Social History of the Jews in Antiquity

Studies in Dialogue with Albert Baumgarten

edited by

Michal Bar-Asher Siegal
and Jonathan Ben-Dov

Mohr Siebeck
Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, born 1979. A scholar of rabbinic Judaism. Her work focuses on aspects of Jewish-Christian interactions in the ancient world, and compares between Early Christian and rabbinic sources. She is an associate professor at The Goldstein-Goren Department of Jewish Thought, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. She was an elected member of the Israel Young Academy of Sciences; Harry Starr Fellow at Harvard university and visiting professor at Yale University.

Jonathan Ben-Dov, born 1971. Associate professor at the department of Bible, Tel Aviv University, formerly at the University of Haifa. He has been a research fellow at New York University (ISAW), The University of Durham (UK) and the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies (Jerusalem). His research involves The Dead Sea Scrolls and apocalyptic literature, history of the biblical Text, and time reckoning in the ancient world:
orcid.org/0000-0002-5346-6950
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“Reading Leads to Translating”
in a Multilingual Context

The View from Early Rabbinic Texts (and Beyond)

Steven D. Fraade

“In the beginning was the word” (John 1:1). Or we might say, from the Hebrew biblical perspective, that the world is created and sustained through words, that is, a pre-existent language, or according to some ancient interpreters, languages. For according to one view, the first human, Adam, spoke and understood seventy human languages (not counting those of the animals), the full panoply of semantic meaning, even before there were seventy nations (as listed in Gen 10).

According to this view, what happened at Babel (Gen 11) was not a splintering of one language into seventy, but a linguistic dispersion, a loss of the originary ability of the speakers of seventy languages to understand one another, that is, to be fully multilingual, a condition only to be restored in messianic days. In-

1 It is a pleasure to offer this article as a tribute to Al Baumgarten, who, within a wide range of important subjects, has contributed to our appreciation of the bilingual context of scriptural translation: Albert I. Baumgarten, “Bilingual Jews and the Greek Bible,” in Shem in the Tents of Japhet: Essays on the Encounter of Judaism and Hellenism, ed. James L. Kugel, JSJSup 74 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 13–30. In what follows, I have benefited from comments on earlier versions from Philip Alexander, Yair Asulin, Harold Augenbraum, Peter Cole, Noam Mizrahi, Hindy Najman, and Tessa Rajak. Needless to say, its shortcomings are mine alone.


3 For an association between nation and language already before Babel, see Gen 10:31. Gen 11:7 could be read similarly. For the rabbinic view that humans spoke seventy languages even before Babel, based on Gen 11:1, see y. Meg. 1:11 (71b) (ed. Academy of the Hebrew Language, 748), discussed by Fraade, “Before and After Babel,” 42–43. For the same idea in Arabic Muslim sources, especially the tenth-century grammarian Ibn Jinni, see Abdelfattah Kilito, The
creasingly, theorists (and practitioners) of translation recognize that the model of translation as a bilingual mediation between a self-contained monolingual source culture on one side and another self-contained monolingual target culture on the other, between which translation seeks to transfer information, does not sufficiently take into account the extent to which all societies are, at some level, multilingual and to which each contains a variety of languages and dialects in a variety of modes of contact with one another. In this view, “internal” translation or code-switching within a single culture is at least as prevalent as “external” translation across cultures and nationalities. This is certainly the case for the ancient cultures of the eastern Mediterranean, to one of which I will now turn my attention. In what follows I wish to examine a cluster of ancient rabbinic sources of the early first millennium CE, for which the very act of reading (and understanding) entails translation by the same, presumably bilingual (Hebrew and Aramaic, at the very least) individual subject.

1. The King’s Torah

Deut 17:14–20 legisitates a set of rules that mandate (or allow) the installation of a human king of Israel, but only on the conditions that his royal prerogatives and

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Tongue of Adam, trans. Robyn Creswell (New York: New Directions, 2016), 27–31. Here I define “multilingualism” as “the knowledge of more than one language by a person or a social group and the ability to switch from one language to another in speech, in writing, or in speaking.” This is from Benjamin Harshav, The Polyphony of Jewish Culture (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 23–40 (“Multilingualism”), citing from 25. Harshav further clarifies that multilingualism can be “personal, social, or inter-subjective,” that is, not all members of a society need to be equally multilingual to characterize that society as being multilingual.


5 This bilingual performance by a single individual is distinct from the rabbinically prescribed public synagogue ritual in which the Hebrew reader and Aramaic translator are to be separate persons, alternating between the reading of a written Hebrew verse and its oral Aramaic rendering for each successive verse in turn. See Philip S. Alexander, “The Targumim and Rabbinic Rules for the Delivery of Targum,” VTSup 36 (1985), 14–28; Steven D. Fraade, “Rabbinic Views on the Practice of Targum, and Multilingualism in the Jewish Galilee of the Third-Sixth Centuries,” in The Galilee in Late Antiquity, ed. Lee I. Levine (New York and Jerusalem: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 253–286.

excesses be limited. Verses 18–19 add the requirement that he shall always have a Hebrew Torah scroll (presumably of Deuteronomy) with him to read regularly, so that he may learn to revere God, and obey his teachings and laws:

18 When he is seated on his royal throne, he shall have a copy of this Teaching written for him on a scroll by the levitical priests.

19 Let it remain with him and let him read in it all his life, so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God, to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching as well as these laws. (NJPS)

In short, the king is to be accompanied and guided by the Torah in all his deeds. In the hands of a rabbinic midrashist of Sifre Deuteronomy, however, the verb “learn” is unpacked so as to produce a progressive series of steps in the rabbinic study curriculum, of both written and oral Torah, each one of which “leads to” the next:7

"Let it (the Torah scroll) be with him and let him read in it all his life … so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God" (Deut 17:19): This teaches that the sight (Vatican MS) (of it) leads to reading (miqraʾ/Scripture), reading leads to translation (targum), translation leads to oral teaching (mishnah), oral teaching leads to dialectical study (talmud), dialectical study leads to performance (maʿaseh), performance leads to reverence (yirʾah) (of God).8

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8 Sifre Deut 161 (ed. Finkelstein, 212). My translation follows Finkelstein’s edition, with the exception that “sight” renders hammarʾeh found in MS Vatican, and the texts of the commentaries of Rabbenu Hillel, R. Suleiman, and David Pardo, as well as Genizah fragment TS 12.852a (unavailable to Finkelstein). Finkelstein has hammoraʾ (“fear”), which is found in MSS Oxford, London, and the editio princeps (Venice, 1545). As I understand the midrash, by having the Torah with him at all times, the king sees it, which leads to his reading it, etc. This makes more exegetical sense than beginning the chain of study with “fear,” which doesn’t appear until later in the verse. David Weiss Halivni has kindly pointed out to me that this is an unusual use of the word marʾeh, which usually denotes “appearance,” as in the appearance of a symptom of skin disease. However, in one other place the Sifre uses marʾeh in the sense of the seeing.
What is retrojectively ascribed to the king, or we might say, is projectively modeled by the king, is the sequence of reading, translating, study, and practice for people in general (ideally, at least). Each stage of performance draws the performer to the next, as if they were intrinsically interconnected. Thus, having the Torah scroll by his side in all of his activities, in such contexts as are specified in m. Sanh. 2:4 and Sifre Deut 161 (ed. Finkelstein, 211), leads him to read it. Note, in particular for our purposes, the liminal role of targum (translation) as a buffer or bridge between migrå (Scripture/written Torah) and mishnah (oral teaching).

Having read a section of Scripture (presumably as little as one verse), one recites its translation (presumably into Aramaic), before preceding in turn to the rabbinic oral (or mishnaic) teaching and dialectical interpretation, leading in the end to performance and reverence of God. Note the change in order from the scriptural text, thereby enabling the process to begin with marʿeh (“sight,” from the root rʾh) and to end with yirʾâ (“reverence,” from the root yrʾ), creating an inclusio based on a word play. For our purposes, translation immediately follows the reading of Scripture and precedes its rabbinic interpretive expansion, presumably in Hebrew. Compare Saul Lieberman’s observation: “But the first rudiment of the interpretation of a text is the ἑρμηνεία, the literal and exact equivalent of the Hebrew הרנה[targum], which means both translation and interpretation.”

Note, as well, the bilingual (or even trilingual) nature of this pedagogic exercise, at least as it would have been practiced, however widely or narrowly, in Palestine in tannaitic times: Scripture is read in (biblical) Hebrew, targum of something. In Sifre Deut 339 (ed. Finkelstein, 388) Moses, in pleading with God not to die, says: “Would it not be better for the people to say ‘Moses is good’ from seeing [him] than … from hearing [about him]?"

9 For a similar biblical sequence and midrashic interpretation, see Deut 31:12 as commented upon by Midrash Lekah Tov (ed. Buber, 5:105): “למען ישמעו ולמען ילמדו: ‘והיראה מביאה לידי שמירה’. ‘והיראה מביאה לידי שמירה’: ולמען ישמעו發布 הה’, ‘והיראה מביאה Lawsonך’: ‘That they may hear and that they may learn’: This teaches that listening leads to study and study leads to reverence [of God]. ‘And they observed to do’: And reverence leads to observance”). The Sifre commentary is not extant for this verse. Compare Sifre Deut 106 to Deut 14:23 (ed. Finkelstein, 167, with note): מגדים שהמעשר מביא את האדםigliליל הלומד להשתהפ çevא ליידר את. ודי להלום המתרומא (‘So that you may learn to revere the Lord your God’: This tells us that tithing leads a person to study of Torah”). I have not found any other passages that follow this exegetical pattern, except for a baraita in b. Menah. 43b:


11 Saul Lieberman, Hellenism in Jewish Palestine, 2nd ed. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1962), 48, with n. 15.
is recited in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, and oral teaching is in early rabbinic (mishnaic) Hebrew. Aramaic targum here is hardly a substitute for Hebrew Scripture but its accompaniment, or, in Walter Benjamin’s term, its flowering.\(^\text{12}\)

I presume that while Scripture was read from a written text (scroll), targum, like the other rabbinic components of the oral study curriculum, was recited either spontaneously or from memory, or some combination of the two, but not from a written text.\(^\text{13}\) Thus, while translation is an immediate extension of reading, it is linguistically and performatively distinct from it, even as it serves as a bridge to the oral forms of rabbinic interpretive teaching that follow. This is similar to the public (synagogue), liturgical reading of the Hebrew of Scripture and the counterpointal oral recitation of targum, except that there it is to be performed interspersely by two distinct persons (reader and translator),\(^\text{14}\) whereas here, in private study, the two are performed by the same person (e.g., the king).

2. Two Tales of Leading Rabbis

Lest we think that the king’s Torah reading, translating, and study are unique to him, or that he is exceptional in this regard, note how similar are the portrayed reading and study practices attributed to two leading rabbis of the tannaitic period (although the collection in which they appear is considerably later):\(^\text{15}\)

[R. Akiba] said: … I will go and study a section of Torah. He went to the schoolhouse and began to read from a student’s tablet, he and his son. He studied Scripture, Targum,


\(^{13}\) For the condoning of written texts of targum, see Fraade, “Rabbinic Views on the Practice of Targum,” 256. For the prohibition of their being read from in public worship, and hence their performative oral recitation, see ibid., 256–257. For the spontaneous (or semi-spontaneous) nature of such oral recitation, see ibid., 259–262. See especially j. Meg. 4:1 (74d).

\(^{14}\) See Fraade, “Rabbinic Views on the Practice of Targum,” esp. 283.

\(^{15}\) Avot deRabbi Natan B 12 (ed. Schechter, 29); Avot deRabbi Natan B 28 (ed. Schechter, 58). There is little consensus regarding the dating of Avot deRabbi Natan, in either of its two recensions. As in all rabbinic anthologies, the dating of its constituent parts is likely to be earlier, but by how much, especially in the absence of earlier parallels, is impossible to determine. In any case, the two rabbis portrayed are dated to the late first and early second centuries CE. I hasten to add that I make no presumptions as to how widely or narrowly the practice portrayed here was actually practiced. In this regard, the later date of the editing of Avot deRabbi Natan compared to that of the Sifre (mid- to late third century) allows us to consider the possibility (by no means certainty) that the representation of the practice of scriptural reading, translation, and study in these sources would have rung true over a considerable period of time, regardless of who practiced them.
Midrash, Halakhah, and Aggadah, (arcane) speech and parables; he studied everything. (trans. Saldarini)\(^{16}\)

אמרו עליו על דבר יוהן בן זכאי שלא הניח פרשה אחת מן התורה שלא למדה ומדת מקרא ותרגומין (הלכות ואגדות שיחין ומשלות הכל למד)

It is said of Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Zakkai that he did not leave one section of the Torah unstudied; he studied Scripture and Targum, Halakhah and aggadah, (arcane) speech and parables. He studied everything. (trans. Saldarini)\(^{17}\)

Once (or twice) again, Aramaic targum functions as a buffer and bridge between written Hebrew Scripture and oral Hebrew rabbinic teaching, leading, as it were, from the former to the latter, differentiating between them even as “translating” between them. Clearly, the king’s reading and study practice, as portrayed by the *Sifre* commentary, was not unique to him, but represents an anachronistic projection of later rabbinic practice onto him, that is, the rabbinicizing of the king and thereby the interpretive authorization of the practice. In the case of the passage about Rabbi Akiba, the pedagogic nature of this practice is made explicit in its locus (“schoolhouse,” בית המדרש) and medium (“tablet,” לוח), as well as his being accompanied by his son. It is not clear, however, how much of what Rabbi Akiba recited or studied was written on the tablet. I assume that it was limited to Scripture, or mnemonic scriptural headings, with the other components of his study, beginning with translation, being generated from the scriptural reading, but oral in their performance. However, of this we cannot be certain.\(^{18}\) Nor can we assume from the formulaic listing of the components of oral teaching (*mishnah*) that these were fixed elements always studied in the same order, especially since not all such lists include the same components, with only these two passages (other than that regarding the king) containing “targum.”\(^{19}\) In any

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\(^{16}\) Avot deRabbi Natan B 12 (ed. Schechter, 29; trans. Saldarini, 94–95, with notes on 95).

\(^{17}\) Avot deRabbi Natan B 28 (ed. Schechter, 58; trans. Saldarini, 166). This text also appears in *Sop.* 16.6 (ed. Higger, 289). A similar portrayal of rabbinic study according to its curricular divisions appears in Avot deRabbi Natan A 14 (ed. Schechter, 57; trans. Goldin, 74), once again depicting the practice of Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Zakkai, but without the element of targum. Similarly, see b. Sukkah 28a; b. B. Bat. 134a.


\(^{19}\) See above, n. 17.
event, both passages emphasize the all-inclusive nature of the exemplary study curriculum: “He studied everything.”

3. Reading Extends to Translation

In the following early rabbinic passages, reading and translating are performed by the same person in such a way that the former (in Hebrew) *extends* to the latter (in Aramaic). First, we need to look at the mishnaic backdrop to a passage from the Tosefta, m. B. Meṣiʿa 2:8a (MS Kaufmann):

מתא ספרות. קורא בתיה אוח [ל]ישלוהו יוט. ואס אוח יודייע לתקחת ( תונלנה). אובל (אס) לא ימד.

One who finds scrolls may read in them once every thirty days. But if he does not know how to read, he unrolls them. But he may not learn from them something new, nor may someone else read with him.

Someone who finds someone else’s lost scrolls is responsible for maintaining their condition until they can be returned to their rightful owner. This entails minimal use, lest intensive use cause them damage. (It would be like my asking you to store my car while I’m away, to drive it around the block once a week so it will start when I return, but not to drive it over long distances.) In the case of lost scrolls according to the Mishnah, reading them occasionally (once per month) so they do not become moldy, or, in case of someone unable to read, periodically rolling them from beginning to end is permissible (even advisory). However, intensely studying the lost scrolls, or having two people simultaneously read from them, would exceed the limited use rule and potentially cause damage to the scrolls.

Along similar lines, we find the following in the Tosefta (t. B. Meṣiʿa 2:21 [ed. Lieberman, 70]):

מצא ספרות קורא בתיה אוח ישלוהו יוט. ולא קורא בתיה אוח יודייע לתקחת. ולא יקרא בתיה אוח יודייע לתקחת ויתרגום. ולא יקרא בתיה אוח יודייע לתקחת ויתרגום. סמקוס אשים אוח ספרות אוח ישלוהו יוט אוח ספרות אוח ישלוהו יוט באחדות. אוח ישלוהו יוט באחדות. אוח ישלוהו יוט באחדות.

One who finds scrolls may read in them once every thirty days, but should not read in them the section and repeat (it), and should not read in them the section and translate (it). And three people should not read from a single volume (all at once), and one should not open a scroll more than three columns. Samkhus says: In the case of new ones, once in thirty days, but for old ones, once in twelve months.

Here too a balance is struck between reading the scrolls occasionally so they do not degrade, and using them in a way that will cause them damage. More specifically to our topic, simple reading (presumably in Hebrew) is permissible (if not advisable), but reading a section of scripture twice, presumably for the sake of review or memorization, is not; this is comparable to the prohibition of “learning something new” in the related mishnah. Similarly, reading *and trans-
lating is comparable to reading twice (and perhaps to studying) and is therefore prohibited as excessive use. As in the cases of the king and Rabbis Akiba and Yoḥanan ben Zakkai, I assume that the scroll that is read contains the biblical text (of whatever length) in Hebrew alone, while the translation is not read directly from a written text (whether a scroll or a tablet), but produced by the finder of the scroll either spontaneously or from memory, or by some combination of the two. The other details of this passage need not detain us for present purposes.

A somewhat similar understanding of the relation between reading and translating is found in the following baraita (actually two), in Hebrew, and accompanying editorial glosses, in Aramaic, from b. Qidd. 49a, the passage as a whole being bilingual:

Our Rabbis taught: [If he says, “I will betroth you] on condition that I am a karyana’,”20 once he has read three verses [of the Pentateuch] in the synagogue, she is betrothed. R. Judah said: He must be able to read and translate it. Even if he translates it according to his own understanding? But it was taught: R. Judah said: If one translates a verse literally, he is a liar; if he adds thereto, he is a blasphemer and a libeller. Then what is meant by “translation”? Our [authorized] translation.21 Now, that is only if he said to her “karyana’.” But if he says: “I am a kara’,” he must be able to read the Pentateuch, Prophets and Hagiographa with exactitude.22 (trans. Soncino)

What defines a “karyana’” or “reader” for purposes of a man’s fulfilling this as his condition for betrothing a woman? Two opinions are given, the first being anonymous (but attributed to R. Meir in some talmudic manuscripts) and the second being attributed to R. Judah bar Ilai: (1) Read three verses of scripture, presumably as part of the synagogue lection for that day, or (2) read and translate, presumably also three verses. According to the second view, “read-

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20 The talmudic manuscripts vary on the exact term, but the meaning is the same, as it is below. For this term for “reader,” see Michael Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2002), 1042–1043. On this term, see also Shlomo Naeh, קריינא איגרתא: Notes on Talmudic Diplomatics,” in Sha arei Lashon: Studies in Hebrew, Aramaic and Jewish Languages Presented to Moshe Bar-Asher, vol. 2: Rabbinic Hebrew and Aramaic, ed. Aharon Maman, Steven E. Fassberg, and Yochanan Breuer (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2007), 228–255 (Hebrew).

21 I take this to denote Targum Onqelos to the Pentateuch or Targum Jonathan to the Prophets, or their antecedents, that acquired authoritative status in the Babylonian rabbinic academies, in contrast to the more paraphrastic “Palestinian” targumim of the Land of Israel.

22 I understand “exactitude” (בדיוקא) to mean with precision, clearly enunciated.
ing” incorporates both reading and translating. The anonymous voice of the gemara (switching from the Hebrew of the baraita to the Aramaic of the editorial layer) asks whether he can translate according to his own understanding of the Hebrew, for to do so risks the dual pitfalls of translating too literally or too freely, as expressed in another baraita attributed to R. Judah. Rather than run these risks, according to the anonymous voice of the gemara, we should assume that the translator does not translate spontaneously but does so from “our [authorized] translation,” that being Targum Onqelos for the Pentateuch (and Targum Jonathan for the Prophets) in Babylonia. However, I would argue that this does not express the view of the opening baraita (reflecting Palestinian rabbinic norms), which understands the translation to be “according to his own understanding,” notwithstanding the risks (of the second baraita). Once again, targum is viewed, at least by the anonymous voice of the opening baraita, to be a spontaneous product of its performer, which is not to deny the possibility that some mixture of memorization or familiarity with targumic tradition is at play.

Our final rabbinic example is from the Babylonian Talmud (Ber. 8a–b), once again referring to private reading and translating:

אמר רב הונא בר יהודה אמר רבי אמי: לעולם ישלם אדם פרשיותיו עם הצבור שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום

Rav Huna bar Judah says in the name of Rabbi Ammi [(Palestine, ca. 300)]: A person should always complete his parashot [weekly lections] together with the congregation, [reading] twice the Hebrew text and [reciting] once the [Aramaic] Targum. (trans. Soncino, modified)

This refers to private study during the week in preparation for the scheduled Torah lection of the upcoming Sabbath. It seems to me unlikely that the person described here would have had written copies of both the Torah lection and its Aramaic translation from which to read (as might have been the case in later times). The primary status of Scripture vis-à-vis targum is signaled by the former being read twice, as compared to the latter being recited once. Assuming (if only ideally) that the person had some level of facility with both Hebrew and Aramaic, the Aramaic recitation, once again an extension of the reading of Scripture, is produced by him in the course of private study.

Turning to liturgical practice, while the rabbinic prayer service is mainly in Hebrew, some key prayers (e.g., Kaddish) are partly or fully in Aramaic. Close to our interests in the reading of Hebrew Scripture followed, verse by verse, by its Aramaic targum, we find an example of interversal translation of Scripture

It is not clear whether this is also performed in the synagogue or in private. Mishnaic law states that the same person cannot both read and translate during the same public synagogue service, but that might not reflect actual practice. See Fraade, “Rabbinic Views on the Practice of Targum,” 257 n. 9; 258–259 n. 12. Hence, the Soncino translation translates loosely: “He must be able to read and translate it.”
from Hebrew to Aramaic embedded in the “Kedushah de-Sidra” prayer. While it is recited overall in Hebrew, the three verses of the Kedushah doxology (Isa 6:3; Ezek 3:12; Exod 15:18) are first recited, one by one, in scriptural Hebrew and then rendered in paraphrastic Aramaic targum. Given the context, it is unlikely that these verses were so rendered so as to make them comprehensible to an audience that understood Aramaic but not Hebrew (however fluent they might have been in either), but to enhance and dynamically enunciate their dialogical significance and performativity, originally between angels and humans, but now with the added linguistic counterpoint of alternating Hebrew verses with their Aramaic interpretive renderings. Later commentators understood the function of this inner-translation as providing a modicum of scriptural study through the recitation of scriptural verses and their targumic interpretive accompaniments, with the combination of reading and translation constituting the core or first stage of study.\(^{24}\)

Finally, we find a similar alternation of biblical verses in Hebrew and their targumic translations in Aramaic in some of the incantation bowls. Their bilingual purpose in this context is unclear and requires a detailed examination in the broader context of magical language(s).\(^{25}\)

4. Conclusion

We have examined several rabbinic texts that speak of targum, mainly in the private context of study, as an extension of reading, and in some passages as the first step to more intensive study. Translation thereby serves as both a buffer and a bridge between reading and interpretation. It linguistically differentiates, while


providing a hermeneutical and performative path between them. Those doing
the reading, translation, and study can be presumed to be bilingual (at least). In
terms of the broader phenomenon of the “internal” translation in multilingual
societies, translation is as much aimed at a “target” audience within as without.
If at the core of the human culture and society is language as a medium of com-
munication, both between and within multiple nations, societies, and cultures,
biblical translation, one of the longest standing and most broadcast of trans-
lations, has much more to teach us.

5. Afterword: The Physicality of Targum
as an Extension of Reading

Our earliest (ca. 1000 CE) scribal evidence for the format of Palestinian Pentateu-
chal targumic texts, as discovered in the Cairo Genizah, contains not a continu-
ous targumic (Aramaic) text, as we find in the texts of the Aramaic translation of
Job among the Dead Sea Scrolls,26 but each complete scriptural verse first in He-
brew and then immediately following in Aramaic, employing the same script for
each Hebrew verse and its targumic rendering. These texts appear on parchment
in three continuous columns per page, the same format as the Hebrew Torah
scroll itself. Therefore, it is a misrepresentation of this interversal placement
of targum to represent it as if it were a continuous Aramaic translation alone.27
This practice, of writing verses in alternating sequence between Hebrew and
Aramaic targum, continued well into the Middle Ages, especially in Germany,
long after Aramaic had ceased to function as a Jewish vernacular language. In
other places, the targum (Onqelos) was moved, demoted as it were, to the side
in a smaller script and subsequently replaced either by Rashi’s commentary

26 On the relation of these Aramaic translations of Job to rabbinic targum of the same book
(and the Syriac Peshîṭta), see David Shepherd, “Will the Real Targum Please Stand Up? Trans-
lation and Coordination in the Ancient Aramaic Versions of Job,” JJS 51 (2000): 88–116; idem,
Targum and Translation: A Reconsideration of the Qumran Aramaic Version of Job, Studia
Semitica Neerlandica 45 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2004); idem, “What’s in a Name? Targum and
targum of Job (on which see my forthcoming book, Before and After Babel, chap. 5), we have
no way of knowing whether it would have contained just the targum to Job, or an interlinear
(interversal) format of alternating Hebrew and Aramaic verses. The same can be said (also in
chap. 5 of my forthcoming book) regarding different views on the rescue of scrolls of scrip-
tural translation from a burning building on the Sabbath.

27 For such texts of the so-called “Palestinian targum,” see Michael L. Klein, Genizah Manu-
scripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch, 2 vols. (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College
Alternatively, some manuscripts provide the first word or few words of the Hebrew scriptural
lemma before providing the verse’s Aramaic translation. This may be termed an abbreviated
interversal format. Klein misleadingly translates the Genizah fragments that he edits as if they
were continuous texts of Aramaic translation.
(especially in France) or Saadia’s Arabic translation (especially in Spain), so that the placement of both Scripture and targum would represent two continuous readings, as they had not existed previously.  

Thus, both physically and functionally, the Aramaic targum never existed apart from its Hebrew scriptural source in pre-medieval times, the two being recited, studied, and written (as best we can tell), as what Gideon Toury (citing Brian Harris) terms a “bi-text,” with Hebrew and Aramaic alternating verse by verse so as to differentiate between the functions and statuses of Scripture and its interpretive translation. In short, we have no evidence whatsoever for the existence of a free-standing Jewish “Aramaic Bible” (as existed for other ancient languages, especially the Greek of the Septuagint, but also non-Jewish Aramaic translations of the Herew Bible such as the Samaritan Targum and the Syriac Peshiṭta). Rather, as I have argued in greater detail elsewhere, the practice of targum, as performed both in the synagogue and in private study, should be seen as “internal translation,” reflecting a broader social phenomenon, across ages and continents, of “internal bilingualism.” Reading and translation, miqraʾ and targum, are performatively interlinked for a shared audience.

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30 For a laudable exception, translating Scripture and targum interversally, see Philip S. Alexander, trans., *The Targum of Canticles*, The Aramaic Bible 17A (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2003). Alexander states (xi): “All the Targumim should be read in dialogue with the biblical text and not as free-standing translations.”


32 For details, see above, n. 4.
Bibliography


