for TJ, arrogance is the utmost sin. It is interesting to note that TJ Jer 48:26,42 changes the MT 'for he has taunted against YHWH' into 'against *the people of YHWH*.' In the Targumist's mind, both scriptures are linked, for both concern Moab and her insolence.

The Aramaic noun חסוד carries a Hebrew metrics (cf גדוף) which imparts its unique origin. It is one of the words common to Rabbinic Aramaic and which occurs in no other Aramaic dialect.<sup>394</sup>

Furthermore, the use of רברב/רר that convey both ideas of arrogance and revilement seems to serve as an inner Aramaic word-play, and thus, according to Shinan's criteria (see pp. 188–89 above), attests to an early and independent exegesis. The common last two letters, that create an assonance, may have induced this word-play.

<sup>390</sup> LXX uses the plural for both nouns.

<sup>391</sup> Showing ואתרדפו, 'and they pursued,' Ms C is either more confused, or intentionally intends to take the second interpretation, that of territorial gain by Israel's enemies. Having a much-corrupted text, the ms leaves no doubt that an exchange between ד/ר occurred. It is not clear why Tg uses the root רברב for the noun and רר for the verb. Neither verb is acknowledged by Houtman's *Bilingual Concordance*, but ררב is. Jastrow has them both. Ms F consistently uses רברב.

<sup>392</sup> So LXX.

<sup>393</sup> As in Isa 37:23, 51:7 and Ezek 5:15. In Isa 43:28 it is 'shame,' while in 37:6 and Ezek 20:27 (cf Num 15:30), where the object of the reviling is God, the replacement of 'reviled' is 'shamed... before Me' and 'irritated before Me' respectively.

<sup>394</sup> Tal, *The Language*, 164,175.



Zephaniah's 'I have heard' acquires the passive tense, for God does not hear like mortals. Instead, rumors, words, and speeches are brought to His attention. In Hab 1:2 the prophet complains that God does not hear his prayers. Targum omits 'but you do not listen' for the same reason, as well as to avoid the notion that God does not hear people's prayers, for He *does* hear them (cf the *Shma* 'Qoleinu' prayer during the morning *Amidah* which emphasizes the attribute of God as 'the One who hears [every] prayer').<sup>395</sup>

2:9: Therefore (as) I live, *said* YYY of Hosts, the God of Israel, for Moab like Sodom shall be, and the sons of Ammon—like Gomorrah, a fallow land of salt-plants and pits of salt, and desolation for ever; the remnant of My people shall despise them and the rest of the tribes shall dispossess them.

The first person continues in this verse, in which God vows to turn the two arrogant nations of Moab and Ammon into ruins as He did to Sodom and Gomorrah (cf Deut 29:22; Isa 1:9–10; Jer 50:40; Amos 4:11), the Dead Sea region being the birthplace of Moab and Ammon. The fate they escaped from earlier (Gen 19:24–38) will meet them now. Targum translates literally.

The rest of the verse elaborates on this scene of ruin. The first clause, made up of two hapax pairs of two-word phrases, has induced much discussion especially the first pair, **חָרוֹל מִמֶּשֶׁק חָרוֹל**, 'thistles' or 'net-tles,' grows in desert areas blown by the wind (Job 30:7; Prov 24:31).<sup>396</sup> **מִמֶּשֶׁק** is understood in various ways in connection with thistles:

First, the root identified is **שִׁקַּק**, as in **בּוֹ שׁוֹקֵק גְּבִים** 'as the noise of locust teeming in it' (Isa 33:4). The verb **שִׁקַּק** describes a noise caused by rushing, bustling movements (Joel 2:9;<sup>397</sup> Prov 28:15). Moab and Ammon shall become a land teeming with noise created by thistles rolling in the desert wind.<sup>398</sup>

<sup>395</sup> Siddur Sim Shalom, 114. Cf *Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 49,8; *Midrash Tehillim* 65,2; *Bavli, Berakhot* 29b; *Yerushalmi, Berakhot* 34b.

<sup>396</sup> Some of the other thorn plants symbolizing devastation in the HB are: **קוֹץ וְדַרְדָּר** (Hos 10:8) **קוֹץ שְׁמִיר** (Isa 32:13) **שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית** (Isa 5:6) **קמוֹשׁ וְחוֹחַ** (Isa 34:13) **בְּרִקוֹן** (Judg 8:7) **סַלְיוֹן** (Ezek 28:24).

<sup>397</sup> Here, too, **שִׁקַּק** refers to locust.

<sup>398</sup> Rashi and Altschuler.

Second, from **בֹּזֶמֶשֶׁק בֵּיתִי** (Gen 15:2), **מֶשֶׁק** is related to **שׁוּק**, ‘market,’ a place teeming with noise, like thistles blowing against each other make noise; or, as a servant **בֹּזֶמֶשֶׁק** does not leave the house, so are the thistles that do not leave the place.<sup>399</sup>

Third, the Arabic **مَشَد**, ‘to possess, acquire’ suggests ‘a land replete with weeds.’<sup>400</sup>

Fourth, on the basis of Hebrew and Aramaic, **מִמְשֶׁק** was originally **מִמְשֶׁק** from the root **מִשַׁק/מִסַּק**, ‘to harvest’ (e.g., olives, dates). Hence, **מִמְשֶׁק חָרוֹל** means “a place for harvesting nettles.” The irony is clear: as it is futile to harvest thorns, so the land of Moab and Ammon will remain unfit for habitation forever.<sup>401</sup> Greenfield describes a double process of interpretation in TJ. Targum’s use of **מִשְׁמַט** for **מִמְשֶׁק** reflects the influence of a Babylonian Aramaic, Mishnaic Hebrew and Akkadian root **שַׁמַּט**, ‘to pick fruits, to harvest’ (Hebrew **קִטַּף**). **מִמְשֶׁק** is derived from **מִמְשֶׁק**, its root being **מִשַׁק/מִסַּק**, ‘to harvest’ (especially used for olives), an agricultural term. Since harvesting is a seasonal activity that results in sustenance and celebration, the irony in Tg is noted: A place ‘to harvest’ salt-plants. **מְלוּחֵץ**, ‘salt-plants,’ Greenfield observes, “may be influenced by Job 30:4 **הַקְּטָפִים מְלוּחַ עַל־שִׁיחַ**” (already noted by Radaq).<sup>402</sup>

Fifth, **מִמְשֶׁק** is emended to **מִמְשֶׁשׁ** from the noun **מִשַׁשׁ**. The word **קָמוֹשׁ** means ‘weed’ (Isa 34:13; Hos 9:6; Prov 24:31) and its denominative would be **מִמְשֶׁשׁ** (like a **קָשָׂא** and **מִקְשָׂה**, Isa 1:8), and hence ‘a terrain of weeds.’<sup>403</sup>

Sixth, **מִמְשֶׁק** is the soil in which weeds (**חָרוֹל**) grow.<sup>404</sup>

<sup>399</sup> Ibn Ezra and Radaq.

<sup>400</sup> Gerleman, *Zephaniah*, 38. Others follow, e.g., Deissler (*Les Petits*, 455); G.A. Smith (*The Book*, 63); Robertson (*The Books*, 305); Stonehouse (*The Books*, 50). Sweetney reads **מִשַׁק** as ‘possession’ from the context in which Eliezer had the right to possess Abram’s estate as long as Abram had no biological heir. He, therefore, translates ‘a possession of weeds’ (*Zephaniah*, 139).

<sup>401</sup> Jonah C. Greenfield, “A Hapax Legomenon: **מִמְשֶׁק חָרוֹל**,” in *Studies in Judaica, Karaitica and Islamica* (ed. Sheldon R. Brunswick. Tel Aviv: Bar Ilan University Press, 1982), 79–82. Repr. *Al Kamfai Yonah*; Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology (vol. I–II. Ed. by Shalom M. Paul, Michael E. Stone, and Avital Pinnick. Leiden: Brill; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Magnes Press, 2001), 734–37.

<sup>402</sup> Greenfield, “A Hapax,” 80–81.

<sup>403</sup> Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 522–23. An intelligible exegesis. However, how does the similarity between the letters ‘ק’ and ‘מ’ in the Palmyran alphabet explain the confusion in our verse? Similar is Renaud’s “un domaine de chardons” (*Michée*, 228).

<sup>404</sup> Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 148.

Seventh, מְשֵׁפֶק is derived from שֵׁפֶק, ‘plenty’ (1 Kgs 20:10; Isa 2:6; Job 20:22), and hence a ‘district of abundance’ will turn into weeds of thistles.<sup>405</sup>

Targum’s translation differs from any of the scholarly interpretations. The exegetical translation of ‘a fallow land’ for מְמִשֶׁק points to the Hebrew verb שָׁמַט, ‘to lay fallow, abandon.’ This is also one of Radaq’s explanations of the word. Sounding close to the Hebrew, מִשְׁמַט also describes what happens to the soil around the Dead Sea when it is not tilled: salt-plants take over. However, this area is not conducive to cultivation. Targum may be suggesting that even farming the only oasis (*Ein Feshha?*) or making any other possible attempt to cultivate on the eastern shore of the Jordan Valley will result in futility. Targum injects the irony that even salt-plants will lay fallow.

The addition of ‘salt plants’ apart from the ‘salt mines,’ enhances this scene of total uselessness of the soil, and hence, total depopulation of the area, as was prophesied against Philistia (vv. 4–6). It is further highlighted by the plural of ‘salt-plants’ and ‘pits’ that paint a picture of a vast and total barren land.<sup>406</sup> The Aramaic מְלוּחִין is based on the Hebrew מְלוּחַ, a well-known plant that grows in salted water and desert soil.<sup>407</sup> Indirectly, TJ states that Moab and Ammon, as against Judah (v. 7), will find no sustenance. There is no reference to nettles or noise.<sup>408</sup>

The second hapax pair מְכַרְה־מְלַח depicts total dryness and barrenness, where the soil is infertile and useless except for its salt (cf ‘and Ekron shall be barren’ in v. 4b). This condition is perceived as divinely decreed on account of sins (Deut 29:22. Cf Jer 17:5–6). מְכַרְה,<sup>409</sup> another hapax legomenon, a place to dig pits, is derived from the root כָּרַה, a

<sup>405</sup> Horst, *Die Zwiölf*, 194. Not only are מְמִשֶׁק and מְשֵׁפֶק far apart orthographically, but the absence of ‘לְ (מְשֵׁפֶק)’ has to be explained.

<sup>406</sup> This is TJ’s translation of ‘salt’ in Ezek 47:11. Jastrow, 763.

<sup>407</sup> Cf *Midrash Tehillim* 114,7; *Midrash Numbers Rabbah* 11,2; *Tanhuma* (Warsaw), *Egeq* 7. Sweeney contends that since Hebrew חָרוֹל can mean “chickpeas” [?], TJ chose מְלוּחִין to ensure the association of “salt plants” with the Dead Sea region (*Zephaniah*, 140). In both Job 30:7 and Prov 24:31 חָרוֹל is translated correctly as ‘thorns,’ חוּרְלִי and חוּרְלִי respectively. TJ here underlines that the soil will turn against Moab and Ammon by becoming salty and cursed for generations. This is the essence of שִׁמְמָה.

<sup>408</sup> Gerleman translates Aramaic מְשַׁמַּט as ‘Standort’ (‘site, location’) without explanation (*Zephaniah*, 39). According to Rudolph, TJ’s reading is only a guess (*Micha*, 277, 9d).

<sup>409</sup> The word is also mentioned in the Mesha stela, line 25: וְאִנֹּכ כִרְתִי הַמְכַרְתַּת, ‘and I dug the pit.’ Sabottka cites Ps 65:14 where, he says, כָּרִים (from the root כָּרַה, ‘to dig’, and hence ‘a dug area’) parallels עֲמָקִים (‘valleys’). He concludes that מְכַרְה־מְלַח means ‘a valley of salt,’ גִּיא מְלַח (*Zephaniah*, 83, 87). The parallelism should rather be found in vv. 13–14, where נְאוֹת מְדַבֵּר is synonymous with כָּרִים הַצֵּאֵן (in the construct meaning of כָּרִי) while גְּבְעוֹת is synonymous with עֲמָקִים.

verb used in v. 6 in a *double entendre*.<sup>410</sup> The Akkadian *karru* means ‘to heap up,’ hence ‘salt heaps, piles’ (so Vul). Moreover, salt is also associated with devastation (Judg 9:45)<sup>411</sup> and with dispelling evil spirits.<sup>412</sup>

As the text suggests, Tj reads מְכָרָה from the root כָּרָה, ‘to dig’ and hence, ‘pits.’ It follows Zephaniah’s wordplay on the root כָּרָה/כָּרַת (vv. 5,6) and translates according to tradition or context. The difficult clause מְשַׁקְּ חֲרוֹל וּמְכָרָה-מְלַח is, then, interpreted as an abandoned land that is not conducive to habitation and that will never be populated again (as against the repossessed land of Philistia).

In a clear case of transposition, Mss U,Y and C read ממשט.

Targum reads ‘the remnant of My people’ as Judah, and ‘the rest of My nation’ as Israel, ‘the tribes.’ This reflects the unfailing hope of the return of the Jews from both exiles. Alternatively, both groups are perceived as parallels, namely, the “lost tribes” of Israel. Again, this vision projects the return from exile to boundaries of the land populated by Israel at the time of the “golden era” of David and Solomon, when Israel controlled the ancient land of Canaan and the territories east of the Jordan River (Gad, Ruben and half of Manasseh).

Whereas all the mss recognize the Hebrew יְבוֹזִים as derived from the root בּוּז, ‘to despise, contempt,’ the Jewish Medieval commentators derive it from בּוּז, ‘to plunder.’

Throughout the verse, Tg transmits a sense of a prayer: May the land of Moab and Ammon remain unsuitable for agriculture and habitation for ever; may the returning people of Israel inherit their land;<sup>413</sup> and may Moab and Ammon be stripped off any particle of possession.<sup>414</sup>

<sup>410</sup> And similarly-sound Crethites in v. 5, and the root כָּרָה in 1:3,4,11.

<sup>411</sup> Stanley Gevirtz offers several examples of Near Eastern kings sowing conquered and devastated cities with salt and other herbs (“Jericho and Shechem: A Religio-Literary Aspect of City Destruction,” *VT* 13 [1963]: 53–62). Though in our verse there is no need to sow salt, the association with שְׂמֵמָה and divine vow is important. See also Moshe Weinfeld who views the curse as a breach of covenant with the deity (*Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* [Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1992], 109–12). This suggests that Zephaniah alludes to a covenant between YHWH and Moab and Ammon, being the kinsmen of Israel (Gen 19:36–38).

<sup>412</sup> A.M. Honeyman, “The Salting of Shechem,” *VT* 3 (1953): 192–95.

<sup>413</sup> One might wonder what good is inheriting a land that is permanently unfit for habitation if the affected area seems to be limited to the Dead Sea region. However, if the prophet and Tg connotes the land of Moab and Ammon in general, then one might perceive the wish as referring to the principle of controlling a territory as a fitting punishment.

<sup>414</sup> For the difficult מְשַׁקְּ חֲרוֹל וּמְכָרָה-מְלַח, LXX and Peshitta offer interesting interpretations. LXX may indirectly connect its reading to Abraham when it translates: ‘and Damascus is left like a heap of wheat,’ alluding to Eliezer of Damascus, Abraham’s

2:10: This (shall come) to them for their boasting, for they disgraced and boasted against the people of YYY of Hosts.

With the end of God's first person speech, the prophet summarizes that address: just deserts will come to Moab and Ammon for their arrogance expressed in vilifying and insulting God's people. The two verbs, **תָּרְפוּ** and **וַיִּגְדְּלוּ** (this time, defective) are employed again. The previous 'My people' and 'My nation' are further reenforced with 'the People of YHWH of Hosts.'<sup>415</sup>

Targum's translation is literal. It, too, uses the same verbs **חסד** and **רברב** for the Hebrew **תָּרְפוּ** and **וַיִּגְדְּלוּ** respectively as it did in v. 8, though the verb **רר** is reserved for the verb again as in v. 8. Both nouns **גְּדוּף**, 'revilement,' and **גָּאוֹן**, 'arrogance,' and the *hif'il* **הגדיל** are translated in vv. 8 and 10 by the same root **רברב**, 'to magnify oneself, be great; to boast,' in the sense of being arrogant. On two occasions concerning Moab (Isa 16:6 and Jer 48:29), though, **גָּאוֹן** is interpreted as 'high officials.' The reuse of **רברב** here and in v. 8bβ for **הגדיל** may suggest the continuation of the perception of Moabite and Ammonite self-aggrandizement with the intent to demean Israel and challenge God's power. The use of the same verse also indicates that for TJ, verbal abuse, self-magnification and aggressiveness are all understood in the same sense of arrogance.

Moreover, the use of **רברב/רר** may reflect an inner Aramaic word-play to describe the triple ideas of revilement, self-magnification, and arrogance, thus pointing to a possible early-stage independent Targumic rendition as outlined by Shinan. The three corresponding Hebrew words, **גדף**, **גדל**, and **גאון** begin with the same letter (two begin with the same two letters), may have justified this word-play.

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servant, who performed household chores. **בֶּן מֵשֶׁק** (Gen 15:2) can be understood as 'one who is in charge of the household.' However, this reading has no connection with the text. It is more likely, then, that by an associative thought and the similarity between **ממשק** and **דמשק** the Septuagint took the opportunity to wish Damascus, a Hellenized city where Jews were mistreated even massacred, to suffer depopulation and be left like an abandoned heap of wheat. Cf Isa 17:1–11; Josephus, 2:20,2 and 7:8,7; Tcherikover, *Hellenistic*, 289–90. The connection with Abraham (Gen 19:23–26) is clearer in Peshitta, which translates: 'for their *plant has been destroyed* and *their salt-plant perished*.' The key is revealed in the use of **נצבתהון**, 'their plant;' with **מלוחהון**, 'their salt-plant' conjures up the fate of Lot's wife who became **נציב מלח**, 'a pillar of salt.' Vulgate guesses the intent with 'dryness of thorns and a heap of salt.' Cf Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 140.

<sup>415</sup> To this, the original Peshitta writer adds 'against Israel' for clarification and national pride.

Whereas Mss F,T,A,U,Y,R,P and Q,W consistently use only רַבְּרַב, as well as Mss Eb 88, all the Yemenite mss as well as Mss M and N consistently use רַרַב for the verb; Mss X,S alternate.

2:11: *The Fearful One, YYY, has determined to save them, for He has humbled all the fear of the land, and (every) man from his place, all the islands of the nations shall pray before Him.*

Many scholars regard this verse as a gloss for diverse reasons. For example: The sudden change in context or the change into prose;<sup>416</sup> the possibility that it was severed from an oracle which focused on Zion theology, when nations will convert to YHWHism, as part of the larger pericope that included 3:8–10;<sup>417</sup> the theory that the oracle on the Island Nations was moved to its current place in order to complete “the map” in 2:4–15;<sup>418</sup> the inconsistency of number between the plural (‘they shall worship,’ ‘the islands of the nations’) and the singular (‘a man/each person,’ ‘from his place’).<sup>419</sup>

‘Upon them’ in the MT clearly shows that the missing object is Moab and Ammon of the preceding verses. They are going to experience the awesome God. However, this is not TJ’s interpretation. The statement in the first part of the verse continues the vow that opened the oracle against Moab and Ammon. Targum connects v. 11 to v. 10

<sup>416</sup> E.g., Marti, *Das Dodekapropheten*, 370; Gerleman also finds in vv. 10–11 a universalistic perspective (*Zephanja*, 40); Yair Hoffmann contends that ‘the island nations’ were neither mentioned before nor later. It was added as part of the major focus of Zephaniah, namely, the Day of YHWH (הַנְּבוֹאוֹת עַל הַגּוֹיִים בַּמִּקְרָא) [Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Press, 1977], 179–80); Taylor expresses his literary critique of the text by detaching vv. 10–12, for they “are stylistically an inferior comment on vv. 8–9, written in prose in the third person” (“Zephaniah,” 1026); In Vlaardingerbroek’s view, vv. 8–12 exhibit an “expectation of salvation” that is quite different from the attitude displayed against Judah in 1:2–2:3. The shift in focus from Judah to other nations is also a factor in this later addition. It now focuses on the melting away of other gods which will bring about the salvation of other nations by turning to YHWH (*Zephaniah*, 127, 142–43).

<sup>417</sup> E.g., Keler, *Nahoum*, 203–04; Stonehouse assigns v.11b to the post exilic period, for by the phraseology and thought they resemble Deutero-Isaiah, e.g., 45:14, 49:7,23 (*The Books*, 52–53).

<sup>418</sup> E.g., Fr. Buhl places 2:11 before 3:9 as part of the oracle concerning the conversion of the nations (“Einige textkritische Bemerkungen zu den kleinen Propheten.” *ZAW* 5 [1885]: 182); Jean Calès explains the current unoriginal placement of 2:11 as a scribal error, deceived by either the word Cush that appears in 3:10 and 2:12, or by the words of similar forms as well as by the common issue in 2:9–10 and 3:8 (“L’authenticité de Sophonie, II, 11 et son contexte primitif,” *RSR* 10 [1920]: 355–57); Roberts says: it is “an isolated fragment” from an unknown place (*Nahum*, 201).

<sup>419</sup> Such inconsistency, though, is not atypical in poetry. Cf 3:7,14.

by the reference to the last mentioned object: the people of YHWH. As Israel's enemies are being severely punished, God has determined to save his people. It is an added promise concerning the inheritance of lands. The "perhaps" of 2:3 is now certain. As expressed in v. 10 ('the tribes'), TJ is concerned about the Jewish diaspora and clings to the hope of redemption.

Targum senses the difficult syntax of **נֹרָא יְהוָה עֲלֵיהֶם** ('YHWH is awesome upon/over them'). The indirect object poses a problem in the identification of 'them.' In 2:3 Tg exhorted Judah to seek the fear (**דחלתא**) of YHWH, which makes God the source of fear, reverence, a divine attribute. Also, the Hebrew **נֹרָא** (of the root **ירא**, 'to fear') in our verse and following 'the people of YHWH,' directs Tg to ascribe this phrase to Judah. However, to do so Tg employs the word not as an adjective, but as a noun with a definite article separating **נֹרָא** from **יְהוָה**, thus creating an apposition (as it does in 3:5 in connection with, again, God's attribute), 'The Awesome, YHWH.'<sup>420</sup> 'Fear/Awesome' is also the name of God as it is written in Ps 111:9, 'His name is Holy and Fear' (cf 99:3).<sup>421</sup>

The difficulty in this verse is solved when one realizes its pivotal place in the oracle against the nations. It allows the oracle's focus to shift from the redemption of the remnant of Israel to other nations whose relationship with Judah/Israel is not an overt issue. This important role is well understood by TJ, which identifies the two parts of the verse with two separate subjects, Judah and the island nations (as it does in 3:7). The link is made by the word **בִּי**, 'for' and thus the redemption of Judah is perceived as occurring simultaneously with the humbling of the nations.<sup>422</sup>

Targum uses the same root **דחל**, 'to fear,' for both 'awesome' and 'gods' in a wordplay. This is an anomaly, for the usual cognate for 'gods' is **טַעֲוֹתָא** (e.g., 1 Sam 5:7; Isa 42:17; Jer 5:19). However, when

<sup>420</sup> Mss Y,P, S,Q and mss B,G and MG, though, read **נֹרָא** as a noun, presenting yet another rendition (י) **דחילא דיי**, 'the Fear of YHWH.' So Radaq who uses the late marker **דה**.

<sup>421</sup> Both LXX and Peshitta read **נראה** from the root **ראה** in the meaning of 'appeared,' suggesting a theophany. For Peshitta this adoption of the LXX fits well its Christian teaching.

<sup>422</sup> This issue of when this redemption will take place (or when the *Shekhinah* returns to the land of Israel, cf 3:5) is considered by Gordon to be "something to be experienced in the future" (*Studies*, 134). Smolar, however, explains the targumic **אמר** ('decided') as an intention whose fulfillment will occur in "some mystical future" (*Studies*, 222–23). "Mystical" or not, it is indeed an intention to be fulfilled in the future when God wills it.



the text quotes a non-Israelite referring to YHWH, 'אֱלֹהִים' is translated either by 1) אֱלֹהֵא Kgs 20:23,28) or דְּחָלָא (Isa 36:18–20, 37:12). It seems, therefore, that TJ mocks the 'fear' of the pagans, whom God has subdued, and imitates their worshippers' speech.

Another view is expressed by Ribera who considers the double דחל a targumic play on the double sense of the root, which is absent in Hebrew.<sup>423</sup> Indeed, we saw this tendency in the previous verse in the use of the root רברב for 'arrogance' and 'increase.'

Scholars find difficulties in the clause 'for He רָזָה all the gods of the land,' because רָזָה is unique in *gal* and the verb never appears as transitive. But there is ample evidence for its meaning of 'become thin, emaciate'<sup>424</sup> to get the picture of the message. Targum understands the metaphorical intent of רָזָה vis-à-vis the gods and translates accordingly: 'to subdue, to humble, abase.' As the respectable, נִכְבֵּד (e.g., Isa 23:8–9; Nah 3:10), is usually a heavy person (1 Sam 4:18), its opposite will render the gods 'insignificant.' Ribera reads the verb רזה as 'to dominate,' a meaning in later Hebrew. This he bases on Sabottka's contention that apart from "emaciation," רוּזוֹן carries the meaning of authority, 'prince, high official' (Prov 14:28<sup>425</sup>).<sup>426</sup> Also, Jastrow (p. 1464) gives the primary meaning of רזה as 'to be strong, hard.' The noun רוּזוֹן, Sabottka continues, apart from the meaning 'secret,' also has the sense of 'strength, foundation.' Moreover, the name of the angel רִזְיָאל supposedly means 'God is strong, God prevails.'<sup>427</sup> These considerations indicate that in Zeph 2:11 רזה, in conjunction with a direct object, can mean 'to be strong.'

<sup>423</sup> Ribera, "La versión," 155. To read the second דחל as "the terrible ones" (i.e., idols), as Daniel H. Ryou, is inaccurate (*Zephaniah's Oracles Against the Nations. A Synchronic and Diachronic Study of Zephaniah 2:1–3:8*. [Biblical Interpretation Series, Vol 13. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995], 42).

<sup>424</sup> רָזָה in the *pi'el* (Isa 17:4), the adjective רָזָה/רָזָה (Num 13:20; Ezek 34:20), and the noun רוּזוֹן (Isa 10:16; Mic 6:10; Ps 106:15).

<sup>425</sup> It is more likely that רוּזוֹן here is a mistake by the scribe who exchanged two very similar letters, וו instead of רוּזוֹן, 'a dignitary, noble, high-official.'

<sup>426</sup> Ribera, "La versión," 155.

<sup>427</sup> The angel Razi'el has actually nothing to do with this meaning. From the *Zohar* (e.g., 1:55b) and from *Otzar ha-Midrashim* (e.g., *Ma'ayan ha-Hokhmah* 3, *Ma'asseh Bereshit U-Ma'asseh Merkavah* 5, Noah 6 and 15) it is clear that Razi'el was the angel who knew the *secrets* of the universe, the secrets of life and the fate of man. His power and acts are described in *Sefer Razi'el*, a "collection of mystical, cosmological, and magical Hebrew works and portions of works" from the 17th century (Joseph Dan, "Razi'el, Book of" *E7* 13:1592–93).



This exercise in semantics in fact results in a statement that is completely opposite to the prophet's message: 'For He made all the gods of the land strong.' Jastrow's 'to be strong' refers to the root **רזה** which TJ does not employ at all; rather, it offers **אַמְאִיךְ** (from **מִוֶּדְ/מֵאִךְ**), 'I shall lower, humble, subdue,' which perfectly fits the accusation against the gods and nations (3:8b–11). God will subdue the gods' significance and their power of fear over their worshipers. From 'to be strong' or even 'prince' is a long jump to 'dominate' as Ribera suggests. One should consider the Aramaic and the context rather than adopt a "unique insight."

Sweeney notes Tg's emphasis on God's "redemptive acts on behalf of Israel."<sup>428</sup>

The MT foresees every person bowing down to God from his own place, suggesting bowing in the direction of Jerusalem. This is not the targumist's concern. As seen before, he promotes praying as an expression of devotion. The world is united by praying to the one God, for the hold of the gods upon them by fear has failed (Rashi). The redemption of Israel is part of a divine plan to eliminate idolatry from the world. One might suggest that these are the converted island nations that God will redeem, instead of the people along the Coast whose destruction has already been declared (2:5). However, nowhere does God 'redeem' nations. Nations are blessed through Israel (Gen 22:18) or through God (Jer 4:2). God's decision to save Israel is a short summary appraisal of vv. 7–10.<sup>429</sup>

Mss W and ms O add **וְיִסְגְּדוּן לֵהּ** ('and they shall bow to/worship Him') before **וְיִבְעוּן** ('and they shall pray'), and thus provide a literal translation. By this addition, the scribe proclaims that praying is not sufficient for true conversion. It is not surprising to find it in Zamora's Ms W and its dependent, the Antwerp Polyglot Bible.

2:12: You, too, Cushites, *shall* be the slain of My sword.

In a sudden shift, God returns in the first person. The sentence lacks a verb. The Cushites are the slain of His sword. Scholars try to identify the Cushites and find the reason why they are mentioned rather than Egypt, for the Cushite dynasty was long gone by Zephaniah's days

<sup>428</sup> Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 143.

<sup>429</sup> LXX is more specific with 'and He shall *destroy* all the gods of *the nations* of the land.' Peshitta is similar with 'to destroy' but targets '*the kings* of the land.' It also renders a more logical description with 'the islands of the *seas*.'

(in 663 BCE). Some identify them with Egypt,<sup>430</sup> Ethiopia proper (or Nubia),<sup>431</sup> the Midianites or tribes to the south of Judah,<sup>432</sup> or the Kas-sites (Akkadian *Kuššū*).<sup>433</sup> But this is not TJ's concern.<sup>434</sup>

In the Latter Prophets, in twelve cases out of fifteen, כּוּשׁ is translated as a name of a country, Cush, or a people, כּוּשׁ־אֲזַי (e.g., Isa 20:3,4; Ezek 30:5,9; Nah 3:9). The only two odd places, Isa 18:1 and Zeph 3:10, have 'India' (see commentary on 3:10). Similarly, כּוּשִׁי as an ethnic term is also understood as an 'Indian' (Jer 13:23). Regarding the personal name כּוּשִׁי, see commentary on 1:1. The plural כּוּשִׁים appears only twice in the Latter Prophets, once here and once in Amos 9:7 (כּוּשִׁיִּים) where the meaning is changed from condemnation to a statement of endearment with no mention of Cushites: 'Is it not you who are considered before Me like loving sons, House of Israel, said YHWH; is it not I who brought Israel out of the land of Egypt and the Philistines from Qaputqia (Capadocia), and Aram from Qirnei [Hebrew קִיר]?' Cushites, for TJ, follows the name of Cush as a territorial designation, probably of Ethiopia.

Some find disharmony between the pronoun אַתָּה, 'you,' in the first colon and the pronoun הֵמָּה, 'they' in the second, even though such inconsistency is common in the HB.<sup>435</sup> Ibn Ezra suggests reading אַתָּם in place of הֵמָּה, or, quoting Yefet, adding comparative כּ, כּוּשִׁיִּים, pointing back to the Moabites and the Ammonites.<sup>436</sup> Peshitta omits הֵמָּה. Sabottka, finding the Ugaritic *hm* cognate to the Hebrew *hn/hnh*, reads 'Look! Behold!'<sup>437</sup>

<sup>430</sup> Deissler identifies Cush as a derogatory name for Egypt (*Les Petits*, 456). This contradicts Amos 9:7. Others, like Elliger (*Das Buch*, 73), Renaud (*Michée*, 231), and G.A. Smith (*A Critical*, 63), either refer to Egypt of the Sais dynasty or to Egypt of Zephaniah's time.

<sup>431</sup> Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 141. Ball's assertion that this designation comes not for the sake of punishment raises the question: what does a mere geographic location do in an oracle against nations?

<sup>432</sup> E.g., Robert D. Haak, "Cush' in Zephaniah," in *The Pitcher is Broken*. Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström (eds. Steven Holloway and Lowell Handy. JSOT Supplement Series 190. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1995), 242–44, 245 note 25.

<sup>433</sup> Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 112–13. Citing Gen 10:8–10, Margaret Odell interprets "Cushim" as "the traditional designation of the peoples of Assyria" ("*Zephaniah*," in *Harper Collins Bible Commentary* [eds. James L. Mays et al. New York: Harper San Francisco, 2000]: 673).

<sup>434</sup> LXX and Vulgate identify them as 'Ethiopians.'

<sup>435</sup> Radaq brings three such examples, 1 Sam 6:4; Isa 1:29 and Job 17:10.

<sup>436</sup> Abrahanel. So Rudolph in *Micha*, 276,278.

<sup>437</sup> Adopted by Christensen (*Prophecy*, 156,158). If, as Sabottka suggests (*Zephaniah*, 92–93), this verse is linked to vv. 13–15, why would the prophet ask dead, pierced and

Others emend the second colon: Read ‘My sword’ in place of ‘His sword’ claiming it is the prophet who speaks;<sup>438</sup> read יַחֲרַבְיָ, *god* representing the tetragrammaton;<sup>439</sup> חֶרֶב יְהוָה, ‘the sword of YHWH’;<sup>440</sup> read חֶרֶב־יְהוָה, ‘their sword.’<sup>441</sup>

Because of the sudden shift in speaker, the short syntax and the verbless sentence, some find the whole verse suspicious. Ball links v. 12a to ‘the islands of the nations’ to say that even the Cushites will worship God. Verse 12b he links with the fate of Assyria, to whom הַמָּה refers.<sup>442</sup>

Since all the verbs in vv. 9–15 point to events in the future, Tg reads the second pronoun as a verb in the imperfect: ‘you shall be.’<sup>443</sup> There is an attempt to frame oracles against the nations as future events foretold by the prophet himself at the date recorded in the superscription. The Cushites are not a special case. Their fate will be like that of the rest of the sinful nations. Targum does not provide any reason for Cush to be part of this oracle.<sup>444</sup>

The Hebrew noun הַלְּלִים, ‘slain (ones),’ is rendered by a passive tense ‘slain, killed, pierced,’ and keeping the construct form, Tg describes the Cushites’ fate as the slain of God’s sword.

Four Mss, T,A, and N,Q read חֶרֶבָא. At first glance, ‘a sword’ denies the theological import of the first person יַחֲרַבְיָ, ‘My sword.’ However, this later change reflects a targumic characteristic to distance God from “owning” a sword, or needing one. Moreover, nowhere else is God portrayed as bringing death upon people with His sword. A change was made to harmonize with all other scriptures where God decrees death by sword.<sup>445</sup> Yet, there is no evidence that this change was made in Palestine; rather, it probably occurred in Europe.

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mutilated bodies to look at how God handles the Assyrians? Moreover, הַמָּה never occurs in the HB at the end of a sentence.

<sup>438</sup> E.g., Ehrlich and BH2.

<sup>439</sup> A phenomenon unknown in any ancient Hebrew text, whether by a single ‘י’ or ‘ה’. E.g., G.R. Driver, “Abbreviations in the Massoretic Text,” *Textus* 1 (1960): 119. Ben Zvi makes a case for it, but later dismisses it as “unlikely” (*A Historical*, 177–78).

<sup>440</sup> BHS; Schwally; Elliger; Horst. Elliger seems to see חֶרֶב־יְהוָה as corrupt for הוֹרָה [?].

<sup>441</sup> An unattested form in the HB. ‘The slain of their sword,’ would make no sense. Rudolph, *Micha*, 278, 12b.

<sup>442</sup> Ball, *A Rhetoric*, 141–42. Cf Calès, “L’authenticité,” 355 note 1.

<sup>443</sup> So LXX and Vulgate. This reading is espoused by some scholars.

<sup>444</sup> Contrary to such a silence, see, e.g., Tg Esther 2:9 that provides a reason why Esther was given seven maid-servants. Grossfeld, *The First Targum*, 98–99.

<sup>445</sup> E.g., Hos 1:7, 7:16; Amos 9:1; Mic 6:14.

2:13: And He shall raise *the stroke/affliction of His might* over the north, and He shall destroy *the Assyrian* and turn Nineveh into a desolation, a wasteland like a desert.

The *vav* conjunctive indicates a resumption of the pericope concerning the nations. However, it is connected with a jussive verb which is not reflected in any of the versions. Since Marti ties v. 13a with the Cushites in v. 12,<sup>446</sup> he changes the text to read in the first person:

וְאֶאֱבֹד וְאֶטָּה יְדִי.<sup>447</sup>

Targum's interpretation of God raising His hand avoids anthropomorphism, since instead it is described as the stroke of His power that is extended. The Aramaic מְחָא is the Hebrew cognate for מַכָּה, 'a stroke, wound, sore, affliction' (e.g., TJ Isa 1:6; Jer 10:19; Mic 1:9; Nah 3:19; Zech 13:6). This meaning, within the context of punishment against Israel's enemies, is consistent with the Rabbinic view. In *Mekhilta ha-Shirah* 9 the Rabbis learn that raising 'the right hand' (Exod 15:12) means to make a vow, and when God stretches out His hand, וַיִּטְ יָדוֹ עַל-צָפוֹן, the wicked of this world are destroyed, for the Assyrians were evil.

Rabbi Levi in *Midrash Ruth Rabbah* 2,19 explicates that means of destruction, stating that 'wherever the hand of God is mentioned it refers to the plague of pestilence.'<sup>448</sup> *Midrash Tehillim* 32,3 carries a shorter version, stating that the hand of God is always in the context of a plague. However, *Gevurot ha-Shem* 58,157 notes that 'יָד ה' without the definite article indicates only the divine finger in wondrous action. With the definite article, it denotes the full force of God's hand. In the Passover Haggadah the hand of God is discussed in detail in order to convey the enormous might of God's plagues upon the Egyptians.

These sources (and many others) understand the phrase הִטָּה יָד עַל as a divine, miraculous act of punishment. However, in the Exodus episode, not only was it Moses or Aaron who did the act, but the act itself was more than merely raising the hand. As seen from Exod 7:20, 8:2,13, 9:23 the phrase involves the raising of the hand and striking the object to be affected, whether the waters, the earth or the sky. When

<sup>446</sup> Saying that the direction that started with Philistia leads to the north through Egypt (!). Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, 370–71.

<sup>447</sup> The correct inflection is וְאֶטָּה.

<sup>448</sup> In *Midrash Ruth* 2,37 this statement is ascribed to R. Joshua. The same link is made in *Exodus Rabbah* (Margalio) 10,2.

it is God's hand, it is perceived as a miracle whenever God's might appears (e.g., Exod 9:3; Deut 9:29, 11:2).<sup>449</sup>

Instead of the MT's 'Assyria,' TJ reads 'the Assyrian,'<sup>450</sup> which may symbolize the Roman emperor, who is targeted for a special retribution. However, in Isa 11:11 and 16 **מֵאֲשׁוּר** is translated as 'from Assyria' and 'from the Assyrian,' respectively. In this Isaiahic pericope, Assyria is mentioned among several nations. Verse 16, which ends this oracle, is understood by TJ as saying that from among the nations, the remnant of Israel who shall remain from the Assyrian exile, will find its way back to the land of Israel. In our verse, as well, from among the nations of the north TJ envisions Assyria to be selected for the stroke of God's might. Targum infers that in 'the north' Assyria is but one nation among others. This observation fits well with TJ's cautious tendency to select only the wicked for punishment.

Radaq raises another possibility, in which 'the Assyrian' can be viewed as Assyria, to where the ten tribes had been exiled, in contrast to Babylon, designated by 'north,' to where Judah was exiled.

Zephaniah's unique phrase, **צִיָּה כַּמְדָּבָר**, is made up of two synonyms (cf Ps 107:35) in a simile structure. This concerns some commentators. One, for example, compares **צִיָּה** to curses in Aramaic and Assyrian treaties and reads **צִיָּה** here in the meaning of imprecations and ghosts.<sup>451</sup> This phrase has to be construed as though written **כַּצִּיָּה כַּמְדָּבָר**, as a merism for all types of desolated areas, in the like of **גִּם...גִּם**.

Targum distinguishes between **צִיָּה** and **מְדָבָר** (cf Isa 35:1 and Jer 50:12), following the MT closely. In most cases **צִיָּה** is translated as **צִדְיָא**, 'desolation, wasteland' (Jer 2:6, 51:43; Ezek 19:13; Joel 2:20; Hos 2:5).<sup>452</sup> **אֲשַׁתְּמָמוּ** was probably chosen for its closeness to the root **שָׁמַם**, which can mean 'desolate' and 'perplexed,' thus anticipating the response of the passers-by in v. 15.

<sup>449</sup> Sweeney reads TJ as an explicit reference to the exodus traditions (*Zephaniah*, 152).

<sup>450</sup> So Peshitta and Vulgate.

<sup>451</sup> J.P.J. Olivier, "A Possible Interpretation of the Word *siyyā* in Zeph. 2,13," *JNSL* VIII (1980): 95–97. The problem in this theory is that all the verses referred to have the plural **צִיָּים**, wild, ghost-like animals. In our verse the focus is on dry land (**שָׁמָמָה**, **צִיָּה**, **מְדָבָר**), lack of provisions and water (cf Jer 2:6; Pss 78:17, 105:41). The focus on animals appears in the next verse.

<sup>452</sup> Once **צִדְיָא**, 'desolation' (Jer 50:12), once **צִיָּתִיָּא**, 'dryness, thirst' (Isa 35:1), and once **צִחְוֹנָא**, 'parched ground' (Isa 41:18).

In our verse TJ perceives the raising of God's hand as a continuation of God's vow in v. 9, and the employment of that divine mighty strike to bring about the plagues of desolation and destruction on the nations, here in particular to Assyria.

2:14: And flocks of all the beasts of *the field* shall lie down in her midst; ravens as well as owls shall dwell in the engraving(-) of her gates; the voice of the bird is chirping in her window; her doors are destroyed and her ceilings they have torn down.

This long verse provides several examples of the nature of Nineveh's desolation. It contains several difficulties which the Witnesses, as well as modern commentators, attempted to solve. The first textual difficulty is the unique phrase כָּל-חַיְתוֹ-גּוֹי, which is translated "every animal of a nation," "all kinds of wild animals," and the like.<sup>453</sup> The difficulty is inherent not so much in the genitive of חַיְתוֹ (cf Gen 1:24; Ps 50:10) but in the hapax combination with גּוֹי, 'people, nation,' for it is usually connected with land, field or forest.<sup>454</sup> Therefore, LXX corrects with 'the beasts of the land.' Vulgate and Peshitta correct with the plural 'all the beasts of the nations,' reading חַיֹּת by metathesis and perforce גּוֹיִם.

Targum corrects the text with 'the beast of the field,' which fits the rest of the verse that deals with animals. R.P. Gordon suggests that TJ may be treating גּוֹי as גֵּיא,<sup>455</sup> 'valley,' and that חַיְתוֹ-אֶרֶץ (Gen 1:24) could be another possibility not to be overlooked.<sup>456</sup> But it is more likely that TJ recognized the poetic style of *vav compaginis* in חַיְתוֹ (cf Ps 50:10a, 113:5–9) as singular and at the same time as presenting a

<sup>453</sup> E.g., Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 152; Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 154,156; Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 180.

<sup>454</sup> Based on Phoenician and Aramaic, Sabottka suggests to reread גּוֹי, 'within her,' which does not necessitate any consonantal change (*Zephaniah*, 92,96). However, 'within her' necessitates three consonantal changes: Eliminating the "י", adding the preposition 'ב' and the genitive 'ה' to create בְּגִיָּה. Cf Ryou's criticism (*Zephaniah's Oracles*, 46, note 130). With a slight change (and with no justification in the Hebrew) Rudolph reads גִּיָּי, 'pasture' as a variant form of גִּיָּה. He justifies this reading on the Biblical association between גִּיָּה and רִבְבָן (*Micha*, 278, 14b).

<sup>455</sup> Others suggest the same, such as Keller, *Nahoum*, 203; Renaud, *Michée*, 232; Ryou, *Zephaniah's Oracles*, 47. Van Hoonacker prefers its Arabic meaning of 'marsh, stagnated waters' rather than 'valley' (*Les Douze*, 524).

<sup>456</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 169. This is also Ryou's commentary. However, חַיִּיא is a collective word for 'beast, animal' and there is no חַיִּית הַגֵּיא in Biblical Hebrew.

better and a more familiar reading for its audience.<sup>457</sup> The relationship between the flocks and the animal species is not clear in the MT. By adding ‘of’ to ‘all,’ Tg clarifies that flocks of every type of wild animals will lie there.<sup>458</sup>

The same apposition between the flocks and the wild animals is created without the genitive of **ד**(כל) in Mss F,U,Y,R and N. However, a subtle change is made by Ms C’s reading of **ובל** that separates domestic flocks from wild animals. If this was an intentional change, then the scribe wished to augment the scene of desolation. Nonetheless, considering Ms C’s having proved itself to be quite an unreliable ms, it is very likely that the scribe read the ‘ד’ as a ‘ו’.

An exact identification of the animals has miserably eluded all commentators.<sup>459</sup> In Isa 34:11, **קִצָּת** and **קִפְדָּ** appear as birds of ruins.<sup>460</sup> Based on the Arabic *qūt*, plural *aquāt*, ‘provisions, stores,’ and the Assyrian (*bīt*)-*qāti*, ‘store(house),’ Haupt identifies **קִצָּת** (more precise, **קָת**) as a swamp bird, and **קִפְדָּ**, ‘bittern,’ from the Arabic *qādafa* (or *dafaqa*) as another swamp bird. In this reading, the two come to portray a submerged palace, whose only visible remains are the capitals of its columns.<sup>461</sup> Ibn Ezra cites a theory that the name **קִצָּת** is derived from the bird’s habit of throwing up its food, **קִיא**.

Other identifications for **קִצָּת** and **קִפְדָּ** are lizards, several types of owls, the jackdaw, the bustard and the cormorant. *Pesikta Rabbati* 17,7 views **עֲרוֹב** (swarms of wild beasts, insects?) as the equivalent for **קִצָּת** which will plague Edom (read Rome).

<sup>457</sup> Gordon also notes that **גוי** may be understood by the Arabic *jaww* to mean ‘land,’ and that one Hebrew ms de Rossi 20 (primo) shows **שד**, ‘field,’ instead of **גוי** (*Targum*, 169).

<sup>458</sup> LXX, Peshitta and Ms C add ‘and’ instead, thus separating the ‘flocks’ from ‘all the animals of the nations.’

<sup>459</sup> Pelicans, which are water birds, should not be considered (e.g., ASV; NJB; NKJ; Rudolph, *Micha*, 276, 278; Renaud, *Michée*, 234); neither should bitterns, land birds that are mostly found in close proximity to animals (e.g., KJV; NKJ); nor hedgehogs, rodents that live mostly in burrows and under bushes (e.g., NAS; ASV; Taylor, “Zephaniah,” 1027; Roberts, *Nahum*, 191). After a lengthy discussion, and drawing from the Arabic, Van Hoonacker prefers rats and beavers, rodents that live near water. (*Les Douze*, 525).

<sup>460</sup> **קפוז** in v. 15 may be another version of **קפד**. The Aramaic *qufda* and the Arabic *qunfud*, as well as the post-biblical Hebrew **קפד**, refer to a porcupine, a nocturnal small mammal that lives underground or among bushes. Even-Shoshan, “קִפְדָּ, קִפְדָּ,” *המלון החדש*, 6:2377–78.

<sup>461</sup> This is what happens when relying on unreliable Arabic. Haupt, “Pelican,” 158–61.

Targum's קַתִּין is translated by Jastrow (p. 1434) as pelican, which all commentators follow. However, the Targumist no doubt knew Lev 11:18, where קַאֲת is clearly listed among birds, and more specifically, nocturnal fowl. According to *Bavli*, *Berakhot* 58a and Rashi, קַאֲת is a bird of prey that causes damage to agriculture. In *Moed Qatan* 25b Rashi explains that קַאֲת and קַפֵּד are a sign for misfortune. *Bavli*, *Hullin* 63a describes קַאֲת as the קוֹק, a type of raven. Similarly, Even-Shoshan describes קִיק, a sub-form of קַאֲת, as a type of raven.<sup>462</sup> This is the preferred translation here. The addition of the 'fowl' whose voice is chirping emphasizes this identification.<sup>463</sup>

קַפֵּד as 'hedgehog' is probably a late meaning. In both HB and *Berakhot* the word most probably describes a nocturnal bird of prey. Hedgehogs live in burrows and bushes and do not climb buildings. Having no knowledge of such a bird in English, and because of its occurrence after types of owls in Lev 11:18, I choose to read here 'owl.'

Typically, כַּפְתוֹר is capitals, architectural engraved designs on top of pillars. It seems that the Witnesses did not know its exact meaning, though they all render architectural contexts: LXX reads 'ceilings,' Peshitta, 'in her homes,' and Vulgate, 'in her thresholds.' Targum's understanding is superior in that it reads 'in the engravings of her gates,' which gives the *meaning* of בְּכַפְתֵּרֶיהָ. The gates of a city represent its first stronghold against invaders. When they collapse, the fall of the rest of the city is inevitable.

Some find another difficulty in the phrase קוֹל יְשׁוּרֵר בַּחֲלוֹן, 'a voice will be singing in the window,' even though it is quite simple. קוֹל is read either 'voice, hark',<sup>464</sup> it is emended to כּוֹס, 'owl,' (Ps 102:7),<sup>465</sup> another unclean bird on Lev 11's list (v. 17; Deut 14:16); it is a bird with a human voice.<sup>466</sup> According to Elliger, the owl and the raven will sing the lament in v. 15a–bα. In this case it is more likely that those passers-by will be the deliverers of the elegy.<sup>467</sup>

<sup>462</sup> Even-Shoshan, 6:2340.

<sup>463</sup> In English, ravens do not chirp but caw. In Hebrew, ravens are considered song-birds.

<sup>464</sup> Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 111,144; Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 115; Calvin, *Commentaries*, 255 ('their voice'); Lehrman, *The Twelve*, 245 ('voices'); Ehrlich, *בְּקוֹל כַּפְשׁוֹטוֹ*, 460 ('the voice of the wind').

<sup>465</sup> E.g., Th. Gaster, *Myth*, 685. According to Arabic and Syrian lore, the owl and the raven (קַאֲת and the emendation of תַּרְבּוּ) haunt ruins and are considered demons. Horst adopts Wellhausen's emendation to קוֹס [?] (*Die Zewölf*, 194).

<sup>466</sup> Roberts, *Nahum*, 194.

<sup>467</sup> Elliger, *Das Buch*, 70,74.



Since most scholars agree that the common verb שׁוּרַר/שׁוּר, ‘sing,’<sup>468</sup> needs no emendation, the two objects must imply to ‘singing’ and not an abstract ‘voice’ or ‘destruction, desolation’<sup>469</sup> or ‘a hole.’<sup>470</sup> These are unnecessary. יְשׁוּרַר in the *poel* form always appears in the context of professional singers or musicians playing, especially with a Temple association (cf 2 Chron 23:13; Neh 12:45–47). It implies a hymnic celebration of Nineveh’s downfall.

Instead, TJ uses the Aramaic verb נָצַף, ‘to chirp,’ for the Hebrew צַפֵּץ, ‘to make the sound of a bird’ (Isa 8:19, 29:4, 38:14), rather than its usual verb שָׁבַח, for the Hebrew שׁוּר. Several reasons can be theorized: first, שׁוּר for TJ is almost always the praising of God (e.g., Isa 26:1, 42:10; Jer 20:13) and there seems to be a deliberate avoidance of its application to unclean birds, which would take away the liturgical connotation. Second, it simply imparts the sound of birds. Third, it asserts that even the birds were happy for the destruction of Nineveh.

As it did concerning בְּכַפְתֵּרֶיהָ, TJ explains the meaning of ‘voice’ by providing the subject: it is the bird’s voice.<sup>471</sup>

The next colon, חָרַב בַּסֶּף, literally, ‘dryness/destruction at the threshold,’ has been repointed in three ways: first, based on LXX, some read עָרַב, ‘raven,’ that adds another bird to the verse.<sup>472</sup> Second, based on Peshitta, Aquila and Symmachus, some read חָרַב, ‘sword.’<sup>473</sup> Third, some read חָרַב, ‘attack, smite down.’<sup>474</sup> Targum, too, repoints

<sup>468</sup> Ryou’s ‘to echo’ is odd (*Zephaniah’s Oracles*, 49). So NIV; NIB. The type of sound depends on the subject each version or translator picks. For example, owls ‘resound’ (NAB), ‘hoot’ (NRS; NAJ; RSV; J.M.P. Smith) or ‘coo’ (Robertson); ravens ‘croak’ (NAB; NRS; RSV; Roberts); birds ‘chirp’ (TJ); beasts ‘call out’ (LXX) or ‘growl’ (Peshitta); the wind ‘whistles’ (Orelli).

<sup>469</sup> E.g., Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 181; Lehrman, *The Twelve*, 245. What is the connection between singing and desolation? Does the ‘voice’ celebrate the destruction? Close to the sense of ‘destruction’ is ‘debris’ or ‘rubbish’ (Barthélemy, *Critique*, 898–99).

<sup>470</sup> Ehrlich argues for a dittography in which a scribe added a ‘ב’ due to the next ‘ב’ in בַּסֶּף. What is left is חָר, a hole where the door used to be. The ‘voice’ is that of the wind that blows through the open window and the gaps left by the broken doors (Ehrlich, *מקרא כפשוטו*, 460).

<sup>471</sup> No one Witness translates the MT accurately: LXX reads ‘and *beasts* will call in her canals’; Peshitta, ‘and *beasts* in her midst will roar.’ Close to the MT is the Vulgate with ‘voice sings in the window.’

<sup>472</sup> LXX’s עָרַב, ‘raven,’ does not fit the overall intent behind the verse, which implies a hymnic celebration, rather than a crowing corvine bird. Advocates for the reading of ‘raven’ are, e.g., Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 115–16; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 456–57; G.A. Smith, *The Book*, 64; Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 155; Rudolph, *Micha*, 276, 278, 14h.; Vulgate also espouses ‘raven.’ A fuller list can be found in Barthélemy’s *Critique*, 897.

<sup>473</sup> E.g., Sabottka, *Zephaniah*, 97.

<sup>474</sup> Ball’s revocalization of the verb חָרַב ‘attack, smite down’ is based on a non-existent meaning (*A Rhetorical*, 112). It also raises grammatical and syntactical problems, let

חָרַב in this case to the verbal plural חָרְבָּ (‘have been destroyed’) to fit ‘the gates.’ A large city does not have only one gate but several.

It is not clear why TJ does not translate סף, ‘threshold,’ a common word and very similar to its Aramaic cognate ספא.<sup>475</sup> Perhaps the ‘window’ suggested ‘doors,’ a second meaning to תרעהא, ‘gates,’ used earlier in the verse. The MT חָרַב בַּסֶּף, ‘dryness/destruction at the threshold,’ is interpreted as ‘the doors have been destroyed.’ Perhaps the imagery of destroyed threshold was not strong enough to convey ruin and desolation. Interestingly, both LXX and Peshitta also render ‘gates/doors.’ An answer may be found in R. Ashi’s opinion that destruction starts at the door.<sup>476</sup>

The next problematic expression is a causal phrase, כִּי אֲרִזָּה עָרָה, which should provide the reason for the state of destruction portrayed earlier. The association of אֲרִזָּה with רָזָה (both are also preceded with כִּי) in v. 11 may suggest, somehow, a meaning of ‘diminish, become thinner or smaller in size.’ This could be accepted if one reads עָרָה as a noun (no one does) which does not exist, unless we read עָרוּהָ or עָרִיָּה, both meaning ‘nakedness’ in the context of holiness. However, ‘I will diminish (her) nakedness’ makes no sense where the opposite is expected.<sup>477</sup>

The consensus derives אֲרִזָּה from אָרִזוּ, ‘cedar,’ and עָרָה is read as a participle, ‘lay bare,’ and thus ‘for he stripped the/its cedarwork bare’ and the like.<sup>478</sup> אֲרִזָּה may be a collective of אָרִזוּ, like דָּג דִּגְהָ, whereas עָרָה connotes stripping wood from its building.<sup>479</sup> Rashi and Radaq read אֲרִזָּה, ‘her cedar.’ The former explains עָרָה in the meaning of destruction (Ps 137:7); the latter, in the meaning of exposure to the forces of

alone contextual. Who is ‘he’ who “has smitten against the threshold” and why is a subject is missing? The lack of relationship between the animals and the smiting bases this on a non-existent meaning. Others revocalize to חָרַב, ‘sword’, e.g., Sabotka who bases his reading on Aquila and Symmachus (*Zephanja*, 97). Also Rudolph, *Micha*, 276,277.

<sup>475</sup> E.g., 1 Kgs 14:17; Isa 6:4; Ezek 40:6, 41:16 (2x).

<sup>476</sup> *Bavli*, *Sota* 48a. Our verse teaches the Rabbis that bird singing is associated with destruction. It is stated that from the day the Temple was destroyed there has not been a day without a misfortune. Singing has been cut off. Rav proclaimed: An ear that heard singing should be cut off. Rava responded: Singing in the home brings destruction at the door, to which R. Ashi added the above.

<sup>477</sup> Vulgate reads closely: ‘for I shall diminish her strength’ (כִּי אֲרִזָּה עָרָה), playing on the word *robur* that means both ‘cedar’ and ‘strength.’

<sup>478</sup> E.g., Roberts, *Nahum*, 191; Stonehouse, *The Books*, 54; Calvin, *Commentaries*, 255; Paul House, *Zephaniah, A Prophetic Drama* (Bible and Literature Series; no. 16. Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1988), 123.

<sup>479</sup> Barthélemy, *Critique*, 899. In HOTTP, though, he suggests a *qal* form עָרָה, “is laid bare” or “was laid bare” (*HOTTP* 5:379).

nature (and so Altschuler).<sup>480</sup> Efros, on the other hand, strips the clause of its association with cedar and reads אָרְזָה עָרָה, “I shall destroy its city.” The city is the one mentioned in the next verse. Conversely, if אַרְזָה is to be read in the *pi’el* אָרְזָה with Marti, Efros continues, then it would come from the Arabic *raza’a*, ‘to damage, harm.’<sup>481</sup>

However, עָרָה should be either in the *hif’al* הֶעֱרָה (‘He [God] has exposed/laid bare’) or in the *hof’al* הֶעֱרָה<sup>482</sup> (‘[her cedar] has been exposed’ after the golden overlaying has been looted). This could happen by the incorrect division of words or the omission of one ‘ה’. Taking into consideration the Priestly usage of the verb (Lev 20:18,19) and the ubiquitous עָרְוָה in Leviticus (32x), the choice of this verb may suggest a sense of shame, comparing the ruined city to a naked woman exposed in public<sup>483</sup> (this is more explicit in the next verse). The buildings (columns, windows and doorways) will be exposed as a result of the collapse of their cedar beams. This explains why wild animals can easily penetrate the ruined structures.

The difficulties in this phrase have caused several scholars to deem it a gloss, a dittography of הָעִיר הָעֲלִיזָה in the next verse, and omit it from their translation.<sup>484</sup>

None of the extreme interpretations of modern commentary is found in TJ. As mentioned above, TJ focuses on describing the total destruction of a once magnificent city, now inhabited by wild animals.

There are several ways to understand TJ’s choice of ‘ceilings’ (וַיִּטְלַלְהָא)<sup>485</sup> for אַרְזָה: TJ took the hint from the סָף, ‘entrance, threshold,’ and wished to show a merism of total destruction of buildings ‘from top to bottom.’ It is also possible that TJ adopted the Aramaic אַרְזָה in

<sup>480</sup> The verb עָרָה carries two meanings: ‘to uncover, expose’ and secondarily ‘cause destruction’ (Isa 22:6; Hab 3:13). Often it alludes to uncovering nakedness, as in Lev 20:18; Lam 4:21 (and hence the feminine form עָרְוָה, Lev 18:6,8; Ezek 16:36); and ‘to cling’ (one possibility for Radaq when expounding on Isa 22:6; Ps 37:35).

<sup>481</sup> Israel Efros, “Textual Notes on the Hebrew Bible,” *JAO* 45 (1925): 153.

<sup>482</sup> Also Deissler, *Les Petits*, 456.

<sup>483</sup> Cf the possible similar comparison to women in v. 4.

<sup>484</sup> E.g., Stonchouse, *The Books*, 54; BHS; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 456–57; Elliger, *Das Buch*, 70; Horst, *Die Zwölf*, 194; Buhl, “Einige textkritische,” 182; Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 156; Gerleman, *Zephanja*, 45. In desperation, Rudolph suggests to read עָרָה אַרְזָה as an onomatopoeia, the imitation of the sound of a bird. He omits the whole phrase from his translated text (p. 276). כִּי should be read as a recitative that precedes the bird sound (*Micha*, 278–79, 14i).

<sup>485</sup> The “*hiriq*” under the final ‘א’ is no doubt a stain. There are no lower vocalization signs in the Aramaic.

its metaphoric meaning of ‘prominent men, scholars’ (Jastrow, 117) to show that destruction will engulf the total population of Nineveh, from poor to rich, from lay people to the top leadership. Another possibility is that TJ viewed the collapse of the ceilings as the major cause for the exposure of the buildings to the elements of nature.<sup>486</sup>

The translation of עָרָה by סָתְרוּ, ‘(they) have torn down,’ is part of this picture. The root ערה/י is usually construed as ‘naked, exposed’ (cf Mic 1:11; Hag 3:9). What exactly is exposed is not clarified. The makeup of the buildings, the cedar, is not important, but rather the sense of destruction. Ceilings are understood to be made of cedar (TJ Hag 1:4. Cf Rashi). They are torn down by a third person plural element, perhaps by enemies, perhaps by the wild animals commissioned by God.

On the whole, the translation of this verse is exegetical to convey the pitiful picture of a demolished city. In several ways TJ amplifies the sense of destruction, especially by focusing on the magnificence of the city and her strength: The repeated addition of the genitive; the city gates are *ornamentally engraved*. They are in the periphery of the city through which people go in and out. When gates are destroyed, walls are, too; windows, doors<sup>487</sup> and ceilings collapse. They represent the city within the gates; ‘they’ suggests hordes of armies; the singular קָאָת and קָפֹד take on the plural. By omitting כִּי after בִּטְרָה, TJ creates a detailed, continuous montage of destruction.

2:15: This is the *powerful* city that dwells securely, that says in her heart “I and none other than I”; how has she become a destruction, a *house/place* (where) *beasts of the field dwell*; whoever *will* pass by her shall *call* and *shake* his hands.

The first two verses concerning the punishment of Assyria and her capital Nineveh foresee events in the future. The city famous for its waters and vegetation will turn into a dry desert with wild animals as its inhabitants. Verse 15a describes the city’s present carefree state, overconfident in its security and might. The second part of the verse describes the ruined city from the eyes of passersby. The depiction of

<sup>486</sup> Cf Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 154.

<sup>487</sup> תִּרְעָא can be either ‘gate’ or ‘door, entrance.’ Jastrow, 1700–01. The word סָר probably suggested this choice of word.

Nineveh as a *fait accompli* is needed for the morale of the audience.<sup>488</sup> Still, some scholars view the verse as a gloss.<sup>489</sup>

There are no lexical, grammatical or syntactical difficulties in this clear verse. Yet, scholars are confused as to the identity of ‘this city’ and to the meaning of its adjective, הַעֲלִיזָה. If the demonstrative ‘this’ points to the city mentioned earlier, then it concerns Nineveh; otherwise, it might refer to Jerusalem’s עֲלִיזֵי גְאוּתֶיךָ, ‘the proud/joyous/powerful of your exultant ones’ (3:11).<sup>490</sup> Even though עֲלִיזָה is more often understood as ‘joyous’ (e.g. Isa 24:8, 32:13), it is not so either in Isa 22:2, 23:7 or here. Isaiah’s influence over Zephaniah is tremendous throughout the composition. In 23:7–8 Isaiah uses זֹאת twice in relation to the city of Tyre in both meanings as Zephaniah does (‘therefore, consequently,’ in 2:10 and ‘this,’ in 2:15). Moreover, in v. 7 he refers to Tyre<sup>491</sup> as עֲלִיזָה, ‘a strong, overconfident (city).’ This same link between arrogance and power (vv. 9,12, 24:4,9) is adopted by Zephaniah.<sup>492</sup>

This is also TJ’s rendition. With תְּקִיפְתָּא it stresses Nineveh’s strength as the source of its security and arrogance rather than its gaiety.<sup>493</sup> This emphasizes its downfall, accentuated by the sense of amazement, which is further reinforced noting Nineveh’s strong defenses.<sup>494</sup> Emerton has shown that in several Scriptures the verb עָלַץ is translated as ‘be strong, prevail.’ Its by-form עָלוּ, too, is so translated by TJ, for example, in Isa 5:14 and in our verse.<sup>495</sup>

<sup>488</sup> The function of the verse is discussed by several scholars: e.g., Sweeney sees it as the summary appraisal of Nineveh’s condition which describes its overconfidence in contrast to its upcoming devastation (*The Twelve*, 517; *Zephaniah*, 154). Vlaardingerbroek finds it to be the song of derision sung by the raven mentioned in the previous verse (*Zephaniah*, 161,162). J.M.P. Smith evaluates the verse as a “stanza of triumph” inserted after the fall of Nineveh by a pious reader (*A Critical*, 234). According to Renaud, it serves to explain to the post-exilic community that the Day of YHWH came not only upon Jerusalem but upon the nations as well (*Michée*, 235). For Calvin, the verse functions “by way of anticipation lest the magnificent splendor of the city Nineveh should frighten the Jews, as though it were exempt from all danger” (*Commentaries*, 256).

<sup>489</sup> E.g., Marti, *Das Dodekapropheten*, 371; Renaud, *Michée*, 233–35.

<sup>490</sup> Cf Isa 22:2, 32:13. This phrase has attracted a myriad of interpretations.

<sup>491</sup> Ezekiel (26:17) similarly derides Tyre calling her הָעִיר הַהִלְלָה.

<sup>492</sup> Deutero-Isaiah, on the other hand, was greatly influenced by Zephaniah. He describes Babylon, the conqueror of Assyria, in Zephaniah’s words (Isa 47:8,10), but instead of portraying her as overconfident or joyous, she is ‘pampered, delicate’ (v. 7) and ‘tender and dainty’ (v. 1). On the dependence of Isa 47:5–11 on Zeph 2:13–15 see Benjamin Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 155, 245, 252.

<sup>493</sup> Also Peshitta. LXX is more blatant with ‘detestable’ while Vulgate has ‘glorious.’

<sup>494</sup> Cf Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 154–55.

<sup>495</sup> J.A. Emerton, “Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs,” *JBL* 20 (1969): 216–20.

In nine out of 15 occurrences of עלו in the Prophets, TJ uses the root תקף, 'be strong' (6x in Isaiah, 2x in Jeremiah and once in Zephaniah). The rest of the cases are translated either *midrashically* (Hab 3:18), or by the roots בעי, 'inquire, pray' (Jer 50:11; Zeph 3:14), חדי, 'rejoice' (Isa 22:2; Jer 15:17), and דוץ, 'be happy' (2 Sam 1:20).<sup>496</sup> These double meanings occur also in the close root עלץ in both TJ and Peshitta, as Emerton has noted.

Two Sepharadi Mss X,C substitute ארעא for קרתא, thus referring to Nineveh as the 'mighty land' rather than the 'mighty city.' Nineveh represents the land of Assyria.

מרבץ לחיה is translated with a retrospect to v. 14. There, the subject of וישרון בגויה 'and they shall dwell in her midst' (of the ruined Nineveh), is explained by 'of all the animals of the field.' Here it is linked by 'a dwelling place of animals of the field.' A similar picture is portrayed in v. 6 concerning the desolation of Philistia, which will turn into a dwelling place for shepherds and folds for sheep. The major difference is inherent in the theological view: When it relates to the Judeans repossessing their land, the verb רבץ is perceived as 'providing sustenance.' Here, because the text concerns the enemy's land that will be possessed by animals, they are portrayed in their natural setting of lying down. Moreover, contrary to the sea district, people will be passing by Nineveh with disbelief.

The reaction of the passersby is to hiss, ישרק,<sup>497</sup> and to gesture with the hand, יניע ידו in derision.<sup>498</sup> This latter phrase is a hapax. The common expression of contempt is 'to shake one's head' as in Isa 37:22, Jer 18:16, Ps 109:25, and Lam 2:15.<sup>499</sup> The choice of *hand* may allude to the hand motif in the composition in its reference to God (1:4), to the foreigner (2:15), and to Judah (3:15; cf Ps 109:25). The unique expression of 'to shake one's hands' denotes a punitive effect as well as astonishment.

<sup>496</sup> Goshen-Gottstein posits that the choice of חדייתא, 'joyous,' for Isa 22:2 in one fragment alludes to a sense of revelry. A similar form, ברבא חדתא, is used by MG there for קריה עליזה (*Fragments*, 24).

<sup>497</sup> This verb in the same context is used in Ezek 27:36, Lam 2:16, and Job 27:23.

<sup>498</sup> Jeremiah presents two variations: כל עובר עליה ישם ויניד בראשו (18:16), and כל עובר עליה ישם וישרק (19:8, 49:17, 50:13). The other variation in Lam 2:15 is very close to Zephaniah, כל-עברי זרך שרקו ויגעו ראשם, 'all passersby hissed and shook their heads.' The expression נשם ושרק appears in the Deuteronomistic theological lecture in 1 Kgs 9:8.

<sup>499</sup> On Jeremiah as the author of Lamentations see William Walter Cannon, "The Authorship of Lamentations," *BS* 81 (1924): 42–58.

In spite of sharing the same verb שָׂרַק, ‘to hiss,’ in Hebrew and Aramaic, TJ adds a sense of mockery by using the verb in the meaning of calling or signaling the flocks to gather or keep off (cf Judg 5:16). The verb יְבִלֵי usually translates the Hebrew קָרָא, as ‘call’ mostly in the sense of to assemble (e.g., Isa 37:13; Jer 1:15). However, there seems to be quite a confusion when the phrase יֵשֶׁם וְיִשְׂרַק or יֵשֶׁם וְיִנְיֵד occurs (1 Kgs 9:8; Jer 18:16, 19:8,17, 50:13): TJ uses כָּלִי, ‘call,’ for the Hebrew נוּשֵׁם, ‘breathe, pant, gasp,’ and נוּד, ‘move, shake,’ for the Hebrew שָׂרַק, ‘whistle, hiss.’ The conclusion is that two scenarios may be portrayed: calling paints a picture of shepherds goading their flocks past the ruins of Nineveh, and/or travelers breathing quickly while passing through the ruins hastily in disbelief. Moreover, the calling may also be construed as adjuring formulas against demons that were perceived to inhabit ruins. Shaking of hands is another measure to ward off evil spirits. Ribera sees in the choice כָּלִי a change from ‘sadness’ to ‘surprise.’<sup>500</sup> Gordon notes that כָּלִי is reserved for references to God, which suggests that TJ hopes that the fate of Assyria will make the foreigners realize God’s sovereignty in world events. This agrees with Zephaniah’s vision of world conversion in chapter 3.<sup>501</sup> However, the basic statement is incorrect. כָּלִי is employed in reference to God *only when the subject is clearly God* (e.g., Isa 5:26, 7:18; Zech 10:8). In all other occurrences (e.g., 1 Kgs 9:8; Jer 19:8, 49:17, 50:13; Ezek 27:36), this is not the case. The change into the plural magnifies the severe perception of the passersby as they view the devastation.

### 3.5 CHAPTER 3

3:1: Woe (*to*) the heads, and (*to*) a city that is broken up, that has increased to provoke. Or

Woe (to the one) *who hurries* and rebels, a/the city that increases to provoke.

As in 2:1, the verse is deliberately ambiguous for rhetorical effect. The linguistic difficulties and their theological significance prompted the Rabbis and many Medieval Jewish commentators to heavily discuss this verse. Using a variety of exegetical methods, they suggested either

<sup>500</sup> Ribera, “La versión” 155.

<sup>501</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 170.

praises and redemption or infamous allusions or both, depending on the roots and their meaning. In the majority of cases, this approach has continued to this day even though many scholars interpret the verse as an indictment of Jerusalem. The ambivalence stems from the grammatical forms, the meanings of מְרֹאָה and נְגַאֲלָה, and the identification of ‘the city of *the dove*.’

When reading the verse negatively, the typical rendition is ‘Woe, rebellious and polluted one, City that oppresses!’

Here is a small sample of ancient and Medieval commentaries beginning with the negative (the majority of opinions).<sup>502</sup> R. Reuven of the 3rd century is quoted as having said that מְרֹאָה is derived from the Greek μωρα, ‘mad, foolish,’ that is, Zephaniah warned Israel to beware of the fools who did not listen to God. They were unclean, נְגַאֲלָה, and thus could not be part of the priesthood as is written in Ezra 2:62 (Dunash ben Labrat shares this reading). הָעִיר הַיּוֹנָה is Jerusalem that did not learn a lesson from what had happened to Nineveh, the city of Jonah, whose inhabitants repented. Zephaniah complains to the people of Jerusalem: ‘I sent one prophet to Nineveh and they repented. How many more prophets do I need to send to you so that you repent?’

According to Yefet, מְרֹאָה is a noun from the root ירא/ה, ‘to teach,’ and hence ‘a teacher, guide.’<sup>503</sup> Zephaniah says to Judah: ‘You, who have had Priests and Levites who taught you (Deut 33:10), have become a people who deceive (ינה, as in Ezek 18:7) others.’ Someone added to Yefet’s commentary another opinion: מְרֹאָה points to intermarriage that is linked to Lev 1:16 (figuratively expressed by the severance of the dove’s head). נְגַאֲלָה has the sense of מְגַאֲלָה, ‘defiled’ by idolatry.

Quoting our verse, Lev 1:16 and Nah 3:6, Menahem ben Saruq concludes that the roots ראי and גאל share the same meaning of ‘filth, excrement’ (as does David ben Abraham). As for הָעִיר הַיּוֹנָה ben Saruq quotes others as reading ‘the deceitful city.’

Rashi follows ben Saruq, saying that Jerusalem will be defiled in the filth of her own sin. Ibn Ezra cites Yefet, Rashi and Rabbi Jeshua who

<sup>502</sup> A more complete survey is recorded in Barthélemy’s *Critique*, 899–903.

<sup>503</sup> Its development is explained in the following way: ירה, ‘to teach,’ can be used with *aleph* as in Prov 11:25 יִרְא וּמְרֹוֹה גְסִיהוּא. The imperative of יִרְא is הוֹרֵא. The noun derived from this is מוֹרֵא and its feminine form is מוֹרְאָה, like עוֹבֵר-עוֹבְרָה, and hence מְרֹאָה means ‘teacher, guide; the one who is taught, the guided one.’ However, ‘teacher’ and ‘the one who is taught’ are not the same but rather stand as opposites.



read מְרָאָה from מָרָה, ‘to rebel’ (Deut 21:18).<sup>504</sup> Both Rashi and Ibn Ezra read הַיּוֹנָה as analogous to a heartless dove of enticing beauty. Radaq sees both verbs carrying the same meaning, ‘be filthy,’ in order to emphasize the depth of Jerusalem’s defilement.

Abulwalid, in the name of Hayyuj, suggests that מְרָאָה is the feminine passive of רָאָה in *hif’l*. According to Abulwalid, it should have a *shuruq* like מְגַלָּה, the feminine form of הַמְגַלִּים (Jer 40:1). On this reading, Zephaniah indicts the exiled Judeans for their sins.

By contrast, many commentators interpret the passage in a positive sense: when reading מְרָאָה, *Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah*, *Petihta* 31 explains that מְרָאָה points to Israel the God-fearers (reading the root יִרָא) and נְגַאֲלָה points to her redemption (the root גָּאֵל). Daniel al Qumisi mentions that others saw here a combination of the root רָאָה and יִרָא (מְרָאָה and מְרָאָה), but he rejects this. He also rejects the connection to Lev 1:16 where a similar word, מְרָאָה, appears in an offensive expression. He sees here a promise for Judah to inspire fear in all nations. A similar interpretation is made by Yefet who translates ‘*hoy*, feared (נִוְרָאָה) and saved, city of the dove.’ Nations will fear Israel and she will be saved from Nebuchadnezzar’s might, as she had been saved in the past. Like the dove that tends to its nest, Israel is occupied with her cult of YHWH and Temple. Abrabanel sees the verse as the basis for a future oracle concerning the suffering and bravery of Israel from the time of the exploits of the Hasmoneans until the destruction of the Temple. God is Israel’s redeemer throughout history, and Jerusalem is the city that God loves (Song 5:2, 6:9). Just as the dove is faithful to her master, so is Israel.

Barthélemy admits that the way this verse is worded can carry double meanings, negative and positive. He then suggests two possible readings: ‘Woe to the rebellious, to the soiled, to the city that oppresses’ or ‘Oh, illustrious and saved, dove city.’ There is a play on the words מְרִי, ‘rebellion,’ and Moriah, one of Jerusalem’s names.<sup>505</sup>

The same conclusion is reached by Jongeling.<sup>506</sup> For him, the first translation is self-evident. The second is supported by the flattering and

<sup>504</sup> An exchange between לִיָּא and לִיָּה verbs. G.R. Driver notes that מָרָה is better translated ‘defiant’ because it is nearly always associated with a refusal to listen to God’s will as in, e.g., Deut 26:43; Isa 1:20 (“Abbreviations,” 130–31).

<sup>505</sup> Barthélemy, *Critique*, 903. However, in HOTTIP (5:380) he suggests ‘rebellious’ for מְרָאָה.

<sup>506</sup> B. Jongeling, “Jeux de Mots en Sophonie III 1 et 3,” *VT* 21 (1971): 542–43. Also Seybold, *Nahum*, 109,110.

loving appellation given to ‘dove’ in the HB (e.g., Song 1:15, 2:14; Pss 68:14, 74:19). Often Jerusalem is described with the same endearing adjectives as the dove. Zephaniah expresses what Jerusalem could be and what she has become. The **הוי** reflects these conflicting thoughts.

As mentioned above, most modern scholars suggest that harsh criticism of Jerusalem is meant. For Rudolph, **הַיִּזְנָה** is a participle *qal*, and thus he reads the phrase as ‘the (actively) violent city.’<sup>507</sup> He emphasizes Jerusalem’s guilt, which he finds to be contrasted with the fact that she is the city of David, the site of much historical achievement, and the place of God’s holy Temple. Elliger follows Schwally’s reading **הַיִּזְנָה = וּמוֹאֵלָה = וּמוֹעֵלָה**<sup>508</sup> for **וּנְגַאֲלָה** and translates “*Pflichtvergessenen*,” in terms of neglect of duty in defiance of God’s will.<sup>509</sup>

Ryou considers the two participles as a single vocative that serves as a proper name for Jerusalem.<sup>510</sup> Sweeney, who reads **מְרָאָה**, ‘rebellious,’ (from **מרה**), also considers the appearance of the unusual ‘א’ in **מְרָאָה** as derived from **ירא** in the *hif’il*, ‘menacing,’ or in the *hof’al*, ‘feared.’ The same double meanings are captured in both **נְגַאֲלָה** (defiled/redeemed) and **הַיִּזְנָה** (oppressing/a dove).<sup>511</sup>

Sabotka attaches a very different meaning to **מְרָאָה**, from the Ugaritic **מרא**, ‘to be fat, to be fattened’ with the meaning of ‘being arrogant.’<sup>512</sup>

Historically, some note that the root **גאל** with its variety of stems meaning ‘defile,’ is exilic and post-exilic (e.g., Isa 59:3, 63:3; Mal 1:7 [2x], 12; Neh 7:64; Dan 1:8 [2x]).<sup>513</sup> Ball suggests that perhaps this oracle was delivered after the fall of Nineveh in order to give emphasis to the similar characteristics that made her fall possible.<sup>514</sup>

<sup>507</sup> “*Der gewalttätigen Stadt!*” He does not explain how he reached this meaning. He derives **ינה** from the Arabic *wnj* in the meaning of ‘to be weak, sluggish’ (*Micha*, 284, 287).

<sup>508</sup> Not only **וּמוֹאֵלָה = וּמוֹעֵלָה** are orthographically far from **וּנְגַאֲלָה**, and ‘א’ does not exchange with or is mistaken for ‘ע’, there is no root **מאל** in any Hebrew. The root **מעל** means ‘to act treacherously, faithlessly’ out of betrayal of trust. **נְגַאֲלָה** is in the passive tense. This would translate into **נְמַאֲלָה** or **נְמַעֲלָה**, which never occurs in the HB.

<sup>509</sup> Elliger, *Das Buch*, 74–75.

<sup>510</sup> Ryou, *Zephaniah’s Oracles*, 120. He quotes Dahood’s remark that “in biblical idiom fatness sometimes connotes arrogance” (in Dahood’s commentary to Ps 17:10).

<sup>511</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve*, 519–20; *Zephaniah*, 159–60.

<sup>512</sup> Sabotka, *Zephaniah*, 102. The Ugaritic derivation is not too far fetched as thought at first reading and especially by taking into consideration Zephaniah’s connection with Deut 32 (note v. 15).

<sup>513</sup> E.g., Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 527.

<sup>514</sup> Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 200–01.

Modern scholars usually identify ‘the city’ as either Jerusalem or Nineveh. The former is so designated because of its position after a threatening/funerary ‘woe’, the ensuing offensive content of accusations against Judah, and the reading by the ancient texts, Theod (*οὐαὶ ἡ ἀθετοῦσα*, ‘Woe, the rejected one’) and the Vul (‘the provoking one’).<sup>515</sup> The latter is so identified because of the opening verse’s proximity to the previous lengthy oracle against Nineveh (2:13–15) and, of course, the association between *הינה* and Jonah. Interpreting the words in a salvific context, a third possibility is drawn that connects ‘the city’ with the redemption of Jerusalem as foreseen in vv. 12–20. This ambiguity in the text allows the audience in each generation to be open to several interpretations,<sup>516</sup> perhaps even to perceive them all according to the realities of their time.<sup>517</sup>

The targumic translation of this verse is consistent with the majority of these opinions, that is, an indictment of the city of Jerusalem. Yet it also reflects the ambivalence all commentators have noted. It is the most intriguing and challenging verse in the entire book of Zephaniah. How did the Targumist leap from the MT to this present rendition? The Hebrew text in TJ is mostly absent and the only surviving connection is ‘woe’ and ‘city’. Targum keeps the genre of lamentation but changes the textual division of the verse. It pauses after *מְרָאָה* while reading it as a noun plus a preposition that usually precedes a participle (e.g., 2:5).

Targum is inconsistent in terms of how or when it translates *הוֹי*. When a noun follows it, TJ may translate literally (e.g., Nah 3:1) or add a preposition like *עַל דְּ*, ‘concerning...’ (e.g., Isa 1:4). When a

<sup>515</sup> E.g., Keller, *Nahum*, 205–06; Roberts, *Nahum*, 204, 211–12; Watts, *The Books*, 174; Renaud, *Michée*, 234, 235–36; Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 150–52; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 459; Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 125, 126–27; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 238,244; Vlaadingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 164,167; Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 184; Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 527; Ryou, *Zephaniah’s Oracles*, 53; Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, 372; Rudolph, *Micha*, 287; James H. Gailey, Jr., *Michah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (The Layman’s Bible Commentary; vol. 15: Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), 81; M.A. Sweeney, “A Form-Critical Reassessment of the Book of Zephaniah,” *CBQ* 53 (1991): 401. In *The Twelve* (pp. 519–20) Sweeney presents the possibility that the city could be identified with Nineveh but this identification is dismissed in the next verses; KJV; ASV; NIV; NIB; NAS; NAU; RSV; NRS.

<sup>516</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve*, 520.

<sup>517</sup> Ginsberg is of the opinion that the entire passage of Zeph 3:1–13 “bears every indication of having been modeled upon” Isa 5:14–17. He finds the lost beginning of Isa 4:14b in the *הוֹי* of Zeph 3:1. Both units rebuke Jerusalem. The end of Isa 5:14b–17 is found in Zeph 3:13b which parallels the imagery of the animals in Isa 5:17 (“Some Emendations,” 53).

participle follows הוֹי, הוּי (or וּי) may be followed by ד, ‘which’ (e.g., Hab 2:12), or ל, ‘to’ (e.g., Amos 5:18), plus a participle. Sometimes הוֹי is ignored completely (e.g., Zech 2:10,11). In Zeph 2:4 and 3:1 the formula is the same... ד וּי, (Hebrew הוֹי plus אֲשֶׁר). However, in the former, but not in the latter, the formula corresponds to הוֹי plus a participle, comparable to Hebrew... הוֹי הַיְשָׁבִים בְּ.

מוֹחָא is the plural form of מוֹחַ or מוֹחָא, ‘head, brain, bone marrow’ (see PsJ to Deut 28:22, מוֹחָא מוֹחָא מוֹחָא... ‘(and with the fire of the bones) that burns the brain,’ for the Hebrew דִּלְקַת, ‘fever,’ and TO to v. 35, מוֹחָא for קדקד, ‘head’). Here Gordon translates a verb meaning ‘to rush on’ after Hab 1:6, where for הַמַּר TJ translates מוֹחָא. In הַמַּר he identifies the root מהר and applies the same meaning to our verse. The reason for this choice, Gordon contends, is “to weaken MT (“defiant”), without neutralizing it as in LXX, Syr (“illustrious”).”<sup>518</sup> The meaning of “rushing on” while being “delivered” and being full of “provocations” is not explained.<sup>519</sup> Although Sperber suggests that TJ represents מהרה (same meaning),<sup>520</sup> Gordon finds it “unnecessary.” Similarly, J.M.P. Smith understands דמוחא as ‘hasty.’<sup>521</sup> None of them explains the purpose for Jerusalem to be ‘hasty.’

Rudolph may shed light on the above explanation. In his reading, TJ continues to refer to Nineveh that hurried (participle *af’el* of יחי/יחא) to become redeemed (cf Jon 3:5). Targum understands מראָה as being derived from the Syriac מרא in the *pi’el*, ‘emulate, vic.’<sup>522</sup> Thus the verse is a call for Jerusalem to hurry and emulate Nineveh which repented

<sup>518</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 170. LXX reads מראה from the root ירא in the *nif’al*, הַנּוֹרָאָה, Nineveh ‘the awesome.’ Peshitta likewise perceives the verse as relating to Nineveh (‘the city of Jonah’), but when retroverted into the Hebrew, this would read הַנּוֹדַעַת, ‘the famous,’ from the root ידע. Cf Isa 61:9; Ezek 20:5, 38:23; Pss 9:17, 48:4, 76:2.

<sup>519</sup> Ryou is not clear how he reads דמוחא, for he first agrees with its meaning of ‘rebellious,’ yet later he writes, “The Targum’s “who rushes on” or “who hastens” (דמוחא?) is better understood with the following word (ומתפרקא) “she who hurries to be redeemed” (*Zephaniah’s Oracles*, 53). If the addressee is Jerusalem, how can this reading fit the context of rebuke? If the addressee is Nineveh, it should have the imperfect verb that creates a dissonance with the oracle of doom in the previous three verses.

<sup>520</sup> Sperber, *The Targum*, 347.

<sup>521</sup> J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 244.

<sup>522</sup> Rudolph, *Micha*, 285, 1a. See Jastrow, 574; Job 39:18; Prov 22:29. Why did TJ not choose from the many possibilities in the Aramaic, such as מרה/מרי/מור/ירא, ‘to be strong, master, rebel, bitter, see, exchange, fear, stupid,’ instead resorting to borrowing from the Syriac? Ribera, too, feels that Rudolph’s assertion that TJ refers to Nineveh is incorrect. It clearly refers to Jerusalem (“La versión,” 156, note 40). Vulgate, too, seems to read Jerusalem, calling her the “provocative.”

and was redeemed. However, if **דְּמוּחִיא** is a verb then all three verbs are in the participle. This raises the question: if Nineveh does hurry to repent, why is she condemned (2:15)? Why does Nineveh not listen to the messages of the prophets, not accept Torah and not draw near ‘her God’ (v. 2)? This verse cannot continue 2:15 but, instead, opens a new unit.

There is merit in the reading of **דְּמוּחִיא** as an *af’el* verb **יחא/יחי**, ‘to hurry,’ since the other two verbs are also participles. This verb occurs several times in TJ, translating the *hif’el* of **שָׁכַם** (Hos 6:4, 13:3), **קָדַם** (Amos 9:10; Jon 4:2), **רוּץ** (Hag 2:2), **חוּשׁ** (Judg 20:37), the *pa’el* of **שָׁקַד** (Jer 1:12), and the *pi’el* of **מָהַר** (Judg 9:48, 13:10; Zeph 1:14; Nah 2:6; Mal 3:5). All these Hebrew verbs have the same meaning, ‘to hurry.’ The Aramaic participle **מוּחִי** in the masculine has already appeared in 1:14. In our verse we encounter the feminine form of the participle, **מוּחִיא**. The three participles respond to the feminine form of **קָרְתָא**. When controverted into the Hebrew, TJ’s reading might be **הוּי הַמְּהֵרָה וְנִגְאָלָה, הָעִיר הַמְּרַבָּה לְהַרְגִּז**. Orthographically, there is some resemblance between **מְּהֵרָה** and **מְּרַאָה**. Alternatively, we might read **הַנְּמֵרָה**. **נְמֵר** connotes a quick and irresponsible action without thinking through. TJ Hab 1:6 has **מוּחִיא וְקָלִילָא**, ‘(their horses are) quick and light,’ for the Hebrew **הַמֵּר וְהַנְּמֵר**, ‘the evil/cruel and quick/thoughtless.’ **מְּרַאָה** could have resembled **מְּרָה**, which triggered TJ Hab 1:6, 3–4 folios earlier. As mentioned above, TJ’s intent was to portray Jerusalem as a city that hurried to sin, and greatly provoked God.

Yet, perhaps another reconstruction of the deliberation behind TJ’s reading can be found, for the previous theory is not completely satisfactory. Targum, unlike LXX and Peshitta, understood quite clearly that this woe oracle concerns Judah and not Nineveh.<sup>523</sup> ‘The city that has increased to provoke’ refers to the same people who are addressed in the next verses. The problem for TJ seems to have been two-fold: the ambiguous words and the context. Since the root **גָּאֵל** usually means ‘redeem,’ how, then, can this apply to a ‘woe’ oracle that exhorts Jerusalem?<sup>524</sup> Moreover, how can TJ maintain the *double entendre* of the

<sup>523</sup> Contra Sweeney who also reads here “she who hurries and is redeemed, . . . apparently in reference to Nineveh” (*Zephaniah*, 156, 161).

<sup>524</sup> As Gordon translates (*Targum*, 170). He claims that **גָּאֵל**, ‘defile,’ was rejected by TJ for a more favorable rendering. LXX and Peshitta agree with TJ. Sweeney notes that TJ’s **וּמִתְפָּרָקָא** also means “and falls apart” (*Zephaniah*, 156).

root that means both ‘defile’ and ‘redeem’? The solution is found in the Aramaic cognate **מתפרקא**, which also carries both meanings as well as the meaning of ‘to break up’ mostly into pieces or parts. Targum could not translate ‘the city of peace’ as such since the prophet describes it as the city of corruption.<sup>525</sup>

What caused TJ to render such a remote translation is inherent in the association it finds in the combination of the words **נגאלה**, **מראה**, and **יונה**: Targum makes an associative link to the law in Lev 1:16, where the hapax **מראה** appears. According to this law, the crop of a *dove* is to be sacrificed as expiation (**לכפר**, v. 3). Both roots, **כפר** and **גאל**, mean ‘to redeem’ (cf Exod 30:15,16; Ps 107:2). In addition, the law in Leviticus commands the Priest to *nip off the neck* (**ומלק**, v. 15) of the dove, thus severing its *head*. Targum uses all four elements of this law to apply it to a difficult verse: the prophet is addressing the heads (leaders) of the people (vv. 2–4), whose heads are to be nipped off, broken; destruction will be the lot of the city, for the city has increased provocation against God. Targum suggests an original, yet audacious, interpretation: The destruction of Jerusalem is a ‘sacrifice to YHWH’ (Lev 1:2,14), ‘a burnt offering, an offering by fire’ (v. 17; cf Zeph 1:7) because of her leaders. And if the current TJ was composed after the year 70, then TJ may suggest that the death of the Zealots, who defiantly took control of the city and endangered the lives of its inhabitants during the First Revolt, was such a sacrifice. Targum accuses the leaders of Jerusalem of responsibility for the city-wide conflagration, evidence of which can still be seen in the Old City. Today, one can visit the “Burnt House” in the Jewish Quarter to visualize the effect of that fire. Alternatively, if written after the year 135, it may refer to the most horrific and brutal slaughter of Jews on the hill of Beitar in the second great uprising, as suggested earlier in the commentary on 1:10. These are the leaders who are indicted in vv. 2–4.

Whoever are the insinuated human sacrifices, it seems that TJ expresses a strong revulsion concerning some specific leaders whose hands are defiled by innocent blood. This feeling is also conveyed in

<sup>525</sup> Gordon contends that MT **יונה** refers to “oppression of humans, as is usual with the verb *ynh*” (*Targum*, 170). However, in all occurrences in the Prophets where this root appears, TJ does not use the root **רגו** as in our verse but instead uses the cognate **ענה/עני**. Targum’s **רגו** usually translates **כעס** (e.g., Jer. 25:7. Cf TJ 2 Kgs 17:11) especially in the *hif’il*, to describe the people’s acts of defiance, as well as for other verbs denoting anger such as **אף** and **עברה** (e.g., Zeph 1:15, 2:2). TJ could easily translate ‘the city of oppression’ for **העיר היונה**, but its rendering was intentional.

the depiction of warriors being killed in Jerusalem (1:14), senseless deaths that call for an urgent reassessment of political and perhaps theological perspectives.

The fates of the leaders and the city are one and the same (see vv. 2–4). With this astute interpretation, TJ reminds the listener and the reader of the necessity of keeping the Law, since these leaders have distorted it (v. 4). By understanding מְרָאָה as מְרָאָה, TJ divides the verse differently, reading it as a noun rather than a verb.<sup>526</sup> The nebulous, multiply-interpreted Hebrew text is maintained by TJ as well.

The accusation of an increase in wickedness is reminiscent of TJ's accusation concerning the increase of the obstructions caused by the wicked in 1:3aβ.<sup>527</sup> In both cases, excess of sins demands severe punishment. Punishment is to be understood in terms of a sacrifice, as TJ interpreted in 1:7: God has determined the day when He is going to prepare the killing of the wicked.

Targum echoes the Rabbinic tradition. The Rabbis' exegeses reflect the multiple meanings of our verse—defilement versus redemption, Israel's punishment versus the role model of Nineveh's repentance. Yet, the admission of Israel's sinful behavior is the major Rabbinic interpretation of this verse, and that is TJ's intent. *Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah, Petihta* 31 presents several opinions: God began praising Israel after it went into exile, remembering their special bond. הָעִיר הַיּוֹנָה is Israel, the nation that God set apart by commandments and good deeds like a dove. Despite all this praise, Israel did not listen. It could only be out of madness! וַיִּגְאָלָה, they defiled themselves by refusing to listen to the Torah's teaching, as well as desecrating the Priesthood (Ezra 2:62); הַיּוֹנָה relates to Jonah's mission to Nineveh, which repented. Judah should have learned from that lesson. God sent only one prophet to Nineveh, yet several were sent to "Israel in Jerusalem" (2 Kgs 17:13; Jer 7:25) day and night, but to no avail. Indeed, Israel's sins escalated and intensified until the inevitable repercussion of exile came to pass. Both TJ and the Rabbis express frustration over Israel's

<sup>526</sup> Onkelos uses the word זָפֶק ('esophagus') for *mur'ah*. This indicates that TJ was not dependent on TO. On the other hand, one can argue that TJ deliberately preferred the meaning of 'heads' to express both literal and analogous renderings, rather than use TO's זָפֶק.

<sup>527</sup> On this translation, Rudolph admits that it is inexplicable (*Micha*, 285,1c). TJ's דַּמְסִינָא, 'that has increased, multiplied,' is construed by Sweeney as "that oppresses," that is, TJ's response to הַיּוֹנָה (*Zephaniah*, 156). No such meaning to the root סג is attested. However, later (p. 161) he reads "the city which multiplies."



ungrateful behavior and both rationalize the dire consequences. Except for Malbim, however, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Radaq, and Altschuler plainly read here an accusation against Judah.

3:2: She has not listened to the voice of *His servants the prophets*, and she has not taken instruction; in the *Memra of YYY* she has not trusted, and to the *worship of her God* she has not drawn near.

The general and ambiguous accusations in v. 1 are illustrated by several examples unfolding in this verse. The message of this poetical four-line verse is clear; Judah is accused of four theological offenses. The first two objects refer to Sinaitic laws (Exod 24:7; Deut 11:2) while the last two objects refer to God, the giver of those laws. Targum senses the separation between the two bi-cola by not connecting them with an added 'and.' Yet, it associates the first three versets with the role of the prophets as messengers of God's Word and as teachers of the Law, while the fourth verset is associated with cultic activity. In doing this, TJ perceives the text as intended by the prophet.

The main thrust of Zephaniah's accusations is as follows. Among all the nations of the world, only Israel heard the divine *voice* (Deut 4:32–33).<sup>528</sup> Israel vowed to listen and obey (e.g., Deut 5:24 [Exod 19:8, 24:3], 26:14,17; Josh 24:24). Post-Sinai, the prophets were assigned by God to transmit His Word (e.g., Deut 18:15–22; 2 Kgs 17:13–14,23; Jer 7:25, 26:5). *מוֹסֵר*<sup>529</sup> is what has been transmitted. *Trusting in God* is the essence of the Covenant that is repeatedly preached by the prophets (e.g., Isa 12:2, 26:4; Jer 17:7). The phrase *קרב אל* is primarily a Priestly term associated with the proper cultic rules to ensure holiness<sup>530</sup> (e.g., Exod 22:7, 40:32; Lev 9:7; Num 17:28, 18:3; Ezek 40:46).<sup>531</sup> The Priests and Levites are considered privileged for being chosen to draw near God (Ps 65:5). Now, they have voluntarily forfeited their privileges and responsibilities. Judah, like Israel before her, broke the Covenant

<sup>528</sup> Robertson, *The Books*, 318.

<sup>529</sup> Keller views the term as 'the fundamentals of Wisdom, namely, the Israelite humanism.' God is the great pedagogue, the source of this 'education.' With no confidence in the teacher, the student fails to respond and progress is not achieved (*Nahoum*, 206).

<sup>530</sup> The same phrase carries a sexual connotation (e.g., Lev 18:14; Deut 22:14; Isa 8:3) with no bearing on the current meaning. See Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 188, note 588.

<sup>531</sup> This association is not surprising, since the *hif'il* *להקריב* and the noun *קרבן*, 'sacrifice,' involve Priestly activity.



and so must bear the consequences. Targum, too, understands these accusations in terms of Covenantal offenses as expressed by its theological additions.

The object of ‘the voice’ is added for clarification (cf Tg 2:1), for God lets His Word be known through His prophets.<sup>532</sup> God’s voice is almost always translated by the special term **מִימְרָא**, ‘the Word’ (e.g., Judg 2:20; 1 Sam 14:36; Jer 25:30; Joel 2:11; Zech 6:15). *Memra* is equivalent to the Hebrew **אמר**. It is associated with divine dictum plus **קדם**. Other utterances by either God (e.g., Isa 5:24; Hos 6:5) or prophet (e.g., Isa 32:9) are rendered **מִימַר** without **קדם**. An exception is Mic 2:7, ‘the spirit of YHWH,’ which in itself is odd, since in the other two cases in the Twelve where *Meimar* translates ‘spirit’ (Zech 4:6, 7:12), the equivalent is *Memra* without **קדם**.<sup>533</sup> Moreover, **מִימְרָא** also applies in cases of the phrase **עַל פִּי** in connection with God (Josh 19:50, 22:9) or a king (2 Kgs 23:24). In all other cases there is no consistency: either **מִימַר** (e.g., Isa 48:3; Jer 15:19) or **מִן קדמי** (Isa 48:3, 55:11) is used for God.<sup>534</sup> Whenever we find a pattern in the usage of *Memra* or any other buffer-word, we can also find exceptions.

Moore notes that *Memra* is not found in any Aramaic literature, be it Talmud, *midrashim*, or the Zohar, outside the targumim. Therefore, “it is a phenomenon of translation, not a creature of speculation.”<sup>535</sup> However, in *Sefer Tiqunei Zohar* (*tiqun* 61, p. 94a) of the 15th–16th century, **מִימְרָא דִּי** appears once in the meaning of ‘the Voice’ that summons ‘the sons of Elohim’ (Job 2:1) to a heavenly assembly concerning the creation of man (Gen 1:26). The “voice” of God constitutes the attribute of creating the Heavens. Here, **מִימְרָא דִּי** is quite specific and goes beyond its targumic characteristic.

<sup>532</sup> Cf 2 Chron 24:19. Bruce Chilton argues that this tendency to view the prophets as the carriers of God’s Word is a targumic characteristic (*The Glory of Israel* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983], 52–56).

<sup>533</sup> Out of 110 occurrences in the Twelve where *meimar* and *Memra* are used, 71 translate no Hebrew equivalent. Houtman, *Bilingual XIX*, 191–96.

<sup>534</sup> G.F. Moore, who examines mostly Onkelos’ *Memra*, does not distinguish between *Meimar* and *Memra*. Therefore, its usage acquires a wide sense of dictum in a variety of contexts, such as expressions which imply commands (e.g., Gen 41:44; Num 14:41; Deut 1:26), disobedience (e.g., Num 11:20), obedience (e.g., Lev 26:14), coming to someone to speak (e.g., Gen 20:3; 31:24), having the oracle revealed (e.g., Exod 14:31; Num 20:12), the usage of human elements such as mind (e.g., Gen 8:21), knowing (e.g., Exod 2:15), fighting (e.g., Deut 3:22), and more. Yet, most of all it is a buffer-word rather than a buffer-idea (“Intermediaries in Jewish Theology,” *HTR* 15 [1922]: 46–59).

<sup>535</sup> Moore, “Intermediaries,” 54.

Sometimes ‘the voice’ is preserved (e.g., Isa 6:4, 30:31). The reasons for the added *Memra* here and in the third verset are to soften the prophet’s utterance and to express reverence to God while de-anthropomorphizing Him.<sup>536</sup> However, in the third verset the intent is to continue elevating the role of the prophets as relevant, especially to the Second Temple period and after<sup>537</sup> (see, e.g., Tg 1:5,11,12, 2:1, 3:1). For TJ, trusting God and the prophets is the essence of Judaism that protects Israel from repeated destruction. This is emphasized again and again by the Rabbis.<sup>538</sup> The prophet is the paradigm for the true faithful.<sup>539</sup> If only Israel had taken heed of the prophets and trusted in God’s Word, it would still be living on its land under Davidic sovereignty.

אַלְפָּן, or אַלְפָּנָא usually refers to God’s teaching (Isa 32:6) and here in particular to what the prophets have been trying to teach the stubborn people (Jer 2:30, 32:33).<sup>540</sup> The term is used in a variety of ways in Rabbinic literature, mostly to mean ‘instruction of tradition’ (e.g., *Tanhuma Leviticus, Aharei Mot* 6), teaching of the Law (*Yerushalmi, Rosh Hodesh* 18b, *Pe’ah* 37b), ‘discussion of the Law’ (e.g., *Yerushalmi, Berakhot* 48a), and ‘instructive supervision or learning a lesson’ (*Yerushalmi, Rosh Ha-Shanah* 18b). The honorific epithet בַּר אַלְפָּנָא is given to the scholar and the knowledgeable (e.g., *Genesis Rabbah* 81,2, *Leviticus Rabbah* 3,1).

Ribera notes that אַלְפָּן here means ‘instruction,’ but when it means ‘correction, punishment,’ TJ uses יְסוּר (Hos 5:2) and מְרָדוֹת (Prov 5:12,23).<sup>541</sup>

In TJ’s theology, no one can literally come near God.<sup>542</sup> One approaches Him through worship, פּוֹלְחָנָא (1:6; Jer 30:21 [2x]; Ezek

<sup>536</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 149, note 135.

<sup>537</sup> This is well expressed in the Qumran apocalyptic (e.g. 4Q371) and prophetic literature (e.g., 2Q23, 4Q485, 6Q10, 6Q12, 6Q13; note the use of הוּי and הַהִם (בימים ההם), and in the *pesharim* (e.g., 1QpHab).

<sup>538</sup> As mentioned above in *Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah, Petihta* 31. See also *Pesikta Rabbati* 29,11; *Midrash Ecclesiastes Zuta* 2,14; *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 16,8.

<sup>539</sup> Cf TJ Isa 50:10. Gordon notes that TJ has “a tendency to introduce reference to prophesying and prophets independently of MT.” He further contends that TJ has the same independent tendency with regard to מוֹסֵר, “a neutral sense of “instruction” that promotes the idea of teaching (*Targum*, 170).

<sup>540</sup> Noteworthy is the second Temple period Aramaic phrase קַבֵּל אוֹלְפָּן (‘receive instruction’), rather than לְקַח אוֹלְפָּן (‘take instruction’). קַבֵּל may carry a stronger sense of commitment than לְקַח.

<sup>541</sup> Ribera, “La version,” 156. It is imperative that Tg Prophets should be separated from Tg Writings when analyzing how the targumist uses specific words for specific ideas.

<sup>542</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 139–40.

40:46), which involves Priestly activity; this in turn suggests attendance at actual Temple services. This is the second time in the book of Zephaniah (cf 1:6) that such religious participation is required and promoted by the Targumist. Temple worship, and later synagogue worship, is one of the key Targumic elements essential for national unity and preservation.<sup>543</sup>

There may be here a hidden censure of Priests for abrogating their role as cultic media and religious leaders. For they engaged in behavior that alienated the people from the Temple cult and religious observance. Moreover, from the time the Hasmoneans took over the High Priesthood to the fall of Judah, the Priestly class had been feuding bitterly with the secular authorities for control. Targum may allude here to their part in the fall of Judah and its Temple.

The Sepharadi Mss X,N,C have the metonym **פּוֹלְחָנָא** for **דְּחַלְתָּא**. No significance should be drawn from this. The two Ashkenazi Mss A,R add **אוֹרִיתָא** after **אוֹלְפָן** as an added explanation for ‘instruction, teaching.’

3:3: Her officials in her midst *like* lions roar, her judges (are) wolves of evening, they are not *weakened* in the morning.

The accusations continue to unfold. Four specific groups of leaders are named, two here and two in the next verse.<sup>544</sup> The first two, the officials and the judges, are depicted in metaphors of animals. The corruption *in the midst* of the city is here deliberately centered in order to underline the statement in v. 5 that positions the righteous God *in the midst* of the city. The pun on the root **קרב** (**קִרְבָּה** in v. 2 and **בְּקִרְבָּה** in v. 3 [and later in vv. 5,11,12,15,17]) emphasizes that Judah has not been drawing near her God, for her divine center has been replaced by a human power elite. Semantically, TJ does not reflect this pun.

Targum’s added comparative particle before ‘lions’ carries over to the next verset. It performs double duty: it avoids the analogy of people compared to animals, and it sets the imagery straight, even though the text shows otherwise.<sup>545</sup> Such characteristics occur, for example, in Ezek 19:2, where the congregation of Israel ‘was *like*’ a lioness. However,

<sup>543</sup> See also commentary on 1:6.

<sup>544</sup> This unit of vv. 3–4 and their association with Gen 49 is analyzed by Ball (*A Rhetorical*, 217–18).

<sup>545</sup> LXX and Peshitta apply the comparative particle to ‘wolves’ as well.

it is quintessentially Targumic to strip off the metaphor and reveal its intended subjects, as in Zech 11:3–4,7 and Ezek 34:6–22, where the shepherds are interpreted as the Judean leaders, and the flock as God’s abused people. Even when the metaphor concerns non-human species, the text is clarified, as in Joel 1:6, where the fangs of locusts are *likened* to those of lions’ offspring.<sup>546</sup>

Comparing the leaders to animals may echo a Rabbinic theology that states that God created innocent and compassionate fowl, fishes and animals, as well as vicious and devouring ones; He created mankind similarly. The righteous are likened to the kind animals (Song 5:2) and the wicked are likened to the vicious animals, such as wolves, as it is written: ‘her judges are evening wolves’ (Zeph 3:3).<sup>547</sup>

Changing שֹׂאֲגִים, ‘roaring,’ from an adjective to a verb (so LXX and Peshitta) emphasizes the leaders’ lack of shame in publicizing their crimes. This scene stands in drastic contrast to the sounds of screaming Judeans on the Day of YHWH (1:10,11,14).

Even though the root גרם is well attested in the meaning of ‘to gnaw bones’ (Num 24:8; Ezek 23:34),<sup>548</sup> scholars have offered several other meanings based, in some cases, on other Semitic cognates: ‘be strong,’ i.e., the judges are “fierce wolves”;<sup>549</sup> ‘they hoped, longed’ (read גִּרְסוּ) to “carry on their lawless activity”;<sup>550</sup> ‘they (do not) finish’ (a parablepsis נִמְרוּ), eating until morning;<sup>551</sup> ‘they (did not) sleep’ (read נָמוּ), in order to look for prey day and night;<sup>552</sup> read the plural noun גֹּזְרִים, “infant wild beasts,” to parallel זְאֵבִים, ‘wolves,’ and change לֹא to לָ (לְעֵרָב)

<sup>546</sup> Interestingly, Onkelos translates גֹּזֵר אֲרִיָּה יְהוּדָה (Gen 49:9) metaphorically, but PsJ uses the comparative ‘I liken you . . . to a lion’s offspring.’ However, both Onkelos and PsJ translate גֹּזֵר אֲרִיָּה דִן in a comparative mode.

<sup>547</sup> *Orhot Zaddikim Sha’ar 28, Yir’at Shamayim*. This book was written anonymously in the 15th century in Germany on ethical issues and reflects many previous Jewish thinkers. This similitude between man and animal may have been derived from an earlier Rabbinic tradition. But this may be speculative. On the book, see “Orhot Zaddikim,” *EJ* 12:1458–60.

<sup>548</sup> MurXII reflects the MT faithfully.

<sup>549</sup> Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 194. Though his argument is valid and well founded, the context is not completely satisfactory. Ball had proposed this meaning saying that the judges, unlike God (v. 5), are too tired to perform their duties in the morning (*A Rhetorical*, 158–59).

<sup>550</sup> Efros, “Textual Notes,” 153.

<sup>551</sup> Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 129. This has been brought as an alternative by Meinard Stenzel in “Zum Verständnis von Zeph. III 3,” *VT* 1 (1951): 305.

<sup>552</sup> Ehrlich, *מקרא כפשוטו*, 461.

to accord with **לְבַקֵּר**, to yield ‘her judges are wolves at night, cubs in the morning.’<sup>553</sup>

Excessive changes are offered by Elliger culminating in **זְאֵבִים לֹא עֹזְבוּ גֵרָם**, ‘wolves do not spare a bone’ while ‘in the morning’ is considered a gloss.<sup>554</sup> Jongeling dismisses Elliger’s changes by noting that justice was dispensed in the morning and by pointing to the image of powerful gnawing in Jer 50:17. A solution to the pun **גֵּרָם/גֵּמֵר** is found in the meaning of ‘decide, resolve’ (from the Syriac), and thus ‘they do not give resolutions in the morning.’<sup>555</sup>

The consensus as to the general meaning of v. 3b is that the prophet accuses the judges of abdicating judicial tasks.

Targum’s translation of **גֵּרָמוּ** has no connection with ‘bones.’ As often in cases of metaphors, TJ presents the intent of the text. The participle **מוֹרְכִין** derives from **מָרַךְ**, ‘be soft, faint’ and so ‘weak.’ Even though the Aramaic root **גרם**, ‘be strong; eat up to the bone,’ could be used,<sup>556</sup> TJ chose the opposite of its Hebrew secondary meaning, ‘strong.’<sup>557</sup> In this way, TJ clarifies the vague MT message: the judges are accused of being so involved with illegal acts throughout the night that they continue their active corruption into the day. They do not let their greed grow faint, for they lack any sense of shame.<sup>558</sup>

Gordon reads **מוֹרְכִין** ‘wait,’ with no evidence for this meaning.<sup>559</sup> He and Ribera base their reading on Peshitta’s **מַבְתְּרִין**, ‘stay.’<sup>560</sup> Whether ‘weak’ (TJ), ‘stay behind’ (Pesh), or ‘leave behind’ (LXX, Vul), the general meaning is that of the insatiable greed of judges who have abdicated their duties.

The charges against the officials and judges, according to TJ, are shamelessness and excessive greed, which result in social injustice. The

<sup>553</sup> Stenzel, “Zum Verständnis,” 303–05. No explanation on its significance or context is given.

<sup>554</sup> Elliger, *Das Buch*, 75.

<sup>555</sup> Jongeling, “Jeux de Mots,” 543–47.

<sup>556</sup> *Bavli*, *Bava Batra* 22a uses the Hebrew meaning of **גרם**, ‘eating the meat off the bones,’ as an allusion to acquiring scant and unscholarly education and failing to aim for the fat meat, namely, the more scholarly teachers. See Jastrow, 269.

<sup>557</sup> See Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 193–94.

<sup>558</sup> For **תִּגְרָמִי** (Ezek 23:34), TJ is exegetical, and so TO Num 24:8.

<sup>559</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 171. Others do the same, e.g., Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 173, Gerleman, *Zephaniah*, 49 and Rudolph, *Micha*, 285,3b. Sweeney translates ‘tarry’ with no evidence (*Zephaniah*, 157).

<sup>560</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 156. It seems that Peshitta reflects the Hebrew **נִשְׁאָרוּ** or **נִתְּוָרוּ**, ‘stayed, remained’ based on the LXX’s reflection of the Hebrew **הִשְׁאִירוּ** or **הִתְּוִירוּ**, ‘left behind.’

people they swore to protect have become their helpless victims. These are charges that fit especially against the Patriarch Judah II (*nasi* ca 230–270 CE). In his days, the economic power of the *nasi* declined; in order to maintain his authority he levied taxes on scholars and the rift between them intensified. Other sources of revenue were gifts from individuals and the sale of judicial posts to rich lay people, which undermined the tradition and authority of the Rabbis. Jewish sources deride these judges with scriptural quotations implying accusations of corruption, ineptitude and unethical and immoral character. These appointments were likened by Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish to idolatry.<sup>561</sup> If this particular interpretation is correct, then we may find here a 3rd century “correction” or “updating” of a former, more literal translation.

3:4: Their *false* prophets *who are in her midst*, are *evil*, lying men; the Priests desecrate holiness, rob Torah.

As with the officials and judges, these two groups, prophets and Priests, have betrayed their positions. However, their abominations are more severe because the positions of both prophets and Priests are divinely designated to transmit God’s Word.<sup>562</sup>

The root פהז, its participle פְּהֹזִים (found again in Judg 9:4), and its nouns פְּהֹז (Gen 49:4) and פְּהֹזוֹת (Jer 23:32) are understood as ‘irresponsible, reckless behavior.’ Jeremiah’s פְּהֹזוֹת also relates to the prophets, and is associated with falsely acting as God’s messengers, with adultery, deception and lies. From Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac and Greek sources Greenfield has shown that the root פהז (noun פְּהֹזָה) has a more specific meaning, that of harlotry, lewd conduct, lust, and defilement.<sup>563</sup>

<sup>561</sup> E.g., *Bavli*, *Shabbat* 139a; *Nedarim* 32a; *Ketubot* 17a; Avi-Yonah, *The Jews*, 118–20; Israel Moses Ta-Shma, “Judah (Nesia),” *Ej* 10:333.

<sup>562</sup> Zephaniah’s strong criticism of prophets and Priests is picked up and elaborated upon by Jeremiah, who adds immoral behavior to the list of charges. Prophets’ role is to transmit God’s Word faithfully regardless of its content (Jer 1:10). Their charge is to address the people and its leaders: kings, officials, Priests and ‘the people of the land’ (1:18). Yet, they knowingly deliver false Words (14:15, 23:15–18, 21, 25–28) and thus mislead those who seek God. They commit adultery (29:21–23) and engage in false dealings, encourage evil doing, and prevent people from repenting (8:10, 23:14). They mislead the people in political matters and have no shame for doing abominations (8:11–12). They are even accused of murder (Lam 4:13).

<sup>563</sup> Greenfield, “The Meaning of phz,” in *From Babylon to Canaan. Studies in the Bible and Its Oriental Background* (ed. Samuel E. Loewenstamm; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew

בגד ('break the trust') is often used in the context of the Covenant (Jer 5:11; Hos 5:7, 6:7; Mal 2:11; Ps 78:57), a major concern of the prophets.<sup>564</sup> Jeremiah describes the nature of the faithless in terms of deception (9:2, 4–5), lack of conscience (12:1. Cf Isa 21:2), and the discounting of God while the prophets remain passive (5:11–13). Both verbs, פתז and בגד, indicate a behavior of deception against the institution of marriage on the one hand and against God on the other.

Targum concurs that *all* Judah's officials, judges and Priests were corrupt but not the prophets. It is characteristic of TJ that whenever 'prophets' occurs in the context of misbehavior, the word שְׁקֵרָא, 'false' is affixed (e.g., Jer 23:25,26,30,31). A good example is Ezek 14:7–10. In this passage, v. 7 presents a case where the people seek the Word of God from a known legitimate prophet. By v. 10 it is clear that God will discredit that prophet and so he is described as a *false* prophet. This designation stems from the tendency to protect the honor of true prophets.<sup>565</sup> Our ms seems to try to convey the literal genitive 'her prophets' and somehow muddles the text. The literal Aramaic reading is 'prophets of their lies' (שְׁקֵרִין), but it results in the change of the Hebrew genitive to 'their.' The syntax would be correct ('their false prophets') if TJ attached the genitive to 'the prophets,' נְבִיהוֹן דְּשְׁקֵרָא (cf TJ Jer 2:26, 27:9,16) or without the genitive, נְבִי שְׁקֵרָא, as all the other mss do except Mss V,H.

Churgin claims that TJ reads 'false prophets' when they speak in the name of idols.<sup>566</sup> This is one case which disproves his claim. The Prophets, officials, judges and Priests mentioned in vv. 2–4 are, according to TJ, the 'heads, leaders' pronounced at the opening of the oracle (in the interpretation offered). In our verse TJ defines them as people of *falsehood*, not people of idolatry. This is consistent with other targumim. Targum Hos 9:7, for example, describes the 'man of spirit' (אִישׁ הָרוּחַ) as a false prophet who dulls the minds of his audience. Hayward, based

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University, 1992), 35–40. The sense of arrogance (Ryou, *Zephaniah's Oracles*, 57–58, 263) or "reckless in assertion, boastful" (S.R. Driver, *The Minor*, 132) is absent here as is the sense of "overconfidence or reckless speech" (Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 175). Rudolph explains the root from the Arabic 'to boast,' and translates it "*Windmacher*," a man of 'hot air' speech (*Micha*, 284, 286, 4a. However, action is criticized in the MT, not speech.

<sup>564</sup> Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 161.

<sup>565</sup> Ryou explains this tendency as "to avoid any possible calumny of true prophets" (*Zephaniah's Oracles*, 57).

<sup>566</sup> Churgin, *Targum*, 118–19.

on Tj Jer 14:14, posits a different definition, that of “any prophet who tells lies in the name of any god.”<sup>567</sup> However, Jeremiah’s prophets are clearly those who consider themselves as true YHWHistic prophets (v. 13). Jeremiah himself wonders if indeed their prophecies better represent the truth than his. In 2 Kgs 18:19 the prophets of the Baal are translated literally because they are not Judean but foreign. The Targumic definition of false prophets is, then, more specific: Judean prophets who knowingly or unknowingly announce false divine messages.

The emphasis on false and evil prophets may suggest a harsh criticism of several ‘messiahs’ before and after 70. Some went peacefully to the desert; others inflamed the Jews to revolt against the Romans and the Herodian dynasty. Among them were Theudas, Judah the Galilean the founder of the Zealots, Menahem ben Judah, and Bar Kokhba. In all cases, they and their followers were brutally slaughtered by the Romans.<sup>568</sup>

Taking the cue from Jer 23:25–32, only false prophets deceive with lies and פְּחֹזוֹת. However, Jeremiah’s פְּחֹזוֹת is translated as ‘levity, thoughtlessness’ (the root בַּקֵּר, the noun בַּקְרוּתָא II),<sup>569</sup> while in Judg 9:4 Abimelekh’s men are ‘contemptible’ (the root בַּסֵּר). In our verse the prophets are described as ‘evil,’ בְּאֲשֵׁי, which sums up Tj’s opinion of the false prophets’ conduct. They are as evil as the people who follow them (cf Jer 23:22). With this word, Tj criticizes these “messiahs’” true religious conduct and intent.<sup>570</sup> Moreover, בְּאֲשֵׁי carries the meaning of ‘a bad smell, smell of decay,’ which adds an offensive tone.<sup>571</sup>

Mss U,Y show the substitute of בְּיִשִּׁין, ‘evil,’ with a secondary meaning of ‘sick’ which mitigates the effect of ‘stench.’ This reading does not necessarily convey a variant, but could have resulted from a scribal error or from the scribe’s not knowing the root בִּאֵשׁ.

The plus of ‘in her midst’ corresponds to the one in the previous verse in order to equate the sins of all four groups, and to sharpen the contrast with God in the next verse.

<sup>567</sup> Robert Hayward, “Some Notes on Scribes and Priests in the Targum of the Prophets,” *JJS* 36 (1985): 211.

<sup>568</sup> Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, “Messianic Movements,” *Ej* 11:1417–27; Isaiah Gafni, “Theudas,” *Ej* 15: 1117; Josephus, *תולדות*, 2.8.1.

<sup>569</sup> Jastrow, 188.

<sup>570</sup> As expressed by Josephus in *תולדות*, 7.8.1.

<sup>571</sup> An equivalent to ‘stinking liars.’ Cf Exod 5:21; Isa 34:3; Joel 2:20. Gordon contends that Tj’s translation is “a bland equivalent” to פַּחְזִים, “reckless” (*Targum*, 171).



The form גְּבָרִין is consistent in all the Yemenite mss but it occurs also in the Ashkenazi and the Sepharadi mss together with גְּבָרִין.<sup>572</sup> The ‘ג’ with *shuruq* or *qubbutz* is consistent, too, in Palestinian sources (e.g., *Genesis Rabbah* 94,9; *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana* 9,1; *Yerushalmi, Shabbat* 39b) and in names such as *Beit Guwrin*. But at the same time they occur in Daniel (e.g., 3:8,12,24,25) and Ezra (as גְּבָרִיא, 4:21). When Palestinian sources and *Bavli* have unvoweled גְּבָרִין, they usually quote Daniel. The form גְּבָרִין/גְּבָרִיא is rare and its location is uncertain (Onkelos shows both morphologies). However, it seems that גְּבָרִין/גְּבָרִיא were of Western Aramaic that influenced the Eastern dialect. It can also be deduced, albeit with caution, that both forms of גְּבָרִין/גְּבָרִיא reached Europe at two different waves of pre- and post-Babylonia redaction.<sup>573</sup>

The fourth group of leaders is the Priests, whose function is ‘to distinguish between the holy and the profane, and between the impure and the pure; and to teach the children of Israel all the laws which God spoke to them through Moses’ (Lev 10:10–11).<sup>574</sup> They ‘desecrate holiness,’ a Priestly concept that is derived from the theological precept that defiling the holy constitutes the desecration of God’s “name” (e.g., Lev 19:12, 20:3b, 22:2,32; Jer 34:16; Ezek 20:39, 36:22–23, 39:7; Amos 2:7).<sup>575</sup> They violate the Law, הַמַּס תוֹרָה. In the Wisdom, חַמַּס means ‘to harm, endanger.’<sup>576</sup> In the legal genre, חַמַּס carries a more severe meaning, that of robbing (Jer 22:3, 7:6).<sup>577</sup> The phrase חַמַּסוּ

<sup>572</sup> Both are noted in Jastrow’s as legitimate (p. 209).

<sup>573</sup> Cf Tal, *The Language*, 84.

<sup>574</sup> The Priests’ function mirrors God who has distinguished Israel to be holy from among the non-holy nations (Lev 20:24b,26). According to Ezekiel (22:26), the Priests failed to carry on their duties. They closed their eyes when they saw people desecrating the Sabbath. Deuteronomy 18:3–7, 21:5a, 26:3 specify the Levite-Priests’ role in cultic terms of service in the sanctuary and beyond, in judicial context in 17:8–13, 19:17, 21:5b, and in military context in 20:2–4. They are in charge of teaching the Law and ensuring its transmission to the next generation (17:18, 27:9–26, 31:9–13).

<sup>575</sup> Ezek 22:25–29 is in reversal to our v. 4b. It is within a pericope that elaborates and interprets Zeph 3:3–4. On the connection between Zeph 3:3–4 and Ezek 22:25–29 see Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 196–205 and Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 461–63. Several exegetical forms are employed here, such as the split-up pattern, pun and homiletical embellishment. קָדֵשׁ is all that emanates from God and is designated as distinguished from what is profane and impure (i.e., the Law, the Sabbath, the Temple and its cult, foods, moral conduct, etc.).

<sup>576</sup> Prov 8:36 states that one who dismisses Wisdom endangers his life. Job 15:33 claims that the ignorant (= the wicked) jeopardizes his well being like the one who damages unripe grapes and sheds the blossoms of an olive tree. In 21:27 Job accuses his friends of attempting to damage his name with their thoughts.

<sup>577</sup> E.g., Calvin, *Commentaries*, 269, note 1; Roberts, *Nahum*, 204; Cheryl L. Kirk-Duggan, “Violence,” *EDB* 1357; Stonehouse, *The Books*, 57.

תּוֹרָה then suggests an implied metaphor of robbing, violating the Law from its essence, and causing damage to its holiness; thus, it serves as an apposition to חָלְלוּ-קִדְשׁ.

Concerning the Priests, T<sub>J</sub> conveys the message of the MT. However, it changes two perfect tenses in the MT, ‘desecrating’ and ‘violating,’ so that they are read in the present tense. Also, the noun בְּהַנְּיָא, ‘the Priests,’ appears instead of the genitive ‘her Priests’ only in our ms and Ms H, and is no doubt an error. The Aramaic verb חָטַף, in the majority of cases, translates the Hebrew חָמַס, ‘to violate, rob’ (1:9), as here. However, the context is almost always that of social injustice with legal implications. Therefore, both Zephaniah and T<sub>J</sub> view the Priests as robbing the Torah from its role as the source of moral and ethical knowledge and guidance. Furthermore, if חָטַף in its meaning of ‘to misinterpret [a text]’ was intended, then T<sub>J</sub> accuses the Priests of deliberately deceiving the public out of evil intent. The source of light becomes the tool for evil. How they acted against the Torah is elaborated by Ezekiel (22:26).

Targum’s אֹרִיחָא for Zephaniah’s תּוֹרָה means the Pentateuch, as in Rabbinic literature and contemporary use.

3:5: YYY, *the Righteous One, has determined to set His Shekhinah in her midst; to do deceit is not before Him. Behold, as the morning light that grows in strength, so His judgment goes out forever, and does not tarry, but the children know no shame.*

Though T<sub>J</sub>, LXX, Peshitta, Vulgate, and MurXII confirm the MT, most commentators deem this verse a gloss. Renaud summarizes the following reasons: the late language is hymnic; it has a different address than vv. 4 and 6; verbal tenses are divergent (*qatal* vs *yiqtol*); it carries a different theological tenor; exercising justice does not result in condemnation; the words do not resound in the same style; it somewhat modifies the aspect of the divine judge by making it possible to present it in both positive and negative fashion (benevolent and condemning, v. 9ff).<sup>578</sup> Others add the generic divergence of a lament in vv. 1–4 over the city Jerusalem as against judgment against the wicked,<sup>579</sup> an issue

<sup>578</sup> Renaud, *Michée*, 241.

<sup>579</sup> Seybold, *Nahum*, 110. Verse 5 is not a judgment.

of holiness should have been more proper after v. 4 than the issue of God's daily behavior.<sup>580</sup>

Defending its integrity, Sweeney regards the verse as an introductory framework for God's speech in vv. 6–13, in contrast to Judah's deplorable behavior as portrayed in vv. 1–4.<sup>581</sup>

The criticism as expressed by modern scholars does not concern TJ. For TJ, the drastic shift in subject matter is an opportunity for a didactic expansion. The addition reveals several typical Targumic elements:<sup>582</sup>

By adding a definite article to צַדִּיק, TJ stresses YHWH's attribute of righteousness, as it stressed the attribute of awesomeness in 2:11. The absolute justice of God's reward and punishment, of His just laws, is promoted by other targumim as well, e.g., P<sub>s</sub>J and Yerushalmi [Fragmentary] to Gen 4:8 and 15:1; Tg Ps 82:1. This attribute stands against a catalogue of the evil, unholy behavior of Israel's leadership (vv. 1–4). The Aramaic זָכַאי has a judicial connotation of being found innocent, 'pure of offense' (Jer 12:1; Zech 9:9). By analogy, all the leaders of Israel will be found guilty. Out of eleven English translations checked, only NJB translates likewise, "Yahweh the Upright."

The concept of the *Shekhinah* is most probably based on the Hebrew expression וּשְׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹךְ (e.g., Exod 25:8, 29:45; Num 5:3; 1 Kgs 6:13; Ezek 43:9; Zech 2:14).<sup>583</sup> Since God does not "dwell," the medium *Shekhinah* was created, supported by מִשְׁכָּן, the prototype of the Temple.<sup>584</sup> The idea of *Shekhinah* (the Aramaic passive form, 'that which is dwelt') was developed in the Second Temple period and is inherently the Divine Presence coupled with the attributes of mercy,<sup>585</sup> holiness<sup>586</sup>

<sup>580</sup> Elliger, *Das Buch*, 76.

<sup>581</sup> Sweeney, *The Twelve*, 521.

<sup>582</sup> Vlaardingerbroek wonders if underlying these additions "there is a text which is more comprehensive than MT" (*Zephaniah*, 168–69). This is not so, but rather, TJ offers a typical targumic exegesis based on praising God's virtues as against humans.

<sup>583</sup> In an Aramaic midrash on the *Amidah* prayer used by the Yemenite Jews, this link is clearly evident. The supplicant asks God to make His *Shekhinah* dwell within Jerusalem as it is written in 1Kgs 6:13: 'and I shall dwell within the children of Israel' (וּשְׁכַנְתִּי) (בתוך בני ישראל). Yosef Tobi, "The Use of Aramaic in writing and in speech among the Jews of Yemen," in *Linguistique des langues juives et linguistique generale* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2003), 323. Gordon associates this concept with the Deuteronomistic Name-Theology (*Targum*, 4–5). A critical survey of scholarly discussions is found in Andrew Chester's *Divine Revelation and Divine Titles in Pentateuchal Targumim* (Tübingen: J.C. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1986), 293–24; Smelik, *The Targum*, 107–11.

<sup>584</sup> E.g., Exod 40:34; 2 Sam 7:6; Ps 26:8.

<sup>585</sup> E.g., TJ Hos 13:14b; Smolar, *Studies*, 197 and note 440.

<sup>586</sup> E.g., TJ Isa 57:15a.

and light.<sup>587</sup> It is a Divine affirmation of protection over Israel in His land. As long as God “dwells” (verb שכן) within the Temple and Israel, no harm can befall them unless they rebel against Him.

*Shekhinah/Shekhinta* cannot be summarized in a tight definition or limited to one function. As a reverential term for God in His relationship with Israel, scholars have attempted to define it, as well as *Yeqara* and *Memra*, within translational phenomena or conceptualized theology. There has also been attempts to define the inconsistencies in maintaining anti-anthropomorphism in Targum versus laxity in this tendency along the lines of historical developments. Smelik, in his review of research, concludes that the three terms are “exegetical devices with theological significance, albeit largely stereotyped.”<sup>588</sup> Stereotyped or otherwise, scholars view these terms within a theological spectrum in which the targumists attempt to present reverential media toward the divine as it relates to man. Whether these media are concepts to explain God’s presence in man’s world within a belief in His heavenly presence<sup>589</sup> or paraphrastic expressions to explain God’s omnipresence,<sup>590</sup> the aim is one and the same. This connection is especially highlighted by the belief that God’s presence is predominantly assured when people gather to study Torah or judge righteously. The three terms are at times interchanged. For example, because of the association of *Yeqara* with light, the *Shekhinah* also obtains this characteristic.

Rambam, Judah Halevi and other medieval philosophers viewed *Shekhinah* as God’s creation extraneous to the Divine. Ramban, on the other hand, viewed it as an interchangeable name for God.<sup>591</sup> In his commentary on Genesis 46, he criticized Rambam’s understanding of the targumic inconsistencies of anti-anthropomorphic techniques (in *Moreh Nevukhim*) and concluded that the targumists tend to translate

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<sup>587</sup> E.g., TJ Isa 60:2b; Jer 4:28; Ezek 43:2; Zech 14:6; Smolar, *Studies*, 138 and note 58.

<sup>588</sup> Smelik, *Targum*, 111.

<sup>589</sup> Arnold B. Goldberg, *Untersuchung über die Vorstellung von der Shekhinah in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969), 450.

<sup>590</sup> Moore, “Intermediaries,” 55–59.

<sup>591</sup> This is also Max Kadushin’s position. He quotes several passages in which the Rabbis view *Shekhinah* as an alter name for God, drawing support from Biblical verses. This equation is made also by the deeds and attitudes the Rabbis ascribe to both God and the *Shekhinah*. It is most of all a reverential appellative for God. The phrase “My *Shekhinah*,” too, refers to God Himself. The use with the genitive gives its circumspect nature a stronger force (*The Rabbinic Mind* [3rd edition; New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1965], 222–29).

literally only when the senses (such as hearing and seeing) or movements (such as going down or passing by) are actual, but that they use buffer terms when they are concepts, e.g., ‘perceive’ instead of ‘see.’ Similarly, buffer terms such as *Memra* or *yeqara* are used in cases of dreams and visions when God appears to man.

The position on the *Shekhinah* and its nature is debated by the Rabbis, who wished to prevent messianic speculations<sup>592</sup> while at the same time upholding the people’s hope for redemption and return to Zion. R. Abba bar Kahana taught that the *Shekhinah* was originally on earth, but seven sinners and wicked generations kept distancing it further into the far corners of Heaven. However, seven righteous men kept transcending it back to earth, where it has remained. So immense, R. Abba concludes, is the power of the righteous.<sup>593</sup> Rabbi Yose doubts that the *Shekhinah* ever came down, but the Gemarah refutes him with several citations (*Bavli*, *Sukkah* 5a). In another *midrash* (*Numbers Rabbah* 7,10) R. Yose states that ever since the Temple was destroyed, the *Shekhinah* has gone to exile, and as long as bloodshed continues in Israel, it will not return. Rabbi Nathan rebuts, saying that the *Shekhinah* indeed went to exile, but *with* Israel, to console and protect her.<sup>594</sup> Rabbi Ishmael and Rav Sheshet believe that the *Shekhinah* is everywhere and therefore one can stand in prayer facing any direction (*Bavli*, *Bava Batra* 25a). R. Phinehas who cites R. Hoshaya limits the *Shekhinah*’s revelation to the righteous in this world; yet, he continues, in the World to Come all will enjoy it (*Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* 1,14).

In many *midrashim*, the *Shekhinah*’s dwelling in the land of Israel is contingent upon the behavior of the individual Jew. Creating joy by doing good deeds,<sup>595</sup> or merely sitting in the presence of Rabbis<sup>596</sup> bring the *Shekhinah*. *Bavli*, *Berakhot* 64a affirms that the *Shekhinah* resides among people who study the Torah and that each righteous person can reconstitute the *Shekhinah*, as did Moses, who requested that it be brought in to live among Israel. In every generation, teaches *Bavli*, *Sanhedrin* 97b, at least thirty six righteous people receive the *Shekhinah*, as it is said: ‘Blessed be he who waits for Him (וְלֵ)’. וְלֵ in *gematria* is 36.

<sup>592</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 223 and note 591.

<sup>593</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* 19,7.

<sup>594</sup> See also *Bavli*, *Megillah* 29a.

<sup>595</sup> *Bavli*, *Shabbat* 30b.

<sup>596</sup> *Bavli*, *Berakhot* 64a.

Just judges and hospitable people bring the Shekhinah to Israel.<sup>597</sup> On the other hand, *Shekhinah* haunts the vulgar and avoids impure people and places.<sup>598</sup> The opposite is expressed in *Bavli*, *Yoma* 56b: Whoever sins in secret or avoids having sons causes *Shekhinah* to withdraw.

Targum Jonathan reflects the Rabbis' discourse. The majority perceives the *Shekhinah* as a mystical entity, in the context of a relationship with Israel, interchangeable with God. Since God is omnipresent His *Shekhinah* dwells wherever God does. God cannot be limited to one place. The *Shekhinah* can be in heaven (1 Kgs 8:23a; Isa 33:5a; Hos 5:15a), among the people (Josh 22:31a; Joel 4:17a,21b), in Jerusalem (Jer 3:17a; Zech 2:14b, 15b) or in the Temple (Ezek 43:7a), and more specifically 'on the throne of glory in the high heaven above the altar' (Isa 6:2b).<sup>599</sup> It can be revealed or hidden from man (Hab 3:4b). At the same time, TJ follows the circumspect approach of some Rabbis who regard *Shekhinah* as a reverential medium, which is what people see, not God Himself (Isa 64:3b).<sup>600</sup> Nevertheless, in our verse, when TJ states that it is 'His *Shekhinah*' that dwells within the city, two concerns conflate: the need to distance oneself from the corporeality of God coupled with the theology that God still "reside" within Jerusalem and hence, Israel.<sup>601</sup> This means that God has never left Jerusalem (and Zion), for He is always ready to receive His children back.

In his extensive study into the usages of *Shekhinah*, Goldberg catalogues the relevant texts into 68 groups. He discerns not a monolithic concept, but rather single concepts of *Shekhinah* at various times that are equally expressed in Rabbinic literature as well as in targumic texts. The shifts in and the reinventing of the concept reflect the vicissitudes of history, which culminate in the recession into the background of the national and theological elements of the *Shekhinah*, and the movement into the foreground of the more individualized relationship. Yet, the earlier theory of the association between *Shekhinah* and Temple continued to be maintained as though the destruction of the Temple still stood fresh in memory. This association was the original usage of the term that was created to explain God's presence within Israel and its land.

<sup>597</sup> *Bavli*, *Sanhedrin* 7a and *Shavuot* 35b, respectively.

<sup>598</sup> *Bavli*, *Sottah* 5a and *Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* 36,3, respectively.

<sup>599</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 226 and note 611.

<sup>600</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 135–36 and notes 40,42,45.

<sup>601</sup> Cf TJ Josh 22:31.

Chilton finds Goldberg's 'original usage' in the relevant texts of TJ to Isaiah. Likewise, he discerns multi-interpretational aspects for the use of *Shekhinah* by the targumists and the Rabbis alike. However, he does not find in his study the dissociation by the Rabbis that Goldberg noted, namely, that the Rabbis accepted the removal of the *Shekhinah* from Zion, whether to a heavenly location or to exile with Israel. Chilton finds four modes of its usage: in its association with the Temple and the cult; as a medium to measure Israel's behavior; as a referent to its own dwelling or removal from Zion, and as a heavenly dwelling that might return. He notes its attenuation by the Rabbis after the Bar-Kokhba episode, in which *Shekhinah* assumed a more individual moral sensitivity.<sup>602</sup> He discerns an early and a later framework, in which the former developed shortly before 70 until the revolt of Bar Kokhba, and the latter evolved after 135. The earlier period reflects the existence of the Temple and the belief in the *Shekhinah* within it. The later period reflects the belief in the temporary removal of the *Shekhinah* from Zion.<sup>603</sup>

In criticizing Chilton's discussion of the *Shekhinah*, Gordon tends to doubt pre-70 targumic references in Isaiah and suggests considering an eschatological view concerning a heavenly Temple rather than an earthly one. According to Gordon, pre-70 references are *vaguely possible* only in Joel 2:27 and 4:17,21.<sup>604</sup>

Not wishing to confine himself to a specific date, Gordon posits that in Zeph 3:5, 15 and 17, the restoration of the *Shekhinah* or a direct Divine redemption are events to be experienced in the future. This presumes that in the present, in TJ's view, the *Shekhinah* has left the country, even temporarily, which then dates this addition to post 70. This is especially true if the *Shekhinah* is linked to God's promise through the targumist's אָמַר. Gordon further contends that TJ raises the possibility of the removal of the *Shekhinah* if the people do not mend their ways, especially when the text relates to the northern kingdom of Israel (TJ Hos 2:5, 5:6,15, 13:14; cf Mic 3:4). Targum also gives credence to its restoration when the text foresees the return of the Divine grace upon God's people (e.g., TJ Hos 2:25; Zech 2:9,14,15), again suggesting a post-70 date.<sup>605</sup>

<sup>602</sup> In texts such as *Bavli*, *Berakhot* 32b, *Niddah* 13b, *Bava Batra* 75a, *Kiddushin* 31a.

<sup>603</sup> Chilton, *The Glory*, 69–75.

<sup>604</sup> Gordon, *Studies*, 134–36.

<sup>605</sup> Gordon, *Studies*, 132–37.

The *Shekhinah* clause is missing from PT, for while AT interprets TJ's אמר as both 'determined' and 'said', PT refocuses the whole verse to be God's statement. It conditions the reinstatement of the *Shekhinah* on the fulfillment of a list of demands. Only at the end of this list (v. 15) does the clause of the *Shekhinah* find a resting place.

The awkward translation for 'He does not do falsehood' results from the Targumic propensity to add 'before Him' to avoid any direct association between God and wrongdoing. It is not in God's nature to lie, declares TJ. Targum continues to use the word שָׁקַר, 'lie,' to tie it with the double usage in the previous verse and thus to sharpen the contrast.<sup>606</sup> However, the Hebrew שָׁקַר does not occur in vv. 1–5 at all.

AT elaborates on this statement by presenting the conditions and demands in the *Tosefta* as an example for 'not doing falsehood.' 'Not doing falsehood' is explained as 'He does not recant from what He said/promised.' Grelot thinks that this addition (and the rest) may reflect the ancient Palestinian targum that TJ later omitted. According to Grelot, all omissions represent TJ's corrections in order to conform to the MT. On the other hand, the existence of נִפְיֵק at the end of TJ v. 5 should be restored to the AT to make a better sense.<sup>607</sup>

PT omits the references to *Shekhinah* and 'not doing falsehood' as well as the addition. The reason seems to be its emphasis on the light and glory of the universal God that it associates with the call to Zion to rejoice. This is presented by both AT and PT as God's own promulgation in the third person. However, PT's omission may be a case of haplography, for the missing part lies between דהוא אמר (which can be shortened by דאמר) and דאמר.

The depiction of God as an executor of justice at a certain time is reinterpreted metaphorically in order to emphasize God's attribute as the indisputable, dependable Supreme King.<sup>608</sup> In order to do so, TJ shuffles the order of the words: לְאֹרֶךְ... בְּבֹקֶר become בְּאֹרֶךְ הַבֹּקֶר and לְ of לְאֹרֶךְ takes on a temporal sense of 'every morning' by becoming לְעַד, 'forever.'<sup>609</sup> The reliability and trustworthiness of the daily cycle of nature enables TJ to bring it as an example of God's eternity and

<sup>606</sup> There may have been cases of gross lying by leaders at the time of TJ. עֲוֹלָה in 3:13 is translated similarly, but in Isa 59:3 it reads 'deceits.'

<sup>607</sup> Grelot, "Une Tosefta," 201.

<sup>608</sup> See Gordon, *Targum*, 171 note 14.

<sup>609</sup> The reading of בְּאֹרֶךְ, 'as the light,' is adopted by several scholars such as E. Sellin, *Das Zwölfprophetenbuch* (KAT XII; Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1929–30), 434,437; Van Hoonacker reads בְּאֹרֶךְ, *comme lumière* (*Les Douze*, 530); NJPS.



unrelenting sense of justice. This characteristic is never questionable and is never delayed.<sup>610</sup> God's ways do not change course, as the morning light reappears without delay every day (לא נֶעְדָּר). The usage of the infinitive absolute Hebrew הלך with other verbs of the same form indicates an act that continues to increase in strength (e.g., Jer 41:6). All the elements in this verse are not abandoned, but reinterpreted.<sup>611</sup>

The MT's contrast of God the Righteous with Israel the Wicked is replaced by AT and PT with an ode to the Divine light as depicted by the Divine statement (דאמר). But there is a subtle difference between the two. AT's reading loses the simile which is corrected by PT:

AT:                   הא כניהור צפרא                   דאזיל ותקיף                   לכל עלמא יתיר מכולא

Behold! As the morning light that grows in strength for the whole world beyond everything

PT:                   הא כניהור צפרא [ד]אזיל [נ]תקיף                   ומוסיף נהוריה  
לכוליה עלמא יתיר מכולא

Behold! As the morning light that grows in strength *and adds His light* for the whole world beyond everything,

AT:                   ודיניה                   וכן תושבחתיה ויקריה

And so His praises and His glory and His Laws...

PT:                   וכן תושבחתיה ויקריה                   יתר מכולא                   וכן גבורתיה                   ודיניה

So His praises and His glory *beyond everything and so His might* and His Laws.

With the restoration of the simile, PT clarifies that the morning light is not a power in itself, but part of the Divine light that is given for the whole world (as His blessing). God's light and His manifestations, when He appears, will be shown *above and beyond* all. The earlier *Tosefta*, AT, while dismissing TJ's simile between the light and the divine Laws,

<sup>610</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 143–44 and note 135.

<sup>611</sup> Gordon maintains that by adapting the MT, TJ “has abandoned the idea of God dispensing justice at the appropriate time (the morning...) in favour of a statement about the ever-burgeoning nature of divine justice” (*Targum*, 171).

<sup>612</sup> Instead of דאזיל ותקין, AT and PT read דאזיל ותקיף, ‘that grows [infinitely] in strength.’

also has to dismiss the link **נפיק**.<sup>613</sup> This is done because AT does not focus on the righteousness of God, which is the subject of Zephaniah,<sup>614</sup> but rather on the nature of God, which is beyond compare. That is why the phrase **לא מתעבב** for **לא נעדר** is not addressed. Building on AT, PT does the same thing but elaborates on God's characteristics. 'Growing in strength' is applied not only to the morning light and to the Law, but also to God's honor and power in the world. This is the focus of PT.

Light and might that 'exceed all' (**תיר מכולא**) to the whole world (**לכל עלמא**) may be associated with Creation.<sup>615</sup> AT may allude to Isa 40:26, which quotes God saying, 'who created all these...out of strength and courage, none is missing [**לא נעדר**]?'<sup>616</sup> The phrase **לא נעדר** in both passages in the context of creation is not the only point of reference. The word **משפטי** (Isa 40:27), not in the meaning of the Law, but rather in allusion to Creation, could be a further reason for this addition in AT. However, instead of the missing phrase **לא נעדר**, so it seems, the idea 'and He does not recant'<sup>617</sup> from what *He said*<sup>618</sup> is added. But this addition is linked to the preceding statement that God does not do falsehood, and not to the following simile. AT's separation between the two subjects is misconstrued by PT, which presents **דאמר** as the opening of the simile.

In all other occurrences of **בבקר בבקר** in the Prophets the translation is literal.<sup>618</sup> The combination of 'morning' with 'light' links the words to the idea of the light in the *Shekhinah*. They also allow TJ to present God in the context of Creation, as is probably the intent of the MT.

According to the AT, just as the divine light grows in strength more than anything else in the world, God's praises, glories and laws increase as well. The change in our verse from the targumic text, **בין**, 'so (is),' to **וכין**, 'and so (are),' forms this connection. As a result, TJ's explanatory

<sup>613</sup> Grelot notices the missing word but has no explanation except to say that "un texte critique devrait sans doute le restituer en cet endroit pour donner un bon sens à la phrase" ("Une Tosephta," 201).

<sup>614</sup> This is indirectly maintained by AT and PT in the addition of 'and His Laws' at the end of the unit, which addresses the essence of v. 5a.

<sup>615</sup> Light was the first creation out of disorder and darkness (Gen 1:2–3).

<sup>616</sup> See also Isa 30:26.

<sup>617</sup> Yet, the choice of **תאיב מ-**, literally 'returns from,' could arise from **עדר** in the meaning of 'enclosure, (going in) a circle.'

<sup>618</sup> 2 Sam 13:4; Isa 28:19, 50:4; Ezek 46:13–15.

addition of נפיק, ‘comes out,’ is not needed.<sup>619</sup> The following comparison of the two versions will sharpen the difference between TJ Zeph 3:5 and the AT to Zech 2:14–15:

Zeph 3:5aβ	לא יַעֲשֶׂה עוֹלָה
	He does not do iniquity
TJ	דלית קדמוהי למיעבד שקר <i>for He is not in the habit to lie</i>
AT (Zech 2:14–15)	דלית קדמוהי למיעבד שקר ולא תאיב ממה דאמר <i>for He is not in the habit to lie, and He does not recant from what He said/promised</i>
Zeph 3:5bα	בְּבֹקֶר בְּבֹקֶר מְשַׁפֵּטוּ יִתֵּן לְאוֹר
	every (early) morning He brings His decision/ order out to light
TJ	הא כניהור צפרא דאזיל ותקין כין דיניה נפיק לאפרש <i>Behold! As the light of morning that grows in strength, so do His Laws always come out.</i>
AT (Zech 2:14–15)	הא כניהור צפרא דאזיל ותקיף לכל עלמא יתיר מכולא וכין תושבחתיה ויקריה ודיניה <i>Behold! As the light of morning that grows and grows in strength for the whole world more than anything, and so are His praises and His glories and His Laws.</i>

Clearly, TJ attempts to remain close to the context and text of the MT: as the Righteous One, God does not lie, contrary to the false prophets and the judges (3:4a, 15a). The double בִּקְר has to be explained according to a Rabbinic exegetical rule: two occurrences of the same words must refer to two different subjects.<sup>620</sup> Two connecting subjects have to be created: the morning light and the Divine order. The grammatical

<sup>619</sup> Contra Grelot who contends that the missing נפיק should be restored (“Une Tosephta,” 201).

<sup>620</sup> E.g., *Bavli*, *Yoma* 33b: בְּבֹקֶר בְּבֹקֶר (Exod 30:7) refers to two candles for two mornings. Cf *Bavli*, *Menahot* 50a; *Midrash Exodus Rabbah* 33,8: בְּבֹקֶר בְּבֹקֶר (Exod 36:3), concerning the manna phenomenon, refers to the two things that came down: manna to eat and precious stones to donate toward the creation of the holy vessels. In addition, it refers to the donations being given twice a day, in the morning and at noon. *Bavli*, *Berakhot* 27a explains בְּבֹקֶר בְּבֹקֶר as two mornings.

connection is made by the comparative particle 'כִּי'. Two things happen in the morning: first, light appears and increases in intensity; second, God's order manifests itself, confirming God's dependability, His sovereignty over nature, and His eternal truth (which is appositional to 'He is not in the habit to lie').<sup>621</sup> The addition of **הא** serves to introduce the simile, which in turn demands a change in the syntax. The simile and the syntactical change are merely an opportunity to teach the essence of God. The resulting reading in Hebrew would be suggested: **הַנֶּהָה, כְּאֹרֶן הַבִּקֹּר הַהוֹלֵךְ וְגוֹבֵר, כִּן מִשְׁפָּטוֹ יוֹצֵא לְעֵד**.

On the other hand, AT views the phrase **בְּבִקֹּר מִשְׁפָּטוֹ יִתֵּן לְאֹרֶן** as the content of God's promise to Israel. This interpretation differs drastically from that of TJ, which views the clause as a didactic lesson on God's character in universal terms. However, a targumic fragment lends support to the AT, yet changes the simile to bolster the promise of Israel's redemption. It says: 'As the Divine light grows in strength, so the assembly of Zion grows in might, glory and judgment.'<sup>622</sup> Thus, this *Tosefta* centers God's promise on Israel's redemption. This is not so obvious in PT's rendition, which offers the *reason* for Israel's rejoicing in God's glory. Later, in its targum to Zech 2:16, PT links the appearance of God in the light of His glory to 'the light of His House and Temple.' Here, PT elaborates on AT's view that connects God's appearance with the promises to Israel by adding a spiritual dimension. PT's added material foresees the House of Judah inheriting 'their share on the holy land, and each tribe will attain his inheritance/strength from the east wind to the west [wind] ...and the righteous who do His will (cf Zeph 2:3) are praying before Him in Jerusalem.' Each *Tosefta* creates a different spin on the same motifs.

The idea that God controls nature and makes it predictable is reminiscent of a midrash (*Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* [Margalioth], 31,10 and *Midrash Tehillim*, 19,11). Every day, the midrash teaches, the sun and the moon refuse to rise because people worship them, and every day God takes them to court and forces them to bring light to the world. God's righteousness is manifested every morning: 'every day He grants His judgment (in order) to give light.' What is the meaning of **לֹא נִעְדָּר**? He does not *stop, let go* of this daily act. This midrash links this daily

<sup>621</sup> Similarly, *Midrash Tehillim* 19,11 associates the clause with God's sovereignty over nature. The double **בְּבִקֹּר** refers to the sun and the moon which come out following God's *light* as He ordered.

<sup>622</sup> Goshen-Gottstein, *Fragments*, 79–80.

event to Isa 40:26, where upon creating the hosts of heaven (צבא מרום) God promises their daily operation as He has designated. Creation is a clockwork mechanism and YHWH is its engineer.

In analyzing Tj's rendition, one observes that the Targumist senses the pivotal role of this verse in the structure and context of the oracle: on the one hand, 'God is not in the habit to lie' addresses the accusation against the false and deceitful prophets in v. 3. On the other, the depiction of God as the source of Light and judgment, that never fails to materialize every day and is never delayed, addresses His righteous acts towards the nations and Israel (vv. 6–12).

Elevating God in this manner, Tj (followed by the three *Toseftot*) carries the intention to strengthen the community to hold on to faith and not to give up hope, for even though social and political situations may be grim, God will not forsake His people. As nature keeps on its course, so God's care for His people never wanes. This teaching affirms God's justice despite the social and political upheavals during the Roman period.

The use of the verb נפק, 'to go out, come out' (Hebrew יצא) "corrects" the expression נתן משפט (Isa 42:1,3).<sup>623</sup>

A theological polemic that promotes the rejection of Israel by God manipulates the Aramaic in one Sepharadi ms. Whereas Tj reads 'His judgment goes out (נפיק) forever' in the absolute present tense, Zamora, the scribe of Ms W, uses the perfect נפק, 'went out,' and instead of לאפרש,<sup>624</sup> 'forever,' he reads לאפרש, '(He) did not explain, clarify.' While Tj glorifies God's laws as just, timeless, and forever increasing in power, Zamora's version doubts their validity and clarity. In other words, in Zamora's reading, laws accepted and cherished by Jews are ambiguous and given to interpretations. His Latin translation seconds this theological skew by 'His Law was gone forever.'

<sup>623</sup> In Isa 42:1 the Aramaic verb used for יצא is גלי, 'to reveal.' This is done, probably, because of its association with the divine spirit that is going to come upon God's servant, translated by Tj as 'the anointed.' The Aramaic verb used in 42:3 is the same as here, נפק. No "correction" is made in Ezek 23:24, where MT נתן is translated with its cognate Aramaic נתן (as is done in Job 36:6). In Ezek 21:32 נתן is not understood by Tj to be associated with משפט, and is translated in the meaning of 'to hand over, deliver into the hands of.' Many divergences suggest two different targumists to the Twelve and the three major prophets Isaiah-Ezekiel, as well as another targumist for the Former Prophets.

<sup>624</sup> This adverb is unique to Tj, according to Tal (*The Language*, 61). He notes an opinion which finds the origin of לאפרש in the Greek ἀπειρος, (which corresponds to the Hebrew אָוּלִי [Zech 11:15] and עֲרֵבָה [Jer 2:6]).

The last strophe of v. 5, וְלֹא יִוְדַע עוֹל בְּשֵׁת, has been considered by many scholars to be an out-of-place gloss.<sup>625</sup> If God continues to be the subject, then it necessitates the two nouns עוֹל בְּשֵׁת to be in a construct form. Not only it is unattested in the HB, but ‘the evildoer of shame’ vis-à-vis God makes no sense. If the subject is the ‘evildoer,’ then in spite of the social and worldly order set justly in place by God, he shamelessly continues with his evil behavior.<sup>626</sup>

The difficulty with עוֹל is solved by our scribe by reading the plural of עוֹל, ‘child, young’ (Isa 49:15, 65:20), עוֹלִיָּא, as the subject. Youth and shame go hand in hand (Jer 31:18; Prov 14:35, 19:26, 29:15). A view may have circulated that even the very young were responsible for the destruction of the Temple. The young followed the various “messiahs” of the 1st and 2nd centuries in shameful acts of killing and mayhem under the sobriquets of “zealots” and “freedom fighters.”<sup>627</sup> This underscores the marked difference between the one Righteous and the many wicked.

<sup>625</sup> E.g., Stonehouse, *The Books*, 59; Horst, *Die Zwölf*, 196; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 461,462; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 242; Renaud, *Michée*, 240; Taylor, “Zephaniah,” 1029. Ben Zvi considers it to be a “reflective activity on the text” (*A Historical*, 213). Seybold wonders how God, dispensing justice in the midst of Judah, can know nothing of either the evil-doers or the crimes. The disturbing clause could only be misplaced (*Nahum*, 111). On this, *Tanna de-Vei Elyahu Zuta*, 3,1 had already noted that our verse evidences that God did not create injustice for He cannot even recognize it. However, MurXII shows עוֹל and all the Witnesses reflect on the last clause in a clear struggle to determine its meaning. See, e.g., Joseph Ziegler, *Duodecim prophetae* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate, Societatis Litterarum Göttingensis editum; vol. XII; Göttingen: Dandenhoed & Ruprecht, 1943), 281; Gerleman, *Zephanja*, 51–52; Lippl, *Das Buch*, 46; Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 528–30; Ryou, *Zephaniah’s Oracles*, 61–62; Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 167–68.

<sup>626</sup> Rashi finds the subject in the corrupt judges who feel no shame in the presence of the righteous among them. Ibn Ezra finds the subject in God who does no iniquity to Israel. Radaq identifies the subject as Israel who feels no shame to do evil while the Righteous God punishes the nations on their behalf. Vlaardingerbroek explicates the verset as a hope that the evil-doer will see God as a model that will lead him to repentance (*Zephaniah*, 178). Sabottka finds Baal (read בְּשֵׁת) to be the subject. Unlike YHWH, Baal does not perceive the evildoer (*Zephanja*, 101, 108–09). This deforms the syntax and the context. Watts ponders whether בְּשֵׁת “may be a derisive term for Baal” (cf Hos 9:10), ‘the shameful god.’ Like Sabottka he suggests that contrary to God, Baal “does not recognize the wrong-doer” (*The Books*, 176). Based on the broader meanings of יָדַע and בּוֹשׁ/בְּשֵׁת, Berlin reads: “But the evildoer ignores condemnation,” despite the knowledge that he is condemned by the righteous, the ever-present God (*Zephaniah*, 130–31). Some delete בְּשֵׁת altogether, pointing to its absence in other Witnesses, or they identify עוֹל as the misplaced subject of לֹא נֶעְדָּר. Sweeney proposes, after the LXX, to take both עוֹל and בְּשֵׁת as the objects of the verb יָדַע viewing God as the subject (*Zephaniah*, 167).

<sup>627</sup> E.g., Josephus, *תולדות*, 2.17,6–10, 7.8,1.

Targum's negative attitude toward the youth may stem from the targumic free exegetical rendering of Isa 57:13.<sup>628</sup> Isaiah says that whomever Israel will gather to save her, none will succeed. Targum translates: 'Shout now (and let us see) if those who *do acts of deceit* (עובדי שקרין), in which you have been occupying yourself *since childhood* (מינקותיך), will save you. Rather, the wind will carry all of them; they will be like naught.'<sup>629</sup> Here, too, we encounter TJ's view that the young are engaged in evil acts that continue into adulthood, עוליא. The association of Isa 57:13 with Zephaniah (3:12) continues with the second part of the verse.<sup>630</sup> However, the reading of 'youth' seems to be limited. Whereas Ms V reads עוליא, Ms H reads עוליא, and Eb 88 seems to leave it to the reader's interpretation with a partial vocalization, עוליא. All other mss clearly read עוליא, 'evildoers,' and many secure its consonantal integrity by doubling the 'ו'.

Whether 'youth, children' or 'evildoers,' TJ distances God from any hint of either iniquity or shame.

3:6: I have destroyed nations, I have made their *fortresses/palaces* desolate; I have destroyed their streets without a passerby; their cities *are* desolate with no man, with no dweller.

The change in focus from Judah to 'the nations' flows naturally from the depiction of God in v. 5 as a universal God, the Creator. YHWH is the God of all nations including Judah. God gives an example of a judgment that can be construed, according to contemporaneous Judean theology, as a saving act. It is drawn from the national tradition of the Conquest, based on the Covenant which stipulated that God will help Israel to rid the land of Canaan of its nations if Israel will obey the Law (e.g., Deut 3:22, 4:1; Josh 23:3–8). In our verse, Zephaniah reminds his audience that God kept His part of the Covenant.<sup>631</sup> Israel reneged on its vow<sup>632</sup> by corrupting its ways (v. 7b).

<sup>628</sup> It is quite likely that TJ Twelve was not translated by the same targumist of the Former Prophets. This is also Tal's opinion (*The Language*, 142, note 261).

<sup>629</sup> Committing deceit as a young child is as naught compared to TJ's propensity to protect the very young from adult abuse. See, e.g., Joel 4:3 where the child (לד) and (ילדה) is replaced by the young adult, (עולימא and עולימתא). Smelik, "Concordance," 298 and note 68.

<sup>630</sup> See Commentary there.

<sup>631</sup> Contrary to Zephaniah, Amos' examples of God's activities (4:6–11) to convince them to change, concern disasters God brought upon Israel.

<sup>632</sup> e.g., Josh 24:16–18, 21–22, 24–26.

The Septuagint's misreading of גַּאִים, 'arrogant,' for MT גוֹיִם, 'nations,' prompted readings away from the Massoretic Text. Lehrman advocates here a general statement, referring to both Judah and the nations, concerning "nations who rose to the heights of glory and power," only to collapse on account of pride and injustice.<sup>633</sup> Similarly, Deissler identifies 'the nations' as those decimated by the century-long Assyrian campaigns into the region and their interventions in the Syro-Palestinian wars.<sup>634</sup> Reading here a reference to Judah alone by the revocalization גוֹיִם, 'their nation,' Roberts identifies the verse as referring to the devastation brought upon Judah by the Assyrians in Hezekiah's time.<sup>635</sup> Van Hoonacker, citing v. 7 for support, views the verse as referring to the haughty Judeans.<sup>636</sup> However, there is no justification for altering the text. Peshitta, TJ and Vul attest to the MT.

Targum's translation is mostly literal and its interpretation resembles that of the Rabbis. As *Midrash Tanhuma* (Buber), *Metzora* 12 teaches, before God punishes Israel, He punishes other nations (v. 6) as a warning to Israel. When the Israelites sinned, God wanted to exile them. However, sending them to exile without teaching them a lesson would make them a disgrace in the eyes of the nations. So He brought Sennacherib to exile other nations in the hope that Israel would notice and repent (Zeph 3:6). But they did not repent (v. 7) and so He exiled them.<sup>637</sup>

Two out of the four verbs are the same, צָדִי, and three are in first person instead of the Hebrew two. This and the change from third person plural in the passive נִשְׁמָנוּ to a first person (הִשְׁמַתִּי) is characteristic of TJ's stress on God's activity in the world. It comes also to clarify that 'their towers' were not demolished by some unknown power but by God Himself.<sup>638</sup> The passive tense נִצְדָּו, though, is changed into a participle to depict a current picture of a state of destruction which can still be seen. God the Righteous is not being idle. This is part of God's daily acts of universal judgment mentioned in the previous verse.

בִּירְנִית (or בִּירָה/בִּירְתָא) means both 'fortress' and '(fortified) palace' as part of the city fortification system, similar to the Hebrew פְּנוֹת,

<sup>633</sup> Lehrman, *The Twelve*, 247.

<sup>634</sup> Deissler, *Les Petits*, 462.

<sup>635</sup> Roberts, *Nahum*, 208,214.

<sup>636</sup> Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 530.

<sup>637</sup> This midrash appears also in *Midrash Tanhuma* (Warsaw), *Metzora* 4 and *beHar* 3.

<sup>638</sup> Gordon reads the passive 'are laid waste' and asserts that the initial 'א' of אֲצִדִּיָּאָה may have been a dittography from עַמְמִיָּא. Perhaps the reading of this אֲצִדִּיָּאָה is the same as later in the verse (*Targum*, 171). Gordon's argument is unlikely as Peshitta renders the same, and TJ's theological intention is clear.



‘corner fortifications’ that include towers.<sup>639</sup> שׁוּקִים means both ‘markets’ and ‘streets’ as the Hebrew cognate חוֹצוֹת. TJ captures well the MT message of the collapse of the nations’ cities and economies.<sup>640</sup>

3:7: I said, (if) only *you* (pl.) shall fear *from before* Me, *you* (pl.) shall take instruction (so that *their* dwelling will not *sever/cease from the land of the House of My Shekhinah*); all the *blessings* that I promised *them* I shall bring to *them*. Then/therefore, they arose early, they corrupted all their deeds.

The second person singular clarifies the identity of the addressee as Jerusalem, which neither fears God nor takes on His teaching, thus tying in to 3:2a. The warning intent of the verse, expressed in a wishful context, is understood from אָמַרְתִּי, ‘I thought, I said (to Myself),’ and אִם, short for לִוּ אִם, ‘if only’ (Gen 23:13; 1 Sam 14:30): ‘If only you fear Me and take instruction so that her habitation shall not be cut off.’ Correctly, Sweeney has noted the prophet’s reliance on the Isaianic tradition, which called future generations to await the fulfillment of his oracles concerning the redemption of Israel (e.g., 8:11, 16–17, 29:11–12).<sup>641</sup> This is indeed what God had envisioned, planned or warned about (כָּל) (אֲשֶׁר־פָּקַדְתִּי עָלֶיהָ). Zephaniah wants Isaiah’s Word to be fulfilled but he concedes that the opposite has occurred: Judah has corrupted her ways more profoundly (אֲכַן הַשְּׁבִימוּ הַשְּׁחִיתוּ כָּל עֲלִילוֹתָם).<sup>642</sup>

On the other hand, calls to revere God and adhere to His instruction together with warnings of punishments are well established in the Deuteronomic tradition, such as in Deut 11:12, 27:15–26 and 28:15–68.

<sup>639</sup> At the time of Nehemiah the fortified northern part of the Temple (as well as the Temple area) was called הַבִּירָה (2:8, 7:2). Later, Herod reconstructed its ruins and called it Antonia. S. Applebaum, “The Organization of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern; 2nd printing; vol. I. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 471–72. Tal considers בִּירְנִי a Palestinian source of Old-Aramaic (*The Language*, 90). This primary source occurs in all the mss and thus serves as evidence to its Palestinian origin retained in both the Eastern and the Western texts.

<sup>640</sup> The possibility of linking Hebrew פְּנוֹת (‘corner towers’) to the Aramaic root פָּנָה, ‘to turn, pervert,’ (Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 168g) does not contribute to the context of the destruction of strong cities. Cf Zeph 1:16; 2 Chron 26:15.

<sup>641</sup> See his full commentary and bibliography in *Zephaniah*, 176–78. Based on Isaiah, he reads the verbs in v. 7a in the imperative. However, Zephaniah is rephrasing and summarizing Isaiah.

<sup>642</sup> Again, Zephaniah places God and Judah as opposites: while God dedicates His time to doing justice (v. 5bα), Judah dedicates her time to doing evil.

However, retribution (and salvation oracles) were ordained against *the city* only through the prophets. Zephaniah, who opened with Creation, now addresses his contemporary social and moral conditions. Moreover, a further thought is derived from Deut 32:26, where God reveals that He was thinking (אָמַרְתִּי) of eliminating Israel from memory because of its ungratefulness. This is preceded in vv. 21–25 by an enumeration of the acts in God’s plan. These acts may be what Zephaniah refers to in ‘all that I had planned against her.’ Both punishment warnings and redemption visions are presented here. Zephaniah leaves “the ball” in Judah’s court: Choose one way or the other.

For two reasons, most modern scholars see here a warning that Judah will be punished: first, following LXX’s reading of מְעִינֶיהָ, ‘from her eyes,’ for MT מְעוֹנָה, ‘her habitation,’ the intent would be that Judah will witness God’s punishment. Second, the expression פָּקַד עַל conveys a plan to exact retribution.<sup>643</sup>

Targum reads the verse as Zephaniah intended: the first half of the verse refers to the warnings and promises transmitted by prophets such as Isaiah and by Deut 27:9–29:20; the second half refers to the increase in Judah’s iniquities since Sinai. However, the tone differs substantially from that of the MT. ‘Cease’ mitigates ‘be destroyed,’ and negative memories are replaced by ‘blessings.’ Targum’s reading is achieved by changes in grammar and syntax and by theological additions.

Targum addresses the MT’s use of second and third person feminine and third person plural. All the verbs are read in the plural for consistency, emphasis and clarity of message. The reference to the nations in the previous verse is made in the third person plural because neither the prophet nor the Targumist contemplate a special relationship between God and the nations who have not yet acknowledged YHWH. In our verse, where the prophet and the Targumist lament the breakup of the special relationship between some Judeans and YHWH, God’s thoughts

<sup>643</sup> E.g., BHS; RSV; NRS; NAB; NJB; Ehrlich, *מקרא כפשוטו*, 461; G.A. Smith, *The Book*, 68; House, *Zephaniah*, 124,132; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 472; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 242,246; Sabotka, *Zephanja*, 112; Edler, *Das Kerygma*, 21; S.R. Driver, *The Minor*, 133; Roberts, *Nahum*, 215; Taylor, “Zephaniah,” 1030; Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 530; Ryou, *Zephaniah’s Oracles*, 66; Rudolph, *Micha*, 285,286; Horst, *Die Zwoölf*, 196. A revocalization of מְעוֹנָה to read מְעוֹנָה ‘on account of her iniquity’ has been suggested by Stonehouse (*The Books*, 60). According to Barthélemy, two others had suggested this (*Critique*, 906). Unaware of earlier commentaries, Berlin also offers this possibility (*Zephaniah*, 132). However, reading the verse in this light is unintelligible: ‘all that I have punished her will not be cut off on account of her iniquity’(?).

are directly expressed in second person plural in a more personal, caring manner. When redemption is mentioned, the second person address returns (vv. 11, 12, 14–20).

The inconsistency of verbs between the second and third person, singular and plural, feminine and masculine caused attempts to achieve thematic consistency. All the Yemenite mss, Mss Y, and X, S, Q change all the verbs into plural, and thereby clarify and identify the feminine object who was warned with those eager to keep their corrupt ways. At first glance, one might assert that the plural suggests the continuation of the addressees as the nations from the previous verse who did not take heed and forfeited the chance to redeem themselves after being severely ruined.<sup>644</sup> This is justified by the decision to punish the nations in the next verse. However, TJ's comment 'so that their dwelling place will not cease from *the land of the House of My Shekinah*' points in a different direction, for TJ would not espouse the rightful dwelling of the nations in the land of Israel. Even more so, TJ's comment allows the interpretation of מעון as a double entendre: as the Temple<sup>645</sup> and as the city Jerusalem.<sup>646</sup> מעון as God's residence resonates with Pss 26:8, 68:6, 91:9; Deut 26:15; Zech 2:17; 2 Chron 36:15. TJ there is similar to here. Moreover, God promised 'benefits, blessings' only to Israel. The verbs were unified, then, for the sake of clarity.

Unlike the Israelites who took a solemn vow to do and to listen but did not (cf esp. 3:1–4), God fulfills His promises.<sup>647</sup> God fulfilled His promise at Sinai to give Israel a land of her own, but she has defiled it (cf esp 3:1). The early morning that metaphorically defines God's sense of judgment, consistency, dependability, and righteousness (v. 5) is juxtaposed with the ungrateful people who carry out their iniquities in early morning. Targum always employs אַקְדִּימוּ for the Hebrew הַשְּׁבִימוּ, 'they arose early' (e.g., Josh 6:15; Judg 6:28; 1 Sam 1:19; see also Isa 5:11; Jer 7:13) to carry out a plan with enthusiasm and dedication. While God dedicates His purpose in the universe to doing justice, Judeans dedicate their purpose in life to doing evil.

Targum's reading throws the blame of the exile not on the nations, but squarely on the Judeans, who do not perceive God's universal actions on their behalf and for their own security. They cannot or will

<sup>644</sup> So Ibn Ezra.

<sup>645</sup> So Qara, Malbim, and Alchuller.

<sup>646</sup> So Rashi and Radaq.

<sup>647</sup> Cf Ezek 5:13b; Smolar, *Studies*, 134 and note 36.

not properly interpret world events, nor do they appreciate the Divine blessings they have been granted. Because of this double blindness, the Judeans are oblivious of the reality and are busily committing atrocities. But more than this, since Judah believes that God will carry out His promises no matter what,<sup>648</sup> it continues to eagerly sin. Sinning, it seems, is a direct response to God's goodness (cf v. 5bβ).<sup>649</sup>

The change from 'indeed' (אֲכֵן) to 'then, therefore' (בְּכִיִן) serves this distorted view of the people.<sup>650</sup> Ryou's translation "then were they quick..." suggests that *after* God destroyed the other nations' cities the Judeans were quick to sin.<sup>651</sup> It is clear from the MT and TJ that Judah ignored God's acts on her behalf and that her corrupt behavior continued as before. However, when we interpret v. 6 as an allusion to the Conquest, an accusation of increased idolatry ever since, is one way to understand אֲכֵן הִשְׁכִּימוּ, 'indeed they have intensified.' Yet, several periods of religious rebirth in both Judah (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah) and Israel (Jehu) contradict this perceived ceaseless intensity in idolatry.

How do Zephaniah and TJ solve this seeming contradiction? They both agree that sinfulness has not been the behavior of all Israelites at all times (e.g., 2:3), and that the righteous will see the day of judgment. Zephaniah expresses it in 'therefore, wait for me...to the day when I arise (as a witness),' whereas TJ expresses it in 'therefore, hope for My Word...to the day of My appearance to judge' (v. 8a).

For מְעוֹנָה, 'her dwelling' TJ reads מְעוֹנָם, 'their dwelling place,' as most mss do.<sup>652</sup> It is not a confusion between 'ה' and 'ם' but a

<sup>648</sup> Prophets kept promising divine protection even while Jerusalem was under siege (e.g., Jer 28:1–4, 38:19).

<sup>649</sup> This is the case in Isa 40:7 and in Jer 3:20,23, 4:10, 8:8.

<sup>650</sup> Out of 12 times that אֲכֵן, 'indeed, truly,' appears in the Prophets, five times it is translated בכֵן, 'therefore, after this' as it is here (Isa 53:4; Jer 3:20, 3:23a, 4:10, 8:8). Three times it is translated correctly by either בקוּשְׁטָא, 'in truth' (Isa 45:15), or by בְּרָם, 'however, only, truly' (Isa 49:4; Jer 3:23b). The case in Jer 3:23 is revealing. There are two אֲכֵן. The first one refers to faith-breakers and is translated by בכֵן, while the second one is translated by בְּרָם to create a contrast between God and the faith-breakers. אֲכֵן in 1 Sam 15:32 is not translated. Outside the Prophets, all cases are translated correctly by בקוּשְׁטָא (Gen 28:16; Exod 2:14; Pss 31:23, 66:19; Job 32:8) and emphatically by בְּרָם בקוּשְׁטָא in Ps 82:7.

<sup>651</sup> Ryou, *Zephaniah's Oracles*, 66.

<sup>652</sup> Mss F, Eb 88, all the Yemenite mss, and the Sepharadi Mss S,N. However, some mss have the plural מְדוּרֵיהוֹן (Mss X,Q,C,W and ms O), probably to ascribe the place to homes rather than to the Temple. Most modern scholars read מְעִינֵיהָ, 'from her eyes,' after the LXX and Peshitta, even though in the context of our verse it does not make much sense. For example, Rudolph, *Micha*, 285,286,7d; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical* 242,

conscious change.<sup>653</sup> מְעוֹן is always translated literally by מְדוֹר, ‘a dwelling place’ (e.g. Nah 2:12, Zech 2:17). מְדוֹר translates other types of dwelling: זָבַל (Hab 3:11), מְקוֹם (Hos 5:15), נֹוּה (Amos 1:2), and קֶן (Hab 2:9, Obad 4), but never בֵּית מִקְדָּשָׁא. In several Scriptures מְעוֹן occurs within the context of the divine abode and is associated with קָדֵשׁ when the dwelling refers to the Temple (Deut 26:15, 33:27; Jer 25:30; Zech 2:17; Pss 26:8, 68:6, 76:3, 91:9; 2 Chron 30:27, 36:15). While TJ reads מְעוֹנָה as literal ‘habitation,’ AT reads רִגְלִיכֹון, ‘presence,’ ‘free access’ to the land or ‘authority, control’ of the land as promised to the Forefathers according to their merits. This is probably in response to the apparently tautological ‘Temple’ and ‘House of My *Shekhinah*.’ PT reads ‘your dwelling places,’ with no allusion to the Temple that has already been destroyed.

Targum combines two Targumic interpretations: it refers to the land of Israel as their dwelling place, and to the Temple where God’s presence resides (*the house [dwelling place] of My Shekhinah*). The added appositional phrase (in the italics) seems to have been added after the destruction of the Temple, in order to identify the land with the *Shekhinah*. This added expression, according to Gordon, “associates land with temple in a way which suggests that the former is sanctified by the latter” (e.g., TJ Isa 17:11; Zech 9:1). By translating “the land of the house of my Shekinah” and not “the land of my Shekinah,” TJ “raises indirectly the possibility of exile away from Judah” (cf TJ Isa 2:3),<sup>654</sup> as well as the potential for a rebuilt Temple in the future, and thus generalizes the reference to any historical period. The concept may not be theological, but rather geographical.<sup>655</sup> However, the addition of

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246; Wilhelm Nowack, *Die kleinen Propheten* (Handkommentar zum Alten Testament; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922 [1897]), 303; Ryou, *Zephaniah’s Oracles*, 66. Peshitta tries to smooth with: ‘I said that you should fear me and that from me you should receive instruction, so that all that I have charged against her shall not be lost from her eyes.’ This revised translation is charged with anti-Jewish Christian theology. On Peshitta here see Gelston, *The Peshitta*, 116, 118 and “Some Readings in the Peshitta of the Dodekapropheton,” in *The Peshitta: Its Early Text and History* (ed. P.B. Dirksen and M.J. Mulder; Peshitta Symposium; vol. IV; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), 97. 8HevXIIgr “corrects” the LXX, yet differs from both the LXX and the MT: it may attest to a Hebrew reading of מְעִינָה, ‘from her spring’ (e.g., Judg 15:19; Joel 4:18), which does not make sense contextually, either. The Septuagint of the third century BCE may have created the confusion between ‘י’ and ‘ו’ or the Hebrew text used by the translators had already carried this error.

<sup>653</sup> A similar Targumic intentional change in suffixes occurs in Isa 30:32 (בַּה vs בָּם). Ribera notes, without explanation, that TJ’s translation of מְעוֹנָה is literal with a typical targumic gloss (“La versión,” 156).

<sup>654</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 172.

<sup>655</sup> Gordon, *Studies*, 132–33.

‘house’ re-emphasizes the theological idea that the *Shekhinah* resides in the land of Israel regardless of the exile of its people.<sup>656</sup> Moreover, in 1:1 TJ noted that King Josiah was of the *tribe of the House of Judah* in order to emphasize the stability and continuity of the Davidic dynasty. Similar is the presence of the *Shekhinah* in Jerusalem and the land of Israel.

This last opinion is also that of Chilton, who considers the ‘Shekinah house’ mentioned in Isa 17:11 to imply a pre-70 period when the ‘house’ and the issue of ‘cult’ would be most appropriate. He therefore concludes that the expression ‘the land of My *Shekhinah*’ was in use during the Second Temple period.

Chilton discerns a multi-interpretational aspect of the use of *Shekhinah* by the targumists and the Rabbis alike: from an association with the Temple and the cult, as a medium to measure Israel’s behavior, as a referent to its dwelling or removal from Zion, to a heavenly dwelling that might return, and to its attenuated term by the Rabbis after the Bar-Kokhba episode in which *Shekhinah* attained a more individual moral responsibility.<sup>657</sup>

The choice of the verb פסק, ‘to cease, sever,’ for the Hebrew ברת, ‘to cut off,’ is profound. In 1:3,4 the verb ברת is translated by the Aramaic שצי, ‘to (completely) destroy.’ Here, TJ alludes to prophetic warnings that God considered the *suspension* of the Jews’ dwelling in the land of Israel.<sup>658</sup> But TJ rejects the idea of permanent exile because it believes in the eternal dwelling of the *Shekhinah* in the land of Israel.

The negative phrase פקד על (e.g., 1:9,12) is explained here positively as a past promise, and the unspecified ‘all’ (probably referring to passages such as Deut 28:1–13) is interpreted as blessings that were granted. Targum has the Sinaitic Covenant in mind: the promise of land, Temple, blessings, and His presence among Israel. Yet, new blessings were promised to exiled Judeans in 2:7.

A typical Targumic characteristic we have seen before (e.g., 1:1,6,7,8) is repeated here: one reveres the presence of God, for He has no form, hence the added ‘from before Me.’ There is no direct contact between man and God.

When comparing our TJ with AT Zech 2:15, Gordon notices the similar divine promise that ‘their dwelling’ here and ‘your pilgrim festivals’ (רְגִלֵינוּ) there “will not cease from the land of the house of my

<sup>656</sup> On the *Shekhinah* see discussion on 3:5.

<sup>657</sup> Chilton, *The Glory*, 70–75. This aspect was noted above in the commentary on 3:5.

<sup>658</sup> AT and PT make this point more personal by using the first person: ‘I shall not cease’ instead of the third person.

*Shekhinah*.” AT interprets מעון as the Temple, which will continue to function as the center of religious celebrations. However, this presumes a pre-70 targum.<sup>659</sup> On the other hand, רגליכון as Grelot translates, refers to actual “vos pieds,” רגְלִיכוֹן, which may imply a post-70 targum.<sup>660</sup>

Both *Toseftot* understand Zech 2:14–15 (2:16–17) as alluding to Zephaniah. AT comments on TJ and PT edits AT. They reorganize Zephaniah’s oracles where the apparition of God’s glory (Zeph 3:5) constitutes the foundation from which two ideas emerge. First, those who listen to the Torah’s teaching will survive in safety. Those who will turn away from their corrupt ways, their presence/festivals (AT; their ‘homes’ by PT) will not cease from the land of Israel. Second, those who will continue to ignore the words of the prophet(s) will be judged together with the nations and kingdoms ‘until all the wicked are perished.’ The latter idea clarifies the transition from 3:7–8a to v. 8b–10 in Zephaniah.

In order to better show the development of the targumic tradition, here is a comparison of the MT and the three targumim. AT comments on TJ and provides a fuller picture on which PT is built.

- MT: אָמַרְתִּי,  
‘I said/thought:’  
TJ: ‘I said/thought:’  
AT, PT: ‘But I said to the house of Israel:’

The *Toseftot* clarify that the following addressee is Judah rather than the nations of the previous verse.

- MT: אֲדַתִּירְאֵי אוֹתִי תִקְחֵי מוֹסֵר.  
‘If only you see/perceive/fear Me, you shall take instruction,’  
TJ: ‘Truly/if you shall fear from before Me, you shall take instruction.’

God, in His pure mind, believes in the possibility of the righteousness of His people.

- AT, PT: ‘If you perceive/reflect upon My Word and fear from before Me and listen to the teaching of the Torah,’

Elaboration and a clearer reference to 3:2.

<sup>659</sup> Gordon, *Studies*, 102–03.

<sup>660</sup> Grelot, “Une Tosephta,” 203.

- MT וְלֹא־יִכָּרַת מְעוֹנָהּ  
 ‘so that her habitation shall not be cut off.’
- TJ ‘And *their* habitation shall not *cease/sever from the land of the house of My Shekhinah;*’
- AT ‘*I shall not cease/sever your feet/festivals from the land of the house of My Shekhinah.*’

Walking the land symbolizes being in possession of it (e.g., Gen 13:17; Josh 18:8; another expression is ‘to sit’ upon the land as in Deut 30:20, which is in the same context as our verse according to AT). The second person continues. It reflects a “synagogal life-setting.”<sup>661</sup>

- PT: ‘*I shall not cease/sever your dwellings from the land of the house of My Shekhinah.*’

- MT: כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־פָּקַדְתִּי עָלֶיהָ  
 ‘All that I had planned about her.’
- TJ: ‘All *the benefits* which I *promised to them, I shall bring/brought to them.*’

Obeying God was the condition for the rewards promised in the past.

- AT, PT: ‘*And all the benefits which I promised to your Fathers I shall bring/brought upon you, by the merit of your Righteous Fathers.*’

Emphasis is put on promises kept to the righteous Fathers.<sup>662</sup> The second person continues further.

- MT: אָבָן הַשְּׂבִימוּ הַשְּׁחִיתוּ כָּל עֲלִילוֹתָם  
 ‘Indeed, they rose up early, they corrupted all their deeds.’
- TJ: ‘*Then/therefore* they rose up early, they corrupted all their deeds.’
- AT: ‘*But the children of Israel could not condition their souls to listen to the words of the prophet but rose up early and corrupted their deeds. And they did not turn from their evil deeds and from their corrupt ways.*’

<sup>661</sup> Gordon, *Studies*, 102.

<sup>662</sup> This idea of the merits of the fathers appears also as an addition in a *Tosefta* to Hos 1:2: ‘who went before me in truth and in righteousness and in perfect heart.’ AT and PT repeat the idea of the ‘righteous fathers’ later in the context of return of exiles. According to *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 23,7, if Jews call upon ‘the merits of the fathers’ as their pleaders, that will suffice for God to acquit them. The ‘fathers’ are specified as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The idea of ‘the merits of the fathers’ seems to be post TJ’s initial composition, and is found in later literature. For example, *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 2,1; *Bavli, Berakhot* 54b; *Sifrei, Shoftim* 41 (on Deut 19:8); *Pesikta Rabbati* 40,6; *Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 92,4.



Here, AT's commentary attaches דמרידת במימרי (TJ Zeph 3:11) to the description of the eagerness to sin and thus expands on TJ. AT finds TJ's 'that you rebelled against My Word' to be the summary assessment of 'indeed, they rose early, they corrupted all their deeds.' It thus explains this rebelliousness twice, both before and after the MT clause, first in a more specific way, then with a general description.

Rebelliousness and ingratitude are the sources for Israel's corrupt ways. The second addition also functions as a prologue to the next statement, that God is going to judge Israel together with the world nations.

PT: ***so that you will not be rebellious like your fathers who did not desire to condition their soul to hear the words of My prophets.***

PT further edits and clarifies AT's expansion and at the same time integrates both TJ and AT by directly mentioning TJ's 'rebelliousness.' PT's targumist also gives his generation the benefit of the doubt by pointing the finger at the forefathers, and by addressing his generation in the second person and in a warning fashion rather than by making a direct accusation. Moreover, PT omits the MT's clause altogether, thus eliding Israel's eagerness to sin while retaining the sense of obstinacy.

AT's singular 'prophet' could mean Zechariah (1:4–6), or else one 'י' from נביא was accidentally omitted.<sup>663</sup> It is corrected by PT.

Both *Toseftot* interpret the MT's single אמרת, 'I thought,' in two ways: 'I warned' (the House of Israel) and 'I promised' (to the forefathers).

Targum understands the second person address as delivered to Judah to be founded on the hope that since God fulfilled His part of the Covenant, Judah will respond in kind.<sup>664</sup> In that Covenant God

<sup>663</sup> Grelot, "Une *Tosephta*," 203, note 8.

<sup>664</sup> The Rabbis, too, understood our verse in the context of Sinai. מעון, according to *Aggadat Bereshit* 58, is understood as the Torah which safeguards Israel. The indirect lesson learnt is that when Israel rejects the Torah, it is as though Israel has perished. This conclusion is reached in the discussion on the meaning of מעונה אלהי קדם (Gen 33:28). Which preceded which in the Creation: מעונה or מעונה? The answer is given by David himself who said 'YHWH, You are מעון' (Ps 90:1), for nothing precedes God (cf Job 41:3). Two other sources impute אכן השכימו השחיתו כל עלילותם to a Sinai event, perhaps because of שחת in Exod 32:7: the first, *Exodus Rabbah* 41,7 tells the story of the Israelites who, while Moses was away on the mountain, rose up early to worship the stars. Against this Zephaniah bitterly cries out (3:7). The second, *Yerushalmi, Sheqalim* 2a elaborates on the above *midrash*. R. Hiya bar Abba learns from this sentence that all sinful acts committed by the Israelites were done early in the morning, including the sin of the Golden Calf.

promised to protect Judah's right to its land by placing His *Shekhinah* in a sanctuary on that land; God promised Judah's ancestors that He would bestow blessings upon their descendants. However, these promises were perceived as unconditional, which resulted in the intensification of Judah's evil ways. The conditional benefits are expressed in the Aramaic **בְּרַם**, 'but, only, if only, truly.' This is the exact equivalent of the MT **אִי**.<sup>665</sup>

The *Toseftot* clarify TJ's implicit reference to a conditional Covenant by opening God's speech with the condition, 'if you perceive/take heed of My *Memra*...I shall not...' with a double accusatory indictment. They also clarify the severance from 'their habitation' as the right of possession over the land of Israel. Their third clarification concerns the identity of TJ's 'to them,' which are the Forefathers.<sup>666</sup> Their next clarification concerns TJ's **בְּכִי**, 'then; therefore,' which tries to connect the two parts of the verse. AT takes TJ's 'then' literally, as a temporal allusion to Zephaniah's earlier oracle (3:1–4). However, PT expands this to apply to numerous prophets. Lastly, the MT/TJ's appraisal of response ('they rose up early, they corrupted all their deeds') is given an extension that closes the added prologue which calls the children of Israel to turn away from their evil path.

3:8: Therefore, *hope for/believe* in My Word, said YYY, for the day of My *appearance to judge*, for My decision is to gather nations, to *bring* the kingdom(s) *near*, to pour upon them My anger, all *the strength of* My wrath, for in the fire of My *retribution* all *the wicked of* the earth shall perish.

The Day, according to TJ, is a day of retribution,<sup>667</sup> when God will reveal Himself through His *Memra*,<sup>668</sup> His prophetic Word, in court, in full strength to cleanse the earth of its polluters.

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We cannot tell if these *midrashim* were known to our Targumist(s), but the context of associating our verse with the Golden Calf at Sinai may have been known.

<sup>665</sup> See commentary above. Gordon reads TJ's **בְּרַם**, 'surely.' He also notes that AT's **בְּרַם אָמַרְתָּ**, 'But I have said,' reflects "an inversion of the word-order of 'Tg'" (and MT) in an adversative sense **בְּרַם**. He concludes, "it seems more likely that AT is a free adaptation of an antecedent text of 'Tg,'" for AT abandoned the asseverative sense of **בְּרַם** 'surely' (*Studies*, 102).

<sup>666</sup> Mss U,Y and W read 'upon them' which more often carries a negative meaning.

<sup>667</sup> In Isa 9:6, 37:32 and 2 Kgs 19:31 TJ translates **הַקְּנָאָתָהּ** by "*Memra* of YYY," and only in Ezekiel (e.g. 36:5) is it **פּוֹרְעָנוּתָא** ('retribution, disaster') like here.

<sup>668</sup> On the *Memra* see commentary on 3:2b and notes.

Scholars argue as to the identity of those who are asked to wait for God. Some identify them with the punished nations, when at ‘the end of time’ (לְעֶד, ‘forever’), God will pour His wrath upon those who will gather in Israel to take over Jerusalem.<sup>669</sup> Others recognize here a universal calamity, the judgment of Judah alongside the nations.<sup>670</sup> Yet others identify them with the Judean sinners addressed in vv. 1–7.<sup>671</sup> Roberts describes them as the “oppressed followers of God” of 2:3.<sup>672</sup>

The first clue to the intent of this verse is revealed in the nature of the participle לִכְנֹן (e.g., 2 Kgs 21:12; Jer 7:20), which carries here a salvific message to an audience, as in Isa 37:33. Further, the phrase לִחְכֹּה לְ that always connotes hope (e.g., Isa 8:17; Ps 33:20), even in death (Job 3:21), is addressed to those who hope for justice.<sup>673</sup> The righteous, last referred to in 2:3, and the dispersed and homeless Judeans of late 8th century BCE, last referred to in 2:7,9b,10b, are exhorted to have hope, for they are going to witness a universal cleansing with drastic results: punishment of the nations, universal monotheism with Jerusalem at its center, and salvation for Israel.

Targum picks up this intent when it chooses a better defining meaning, that of ‘hope, trust’ with a focus on faith. The legal context is clearly expressed by the infinitive לְמַדֵּן, ‘to judge,’ which suggests the reading of לְעֵד, ‘for a witness; to witness,’ rather than the MT לְעֶד,<sup>674</sup> ‘for/ to eternity’ or ‘for booty’ (Gen 49:27; Isa 33:23). The addressees are

<sup>669</sup> E.g., Abrabanel; Malbim; Ehrlich, *מקרא כפשוטו*, 462. This idea appears in Hab 2:3. Marti, too, views the intent as eschatological in nature offered by the prophet as consolation to the Jewish community of Jerusalem, similar to Jer 30:18b (*Das Dodekapropheten*, 374). So is Taylor (“Zephaniah,” 1031).

<sup>670</sup> E.g., Calvin, *Commentaries*, 280–81; Robertson, *The Books*, 325; Széles, *Wrath*, 105.

<sup>671</sup> Therefore, Elliger finds here a missing addressee, either Jerusalem or ‘daughter of Zion,’ instead of נְאֻם־יְהוָה. The meter of v. 8a, in his opinion, is “schmierig,” ‘smudgy’ (*Das Buch*, 77). Rashi and Radaq see an eschatological sense during the war between Gog and Magog; Van Hoonacker calls for the reading of simply ‘wait’ as a warning against those mentioned in vv. 1–7 (*Les Douze*, 531). See also Keller, *Nahum*, 210; Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 184; Renaud, *Michée*, 243.

<sup>672</sup> Roberts, *Nahum*, 215. So are J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 247 and Rudolph, *Micha*, 290.

<sup>673</sup> In this sense, Renaud finds an irony, for the wicked expect a message of hope (*Michée*, 243). Achtemeier explains that “to wait” for God means to expect him to act, whether in blessing (Isa. 40:31) or, as here, in judgment.” Following her theological bent, she concludes, while ignoring the text, that “God will begin a new people and a new earth by wiping out the old” (*Nahum*, 82).

<sup>674</sup> Ribera notes the same change made in Isa 30:8 where MT לְעֶד, ‘forever,’ is read לְעֵד, ‘to witness’ (“La versión,” 156). This is also the reading of the LXX and Peshitta. On the other hand, Vulgate’s ‘resurrection’ is clearly a theological slant.

those who will revere God, who will take the divine teaching to heart (v. 7a), who will find refuge in God (2:3, 3:12–13). Man cannot fully perceive God until He appears as the universal judge<sup>675</sup> and when He does appear, He targets only the wicked for punishment<sup>676</sup> (cf TJ 1:3,7), contrary to the MT. The universal purge is ethically selective.

Apart from ‘to hope for,’ the verb סבר means ‘to believe, trust,’ and hence is a call to trust in God’s ultimate justice and plan. The ‘Word’ here refers to Zephaniah’s words of hope as well as to other prophets’ messages of comfort.<sup>677</sup>

The Targumic interpretation echoes that of the Rabbis. Two sources identify the addressees of ‘wait for Me.’ According to *Pesikta Rabbati* 34,3 these are the mourners of Zion who witnessed the destruction of the Temple and yet waited for and *believed* in the kingdom of God to come (TJ’s סבר). They humbled their spirit and heard their disgrace silently, and yet did not consider this as a merit. *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 2,2 adds that when witnessing the destruction and the bloodshed, Israel asked God: ‘When are You going to judge the nations (Joel 4:12)?’ God answered: ‘You must wait for Me,’ for God vowed then: ‘Whom-ever waits for My kingdom, I will *testify* on his behalf.’ On this, *Otzar ha-Midrashim*, *Pesikta* 17 expounds: God answered, ‘It is not for you to know the time. You must wait.’ *Midrash Exodus Rabbah* 17,4 learns from our verse that when God will reveal Himself on the day of judgment, He will stand up to give evidence.

AT clarifies both the MT and TJ since they do not specify the object of ‘to judge.’ AT expounds: ‘And on the day of My appearance (PT: when I am going) to judge (PT: the whole) *the world, I shall judge them.*’ ‘Them’ are those Judeans who fervently corrupted their deeds (v. 7b), expressed by the addition of AT and PT, ‘from their evil ways and corrupt deeds.’<sup>678</sup> Thus, both TJ and AT correctly relate v. 8a to v. 7. However, the difference in perception is quite startling: whereas the MT and TJ call the righteous to wait or to trust in God’s theophany to create a better world, AT (without such a call) refers to the corrupt Israelites as part of the worldwide wicked to be purged. The purge is

<sup>675</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 144.

<sup>676</sup> Cf 1:3a, 1:18a; Smolar, *Studies*, 196 and note 433.

<sup>677</sup> In Isa 30:18, 64:3, ‘to wait for God,’ is translated by TJ, ‘to *hope* for His *redemption.*’ However, when the MT describes God as waiting, TJ ignores this (Isa 30:17).

<sup>678</sup> PT uses the second person plural and places this addition within God’s loving plea to turn their hearts to God, calling Israel ‘the people of YYY.’ AT places this addition within the criticism of Israel’s refusal to listen to the prophets.

followed by a conditional statement: ‘But if the children of Israel return from their ways, I shall not pour My wrath upon them . . .,’ a condition that is missing in both MT and TJ.<sup>679</sup> The sternness of AT may reflect a period of flagrant corruption among the leadership during the time when it was composed.

The phrase **בִּי מְשַׁפְּטִי** (‘for My decision’) that artificially connects v. 8a to 8b is reserved by TJ (**דִּינִי**, ‘My judgment’) for the fate of the nations, even though TJ clearly understands the message in v. 7 as a criticism of Judah. Thus it dodges Judah’s punishment, together with that of the nations. TJ’s **דִּינִי** is further explained by the *Toseftot* AT and PT as ‘a decree that has been issued from before Me.’ This expression has already been used by TJ for 2:2 as a response to the difficult **בְּטָרֵם לְדַת חֵק**, literally, ‘before the birthing of law.’ It alludes to a decree in progress that cannot be rescinded, a theological perception that corrects TJ’s plain statement.

The expression **לְקַרְבָּא מְלִכּוּתָא** is based on a Second Temple period eschatological theology concerning the coming of ‘God’s Kingdom,’ an era when God’s Heavenly world, **מְלִכּוּת שָׁמַיִם**,<sup>680</sup> will be manifested on earth.<sup>681</sup> This concept of TJ is presented by the phrase **מְלִכּוּתָא דִּי** (Obad 21; Zech 14:9). Indeed, the unusual translation of ‘to gather’ by ‘to draw near,’ as Ribera notes, evidences this interpretation.<sup>682</sup> The inhabitants of the earth shall be privileged to witness this coming,<sup>683</sup> but first, wickedness must perish and the remaining righteous must draw

<sup>679</sup> See also Gordon, *Studies*, 103.

<sup>680</sup> **שָׁמַיִם** is a metonym for God.

<sup>681</sup> This longing for God’s Kingdom is expressed in the daily prayer directly following the *Shema*: **ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד**. Mishnah, *Berakhot* 2b (repeated in *Bavli*, *Berakhot* 14b as well as in Yerushalmi, *Kiddushin* 11b, *Sifrei*, *Shalah* 9, and *Pesikta Rabbati* 15,10) states that the concept of the Kingdom of Heaven starts in ‘Hear, O, Israel . . .’ (Deut 6:4–9) which precedes the laws that start with ‘and it shall be if you listen . . .’ (Deut 14:13), because the former concerns the belief in the supremacy, Kingship and oneness of YHWH, while the latter concerns the acceptance of the Law. Israel Knohl adds that the opening of ‘Hear’ is essentially a praise of God similar to that of the Psalms of Praise. Praising God was taught to be a central part of the Jew’s cultic routine, whether sitting, walking or lying down (cf. Yerushalmi, *Berakhot* 12b). The Hillel School stripped off the ritual aspect of saying the *Shema* and made it part of everyday life activities (“פרשה שיש בה קיבול מלכות שמים,” *Tarbiz* 53 [1944]: 11–12, 21–26). On the antiphonic tradition of declaring the Kingdom of Heaven in the Song of Moses, see C.D. Shavel, “קבלת עול מלכות שמים בשירת הים,” *Hadarom* 25 (1967): 31–34.

<sup>682</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 156. TJ normally translates **קָבַץ** by the cognate root **כָּנַס** (e.g., Jer 29:14; Ezek 22:19,20; Zeph 3:20).

<sup>683</sup> Smolar, *Studies*, 132. See Obad 21b.

near to God by accepting (לקבל) His Kingdom.<sup>684</sup> This is precisely the message revealed in this verse: when this Kingdom comes, God will convene a final court in which the world nations will experience divine judgment. God will pour His utmost wrath over the wicked among the nations so that the remaining righteous will call Him in unified devotion (v. 9). The Kingdom of Heaven can be born only through the pangs of refinement, and can exist only for the righteous. The idea of the Kingdom of Heaven expresses the yearning of the Jews under the yoke of the Greeks and Romans for divine deliverance from endless suffering.<sup>685</sup> The intentional change from human kingdoms to the divine kingdom seems to be inherently a targumic innovation, especially when the context allows a universalistic eschatological interpretation.<sup>686</sup>

The portrayal of the universal upheaval as the Kingdom of Heaven approaches lies in stark contrast to the rebellious city that does not draw near her God (v. 2). This interpretation cancels out the parallelism between ‘nations’ and ‘kingdoms.’<sup>687</sup> However, the vast majority of mss do show the plural מַלְכוּתָא that is harmonious with the MT, and hence most probably its original targum. The theory of the lateness of the change to מַלְכוּתָא is in precise opposition to that of Bruce Chilton, who views the universal theology as superseded by the nationalistic theology, which saw God appear on Mount Zion (TJ Isa 24:23b, 31:4c; Mic 4:7b,8) following the destruction of the Temple. But the issue of the chronology of this developed theology is not very clear. Chilton says: “Logically, the more universalistic rendering may be taken to

<sup>684</sup> Cf *Pesikta Rabbati* 9,1; *Bavli, Berakhot* 14b; *Midrash Numbers Rabbah* 2,8. Bringing the Kingdom of Heaven is often expressed in Rabbinic literature as saying the prayers in which the appellative of God as King is uttered (e.g., *Midrash Tehillim* 16,8). Often the phrase is associated with accepting ‘the yoke’ of God’s Kingdom.

<sup>685</sup> According to the *Mekhilla*, the idea of the Kingdom of Heaven encompasses the Rabbinic value-complex concerning such concepts as divine judgment, the punishment of the idolatrous nations and Israel’s enemies, the abolition of idolatry, the acknowledgment of God’s supremacy, God’s love and mercy toward Israel, and the observance of the commandments. These are concepts raised by Zephaniah and interpreted by TJ. See, for example, Kadushin, *The Rabbinic Mind*, 18–26.

<sup>686</sup> G.W. Lorein is skeptical as to the innovative tendency of TJ. He notices the “many problems” mss have in distinguishing between singular and plural, and estimates that this could have a theological explanation. That is, מַלְכוּתָא is in regards to Israel and מַלְכוּתָא is in regards to the nations. But, he gathers, this could result from inattentiveness by the scribe (“מַלְכוּתָא in the Targum of the Prophets,” *AS* 3 [2005]: 38).

<sup>687</sup> Grelot contends that TJ does not concern itself with *assembling* the kingdoms, but with *calling* them (literally, to make them come closer). Grelot, “Une Tosephta,” 206. Both MT and TJ show otherwise.

be the antecedent or the reaction to the Zion association; a reading from the *Mekhilta* inclines us toward the former possibility.”<sup>688</sup> Later he says: “...one can see traces of the older, more dynamic kingdom understanding in rabbinic literature...and [this] is associated with the expectation of return to **ירושלים בית מקדשך**.”<sup>689</sup> However, to follow the *Gemara*’s methodology, reconciliation is found when one perceives the universalistic approach, to the establishment of God’s Kingdom, in the divine appearance on Mount Zion, from where all emanates. This is clearly Zephaniah’s view, as spelled out in 3:8–20 and interpreted by TJ, especially in vv. 8–11. Chilton also asserts that both theologies were contemporaneous in the first century and appear in TJ Isaiah and Ezekiel, reflecting texts such as Obad 21 and Zech 14:9.<sup>690</sup>

Since ‘Kingdom’ appears in all the groups, Mss F, Eb 88 (?), V, M, S (?),<sup>691</sup> it is safe to conclude that both singular and plural forms originated in Palestine and co-existed there before moving on to the East and to the West. It also shows that the eschatological idea of the Kingdom of Heaven found a strong hold in Palestine, and then in Judaism at large.

The theology of the Kingdom of Heaven is alluded to also in TJ Isa 28:5 and Ezek 7:10. In both texts the rare word **הצפירה** facilitates this allusion.<sup>692</sup> In Isa 28:1–4 the eschatological scene begins with the portrayal of the ‘crown of the haughty’ of Ephraim being trampled to the ground. Contrary to this oracle, v. 5 describes God ‘on that Day’ as the ‘crown of glory and the garland of majesty.’ TJ translates here: ‘On that Day the Anointed of the Lord of Hosts will be the crown of joy and the garland of praise.’ Even though the word ‘kingdom’ is absent, the context is clear. This translation is repeated almost verbatim later in 62:3 where **צניף מלכות** is translated again as ‘garland of praise.’ The mood in both texts is celebratory and the context expresses the eschatological days of God’s sovereignty.

<sup>688</sup> Chilton, *The Glory*, 78.

<sup>689</sup> Chilton, *The Glory*, 81.

<sup>690</sup> Chilton, *The Glory*, 79.

<sup>691</sup> Also mss B,G.

<sup>692</sup> The verb **צפר** is not clear and is to be understood from its textual context. In Judg 7:3 it suggests an affinity with **צפור**, that is, a bird’s-eye view from the top of the mountain. In Isa 28:5 it suggests a similar meaning, that of ‘an object to look up to’ in spite of its seeming parallelism there with ‘crown.’ Ezekiel 7:7, where it also appears, concerns a vocal message or a decree that is coming soon (as Radaq comments) in contrast to ‘the echo of the mountains’; this urgent decree is repeated in v. 10.



In Ezek 7:1–27 the mood is somber. The prophet portrays the end of days, הקץ. The repeated assonance of ‘צ’ (קץ, הקץ, הקץ) is amplified by הצפירה. TJ interprets the ‘end’ as the day of ‘catastrophe’ (פורענותא) in vv. 6,10,12, as in Zeph 1:18, whose imagery is borrowed later in v. 19. TJ also makes the same association in which both Days portend the Day when God reveals Himself to the world (ליום אתגליותי) according to Zeph 3:8. For TJ, this Day signals the beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven era. That is the reason why TJ clarifies the metaphor יצאה הצפירה in Ezek 7:10 as אתגליאת מלכותא.<sup>693</sup>

But as prophets tend to borrow terms and ideas from earlier prophetic literature, so does TJ. The association of הצפירה with מלכותא is further made by Dan 8:5. Here, צפיר העזים is first introduced and its interpretation is given in v. 21 as ‘the King of Greece.’ The masculine צפיר is preserved to fit ‘the King.’ This association between (ה) צפירה and kingship further warrants its translation in Ezek 7:10 and the context of the Kingdom of Heaven in both Isa 28:5 and Zeph 3:8.

Apart from the dialectical variations in PT which agree with TJ (e.g., לכנשא for AT’s למכנש, עממא for AT’s עמא), both *Toseftot* expand on ‘nations’ with ‘peoples and tongues,’ reminiscent of TJ Isa 66:18.<sup>694</sup> PT’s correction of the plural מלכותא breaks its association with ‘God’s Kingdom’ to harmonize with the MT rather than with the later TJ.<sup>695</sup>

Targum’s faithful rendition of כִּי בְּאֵשׁ קִנְאָתִי תִאָּכַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ is redone by the *Toseftot* that omit<sup>696</sup> ‘for in the fire of My retribution’ and view the purge as complete only *after* all the wicked of the world are cut off *before Me*.<sup>697</sup> The theology of punishment is better expressed

<sup>693</sup> Lorein cannot find the reason for the replacement of צפירה by מלכותא. The latter “as God’s royal power seems to be meant in this eschatological context.” He merely suggests that “Isa 28:5, with its positive context, has played a part in TgJon’s interpretation” (note 63). Lorein sees no Kingdom of Heaven theology behind מלכותא and concludes that TJ “was not preoccupied with the idea” (“מלכותא,” 32–33, 41, note 63).

<sup>694</sup> לקבץ את־כל־הגוים והלשונות. Grelot contends that this addition is a prophetic theme that better fits the context (“Une Tosephta,” 207). However, from Tg Esther 1:22 which mirrors the rendition for עַם וְעַם כָּל־שׁוֹנוֹ, one may conclude that this triple designation of ‘nations’ comes to include each and every group.

<sup>695</sup> The plural reading is found in the majority of the mss. The existence of the single form in the Ashkenazi Ms M (and probably in the Sepharadi Ms S) attests to its Palestinian origin in a later development which found its way to both the East and the West.

<sup>696</sup> PT resurfaces this ‘fire’ in its targum to Zech 2:17 by picturing the end of the wicked ‘in the fire of Gehenam’ in contrast to the eternal existence of the righteous ‘in the garden of Eden.’

<sup>697</sup> Following his theory, Grelot reckons that TJ adjusted that which AT had omitted (“Une Tosephta,” 206).



in the *Toseftot*.<sup>698</sup> However, this reflects the pathos of the MT's 'the whole land.'

For TJ, on the day of judgment, God's anger, like fire, will emanate in full strength to rid the world of its wicked.<sup>699</sup> Targum makes a clear distinction between Judah, which is encouraged to keep faith, and the nations, who are the object of the purge. This was already made in 1:18b. This distinction that separates v. 7 from our verse is achieved by the transference of 'wait' to a higher spiritual level of 'hope, trust.' Moreover, the call to wait demands no action on the part of the Judeans, but rather perseverance in their exemplary behavior and faith.<sup>700</sup> The hope and trust in better conditions that TJ espouses motivates the righteous to demand changes in their society, as 2:3 suggests. Another consideration may involve an attempt to deny any suggestion that 'wait for Me' could be perceived as a reference to other than God Himself. Religious nationalism supersedes universalism.<sup>701</sup>

The ultimate goal of the Righteous One, according to TJ here and in v. 9, is the arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven. It will come to pass after God appears in court as witness, judge and executioner to cleanse the world of its wicked. Then the righteous of the world will turn to God as one body.

3:9: For then, I shall change/*bring again upon the nations one chosen* speech, to *pray* all in the name of YYY, to worship *before* Him one shoulder.

As noted above, scholars consider vv. 8–10 a gloss for a variety of reasons, the most being their "eschatological" vision. Others view vv. 9–10 as late, for they "describe an opposite result" compared to the preceding two verses: instead of total destruction, nations will convert to

<sup>698</sup> Grelot, "Une Tosephta," 207.

<sup>699</sup> Some scholars emend **עליהם** to read **עליכם**, that is, upon Judah. This is done because vv. 8–10 are considered to be against Judah within a context of universal conversion, a later idea. For example, Rudolph, *Micha*, 285,290 (also Deissler and Nowack). Roberts, on the other hand, argues that since Jerusalem failed to repent, a new judgment had to be expected. **עליהם** should not be emended, for it is connected with the end of v. 7 (*Nahum*, 210, 215–16). The function of the nations and kingdoms in the midst of an oracle against Judah is explained by Rudolph to act as the agents of destruction. Roberts does not address this point.

<sup>700</sup> Cf. Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 179.

<sup>701</sup> Grelot, "Une Tosephta," 207.

YHWHism.<sup>702</sup> Verse 9 expresses more kindly and generous feelings toward the nations;<sup>703</sup> עַמִּים should be read עַמִּי.<sup>704</sup> Even though the phrase כִּי־אָז, ‘for then,’ clearly unites v. 8 to v. 9, pointing to the same subject of the nations, some scholars view it as an introductory transition, introduced later, that ends in v. 20.<sup>705</sup>

Many commentators recognize the allusions in our verse to the Flood stories.<sup>706</sup> Indeed, the unique phrase שְׂכָם אָחָד,<sup>707</sup> an anarthrous accusative of manner,<sup>708</sup> rather than the more common לֵב אָחָד or פֶּה אָחָד, may point to an allusion to a renewed Covenant, as Ball suggests. Or as Jeremiah (32:39–40) echoes: ‘And I shall grant them *one heart and one way*... and I shall make an everlasting *Covenant* with them that I shall not *turn away* from them...’ A rebirth of innocent times for Israel and the nations within a new covenant is here envisioned.

For the Targumist, the redactional activity of the MT is, of course, of no concern. A rebirth of Israel and the world is very much his concern. Here he is careful to describe the nature of the universal conversion, for it is critical for the fulfillment of God’s promises to the Forefathers (e.g., v. 7).

By choosing the verb שָׁנִי, TJ offers a combination of meanings, ‘to turn, change’ and ‘to do again, repeat.’ Preferring this verb to the

<sup>702</sup> G.A. Smith, *The Book*, 69; and so Stonchouse, *The Books*, 20–21; Edler, *Das Kerygma*, 57–60; BHS.

<sup>703</sup> J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 248. Also Taylor, “Zephaniah,” 1031. Others, like S.L. Edgar, reject this theory for these verses deal with the same matter in 3:13 (*The Minor Prophets* [London: The Epworth Press, 1962], 20).

<sup>704</sup> E.g., Roberts, *Nahum*, 217; Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 196; Elliger, *Das Buch*, 78; Sabotka reads the ‘ם’ as enclitic (*Zephania*, 116–17).

<sup>705</sup> E.g., Simon De Vries defines the phrase as an opening of a “cluster of redactional materials” (e.g., ‘on that day,’ ‘at that time’). Moreover, the phrase marks the earliest redactional addition to 3:1–8 (*From Old Revelation to New* [Grand Rapids: William E. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995], 36, 106–07). Roberts and Vlaardingerbroek also see it as opening a new unit. However, outside of the casuistic laws, כִּי does not begin a new unit, but rather functions as a conjunctive element. In the narrative, when כִּי functions as ‘if,’ כִּי־אָז may occur in the meaning of ‘then’ (e.g., 2 Sam 2:27; Job 38:21). See also Elliger, *Das Buch*, 78, 79; Renaud, *Michée*, 246. For a review of the reasons for assigning vv. 8–10 to a later time see Sweeney’s *Zephaniah*, 179–80, 182.

<sup>706</sup> Ball, for example, finds a link with Gen 11:1–9, where seven words (יְהוָה, אָחָד, עַמִּים, שָׁפָה, קוּרָא, בְּשֵׁם, בְּלִם) are shared (*A Rhetorical*, 236–38). However, there is no עַמִּים, but עַם (v. 6), and no בְּשֵׁם, but שֵׁם (v. 4).

<sup>707</sup> The same phrase in Gen 48:22 means ‘an extra portion’ and has no connection with the present meaning.

<sup>708</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 172.

more appropriate הפך signals an exegetical exercise.<sup>709</sup> This is further confirmed by the translation of literally ‘one chosen speech.’ Targum associates this message with Gen 11:1, to allude to the innocence of humankind in the pre-Tower of Babel period. There will be a return to that era, a second chance for humanity. The language spoken then is assumed to be Hebrew, the chosen tongue, for to pray to YHWH one must use Hebrew (so Ibn Ezra, Qara and Altschuler). We see here TJ’s typical exhortation for praying.<sup>710</sup> ‘Praying’ as a spiritual state conforms to the elevation of state of spirituality from ‘wait’ to ‘trust, believe’ chosen by TJ in v. 8. In TJ Prophets (and in TO),<sup>711</sup> all occurrences of קרא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה (e.g., 1 Kgs 18:24, 2 Kgs 5:11; Joel 3:5) are rendered as praying. This is also the Rabbinic interpretation. For example, *Midrash Tehillim* 66,1 inquires into the nature of worshipping God, לְעַבְדוֹ, and concludes that it always means praying (cf Deut 11:13; Ps 100:2; Dan 6:11,17).

The adoption of YHWHism will be initiated by God Himself upon<sup>712</sup> the nations, resulting in total faithfulness by those who survive the purge.

The MT ברורה can mean ‘clear,’ ‘pure,’ or ‘chosen.’ However, TJ’s בחיר has an added significance in the meaning of ‘the best, the purest.’ It also conjures up the endearing name given to the land of Israel, ארץ הבחירה. The choice of ברור would not capture the same emotive weight, and its multiple meanings could diminish TJ’s intent.<sup>713</sup>

Targum’s interpretation is well grounded in Rabbinic thought. The verse is understood as referring to the restoration of primordial conditions, when all people spoke Hebrew and all worshiped the one God of Israel.<sup>714</sup> It is used as an eschatological source for states or events

<sup>709</sup> Aramaic הפך is cognate to the same root in Hebrew in many passages, e.g., Josh 7:8; 2 Kgs 5:26; Jer 20:16; Amos 8:10; Jonah 3:4. It appears eleven times alone in the Twelve. Houtman, *Bilingual XVIII*, 284.

<sup>710</sup> 1 Kgs 22:13 is also translated by מְקוּלֵל חֵד, ‘one speech,’ as TO Gen 11:1. Attention should be drawn to Ps 51:17, where the psalmist asks God to open his lips so that he may start praying to declare God’s glory. This verse opens the daily *Amidah* prayer. See *Siddur Sim Shalom*, 101.

<sup>711</sup> Except for Exod 33:19 and 34:5 where God calls out His name for Moses.

<sup>712</sup> As MurXII, LXX, and Peshitta show to make a better reading. Vulgate has no preposition.

<sup>713</sup> Cf Jastrow, 155, 197–98. בית הבחירה, for example, means ‘the most special, selected, purest House,’ namely, the Jerusalem Temple. Peshitta’s גְּבִיתָא follows TJ and not the LXX, which reads, erroneously, בְּדוֹרָה, ‘in her generation.’ Vulgate, Aquila and Theodotion also show ‘chosen.’

<sup>714</sup> Expressed so well in the daily *Aleinu* prayer.

that will take place in the days of the Messiah.<sup>715</sup> Targum transmits Zephaniah's vision well: the problems of the world began when the world population stopped speaking in the one holy language, and thus idolatry ensued. A return to those days of pre-Tower of Babel will solve the world's problems, including the fate of Israel. Common language and common faith will ensure the peace of humanity.

3:10: From beyond the rivers of *India*, in mercy/love the exile of *My people*, who were exiled, shall return, and they shall be bringing them as offerings.

Completing the vision of the universal conversion, the prophet marks the most distant land, from where pilgrims will come to worship God, as 'the rivers of Cush.' Scholars identify Cush with four geographical locations: Egypt/Ethiopia/Nubia,<sup>716</sup> a north Arabian tribe (Hab 3:7),<sup>717</sup> a tribe in Sinai/southwestern Judah (Num 12:1; 2 Chron 21:16),<sup>718</sup> and Mesopotamia, Akkadian *Kaššu* (Gen 2:8,12, 10:8–12).<sup>719</sup>

Targum's 'India' is unique. It is clear that the prophet aims to convey "the farthest place imaginable,"<sup>720</sup> and no doubt TJ understood that. The puzzle is resolved when we notice that wherever Cush is mentioned along with Egypt, the translation is Cush (e.g., Isa 20:3; Jer 46:9; Ezek 29:10; Nah 3:9). Whenever Cush appears in a non-Egyptian context, it is rendered as India (Isa 11:11, 18:1; cf Jer 13:23), "on the other side of the globe" from Egypt. Moreover, First Targum to Esther 1:1 describes the borders of the empire 'from Greater India to Western Cush.'<sup>721</sup> The exiles of 821 and 586 BCE concentrated in the far east

<sup>715</sup> E.g., *Tanhuma Genesis* (Buber), *Noah* 28, *vaYar* 38; *Midrash Song Zuta*, 5,5; *Tanna de-Vei Elyahu* 20,3; *Leviticus Rabbah* 32,6; *Numbers Rabbah* 11,4. In *Yerushalmi, Megillah* 10a Hebrew is the language of God, the Unique One.

<sup>716</sup> E.g., J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 249; Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 152, 198; Roberts, *Nahum*, 218; Sweeney, *The Twelve*, 522; Renaud, *Michée*, 248; Bennett, *The Book*, 699; Lipiński, "Review," 690; also LXX. See also discussion on 2:12 above.

<sup>717</sup> Israel Eph'al, *The Ancient Arabs* (Jerusalem: the Magnes Press, 1984), 63–72, 78.

<sup>718</sup> E.g., Haak, "Cush," 249–51; S. Yeivin, "Topographic," 176–80.

<sup>719</sup> Ball ascribes Isa 18:1 and Zeph 3:10 to a Mesopotamian tradition concerning the "Rivers of Cush" of the Garden of God tradition (*A Rhetorical*, 248–49). Berlin, too, prefers this eastern location based on the order of nations in Gen 10:5–11 (*Zephaniah*, 112–13). Odell reads "Assyria" ("Zephaniah," 674). Likewise, Rashi on Isa 18:1 refers to a warm land in the east where birds gather (alluded to by the sound of their wings). The oracle, he adds, refers to Gog and Magog (in the east) according to Ezek 38, where Cush together with Persia and Put will join them. For a fuller discussion see Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 244–52.

<sup>720</sup> Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 134.

<sup>721</sup> Grossfeld, *The First Targum*, 40. Edition 'L' (Walton's London Polyglot Bible of 1654–57), which appears in MG (Lyon Press: NY) has a double designation: 'from

of the empire rather than in the near Egypt/Cush. The actual return of those exiled is the immediate concern of TJ, rather than the abstract idea of geographical directions. We hear the voice of the interpreter in the synagogue following the literal translation of the verse.

Another answer may be found in the dispute between Rav and Samuel in *Bavli, Megillah* 11a:<sup>722</sup> The two rabbis discuss the reason for the seemingly duplicated descriptions of the territory under the Persian king (Esther 1:1). It is first described by the phrase ‘from India to Cush,’ then by the number of 127 countries. Rav explains the phrase as describing the two ends of the empire: India on one end and Cush on the other. The mention of 127 countries serves as an apposition. Samuel, on the other hand, believes that the phrase is an expression of exaggeration and scorn. Cush, for him, was a country near India. The number of 127 countries comes to elaborate on the expression. Rashi agrees with Rav. It seems that by the additions to the MT, TJ agrees with Samuel’s opinion that Cush represents India in the north-eastern areas to which the Israelites were exiled. Jews were not exiled to Egypt or Ethiopia, but rather migrated there (mostly) voluntarily.

Another identification follows Krauss’ study on the Biblical table of nations in the Talmud, Midrash and TJ. He contends that LXX’s Ἰνδικῆς (LXX does not mention Cush) refers to a land in Africa, south of Egypt, which is Biblical Cush. Targum to Qoh 2:5, Peshitta to 2 Chron 21:16 and PsJ to Gen 2:11, 25:18 for *Havilah*, one of the sons of Cush (also Tg to 1 Chron 1:9), indicate that *הינדקא* meant Ethiopia.<sup>723</sup> This designation agrees with Rav.

The next textual problem concerns the meaning of *עֲתָרִי בְּת־פּוֹצִי*. This phrase has attracted many interpretations based mostly on emendations to a later gloss. The three major reasons advanced for its exilic or post-exilic source are the universal conversion, the mention

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Greater Hindia to Cush, from the east of Greater Hindia to Western Cush.’ The second description tries to be more specific. Ibn Ezra, on Esther 1:1, notes that this Ahasuerus II reigned over lands between ‘Medes and Persia north of the land of Israel and India. Only Cush is in the south.’ However, in his commentary on Isa 18:1, he identifies Cush with Assyria (*The Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah* [vol. I; tr. Michael Friedländer; New York: Philipp Feldheim, Inc, 1873], 85).

<sup>722</sup> Echoes are found in other Rabbinic sources such as *Midrash Esther Rabbah* 1,4; *Midrash Tehillim* 22,26. Rav (Abba ben Aivu) and Samuel (ben Shilat) were two of the greatest leading Babylonian Rabbis of the 3rd century.

<sup>723</sup> S. Krauss, “Die biblische Volkertafel im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum,” *MGWJ* 39 (1895): 56. For further support for Cush as India see Grossfeld, *The First Targum*, 116.

of exiles, and the verb פּוֹץ.<sup>724</sup> LXX and Peshitta omit it, as well as BHS. However, MurXII and the Vulgate attest to it. The majority of scholars read עֲתָרִי, ‘My supplicants,’ and בַּת־פּוֹצִי, literally, ‘the daughter of My scattered,’ thus reading בַּת־פּוֹצִי, ‘in My dispersions.’ The supplicants are commonly understood as the Israelites who will return from beyond the rivers of Cush.<sup>725</sup> However, this interpretation invariably describes the Israelites as bringing tributes to God. This in turn creates two problems: first, it forces one to declare the verse to be the beginning of a new unit concerning the Israelite exiles in the farthest lands, and not the completion of the oracle concerning the universal conversion. Second, Israelites on a pilgrimage bringing tributes, are not the prophet’s vision, rather, the prophet foresees their return to their ancestral land. The prophet’s intent is indeed to focus on nations who are now supplicants, who were described in the previous verse as worshiping God in one ‘shoulder.’ This expression led to an associative scene in which newly converted nations, עֲתָרִי בַת־פּוֹצִי, carry (upon their shoulders) tributes to God.<sup>726</sup> Whether the tributes are gifts or the Israelite exiles is another point of discussion. However, in our case it seems that Isa 66:20 influenced TJ.

Struggling with the phrase’s meaning, TJ presents an interpretation, not a translation. The sense of supplicants is missing while the sense of exile remains. However, the addition of ‘My people’ identifies those supplicants. Unlike the modern scholars, TJ reads the verse as having two subjects. The Israelites alone will return from beyond the rivers of India. This is reiterated by the explanatory addition ‘who were exiled.’ The divine attribute of Mercy/Love,<sup>727</sup> as against the divine wrath that sent them away, is that by which the exiled will be returned (Isa 54:7–8). The use of the verb תּוֹב comes in a Covenantal context to contrast

<sup>724</sup> E.g., J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 249; Horst, *Die Zwölf*, 196; Marti, *Das Dodekapropheton*, 375; Kauffmann, *תולדות*, 353–54, note 9; Gerleman, *Zephaniah*, 57–58; Sabottka, *Zephaniah*, 120–21; Seybold, *Nahum*, 113; Rudolph, *Micha*, 291; Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 194–96. However, ‘the supplicants in My scattered (lands)’ is to be understood in the context of Gen 11:1–9, esp. vv. 4,9, for the nations are those scattered since then (cf Gen 10:18), and not Israel or Judah. The verb פּוֹץ is often used in pre-Zephaniah’s time, e.g., Num 10:35; 2 Sam 20:22; Ps 68:2, and around the prophet’s time, e.g., Deut 4:27; Jer 30:11. See also Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 184–86.

<sup>725</sup> E.g., Qara, Rashi. Radaq, Ibn Ezra and Altschuler understand the phrase as referring to other groups.

<sup>726</sup> The *Tosefta* (AT) makes this association very clear. See below.

<sup>727</sup> The Aramaic root רחם means both mercy and love. This phrase is taken from Isa 54:7: וּבְרַחֲמִים גְּדֹלִים אֶקְבְּצֶךָ, ‘but with great mercy shall I gather you.’

with the exiles' former state of rejection.<sup>728</sup> The same nations who exiled the Israelites and who have dominated them beyond the rivers of India will bring<sup>729</sup> them back as tributes to God. Thus the sinners will atone for their sin of abusing God's people. Targum marks the two subjects by the addition of the *vav* conjunctive. The change to the passive and the addition of *them* clarify the ambiguous subject and object on the basis of Isa 18:7, 66:20.<sup>730</sup> קורבן for the Hebrew מנחה can refer to any gift, be it religious (e.g. Amos 5:25) or secular (e.g., Isa 39:1). Since the nations will be bringing the Israelites as offerings to God, and will be cleansed of their sins and converted to YHWHism, the offerings are construed as holy. They may be considered also as guilt offerings. The plural of 'offerings' may be intentional to enhance the number of the gifts and the number of the returned exiled. The same effect is given by the plural דאיתגליאו, instead of the singular דאיתגליאה, 'who was exiled' (as in all the mss except for V,H).

The interpretation here indicates that though the phrase, 'from beyond the rivers of Cush' was adopted by Zephaniah from Isaiah (18:1), its association with Egypt was not adopted by TJ. Rather, TJ had to adapt its interpretation to other circumstances, taking account of history, reality, and the MT eschatological context.

Our Targumic scene is amplified in the AT and PT to Zech 2:15 that loudly echo Isa 18:7, 46:7, 49:22, 66:20, and Zeph 3:9–10:

And if the children (PT, 'House') of Israel return from their ways, I shall not pour My wrath upon them, and I shall have mercy upon them on account of My loving their righteous Forefathers. And I shall gather their exiles from among the nations to where they were exiled,<sup>731</sup> and all nations, peoples and tongues and kingdoms<sup>732</sup> shall be carrying (PT, 'to')<sup>733</sup> them on their shoulders, and they shall be bringing them (PT, 'before Me') as offerings, and they shall be before Me as (PT, 'for') a

<sup>728</sup> W.L. Holladay, *The Root Subh in the Old Testament with Particular References to its Usages in Covenantal Contexts* (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 69.

<sup>729</sup> ויהיו מיתן, literally, 'and they will be bringing' from the root אָתַן in *af'el*, 'to bring, carry' (cf. Jastrow, 132), and not "who died" as Vlaardingenbroek translates, probably reading the root מוּת (*Zephaniah*, 195). He then wonders if Tg understood יוּבְלוּ (sic) as stemming from "נָבֵל (cf. נְבֵלָה, corpse)" [?].

<sup>730</sup> The Hebrew would be וְהֵם יוּבְלוּן כַּמְנַחֲתֵי וְהֵם יִבְרִיאוּ.

<sup>731</sup> AT, דאיתגליא; PT corrects, דאיתגליאו.

<sup>732</sup> PT omits 'and kingdoms' either because of a scribal error or to harmonize with its earlier reading.

<sup>733</sup> A colloquial expression that uses the indirect instead of the direct object. For example, מְכַנְשָׂא לְהוֹן, *Midrash Songs Rabbah* 4,19; מְכַנְשָׂא לְהוֹן בְּבוֹרֵתֵי דָא, *Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* (Margalioth) 25,5; עוֹבְדֵי לְהוֹן, *Yerushalmi, Pe'ah* 14a.



loving/beloved nation, and I shall let My *Shekhinah* dwell in his (PT corrects with ‘your’) midst and you shall know that YYY of Hosts has sent me to prophecy to you.<sup>734</sup>

These *Toseftot* explicate TJ and emphasize the repentance as a condition for redemption, and the restoration of the loving relationship between God and Israel.

Only once in the HB does the root **חבב** occur, and interestingly, it is found together with ‘nations,’ **אֵף הַכּוֹב עַמִּים** (Deut 33:3). God is said to love ‘His people.’<sup>735</sup> The word **חביב** in Rabbinic literature is often associated with Israel and what God loves (such as those who live by the commandments, the elders, the Levites, the converts). Equating the nations with Israel as God’s beloved is unique. This unusual premise may be understood in light of the statement in *Midrash Ruth Rabbah* (3,5 for 1:18) that justifies David being a descendant of a proselyte: ‘Proselytes are beloved by God.’<sup>736</sup>

Targum’s extended interpretation probably took its inspiration from Zech 1:16, where the phrase ‘I have returned to Jerusalem with mercy’ occurs. The link between Zech 1:17 and Zeph 3:10 is also made by the use of the root **פּוּץ** (**פּוּצִי/תְּפוּצִינָה**), although in the former, the root is translated in the meaning of ‘full of (goodness).’ While Zephaniah envisions a time when the *scattered nations* will return to the center of the universe, Jerusalem (as against the center of Babel from which they were scattered), bringing with them peace or guilt offerings to the only God, Tg interprets the scattered as *the Israelites* whom the nations will bring back to Jerusalem as holy tributes to the one God of Israel (v. 9). In being the active party in the return of the Jews from exile, the nations expiate their sin of scattering Israel among them, confess their guilt, and pledge their adherence to God and His people.

<sup>734</sup> From the *Testimonia apparatus* in Sperber’s *The Bible in Aramaic*, (2004), 480 (69). See also Gordon, *Targum*, 172, note 26 and *Studies*, 104; Grelot, “Une Tosephta,” 203,208. Gordon believes that AT’s ‘upon their shoulders’ is influenced by Isa 49:22. It is more likely that the expression is associative from TJ’s ‘one shoulder,’ while Isa 49:22 is secondary.

<sup>735</sup> Even though the word is ‘peoples,’ it can be read as referring to Israel. Cf Deut 33:19, Gen 28:3, 48:4; LXX and all the Medieval Jewish commentators. A.D.H. Mayes, *Deuteronomy* (New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., [1979] 1991), 399.

<sup>736</sup> The opposite opinion is expressed by the *amora* R. Helbo in *Bavli, Kiddushin* 70b, who said that ‘proselytes are as injurious to Israel as scab’ (**ספחת**). He deduces this from Isa 14:1b **וּנְסַפְחוּ** (‘and they shall join’) thus turning the vision from positive to negative. Discussions on proselytes in the Talmud appear especially in *Bavli, Yevamot*.



In its attempt to clarify the MT, where ‘the supplicants’ are not clearly identified, TJ has ‘the exiles of My people who were exiled shall return.’ Thus, it creates a three-part verse instead of the MT’s couplet. However, AT rejects TJ’s reading and instead identifies the subject as ‘all the nations, peoples and tongues and kingdoms.’ Targum’s subject becomes AT’s object, as it was introduced earlier: ‘And I shall gather *their exile*, from among the nations, to where they were exiled’ which later is twice referred to by the direct object ‘them.’ To clarify even further, AT expounds on its subject, depicting the nations as *carrying* the exiles *on their shoulders*, which is absent in both the MT and TJ. This is done by the Aramaic expression נטל על כתף (cf Isa 46:7). The Hebrew, when introverted, according to AT, would be: עתרי בתפוצי ישאום על כתפיהם. The second part of TJ, ‘and they shall bring/carry them as tributes,’ is further clarified even though AT here agrees with TJ as to the subject and object: ‘they,’ the carriers, are equated with those ‘who shall bring them (the exiles) as tributes.’ Both verbs, מניטלין and מיייתין, share the same subject. Both TJ’s ויהון מיתן להון and AT’s ומיייתין להון translate the MT יובלון.<sup>737</sup> To this vision AT adds an unusual promise, saying ‘and they shall be before Me as a beloved nation.’ MT and TJ Zech 2:15 envision many nations who will attach themselves to YHWH ‘and they shall be a people to Me’ (JNPS reads “and become His people”). Since it is followed by ‘and I shall make My *Shekhinah* dwell in *his* midst,’ the subject is assumed to be the people of Israel rather than the ‘nations, peoples and tongues and kingdoms.’ However, AT’s rendition seems to present an opposing idea, or perhaps a clarifying point, that the nations are to be the ‘beloved people.’ This is further supported by the change from ‘and I shall dwell in *your* midst,’ namely, ‘the daughter of Zion,’ to ‘and I shall make My *Shekhinah* dwell in *his* midst,’ namely, the beloved people. Universalism is brought back to where nationalism took preference (v. 8). While MT and TJ cannot conceive of the assimilation of the nations into the Jewish people, AT seems to endorse it.<sup>738</sup> On the

<sup>737</sup> Grelot believes that since TJ is AT’s abridgement, its ויהון מיתן that seems to translate יובלון is purely accidental, *trompe-l’oeil*. He erroneously argues that the Aramaic מניטלין יהון translates the Hebrew יובלון and the rest is a secondary amplification (“Une Tosephta,” 208). Rather, יובלון is correctly translated by TJ and AT by the verb אתא in the *af’el*, ‘to bring, carry.’ See Jastrow, 132. See also Gordon’s criticism in *Studies*, 104. Gordon rightly notes that TJ never translates the Hebrew יבל by the Aramaic נטל (cf Isa 18:7), but rather by אתא.

<sup>738</sup> Contra Gordon (*Studies*, 104). Grelot assumes that Tg removed חביב, ‘beloved,’ which was in the ancient recension preserved by AT, in order to conform to the MT (“Une Tosephta,” 199). The opposite is more likely to have happened.

other hand, PT reserves itself from making a full endorsement by noting that the *Shekhinah* will dwell ‘in *your* midst,’ that is, Jerusalem and ‘the daughter of Zion.’ It interprets Zech 2:15 faithfully.

Grelot observes here a *midrashic* development in which God’s love for the captives of Israel played a part. He notes the similarity between AT and T<sub>J</sub> in the expression ‘they shall return with love’ and concludes that Scriptures such as Zech 1:4 and 2:14–15 were interpreted in light of Zeph 3:10, because of shared themes and verbal usages. The T<sub>J</sub> of our verse is an abridged version of that earlier, larger version (AT). This *midrashic* development, which is an ancient Palestinian *haggada*, has its spiritual roots in the time of the *Amora'im*, or probably even earlier, at the time of the *Tannaim*.<sup>739</sup> The discussion above does not support the precedence of AT over T<sub>J</sub>.

To Grelot’s position, Gordon responds that the Targumic reading may be sufficiently explained by other sources: first, MT Zech 1:16 has שָׁבַתִּי בְּרַחֲמִים לִירוּשָׁלַם (‘I have returned to Jerusalem in mercy’); second, 11QTgJob 42:10 has וּתָב אֱלֹהֵא לְאִיּוֹב בְּרַחֲמִין (‘and God returned to Job in mercy’); and third, 1QIs<sup>a</sup> 52:8 adds בְּרַחֲמִים following יְהוָה יָצִיחַ צִיּוֹן. Targum Zeph 3:10 shows an early association between ‘return’ and ‘mercy’ that may have derived from Zech 1:16. He therefore rejects Grelot’s conclusion that the AT to Zechariah preceded T<sub>J</sub> Zeph 3:10.<sup>740</sup>

Radaq understands T<sub>J</sub> as reading עֲתָרִי and בְּתַפּוּצֵי and explains them as two names God called Israel: the former refers to the promise to respond favorably (to Israel’s prayers) and the latter refers to ‘the scattered congregation in exile.’ Behind Radaq’s interpretation is probably an exegetical tradition he knew. Ibn Ezra seems to reject this tradition, commenting that עֲתָרִי and בְּתַפּוּצֵי are names of two nations and the plural of ‘they will carry’ refers to them. However, he also brings another tradition that identifies the phrase with the people of Israel who pray to God and who are scattered among the nations (so Qara and Alschuler). They will bring tributes to God. This second tradition was previously offered by Rashi.

<sup>739</sup> Grelot, “Une Tosephta,” 207–08.

<sup>740</sup> Robert P. Gordon, “The Targum to the Minor Prophets and the Dead Sea Texts: Textual and Exegetical Notes,” *RdQ* 8 (1973): 427–28 and *Studies*, 104.

3:11: At that *time* you shall not be ashamed from all your evil deeds (for *she* rebelled in My *Memra*), for then I shall *exile* from your midst the *powerful ones* of your *praise*, and you shall no longer *vaunt* on the mountain of My holiness.

The prophet continues to transmit God's words. The address to the righteous among the Judeans that began in v. 8 with 'wait for Me,' in which God's plan concerning the nations was unfolded, now turns to Jerusalem the city in second person feminine form. The connective motif of 'in her midst' (v. 5) returns with 'in your midst.' However, while God operates from the Temple within the city whose leaders are corrupt (vv. 2–5), the prophet addresses the aspect of their arrogance that will be eradicated from the Holy Mount. When arrogance is gone, humility can replace it (vv. 12–13). The purification of Judah is part of the events that will take place on the Day of YHWH.<sup>741</sup>

The shame that sets in when one realizes his sinful behavior and repents will no longer haunt the people whose purified souls will find refuge in peace and decency. In a triple way the prophet links height with arrogance: גְּבוּהָ, גִּאוּת, and הָרָה.

What is the significance of the 'shame'? Why would the city not feel shame from all her evil ways on 'that day'? Ought they not feel shame and remorse? This is explained by Radaq, Abrabanel and Malbim, who note a distinction between now and then: on that Day the city will not need to be ashamed, for all her deeds will be done in honesty and faith, unlike the present, when she should be ashamed of her evil deeds. Malbim cites Isa 54:4 for support. The reason for not being ashamed any longer according to Rashi, is because Jerusalem has been punished and forgiven (Isa 40:2). Altschuler, on the other hand, perceives the shame as the state of suffering brought upon her by others.

Targum explains where ambiguity seems to take hold. It continues to view the Day as an unspecified 'time, era' (cf 1:9,10) similar to that of the Rabbis and the Jewish Medieval commentators. The double persons in the text, second and first, are faithfully kept and so is the content:

<sup>741</sup> The changes of addressee, subject matter, and address form cannot stand without the connective phrase 'on that Day.' Its role of cementing the events envisioned in the book into one vision of the Day of YHWH is an integral part of the overall message. Cf Renaud, *Michée*, 251; Taylor, "Zephaniah," 1032; Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 230. The influence of Isaiah on this verse in particular is quite extensive. See discussion in Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 186–88 and the citations below.

there will come a time when Jerusalem will no longer be ashamed of her rebelliousness (2:17aβ, 3:1–4,7b); the powerful will be exiled, and none will boast or magnify himself on the holy Mount.<sup>742</sup>

In v. 7 TJ translated עֲלִילוֹתָם by עוֹבְדֵיהוֹן, ‘their deeds.’ Here it is correctly interpreted as ‘evil deeds’ as it is specifically associated with a rebellion (the verb פָּשַׁע, cf TJ 2 Kgs 1:1; Isa 1:2; Jer 3:13) against God’s Word, namely, the Law and His messengers the Prophets.<sup>743</sup> There, in v. 7, we also noted the *Toseftot* AT and PT as they respond to the rebelliousness issue, each one explicating its predecessor. Here are the various readings for comparison.

MT: אֲשֶׁר פָּשַׁעַת בִּי

‘that you rebelled against Me.’

TJ: דְּמַרְיֵדַת בְּמִמְרֵי

‘that you rebelled against My Word.’

AT: *‘But the children of Israel could not dispose their soul (לְסוּבְלָא נַפְשֵׁהוֹן) to listen to the words of the prophet.’*

PT: *‘so that you shall not be rebellious (סַרְבְּנִין) like your forefathers who did not desire to dispose their soul (לְסוּבְלָא בְּנַפְשֵׁהוֹן) to listen to the words of My prophets.’*

PT further edits and clarifies AT’s expansion and at the same time integrates both TJ’s and AT’s interpretations.

One might construe the plural subject as the converted nations who are coming to Zion, bringing the exiled Judeans back as sin offerings (v. 10). The evil deeds ascribed to them are perceived as their sins against Israel. They will come to Mount Zion not as boasters (cf 2:8,10), but as repentance seekers. God will remove them, the mighty oppressors, as He will remove the enemy and judges (v. 15) from Israel.

This possibility may be reflected in the plural verb תוֹסִיפוּן that some mss carry (F, M,Y,T, and mss B,G and MG). The change in number, the previous verse that portrays the nations in an act of repentance, and the depiction of the arrogant powerful on the Temple Mount could suggest a change in addressee, from Judah in the singular to the nations in the plural. This understanding could have indeed been the

<sup>742</sup> Malbim identifies the power in military might as well as in personal wealth.

<sup>743</sup> Cf LXX’s wrong reading of עֲלִילוֹת, ‘your gleanings’ instead of עֲלִילוֹת, ‘acts,’ in 3:7. Here, however, the translation is correct.

original intent of TJ, especially if those arrogant powerful are viewed as the Roman soldiers in Jerusalem.

If this is so, then the removal of the enemy from Jerusalem will avail the return of the humble remnant of the next verse. Targum envisions the return of holiness to the Holy Mount. Moreover, the absence of shame is associated with this remnant, who will find refuge ‘in your midst’ (v. 12. Cf 2:7,9b).<sup>744</sup>

However, the original interpretation stands here, in that both Zephaniah and TJ understand the addressee in our verse to be Israel, which has ‘just’ been returned to the land of Israel by the nations (v. 10). The punishment of exile is ascribed to Israel alone as it is mentioned twice in the previous verse. The use of the verb גלי, ‘be exiled,’ for סור, ‘to remove’ as in v. 15, underscores the fulfillment of this oracle (My *Memra*) as described in 2 Kgs 24:12,14–16: ‘And he banished all of Jerusalem, and all the officials and all the warriors...and Jehoiachin...and the king’s wives, and his officers and notables...to Babylon...’ These were the elite who vaunted their power from the center of the city. Further, since it is impossible to rebel against God, TJ substitutes the deity with His *Memra*.<sup>745</sup>

Targum Isa 13:3 views עליזי גאֹותי as two separate divine attributes, ‘My power and My glory,’ who are identified as God’s warriors who will retaliate against Babylon. In our verse the phrase עליזי גאֹותך<sup>746</sup> is understood as a reference to the powerful leaders who consider themselves to be the object of praises or glory. Usually, תשבחתא translates words with the meaning of ‘praise’ or ‘glory.’ Since the verb שבח is reserved mostly for prayers in which God is extolled and praised, words with the meaning of ‘songs,’ such as נגינה (Hab 3:19), זמרה (Nah 2:3),<sup>747</sup> and שיר (Amos 8:10), are translated by תשבחתא as well. When words of ‘arrogance,’ such as גאון and גאות, are associated with God, they take on the meaning of ‘majesty, glory, exaltation’ (Isa 2:10, 26:10; Hos 5:5). The analogy drawn suggests that TJ accuses the overconfident arrogant of likening themselves to God, for power and glory are God’s

<sup>744</sup> This association is also noted by Ben Zvi, who reads vv. 11–12 as one unit. He finds the association in the syntagmatic pair of ‘you shall not be ashamed’ that opens v. 11 and ‘find refuge in the name of YHWH’ which ends v. 12 (Pss 25:20, 31:2, 71:1). Being protected by God takes away the supplicant’s feeling of shame (*A Historical*, 230–33).

<sup>745</sup> TJ Jer 3:13, 33:8; Ezek 20:25; Hos 10:9, 14:1. Smolar, *Studies*, 131 and note 15.

<sup>746</sup> העליזיה in 2:15 is also rendered ‘powerful.’

<sup>747</sup> Instead of the Hebrew זמריהם, ‘and their vine-twigs,’ TJ reads זמריהם, ‘and (the cities of) their praises.’

alone. Note the use of **תקוף** in 2:2 and 3:8 to describe God's wrath. As God exiled the elite of Jerusalem in the last days of Judah's kingdom, so will He do to the contemporary elites of power.<sup>748</sup>

The accusation of haughtiness is interpreted as a verbal vaunting, **לאַתַּרְבֵּרְבֵּא**, a self aggrandizement of their own power (the same root is used for the Hebrew **גָּדוּל**, **הַגְּדֹל** [2:10] and **גָּאוֹן**). This is rendered as an apposition to **עֲלִיזֵי גְּאֻתְךָ**, 'the powerful of your pride/arrogance,' thus suggesting again an accusation of verbal sins. The second part of the verse then completes the indictment of evil deeds in the first part. The severity of the charge is inherent in its location, the Holy Mount.

If the second interpretation is adopted, **תְּקִיפֵי תוֹשִׁבְחַתְךָ** may be interpreted as 'the abusers of your praise'; by their sins, the powerful in Jerusalem abased the praise of the city and her inhabitants, thus diminishing Jerusalem's glory.

3:12: And I shall leave in your midst a *humble* nation and (*who*) *submits to humiliation*, and they shall *trust* in the name of YYY.

The vacuum that will be created with the removal of the self-praising, arrogant and powerful elite in v. 11 will be replaced with a worthy remnant, **עַם עָנִי וְדָל**. Who are they? The terms **עָנִי** and **דָּל** are usually associated with a court setting where the poor and the under-class find no justice and protection (cf Amos 4:1, 5:11; Isa 3:14–15, 10:2, 26:6; Jer 22:16; Ps 82:3). The phrase **עַם עָנִי וְדָל** is a hapax and probably a conflation from Isa 26:6: **רִגְלֵי עָנִי פִּעְמֵי דָלִים**.<sup>749</sup> According to Lev 14:21, **דָּל** is someone who is materially poor (cf Ruth 3:10). For Jeremiah (who never uses the singular **דָּל**), **דָּלִים** are the remnant 'who have nothing' (39:10; cf 52:15). They are both poor and few in number (cf Judg 6:15, 2 Sam 3:1 and Isa 19:6). All of these characteristics appear to fit Zephaniah's perception: they are the innocent abused by the powerful (1:9b, 3:3b, 11), the few righteous (2:3) who will find everlasting refuge. Renaud reads the phrase in a religious context where the humble people will perceive themselves "small" before God. This contrasts with those

<sup>748</sup> On the root **תקף** see commentary on 2:15.

<sup>749</sup> The opposite of the split-up technique as described by Benjamin D. Sommer in "Allusions and Illusions: the Unity of the Book of Isaiah in light of Deutero-Isaiah's Use of Prophetic Tradition" (in *New Visions of Isaiah*. Ed. R.F. Melugin and M.A. Sweeney; JSOT SUP. Series, 0309–0787; no. 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 162.

who elevate themselves on Mount Zion.<sup>750</sup> Sweeney places them in a political context: they are the עִם־הָאָרֶץ who supported Josiah against the royal court of Manasseh, who (forcibly) supported the Assyrians.<sup>751</sup> Ben Zvi considers them as the humble and the violated in a social context.<sup>752</sup> A social range is applied also by Asurmendi who identifies the humble and the poor as those who do not count on their wealth and power but on God.<sup>753</sup> *Bavli, Sanhedrin* 98a ascribes the verse to the Messianic era. So Abrabanel: they are those who will return to their land when redemption comes, and will need no possessions.

Targum's midrashic translation is surprising. עָנִי is commonly translated by חֲשִׁיךְ (e.g., Isa 10:2) and דָּל by מִסְכֵּן (e.g., Amos 4:1, 8:6), but at times they exchange (e.g., Isa 3:14; Jer 22:16). In our verse, עָנִי is translated by עֲנוּתוֹן, 'humble,' thus making no distinction from עָנָו (2:3). דָּל is translated by מְקַבֵּל עוֹלָבָן, 'one who submits to humiliation,' a rendition found nowhere else in the Prophets. Radaq reconciles this offensive and depressing characterization of a righteous remnant by saying that the translation describes the remnant as being the humble whose spirit is low, in sharp contrast to the arrogant in the previous verse. More specific is Altschuler, who explains this translation as referring to the remnant who will submit themselves to God as the poor submit to the mighty. Ibn Ezra elucidates this character of humility as prerequisite for receiving the divine protection.

However, this odd translation for דָּל is found once more in TJ Isa 29:19, but in this case it translates עֲנוּיִם. Here, the humble will be granted divine joy. In TJ Isa 54:11 עֲנִיָּה סְעָרָה, 'agitated poor,' is rendered 'poor, receiving humiliation.'<sup>754</sup> In both scriptures the context involves a transition into blissful conditions. This is the same context as in our passage beginning in v. 11. With this interpretation, TJ emphasizes the human character rather than the socio-economic element vis-à-vis the haughty of the previous verse.

Furthermore, in Isa 66:2 the prophet describes three types of people who will be supported by God at the age of redemption: עֲנִי וְנֹכַח־רוּחַ, 'the poor, the depressed, and the one who is attentive to

<sup>750</sup> Renaud, *Michée*, 251.

<sup>751</sup> Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 188–90.

<sup>752</sup> Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 233.

<sup>753</sup> Asurmendi, "Sophonie," 15. He rejects Lohfink's argument which doubts the prophetic vision of a poor and distressed people for the vision of a people enjoying the wealth of the divine blessings. He calls such a reading "fallacieux" (p. 16).

<sup>754</sup> Pointed out by Gordon, *Targum*, 173, note 29.

receiving My Word.’ The last type refers to those who take God’s words seriously and follow them. This last characteristic is already described by קבילת אלפן, ‘(the city) that did not receive Torah’ (3:2) and by תקבלון אולפן, where God expects Judah to ‘receive teaching’ (3:7). The key word is the root שׁוּי in the *ihpa’el*, ‘to be ready, to be attentive, to obey.’ It also means ‘to value, weigh, consider.’<sup>755</sup> This is then precisely the intent of TJ in our verse: The remnant will be ready and attentive to receive God’s words by submitting to them. Targum highlights the gentle quality of the remnant and their faithfulness over their state of poverty and scant number.<sup>756</sup>

This is also the view of the *Toseftot* AT and PT. Following the introduction of God’s light, glory, might, and Laws that are going to be revealed to the world, they address those in Israel who do listen to God’s instruction and who will constitute the remnant. AT is closer to TJ with עם ענותן, while PT aims at a more precise depiction, one perhaps more attractive to its audience, צדיקיא ועינוותניא. These appear again at the end of PT Zech 2:17, where they are foreseen as those who will exist forever in the garden of Eden. Their antithesis, the wicked, will burn in *Geihinom*. For the *Toseftot*, TJ’s מקביל עולבן, ‘submitting to humiliation’ does not do justice to the righteous and it is omitted.

Our basic Ms V and Ms N read a surprising עם instead of עם, two common words in both Hebrew and Aramaic. What could have possibly made a scribe err so blatantly unless a conscientious interpretation was meant? If this possibility holds true and not merely a haphazard case, then we might detect here a wistful divine promise to remain ‘within you.’ Instead of the *hif’il* verb והשארתי, the scribe re-read ונשארתי, so that a promise would be linked to that in Zech 2:14,15, ושכנתי בתוכך, which is heavily invested in Zeph 3:14–20 by two lengthy *Toseftot*.<sup>757</sup> God’s promise would read ‘and I shall remain within you with the humble and the humiliated.’ The *hif’il* ואשאַר would be read in the same meaning as ונשארתי.

Since עם is found in two distinct groups, Yemenite and Sephardi, it is to be deduced that it originated in Palestine and that both versions circulated before moving on to Babylonia and Europe. Having said all

<sup>755</sup> Cf. Jastrow, 1532–33.

<sup>756</sup> Similarly, Malbim portrays them as people who are submissive in their spirit and character.

<sup>757</sup> *Tanna de-vei Elyahu* 18,16 associates ושכנתי בתוכך with Zeph 3:15, ‘YHWH has removed your judgments.’



the above, the *hiriq* instead of the *patah*, may have been derived from a partial fading of the *patah*.

In most cases, TJ understands the verb **חסה** as ‘trust in God’ (2 Sam 22:31; Isa 14:32, 30:2, 57:13; Nah 1:7). Divine protection on that Day and forever will be granted only to those who trust in God, the humble and the willing to obey.

As noted above, there is a targumic link between Isa 57:13a and Zeph 3:5a. This link continues here. In Isa 57:13b the prophet says: ‘Whoever finds shelter (והחוסה) in Me will inherit land and take possession of the Mount of My holiness (הר קדשי).’ As in our verse, TJ translates **חסה** there as ‘trust.’<sup>758</sup> **בי**, ‘in Me,’ is changed to ‘in My *Memra*.’ In our case ‘in My *Memra*’ is not needed because the prophet provides the medium of ‘in the Name.’ **הר קדשי** is designated by Zephaniah (3:11–12) as the place which will be emptied of the evildoers, who will be replaced by the humble and those ready to submit to God (cf 2:3). With its choice of words, TJ makes this link even clearer.

As in the previous verse, the Rabbis understand this verse as referring to the Messianic era. *Bavli*, *Sanhedrin* 98a views the idiom **עם עני ודל** as the opposite of the haughty (v. 11) who will be removed from this world to pave the way for the Messiah to come. The sages then link 3:11 and 3:12 in their theme of arrogance, saying: ‘The son of David will come only when arrogant people will no longer be [found] in Israel, as it is said, ‘for then I will remove from your midst those arrogant powerful (3:11)...and [in their place] I will leave in your midst a humble and few people... (3:12).’<sup>759</sup> Rav Pappa best formulates the Rabbis’ theology, on the sin of arrogance and personal and national responsibility for the ushering of the Messianic era, in this way: ‘When the arrogant cease [in Israel], *Amgushi* will end [in the Persian empire].’<sup>760</sup>

3:13: The remnant of Israel shall not do *falsehood* and they shall not speak lies, and a tongue of deceits shall not be found in their mouth, for they shall *sustain themselves* and rest, and none to scare (them).

<sup>758</sup> So Peshitta. LXX renders ‘fear, revere.’

<sup>759</sup> Cf Neusner, *Theology*, 550–51.

<sup>760</sup> The word used, **אמגושי**, refers to the Magis, a hereditary caste of priests (or tribe, by Herodotus 1,101) who achieved a powerful position, both religiously and politically, in the Sassanid empire (226–650 CE). One may discern in Rav Pappa’s statement an impartation of the impossibility of a near-future Messianic era.

The humble people of the previous verse are now identified as the remnant of Israel. The nature of that people is revealed in the context of character. The second part of the verse depicts the reward for that meritorious group in an imagery of peaceful, protected sheep.

Targum does not determine who the speaker is, God or the prophet. However, by linking this verse to v. 5, it clearly points to the prophet's evaluation of the character of the remnant. By again reading **שקר**, 'falsehood,' instead of **עולה**, 'iniquity,' TJ states that the remnant will adhere to God's righteousness. The iniquity of lying takes a top position on TJ's list of sins, as seen in 3:4 and 7. Liars are evil.<sup>761</sup> As noted above in 3:4, TJ adds 'lies' to sharpen the contrast with the righteous God who 'has no lies before Him.' A similar intent is evidenced here, this time to enhance the righteousness of the remnant who will replace those who aggrandize themselves (v. 11). The contrast between the remnant and the haughty wicked is given even more force by the change from the singular into the plural 'lies' and 'deceits.' In this way, TJ places the verse in two relations: in contrast to the evil elements in Israel on one hand, and in alignment and partnership with God on the other.

The repetition of 'lies' may also suggest that TJ foresees a time when no 'men of lies' and no 'false prophets' (3:4) will ever materialize among Israel. This trust in Israel's righteousness is expressed by the Rabbis, who regarded the Jews living in the land of Israel as the remnant about whom Zephaniah prophesied. They believed that the verse was fulfilled in their lifetime.<sup>762</sup>

**תַּרְמִית** and its synonym **רְמִיָּה** ('deceit'), as well as **מַרְמָה**, are also translated **נִבְלָא/נִבְלִין**, 'lie(s)' in Zeph 1:9, Hos 7:16, 12:1, Mic 6:12, and Jer 8:5.<sup>763</sup>

For **יָרַעוּ** TJ renders the same verb as in 2:7: **פִּרְנַס**, 'to make a living, sustain oneself.' The metaphorical depiction is given a human face by using verbs appropriate to human activity rather than to animal imagery.<sup>764</sup> However, for **רָבְצוּ** TJ digresses from the verb **בִּית**, 'to lodge, stay the night,' and chooses a similar verb **שָׂרַי**, 'to dwell, rest.' The former better suits 2:7, where 'in the *houses* of Ashkelon in the *evening*' is

<sup>761</sup> This is also true in the translation of **תַּרְמִית לֵב**, 'the evil of the heart,' in Jer 14:14 and 23:26.

<sup>762</sup> E.g., *Bavli*, *Pesahim* 91a; *Bava Metz'ia* 106b; *Kiddushin* 45b.

<sup>763</sup> **נִבְלָא** is used for **מַרְמָה** also in Hos 12:8 and Amos 8:5. For other words of deceit or wickedness, see Houtman, *Bilingual* XIX:260–61.

<sup>764</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 173.

plainly stated. The root שרי is the free translation of the Hebrew רבץ, while the literal meaning of רבץ is רבע, ‘to lie down; lie over, hatch’<sup>765</sup> (e.g., Exod 23:5, Deut 22:6).

The AT condenses some parts of TJ Zeph 3:12–13 and enlarges another, but at the same time, it provides an introduction to identify the new addressees. The introduction is made by combining elements from 3:2a and 3:15bβ. The *Tosefta* unit follows TJ Zeph 3:5a–bα:

MT: -----

TJ: -----

AT: *‘Oh, you, the House of Israel, when you listen to the teaching of His Torah,*

PT: *‘Oh, you, of the House of Israel, when you listen to the teaching of My Torah,*

AT: *so that you shall not fear from before the evil that is going (coming) to the world*

PT: ----- *do not fear from the evil that I am bringing to the world*

MT: And I shall leave in your midst people, humble and few,

TJ: ואשאר בגויך עם ענותן ומקביל עולבן

‘And I shall leave in your midst people, humble and submitting to humiliation,

AT: *for I shall leave in your midst a humble people -----*

PT: *for I shall leave in your midst the righteous and the humble*

MT: and they shall find refuge in the name of YHWH.

TJ: ויתרחצון בשמא דיי

and they shall *trust* in the name of YYY.

AT: and they shall *trust* in the name of YYY.

PT: -----

MT: The remnant of Israel shall not commit iniquity and they shall not speak falsehood.

TJ: שארא דישראל לא יעבדון שקר ולא ימללון כדבין

The remnant of Israel shall not commit *falsehood* and they shall not speak *lies*.

AT: The remnant of Israel shall not commit falsehood and they shall not speak lies.

PT: -----

MT: and a tongue of deceit shall not be found in their mouth,

<sup>765</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 157.

- TJ: ולא ישתבח בפומהון לישן דנכלין  
and a tongue of deceits shall not be found in their mouth,
- AT: and a tongue of *falsehood* shall not be found in their mouth,
- PT: *that words* of falsehood shall not be found in their mouth,
- MT: for they shall pasture and dwell with none to scare (them).
- TJ: ארי אנון יתפרנסון וישרון ולית דמניד  
for they shall *find sustenance* and dwell and none to *uproot* (them).
- AT: *men by whose merits a great nation* shall find sustenance and dwell  
and none to uproot (them) *in the name of YYY*.
- PT: ---- by whose merits a great nation shall find sustenance and  
dwell and none to uproot (them), and they shall trust in the name  
of YYY.

The AT's introduction introduces the subject of the remnant by addressing 'the House of Israel.' It condenses TJ's (and the MT's) moral description of the remnant (which seems redundant) by portraying them as a humble people who will not speak falsehood. The idea of 'trusting in God' is already rephrased in the introduction. The phrase 'in the name of YYY' is now automatically transferred to the end of the unit, keeping it in the same syntactical position, thus confusing the meaning of the message. The phrase should be placed after **וישרון** ('and they shall dwell') to say, 'and they shall dwell in the name of YYY,' to parallel 'and they shall trust in the name of YYY.'<sup>766</sup> The evil that God is going to bring to the world refers to Zeph 3:8, which AT mentions in Zech 2:15. In this way AT links its allusion to Zeph 3:8 with the 'evil' mentioned in Zeph 3:15, whose nature is not revealed.

AT, followed by PT, promotes an idea not found in either Zephaniah or TJ, and that is that the remnant will attain the status of the Forefathers, by virtue of their own merits. These merits will sustain and protect 'a great nation,' foreseeing a great number of progeny. A new beginning is implied. PT, though, omits 'men' as the recipients of the merits, perhaps to include women and children. This addition comes to identify MT's and TJ's 'they.' The identity of **עם עני וְדָל** is found, as in TJ, in the righteous character of the remnant, and not in any social or political context.

<sup>766</sup> Erroneously, Grelot reads Aramaic **דמניד** as Hebrew 'who shakes (his head)' (cf 2:15; Jer 18:16) ("Une Tosephta," 200). Gordon assumes incorrectly that it results from the absence of **ויתרחצון**, 'and they shall trust' (*Studies*, 101, n. 16).

Since AT and PT Zech 2:14 concentrate on Israel's redemption, they skip Zeph 3:6–11, which mostly concerns the nations. Whether nations will pray in one language and worship God from end to end of the world is not an issue. What is important is that they will bring Israel back to the land of Israel 'as tributes' and that they will become to God 'like a beloved people.' That is, the nations will acknowledge their guilt and repent.

TJ's universal conversion and the promise of return to Zion are both conditioned on the return of Israel from its corrupt ways. Targum here assumes that with the elimination of the wicked of the world (3:8b), a righteous remnant will survive in both Zion and the exile, who will return to their land (3:10–13). In 2:3 TJ already asserted that there exists a group of righteous people who follow God's will. In 2:6 TJ stated that the remnant would succeed to their inheritance thanks to their righteousness, acknowledged by God. The *Toseftot* seem to specifically add the condition of repentance because the reality of the exile continued to persist beyond Jonathan ben Uzziel's translation (contra Grelot). Also, the tendency to clarify the MT and TJ for the sake of the audience, better suits a later stage in translation.

To the overall trust in God's mercy, some mss (A,R and C) add לרוחצן,<sup>767</sup> 'securely' (Hebrew לבטח, cf e.g., Isa 14:30; Jer 23:6; Nah 2:12; Zech 14:11; also Deut 12:10) following 'and they shall dwell' as a prayer and a note of confidence that the prophecy of peaceful living in the land of Israel will indeed materialize. This wish for security against external foes is based on the promise of a remnant living ethically and humbly. Israel's unassuming confidence in its God's covenants stands in contrast to idolatrous Nineveh's trust in its own strength to 'dwell securely' (2:15). Mockery pervades these two poles. Judged by the provenance of these three mss, this plus seems to have originated in Europe where life did not proceed so 'securely.' Whether in Spain or Ashkenaz, the oppressing rulers could be viewed as Nineveh.

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<sup>767</sup> The adverb לרוחצן, according to Tal, occurs in TJ but not in Eastern Aramaic (*The Language*, 61). This is partly incorrect as it occurs in *Bavli, Kiddushin* 72b in a quote from Zech 9:6 by the Babylonian Rav Joseph. Onkelos uses it five times in Gen 34:25, Lev 25:18,19, 26:5 and Deut 33:12. It also occurs in a short form of לרוחצן in Deut 12:10, 33:12. PsJ is consistent with לרוחצן. It seems to be a more common Palestinian adverb than Babylonian.

3:14: *Praise, O congregation of Zion, shout for joy, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all heart, O congregation of Jerusalem!*

A new oracle begins. The vision of a righteous remnant living under God's protection opens the door to a call to rejoice. It is neither a thanksgiving song nor a psalm of victory over enemies, personal or national. Rather, it is a call to trust in the fulfillment of God's promises that will bring the era of Divine protection (vv. 11–13). The oracle concerns not only Jerusalem (v. 11) or Judah, the remnant of Israel (v. 13), but Israelites among the Judeans as well. Verses 14–18 address the Judeans, living in Judah, whereas vv. 19–20 address the exiles.<sup>768</sup> This vision of fulfilled promises reveals the return of the once original, pre-Amos view of the Day of YHWH, for which the people longed.<sup>769</sup>

Most scholars treat vv. 14–20 as one unit, though noting a later redactional hand addressing a glorious return to the exiles (e.g., J.M.P. Smith, Marti, Sabotka, Kapelrud, Deissler, Berlin, Ben Zvi, Taylor, Elliger).<sup>770</sup> Many consider v. 20 redundant to v. 19 in language and content.<sup>771</sup> The best advocacy for the integrity and authenticity of the unit of vv. 14–20 is expressed by Kapelrud, who argues that these

<sup>768</sup> 'Israel' of late 8th century BCE constituted the Judeans and those who survived the fall of Samaria. The plural of שְׁבוּתֵיכֶם (v. 20) refers to both the Israelite exile and the Judean, following the campaign of Sennacherib of late 8th century BCE.

<sup>769</sup> This reversal of a prophetic theme born in the 8th century BCE, and which typifies Zephaniah's messages, is expressed by the phrase 'on that Day' (e.g., 1:10 vs 3:20). Some other such themes are: a total destruction (1:2–3) will be replaced with a total forgiveness (3:11b–18); lost lands will be reclaimed (1:16b, 2:7,9b); illegal and immoral acts (1:9b) will be replaced by a purely moral existence (3:13); high officials in the midst of Jerusalem (3:2–4) will be replaced with God's kingdom in her midst (3:14–15); the only 'valiant worrier' will be God (3:17) rather than the sinners (1:14bβ); the tower of Babylon (alluded to in 3:9) will revert to its primordial era; nations that carried Israelites away will carry them back (3:10); the judge of Israel (1:4–18) will judge the nations (3:8); Israel's oppressors (2:5–15) will be oppressed (3:19a). The double transformation of the Day from salvation to judgment and back to salvation is also noted by Asurmendi, among others, who identifies these elements as essential for the Biblical eschatology ("Sophonie," 16).

<sup>770</sup> Elliger suggests that vv. 14–15 could very well be the conclusion of vv. 9–13. In his opinion, these verses show no prophetic characteristics either in form or in content (*Das Buch*, 81). Still, he is not certain whether they stem from Zephaniah or from a later redactor.

<sup>771</sup> As J.M.P. Smith declares: "it is a weak variant or repetitious expansion" (*A Critical*, 260). Sweeney rejects this trend because the return of exiles is "a primary goal of the program here articulated and a primary basis for Zephaniah's exhortation" (*The Twelve*, 524). Watts asserts that v. 20 adds an emotional tone (*The Books*, 184). Roberts finds vv. 14–20 a logical continuation of vv. 9–13, but is not certain of their authenticity in part or in whole (*Nahum*, 222).

verses are a “counterpart to the speeches of the Day of Yahweh,” for otherwise the prophet’s words would not have been transmitted to posterity. Without this theological-political counterbalance Zephaniah might have ended up “hanged up upon a pole.”<sup>772</sup>

Even though many pairs of imperatives to rejoice appear ubiquitously in Psalms (e.g., 5:12, 35:27, 67:5, 95:1–2, 98:4), in Deutero-Isaiah (e.g., 44:23, 49:13, 52:9, 54:1, 66:10), and elsewhere (e.g., Jer 31:6, 50:11; Hos 9:1; Joel 2:21,23; Hab 1:15), Isaiah’s influence is most notable (12:6).

Targum’s **שְׁבַחֵי**, ‘praise,’ explains the nature of the rejoicing as a religious and cultic event. The term implies the recital of psalmic hymns of praise (**הַלֵּל**) such as Pss 117, 145, 147. Ribera notes correctly this liturgical significance along with the other synonymous verbs **הַלֵּל**, **זָמַר**, **יָדָה**, **רָנַן**, and **שָׁיר**. Such events took place when the Temple was still standing. However, the designation of the ‘daughter’ of Zion and Jerusalem by TJ as **בְּנוֹשְׁתָא**, ‘congregation’ (Hebrew **בְּנוֹסַת**, Greek **συσταγωγῆ**), indicates an expression of endearment as well as a later time when synagogues replaced the Temple.<sup>773</sup> This also reflects the targumist’s concern to adapt to the realities of the time.<sup>774</sup>

The translation of Hebrew verbs of joy is inconsistent. Often the Aramaic verb **שְׁבַח** translates the Hebrew **רָנַן** (e.g., Isa 12:6, 24:14, 44:23a; Jer 31:6; Zech 2:14). In Isa 44:23b, **שְׁבַח** translates the Hebrew verb **פָּאֵר**, ‘to glorify’; in Isa 42:10 it translates the verb **שָׁיר** and the noun **תְּהִלָּה** (also vv. 8,12), and in v. 11, it translates **נִשְׂא** (presuming the meaning of ‘lifted a voice’). On the other hand, **בּוֹע** serves the same function when it translates the verbs **גִּיל**, **רָוַע** (Zech 9:9), **רָנַן** (2:14), **צָהַל** (Isa 12:6), and **פָּצַח** (44:23). The Hebrew verb **רָוַע**, ‘to shout, to trumpet,’ is translated by the Aramaic verb **יַבֵּב** (e.g., Josh 6:5; Judg 15:14; Isa 44:23; Jer 50:15; Joel 2:1) when the context is that of anxiety. In Isa 15:4, **יַבֵּב** translates **יָלַל**, ‘to wail’; both verbs fit the context of disaster.<sup>775</sup>

<sup>772</sup> Kapelrud, *The Message*, 90. He also finds the source of Zephaniah’s positive promises in Psalms, and especially in the “enthronement psalms” (pp. 91–92). This association undergirds the theory that Zephaniah the prophet was coincidentally a Priest, a view that I endorse. More on the rearrangement of 3:14–20 by scholars see Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 264–65.

<sup>773</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 157. A paralleled name, **בְּנוֹשְׁתָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל**, is found also in an expanded midrash in 1 Sam 2:1, in several prophetic texts that describe Israel as ‘daughter’ or ‘virgin’ (e.g., Amos 8:13, Jer 4:31, 31:4,13), and in *Midrash Tehillim* 18, 30.

<sup>774</sup> Asurmendi, “Sophonic,” 13:17.

<sup>775</sup> Similarly, **יַבֵּב** for **תְּרוּעָה** in Zeph 1:16 deviates from the common cognate use and from our verse.

The Aramaic form יַבְעוּ (also in Mss Z, Eb 80), for the Hebrew הִרְעוּ ('shout for joy'), is derived from the verb יַבַּע in the plural *pa'el* imperative.<sup>776</sup> However, many mss (e.g., T,M,U, C, B,G,MG,O) use the more common verb בוע in the *pe'al* imperative (בועו or בועי)<sup>777</sup> which carries the same meaning. The verb בוע is used by TJ to translate the Hebrew עָלְזוּ, 'rejoice!' later in the verse, thus connecting the two imperatives in a wordplay. A substitution for יַבְעוּ appears in Ashkenazi Mss A,R in the form of יַבִּיבוּ, stemming from the verb יַבֵּב. TJ uses both verbs יַבַּע and יַבֵּב to translate the Hebrew verb רוּע in the *hif'il* (Joel 2:1). However, while יַבַּע expresses a shout of gladness (Zeph 3:14; Zech 9:9), יַבֵּב expresses a shout of anxiety (Joel 2:1) or a shout to cause anxiety (Josh 6:5). However, the noun יַבְבָּה, though, denotes the 'sounding of an alarm, trembling, crying' (cf Jastrow, 560). Mss A,R do not make this distinction, nor do the Sefaradi Mss C,O.

Whereas in our verse יַבְעוּ... וְעָלְזוּ רַנְי is rendered שַׁבְּחֵי... וְבוֹעֵי, TJ renders the same for Isa 12:6 (וְעָלְזוּ וְרַנְי), but translates בועי וחדי for Zech 2:14 (וְשִׁמְחֵי וְרַנְי). This, however, is 'corrected' by AT with בועי ושַׁבְּחֵי. These observations show that Hebrew verbs that express gladness have been interpreted by two Aramaic verbs, שַׁבַּח and בוע, that carry the meaning of praising God (note the closeness of בוע and בעי, 'to pray').<sup>778</sup> Songs, for TJ (and the Rabbis), are perceived as praises to God (e.g., 1 Kgs 5:12b; Isa 26:1a) in an emotional state of praying. Songs of prayer are expressions of joy and enthusiasm.<sup>779</sup> The second emerging conclusion is that the phrase בועי ושַׁבְּחֵי, or שַׁבְּחֵי וְבוֹעֵי, became a formulaic hendiadys at the time when prayers constituted an important tradition as a result of the events of 70 CE.

The Rabbis, too, emphasize the importance of prayers. Rabbi Johanan encourages praying, saying that one can pray all day, for a prayer is never wasted (*Yerushalmi, Berakhot* 1b). Rabbi Judah claims that praying can change everything, especially natural phenomena. He brings several such examples (*Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* 10,5 [Margalio]). Rabbi Yudan, in the name of Rabbi Elazar, states that praying is one of the three things that rescind a divine decree (*Midrash Genesis* 44,13). Rabbi

<sup>776</sup> Also in Zech 9:9. The verb יַבַּע does not appear in Jastrow's, but see Houtman, *Bilingual*, XIX:64.

<sup>777</sup> Mss F,P have ובעו, plural of the verb בעי in the *pa'el* imperative.

<sup>778</sup> See Jastrow, 147,181.

<sup>779</sup> Smolar, 166 and notes 248–252. Peshitta, too, reads 'praise.' It changes the fourth imperative, 'rejoice,' to 'dance.'



Abba Benjamin states that wherever there is singing, there is praying (*Bavli, Berakhot* 6a). *Berakhot* 31a explains ‘singing’ as ‘praying’ and *Sotah* 14a reads ‘song and prayer’ (Jer 7:16) as an expression for praying. Rashi (on *Shabbat* 30a) expounds King Solomon’s 24 songs (רננות) as prayers.

חֲדָא, ‘be glad!,’ a feminine singular in the *pe’al* imperative, translates שְׂמְחִי (also Joel 2:21; Zech 2:14). The apostate scribe Zamora in Ms W has the comparable form חֲדָאִי, which appears in *Bavli, Pesahim* 68b. Some mss use the form חֲדָי (M,U,A,R,P, C and mss O,B,G).<sup>780</sup> MG, on the other hand, turns the last three imperatives into plurals, creating a discord with the feminine form of ‘daughter of Jerusalem.’

The MT’s imagery of a daughter is replaced in TJ by Israel as a congregation, כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, the classical epithet for Jews in Mishnaic and Talmudic periods.<sup>781</sup> In *Midrash Tehillim* 45,6, ‘daughter’ (Ps 45:11) is analogous to כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, and in *Aggadat Bereshit* 62 it is the daughter of Jacob. In *Midrash Exodus Rabbah* 15,11, כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל is analogous to the beloved king’s daughter. Ramban to Gen 24 states that the Rabbis call Zion ‘daughter’ because ‘all is convened (כְּנוּסָה)’ in her. This ‘daughter’ Ramban identifies as one of the 13 Divine attributes. Another feminine attribution by the Rabbis is the equation of the woman in Song of Songs with God’s beloved Israel. As *Midrash Songs Rabbah* says on many occasions, it is a song between כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל and God. *Pesikta Rabbati* 35,2 identifies כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל with the valiant woman of Prov 31:10–31.

בֵּית כְּנֶסֶת, ‘synagogue,’ is where the assembly gathers. The emphasis on praying, through the use of many verbs of rejoicing, promotes the importance of the synagogue in the life of the community.

‘Daughter’ as ‘congregation’ occurs also in AT Zech 2:14 and 9:9, which seem to build not only on Zeph 3:14–15, but also on TJ Zech 2:14 and TJ Isa 12:6. Unlike in our verse, the opening of TJ Zech 2:14, בּוֹעִי וְחַדֵּי, corresponds perfectly with the MT רְנִי וְשִׂמְחִי but not with AT Zech 2:14, which uses the targumic formula בּוֹעִי וְשִׂבְחִי, ‘rejoice and praise,’ and which appears in our verse on both sides of יְבִעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲדָא (though in a reversed order which may allude to borrowing). One may conclude that by the time of AT, the formula was

<sup>780</sup> Ms R corrects חֲדָא by inserting a ‘ו’ over the ‘א’.

<sup>781</sup> LXX replaces ‘Israel’ by another ‘daughter of Jerusalem.’

well established; expressions of gladness must be made by prayers and praises of YHWH (that are perceived as one and the same).

Further, in TJ Isa 37:22, ‘daughter’ is once translated as ‘congregation’ and elsewhere rendered ‘the people of,’ which is also the interpretation for 23:12. Moreover, it is still ‘כְּנִישְׁתָּא’ when the nation is not Israel (e.g., Isa 47:1;<sup>782</sup> Jer 48:18, 50:42). The contrast between the translational harmony in the Twelve versus the free hand of the targumist in the Major Prophets may attest to two different translators, two different groups of translators, or redactions along Rabbinic conceptions. When ‘כְּנִישְׁתָּא’ refers to non-Israel, it reflects an earlier translation, possibly pre-70.

3:15: YYY has *exiled* the *deceitful judges from your midst*, He has removed your *enemies*, the kings of Israel; YYY has *decided to let His Shekhinah dwell* in your midst; do not fear *from before* misfortune any more.

To the end of the oracle the prophet now appends the reasons for Zion to be exuberant: God has removed her judgments and her enemy from her midst.<sup>783</sup> The King of Israel, YHWH, has replaced that vacuum with His presence (under whose protection the few and humble shall dwell, v. 12). Zion shall no longer fear catastrophes. These judgments concern the ‘visitations’ threatened in 1:4–18 and the decree referred to in 2:2.<sup>784</sup> The ‘evacuated’ enemy are the ‘powerful arrogant’ of v. 11.<sup>785</sup>

The unique pair פְּנֵה-הַסִּיר is an example of a reversal dittology that is linked to previous usage. While before, they were used in the context of punishment (1:16, 3:6, פְּנֵה; 3:11, אָסִיר), now they are employed in the context of salvation. Punishment cleanses so that salvation can

<sup>782</sup> Here, בַּת is once translated by כְּנִישְׁתָּא and once by יְקָר, ‘honor, dignity.’ Cf Jer 48:18, ‘get down from honor.’ Here TJ has מְלָכוֹת for בַּת. In Isa 23:10 TJ is interpretative and בַּת is not translated at all.

<sup>783</sup> LXX probably read פָּדָה, ‘has redeemed, ransomed,’ instead of פְּנָה, ‘has removed.’ Peshitta adds ‘from you’ after ‘has removed.’

<sup>784</sup> Radaq interprets these מִשְׁפָּטִים as the laws enacted by the nations against Jews in the diaspora.

<sup>785</sup> LXX, Peshitta and Vulgate read ‘your enemies,’ perhaps referring to outside forces. No such enemies are mentioned or alluded to in the book so far. However, the plural should be the right form, not only to parallel ‘your judgments’ but to allude to all those groups within Judah who deserve punishment. So Ibn Ezra and Radaq. See discussion in Ben Zvi’s *A Critical*, 241–43 and the bibliography there.

begin. Similar dittology is used concerning Judah's fear; ungratefully, Judah did not fear God while witnessing Him fulfilling His promise to rid the promised land of the Canaanites (v. 7). Now, a grateful remnant will experience no fear from any source.<sup>786</sup>

משפטי, as a legal term, can mean 'judgments, indictments, sentences, verdict,' etc.<sup>787</sup> The problem for this interpretation lies in its position as a parallel to 'your enemy.'<sup>788</sup> If this equation holds, then the prophet considers these past divine indictments against Judah as the resistance that hinders the salvation of Israel. The removal of these legal obstacles will purify Jerusalem of all legal blemishes. The understanding of משפטי as a legal term brings commentators to read it as 'afflictions' (Rashi), 'laws' (Radaq), 'punishments and afflictions' (Abrabanel), "charges" dropped against Judah,<sup>789</sup> "punishment,"<sup>790</sup> and "judgments."<sup>791</sup> Those who find in the word an indication of persons that parallel 'enemy' translate accordingly by 'accuser, prosecutor,'<sup>792</sup> 'those who condemn,'<sup>793</sup> 'adversaries' or 'opponents,'<sup>794</sup> "oppressors,"<sup>795</sup> and 'tyrants.'<sup>796</sup> Ibn Ezra defines it as 'enemies.'

Even though the Hebrew text is clear, TJ presents its own ideas in a variety of ways. The removal of negative elements from within the Israelite society is interpreted as sending them to exile, according to the admonition in Deut 28:64, 29:27 (same interpretation in Zeph 3:11,18), rather than endorsing death as it does elsewhere (e.g., Deut 28:61–63). This can be understood in light of Biblical theology echoed in TJ, that the exile was a divine decree for those who did not observe

<sup>786</sup> Whether ראה 'see' (LXX, Peshitta) or ירא 'fear' (TJ, Vulgate), they convey the same scene of peace.

<sup>787</sup> The non-judicial meaning is 'decision, plan' (v. 8).

<sup>788</sup> LXX probably reads 'your iniquities' (פשעיך). This parallel brings Kauffmann to suggest משנאיך, 'your enemies.' He identifies these foes with Assyria and her allies (תולדות, 353, note 11). So Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 198. J.M.P. Smith translates משפטי as 'your opponents' (*A Critical*, 256,261). Sabotka for the same reason translates it as 'your tyrants' (*Zephaniah*, 124,126).

<sup>789</sup> Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 142.

<sup>790</sup> Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 243.

<sup>791</sup> Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 209; Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 534.

<sup>792</sup> Seybold, *Nahum*, 116.

<sup>793</sup> Renaud, *Michée*, 254.

<sup>794</sup> Watts, *The Books*, 182,184; Marti, *Das Dodekapropheten*, 376; Keller, *Naoum*, 213, 214; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 255,255.

<sup>795</sup> Kapelrud, *The Message*, 90,91.

<sup>796</sup> Sabotka, *Zephaniah*, 124. Sabotka, true to his approach, perceives the 'tyrant' and the 'enemy' as Baal, called מלך of Israel, thus changing the Massoretic accent to make 'the king of Israel' appositive to 'your enemy.'

the law and for those who failed to respect the sanctity of the Temple and Jerusalem.<sup>797</sup>

Mss U,Y, which constitute one stemma, use the root עדי, which often translates the *hif'il* root of סור, 'to remove' (e.g., Isa 36:7; Ezek 11:18; Hos 2:4,19; Amos 5:23). It is this verb אעדי in its literal meaning that may have been the original translation in our verse. However, since it occurs only in this stemma, it is too suspicious to be original. But it may be an indication of a Palestinian version long forsaken for the more intense reading of 'I shall exile' (Israel's enemies).

The addition of 'from your midst' comes to contrast with God, who dwells in Israel's midst. It also parallels the arrogant in v. 11 who will be removed from Israel's midst.<sup>798</sup> This expression is an unbroken thread that runs through chapter 3, through which the contrast between God and the remnant on one side and the wicked on the other is presented.

Following Rabbinic interpretation,<sup>799</sup> TJ revocalizes משפטיך to read either משפטיך or שפטיך,<sup>800</sup> 'your (false) judges' (in Sanhedrin 98a Rashi explains that משפטיך means 'your judges'). Thus, the parallel to 'enemy' is construed as people and not as a legal term; they are the corrupt judges mentioned earlier in v. 3. Deception is one of TJ's utmost abominations (cf v. 4 concerning the prophets). These false judges are indeed the enemies (plural form in both nouns) that will be removed from Israel's midst. This obsession with deception and lies may derive from the behavior of contemporary judges. On several occasions the Rabbis deplore the judges of their time for taking bribes. Deceitful judges are harshly viewed in Rabbinic literature. For example, in *Pirkei de-R. Eliezer* 25, the deceitful judges of Sodom are said to be one of the causes for her destruction. According to R. Simeon ben Gamliel in *Midrash Deuteronomy Rabbah* 5,1, when a judge distorts justice he shakes the world, for justice is one of its three foundations, or one of the three pillars of God's abode. No death penalty is prescribed, and perhaps this is the reason why TJ condemns them to exile. The destruction of the second Temple was viewed as mostly the result of internal corruption

<sup>797</sup> E.g., TJ Isa 28:2,13,19. Chilton, *The Glory*, 29–30. This is understandable as it refers to the exile of 821 BCE.

<sup>798</sup> Ribera, "La versión," 157.

<sup>799</sup> E.g., *Bavli, Shabbat* 139a: אלו הדיינין... משפטיך; *Sanhedrin* 98a: ואי בטלי דייני בטלי גזירפטי דכתיב (צפניה ג) הסיר ה' משפטיך.

<sup>800</sup> So Sperber, *The Targum*, 347. It is unclear why he views TJ's reading שפטיך as a result of dittography in the square alphabet (p. 363).

and internecine strife for control. The Sadducees were considered to be the corruptors of Torah laws. What we hear here is a prayer or a wish to rid Israel of these destructive elements.

Targum's negative opinion of the judges is expressed homiletically in several scriptures:<sup>801</sup> on Isa 1:23a, 'every one loves a bribe and runs after gifts,' TJ interprets: 'They all love to receive a bribe saying to one another, 'Do something for me in my court case so that I may recompense you in your court case'; on Hos 5:11b, 'for he willingly followed a command,' TJ reads: 'For their judges took time to go astray after money of falsehood'; on 2 Sam 14:14b, 'God (אֱלֹהִים) will not take away the life of one who makes plans, so that no one may be kept banished,' TJ reads: 'It is impossible for a true judge to receive money of falsehood and from one who devises plots, so as not to cause him to be exiled.' The abusive judges are considered here, as by the Rabbis, as the cause for Israel's suffering and especially the exile.<sup>802</sup>

Condemnation of judges by the Rabbis is found in several discussions. *Midrash Tehillim* 95,1 links 'Come let us sing joyously to the Lord...' to Zephaniah's verse, 'Sing, daughter of Zion...' and finds in v. 15 the reason for the call to sing: 'The Lord has removed your enemy, for everyone rejoices when the wicked fall' (cf Prov 11:10). The second midrash, *Midrash Tehillim* 147,2, adds an eschatological dimension. It links Ps 147:1, 'it is good to sing to our God...', with 'sing, daughter of Zion' and suggests that when the kingdom of God will rule the earth, all peoples would sing God's praises. The reason for the singing in Zephaniah is that God has blotted out Zion's משפטיך (either 'judges' or 'decrees'). *Bavli, Sanhedrin* 98a and *Shabbat* 139a strongly condemn the judges and find support from our verse. The latter source describes the judges as bribe-takers, who appoint student-relatives to be judges, and students who teach Halakhah to unqualified judges. The entire judicial system is corrupt, says Resh Lakish quoting Isa 59:3: 'the judges' hands are dripping in blood, the scribes's fingers are tainted in iniquity, the judges' assistants speak lies, and the litigants

<sup>801</sup> All the following cases are taken from Smolar, *Studies*, 88–89.

<sup>802</sup> This emphasis on justice in courts is also expressed in Isa 1:26, where it reads: 'and I shall restore your judges as of old.' Targum makes sure of the character of these judges when it translates: 'and I shall appoint honest, true judges as of old' (cf Exod 18:21, 23:2b–3, 6–8). Targum states that the old judges are not to be restored, but that new appointees are meant. For further background on the judges' corruption in the third century see Commentary on 3:3.

utter dishonesty.’ The conclusion is that the Messiah will come when all judges and officers perish from Israel (Isa 1:25–27). Depressed, Rav pappā says:<sup>803</sup> ‘When judges are removed (in Israel), oppressive officials will be removed (in the Persian empire)’ as well.<sup>804</sup> The redemption of Israel is dependent on the integrity of their judges, but reality is too dystopian.

*Bawli, Shabbat* 139a further states that whenever a catastrophe befalls Israel, the cause can be found in corrupt judges (as is written in Mic 3:9–12). Therefore, God brings three disasters upon them to fit their three sins (as spelled out in Micah): ‘Because of you, Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the Temple Mount a shrine in the woods’ (v. 12). Furthermore, the Holy One Blessed be He will not let His *Shekhinah* dwell among Israel until all corrupt and wicked judges are removed, for Jerusalem will be redeemed only by righteousness (Isa 1:26).

Ribera notices a relation to LXX’s ‘your injustices’ in the translation of TJ’s ‘false judges.’<sup>805</sup> However, both translations stem from theological and social interpretation and one is not necessarily dependent on the other. In every generation, corrupt judges flourish. Ribera also claims that TJ attests here to a different *Vorlage* than the MT. However, this is a case of an interpretation rather than a different version. Gordon posits that the addition of ‘deceitful’ “is qualified to avoid the suggestion that God is against judges as a class.” This observation is analogous to the prophets as well (cf 3:4).<sup>806</sup> This is a legitimate observation in light of TJ’s tendency to condemn only the wicked.

The choice of the verb פלי for the Hebrew פנה in the meaning of ‘to remove, vacate’ is a hapax in the Twelve. The usual cognate is פני (Isa 40:3, 57:14, 62:10; Mal 3:1).<sup>807</sup> This is indeed TJ in the Ashkenazi Mss U,Y,P. The Aramaic פלי is the common cognate for the Hebrew בער, ‘to utterly destroy’ (2 Sam 4:11; 1 Kgs 14:10, 22:47, 2 Kgs 23:24),

<sup>803</sup> Rabbi Johanan responds by saying that one should wait for redemption.

<sup>804</sup> Judges are likened to *Gezirpatai*, “oppressive Persian officials.” For *Gezirpatai* see Jastrow, 230. Rashi describes them as ‘idol worshipping oppressing officials.’ Discussing the origins of sin in Rabbinic theology, Jacob Neusner quotes this statement by Rav Pappā to emphasize, rather, the contrast between righteousness and arrogance, the main point in this theology. The sages, he says, found “the origins of sin in the attitude of arrogance, the beginnings of virtue in that of humility” (*The Theology*, 466–67).

<sup>805</sup> Ribera, “La versión,” 157.

<sup>806</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 173.

<sup>807</sup> Also TO and PsJ Gen 24:31; Lev 14:36.

and appears mostly in the context of idolatry committed by former kings of Israel.<sup>808</sup> In our verse, then, the Targumist is enraged by the kings of Israel who caused Israel to disperse, and in this intense fury he compares them to idolaters. This is the reason for T<sub>J</sub> imaginatively moving the *etnah* under ‘your enemy’ to rest under ‘Israel,’ so that the enemy is equated with the ‘kings of Israel.’ This is virtually done by Ms W to secure this reading. פלי and the shifting of the *etnah* seem to have occurred as a secondary and therefore a later version. The literal rendition of the Ashkenazi Mss U,Y,P seems to have retained the original version of פני. However, it is suspicious that this version has found a place only in Ashkenazi tradition, especially since the Mss are of the same stemma (U,Y). Moreover, the early Mss F, Eb 80 and H show פלי. These contradictory positions pose a problem where the secondary reading seems to have preceded the literal reading. The scenario in which an Ashkenazi scribe, unfamiliar with the verb פלי, initiated a change into the more common verb, פני, is convincing enough to deem it secondary. All things considered, the literal reading could have originated in the very early stage of translation in one Palestinian text, and the change could have come during or after the Herodian period.

Another variant, שיצי, occurs only in the Sepharadi Mss X,C.<sup>809</sup> The verb שיצי translates a variety of Hebrew verbs that express utter destruction, such as להט (Joel 1:19), מחק (Hab 3:13), שמד (Amos 2:9), כרת (Zeph 1:4), סוף (Zeph 1:2–3), כלה (Amos 7:2), and אכל (Nah 3:13). This verb, like פלי, relays a strong sense of destruction reminiscent of the opening of the book of Zephaniah (1:2–3). It seems that the scribe who first offered this variant intended to make this connection, thus equating God’s fury upon mankind with His fury upon the enemy within Israel, so pervasive was their iniquity. The scribe wishes Israel’s enemy a more severe punishment. This variant with its intended force indicates the free hand scribes had in copying T<sub>J</sub>.

Since only Mss X and C share this variant,<sup>810</sup> the above reasoning seems correct. Furthermore, whereas Ms X equates ‘the King of Israel’ with YHWH according to the MT, Ms C equates ‘the Kings of Israel’ with ‘the enemy’ according to T<sub>J</sub>.

<sup>808</sup> The context in 2 Sam 4:11 concerns the brutal murder of Ish-Boshet. Onkelos uses the verb פלי as to *remove* (בער), for example, the tithing from the house according to the Law (Deut 26:13,14).

<sup>809</sup> See Houtman, *Bilingual* XX:222–25 for a fuller list and citations.

<sup>810</sup> See Table 32 (p. 158) under the Sepharadi Mss.

Except for Ms C, the Aramaic for the MT אִיבֹךְ, ‘your enemy,’ is rendered in the plural by all the mss as well as by MurXII, LXX, and Peshitta.<sup>811</sup> It better parallels ‘your judgments/judges’ and provides a more realistic picture of enemies, rather than one who is nowhere specifically identified. ‘Your enemies,’ then, was probably the original version of the MT.

An exception to the rule in TJ for the Hebrew מְלֹךְ (usually מְלֹךְ, מְלֹךְ, or מְלָכָא),<sup>812</sup> both here and in Isa 41:21, is מְלָכִיהָ.<sup>813</sup> In the three occurrences where TJ uses the formula ‘YHWH has decided to dwell His *Shekhinah* in her/your midst,’ (3:5,15,17) YHWH has an apposition: ‘the righteous,’ ‘King of Israel,’ and ‘your God’ respectively. In 3:5 and 3:17, ‘YHWH’ is the subject while the apposition serves as an adjective. Only in 3:15 is the syntax reversed.

Moreover, in Isa 41:21, מְלָכִיהָ no doubt translates the singular ‘king (of Jacob).’ However, it has a plural form. Furthermore, while TJ identifies in our verse those being removed as the false judges, the Hebrew text does not explicitly identify the ‘enemy.’ Targum, as it does so often, reveals the implicit. Hence, the unusual form, the reversed syntax and the unspecified enemy may have created an opportunity for a Targumic interpretation; ‘Your enemies’ are identified as the kings of Israel. This position is well attested in several scriptures which accuse kings in Israel and Judah of causing the exile from the land of Israel (e.g., 2 Kgs 17:8,21, 21:9–16, 23:26–27; Jer 19:4). To the list of Priests and false Prophets, officials and judges, who constituted the enemies that brought about the exile and the suffering, now TJ adds the Kings. While the Hebrew text spares the king himself from accountability, TJ adds Kings in general to the list of wicked leaders. Looking at the text from a post 70 CE perspective, kings like Herod and his descendants, who caused misery and severe social and economic malaise, are well within the parameters of such an accusation. Human kingship contradicts God’s plans for Israel.

If this hypothesis holds true, then the Targumist views the removal of the kings from Israelite society (vs. 14) as a blessing and a cause for rejoicing.

<sup>811</sup> As well as by Radaq, Ibn Ezra, and Altschuler.

<sup>812</sup> See discussion on 1:1.

<sup>813</sup> But not in Isa 44:6, מְלָכִי דִישְׂרָאֵל. In Isa 41:21 מְלָכִיהָ דִיעֻקְבָּא translates מְלֹךְ יְעֻקֵּב in apposition to YHWH.



Only two Ashkenazi Mss (U,Y)<sup>814</sup> and one Sepharadi Ms X read the singular ‘a king,’ thus agreeing with the MT’s syntax and its ascription of the ‘King’ to YHWH. As in the case of פני/פלי, here, too, it is plausible that the interpretative text preceded the literal rendition, which could have been instigated by a scribe (or scribes) at one point of transmission who neither understood TJ’s interpretation nor saw the merit of deviating from the literal meaning of the MT. It is also suspicious that both instances of this reading occur in the same stemma of U,Y, of which Ms Y is dependent upon Ms U. Of course, in the very early stage of targum, before the Common Era, the literal reading might have conveyed the MT, and may have changed during or after the Herodian period. Nevertheless, TJ’s new reading allows the separation of the two issues: the removal of negative elements from Israel and the paving of the way for God’s reappearance.

As in v. 5, TJ views the presence of the *Shekhinah* ‘in her midst,’ namely among the people of Israel in Zion (see vv. 5,7,14,17), as the solution to securing Truth and lasting righteousness.<sup>815</sup> The Divine presence dwells in Jerusalem, in the Temple and in Israel (e.g., 3:7; Isa 17:11, 56:5; Zech 9:1). This mystical vision affirms God’s forgiveness and the dawn of a new relationship between God and humanity. The return of the *Shekhinah* among Israel will safeguard Israel from evil.<sup>816</sup>

The Targumists, says Smolar, “were not too certain whether the *Shekhinah* should dwell on earth among men or even among Israel” in Jerusalem. Targum is not forthright in stating that the *Shekhinah* dwelt or dwells in Jerusalem, but merely that it is an intention on God’s part, to be actualized at some time in the “mystical future.”<sup>817</sup> However, the Aramaic אָמַר indicates a decision made that is not to be abrogated. This event is associated with the state of peace and security, and with the gathering of the exiles that will take place ‘before your very eyes,’ namely, in the temporal future, not in some mystical future. A differing view is suggested by R. Gordon who identifies TJ to 3:5,15,17 with

<sup>814</sup> The plural ‘kings’ in Ms R is corrected to read in the singular.

<sup>815</sup> For more on the *Shekhinah* see discussion on 3:5 above. On the *Shekhinah* and its bond with the land of Israel/Judah see Gordon, *Studies*, 130–37 and Chilton, *The Glory*, 69–75.

<sup>816</sup> The *Shekhinah* is still hidden from Israel but not away from her land. She is always ready to reappear when the right conditions are present. Cf TJ to v. 7aβ.

<sup>817</sup> He quotes TJ 1 Kgs 8:27a and *Bawli, Sukkah 5a* (*Studies*, 222–23 and notes 590–91).

the belief sometime after 70 CE that the *Shekhinah* has temporarily left the land of Israel.<sup>818</sup>

The addition of ‘from before’ usually precedes ‘YHWH’ to eliminate the possibility of a direct contact with God (cf 1:6, 2:2, 11). Gordon points to the standard addition of the phrase with the Hebrew verb **ירא** (cf v. 7). He rejects J.M.P. Smith’s reading here (p. 262) of a compromise by incorporating both verbs **ירא** and **ראה**, as well as his translation “thou shall not be alarmed at the sight of evil” (pp. 256, 262).<sup>819</sup>

AT to Zech 2:14 quotes TJ with some adjustments: ‘And you (plural) shall not fear from before misfortune (**באישתא**)<sup>820</sup> for TJ **בישא** (cf **אתון**).<sup>821</sup> This ‘do not fear’ is contingent on the House of Israel listening to ‘the teaching of Torah.’ At the same time, the misfortune that will come upon the world nations will coincide with the appearance of God with all His glory; when His praises, glorification and Law will be revealed worldwide. However, this vision is in direct contrast to Zeph 3:15 (and TJ), where the ‘do not fear’ is associated with the removal of the domestic enemies. AT and PT place this call for ‘do not fear’ in the context of Zeph 3:12, as a state in which the humble and the morally upright remnant will exist.

In this verse TJ follows several Rabbinic teachings which allow rejoicing when the wicked enemy falls, and which condemn corrupt judges. Targum adds an accusation against the kings of Israel who are/were the enemy within. They pose(d) an obstacle in the *Shekhinah*’s way, preventing the ushering in of the era of redemption. But God is supreme over them all and He will remove the obstacle by sending the enemy off to exile, and grant His people life with no harm.

Radaq quotes an added **ארי** (Hebrew **כי**) in the opening of the verse that is not found elsewhere. This underscores the link between the rejoicing and the removal of the laws enacted against the Jews in the diaspora (Radaq on **משפטיד**).

<sup>818</sup> Gordon, *Studies*, 134.

<sup>819</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 173, note 37. Indeed, there is no sight for the verb ‘to see.’

<sup>820</sup> Hebrew **רעה**. See, for example, Jer 22:22, 23:17; Mic 3:11; Ps 37:19.

<sup>821</sup> Against Grelot (“Une Tosefta,” 201). A change in number cannot be automatic evidence for the existence of an ancient Palestinian Targum from which this *Tosefta* borrowed (and on which TJ is dependent). This is also Gordon’s opinion (*Studies*, 101). Grelot adds that this divergence is indicative of the midrashic expansion (in AT?) made before the drastic revision of TJ.

3:16: At that *time* it will be said to Jerusalem, do not fear, Zion, do not let your hands weaken.

This verse has no grammatical, syntactical or contextual problems. On that day of redemption and jubilation, the prophet relates, it will be said to Jerusalem: ‘Do not be anxious, Oh Zion, do not let your hands weaken.’<sup>822</sup> The formula ‘do not be anxious’ is an element in a message of Divine protection, often in prophetic literature (e.g., Gen 15:1; Deut 31:8; Josh 10:8; Isa 7:4). Fear paralyzes and negates action (e.g., Deut 1:21; Jer 51:45–46). Similarly is the expression ‘do not let your hands weaken’ (e.g., Isa 13:7; Jer 6:24; Ezek 21:12), synonymous to ‘weaken the heart’ (Jer 51:46) and ‘melt the heart’ (Deut 1:28). The double call to be spiritually strong underscores the need for action. God’s promises are conditioned on an active partner. God does not promote quiescence.

Because of the passive tense, some scholars find the speaker to be either an authority, such as the prophet who delivers the message,<sup>823</sup> or God through His prophets.<sup>824</sup> Ibn Ezra and Abrabanel identify the speaker as the ruling enemies of Israel who will call Zion to take hold of Jerusalem again upon acknowledging YHWH’s supremacy over them. LXX reads ‘YHWH will say.’

Some also find a missing vocative marker before ‘Zion’ to parallel ‘O, Jerusalem,’ even though the ‘ו’ before ‘Jerusalem’ is a simple preposition ‘to.’<sup>825</sup>

Targum’s translation is literal. It does not identify the speaker of the words of encouragement, either here or in other places (e.g., Isa 61:1, 62:4; Jer 4:11; Ezek 13:12; Hos 2:1). However, TJ most likely understood the speaker to be a prophet (cf TJ Isa 34:3). Targum is consistent in the translation of ‘at that time’ for ‘on that day’ (1:9,10, 3:11). For theological and practical reasons, TJ considers salvation as an era rather than a day. The Rabbis, too, associate this ‘time’ with an era, when the Temple will be rebuilt.<sup>826</sup>

<sup>822</sup> On אָנְשִׁי as ‘anxious’ see Mayer I. Gruber, “Fear, Anxiety and Reverence in Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew and Other North-West Semitic Languages,” *VT* 40 (1990): 416ff.

<sup>823</sup> Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 245–46.

<sup>824</sup> Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 212 and most of the commentators.

<sup>825</sup> See Berlin, *Zephaniah*, 144. Peshitta adds ‘and to’ before ‘Zion’ to improve the parallelism.

<sup>826</sup> E.g., *Midrash Tehillim* 138,2.

The expression **רפה ידים** in the *pa'al* is sometimes translated by TJ in the *ithpa'el* (e.g., Jer 6:24, 50:43; Ezek 21:12), in the meaning of 'to cause oneself to lose the spirit and will to act.' The choice of this grammatical stem describes the effect of fear on the human spirit. It captures well Zephaniah's intent to arouse his generation to religious and political action. The Targumist's intent seems to be to imbue his listeners/readers with spiritual strength and courage against all ills.

3:17: YYY your God *has decided to let His Shekhinah dwell* in your midst; a *redeeming* valiant, He shall gladden over you with gladness, He shall *expunge your debts/sins* with His love, He shall exult over you with *exultation*.

Except for the problematic **יְהִרֵשׁ**, the meaning of the verse is clear: Being in their midst, God the Mighty will redeem His people with love and gladness. For the third time, the prophet emphasizes God's presence in Zion against the belief by some that God is inactive (cf 1:6,12; Jer 14:9) or vengeful (cf Amos 5:16–17). The first time God is portrayed as a righteous Judge; the second time, as a protector-King; the third time, as a valiant redeemer against the 'warrior' who shrieks bitterly out of spiritual and physical paralysis (1:14b). God is all this because of His love and commitment to His people.

Targum makes some changes to the text, but essentially they reflect the overall meaning of the verse.

As in vv. 5,15, TJ clarifies that it is God's *Shekhinah* that will be established in the midst of Israel, for God does not "dwell." His presence rests upon the land. He will manifest Himself through His attributes of love and mercy.

The MT describes God as **גִּבּוֹר יוֹשִׁיעַ**, 'a warrior who will redeem.' However, the imperfect **יוֹשִׁיעַ** serves here as an adjective, 'a redeeming warrior.'<sup>827</sup> This is indeed TJ's reading (as in Jer 20:11, 50:9). It gives the phrase a clearer meaning. It can also be read as two nouns, 'warrior' and 'redeemer.' Gordon notes that occasionally TJ personalizes the root **יִשַׁע** to read 'redeemer' (e.g., Isa 12:2, 46:13).<sup>828</sup> De Moor sees here a reference to the Messiah as in Song 1:8,17.<sup>829</sup> There are

<sup>827</sup> Cf Isa 45:20; Lam 4:17.

<sup>828</sup> Gordon, *Targum*, 173.

<sup>829</sup> Johannes C. de Moor, "The Love of God in the Targum to the Prophets," *JSJ* 24 (1993): 264–65.

no convincing reasons to support this. God Himself is doing all the rejoicing and the loving. This is the case in Peshitta, which describes God by two nouns, ‘the mighty (one) and the redeemer.’

Twice TJ uses the verbs of joy and their nouns instead of the four different vocables in the MT. In all other cases in the Prophets, the Hebrew **שׂישׂ** is translated with the Aramaic root **חדי** (Isa 61:10, 62:5, 65:18,19, 66:14), as it is here. However, in all cases, the Hebrew root **גיל** is translated by the Aramaic root **בוע**, ‘to rejoice’ (Isa 35:1, 61:10, 65:18,19, 66:10), and not by **דין** as it is here. The reason may be inherent in the double meanings of **דין**, ‘to dance’ and ‘to rejoice.’ Targum, as Peshitta in v. 14, completes the picture of exultation and does not repeat the abstract ‘joy.’ It is also possible that the Targumist wished to contribute a better assonance: MT, **בְּשִׂמְחָה... יְשִׁישׁ**, TJ, **בְּחֻדּוּא... יְחַדִּי**; MT, **יְגִיל... בְּרִנָּה**, TJ, **יְדוּן... בְּדִין**.

Much has been written on the phrase, **יְחַרִּישׁ בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ**, literally ‘He will be silent in His love.’ Many emendations have been offered to **יְחַרִּישׁ**, the most favorable being **יְחַדִּשׁ**, ‘He will renew you,’ based on the LXX **κατινῆι σε** (adopted by the Peshitta).<sup>830</sup> Targum gives it an interpretive translation within the context of divine mercy and forgiveness (cf Isa 43:25, 44:22; Pss 51:3, 65:4), which is most likely Zephaniah’s intent. The expression **כָּבַשׁ עַל חוּב** means to expunge or forgive a debt or a sin. The Hebrew **יְחַרִּישׁ** may be understood in this reading as an allegory of a creditor who, out of love, remains silent and does not demand payment. The choice of the verb **כבש** also fits the context of ‘warrior’ in its meaning of ‘conquer, subdue.’ The Aramaic **חוב** also means a ‘sin,’ which suggests a willingness to expiate Israel’s sins. Thus, literally, God subdues and eliminates Israel’s sins. As in the case of a loving husband who rescinds his wife’s vows, following which God forgives her for not carrying them out, so in our case, God has the power to forgive the sins of His people.<sup>831</sup> This expression of ‘He will

<sup>830</sup> On the treatment of this word and bibliography see, for example, Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 210–11, 214; Rudolph, *Micha*, 293 (b); Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 249–52; Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 193, 202–03; Keller, *Nahum*, 214–15; Kauffmann, *תולדות*, 354, note 12; Roberts, *Nahum*, 219,220; Barthélemy, *Critique*, 913–15; Sabottka, *Zephaniah*, 130,132; Deissler, *Les Petits*, 470.

<sup>831</sup> Num 30:7–13. The same applies to a case between a father and his daughter (vv. 4–6). God’s relationship to Israel is allegorized in terms of father-daughter (e.g., ‘daughter of Zion’, 3:14) and man-wife (Hos 2:21–22). Note the use of the verb **חַרַשׁ** in these cases, when the father or husband ‘keeps quiet’ by not rescinding the vow of the woman. This could be interpreted as coming out of respect and love for her wish. By analogy, God’s **יְחַרִּישׁ** in our verse suggests having the same attitude of respect ‘because

expunge your debts/sins in His love' is borrowed from Mic 7:19, where its Hebrew **יִכַּבֵּשׁ** occurs.<sup>832</sup> In that verse the prayer for forgiveness is expressed in three different ways: 'He will again *have compassion* on us, and will *expunge* our iniquities, and will *cast* into the depths of the sea all the sins of Israel.' The Hebrew root **רחם** also means 'to love.' Ribera finds in the phrase **יִחְרִישׁ בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ** a moral sense.<sup>833</sup>

By this translation, TJ confesses the sins on one hand, and is certain of their expiation through God's love on the other. Prov 10:12 (cf 17:9) expresses this idea well, saying, 'Love covers up all sins.' Rashi quotes TJ and explains the expression by it: 'He will cover up your sins with His love.' Ibn Ezra interprets the silence as not remembering the sins. Radaq reads, 'He will be silent concerning your sins that you did in the past because of His love for you.'<sup>834</sup> Malbim expounds the verb in the meaning of 'engaged in deep thoughts.'

Following his theory, De Moor contends that whenever God is described as loving Israel, targumim have the Messiah in mind, for the targumim perceive the Messiah as the lover who will abolish the sins of Israel. This is also true in passages like Song 1:8,17, Dan 4:24, Ps 130:8, and Lam 4:22. The **פְּרִיק** is a messianic epithet used sometimes to circumvent the dangerous Messiah. This means that TJ is hiding behind an anti-Christian polemic.<sup>835</sup> However, as was mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs, this idea of the loving God forgiving Israel's sins is a typical Jewish and targumic characteristic that does not require an apology. God as the only acting savior and the only forgiver of sins (Isa 42:8, 43:1–4,14,25) is clearly stated in Isa 43:1 and emphasized in the Passover *Haggadah*.

Targum prays to the Divine attribute of love to end Israel's misery. After the harsh words and bitterness poured out in 3:1, TJ finds an opportunity to explicitly express forgiveness.

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of His love.' PsJ to Num 30:5 (and vv. 8,15) expounds on the text, saying: 'and he will keep quiet intentionally,' suggesting a reason behind accepting her vow. The reason itself is not given but is implicit, as suggested here.

<sup>832</sup> Gordon views TJ's interpretation as "withholding of judgement to the extend of actual forgiveness for the wrongdoing." He believes that TJ Mic 7:19 "has probably been influenced by the Tg" to our verse (*Targum*, 173). According to Sweeney, TJ understands God's silence as an omen for forgiveness (*Zephaniah*, 193). Rudolph rejects both 'will renew' and 'will tread down' for the literal meaning of TJ's **יִכַּבֵּשׁ** (*Micha*, 293,17b), which Vlaardingerbroek endorses (*Zephaniah*, 211).

<sup>833</sup> Ribera, "La versión," 157.

<sup>834</sup> Abrabanel and Altschuler express similarly.

<sup>835</sup> De Moor, "The Love," 264–65.

An echo of TJ is found in the two *Toseftot* who seem to espouse a harsh position that focuses on repentance. AT and PT make God's love and mercy conditional: 'If the children of Israel return from their ways, I shall not pour My wrath upon them; and I shall love/have mercy upon them because of the love of their righteous forefathers.' PT gives this declaration of love a more personal touch with 'your forefathers.'

The third noun of joy, רְנָה, 'song,' is translated as 'praise' in all occurrences in Isaiah, equating singing with praising God;<sup>836</sup> but in Jeremiah it is rendered as 'prayer.'<sup>837</sup> The exception here is obvious because God does not sing His own praises. But He can be happy.

Ms C shows a second person pronominal suffix, יִפְרֹקֶינִיךְ, 'will redeem you,' in place of פְּרִיק, 'redeemer, redeeming,'<sup>838</sup> thus maintaining the second person mode of addressee throughout the verse. This rendering perceives גְּבוֹר as God's epithet, 'the Mighty will redeem you.'

3:18: (Those) *who were delaying within you the appointed times of your festivals*  
I have removed from your *midst*; *woe upon them for they were carrying*  
*their weapon against you and were reviling you.*

The Versions and many scholars have struggled with this verse on both syntactical and content issues. Scholars follow LXX and Peshitta by appending the first two words of the verse to the one before with an added simile, reading כִּיּוֹם מוֹעֵד for the enigmatic MT נוֹגֵי מִמוֹעֵד: 'And He will gladden over you with song as (in) a day of festival,' and 'And He will gladden you with praise like in a day of festival,' respectively.<sup>839</sup> Buhl explains that the letters 'נ', 'כ', 'ו', and 'ג' are frequently confused.<sup>840</sup> This reading leaves 'I have gathered' without a direct object, as well as

<sup>836</sup> תוֹשֵׁב־חַתָּא (14:7, 55:12) or תוֹשֵׁב־חַתָּא (35:10, 43:14, 44:23, 48:20, 49:13, 51:11, 54:1).

<sup>837</sup> בָּעַו in 11:14 and עָלוֹת־הוֹן in 14:12.

<sup>838</sup> This is also the LXX reading.

<sup>839</sup> LXX in fact does not turn נוֹגֵי into כִּיּוֹם, but adds to it the plural suffix 'ם' from מוֹעֵד to create נוֹגִים. It then attaches it to אֲסַפְתִּי, making it its direct object. The result is this: "I have gathered the afflicted/broken ones" (cf LXX Isa 61:1; Jer 2:13, 23:9; Mic 4:6,7) who were being disgraced by others (expressed in the next sentence: 'Who carried disgrace upon her?'). The 'סא' (for הוֹי) that precedes the question threatens them in retaliation. It is the same interjection used against Philistia in 2:5. Peshitta does not translate נוֹגֵי but instead replaces it with כִּיּוֹם.

<sup>840</sup> Buhl, *Einige textkritische*, 183. The letters 'נ', 'כ', and 'ו' may be similar in the proto-Hebrew script but not in the Aramaic script. This suggests a very early corruption of text. Buhl has no doubt that LXX and Peshitta reflect the original text. So Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 211,215; Elliger, *Das Buch*, 81; Marti, *Das Dodekapropheten*, 377.

placing ‘they were’ as the opening of the next clause. Van Hoonacker finds the direct object in those who stroke (מִמֵּיָדָם) Israel. They are מְעַנְיָדָם, ‘your oppressors,’ in the next verse.<sup>841</sup>

Four roots for נוּגֵי as a construct *nif'al* participle have been identified: (a) הִגָּה, ‘to remove,’ as in 2 Sam 20:13; Prov 25:4;<sup>842</sup> (bα) יָגָה, ‘to be sad,’ as in Lam 1:4;<sup>843</sup> (bβ) ‘to grieve, afflict, oppress’ as in Lam 1:5, 12, Job 19:2;<sup>844</sup> (bγ) ‘to mourn’;<sup>845</sup> (c) נָגַה, ‘to come out’ as in Arabic. נוּגֵי is an error for the feminine imperative נִגִּי, thus ‘come out from distress to relief’;<sup>846</sup> (d) נָג or נוּג as in Ugaritic ‘to go away.’<sup>847</sup>

The free exegetical translation is TJ’s response to the difficulties. The result is a two-part verse, with a pause after מִמֵּיָדָם, and with two separate accusations.<sup>848</sup> One is linked to the preceding verses concerning the removal of internal sinful groups; the other is linked to outside enemies alluded to in the next verse (‘your oppressors’). The interpretation is formed by key words.

In the first part TJ accuses an element within the Judean society of cultic abomination: They delayed the observance of the festivals.<sup>849</sup> The key word for this interpretation is נוּגֵי, which TJ derives from the Aramaic root נָגַה, ‘to delay, be belated’ (probably out of despair over its Hebrew context).<sup>850</sup> Those who interfered with the cultic appointed times will be removed, in the same way as other leaders, the false judges, the kings of Israel (v. 15), and the powerful arrogant elite (v. 11). The verbal clause refers to them and to the ‘enemies’ mentioned in v. 15.

<sup>841</sup> Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 535–36.

<sup>842</sup> Like Rashi, Lehrman reads “far from” after reading נוּגֵי as “driven away” (*The Twelve*, 251).

<sup>843</sup> Ibn Ezra; Radaq; Altschuler; Abrabanel; Malbim; NJPS; NIV; KJV.

<sup>844</sup> Calvin; Orelli; Berlin; NAS. See מְעַנְיָדָם, ‘your oppressors,’ Isa 51:23.

<sup>845</sup> Linking the phrase with the call to rejoice in v. 18, and on the basis of Isa 66:10, Gerleman identifies the subject with those mourners in exile who are called to rejoice over Jerusalem (*Zephanja*, 63).

<sup>846</sup> Ehrlich, *מקרא כפשוטו*.

<sup>847</sup> Sabottka finds Ugaritic נ(ו)ג a parallel to רָחַק (‘to go away’), and concludes that נוּגֵי are those who have gone away from the community (*Zephanja*, 130, 135).

<sup>848</sup> The quotation in *Bavli, Berakhot* 28a reads v. 18a according to the MT division.

<sup>849</sup> Gordon notes that stopping Jewish cultic observances was an act of foreign interventions, while the Aramaic עָקַב, ‘delay,’ points rather to internal interference. He therefore concludes that TJ reflects here an added translation which augments the original criticism of internal intervention by an external foreign interference (*Studies*, 51).

<sup>850</sup> The Vulgate uses the same method for נוּגֵי with *nugas*, ‘fools.’ Goshen-Gottstein claims that the Aramaic תָּבַר translates the Hebrew יָגָה 1. In note 1 he posits that one of the three Arabic cognates for Aramaic עָקַב translates the Hebrew אָחַר, ‘to delay’ (*Fragments*, 85, notes 1, 6).



אֲרַחֵיקִית, ‘I have sent away (from your midst),’ translates אֲסַפְתִּי (root אֶסַף), ‘I have taken away, removed,’ and is synonymous to אֲגַלֵּי, ‘(He) has exiled’ (from your midst)’ in v. 15. אֲסַפְתִּי allows this association. Since their removal is prophesied to occur in the future, this practice of tampering with the festival celebrations still continues at the time of the targumist, or the traditional appointed times have not yet been reinstated. This may reflect the reality during the Second Temple period and may imply a criticism of the Temple Priests in charge of cultic matters, namely the Sadducees. If this conjectural scene is correct, then this targum originated before 70.<sup>851</sup>

This reality may be found in other Jewish sources. From Tannaic sources, from Josephus, Ben Sira, the Book of Jubilees, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and others, one learns that the Jewish calendar was undergoing a controversial transition, notably the designation of Tishri rather than Nisan as the New Year for specific events, and the beginning of the counting of the Omer. In addition, the beginning of the month was not always made known on time.<sup>852</sup> Moreover, even though several sources attest to the use of a lunisolar calendar during the Second Temple period, not all Jews followed the normative calendar. The Book of Jubilees of the second century BCE describes a solar calendar used by a small group of Judeans who accused the rest of the Jews of following the ‘festivals of the nations.’<sup>853</sup> The sectarian calendar of the Qumranites that followed that of *Jubilees* differed from that of the Jerusalemite Pharisees, notably in the timing of Yom Kippur<sup>854</sup> and Shavu‘ot.<sup>855</sup> As a result, their festivals were celebrated *later* than those of the rest of the Jews.<sup>856</sup> Targum’s criticism of elements within the Jewish community ‘delaying’ the appointed times could relate to groups representing the

<sup>851</sup> Polemics against the Sadducees after 70 was irrelevant. See S.R. Isenberg, “An Anti-Sadducee Polemic in the Palestinian Targum Tradition,” *HTR* 63 (1970): 442.

<sup>852</sup> See M.D. Herr, “The Calendar,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century* (vol. 2; eds. S. Safrai and M. Stern. 2nd printing. Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, Assen, Fortress Press, 1976), 843–57.

<sup>853</sup> *The Book of Jubilees* (trans. from the Ethiopic text and annotated by R.H. Charles & D. Litt; New York: The MacMillan Company, 1917), 65 (6. 35). Online: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/jub/jub20.htm>. On the Judean calendars up to the first century see M.D. Herr, “The Calendar,” 834–64.

<sup>854</sup> 1QpHab 11,6–8.

<sup>855</sup> Since they started to count the Omer the day after the first Sabbath following the end of Passover instead of on the second night of Passover.

<sup>856</sup> Their many mss concerning the calendar indicate the importance given to Sabbaths and festivals according to their solar system. For example, 4Q320–321a synchronizes the 354-day lunar calendar with the 364-day solar calendar; 4Q322–330, 4Q334 and 4Q337 describe an annalistic calendar of *mishmarot* (Sabbath duties). Florentino García

Sadducees, the *Jubilees* and the Qumranite followers. This internal, early interference with the Jewish calendar adds support for the priority of our TJ over R. Joseph's.

Neither the MT nor TJ show a clear link between our verse and the preceding one. In TJ, an opening pronoun is missing, such as אֵלֵינוּ or אֵנּוּן, 'those' or 'they' (who)' or 'woe to those,' that opens the second part, though it is implicit. A Talmudic quotation may suggest another Targumic opening. *Bavli, Berakhot* 28a quotes another purported targum to our verse with the opening תברא<sup>857</sup> (Hebrew שבר, 'disaster.' Cf 1:10) or תברא אתי על, 'disaster comes upon' ('those who were...'). This tractate discusses the times for celebrating the Sabbath and festivals and the importance of reciting the Sabbath and festival prayers according to tradition. R. Judah (second half of second century to early third century) is said to have made changes in the sequence of the *Minhah* and *Mussaf* prayers and in their appointed times.<sup>858</sup> His opinions are considered to be a 'disaster' to the Jewish people by R. Joshua (third century). R. Joshua quotes the first half of our verse, נוּגֵי מְמוּעָד אֶסְפְּתִי, because of the association of 'appointed times' and 'sadness' with his view. As Rashi explains: the connection with Zeph 3:18a is that 'because they changed the appointed times of the prayers and festivals, they will be sad, and afflicted and destroyed.' R. Joshua continues: 'What is the meaning of this נוּגֵי? It is in the semantic field of a disaster' (לישנא דתברא). נוּגֵי does not mean 'disaster,' and no doubt R. Joshua knew that. He merely explains the meaning of נוּגֵי in terms of his opinion concerning R. Judah's changes in prayer sequence and times. R. Joshua does not quote our TJ because delaying festivals was not relevant to his case. The sense of disaster in our verse was.

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Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigheelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (vol. 2; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 678–93, 693–07. A fragmented calendrical ms is 6Q17 (p. 1156).

<sup>857</sup> Cf TJ's exclamation שִׁיעָאָה, 'destruction,' that opens Zephaniah's oracles in 1:2.

<sup>858</sup> Two different circumstances are recorded, one by R. Joshua, the other by R. Eleazar. The former concerns R. Judah's decision to say the *Mussaf* prayer *seven* hours after the *Shaharit* prayer. This elicited R. Joshua's objection. He calls this decision a 'disaster' based on a targum he knew that is later attributed to R. Joseph's targum תברא נוּגֵי from Zeph 3:18 (we must note that R. Joshua died before R. Joseph's academic activities). The second case concerns R. Eleazar, who refers to another change by R. Judah, or perhaps to another version of the same change in prayer times. This time, the decision concerns saying the *Mussaf* prayer *four* hours after *Shaharit*. For R. Eleazar, the citation from Zeph 3:18 comes to describe this event as 'sadness,' for this is the meaning of נוּגֵי. He bases this meaning on Ps 119:28. R. Nahman bar Isaac (died ca. 356) is brought into the discussion by the Talmud to support R. Eleazar's opinion by citing Lam 1:4.

The Talmud next quotes R. Joseph in order to clarify and lay R. Joshua's laconic remark on an authoritative figure. A generation after R. Joshua, R. Joseph employs this "translation" to interpret TJ Zeph 3:18a. It first provides an opening in the form of a prayer: 'May disaster come upon,' perhaps based on Jer 4:20 or on a common curse formula. Next, it provides an explanation of TJ's target and a subject for TJ's 'who were': They are 'the enemies of Israel' (already mentioned in v. 15 as **בְּעֵלֵי דְבָבָד**). This phrase is indeed a euphemism, *tiquin soferim*, concerning elements withing the Jewish community, as suggested by Gordon.<sup>859</sup> Next, R. Joseph replaces **דְּהוּוּ מֵעַכְבִּין**, 'for they were delaying,' with a parallel, **עַל דְּאַחְרוּ**, 'for they delayed.' Since R. Joseph's quotation is not a translation of Zeph 3:18a, he does not conform to the MT second person address, which TJ does. Therefore, his reference to **זְמַנֵּי מוֹעֲדֵיָא**, 'the times of the appointed festivals,' can be a general statement, as against TJ's specific **זְמַנֵּי מוֹעֲדֵיךָ**, 'the times of your appointed festivals.' Lastly, the addition 'which is in Jerusalem' explains TJ's 'in you' and further clarifies TJ's target. Targum's 'I have removed from you' is replaced by the offered opening. This fourth century paraphrase was created on the basis of TJ to address problems in calendar changes made by leaders such as R. Johanan after 70, while TJ's original version addressed similar problems caused earlier by the Sadducean Priests and marginal sectarian groups.<sup>860</sup> R. Joseph's interpretation does not constitute another version.<sup>861</sup>

Some scholars consider R. Joseph's "quotation" to be another version of our TJ. Churgin explains R. Joshua's statement as a reconciliation or an association between R. Joseph's translation and that of TJ, i.e.,

<sup>859</sup> This is also Goshen-Gottstein's interpretation (*Fragments*, 85). Gordon, though, believes that our TJ "in and around verse 18" reflects patriotic tendencies which are absent in R. Joseph's quotation of the third century. He concludes that originally the targum referred to domestic enemies who interfered in cultic observations. The Talmudic quotation reflects the same concern, but specifically in terms of prayers. This was modified by our TJ, which refers to "both delay and enemy intervention" (*Studies*, 51–52).

<sup>860</sup> Cf Isa 24:5: 'They substituted the Law, they breached an eternal Covenant' and its targumic rendition: 'They abolished (or 'suspended') the appointed festivals, they changed the tradition of eternity.' Here, the accusation is clearly against the Judeans.

<sup>861</sup> For a fuller discussion on the theory that R. Joseph translated the Prophets see the Introduction. Rambam learned a lesson from the Talmudic discussion. In *Hilkhot Hagigah* 1 he discusses the three types of sacrifices each person should offer on the three pilgrimages. It is commended, he concludes, to sacrifice on the first day of the festival and not be late. To delay is deplorable, **מְגוּנָה**, and the Scripture **נִוְגֵי מִמוֹעֵד אֶסְפְּתִי** concerns such a person. This teaching is made possible by fusing TJ and the transposition of the letters **גג**.

between two extant versions. R. Joshua explains נִוְגִי as the ‘disaster that comes’ that is missing from our TJ. But what is missing in this association is to show that נִוְגִי means ‘delay,’ namely, TJ’s מַעֲכָבִין.<sup>862</sup> Gordon, like Churgin, concludes that there were two different Targumic versions to our verse: the lost, older one (Joseph’s) addressed a domestic problem not later than the early third century, while our TJ addresses an external problem. He presents three arguments for this finding: first, the Talmudic interpretation is ascribed to R. Judah of the late second century; second, R. Joshua may have explained נִוְגִי on the basis of the Talmudic quotation; third, since TJ went through a lengthy period of standardizing to a closer conformity with the MT, the Talmudic fragment suggests priority.<sup>863</sup> The counter arguments against Gordon’s conclusion have already been presented above and in the Introduction.

Gordon also concedes that ‘delaying’ has to be associated with inner intervention, rather than cessation of observances that must come from an outside enemy. Since he contends that TJ addresses an inside enemy, he finds all possibilities to have occurred prior to the year 70. This is contrary to his earlier argument that places TJ after the Talmudic fragment, namely, from the second half of the fourth century.

Similarly, Sweeney identifies R. Joseph’s targum as an older translation that “anticipated punishment for those within Judaism who were involved in delaying elements of the Jewish worship service.”<sup>864</sup> According to Sweeney, our TJ is later and directed against outside enemies “most likely the Romans, who took up arms against Jews.” Thus, he (as well as Gordon) makes no distinction between the two parts of Tg’s rendition. Those scholars who believe that TJ is referring to enemies already removed, continues Sweeney, can date TJ’s rendering to the aftermath of the conquest of Roman Byzantium by the Persians in 614 and eventually the establishment of the Islamic authority in 634.

The discussion in the Talmud uses a paraphrase of a known TJ as a reminder of the disaster such internal activities brought about.

If one entertains the possibility that TJ addresses an outside enemy that delayed the observance of holy days, one may point to the assault

<sup>862</sup> Churgin, *Targum*, 148 (376). Ribera reads מַעֲכָבִין as corresponding to the second meaning of the root נִגַּה, ‘to remove, withdraw from’ similar to TJ 2 Sam 20:13 (“La versión,” 157). However, TJ there uses the root פָּנָה, ‘to remove,’ and not עָקַב.

<sup>863</sup> Gordon, *Studies*, 50–51.

<sup>864</sup> Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 34.

on Judaism during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes IV prior to the Maccabean revolt and the Greeks' defeat. However, the Greeks stopped all cultic celebrations, rather than "delaying" them. Moreover, TJ, just as the MT, shows no change in subject, which is still the Israelites of the preceding vv. 11–17.

The second verset has attracted as much commentary as the first verset has.<sup>865</sup> Neither the array of emendations offered nor the resulting readings have convincingly interpreted the verset. The common reading among most of the commentaries concerns the removal of those who grieved or suffered, for they were a burden, a reproach on Judah. What is the connection between the two is completely baffling and certainly contradictory. Would not the "aggrieved" or the "afflicted" be considered the Judean elements to be protected and redeemed, rather than elements to be punished? In what way were these sufferers a shame or reproach? Sweeney attempts to bridge the contradiction by explaining the resulting reading in this fashion: the verse comes to rationalize God's purge or exile of Jerusalem and Zion, who "are considered as a sort of offering to YHWH" along the lines of chapter 1.<sup>866</sup> He bases his reading on a secondary meaning of the root **גה**, defining it as a *hif'il* form appearing in 2 Sam 20:13. He translates this root as "to be thrust away, expelled."<sup>867</sup> However, **הגה** in this citation is derived from the root **הגה**, in the *hof'al*, with the meaning 'was removed/thrust (away from),' and it has no association with 'expulsion.'<sup>868</sup> This trend of readings interprets the verse in a negative light in the midst of a most exuberant oracle.

A more concordant interpretation of Zephaniah's message (e.g., 2:8, 10, 3:11) is offered by some emendations, such as: **הַמְשִׂאִים**, 'those who were speaking' against Judah to humiliate her (J.M.P. Smith, after Peshitta); **הַיָּה מִשְׂאָת**, '(I shall take away from you) the grief from ever

<sup>865</sup> For reviews of the myriads of commentaries see, e.g., Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 188–93; Vlaardingerbroek, *Zephaniah*, 211–12, 215–16; Ben Zvi, *A Historical*, 252–54; J.M.P. Smith, *A Critical*, 258–49, 262–63; Van Hoonacker, *Les Douze*, 535–36; Marti, *Das Dodekapropheten*, 377. Rudolph offers a Christian spin by changing **עָלִיָּה חֲרָפָה** to **עָלִי הַחֲרָפָה**, thus suggesting that Israel, knowingly, takes shame upon herself on account of her rebellion against God (*Micha*, 293–94, 298–99). The context of salvation and mercy totally contradicts this idea.

<sup>866</sup> Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 205.

<sup>867</sup> Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 204.

<sup>868</sup> It may be possible to manipulate this meaning in English, but not in Hebrew. Cf Prov 25:4,5; Even-Shoshan, 2:482; BDB (Strong 1898), #2265 (p. 212). The *hif'il* of **הגה** occurs in Isa 8:19 and the *qal*, in Isa 27:8.

carrying the shame' (Deissler); **מִי יִשָּׂא**, 'whomever will carry' disgrace against Judah will be punished (Lippl, Zandstra); **הַיּוֹם שָׂאת**, 'I have removed from you the day when people carried shame over her' (Gerleman; recommended by Ball); **נוֹגֵשׁ וְרוֹעֵץ אֶסְפְּתִי מִמֶּךָ, הִיוּ מִשָּׂאת חֲרָפָה**, **עַלֶיךָ**, the oppressors who were a disgrace will be removed (Kauffmann). The intent is correct, but the emendations are far from the text.

The difficulty of our verse must be resolved within the context of salvation, as TJ, LXX, and Peshitta have done. The solution suggested here is based on the theory that Zephaniah was a Priest and on his repeated concerns for holiness and purity in cultic contexts.<sup>869</sup> What God promises to remove, so that no shame will remain among the redeemed people, are afflictions, **נִגְע** (a general term for a skin disease) and **שָׂאת** (one type of such a disease), which are found in Priestly literature such as Ps 39:11 and Lev 13:2,43.<sup>870</sup> **שָׂאת** and **נִגְע** are two medical conditions affecting the skin that render the sufferer impure, and in some cases he or she needs to be removed temporarily from the community. The prophet metaphorically describes the people's condition as skin afflictions that constitute the people's shame. These are conditions that are external and easy to spot. God promises to remove these plagues from Israel and turn their shame into 'praise and name' (vv. 19–20).

The original text might have been as follows:

<b>נִגְעֵי מוֹעֵד אֶסְפְּתִי מִמֶּךָ</b>	Afflictions of the warned ones <sup>871</sup> I have removed from you
<b>הִיוּ כְּשָׂאת עָלֶיהָ חֲרָפָה:</b>	They were shame upon her like a skin disease.

<sup>869</sup> The possibility that Zephaniah was a Priest was addressed by several scholars (e.g., Eaton, Ben Zvi, Mason).

<sup>870</sup> Onkelos translates **שָׂאת** by **עִמְקָא**, a 'swelling.' This is probably so by its basic meaning of 'high,' from the root **גָּשָׂא**. This is also the source for Rashbam's explanation 'a matter of height.' He adds that it is not as light in color as the *baheret*. Rashi understands it to be a name of a plague, citing *Mishnah, Nega'im* 81,1. Ibn Ezra suggests **שָׂאת** to be a matter of 'burning, fire,' since fire aims upward (Judg 20:40; 2 Sam 5:21). Ramban quotes Rashi and Ibn Ezra and offers a medical explanation, that of a (skin) disease caused by the burning green spleen. **שָׂאת**, he explains, is a type of a **נִגְע**. Sforno explains *Nega'im* 81 as describing the inter-relationship between the four skin plagues mentioned in the verb: **שָׂאת** develops into **בַּהֲרַת**, which develops into other types of plagues. *Tanhuma* (Warsaw), *Metzora* 4, describes **נִגְע** as one type of a skin affliction.

<sup>871</sup> **נִגְעֵי מוֹעֵד**, 'the afflictions of those who were warned' (cf Exod 21:29, 19:21; Deut 8:19) or 'those who were called to court/to testify' (cf Deut 30:19, 31:28; Isa 8:2).

Those who were warned by the prophets for generations but displayed their sins like a skin disease will be at last removed (see 3:11), for the exposed impurity that caused Judah shame will be taken away to reveal a renewed, healthy “skin.” מוֹעֵד is the legal term that indicates guilt after being warned more than once (cf Exod 21:29). An alternative reading could be נִגְעֵי מוֹעֵד, ‘those who are impure during festival times.’ The extant TJ may reflect a redaction to suit new historical conditions.

Addressing the Targumic text, we find it struggling with the second part of the verse. Changing הָיָה to הָיָה (also LXX and Aquila) defines it as an exhortation. The key words in this section are מְשָׂאת and חֶרְפָּה. The phrase לְשֵׂאתָ עַל, ‘to carry upon,’ suggests the carrying of weapons.<sup>872</sup> חֶרְפָּה, ‘disgrace, shame,’ conjures up the accusation against Moab and Ammon in 2:8–10. Using again the Aramaic verb חִסַּד, ‘to revile,’ and reading עָלֵיהֶם, ‘upon them’ (also all mss compared here) instead of עָלֶיהָ, ‘upon her,’ make this link more obvious. This change is imperative (and not a variant) in order to maintain a similar syntax and a plural past progressive. The indirect object ‘upon them’ is made to function as the opening subject that submits the following accusation. These four elements produce an interpretation to a difficult verset in which a new accusation, this time against foreign oppressors, can be presented: Woe to Israel’s enemies for carrying arms against her to disgrace her. With this interpretation the transition to the next verse flows naturally.<sup>873</sup>

<sup>872</sup> The verb נִשָּׂא often comes with types of weapons (e.g., 1 Sam 17:7, 41; Isa 2:4; Jer 17:27; 1 Chron 5:18; 2 Chron 14:7). Isaiah 14:19 has מְטַעְנֵי חֶרֶב, ‘carriers of the sword.’ The nouns מְטַעַן and מְשָׂא (‘a load’) are synonyms. Gordon contends that TJ seems to use חֶרְפָּה twice: first, as a cognate of the Aramaic חוּרְפָּא, ‘edge of knife,’ and the Syriac חַרְפָּא, ‘blade, sword.’ This meaning is reflected by the ‘weapons.’ Second, in its usual meaning of ‘reproach.’ Contrary to the military context of מְשָׂאת in TJ, Peshitta reads the verb נִשָּׂא in its context of speech (e.g., Isa 14:4, 52:8; Jer 9:9; Ps 16:4), and omitting הָיָה it thus reads: ‘And I shall remove from you those who were speaking disgrace against you (fem. sing.)’ (*Targum*, 174, note 44). Peshitta had either no knowledge of TJ or, more plausibly, preferred an alternative reading.

<sup>873</sup> A similar transition took place in 3:8, where an exhortation against the nations unexpectedly follows (by the conjunction ‘therefore’) an oracle concerning Judah. The identity of the MT ‘wait for Me’ is revealed by TJ’s ‘hope for My Memra’ to be Judah. Later, in v. 10, another unclear transition occurs concerning the identity of עֵתְרֵי בֵּית־פּוּצֵי. Again, TJ reveals in a double reading that the second part of the verse concerns the exiled Judeans.

This targumic interpretation is made possible only by knowingly changing  $\text{הָיוּ}$  to  $\text{הוּי}$ , but yet retaining it as a plural past progressive verb, to harmonize with ‘who were’ in the first part of the verse.<sup>874</sup>

Churgin’s and Gordon’s theory that TJ reflects two Targumic versions is incorrect, taking into consideration the key words in both parts of the verse, the associative interpretation, and the pre-70 allusions. Out of all the other versions, LXX indicates the most serious struggle, which is reflected in the wrong division, in ‘woe’, and in an interrogative sentence, none attested in the MT. Moving ‘festival’ to v. 17, it reads, ‘And I shall gather the broken ones. Woe! Who carried upon her disgrace?’ Introverted into Hebrew it would be  $\text{הוּי אֲסַפְתִּי. הוּי מִי נִשָּׂא עֲלֶיהָ חֲרָפָה}$ . The Vulgate, as well, carries a question, ‘how is there disgrace upon her?’ but no interjection. Its division follows the MT. The attempts of the Witnesses to give the verse some sense confirm its endurance at least since the third century BCE. This is also attested in MurXII.

When considering all of the above, TJ accuses two groups. The first are Hellenized Jews, Priests, kings, and especially marginal sectarians who delayed the appointed times of the festivals by tampering with the lunar calendar. This situation still exists at the time of TJ. The second is a foreign power operating militarily against the Jewish community and humiliating them. The first half of the verse, as discussed above, concerns events during the Hellenistic period up to the first century.

The second accusation can also have occurred in that same designated period, since military activities against the Jews took place then, notably in pre- and early Maccabean times in mid-2nd century BCE. or in the first century during the First Revolt but not later than the Second Revolt of 135.<sup>875</sup>

3:19: Behold I (am going to) make *a (total) end* with all your enslavers at that time, and I shall redeem the *exiled* and I shall *bring near the scattered*, and I shall make them for praise and for fame in all the land *of their shame*.

<sup>874</sup> Based on LXX and Aquila, Gordon allows  $\text{וּי (עֲלִיהוֹן)}$  for (a missing?) MT  $\text{הוּי}$ , but he identifies in TJ  $\text{הוּי (נִטְלִין)}$  the reflection of the MT  $\text{הוּי (מִשְׁאֵת)}$  (*Targum*, 174 note 43). What evolves is a new text:  $\text{מִמֶּךָ הָיוּ הוּי מִשְׁאֵת}$ . He does not defend this reading.

<sup>875</sup> Cf commentary on 1:10.



Some scholars date vv. 19–20 to the post-exilic period, citing the phrase ‘at that time’ in an eschatological context, and noting the subject of the exiled returning to the land of Israel. However, ‘at that time’ is a temporal expression pointing to the future, and exiles existed since the late 8th century BCE.<sup>876</sup>

In general, the content, grammar and syntax of the MT are straightforward, except for the last phrase, בְּכֹל־הָאָרֶץ בְּשִׁתָּם. The correct form is בְּכֹל־הָאָרֶץ (LXX) or בְּכֹל־אֶרֶץ בְּשִׁתָּם (TJ, Peshitta, Vulgate), as affirmed by the parallel expression in the next verse, בְּכֹל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ. MurXII is identical to the MT. God promises to punish Israel’s oppressors on that Day. He will save the lame, and the driven-out He shall gather. And He shall turn them into a praise and a name in wherever they live in shame.

However, despite its clarity, a few points of dissent have been raised. One concerns the object of וְשִׂמְתִּים, which prompts two possibilities: ‘I shall turn their *shame* into a praise,<sup>877</sup> and ‘I shall turn *them* (the exiled) into a praise and their shame into a name.<sup>878</sup>

Another point of contention is the seemingly missing direct object for ‘I am going to do.’ Often when God opens with הֲנִי plus a participle, it is followed by a threat (e.g., Gen 6:17; Exod 10:4; 2 Sam 12:11). This is even more true when it is followed by the preposition עַל (e.g., Jer 23:30; Ezek 28:22) or אֶל (e.g., Jer 21:13; Ezek 29:10). In our case the expression contains both participle and preposition, הֲנִי עֹשֶׂה אֶת, which in itself is sufficient to convey the message of a threat within a context of taking a vow (cf Ezek 22:14). Yet, the versions have felt the need to add an object. LXX clumsily rebuilds v. 19a so that it becomes a promise, ‘I am going to make *in you for you*’; retaining the threatening tone, Peshitta shows a similar clumsy sentence, ‘I am going to make *all of them like the humble ones in your midst*’; similar is the Vulgate with ‘I am going to punish all who afflict you.’

Targum expounds without losing sight of the very clear vision of the verse. It first provides an object for the ‘making’ by an equivalent of כְּלָה, ‘a total end’ as in 1:18, thus assuming the MT’s intention to

<sup>876</sup> See, e.g., Sweeney, *Zephaniah*, 205–06.

<sup>877</sup> Reading the final ‘ם’ as enclitic, Berlin (*Zephaniah*, 147), Sabottka (*Zephaniah*, 139), Sweeney (*Zephaniah*, 207), NRSV and NJPS espouse this meaning.

<sup>878</sup> E.g., Ball, *A Rhetorical*, 272; NIV; KJV.

have **עִשָּׂה כְּלָה** (cf Jer 5:18, 30:11; Ezek 11:13).<sup>879</sup> Next, it explains ‘the lame’ (feminine singular that corresponds with Jerusalem, a form prevalent in chapter 3) as a symbol for ‘the exiled ones.’ Perhaps TJ warns against taking this designation literally, so as not to limit those redeemed.<sup>880</sup> ‘The strayed, outcast’ (again in feminine singular) is also explained in terms of exile, ‘the scattered ones.’ Then it replaces ‘I shall gather’ with ‘I shall bring near’ to show an intimate relationship that pertains not only to physical proximity, but more so to a religious closeness. This sense alludes to Deut 26:16–19, where bestowing fame and glory is contingent on Israel’s adherence to the Law. This reading also places the returnees in contrast with the people who did not draw near God (3:2). Next, the definite article in **הָאָרֶץ** is dropped to allow a construct form to which ‘their shame’ is attached. Thus, the message declares that four transformations will take place: first, those who afflicted the Jews will be totally destroyed, as was stated in 3:8b (1:18); second, the state of shame of the Jews in their lands of residence will be transformed into a state of fame and praise; third, the exiled will return to the land of Israel; and fourth, a renewed Covenantal relationship will emerge.

As noted in Chapter 2,<sup>881</sup> the passive form of **מְטַלְטֵיָא** may reflect the local Yemenite Aramaic which is shared even by the stemma Z,J,E. This stemma corrects **מְבַדְרֵיָא** to read **מְבַדְרֵיָא** in order to correspond to the paralleled form. The Palestinian form appears in all the Ashkenazi and the Sepharadi mss, as well as Ms F, as **מְטַלְטֵיָא** and **מְבַדְרֵיָא**. On such vocalizational alterations found in Yemenite mss, Tal agrees that it was possible that the Yemenite *naqdanim* took the liberty to alter the reading under the impact of the local language.<sup>882</sup>

3:20: At that time I will bring you in and at *that* time I *will* gather you, for I will make you for a renown and a praise in all the nations of the land, when I return your *exiles* before your eyes, said YYY.

<sup>879</sup> Also see Sperber, *The Targum*, 60. Rashi explains this **עִשָּׂה** by Mal 3:21 **וְעִסּוּתָם**, from the root **עָסַס**, ‘to press down, squeeze, crush, pound.’ Radaq quotes another scripture, **בְּעִשּׂוֹת** (Ezek 23:21) with the same meaning. On the other hand, Sabottka observes this negative sense of ‘to violate, to abuse’ in the Ugaritic **עִשִּׁי** (*Zephanja*, 137).

<sup>880</sup> The translation for ‘the lame and the strayed’ and for ‘I shall gather’ is the same in Mic 4:6. See also Mic 4:7.

<sup>881</sup> Under Ms H and note 161.

<sup>882</sup> Tal, *The Language*, 5.



- Ms V: ... כִּי אֲתָנּוּ בְּעַת הַהוּא אָבִיא אֲתֶכֶם וּבְעַת הַהוּא אֶקְבֹּץ אֲתֶכֶם  
בְּשׁוּבֵי אֶת־שְׁבִיּוֹתְכֶם
- Ms Z: ... כִּי אֲתָנּוּ בְּעַת הַהוּא ----- אֶקְרַב אֶת־שְׁבִיּוֹתְכֶם כִּי אֲתָנּוּ  
בְּשׁוּבֵי אֶת־שְׁבִיּוֹתְכֶם
- Ms M: ... כִּי אֲתָנּוּ בְּעַת הַהִיא אֶקְבֹּץ אֲתֶכֶם וּבְעַת הַהִיא אֶקְרַב שְׁבִיּוֹתְכֶם  
בְּשׁוּבֵי אֶת־שְׁבִיּוֹתְכֶם
- Ms F: בְּעַת הַהוּא אֶקְבֹּץ אֲתֶכֶם וּבְעַת הַהוּא אֶקְרַב שְׁבִיּוֹתְכֶם כִּי אֲתָנּוּ  
בְּשׁוּבֵי אֶת־שְׁבִיּוֹתְכֶם ...

These differences are due to attempts to smooth and harmonize the text by several scribes from different locations and times. There is a tendency to relinquish ‘I shall gather you’ for ‘I shall draw you/your exile near.’ Since the mss do not read ‘restoration,’ but rather assume scattered communities in the diaspora, they all use the plural ‘exiles.’ It is evident that for the Targumist or the scribe, the message of return to Zion in the near future was more essential for its audience than a general message of ‘to bring in’ or ‘restoration.’ This double mention of the ‘exiles’ was present early on in the transmission of TJ before moving on to the East and West. The harmonization with the MT, as seen in Mss V,H, seems to be a later (Yemenite?) trend. It should be noted that **שְׁבוּת** seems to have already been understood in the meaning of **שְׁבִיּוֹת** in Zephaniah’s time (cf Jer 30:3).<sup>886</sup>

Targum corrects the syntax by adding ‘that’ to the second ‘and at the time’ and changes the infinitive construct to imperfect, thus creating perfect parallelism. The causal **כִּי** remains (as in LXX, Peshitta).<sup>887</sup> Otherwise TJ is literal.<sup>888</sup>

The Rabbis derive a host of theological perceptions from our verse and from the Rabbinic discussions relating to the Messianic era and the role of prayers. For example, *Tanna de-Vei Eliyahu* 19,6 perceives v. 20 as a reference to the days of return, when Israel will study the Torah with spiritual thirst, when Jews will revere God, acknowledge

<sup>886</sup> In Rabbinic literature, since Mishnaic time, **שְׁבוּת** was used in the meaning of ‘exile, captivity.’ For example, *Mishnah, Yadayim* 4; *Bavli, Berakhot* 28a; *Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 13,6; *Otzar ha-Midrashim*, Johanan ben Zakai, 7; *Shaarei Teshuvah*, תרצו. See also Bracke, “*šûb šbût*, 233–44 and the literature cited.

<sup>887</sup> Vulgate’s *enim* can mean ‘indeed’ or ‘therefore.’ As for LXX, it uses the noun ‘shame,’ that ends the previous verse, as a verb thus reading: ‘And they shall be shamed (at that time)’ referring to ‘all the land’ which ends v. 19.

<sup>888</sup> LXX reads ‘before you’ for ‘before your eyes’ while Peshitta reads ‘before their eyes’ (of the nations). Vulgate follows the MT.

and speak the truth and be humble before God when offering the daily morning prayer. That is the time when Israel's righteousness will be praised throughout the world.

Rambam, in 'the order of the annual prayers,' refers to that *midrash* when he discusses the prayers one should recite every day. The prayers must praise God's supremacy, His goodness and love for His people Israel. One should ask God to fulfill His promise of restoring Israel on its land and make it for a renown and a praise among the nations.

*Otzar ha-Midrashim, Mashiah* 16, discusses ten signs that will usher in the Messiah. The last one will be when the angel Michael blows the shofar. This will begin the great exodus of all the Jews from the east and will be the fulfillment of God's promises through His prophets, as is written in Zeph 3:20.

Another *midrash* in *Otzar ha-Midrashim* (Simeon ben Yohai, 7) is the prayer of this great Rabbi who attributes our verse to the coming of the Messiah. Our verse alludes to the time when the Messiah will summon Israel to witness God fighting the evil nations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSIONS

#### 4.1 TARGUM'S EXPRESSIONS AND CONCERNS

Even though TJ is sometimes paraphrastic, its text responds to every word in the MT. Its effort to remain literal is not often maintained because the Hebrew text was used not only to transfer faithfully the Word of God, but above all, to transfer theological ideas and teachings learned from centuries of mostly depressive history. The destruction of yet another Temple and its ramifications, a place which theologically represented God's existence within Israel (Exod 25:8), and by extension—the world, constituted the worst blow for the Jewish people. The connection with the Word had to be maintained and strengthened. At a time when as a group, Jews went into deep spiritual depression, TJ functioned as a teaching tool to keep hope alive. It became a medium for the national emotions, such as anger, disappointment, frustration and hope. The prophets were not only doomsayers, TJ contended, but heralds of salvation. The doom prophecies had to be translated in the most powerful way (cf. 1:2–4) so that the listening community would fully perceive the reasons for their depression. Understanding these reasons and Divine wrath as cause and effect could lead to a full recovery, either by spiritual return to God's Law (2:1–3, 3:11–13), or by the divine intervention of an actual return to the land and to former, better lives (3:19–20).

Targum projects its thoughts and assessments onto each scene, from the first verse to the last. Indeed, a nation and a dynasty that were special to God and were unique in their holiness (1:1) have gone astray by *increasing* their wickedness (1:3b, 3:1). But the wicked, and only they, must pay for their sinful ways (1:7,18). Earth will never be totally destroyed. However, no change has occurred, and the valiant continued to be killed (1:15). Targum does not shy away from forceful imagery when it describes the killing field, where corpses are strewn like domestic refuse (1:17). The only way out is to develop a spiritual thirst for God's Law (2:1,3). Only then will the enemy be destroyed according to God's desire (2:5). God has not forsaken Israel and has

not removed His Presence from her (3:5,7,15), for His love and mercy never wane. He will wipe away Israel's sins (3:10,17). Those who brought misery to Israel, whether domestic or foreign, will be exiled, removed and destroyed (3:15,17,18,19). With this equation, TJ reiterates Zephaniah's message that the fates of Israel and the nations are intertwined, for both are God's creation. However, the nations have a mission. The hatred will turn into compassion and with this attitude they will atone for their sins toward Israel by bringing the exiled back to their land (3:10). Israel still has a special place in God's plans for the world.

Opening with a strong, unyielding "Destruction!" and scenes of horrible death, TJ later softens its tone, and towards the end it envisions a spiritual closeness (אקרִיב) between God and the returnees rather than merely a gathering (אקבִץ, 3:19). We follow the changing mood of TJ, as it follows Zephaniah, from intense anger and pain to intense love and compassion.

The interpretative homiletics of TJ Zephaniah is limited.<sup>1</sup> The Targumist could not change the Holy text, but he could try and modify it to make it relevant to his generation. What we have today is the amalgam of two methods that evolved from Ezra's early teaching: literal translation as the fundamental mission of the translator, and interpretative mission to make sense of the text; to make it meaningful for his time and for generations to come, and to constitute life lessons for the individual but above all for the community. This interpretation is the part that experienced changes and additions and which constitutes our interest. Even though this homiletics is limited, some reflections can be made.

Two major concerns are reflected in TJ Zephaniah: Israel's well-being and the social, political, and religious criticism of TJ's day. All these issues in effect converge towards one overall prayer: may the Jewish people return to their land to be independent again under God's Law.

God's love for Israel and His concern for her well-being is of paramount importance not only for the theological bond between the two parties, but mostly for the preservation of the nation and its religion

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Harrington examined the interpretative homiletics of TJ of the Song of Deborah and drew similar observations concerning TJ's messages, techniques and reflections on the Targumist's time ("The Prophecy of Deborah," 432–42).

in the land of Israel and beyond. In times of destitution TJ keeps hope alive. Israel has atoned and returned to God (2:1), for they are now “officially” **כְּנֻסַת יִשְׂרָאֵל** (3:14). With mercy and love He will bring back the dispersed from their *exiles* (2:7, 3:10,19), for He will grant forgiveness and love not only to the Judeans, but to the rest of the *tribes* from the northern kingdom of Israel (2:9, 3:10). Each will return to his land and inherit lands that had not been conquered before or that had been taken away (2:5,7).

## 4.2 TARGUM'S CHARACTERISTICS

In his study on the characteristics of TJ, Smolar dedicates 98 pages (129–227) to the *theological concept* in TJ, more than to each of the other two “concepts” (Halakhah and Historical and Geographical allusions). The nine aspects of this concept are well represented in the short book of Zephaniah:

### 4.2.1 *The Concept of God*

Anti-anthropomorphism is often expressed by the word **קדם**,<sup>2</sup> a theological buffer term to maintain the dignity of God and to tone down strong feelings like anger. It occurs as soon as the first verse: God does not speak directly to man, not even to a prophet. Rather, a prophetic Word *before* Him somehow transcends upon the prophet in some metaphysical way. However, when He addresses the nations to be punished, the Word is expressed as a decree (2:5). The essence of God is righteousness that never fails (3:5), for He is the Truth (2:3b). One cannot possibly rebel against God, but rather against His Word, *Memra* (3:11a). Through His *Memra*, God reveals His Torah to His people (3:2). Worship is not directed at God Himself as is done with idols, but rather it is directed at His presence (3:9b). God punishes *only* the wicked (1:7a,18aβ, 3:8b).

God is *awesome* and superior, for He *crushed* all the *idols* of the land (2:11a); He is not light (i.e., the sun), but *like the morning light that grows in intensity* (3:5b), for He cannot be compared to the objects in nature that He Himself created.

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<sup>2</sup> Literally ‘before’ and metaphorically ‘aura, presence.’ See Robert Gordon, *The Targum*, 5; Michael L. Klein, “The Preposition **קדם**,” 502–07 and Commentary on 1:1.



God *determines* man's destiny (1:7, 2:5b, 11a) and man cannot change His decisions (1:18); He is a *redeeming* warrior whose love rejoices in forgiving sins (3:17a); God keeps His word. He *fulfilled* the *blessings* He had *promised* Israel's ancestors (3:7aβ).

God does not sing His own praises, but He rather delights in *rejoicing* (3:17bβ). He also delights in rewarding the righteous (1:12).

God does not have a hand to stretch out, but a *stroke of His might* is raised against the sinners (1:4, 2:13). The idea that one can be 'behind God' (מֵאַחֲרַי יְהוָה) suggests that He has a back. Therefore, turning away from God means turning away from *behind His worship* (1:6). God does not arise, but rather reveals Himself through a variety of media (3:8a). God does not possess human feelings. He has no 'jealousy' but rather a *fire of retribution* (1:18, 3:8); messengers (1:12a) and prophets (1:1, 3:2a) are the means of retribution and transmission of the Divine will. Good and bad are willed the way His Word operates (1:12b). The Law is the result of His will (2:3a). God is not the object that inspires fear, but rather His *Shekhinah* (3:7a).

Most of all, God is the force behind all historical events. For this, TJ emphasizes the first person: '*I shall destroy*' (1:3) and '*I desolated*' (3:6).

#### 4.2.2 *Man and God*

Man cannot communicate or approach God directly. God cannot be sought, for He has no body, nor can He physically draw near man or vice versa. Rather, He can be approached through the *Torah* or the divine aura that precedes Him (1:6, 2:1, 2:3a, 3:2b). Torah includes God's Law, the divine *Fear, worship*, good deeds, etc. Similarly, one does not wait for God, but *hopes for His Word* (3:8a), for there is always a distance between the two. One is not to trust in God as an object, but more properly, in His Word that is transmitted through the prophets (3:2). Man swears in the *name* of God, unlike swearing by people (1:4b). Unless one is a righteous man, one cannot change God's decree (1:18a).

#### 4.2.3 *Idolatry*

Idolatry is the most condemned abomination, for this is the root of all evil. It caused the destruction of the Temples and the exile. 'The Wicked' as idolaters is self-explanatory. Idolatry is expressed in syncretism, apostasy and agnosticism: they worshiped both YHWH and foreign gods. They swore in the name of YHWH then *repeated that vow in the name of their idols* (1:4b–5). They *worshiped* Baal and allowed priests

to officiate. They worshiped the hosts of heaven. They *rushed to worship idols and to imitate the ways of the Philistines* (1:4–5, 8–9). They were so eager in their pursuit that they imitated even those who had lived in the land of Israel prior to the conquest (1:11b). Since idolaters have to be uprooted, the search for them must be thorough, for they are a defiled element in the holy city and land. Wealth is a source of heresy (1:12) as it is the source of idolatry and criminal activity (1:11).

#### 4.2.4 *Fear of God and Sin*

Sinning can be redeemed by *fearing* God (1:6b, 2:3) for this leads to *repentance* and life of *Torah* (2:1b, 3:13). *Return to Torah*, and thus drawing near God, can obviate the *divine decree* and the *divine intense wrath* (2:1–2).

#### 4.2.5 *Prayer*

Prayer is strongly promoted by TJ as a way of worship and expression of faith. ‘Bowing down’ is interpreted as ‘*praying before Him*’ (2:11b), and what is ‘to call in the name of God’ if not ‘to *pray*’? Praying must be done in Hebrew as all people did before they built the Tower of Babel. Speaking in many languages was the beginning of the world’s downhill spiral, for this was the beginning of idolatry (3:9b). God calls the people to praise Him when redemption comes (3:14a), and promises to make them the object of praise as well (3:19b). Prayers are perceived as praises. Especially after the destruction of the Temple, prayers replaced sacrifices and other cultic activities. They acquired the utmost importance for the Rabbis, who elaborated and developed this subject in numerous discussions.<sup>3</sup> There is essentially a prayer for every life situation.

#### 4.2.6 *Reward of the Righteous and Punishment of the Wicked*

All human actions are weighed in terms of good and bad, and God rewards or punishes accordingly (1:9b,13). Since God is the ultimate judge, and since justice is His utmost essence, man should follow His lead. Since He is צַדִּיק (3:5a), the righteous are called צַדִּיקִים. For their piety and good deeds they are rewarded with a spiritual power to avert a decree and with closeness to God (2:1–2). Their prayers are heard and fulfilled and their merits save them and their descendants

<sup>3</sup> E.g., *Bavli*, *Berakhot* 36a; *Yerushalmi*, *Ta’anit* 11a.

(2:7b). They pursue *Torah, truth*, and the *fear* of God (2:1–3). They reject *falsehood*, lies and deceits, for this is what God detests. They are the *humble*, those who *submit to humiliation* and *trust* in God (3:12), and speak no evil (3:13). They are rewarded with God’s protection and with secured life (3:13).

The world cannot be completely destroyed because God promised the righteous to reward them when all the wicked are cut off (1:18).<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, the fate of *all the wicked is to be destroyed from before God* (1:7a), for their evil is too much to bear (1:3a). Wealth, according to TJ, promotes the evil of criminal activity, arrogance, complacency, agnosticism, and assimilation. They are the ones who transgress against man and God: they worship other *deities* (1:5b) or deny God’s power (1:12b). They abuse their economic and political power to increase deceits (1:9b, 3:1–4). Having acquired wealth, they are not involved in doing good or promoting the faith. On the contrary, they stay remote and skeptical (1:11b, 12:2). For their evil ways, they and their wealth will be utterly destroyed and there will be no power that can save them (1:7a, 13a, 18). Their fate will be a sacrifice, for they defiled the holy (3:1). Even their *corpses* will have no rest or respect (1:17b).

Whether Israel or the nations, God punishes the wicked with the fire of His *retribution* (1:18a, 3:8b). Wickedness can be tampering with the times of the festivals, waging war against the Jews, or disgracing them (3:18; 2:8, 10). Wickedness is being arrogant (1:15, 3:11) and ungrateful (3:7).

#### 4.2.7 *Mysticism*

Mysticism is expressed in both Rabbinic literature and TJ by the concept of *Shekhinah*, the Divine Presence, that is hidden yet revealed. Since God cannot physically dwell in a place, it is, instead, His *presence that dwells* in the midst of Jerusalem. Targum stresses that it is God’s decision to maintain His presence there (3:5a, 15b, 17a).

Three times in Zephaniah<sup>5</sup> TJ espouses not only the idea that the *Shekhinah* dwells in Jerusalem and among Israel, but also that it always dwells in *the land of the house of My Shekhinah*. In 3:7 TJ states that if Israel does not fear God and does not take instruction, their dwelling in the

<sup>4</sup> On this promise see, e.g., TJ Mic 7:14 and TJ Hab 3:2.

<sup>5</sup> And contrary to 1 Kgs 8:27a where TJ expresses doubt as to God’s dwelling among people. Cf. Smolar, *Studies*, 222.

land of Israel will cease. It does not allude to the *Shekhinah leaving* the land but rather to the idea that the land of Israel *is* the house of His presence. This remains so even when Israel goes into exile.

#### 4.2.8 *Eschatology*

Zephaniah's Day of YHWH takes on eschatological homiletics. The destruction of the two Temples and the long years of struggle against the Hellenist and the Roman empires probably caused TJ to believe that the prophet did not speak of literally *one Day* of retribution. Moreover, the Rabbis developed an intricate ideology of the World to Come.<sup>6</sup> Targum refers to the Day as *Time*, Period (1:10,12). However, when it does follow the text with 'Day,' TJ adds the expression '*that will come from before YYY*' (1:7,8,14 [2×]). On 'that *Time*,' God will exact judgment against the idolaters of Jerusalem and its vicinity. However, 'the Day' seems to relate to many events. It is a day of the *killing* and *slaughter* of the *wicked* who are idolaters and corrupt. It is a Day when the *palaces* will be *plundered* and the *mighty* will be *killed*. The *hastening Day* will be a day of much *noise* (1:14b,15b), when God will *pass a decree* of *utter ruin* (1:18b). It is the Day when God will *reveal Himself* to the world nations as the ultimate *judge* in order to *bring near* the (Heavenly) *Kingdom*, that is, the Messianic era (3:8).

#### 4.2.9 *The Love of Israel*

God's love for Israel<sup>7</sup> is unwavering for the sake of the righteous. Divine *inspectors* will be unleashed in order to identify the wicked who *relax in their properties* (1:12), so that the righteous will be spared. Targum paves the way for redemption by presenting the means of fear, truth and life of Torah (2:1–3). The *merits* of the ancestors *will come before God for a blessing* so that Israel will return from *their exiles* (2:7b). The *multiple boastings* of the nations against Israel *are heard before God* and are taken personally (2:8,10). Therefore, He *decided to redeem* His people (2:11a) and *with mercy He will bring them back* from where they *had been banished*.<sup>8</sup> The nations, as far away as the rivers of *India*, will bring '*My people*' as tribute to God upon their conversion (3:10). In this schema,

<sup>6</sup> See especially the chapter of *Heleq* in *Bavli, Sanhedrin*.

<sup>7</sup> On God's love in TJ see De Moor, "The Love of God," 257–65.

<sup>8</sup> TJ avoids the notion that it was God who had banished them to minimize the divine origin of the harsh punishment.

God will not forsake those Israelite *tribes* of the northern kingdom who were dispersed. They, too, will return to inherit the lands east of the Jordan river (2:9).

The blessings God promised Israel came to be (3:7a) and will continue to be realized. He will remove Israel's internal enemies (3:15a,18a) as well as her external foes who *took up arms against her* (3:18b). He will *relinquish the sins* (3:17b) of His *congregation* (3:14), *redeem* them (3:17a), and *the exiled and the scattered* (3:19b). As God will rejoice in the redemption of His people (3:17b), so will Zion rejoice and cry aloud with prayers of *praise* (3:14a).

While the Rabbis (and the Qumran community) separate Israel from other nations, TJ makes a point of separating Judah and especially the Davidic dynasty from the rest of the world. The latter concern indicates an early period of the pre-Hasmonean era. Here it is expressed in two ways: first, the title מֶלֶךְ, 'king,' is assigned only to the Judean kings, while מְלִכָּא is attributed to all others. Second, only Judean kings are identified by their affiliation with the tribe of Judah and/or the House of Judah. In our case, both *tribe* and *House* identify Josiah in the superscription.

#### 4.2.10 *Geographical Names*

Some geographical names are changed because they are no longer identifiable or do not fit a certain purpose. The *Mishneh* is replaced with the *Ophel* which was probably better known and made sense in the context of the geographical locations mentioned in the verse (1:10). The *Makhtesh* is replaced by *wadi Qidron* (1:11), which fits the parameters of the areas mentioned. In this way the map drawn shows the north (the Fish Gate), the south (the Ophel), the west (the Hill), and the east (Wadi Qidron).

#### 4.2.11 *Modification*

Targum modifies grammar, syntax, and number to make it clearer for the reader, thus creating a prosaic text. For example, the questionable אָסַף אָסַף is read in the first person אָסַף אָסַף ('I shall surely destroy,' 1:2). The second person singular is changed to agree with the second person plural עֲלֵיכֶם (2:5). This trend is especially evident in 3:7, where all the persons appear in the plural instead of a mixture of singular and plural, as in the previous and following verses. The verb 'you shall be' is added where an imperfect verb is missing (2:12). All the architec-

tural parts of the city of Nineveh receive the genitive form to agree with *בְּכַפְתָּרִיָּהּ* (2:14). The superfluous definite article in *בְּכַל־הָאָרֶץ* (3:19b) is omitted; the ‘voice of the day of YHWH’ is linked with ‘bitter, screaming’ by an explanatory ‘in which.’ In this way the voice and the screaming are separated from the enigmatic ‘there a warrior’ to allow the depiction of the day as a day of ‘trouble and outcry.’

The laconic and grammatically flawed 3:5b becomes clear through its transformation into an analogy. It also becomes a theological teaching opportunity about God’s way of dispensing justice, as well as a social criticism of Tj’s day.

Targum changes the singular to the plural for emphasis especially when the text involves idolatry and unethical behavior. For instance, the Judeans bowed to the *hosts* of heaven (1:5) and committed *deceits* and *lies* (1:9, 3:13). Moab committed *disgraces* (2:8). Sometimes such changes are made to standardize the person, number or suffix.

Accordingly, their punishment is augmented in the plural as well. The *valiant ones* will be killed (1:14) and *corpses* will fill the land like dung (1:17); the enemy’s land will turn into salt *plants* and *pits* of salt (2:9); the *enemies* of Israel will be removed (3:15).

#### 4.2.12 Clarification

Translation is often explanatory especially when the text is difficult. For example, ‘might’ means ‘houses’ and ‘houses’—‘palaces’ (1:13). ‘Corners’ are high hills (1:16) and *כְּפֹתָרִים* are the engravings on gates (2:14). ‘Man’ symbolizes ‘people’ or literally ‘the children’ of man (1:17), while ‘flesh’ refers to ‘corpses’ (1:17). *כְּרֵתִים* (Crete) should be read as the passive verb *כָּרַתִּים* (deserve to be cut off, 2:5), and ‘Canaan’ means the inhabitants of the land (2:5).<sup>9</sup> The difficult phrase *כָּרַת רְעִים נוֹת* is explained in the context of shepherds’ life (2:6), and v. 7 is to be read metaphorically, for people do not pasture or crouch like animals, but rather they ‘make a living’ and ‘spend the night.’ The unusual phrase *חֵיתוֹ-גֹי* is explained by the more common phrase ‘the beast of the field’ (2:14). Sometimes appositions are added for clarity. For example, ‘their dwelling place’ is the ‘land,’ ‘the habitation’ of the *Shekhinah*.

Like the prophets themselves, Tj also uses former literary traditions to clarify and to interpret. Especially noted is Tj’s interpretation of the

<sup>9</sup> Here the tendency is also to create a parallelism with ‘those who dwell in the sea district.’

very difficult 3:1 with the help of Lev 1:16, which enables TJ to render the verse as a critical warning instead of placing it in a redemptive context. The echo of the story of the Flood generation is heard in 1:2, and Hos 13:3 is echoed in 2:2. An allusion to the Tower of Babel story may be found in 3:9. The Rabbis' views, which are usually reflected in TJ, are ambivalent here.

Similarly, TJ repeats similar words and phrases found in earlier books to ensure uniformity of interpretation. For example, **חפש** (1:12) is translated by **בלש** as in Amos 9:3 and Obad 6; **נדחה**, **צלעה**, and the root **קרב** (3:19) by **מטלטליא**, **מבדריא**, and the root **קרב**, respectively.

In an unintentional finding, suspicion has arisen to suggest that TJ of the Twelve was originally composed by other than the meturgeman of the Former Prophets in addition to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.2.13 Conflation

We have two examples in which TJ conflates two different Targumic traditions (2:2, 3:18).

### 4.3 TARGUM JONATHAN AND RABBINIC TEACHING

TJ concurs with the Rabbis on several positions: it interprets **כרתים** as **כרתים** (2:5); it reads 3:1 as condemnation of Judah; it perceives the imperative 'wait' as a call to hope, and endorses the theology of the Kingdom of Heaven (3:8); it interprets 'call in the name of YHWH' as praying, and espouses the eschatological view of a new world in which Hebrew and one faith in God will be restored, as in the pre-Tower of Babel period. These will ensure world peace (3:9); **משפטיך** is read as 'judges' (3:15); the Day is understood as an era (3:16); only the wicked and the idolaters of the world will be purged (1:2–3, 7, 18, 2:5, 3:8).

The literary and cognitive relationship between TJ and the Rabbinic sources<sup>11</sup> has found its expression in this study, in spite of its textual brevity. Shinan's criteria for determination of primogeniture of texts

<sup>10</sup> This is also Tal's conclusion concerning the two parts of the Former and the Latter Prophets (*The Language*, e.g., 142, note 261).

<sup>11</sup> Quoting Richard S. Sarason ("Toward a New Agendum for the Study of Rabbinic Midrashic Literature," in *Studies in Aggadah, Targum and Jewish Liturgy in Memory of Joseph Heinemann*; eds Jakob J. Petuchowski and Ezra Fleischer; Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1981, 68) who called for a "fresh detailed exegesis of the texts themselves... with proper attention to nuance... and conceptual traits." Even though Sarason referred to the

have been partly applicable, for in most cases no parallel literary text has been found. However, in most cases the theological cognitive concepts have been.

Two deviations from the rule have been found in 1:12. Whereas in all Rabbinic discussions 1:12 receives a positive interpretation, in which Israel will be set free, reading חפֿש instead of חפֿשׁ, T<sub>J</sub> presents a contrary idea of divine “inspectors,” who will be sent to punish the Judeans (1:12). The second deviation concerns ‘congealed upon their lees’ from ‘congealed upon their guardians’ of *Pesikta Rabbati* 8,6. These cases, following Shinan, may suggest an independent Targumic exegesis and/or an unknown, orally transmitted tradition that found its way into the later literature of the *Pesikta*. Or, in the first case it may very well be an intent to adhere to the Massoretic context rather than to the Rabbis’ eschatological view,<sup>12</sup> or perhaps a personal, emotive reaction to time factors.

In a similar case, T<sub>J</sub> presents a contrary opinion to a Rabbinic source when T<sub>J</sub> blames the evil people as an obstacle to God’s decision to destroy the world, rather than the animals that are the obstacle to man (1:3).

The question of “in what way the meturgeman felt obliged to abide by the sages’ views” cannot be answered, even by considering all the criteria suggested by scholars.

Another criterion to determine an independent Targumic exegesis, as underlined by Shinan, is that which is based on an inner Aramaic word-play. This has been found in two instances: one, in the unusual choice of נברשתא in 1:12 (instead of the common בּוֹצִין), a play on the verb בלשׁ. Two, the use of the roots ררב/ררב (2:8,10) which mean ‘vaunt,’ self-aggrandizement,’ and hence ‘arrogance,’ respond to the two Hebrew verbs גדל, גּדף, and the noun גאון (note the resulting assonance).

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study of Midrashic literature, the same approach is applicable for the study of Targum and its relationship to Midrash. Hopefully, this study has lived up to Sarason’s vision.

<sup>12</sup> On the relationship between the Targumim, their authority, personal views or conformity to questions of Halakhah and the Rabbis’ views, see Faur, “The Targumim,” 19–26 and the bibliography there (also see the prologue to the Commentary). Faur concludes that in Palestine, the targumist could not dissent from the Halakhic norm to express a personal view. However, Zeph 1:12 shows otherwise. This might attest to the earlier stage of this particular targum, and more specifically, to a time around 70 CE.



## 4.4 HISTORICAL ALLUSIONS AND DATING

Targum has provided some glimpses into possible historical allusions and revealed typical targumic characteristics. Targum clearly responds to the Hebrew text faithfully by using literal as well as midrashic media. Its major concerns emphasize criticism of the leadership, hope for the return of Israel to their land, and for God's presence in their midst. Criticism at times is bold (1:14, 3:1), but expressions of Divine love and mercy provide solace, as well as religious and national hopes for reunification and a peaceful existence.

Targum not only functioned as a commentary to holy Scriptures, and the mouthpiece of Rabbinic teaching, but took up the message of the Prophets as the barometers of social conscience and articulated new theologies in order to deal with new realities. By disseminating its text alongside the Massoretic Text, Targum helped to keep the Jewish flame alive.

The subject of historical allusions is a subjective endeavor with no absolute certainty, and dating, therefore, is elusive and conjectural.

Dating of TJ Zephaniah cannot be decisively determined because of its progressive composition. The efforts by scholars to date it by the double comments in 3:18 have not been proven one way or the other. All mss carry this plus with insignificant variations. As we noted in the Commentary, R. Joseph's quotations are but paraphrases (by rote or otherwise), which explicate Scriptures in Aramaic. His "citation" in *Bavli, Berakhot* 28a is one such explanation. He and other Rabbis, as with TJ, address problems within the community, but with a major difference: TJ criticizes several groups of the pre-70 CE that followed a variety of calendars so that the festivals were celebrated at different times. The Rabbis referred to "disasters" concerning differing appointed times for the daily prayers during the 2nd–4th centuries of the Common Era. As for the second part of the verse, TJ wishes disaster on a foreign power that physically carried weapons against Israel. This fits well with the context of the next verse (v. 19a). This referral could apply to several events in the life of Israel from the 3rd century BCE to the mid 2nd century CE. However, if TJ meant the destruction of the second Temple, it would use stronger accusation and prayer language than a mere ׀. It seems that 3:18 reflects criticisms from the Second Temple period. In addition, the accusation against the 'kings of Israel' as being the enemies of Israel from within, together with the Temple functionaries (1:8,9, 3:15), as well as the interpretation of 'wealth'

to-be-destroyed as ‘palaces’ (1:13) better fit a pre-70 dating. Similarly, if we consider Ms V’s TJ of 3:5bβ as an alternative, true version, then TJ expresses disappointment with the shameless youth. Perhaps they were the followers of the ‘messiahs du jour’ or the Hellenized youth of the gymnasium.

Can we interpret the unique **לאַתראַ** (1:6) as a survival of **לאַתראַ אַתראַ** in allusion to the first Jewish Christians of the first centuries of the Common Era, or is it rather a mere scribal error?

Targum’s emphasis on the separation of Judah and the (Davidic) kings from foreigners also reflects an early stage of translation, when hope for the reinstatement of the Davidic House was still an issue (a subject of an utmost importance within the Qumran community).<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, we mostly witness the turmoil that ensued the destruction of the second Temple. The social, political, and religious upheavals during the Roman occupation seem to be echoed in TJ throughout the book. When words with double meanings like **תַּקְלָא** (‘obstacle; taxation’) and **נְמוּס** (‘custom’; νόμος, ‘law, principle, religion’) are used, one cannot help but read a criticism of the Romans and the Hellenized Jews. Judges and leaders were notoriously corrupt in the 3rd century (3:1–4,5,13,15). In an unusual and bold criticism, TJ suggests that the fall of Jerusalem and the slaughter of its people were a sacrifice brought about by the corrupt leaders (1:7, 3:1).

The pain of the Targumist is palpable when he takes the opportunity to allude to the massacre of Beitar, where zealots, perhaps foolishly and irresponsibly, defied the Romans and consequently paid the highest price (1:10,14b,17b). The hill was piled with corpses. Targum laments the severe punishment God brought upon Israel. If only their wickedness had not gone too far (1:3b).

Two major concerns for TJ are the exile and the return of Israel to its land. The theological concept of the *Shekhinah*, that evolved after the fall of Jerusalem, was created to deal with these concerns. It is a time when Jerusalem is no longer ‘the city of the dove’ but a city in ruins.

The prayer for the fall of ‘the Assyrian’ (2:13) can refer either to the Greek<sup>14</sup> or later to the Roman emperor. With such uncertainty, we may witness the activity of a number of Targumists over several

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the Temple Scroll.

<sup>14</sup> According to Rav Joseph in *Bavli, Yoma* 10a, ‘Assyria is Silq’ (Sliq or Sliqa), that is, Seleucia, the Seleucids. Cf. Jastrow, 994–95.

centuries before and after 70 CE. An overall examination points to a basic translation made in an early period followed by editing post 70 CE, as the nation went through traumatic events.

On the whole, Targum agrees with Zephaniah's message but tries to modify it in light of the difficult times it reflects. The Targumist (in whatever redactional stage he lived) uses the text to criticize his generation in order to avert further disasters and to be a teaching and a healing tool. This can be achieved only when the Jews turn away from corruption and from imitating other cultures and return to national and religious traditions. His message is to raise the hopes of his people and maintain their unity in faith after the loss of political independence and further exile and suffering. One way is to designate the Day as some time in the future so as to allow the process concerning Israel and nations to work out. Another way is through the Divine promise to keep God's *Shekhinah* among Israel.

Historical allusions may be found in 1:8–9, 10, 14, 2:12, 3:1, 3:15 and 3:17.

1. 1:8–9: When TJ describes the elite as *rushing to worship idols and to imitate the ways of the Philistines*, it may be criticizing the Hellenization of the elite Sadducees who imitate the ways and customs of the Greeks. This and the allusion to Temple functionaries, then, reflect the reality of the 1st century BCE up to 70 CE.
2. 1:10,14: Whether **גְּבִישָׁתָא**, **גְּבִעָתָא**, or **גְּבִשׁוֹתָא**, the translation deviates from the plural of the MT, which merits our attention. Perhaps Targum finds a textual opportunity to lament the gruesome slaughter of the last rebels led by Bar Kokhba' against Rome on the hill of Beitar.<sup>15</sup> Not one soul was spared. The choice of **גְּבִשׁוֹתָא** conjures up heaps of stones placed over corpses. This may date this allusion to the summer of 135. The participle plural in 'there, warriors are being killed' adds to this macabre picture of those days in Beitar. It gives the sense of either a current event or an event in recent times.
3. 2:12: The use of the imperfect 'will be' instead of the statement that the Cushites are (subject) to be killed by sword, could refer to the brutal invasion of Jerusalem on the Sabbath by Ptolemy, the

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<sup>15</sup> Some references are *Bavli*, *Gittin* 57ab–58a, *Ta'anit* 26b, 31a; *Yerushalmi*, *Ta'anit* 24ab.

satrap of Egypt, in 302 BCE. The walls of the city were breached, its inhabitants brutalized and taken to Egypt as slaves. A year or so later Ptolemy invaded Jerusalem again and left her even more devastated. Between 320–300 BCE, Ptolemy invaded the land of Israel four times.<sup>16</sup> Egypt ceased to be a political actor in Palestine from 198 BCE. Is it possible to ascribe this targum to a time prior to 198 BCE? Even if it was recorded here post 70, these invasions were so devious and ferocious that their echoes still lingered for centuries.

4. 3:1: Targum may have found an opportunity to criticize the leaders of Jerusalem during the late Hasmonean period up to 70 CE. Corruption was rampant, murder of political opponents was committed with impunity; Hellenists desecrated the holy and broke the Law. These leaders indeed multiplied atrocities to anger God. The young among them knew no shame (3:5b).<sup>17</sup>
5. 3:15: Despite of the clear phrase **יְהוֹה מְשַׁפֵּט יֵד**, TJ renders a statement that is far from the literal meaning of the text. It reflects a strong criticism of corrupt judges whose fate will be exile. Such a reality could indicate any time before and after 70. However, rejection of such judges was especially intense at the time of the *nasi* Judah II of the mid 3rd century, who sold judgeships to the higher bidder. Resh Laqish compared this act to idolatry.<sup>18</sup>

In this verse, TJ also changes the syntax and number in order to express another criticism. After the judges he attacks the ‘kings of Israel (who are) your enemies.’ Does TJ launch another assault on the Patriarchs (*nessi'im*) for abusing their power? Or perhaps it refers to the Hasmonean or the Herodian kings of the late 2nd century BCE through the 1st century CE? Targum of this verse can be ascribed to any period over three centuries, between late 2nd century BCE and 3rd century CE.

6. 3:17: In a context of Divine love for Israel, TJ translates the verb **חָרַשׁ** as ‘expiate sins or debt.’<sup>19</sup> This could be especially relevant after 70 CE and perhaps soon after 135.

<sup>16</sup> See Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization*, 50–58 and the bibliography there.

<sup>17</sup> At least by the reading of Ms V.

<sup>18</sup> E.g., *Bavli*, *Shabbat* 139a.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. TJ Mic 7:19.

## 4.5 THE MANUSCRIPTS AND THEIR STEMMAS

The manuscripts examined in this study originate in different provenances and times. When comparing them, with the inclusion of quotations from Rashi and Radaq, we observe that generally speaking, their text originated from the same written source, which we refer to as Targum Jonathan that evolved in Palestine. From the study of expressions, such as *בדמתרגם* or *מתרגמינן*, we conclude that in the 3rd–4th century TJ was known to have been translated by Jonathan ben ‘Uziel but forbidden to be quoted verbatim. However, its beginning was in oral form since early Second Temple period.

The stemmatic research has resulted in finding at least two Palestinian versions to co-exist during the Second Temple period and after.<sup>20</sup> Both found their way to the East and West sometime before 1105 (the date Ms F was copied), prior to the 6th–7th (the latest editing activity in Babylonia) and the 11th century. In Babylonia, TJ went through several editing phases. This is especially evident in the two Babylonian mss which have been shown to be rooted in Palestinian provenance and thus linked to all other groups. From Babylonia, pre- and post-redactions, TJ moved to Yemen, where both Palestinian and Babylonian versions have been maintained. However, in Yemen, TJ was partially adapted to local Aramaic dialects. Aramaic and Targumim have been cherished and studied to this day by the entire community. On the other hand, the Western mss show a strong affinity with the Palestinian textual tradition with minimal contact with the Babylonian redaction. However, here, because of a variety of reasons, the importance, and hence knowledge, of the Aramaic and TJ, eroded markedly to be cherished by a handful of scholars. This study supports Churgin’s conclusion that TJ (and Onkelos) “were formed and reformed through many centuries, gradually, invisibly” [to us].<sup>21</sup>

Total uniqueness in terms of textual tradition, therefore, cannot be ascribed to any community. One can merely discern a better or a worse preservation of the textual tradition.

Ms F has been shown to originate in Palestine. Its plene script resembles that of the Palestinian base of Eb 80 and 88.

<sup>20</sup> Ancient Palestinian targumic traditions in TJ have also been maintained by Komlosh (1973; 1980) and Churgin (1927), among others.

<sup>21</sup> Churgin, *Targum*, 36. He adds, “They were not a new attempt, supplanted none, but are the continuation of the Targumim used in the service.” He nevertheless maintains that TJ did not originate before the Maccabean age.

4.5.1 *Stemmas*

Clear *stemmas* have been found in the Ashkenazi and, surprisingly, in the Yemenite mss. However, even among them, similarities do occur. On the whole, the Yemenite stemma H,V shows one Babylonian branch while stemma Z,J,E shows another with survivals of a Palestinian version. Mss Z,J,E also share 2 *pisqaot* with the Palestinian Ms F in contrast to the Babylonian-based Mss H,V. In addition, this unique stemma shows affinity with Western mss which are Palestinian based. Ms H has been found to be much earlier than formerly dated, that is, between the 10th and the 12th century (or even earlier). It presents a manuscript in transition between the old Babylonian Eb 80 and Eb 88 and the later Medieval Yemenite mss.

The two stemmas of the Yemenite mss are very similar to the Babylonian Eb 80 and Eb 88 and seem partially evolve from them. Mss Eb 80 and Eb 88 carry unique readings that reflect Babylonian pronunciation and are more plene in writing than the Yemenite mss. They show their earlier date by the accents and grammarian signs, such as the use of *mappiq* above the final 'ה' and *hiriq* for a *vav* consecutive before a *sheva*. Some of these early signs still appear in Ms H, but by the 15th century they are no longer used and the Tiberian vocalization system takes over. On the whole, the Babylonian and the Yemenite mss show a symbiotic relationship.

The clear three stemmas found among the Ashkenazi mss are AR, MP, and UY. Similar text and forms occur in each group. Ms Y has been shown to rely on Ms U and correct it. Yet, cross versions do occur and a sub-stemma is found but with no determinant significance.

The Sepharadi mss cross versions among themselves, with no discernible stemmas. They also cross versions with the Ashkenazi mss and Ms F, which indicates the sharing of the same version in early stage of transmission, and a Palestinian origin. The very unique Ms W shows knowledge beyond the Sepharadi traditions, that is linked to the pre-Babylonian Yemenite stemma of Mss H,V (עופלא, מן גבעתא, גובריא). This may indicate either the availability of the two Palestinian versions in separate mss, or in one such a text. Rashi and Radaq know of three versions to one reading.

Differences in *phonemics* are found in nouns and verbs before the Babylonian vocalization system (in case of Yemenite or Babylonian mss) or the Tiberian vocalization system (in case of Palestinian mss) were incorporated into the vowel-less copied text (e.g., עוליא vs. עוליא in 3:5). The Western mss retained some of the Palestinian vocalization

system. As the Aramaic fell into disuse, its grammarian rules in particular became confused and Hebrew forms crept into the Aramaic.

Some mss have retained a plene script, and a double ״ to guarantee its consonantal value, typical of the Qumran system. We see this especially in Ms F and the Ashkenazi mss. This and the use of ״ as the tetragrammaton in 11 out of 13 Western mss versus ״״ in Yemenite (4 ״״ out of 5) and Babylonian mss suggests an earlier, Palestinian version of Targumic text. This observation has also shown a development from a triple ״ to ״״ with a bottom line, to form a װ, to an addition of a tail on its left, then to a truncation into ״ with a diacritic on its left side.

In addition, this study has shown a strong Palestinian origin, tenaciously preserved in the Yemenite mss, with minor changes as TJ moved Eastward, which agrees with Tal's study.<sup>22</sup>

#### 4.6 THE *Toseftot*

In examining the two additional *toseftot* to Zeph 3, we ascertained the priority of AT over PT,<sup>23</sup> and noted the immense influence of Zeph 3 on the *haftarah* of Zechariah and its interpretation.

#### 4.7 TRUE VARIANTS

True variants, which might point to a different recension altogether, are non-existent for they can be explained by several factors stemming from scribal activity and theological views. However, 27 possible true variants have been discerned, especially in the form of substitutions, indicating development in transmission. Additions of mostly *vav* conjunctive are ubiquitous and insignificant, for they reflect a dialectical preference. Many mss resort to shortened script for *mise-en-page* considerations based mostly on the financial circumstances of the scribe or his benefactor. The First Rabbinic Bible is especially culpable of this habit. This is not surprising, as it was the first attempt in a printed form to incorporate into one page not only the Hebrew with Tiberian vocalization and *te'amim*, plus the Aramaic text, but also Radaq and *massora parva*.<sup>24</sup> In some cases

<sup>22</sup> Tal, *The Language*, esp. 61–63, viii.

<sup>23</sup> Against Grelot (1966) and with Kasher (1996).

<sup>24</sup> The Ashkenazi Ms T of the 13th century had already incorporated Rashi into its Hebrew and Aramaic texts. However, its TJ is not punctuated.

scribes work on more than one manuscript. In most cases they copy *and* vocalize, yet some mss reflect the later work of a *naqdan*.

#### 4.8 THE EROSION OF TJ

In the Ashkenazi community, by the late 13th century to 14th century, the role of TJ was eroding. The majority of the mss in this study show neglect and ignorance of Aramaic. Even within distinct stemmas, errors are numerous. The scribe of the earliest ms from the 13th century (Ms T) shows pride in his erudition by composing a song of encouragement in Aramaic. He is the only scribe who separates the MT from TJ and adds Rashi in a separate column. In time, Rashi replaces TJ as commentary. By the time of Joseph Caro of the 16th century, Targum is no longer used in services. He remarks in *Shulhan Arukh (Orah Hayim 145)* that '(although) in the days of the *Gemara* sages it was the custom to translate so that the people understood...nowadays, they do not translate (into Aramaic) because there is no use in Targum, since no one understands it.' Hafetz Hayim (Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan) in his *Mishnah Berurah* on *Orah Hayim*<sup>25</sup> explains that 'now that we do not translate...it is (nevertheless) permitted to translate in the language of Targum even though it is not understood because it was created in the Holy spirit, but the Targum should not delay (the services).'

In his *Hilkhot Tefillah*, Rambam describes in detail the customs of praying and synagogal services. Targum was very much part of the services. He writes that 'from the time of Ezra it has been the custom to have a translator who translates for the people...so that they understand the words.' The *meturgeman* translates from the Torah by heart 'so that one may not say that Targum is written in the Torah.' After each verse Targum is followed. When reading from the Prophets, the rules are relaxed. One could translate three verses at a time, even two *meturgemanim* were permitted. The *Qedushah* part of the morning services was also translated. This was still the custom of reading Targum in Sepharadi communities in the 12th century. However, the deteriorating state of TJ from the 13th century and its separation from its Hebrew text clearly show that it no longer played a role in the life of the synagogal community, and was reserved for the schools

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<sup>25</sup> Published in 1894–1907.



and scholars. The errors displayed are numerous and in some cases absurd. Scribes copied automatically with little knowledge of Aramaic grammar or language.

In the academies, Aramaic was learnt because of the Talmud and because certain scholars used some Aramaic in their writings. Targum ceased to be essential in the Western synagogues because of several factors: it took too much time; Aramaic was not understood; the Rabbis explained the Scriptures in their sermons; for those who were interested in further study, a variety of commentaries were available in Hebrew (Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Radaq, Abrabanel, and others) and in their local languages following the introduction of printing.

This regrettable situation did not apply to the Yemenite community, which had adapted Babylonian Aramaic sometime in the *Geonim* period or even earlier.<sup>26</sup>

Aramaic has been part and parcel of reading, writing, and speech practices in the Yemenite community from ancient times to this day.<sup>27</sup> The use of Aramaic by Jews in northern Arabia in ancient times is evident from Jewish Aramaic inscriptions found there.<sup>28</sup> This phenomenon can be attributed not only to their strong sense of tradition, but also to the Jewish education of every male child from the age of 4–5. This included the Bible, Mishnah, Talmud, Sayings of the Fathers, commentaries, treatises, poetry, and sometimes Kabbalah.<sup>29</sup> The study by rote of Aramaic targumim, sometimes more than the Hebrew text, was a goal

<sup>26</sup> Shlomo Morag conducted methodical research on the Yemenite Hebrew and Aramaic, which he published in many books and articles. Among them, *מסורות הלשון העברית והלשון הארמית שבפי יהודי תימן אפיקים לתחיה*. Ed. Joseph Tobi; Tel Aviv: Ben Zvi Institute, 1988; *The vocalization systems of Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic: their phonetic and phonemic principles*. *Janua linguarum* 13; Gravenhage: Mouton, 1962. I was privileged to be his student and part of his research. Many modern Yemenite authors such as Yehuda Ratzaby, Joseph Tobi, and Joseph Qafah have written in abundance on the subject of the literary traditions of the Yemenite Jews; Albert van der Heide, *The Yemenite tradition of the Targum of Lamentations*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1981.

<sup>27</sup> Nowadays it is rather integrated in words and phrases into the daily use of Hebrew or Arabic.

<sup>28</sup> H.Z. Hirschberg, *ישראל בערב, קורות היהודים בחמיר וחג' אז מחורבן בית שני ועד מסעיה הצלב* (Tel Aviv: Mossad Bialiq, 1946), 42–46; Y. Ratzabi, *אוצר לשון הקדש שלבני תימן* (Tel Aviv, 1978), 25.

<sup>29</sup> On the use of Aramaic among the Yemenite Jews see Joseph Tobi, “The use of Aramaic in writing and in speech among the Jews of Yemen,” in *Linguistique de langues juives et linguistique generale* (eds. F.A. Péreyre et J. Baumgarten. Paris: CNRS éditions, 2003), 297–328, and the many important notes and bibliography.

in itself in the education of the young. In their study of Aramaic they learned to distinguish between Biblical and Talmudic (*Bavli*) Aramaic. Yerushalmi Talmud was studied by a few and its Aramaic was used according to the *Bavli* pronunciation. By their preserved pronunciation of the unpointed Talmud, the ancient Babylonian dialect as it was spoken in the academies can be reconstructed today.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, it is not surprising that even when diverse, the readings in the mss indicate correct Aramaic, unlike the corrupt forms found in Ashkenazi and Sepharadi mss.

Aramaic texts were drawn not only from such studied Aramaic texts. Some ancient prayers, once originated in Hebrew, were said in partial or full Aramaic. Some of these prayers were unique to the Yemenite Jews after, perhaps, being neglected by the Babylonian Jews. On five occasions midrashic portions in Aramaic were added to the *haftarot*.<sup>31</sup> These *toseftot* originated in the land of Israel and adopted by the Yemenite Jews in the 15th and 16th centuries.<sup>32</sup> Most of the *toseftot* were studied in the synagogues usually after the evening prayers and at home, rather than in schools where the shorter version of TJ was taught.

Apart from Aramaic texts within the context of the synagogue, other use of the Aramaic was made at events such as circumcision and marriage, and in texts such as *ketubbot* and *gittin*, *midrashim* and poetry.<sup>33</sup> Colophons in Biblical mss, as seen in The Manuscripts, were composed in both Hebrew and Aramaic. *Piyyutim* in particular boasted of mastery of the bi- or tri-languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic).

With the introduction of printed Bibles into Yemen, a strong opposition from local scholars rose against deviation from their most precise tradition.

However, ironically, the erosion of TJ in the synagogue and Aramaic in general has begun with their immigration to Israel. Except for Onkelos, TJ is not read in every synagogue during services. This is true in small communities where young people set the tone of the services. The Prophets are studied in public schools and Hebrew has become

<sup>30</sup> Shlomo Morag, "הארמית הבלית במסורתם של יהודי תימן," *Tarbiz* 30 (1961): 120–29.

<sup>31</sup> These additions (Judg 11:39; 1 Sam 2:1–10; 2 Kgs 4:1–37; Isa 10:32–33; Ezek 1:1) are presented with the commentary by HaRazah (Yihych ben Saliman Altajib) in Yitzhaq Damti's and Yehudah Levi Nahum's *ספר ההפטרייות* (Tel-Aviv, 1965), 137, 246–49, 9–15, 220–21, 225–26. Tobi, "The Use," 306.

<sup>32</sup> Kasher, *תוספתות*, 61–64; Tobi, "The use of Aramaic," 306.

<sup>33</sup> Tobi, "The use of Aramaic," 307–09 and the bibliography there.

the primary language of all Yemenites. Sermons are given in Hebrew every Shabbat morning. For the interested in further studies, many commentaries are available in Hebrew. Even when read in public, TJ is not studied but merely read.

And yet, when Israelis of Yemenite descent are asked why they continue to read Aramaic in synagogue services, they would answer in utter surprise: “But this is our tradition!”

The Yemenite poet and scholar, Mordekhai Yitzhari, summarizes the importance of TJ in the life of the Jewish community in this way: “The obligation of Targum among the Yemenite Jews demands that each of them and each of their offspring, for generations, be warned against erring or changing the tradition of their forefathers, which stands firmly, since the days of Ezra until our days, and from now to eternity. Our sages ruled explicitly which verses are not to be translated. And do not be a fool to add to what the Wise have ruled, for ‘whoever adds—lessens.’<sup>34</sup>

The study of TJ has been reserved for the scholars and this dissertation is a witness.

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<sup>34</sup> M. Yitzhari, *אוצר הדרשות* (vol. 2; Netania: HaAgudah LeTipuah Hevrah VeTarbut, 2000), 60–61.

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