



# Contradictions and Coherence in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

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CONTRADICTIONS AND COHERENCE IN TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHAN

A dissertation presented

By

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to

The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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in the subject of

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CONTRADICTIONS AND COHERENCE IN TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHAN

Abstract

The subject of this dissertation is the conception of congruity in the narrative of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (Ps-J). A literary study of Ps-J reveals a two-part conundrum regarding congruity in the Targum. First, congruity seems to be disrupted with regard to the vertical dimension of the Targum, that is, between the Aramaic translation and its Hebrew *Vorlage*. This appearance of incongruity is considered below in the analysis of five cases of translation that seem to state in the Aramaic the exact opposite of what the corresponding passages state in the Hebrew. Second, congruity seems to be disrupted with regard to the horizontal dimension of the Targum, that is, within the literary boundaries of the Ps-J corpus itself. This appearance of incongruity is considered below in the analysis of twenty-two cases of contradiction that seem to emerge in the narrative as a result of the targumist's interpretive translation and expansion of the text. On account of the apparent incongruities, two interrelated questions arise: As regards the vertical dimension, does Ps-J preserve continuity with its Hebrew *Vorlage*? As regards the horizontal dimension, does Ps-J itself render a coherent narrative?

Addressing this query, the present dissertation offers a contribution to the study of Ps-J, and to the study of ancient Jewish literature in general, by analyzing a broad variety of passages that within the surface structure seem to disrupt narrational congruity, and, moreover, by demonstrating how these passages ultimately prove to be congruous once the targumist's presuppositions about the narrative are taken into consideration. This dissertation hopes to show that the targumist approached the Hebrew text with a

particular set of assumptions, as regards both his exegetical reading of each passage and his knowledge of interpretive tradition associated with the respective passage. These assumptions, while not always obvious, are, nevertheless, discernible in the targumic text; and it is these assumptions that carry the underlying congruity of the text that may otherwise seem fractured. Inasmuch as targumic additions are often terse, they are, in effect, often difficult to reconcile at first sight with the Hebrew *Vorlage* and with the broader context of the Ps-J narrative. Attention to the targumist's assumptions, therefore, is necessary to discern the manner in which the apparently discrepant passages hang together.

The presence of apparent contradictions in Ps-J also implies two characteristics about the targumist himself. First, while the targumist exegeted the Hebrew text and sought to bring clarity to ambiguity in the biblical narrative, he nevertheless had high tolerance of and exercised patience toward literary tension in the surface structure of the Aramaic text, but, to be sure, tension that is ultimately brought to resolution in the light of the targumist's assumptions about the text. Second, the targumist maintained certain readerly expectations of his audience: he expected his audience to be able to follow his interpretive approach to the text in order to ascertain the sense of the translated and expanded text and to discern the overall coherence and logical consistency of the narrative.

Reckoning with these aspects of Ps-J, this study shows how a coherent synchronic reading of a difficult narrative is possible and, indeed, necessary for a better understanding of the literary nature of an early Jewish text as well as for the understanding of the encounter a text such as Ps-J provided for its audience.

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לאמא  
ולמשפחה

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

אלו ואלו דברי אלהים חיים הן

—*b. Eruvin* 13b

### 1.1 Overview

The subject of this dissertation is the conception of congruity in the translation and the expansions of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (Ps-J).<sup>1</sup> A literary study of Ps-J reveals a

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<sup>1</sup> Ps-J is an Aramaic translation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. Defining the term “Targum,” John Bowker writes: “The word *targum* means in general ‘translation’ or ‘interpretation’, but in particular it is most often used to refer to the Aramaic versions of the Hebrew Bible” (John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture* [London: Cambridge University Press, 1969], 3). For a discussion of the basic features of Ps-J, see Alexander Samely, *The Interpretation of Speech in the Pentateuch Targums: A Study of Method and Presentation in Targumic Exegesis*, TSAJ 27 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 180. The date and provenance of Ps-J is a difficult question that has received much scholarly debate. This discussion is outside the scope of this dissertation, but the view presupposed in this work is expressed best by Stephen A. Kaufman, who regards Ps-J “a kind of compote of Onqelos, the Palestinian Targum, midrashim, and even the Babylonian Targum, a compote in terms of both language and content; a document, therefore, post-talmudic in date at the very earliest, in spite of the presence of admittedly early traditions within it” (Stephen 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*, eds. D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara, JSOTSup 166 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992], 124). With slightly more specificity, Avigdor Shinan proposes a seventh or an eighth century date for the production of Ps-J (Avigdor Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” *JJS* 36, no. 1 [1985]: 87; and see idem, אגדתם של מתורגמנים: תיאור וניתוח ספרותי של החומר האגדי המשוקע בכל התרגומים הארמיים הארץ ישראליים לחמשה חומשי תורה [Jerusalem: Maqor, 1979], 1:119–46; and 2:xvi). For a selection of proponents of a late-date for Ps-J, see Paul V. M. Flesher and Bruce Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction*, Studies in Aramaic Interpretation of Scripture 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 71–73, and 87–89; Michael Maher, ed. and trans., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, The Aramaic Bible 1B, eds. Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 12; Donald M. Splansky, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Its Relationship to Other Targumim, Use of Midrashim, and Date” (PhD diss., Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1981); and Avigdor Shinan, “Dating Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Some More Comments,” *JJS* 41 (1990): 57–61. For the key advocate of an early date, see C. T. R. Hayward, “Inconsistencies and Contradictions in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: The Case of Eliezer and Nimrod,” *JSS* 37, no. 1 (1992): 31–55; Robert Hayward, “Red Heifer and Golden Calf: Dating Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” in *Textual and Contextual Studies in the Pentateuchal Targums*, ed. Paul V. M. Flesher, SFSHJ 55, Targum Studies 1, eds. Jacob Neusner et al. (Atlanta, GA: Scholar’s, 1992), 9–32; idem, “The Date of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Some Comments,” *JJS* 40 (1989): 7–30; idem, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic,” *JSS* 34, no. 1 (1989): 77–93; and idem, “Jacob’s Second Visit to Bethel in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, eds. Philip R. Davies and Richard T. White, JSOTSup 100 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990), 175–92. For an introductory survey of scholarship on this question, see Roger Le Déaut, *Introduction à la Littérature targumique* (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1966), 89–101. For a more general discussion of

two-part conundrum regarding congruity in the Targum. First, congruity seems to be disrupted with regard to the vertical dimension of the Targum, that is, between the Aramaic translation and its Hebrew *Vorlage*. This appearance of incongruity is considered below in the analysis of five cases of translation that seem to state in the Aramaic the exact opposite of what the corresponding passages state in the Hebrew. Second, congruity seems to be disrupted with regard to the horizontal dimension of the Targum, that is, within the literary boundaries of the Ps-J corpus itself. This appearance of incongruity is considered below in the analysis of twenty-two cases of contradiction that seem to emerge in the narrative as a result of the targumist's interpretive translation and expansion of the text.<sup>2</sup>

On account of these apparent incongruities, a series of interrelated questions arise about the nature of the Targum and the approach of the targumist: As regards the vertical dimension of the Targum, does Ps-J preserve continuity with its Hebrew *Vorlage*?<sup>3</sup> As

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the Targumim (e.g., Targum Onqelos, Targum Neofiti, Targum Jonathan, the Cairo Genizah manuscripts, the Fragmentary Targumim, etc.), see Philip Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, eds. Martin Jan Mulder and Harry Sysling (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 217–53; Fleisher and Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction*, 71–264; Alexander Samely et al., *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity: An Inventory, from Second Temple Texts to the Talmuds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 248–53; Peter Schäfer, "Bibelübersetzungen II (Targumim)," in *TRE VI*, eds. Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980): 216–29; Bernard Grossfeld, trans., *Targum Onqelos to Genesis*, The Aramaic Bible 6B, eds. Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1990), 1–40; and Martin McNamara, trans., *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, The Aramaic Bible 1A, eds. Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 1–50.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the conception of "the targumist," Samely offers a sound perspective: "The targumist, as occurring in these pages, is but an abstraction from the text for which he is responsible. Where I refer to the targumist as 'he', I do not wish to prejudge the historical question whether he was a man or a woman, even if, given what we know about male predominance in rabbinic intellectuality, the likelihood of the latter alternative is remote. Similarly, the singular should not be taken to imply that there could not have been many" (Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 5).

<sup>3</sup> See discussion of this in Michael L. Klein, "'Converse Translation': A Targumic Technique," *Bib 57*, no. 4 (1976): 515–37; reprinted as Michael L. Klein, "'Converse Translation': A Targumic Technique," in Avigdor Shinan et al., eds. *Michael Klein on the Targums Collected Essays 1972–2002*,

regards the horizontal dimension of the Targum, does Ps-J itself render a coherent narrative?<sup>4</sup> Regarding the targumist's approach to the production of the Targum, the question emerges: Was the targumist even committed to producing a text that would exhibit logical consistency with reference to its Hebrew *Vorlage* and with respect to the internal composition of the narrative? That is, might the targumist(s) have simply intended for the Targum to serve as an aggregate of variant and discrepant traditions rather than as a narrative that read coherently?<sup>5</sup> Or might the targumist(s) have simply been careless in introducing expansions into the Targum without regard for their

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SAIS 11 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 19–39 (citations of this article will refer to the 1976 publication); Siegmund Maybaum, *Die Anthropomorphien und Anthropopathien bei Onkelos und die spätern Targumim, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ausdrücke Memra, Jekara und Schechintha* (Breslau: Schletter, 1870), 21; C. H. Cornill, *Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1886), 153; Roger Le Déaut, “Un phénomène spontané de l'herméneutique juive ancienne: le ‘targumisme,’” *Bib* 52, no. 4 (1971): 517; Joseph Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), 154 and 238, n. 67; R. P. Gordon, “The Targumists as Eschatologists,” in *Congress Volume: Göttingen 1977*, ed. J. A. Emerton, VTSup 29 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 113–30; Steven D. Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation: Pre-Israelite Hero and History in Postbiblical Interpretation*, SBLMS 30 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1984), 116–19 (I thank Professor Fraade for pointing me to this source); Étan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of the Bible*, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 33–34; R. P. Gordon, “‘Converse Translation’ in the Targums and Beyond,” *JSP* 19 (1999): 3–21; Uwe Glessmer, *Einleitung in die Targume zum Pentateuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 86, n. 309; Beate Ego, *Targum scheni zu Ester: Übersetzung, Kommentar und theologische Deutung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 29; Jerome A. Lund, “Converse Translation in Peshitta Ezekiel,” *TC* 6 (2001): <http://purl.org/TC> or at <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/v06/Lund2001.html>; and Gerald A. Klingbeil, “Looking over the Shoulders of Ancient Translators: Contextualization and Ancient Translation Techniques,” in *Misión y contextualización: Llevar el mensaje bíblico a un mundo multicultural*, ed. Gerald A. Klingbeil, Serie monográfica de estudios bíblicos y teológicos de la Universidad Adventista del Plata 2 (Argentina: Editorial Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2005): 3–21.

<sup>4</sup> For some discussion of this, see Moses Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan (Thargum Jonathan Ben Uziel Zum Pentateuch) Nach Der Londoner Handschrift (Brit. Mus. Add. 27031)* (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co, 1903), XX–XI; Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 132–46; idem, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 72–87; Étan Levine, “מקורות סותרים בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל,” *Sinai* 64 (1968): 36–38; idem, “Internal Contradictions in Targum Jonathan Ben Uzziel to Genesis,” *Aug* 9, no. 1 (1969): 118–19; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 5. On the question of textual unity, see Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity*, 26.

<sup>5</sup> For such a proposal, see Étan Levine, “מקורות סותרים בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל,” *Sinai* 64 (1968): 36–38; idem, “Internal Contradictions in Targum Jonathan Ben Uzziel to Genesis,” *Aug* 9, no. 1 (1969): 118–19.



compatibility within the broader context of the narrative?<sup>6</sup> Examination of these questions helps to determine the targumist's commitment to logical consistency within the narrative, both on the vertical level and on the horizontal level, and to establish the manner in which a text such as Ps-J can and should be read.

To this end, this dissertation investigates the issue of (in)congruity in Ps-J and offers a close study of a variety of passages that seem to disrupt Ps-J's congruity. However, rather than viewing the two forms of apparent incongruity—*between* Ps-J and its Hebrew *Vorlage*, and *within* the corpus of Ps-J—as separate phenomena, this study examines them as expressions of the same targumic approach to translating and expanding the Hebrew text. The reason is that a close reading of the relevant passages in Ps-J demonstrates that the targumist approached the Hebrew text with a particular set of interpretive assumptions that he did not make obvious in his Aramaic rendition of the narrative, but which assumptions prove to undergird the Aramaic text and ultimately to sustain the congruity of the narrative in Ps-J.

The starting point of this study is the text of Ps-J as we have it, that is, its present literary surface. As Alexander Samely contends, the scholar of ancient Jewish literature has “the obligation to articulate how the text—*as it is*—actually works as a whole.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, this study seeks to answer the question: Does the narrative of Ps-J work as a consistent and a coherent whole? If it does, then how can and should it be read as a

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<sup>6</sup> For such a proposal, see Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 132–46; idem, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 72–87.

<sup>7</sup> Italics original. Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity*, 4; see also 14 and 20–26. For a similar perspective, see Robert E. Longacre, *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence: A Text Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 37 and 39–48*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 9.

coherent narrative? A synchronic analysis of the present form of the text endeavors to articulate how Ps-J does indeed work as a consistent and a coherent literary whole.

Diachronic analysis too proves invaluable in this examination in that it helps to reveal the different stages and the process of the text's literary development. Considering the text of Ps-J from both perspectives, this study is both analytic and evaluative. The aim is to articulate the specific details in the various passages that suggest logical inconsistency in the text and then to draw conclusions about the concepts and processes that were in effect during the production of the Ps-J narrative.

The fundamental problem addressed in this thesis, as noted above, is the appearance of contradiction in Ps-J and, therefore, the ensuing question as to whether Ps-J is a logically consistent document and what, if any, principles of logic inhere within this text. For the purposes of this study, the term *contradiction* may be defined as follows: the existence of two or more logically incompatible propositions with reference to the same object, situation, and point in time.<sup>8</sup> These incompatible propositions may appear on

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<sup>8</sup> Concerning the meaning of contradiction, Aristotle offers the following discussion: "That the most certain of all beliefs is that opposite statements are not both true at the same time, and what follows for those who maintain that they are true, and why these thinkers maintain this, may be regarded as adequately stated. *And since the contradiction of a statement cannot be true at the same time of the same thing, it is obvious that contraries cannot apply at the same time to the same thing. For in each pair of contraries one is a privation no less than it is a contrary—a privation of substance. And privation is the negation of a predicate to some defined genus. Therefore if it is impossible at the same time to affirm and deny a thing truly, it is also impossible for contraries to apply to a thing at the same time; either both must apply in a modified sense, or one in a modified sense and the other absolutely*" (italics mine; Aristotle, *Metaph.* 4.6.1011b14–22; translation from Hugh Tredennick, trans., *The Metaphysics*, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933–35], 1:198–99, lines in Eng. 10–17). See also Richard Purtill, "Principle of Contradiction," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 737; and C. W. A. Whitaker, *Aristotle's De Interpretatione: Contradiction and Dialectic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 183–203. Along with Aristotle's principle of contradiction, my definition seeks to incorporate the following two notions of "contradiction" offered in the *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*: 1) "a proposition, statement, or phrase that asserts or implies both the truth and falsity of something"; and 2) "a situation in which inherent factors, actions, or propositions are inconsistent or contrary to one another" ("Contradiction" in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. [Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996], 251–52). For a discussion of the meaning of *coherence*, see Teun Adrianus van Dijk, *Text and Context: Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse*, Longman Linguistics Library 21 (London; New York: Longman, 1977), 93–129;

various compositional and literary levels in the narrative—they may be expressed by the narrator and by the characters; they may appear in the non-expanded text as well as in the expansions of Ps-J; and they may obtain between the Aramaic text and its Hebrew *Vorlage*, and within the boundaries of the Ps-J corpus.<sup>9</sup> Analysis of these apparent contradictions is guided by the following questions: How does Ps-J render a contradictory translation of its Hebrew *Vorlage* and yet expect the translation to be read as consistent with the Hebrew text? How are apparent contradictions and logical inconsistencies able to obtain within the narrative of Ps-J and yet express narrational coherence? How does the text of Ps-J expect its audience to respond to these apparent contradictions—to resolve or to tolerate them?<sup>10</sup> In short, is there an underlying commitment to logical compatibility between the Targum and its Hebrew *Vorlage*, on the one hand, and with respect to the various statements within the boundaries of the Targum itself, on the other?

In this analysis of contradictions, attention is given both to the explicit statements expressed in the surface text, as well as to the implicit knowledge that remains unexpressed (e.g., the targumist’s exegetical process of reading the passages in question as well as his dependence on interpretive traditions associated with these passages).<sup>11</sup> The

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Siegfried J. Schmidt, *Texttheorie: Probleme einer Linguistik der sprachlichen Kommunikation*, Uni-Taschenbücher 202 (Munich: Fink, 1973), 154–58.

<sup>9</sup> See Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures,” 217–53.

<sup>10</sup> Avigdor Shinan, “Live Translation: On the Nature of the Aramaic Targums to the Pentateuch,” *Prooftexts* 3 (1983): 43; idem, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 83.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the function of context within a narrative, see Robert de Beaugrande and Wolfgang U. Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, Longman Linguistics Library 26 (New York: Longman, 1981), 33, 63, 94; Teun Adrianus van Dijk, *Some Aspects of Text Grammars: A Study in Theoretical Linguistics and Poetics*, *Janua Linguarum* 63 (Mouton; Paris: The Hague, 1972), 40–42, 81–83, and 96–106; B. Hatim and I. Mason, *Discourse and the Translator* (New York: Longman, 1990), 14; Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen, *Collaborating towards Coherence: Lexical Cohesion in English Discourse, Pragmatics & Beyond* 146 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2006), 7; van Dijk, *Text and Context*, 94; Peter

study shows that this implicit knowledge is a necessary element within the text that contributes to the meaning of the respective passage. In effect, this analysis takes into account the various levels of context in the light of which the targumist produced the text—the immediate context of the narrative, the context of the entire Hebrew Bible, and the context of a broad corpus of rabbinic tradition known to the targumist.<sup>12</sup> This approach demonstrates how all levels of context help to explain the presence of the apparent contradictions in the narrative and their effect on the coherence of the narrative.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, if indeed there is a commitment to logical consistency on the part of the producer of this text, then this is instructive regarding the readerly expectations of the audience of this text. The presence of apparent contradictions in the text and the absence

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Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989), 28–33, 47–49, 269; and for a discussion of the macrostructure of a narrative, see Longacre, *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence*, 40.

<sup>12</sup> Samely writes: “It becomes clear that the targumist, in telling new stories, often makes use of material known from other parts of MT. This means, events that are not connected with each other in MT become linked. . . . The effect this has on the literary fabric is that it increases the textual links between various parts of MT. . . . In short, the use of original MT ingredients in targumic narrative additions increases the *coherence* of the text; to those links of various parts of MT present in the original, new ones are added. . . . A certain amount of material comes from non-neighbouring parts of MT, and in so far as this is the case, these additions increase the coherence of the biblical text” (italics original; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 66). See also Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 87; Avigdor Shinan, “Post-Pentateuchal Figures in the Pentateuchal Aramaic Targumim,” in *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara*, eds. Kevin J. Cathcart and Michael Maher, 122–38, JSOTSup 230 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 122; Arnold Goldberg, “The Rabbinic View of Scripture,” in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, eds. Philip R. Davies and Richard T. White, JSOTSup 100 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990), 156; Yairah Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, trans. Yael Lotan (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 126–47; and Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, ISBL (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 15.

<sup>13</sup> Samely writes: “Given our near-total ignorance of specific historical contexts for the texts in the project corpus [referring to the analyzed literature of Jewish antiquity], together with our uncertainty of what would have counted as an ‘incoherent’ text in ancient Jewish culture, one has to explore all manner of thematic links between text parts and look for them on all levels of the text, from the single sentence upward” (Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity*, 182). See also idem, 21; and Longacre, *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence*, xii.

of explicit attempts to reconcile these inconsistencies suggests that the targumist expected his audience to be able to follow his interpretive approach, and, thereby, to ascertain the sense of the translated and expanded text, and to discern the overall coherence of the narrative. Commenting on the presumed relationship between the author and the audience in the context of the Hebrew Bible, Meir Sternberg contends that

it all boils down to the rules of the writing game, namely, to the premises, conventions, and undertakings that attach to the discourse as an affair between writer and audience. What kind of contract binds them together? What does the writer stand committed to? What is the audience supposed to assume? What do both sides expect historiography (or fiction) to be and do?<sup>14</sup>

Focusing specifically on the type and extent of knowledge expected of the reader in the ancient Jewish encounter with the text, Willem Smelik writes:

In learned circles, familiarity with the [biblical] text was a prerequisite. The importance of fore-knowledge for the rabbinic act of interpretation emerges from the brief way in which the interpreted text is quoted: *a word is enough to the wise....* Thus all who wanted to participate in any study or debate would need a memorized version of the Tora, but the ability to quote any given biblical verse is only a first requirement for following the intricacies of rabbinic discussions. A student or scholar would also need a thorough knowledge of traditional exegesis, as well as halakhic concepts and terminology. While sages quoted from a vast array of traditions, they selected those parts which were useful for their arguments.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, ISBL (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 26.

<sup>15</sup> Italics original. Willem F. Smelik, *Rabbis, Language and Translation in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 222–23. For additional sources that address this issue of audience, whether broadly or with some degree of specificity, see Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity*, 16–18, 26–28, 96–98, 128–30; Abraham Tal, “Is There a Raison D’être for an Aramaic Targum in a Hebrew-Speaking Society?” *Revue des Études Juives* 160, no. 3 (2001): 357–78; Michael L. Klein, “The Aramaic Targumim: Translation and Interpretation,” in *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia*, ed. Jože Krašovec, JSOTSup 289 (Ljubljana: SAZU; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 317–31; idem, “Palestinian Targum and Synagogue Mosaics,” *Immanuel* 11 (1980): 33; Josep Ribera, “The Targum: From Translation to Interpretation,” in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, eds. D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara, JSOTSup 166 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 218–25; Shinan, “Live Translation: On the Nature of the Aramaic Targums to the Pentateuch,” 43; Stephen 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*, eds. Lee I. Levine (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), 253–88; Anthony D. York, “The Targum in the Synagogue and in the School,” *JSJ* 10, no. 1 (1979): 74–86; Zeev Safrai, “The Origins of Reading the Aramaic Targum in Synagogue,” *Imm* 24–25 (1990): 187–93; Arie Van der Kooij, “The Origin and

The immense knowledge of interpretive tradition implicit within the terse expansions and required for understanding the targumic text points toward the expectations the targumist had of his audience.<sup>16</sup> The targumist expected the audience to be able to recognize his assumptions underlying the Aramaic narrative. In an analysis of the targumist's expansion at Ps-J Exod 2:21, Maher comes to the following conclusion about the assumed tradition in the expansion: “[The targumist of Ps-J] did not need to elaborate on those details because he knew that they were familiar to his audience. He was satisfied to allude to the traditions and to allow his readers to complete the picture for themselves.”<sup>17</sup> Oftentimes, Ps-J's laconic expansions result in literary tension in the narrative of Ps-J, and this literary tension, in turn, suggests that the text of Ps-J required an active and an informed audience.<sup>18</sup>

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Purpose of Bible Translations in Ancient Judaism,” in *Archiv für die Religionsgeschichte* 1, eds. Jan Assman et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 204–14; Philip Alexander, “How Did the Rabbis Learn Hebrew?” in *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda*, ed. W. Horbury (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 71–89; and for a literary-theoretical perspective, see de Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, 7–8, 94; van Dijk, *Text and Context*, 93–95; Tanskanen, *Collaborating towards Coherence*, 20; Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 91–93, 249, 260.

<sup>16</sup> Regarding the oftentimes terse presentation of the story in the biblical text, Michael Fishbane writes: “[T]erse narrative description ... may stimulate a reader to actively supplement underdeveloped details. These participant assumptions build up in a reader's mind and affect his evaluations of the unfolding narrative” (Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts* [New York: Schocken Books, 1979], xi).

<sup>17</sup> Michael Maher, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Exodus 2.21,” in *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara*, eds. Kevin J. Cathcart and Michael Maher, JSOTSup 230 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 99.

<sup>18</sup> On the general question of audience, Robert E. Longacre and Shin Ja J. Hwang write: “If the knowledge bank and experiential background of the hearer/reader were exactly the same with the knowledge bank and experiential background of the speaker/writer, interpretation should not present great problems—unless the text is inadvertently or purposely ambiguous at one or more points” (Robert E. Longacre and Shin Ja J. Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis* [Dallas: SIL International, 2012], 16). See also Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 90–97, 258; Tanskanen, *Collaborating towards Coherence*, 20; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 41; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 16; and for a broader discussion as to how the hearer/reader generally follows a story see Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 71–79.

Finally, the presence of apparent contradictions in Ps-J reveals the fact that the targumist did indeed have a high tolerance of and that he did exercise patience toward literary tension within the surface structure of the Aramaic text, but, as already stated above, tension that is ultimately brought to resolution by means of the targumist's assumptions about the text. Samely remarks: “[I]t is clear that the interest of the targumists was directed primarily at the coherence of Scripture, not at the coherence of the resulting Aramaic version *as such*.”<sup>19</sup> And in another study, Samely remarks: “[T]he ‘tolerances’ for incoherence may have been quite different from those we take for granted in our own reading.”<sup>20</sup> However, the targumist's presupposition of an underlying coherence in the narrative demonstrates that the targumist was neither uninterested nor

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<sup>19</sup> Italics original. Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 169; see also 115, 118–19, 181, 183. For a discussion of tolerance of various types of incoherence in a text, see de Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, 7, 113–38. On some comments pertaining to the sages wanting to resolve inconsistencies in the Bible, see Yair Zakovitch, “Inner-biblical Interpretation,” in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism*, 27–63, ed. Matthias Henze (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 45–46; Isaac Heinemann, *דרכי האגדה* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1949), esp. 57–60; for a brief discussion of the principle that “Two verses of Scripture contradict each other until the third verse comes and decides between them,” see Günter Stemmerger and H. L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. and ed. Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 21; and for a description of the thirty-two *Middot* used in rabbinical hermeneutics see idem, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 22–30; in b. Šabb. 13b, Hananiah b. Hezekiah b. Garon is said to have resolved contradictions between the book of Ezekiel and the Torah; and in Avoth de-Rabbi Nathan (ARN), R. Eliezer instructs: *הוי שקוד ללמוד תורה ומה שתשוב*: “Be diligent to study the Torah in order to answer the heretic [*epikores*] concerning the words of the Torah [and to demonstrate] that they do not contradict” (Solomon Schechter, ed., *נוסחא ב פרק ל*, [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1997], p. 66).

<sup>20</sup> Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity*, 16–18, and see 26–28, 180–90. With reference to the biblical text, Robert Alter remarks: “It seems reasonable enough, however, to suggest that we may still not fully understand what would have been perceived as a real contradiction by an intelligent Hebrew writer of the early Iron Age, so that apparently conflicting versions of the same event set side by side, far from troubling their original audience, may have sometimes been perfectly justified in a kind of logic we no longer apprehend”; and he later adds that “the biblical writers and redactors ... had certain notions of unity rather different from our own, and that the fullness of statement they aspired to achieve as writers in fact led them at times to violate what a later age and culture would be disposed to think of as canons of unity and logical coherence. The biblical text may not be the whole cloth imagined by pre-modern Judeo-Christian tradition, but the confused textual patchwork that scholarship has often found to displace such earlier views may prove upon further scrutiny to be purposeful pattern” (Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, revised and updated [New York: Basic Books, 2011], 20 and 133, respectively).

even disinterested in presenting a coherent narrative. Rather, the targumist's perspective of the Targum seems to have been such that the surface structure of the narrative could exhibit the appearance of contradiction and yet maintain narrational coherence by virtue of the underlying presuppositions about the narrative. Ps-J, in the end, arguably does demonstrate coherence, albeit coherence that exists beneath and that sustains the surface structure of the targumic text.<sup>21</sup>

## 1.2 A Brief History of Research

Each form of incongruity in Ps-J—whether between Ps-J and its Hebrew *Vorlage* or within the literary corpus of Ps-J itself—has received a variety of explanations in modern day scholarship.

First, as regards the appearance of incongruity between Ps-J and its Hebrew *Vorlage* (the vertical dimension), Michael Klein termed this phenomenon “converse translation” and pointed to various passages in the Pentateuchal Targumim that produce a translation in the Aramaic that appears to be exactly opposite in meaning to the corresponding passages in the Hebrew.<sup>22</sup> Preceding Klein, Joseph Heinemann, whom Klein mentions in his article, also observed this phenomenon of converse translation and concluded that “this is an inelegant manner of interpreting the Scripture, wherein the

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<sup>21</sup> After discussing a series of apparently conflicting passages in the biblical text, Sternberg contends that the Bible still maintains a type of coherence: “Not that the whole clicks together into a neat moral. It is, as usual, difficult coherence that the narrative favors” (Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 361, and see 348).

<sup>22</sup> Klein, “‘Converse Translation’: A Targumic Technique,” 515–37. Klein observes that this phenomenon was already noted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Elias Levita, *Meturgeman: Lexicon Chaldaicum* (Isny: 1541). See also Klein's comments on converse translation in Michael Klein, *The Masorah to Targum Onqelos*, Targum Studies: New Series, ed. Paul V. M. Flesher, Academic Studies in the History of Judaism (Binghamton, NY: Global, 2000), 216–17.



interpretation is contrary to that which is said.”<sup>23</sup> The impetus for the targumist’s rendering of converse translations in the Targum is understood to be the presence of theological or literary difficulties in the text. Étan Levine, who follows and builds upon the work of Klein, states:

Despite its self-presentation as a translation or paraphrase of Scripture, there are many cases in which the *targum* presents a direct contradiction of the Hebrew text, rather than merely an interpolation or interpretation. Whether or not these outright contradictions represent an early (pre-Tannaitic) technique lacking the elegance of the ‘creative philology’ of the genre *midrash*, the fact remains that where the Hebrew Bible implicitly or explicitly violates theological, ethical or esthetic values, the *targum* directly contradicts Scripture.<sup>24</sup>

In other words, this view contends that instances of apparent converse translation represent the targumist’s outright and forced inversion of the Hebrew text.

Since Klein published his article “‘Converse Translation’: A Targumic Technique” (1976), scholars have taken note of and studied this phenomenon further in the Targumim and in other translations of the Bible.<sup>25</sup> Among the goals of these scholars

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<sup>23</sup> In the original: צורה בלתי-אלגנטית זו של פרשנות דברי הכתוב בנגוד מפורש לנאמר בו (Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 154, and see p. 238, n. 67); see also Klein, “Converse Translation,” 516–17, n. 6. Even prior to Heinemann, C. H. Cornill noticed this phenomenon in the Peshitta of Ezekiel and stated: “Ja sogar die denkbar grösste Freiheit, durch Hinzufügen oder Weglassen der Negation den Sinn in sein directes Gegentheil zu verkehren, hat sich ~~§~~ ihrer *Vorlage* gegenüber wiederholt erlaubt” “Indeed, by means of additions or subtractions of the negative particle, the Syriac Peshitta repeatedly allowed itself the extreme freedom to take up the sense that was exactly opposite to its *Vorlage*” (Cornill, *Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel*, 153). However, see Jerome A. Lund who sternly criticizes Cornill’s conclusions on the translation conventions of the Peshitta of Ezekiel (Lund, “Converse Translation in Peshitta Ezekiel,” at <http://purl.org/TC> or at <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/v06/Lund2001.html>).

<sup>24</sup> Italics original. Levine, *The Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 33. For more on the Targumim resolving ambiguities in the Hebrew text, see David Golomb, “‘A Liar, a Blasphemer, a Reviler’: The Role of Biblical Ambiguity in the Palestinian Pentateuchal Targumim,” in *Textual and Contextual Studies in the Pentateuchal Targums*, ed. Paul V. M. Fleisher, SFSHJ 55, Targum Studies 1, eds. Jacob Neusner et al. (Atlanta, GA: Scholar’s, 1992), 135–46.

<sup>25</sup> The following includes sources that both precede Klein (some of which are mentioned by him) and those that follow Klein: Maybaum, *Die Anthropomorphien und Anthropopathien bei Onkelos und die spätern Targumim, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ausdrücke Memra, Jekara und Schechintha*, 21; Cornill, *Das Buch des Propheten Ezechiel*, 153; Le Déaut, “Un phénomène spontané de l’herméneutique juive ancienne: le ‘targumisme,’” 517; Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 154 and 238, n. 67; Gordon, “The

has been to nuance this targumic technique and to ascertain precisely how it was that the targumist achieved these apparent converse translations. That is, while Klein emphasized the “contradictive” element of the translation, only sometimes mentioning the possibility that these translations might be products of interpretation,<sup>26</sup> a number of scholars who followed Klein gave more weight to the interpretive aspect of these translations.<sup>27</sup>

For example, with respect to Klein’s assessment that Gen 4:14 contains a case of converse translation (see Onqelos, Neofiti, and Ps-J), Bernard Grossfeld remarks: “M. L. Klein ... mistakenly considers N[eofiti] here as employing a converse translation because of the negative לית אפשר here. *In fact, the Hebrew essentially implies the negative*

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Targumists as Eschatologists,” 113–30; Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation: Pre-Israelite Hero and History in Postbiblical Interpretation*, 116–19; Levine, *Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 33–34; Gordon, “‘Converse Translation’ in the Targums and Beyond,” 3–21; Glessmer, *Einleitung in die Targume zum Pentateuch*, 86, n. 309; Ego, *Targum scheni zu Ester: Übersetzung, Kommentar und theologische Deutung*, 29; Lund, “Converse Translation in Peshitta Ezekiel,” <http://purl.org/TC> or at <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/v06/Lund2001.html>; and Klingbeil, “Looking over the Shoulders of Ancient Translators: Contextualization and Ancient Translation Techniques,” 3–21.

<sup>26</sup> Klein clearly articulates that “The purpose of the present article is to demonstrate that the *contradictive rendition* is not uncommon in the various targumim to the Pentateuch” (italics mine; Klein, “Converse Translation,” 516). Moreover, he seems to distinguish between the phenomenon of converse translation and the targumist’s practice of introducing “interpretative” aggadah into the translation (Klein, “Converse Translation,” 516). Furthermore, at one point Klein remarks that the Targumim “*alter the meaning of this verse...*” (italics mine; Klein, “Converse Translation,” 518), and again he writes, “all of the targumim have *changed* the sense of the verse...” (italics mine; Klein, “Converse Translation,” 518). Nonetheless, on at least one occasion he refers to a case of converse translation as “interpretation,” which, perhaps, might suggest that he still sensed some exegetical activity to be taking place in the targumist’s production of converse translation (Klein, “Converse Translation,” 523). See also Michael L. Klein, “Associative and Complementary Translation in the Targumim,” in *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical, and Geographical Studies: H. M. Orlinsky Volume 16*, ed. Baruch A. Levine and Abraham Malamat (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1982), 134.

<sup>27</sup> See Bernard Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis* (New York: Sepher-Hermon, 2000), 91, n. 21; B. Barry Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 2 vols., Studies in Judaism 1 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 110 on Gen 4:14; and 112 on Gen 4:23–24; Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 116–19; and Lund, “Converse Translation in Peshitta Ezekiel,” <http://purl.org/TC> or at <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/v06/Lund2001.html>, especially paragraph 30, in which he proposes that cases of converse translation might be explained by “serious contextual exegesis.”

*inherent in its rhetorical question.*”<sup>28</sup> Grossfeld’s response to Klein, in other words, suggests that the targumist was accurately *interpreting*, rather than simply *contradicting*, the Hebrew text. That is, the targumist was making explicit in Aramaic what he perceived to be implicit in the Hebrew. Coming to a similar conclusion as Grossfeld about the technique of converse translation, McNamara states, “There is generally a valid midrashic or theological reason for this technique.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, the premise of Klein’s view—that converse translation is a mode of translation that is essentially outright contradiction of the Hebrew text, rather than explication of the text—has been challenged, albeit to a limited extent.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, Klein’s designation “converse translation” for Aramaic renderings that appear to “contradict” the plain-sense reading of the Hebrew text still serves as a valuable designation. For this designation conveniently captures the formal appearance of contradiction between the Hebrew and the Aramaic. However, further investigation into the question concerning the apparent incongruity that these converse translations imply between the Aramaic and the Hebrew is in order.

Second, as regards the sense of incongruity caused by the apparent contradictions within the literary corpus of Ps-J (the horizontal dimension), a few hypotheses have also been advanced by modern scholars, generally in brief discussions within books or dissertations, or in specific studies in essays or articles. In his introduction to *Pseudo-*

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<sup>28</sup> Italics mine. Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 91, n. 21. For a thorough discussion of this case of converse translation, see chapter 2.2 below.

<sup>29</sup> McNamara, *Neofiti 1: Genesis*, 31.

<sup>30</sup> As seen above with Levine, *The Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 33, some scholars accept Klein’s conclusions. See also Klingbeil, “Looking over the Shoulders of Ancient Translators: Contextualization and Ancient Translation Techniques,” 3–21, who does not make reference to the interpretive aspect of converse translation.

*Jonathan (Thargum Jonathan ben Uziel zum Pentateuch)* (1903), Moses Ginsburger makes reference to four contradictions in Ps-J: Gen 37:32 against 38:25 (“with regard to who brings Joseph’s garment to Jacob”); Exod 13:21 against 14:20 (“with regard to the pillar of cloud”); Lev 10:9 against 10:1 (with regard to the cause for the deaths of Nadab and Abihu); and Deut 27:26 (where leaving the issue unspecified, Ginsburger states: “the beginning of the verse stands in contradiction to the conclusion of the same verse”).<sup>31</sup> Though Ginsburger notes these potential contradictions, it is clear that they are not of primary concern to him. Nevertheless, he offers a diachronic explanation for them, remarking that the inconsistencies point either to later additions to the text of Ps-J or to the transmitter’s use of different recensions.<sup>32</sup> Even if Ginsburger’s diachronic explanation is accurate, it still does not explain how or whether the apparently discrepant passages hang together in their present form.

Taking a slightly more focused interest in the question of Ps-J’s internal contradictions, Levine published a short article under the title “מקורות סותרים בתרגום “יונתן בן עוזיאל” (“Contradictory Sources in Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel”) (1968), in which he searches for a historical reason that would explain the existence of contradictions in a single corpus.<sup>33</sup> He limits his study mostly to the book of Genesis,

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<sup>31</sup> In the original: “[D]er Anfang des Verses steht im Widerspruch mit dem Schlusse desselben” (Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, XX).

<sup>32</sup> Ginsburger writes: “Von Ps. Jon. dürfen wir jedenfalls annehmen, dass viele [Zusätze] erst später hinzugekommen sind, denn nur auf diese Weise lassen sich die folgenden Tatsachen erklären: 1) Haggadische Zusätze in Ps. Jon. widersprechen sich.... 2) Citate im Ps. Jon. stimmen mit der citirten Stelle nicht überein.... Möglich wäre es allerdings auch, dass diese Widersprüche auf die Benutzung mehrerer Recensionen zurückzuführen sind” (Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, XIX–XX).

<sup>33</sup> Levine, “מקורות סותרים בתרגום “יונתן בן עוזיאל,” 36–38. See also, idem, “Internal Contradictions in Targum Jonathan Ben Uzziel to Genesis,” 118–19.

pointing to contradictions between the following passages within the text of Ps-J: Gen 2:7 (the conflation of two traditions on the creation of Adam); 10:9 against 10:11 (the portrayal of Nimrod as wicked or righteous); 16:3 against 21:14 (the status of Hagar as a slave or a free-woman); 37:32 against 38:25 (the individual(s) who presented Joseph's garment to Jacob); 43:14 against 45:27 (the presence or absence of the holy spirit or the spirit of prophecy on Jacob); 45:4 against 45:12 (the means by which Joseph proves his identity to his brothers); and Gen 49:21 against Num 26:46 (the identity of the messenger who informs Jacob that Joseph is still alive).<sup>34</sup> In his study, Levine argues that Ps-J is an eclectic document that from its outset intended to assemble conflicting traditions and to contain them in one literary corpus. He writes:

An in-depth analysis of the haggadic elements in the Palestinian Targum shows no effort on the part of the author to choose or to form an exclusive or conclusive authoritative tradition, and, in this way, to reject and abolish other traditions. Moreover, neither does the analysis described above reveal any attempt [within Ps-J] to settle the controversy and to produce a compromise between the different versions and opinions that blossomed in the culture of oral traditions. On the contrary, Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel to the Torah even includes contradictory haggadic elements. Close investigation of the haggadic elements in the Targum to the book of Genesis testifies that the targumist was eclectic with respect to how he chose the sources of Haggadah for his Targum. Not infrequently does he even employ sources that contradict each other. It thus appears that precisely this was the principle that guided him when he prepared his Targum.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Levine, "מקורות סותרים בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל," 36–37. Also, see Étan Levine, "The Aggadah in Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel and Neofiti 1 to Genesis: Parallel References," in *Neophyti 1: Exodo*, ed. A. Díez Macho (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1970), 537–78.

<sup>35</sup> In the original: והנה, ניתוח מעמיק של יסודות האגדה בתרגום הארצישראלי אינו מראה כל מאמץ מצד המחבר לבחור או ליצור מסורת בת סמך בלעדית וסופית ועל ידי כך לדחות ולבטל מסורות אחרות. יתירה מזאת, ניתוח כנ"ל אף אינו מגלה נסיון ליישב את המחלוקת ולפשר בין הגירסאות והדעות השונות שצצו עם התרבות המסורות שבע"פ. אדרבה, תרגומו של יונתן בן עוזיאל לתורה מכיל אפילו יסודות אגדה סותרים. בדיקה מדוקדקת של יסודות האגדה בתרגום לספר בראשית מעידה שבעל התרגום היה אקלקטיקן בבחירתו את מקורות האגדה לתרגומו. לא פעם הוא משתמש אפילו

Levine contends that the targumist achieved this with a specific goal in mind—to preserve peace among the communities adhering to discrepant traditions. He explains: “The Targum tries to encompass and include most of the different and distinct traditions. The final version does not reject traditions, but takes them in and adopts them.”<sup>36</sup> In other words, Levine suggests that in order to prevent controversy in ancient Judaism, the targumist of Ps-J collected the discrepant traditions into one text with the hopes that the opposing communities would come together to accept this new collection, inasmuch as the text would represent all positions. Thus Levine explains: “We may infer that it was the eclectic nature of the Targum to the Torah that brought about a compromise to the controversy between the communities adhering to different traditions in Israel.”<sup>37</sup> For Levine, then, the targumist of Ps-J was not an author but a compiler.<sup>38</sup> Affirming the presence of discrepant traditions in Ps-J, but going further than Ginsburger, Levine views the inconsistencies in the text to be the result of a purposeful undertaking, the intent of which was to bring different views into a single corpus and in this way to prevent conflict among the various groups of the community.

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מקורות סותרים” (Levine, “מקורות סותרים זה את זה. ונראה שהיה זה עקרון שהנחה אותו שעה שהכין את תרגומו בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל,” 36–37).

<sup>36</sup> In the original: התרגום מנסה להקיף ולכלול בתוכו את מרביתן של המסורות השונות והנבדלות. הנוסח (Levine, “מקורות סותרים בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל,” 38).

<sup>37</sup> In the original: מותר לנו להסיק, שהאקלקטיות שבתרגום התורה היא היא שגרמה ליישוב המחלוקת (Levine, “מקורות סותרים בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל,” 38).

<sup>38</sup> In another article Levine writes: “Thus, the compiler of our MS [Ps-J] is neither an author nor a redactor; he has not chosen to harmonize the various traditions he brings, nor does he originate material *de novo*. Rather, he incorporates divergent traditions for specific purposes” (Étan Levine, “British Museum Aramaic Additional MS 27031,” *Manuscripta* 16 (1972): 6–7).

Deeply critical of Levine's position, Avidgor Shinan devotes a valuable, though brief, discussion to this question in his book *אגדתם של מתורגמנים: תיאור וניתוח ספרותי של* (The *Aggadah in the Aramaic Targums to the Pentateuch*) (1979), as well as in other works that he has published since then.<sup>39</sup> Shinan insists that the contradictions in Ps-J do not betray any intent or purpose on the part of the targumist. In one of his discussions on this issue, he states: "The phenomenon of contradiction, found scattered in PsJ, is marginal and accidental, the result of careless editing or transposition of material by copyists. It can hardly be considered deliberate or systematic."<sup>40</sup> In another discussion, he further remarks: "In its [Ps-J's] eagerness to include many aggadic and halachic traditions in its work, there were created, though unintentionally, some contradictions between additions that were derived from independent sources."<sup>41</sup> According to Shinan, the contradictions are, in a word, accidental.

Moreover, further disputing Levine, Shinan argues that contradictions, in principle, are "a non-Targumic phenomenon."<sup>42</sup> The implication here is that no targumist

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<sup>39</sup> Avidgor Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים: תיאור וניתוח ספרותי של החומר האגדי המשוקע בכל* (Jerusalem: Maqor, 1979). This book is his reworked dissertation: idem, *האגדה בתרגומים הארמיים הארץ ישראלים לתורה – עיצובה, תכניה ומיקומה בספרות חז"ל* (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1977). See also Shinan, "The 'Palestinian' Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions," 72–87; and idem, *The World of the Aggadah* (Tel Aviv: MOD Books, 1990), 122–25.

<sup>40</sup> Shinan, "The 'Palestinian' Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions," 83–84.

<sup>41</sup> Avidgor Shinan, "'Targumic Additions' in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan," *Textus: Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project* 16 (1991): 150.

<sup>42</sup> Shinan, "The 'Palestinian' Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions," 83.

would think to include contradictory traditions in a single Targum because this would be contrary to the conventions of Targum. Shinan explains that “the *meturgeman* could neither juxtapose contradictory aggadic traditions, nor say in the same breath one thing together with its opposite. He, after all, was supposed to present to his audience a complete, properly constructed biblical story or incident.”<sup>43</sup> On account of this, Shinan contends that the literary make-up of Ps-J is “not the work of a *meturgeman* engaged in oral translation.”<sup>44</sup> Instead, he explains, the presence of contradictions in Ps-J “testifies to the stage at which the Targum was committed to writing, or was copied, rather than to the stage at which the Targum was actually created.”<sup>45</sup> In short, for Shinan contradictions in Ps-J are inadvertent and uncharacteristic of the Targum; and they do not so much reveal the intentions of the author(s)-compiler(s) of the Targum as they reveal the nature of the Targum’s production as a written text, that is, as an aggregate of what were originally distinct units.

Shinan’s conclusions have, to a certain degree, resonated with modern scholars; and this is made especially evident in the repeated reference to Shinan in the translation and commentary of Pseudo-Jonathan in *The Aramaic Bible* series.<sup>46</sup> Discussing contradictions in Ps-J, Maher follows Shinan in saying that contradictions are

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<sup>43</sup> Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 82.

<sup>44</sup> Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 82.

<sup>45</sup> Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 83. Smelik remarks, nevertheless, that “It is beyond doubt, however, that even Pseudo-Jonathan was recited as a Targum in the synagogue service, as it influenced the targumic texts of the prayer books” (Willem F. Smelik, “Translation and Commentary in One: The Interplay of Pluses and Substitutions in the Targum of the Prophets,” *JSJ* 29, no. 3 [1998]: 260, and see 245–260).

<sup>46</sup> See the discussion of contradictions in Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 5–6.



uncharacteristic of a Targum, “since the *meturgeman* who translated the text in the synagogue would have tried to eliminate contradictions from the biblical text rather than create contradictions by adding opposing haggadic traditions to it.”<sup>47</sup> Maher affirms Shinan’s contention that contradictions—particularly those in close textual proximity—suggest that the text was produced in written form and at a late date by a targumist(s) who was disconnected from the “reality of live presentation” that intended to produce a coherent narrative.<sup>48</sup> In other words, Maher affirms the presence of contradictions in Ps-J and concludes in accord with Shinan that they are inadvertent.

Indeed, according to the views laid out above, the coherence of the narrative of Ps-J is altogether compromised. The nature of the production process means that the text of Ps-J differs fundamentally from its source materials when it comes to the question of coherence. In the view of Levine, holistic coherence does not apply to Ps-J, since the targumist did not seek to produce a coherent narrative. In the view of Shinan, holistic coherence suffered on account of the carelessness of the targumist, the compiler, or the copyist. In the view of either position, in effect, the narrative of Ps-J cannot be read as a unified whole.

Not all scholars, however, have conceded that the apparent contradictions in Ps-J are irreconcilable. In contradistinction to the authors mentioned above, C. T. Hayward published an article entitled “Inconsistencies and Contradictions in Targum Ps-J: The Case of Eliezer and Nimrod” (1992), in which he proposes the possibility that the “alleged contradictions” are not contradictions at all, but are rather congruous if read and

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<sup>47</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 5.

understood in the light of their full context of Jewish tradition known to the targumist.<sup>49</sup> In other words, he challenges the view that the supposed contradictions are products of carelessness, and his study implicitly questions the suggestion that these contradictions reflect an attempt to collect opposing traditions into a single literary corpus now known as Ps-J. Rather, he raises the possibility that the apparent contradictions might be grounded in the targumist's exegesis of the text; and once the targumist's presuppositions and the process of this exegesis are determined, the conflict between the texts might see resolution. The implications of this view, contends Hayward, challenge Shinan's conclusions that apparent contradictions are non-Targumic and that they point to a late and literary production of the Targum. He summarizes his proposition as follows:

This study suggests that too much may have been claimed for alleged inconsistencies, contradictions, and mistakes in PJ as pointers to its character, provenance, and date. Although we have examined in detail only two biblical personalities, the results must lead us to question whether other elements in the Targum, which are commonly regarded as contradictory or mistakes, are truly so. For close and detailed examination of alleged mistakes and contradictions may indicate that they are probably nothing of the kind; and that the Targum has a clear and logical purpose in presenting material in the way it does.<sup>50</sup>

A key point that emerges in this summary, and which point Hayward emphasizes throughout his article, is the need first to determine whether or not an apparent discrepancy is, indeed, a real contradiction; or whether the apparent contradiction might actually be resolvable and, therefore, representative of the targumist's technique of producing the Targum.<sup>51</sup> The method suggested is first to carry out a synchronic analysis

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<sup>49</sup> Hayward, "Inconsistencies and Contradictions," 54.

<sup>50</sup> Hayward, "Inconsistencies and Contradictions," 54.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. the recommendation of a similar method of interpretation in Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity*, 4 and 14, and 20–26; and Longacre, *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence*, 9.

of the text, and only afterwards to draw out implications for the text from a diachronic perspective. With this admonition, Hayward challenges the fundamental premise on which the contentions of the scholars mentioned above are based—the premise that there are irreconcilable contradictions in Ps-J. He calls for scholarship to revisit the question of contradictions and their literary function in Ps-J, and then to consider the implications such a study may have for the literary nature of Ps-J.

### **1.3 Shape and Scope of the Present Study**

#### **1.3.1 Arrangement of Chapters**

In the light of this phenomenon of contradiction in Ps-J, the present study offers a thorough analysis of a broad variety of passages that, on the one hand, scholars have identified as contradictory and, on the other hand, passages that, though not identified as contradictions by any one scholar, seemed to me potentially to lend themselves to such a reading. In selecting contradictions for this study, my objective has been to find the examples that best illustrate the types of contradictions Ps-J contains. While my method of selection exhibits some arbitrariness, I could not, for reasons of space limitations and the possibility of a wearisome list of examples, study every contradiction the Targum of Ps-J presents. However, I have tried my best to provide a fair representation of this phenomenon in this Targum. Chapters two and three address the cases of converse translation that occur between the Hebrew and the Aramaic (the vertical dimension), and chapters four, five, and six analyze the contradictions that appear within the corpus of Ps-J (the horizontal dimension).

Chapter two studies four cases of converse translation between Ps-J and the Hebrew Bible. While at Gen 4:14, the Hebrew text seems to suggest that it is possible for Cain to be hidden from God, in Ps-J the opposite is indicated in the formulation of a rhetorical question that expects a negative answer: Is it possible to be hidden from God? At Gen 4:23–24, the Hebrew text seems to have Lamech declare that he killed a man and a youth, but in Ps-J Lamech contends that he did not kill a man and that he did not wound a youth. At Gen 37:33, the Hebrew text has Jacob exclaim that Joseph has been killed, but in Ps-J Jacob exclaims the exact opposite—that Joseph has not been killed. And at Exod 33:3, the Hebrew text states that God *will not go* with the Israelites, while Ps-J states that God *will not remove* his presence from going with the Israelite.

Chapter three continues to examine the technique of converse translation with a concentrated study of the complex situation at Gen 19:33. Whereas the Hebrew text at 19:33 suggests that Lot did *not* know when his daughters lay with him or when they arose, Ps-J states that Lot *did* indeed know when the older daughter arose. These two chapters demonstrate how the targumist began with the Hebrew text and by means of exegesis of the text and sensitivity to relevant Jewish tradition arrived at the Aramaic and apparent converse translation.

Chapter four analyzes eight cases of contradiction resulting from the targumist's implication or explicit mention of numerals in the corpus of Ps-J. The following apparent discrepancies are addressed: Were there ten or two hundred fifty plagues at the Exodus (Gen 15:14 vs. Exod 14:21)? Were Isaac and Sarah barren for twenty or twenty-two years (Gen 25:20, 26 vs. 25:21)? Was Isaac dead or alive when Joseph was sold by his brothers (Gen 35:29 vs. 37:35)? Was Abraham dead or alive when Esau sold his birthright to

Jacob (Gen 25:8 vs. 25:29)? Was Joseph seventeen or eighteen years old when he was sold (Gen 37:2 vs. 46:21)? Was the famine in Egypt intended to last seven or forty-two years (Gen 41:27, 30 vs. 50:3)? Did Levi live to see Aaron and Moses, and did Kohath live to see Phinehas (Exod 1:6 vs. 6:16–20)? How long did Levi, Kohath, and Amram, in fact, live (Exod 6:16–20)?

Chapter five studies ten instances of contradiction produced by the targumist's incorporation of various miscellaneous statements that appear to be incompatible. The questions addressed in this chapter are as follows: Who is to blame for God's cursing the earth, the earth or mankind (Gen 3:17 vs. 5:29)? Was Sarah Abraham's cousin or his niece (Gen 11:29 vs. 20:12)? Who presented Joseph's bloodied coat to Jacob, the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah or Judah (Gen 37:32 vs. 38:25)? Did the spirit reside on Jacob after Joseph was sold or did the spirit depart from him when Joseph was sold (Gen 37:33; 43:14 vs. 45:27)? Who informed Jacob that Joseph was actually alive, Naphtali or Serah (Gen 49:21 vs. 46:17; Num 26:46)? Did Moses make his return-journey to Egypt alone or with Zipporah and their sons (Exod 4:20–26 vs. 18:1–4)? Did the pillar of cloud produce darkness alone or both darkness and light (Exod 13:21–22 vs. 14:19–20)? Did Dathan and Abiram remain in Egypt or did they go out from Egypt with the rest of the Israelites (Exod 14:3 vs. Num 26:4–9)? Did Aaron exhibit fear or courage in the golden calf episode (Exod 32:5)? Did Nadab and Abihu die because they offered foreign fire or because they consumed wine (Lev 10:1 vs. 10:9)?

Chapter six addresses four examples of contradiction in the targumist's depiction of characters. Is Hagar a slavegirl or a freedwoman (Gen 16:3 vs. 21:14)? Is Nimrod

righteous or wicked (Gen 10:8–10 vs. 10:11–12)? Is Esau righteous or wicked (Gen 32:12)? Is Ishmael righteous or wicked (Gen 25:7–11, 17)?

All these chapters will attempt to demonstrate how the surface structure of the Ps-J narrative could exhibit the appearance of contradiction and yet maintain narrational coherence by virtue of the targumist's assumptions about the passages in question.

### **1.3.2 Contributions**

The brief history of research presented above reflects the challenge posed by the phenomenon of contradiction in Ps-J. Against the background of this research, this dissertation offers a contribution to the study of Ps-J by providing detailed analysis of a broad variety of major contradictions that seem to disrupt Ps-J's coherence. These contradictions are studied with a view toward understanding the nature of the coherence of Ps-J. This study hopes to add to the ongoing discussion about contradictions in Ps-J, particularly addressing the concern that modern scholars, it seems, have too readily concluded that the apparent contradictions in Ps-J wreck the coherence of the targumic narrative. A close reading of the relevant passages shows that the targumist approached the Hebrew text with a particular set of interpretive assumptions that he did not make obvious in his Aramaic rendition of the narrative, but which assumptions prove to undergird the Aramaic text and ultimately to sustain the congruity of the narrative of Ps-J.

This study also hopes to contribute to the conversation about Ps-J by drawing attention to two characteristics about the targumist. First, while the targumist exegeted the Hebrew text and sought to bring clarity to ambiguity in the biblical narrative, he

nevertheless exhibited tolerance toward literary tension with regard to the surface structure of the Aramaic text; but, as noted above, this tension is ultimately brought to resolution via the targumist's assumptions about the text. Second, the targumist maintained certain readerly expectations of his audience: he expected his audience to be able to follow his interpretive approach in order to ascertain the sense of the translated and expanded text and to discern the overall coherence of the narrative. Thus the audience of Ps-J was imagined to be informed about and engaged with the content of Ps-J as well as with the broader Jewish tradition and the interpretive practices of the targumist.

Finally, as regards method, this dissertation serves as a case study of Samely's exhortation, already mentioned above, "to articulate how the text—*as it is*—actually works as a whole."<sup>52</sup> This dissertation offers a rigorous synchronic analysis of the text of Ps-J and demonstrates how, despite the appearance of contradictions in the narrative, the targumist arguably imagined his Targum to deliver a coherent narrative.

### 1.3.3 Primary and Secondary Sources

The Aramaic text of Ps-J is taken from E. G. Clarke et al., eds., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1984). This published edition is based on the Ps-J manuscript (Add MS 27031), which is held at the British Library in London and which can be accessed in digitized form at: [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add\\_MS\\_27031](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_27031). To render the most accurate presentation of the text, I have compared the relevant parts of Clarke's edition with this digitized manuscript as well as with a text-critical edition of Ps-J that compares

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<sup>52</sup> Italics original. Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity*, 4; see also 14 and 20–26.

the manuscript of Ps-J with the 1541 *editio princeps* of Ps-J (see Alejandro Díez Macho et al., *Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuchum: Additur Targum Pseudojonatan Ejusque Hispanica Versio*, 5 vols., Biblia Polyglotta Matritensia IV [Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1977–1988]). On the basis of Díez Macho’s text-critical edition, I sometimes include emendations in my citation of the Aramaic text to correct what appears to be an error in the manuscript. In such cases, the superscript text represents the suggested emendation, while the regular script represents the actual text of the Ps-J manuscript (e.g., דפּקדיתו דפּקדיִתך). Additionally, various published editions of ancient texts represent their emendations by means of placing the suggested correction in brackets (e.g., [לי]ה); I include such text in the dissertation as it appears in the published editions.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> The text of the remaining Aramaic primary sources is taken from the following published editions: Alejandro Díez Macho, *MS Neophyti I*, 6 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1968); A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic 1: The Pentateuch according to Targum Onkelos* (Leiden: Brill, 1959); M. L. Klein, *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch according to their Extant Sources*, 2 vols. (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980) (P [MS Paris - Bibliothèque Nationale Hebr. 110], V [MS Vatican Ebr. 440], N (MS Nürnberg - Stadtbibliothek Solg. 2.2°, fols. 119–147], L [MS Leipzig - Universität BH fol. 1]); Paul Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens II: Das Palästinische Pentateuchtargum, die Palästinische Punktation, der Bibeltext des Naftali*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur vormasoretischen Grammatik des Hebräischen (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1930) (Mss A, B, D, E); M. L. Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, 2 vols. (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1986) (Ms 2755 [MS Jewish Theological Seminary - E. N. Adler Collection 2755, fol. 2]); and Avraham Tal, *התרגום השומרוני לתורה: מהדורת ביקורתית: בראשית, שמות*, (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1980). The Greek text is taken from John William Wevers, ed., *Genesis*, vol. I, *Vetus Testamentum Graecum, Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Göttingensis editum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974); idem, ed., *Exodus*, vol. II, 1, *Vetus Testamentum Graecum, Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Göttingensis editum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991); idem, ed., *Leviticus*, vol. II, 2, *Vetus Testamentum Graecum, Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Göttingensis editum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); idem, ed., *Numeri*, vol. III, 1, *Vetus Testamentum Graecum, Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Göttingensis editum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982); idem, ed., *Deuteronomium*, vol. III, 2, *Vetus Testamentum Graecum, Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Göttingensis editum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006). The Syriac text is taken from the *Leiden Peshitta* (Leiden: Peshitta Institute Leiden, 2008). The Latin is taken from Robert Weber, et al., eds., *Biblia sacra: iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983).



Translation of the Hebrew Bible is taken from Michael D. Coogan et al., eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha*, An Ecumenical Study Bible, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Translation of the Aramaic Targumim generally depends on Martin McNamara et al., eds., *The Aramaic Bible Series: The Targums*, 22 vols. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1987–2007). However, this translation is very frequently adjusted to render the text more precisely. The text in italics in the English translation of the Targumim signifies targumic expansions that do not appear in the Hebrew text. All other ancient and modern translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

In matters of style, the abbreviation of sources generally follows *The SBL Handbook of Style*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014). Full citations are provided in the bibliography.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN PSEUDO-JONATHAN**  
**AND ITS HEBREW *VORLAGE*:**  
**CONVERSE TRANSLATION**

**2.1 Introduction**

The present chapter studies those passages in Ps-J that appear to render a translation that is opposite in meaning to the corresponding passages in their Hebrew source-text. As indicated above, Klein designated such renderings as “converse translation,” and accentuated the “contradictive” aspect of the translation.<sup>54</sup> A number of scholars who subsequently revisited this issue sometimes gave more weight to the interpretive aspect of these translations.<sup>55</sup> Taking this research as its point of departure, the present chapter analyzes four such cases of converse translation occurring at Gen 4:14; 4:23–24; 37:33; and Exod 33:3–5; and chapter three studies a more complex case of converse translation at Gen 19:33.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Klein, “Converse Translation,” 515–37.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 91, n. 21; Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 110 on Gen 4:14; and 112 on Gen 4:23–24; Fraade, *Enosh and His Generation*, 116–19; and Lund, “Converse Translation in Peshitta Ezekiel,” <http://purl.org/TC> or at <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/v06/Lund2001.html>.

<sup>56</sup> Klein does not mention Gen 19:33 in his article “Converse Translation,” 515–37 possibly because his article does not focus on Ps-J; indeed, he notes that while his list of texts of converse translation is exhaustive for Neofiti, it is only “selective” for Ps-J and Onqelos (Klein, “Converse Translation,” 537). Generally following Klein, these five passages are categorized according to their formal characteristics: 1) “Creation of the Rhetorical Question” (Gen 4:14); 2) “Addition of the Negative Particle” (Gen 4:23–24; 37:33); 3) “Deletion of the Negative Particle” (Gen 19:33); and 4) “Replacement of the Verb” (Exod 33:3) (Klein, “Converse Translation,” 515–37). The specific title of the first category, “Creation of the Rhetorical Question,” is taken from Gordon, “Converse Translation,” 4, and idem, “The Targumists as Eschatologists,” 113–14. Pace Gordon, however—who claims credit for this category—this category, though not the title, is already noted by Klein with reference to Ps-J Gen 4:14, a translation that according to Klein introduces “an interrogative element” (Klein, “Converse Translation,” 518). Importantly, Gordon draws a distinction between “formal” converse translation (in form only, but not in

The aim of this analysis is to examine how it is that the targumist began with the Hebrew text and arrived at his Aramaic and apparently contradictory rendering. To this end, this study advances the thesis that the Ps-J translation is the product of careful exegesis of a Hebrew text that in the view of the targumist exhibited interpretive ambiguity and posed a literary or a theological difficulty for the narrative. The apparent converse translations, in effect, represent the targumist’s interpretation of the text in the light of the textual difficulties in the passages as well as in the light of the interpretive tradition associated with the passages in question. In other words, the targumist sought to produce an Aramaic rendition of the narrative that resolved the issues in the text.<sup>57</sup> His ultimate intent was to ensure that a particular reading of the narrative—one that was sanctioned by the targumist—was clearly and unambiguously expressed. In producing the apparent converse translation, therefore, the targumist did not intend to reject the Hebrew

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sense, e.g., Peshitta 2 Chr 15:19) and “outright” converse translation (both in form and in sense) (Gordon, “Converse Translation,” 5 and 19). For example, 2 Chr 15:19 of the Peshitta reads: ܘܡܠܚܡܐ ܠܐ ܗܝܬܐ ܥܕ ܫܢܬ ܫܠܫܝܡ ܘܗܩܡ ܠܡܠܚܘܬ ܐܫܐ “and **war took place** in the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa”; cf. with the Masoretic Text (MT): וּמִלְחָמָה לֹא הָיְתָה עַד שְׁנַת־שְׁלֹשִׁים וְהָקַם לְמַלְכוּת אֲסָא “and war *did not* take place until the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa.” Whereas the Peshitta removes the negative particle ܠܐ (“not”), the sense of the passage—that there indeed was war during the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa—is retained in the translation. Conversion of rhetorical questions into statements also sometimes undergoes formal translation only on the surface of the statement, for which see Klein, “Converse Translation,” 532–35; and Lund, “Converse Translation in Peshitta Ezekiel,” 5–6. Nevertheless, this too demonstrates interpretation on the part of the targumist: Lund remarks that the conversion of rhetorical questions into statements “does not indicate a whimsicalness on the part of the translator but rather a desire to express the perceived meaning of the text clearly to his readers” (Lund, “Converse Translation in Peshitta Ezekiel,” §22).

<sup>57</sup> For a helpful discussion of gaps and ambiguity in the biblical text, see Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 186–229; Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, 39–56; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 169; and David Andrew Teeter, *Scribal Laws: Exegetical Variation in the Textual Transmission of Biblical Law in the Late Second Temple Period*, FAT 92 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 177, n. 10; for ambiguity in the Targumim, see Golomb, “‘A Liar, a Blasphemer, a Reviler’: The Role of Biblical Ambiguity in the Palestinian Pentateuchal Targumim,” 135–46; and for a theoretical discussion of ambiguity and coherence, see de Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, 3–4, and 84.

narrative, but rather to offer a translation that explicated it.<sup>58</sup> As Golomb articulates: “Like all midrash, it seems to me, the main function of the targumic texts is essentially explanatory—to fill in the gaps. It supplies that which is ‘missing’ from the Hebrew text but which is surely there between the lines; it makes explicit the implicit.”<sup>59</sup>

By means of a close reading of these apparently contradictory translations, the discussion below shows how the targumist reworked the “surface structure” of the text in order to draw out the “deeper meaning” of the text (i.e., the meaning sustained by the global context of the narrative).<sup>60</sup> The targumist produced in the Aramaic what he believed to be implicit in the Hebrew. In effect, despite the appearance of contradiction between the Hebrew and the Aramaic, recognition of the targumist’s set of assumptions—both his exegetical reading of the passage and his awareness of the interpretive tradition

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<sup>58</sup> This is the perspective that Wellhausen proposed with regard to the apparently deliberate variants in the ancient biblical texts—that the variant emerged out of an ambiguity in the text and that it intended to bring clarity to the ambiguity rather than to introduce foreign meaning into the text. He writes: “[D]ie tendenziöse Aenderung *will* nichts der Sache fremdes hineinbringen, sondern ihr nur zu besserem Ausdruck verhelfen” (italics original; Julius Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht’s, 1871], 32). See also R. G. Kratz, *Das Judentum im Zeitalter des Zweiten Tempels*, FAT 42 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 147; and Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 11–14, where he offers a discussion of Wellhausen’s views in the context of Geiger’s proposition that the deliberate textual changes reflect an attempt to adapt the text to developing “religious sensibilities” (Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 12). See also Jeffrey H. Tigay, “An Early Technique of Aggadic Exegesis,” in *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literature*, eds. H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 169; Simon G. D. A. Lasair, “Targum and Translation: A New Approach to a Classic Problem,” *Association for Jewish Studies* 34, no. 2 (2010): 265–87; and Golomb, “‘A Liar, a Blasphemer, a Reviler’: The Role of Biblical Ambiguity in the Palestinian Pentateuchal Targumim,” 135–46.

<sup>59</sup> Golomb, “‘A Liar, a Blasphemer, a Reviler’: The Role of Biblical Ambiguity in the Palestinian Pentateuchal Targumim,” 137.

<sup>60</sup> Golomb, “‘A Liar, a Blasphemer, a Reviler’: The Role of Biblical Ambiguity in the Palestinian Pentateuchal Targumim,” 139. For some discussion of surface structure and deep structure, see Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 177, n. 11; Heinrich F. Plett, “Intertextualities,” in *Intertextuality*, ed. Heinrich F. Plett, RTT 15 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 9–10; van Dijk, *Some Aspects of Text Grammars*, 34–162; Schmidt, *Texttheorie*, 156–58; de Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, 49, 57–58; Edward L. Greenstein, “How Does Parallelism Mean?” in *A Sense of Text: The Art of Language in the Study of Biblical Literature*, Papers from a Symposium at the Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, May 11, 1982, *A Jewish Quarterly Review Supplement* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 41–70.

associated with the passage—helps to ascertain the congruity that the targumist presupposed to subsist between the Hebrew text and his Aramaic translation.

## 2.2 Creation of the Rhetorical Question

### 2.2.1 Genesis 4:14

At Ps-J Gen 4:14, the targumist produced an Aramaic translation that appears to be opposite in meaning to the Hebrew text by transforming an indicative statement in the Hebrew text into a rhetorical question in the Aramaic translation.<sup>61</sup> In the conversation that takes place between God and Cain—immediately after Cain murders Abel—Cain utters a *statement* to God in the Hebrew text which in Ps-J is translated as a *question* that

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<sup>61</sup> On the transformation of rhetorical questions into statements in the Targumim, see Yehudah Komlosh, *המקרא באור התרגום* (Tel-Aviv: Bar Ilan University Press, 1973), 240–41; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 180. Addressing the phenomenon of the negation of a positive in the transmission of biblical manuscripts, Wellhausen contends that this too can be seen as the result of the interpretation of the text with the intent to make explicit what is potential in the Hebrew text. He explains, for example, that the negative particle לֹא may be perceived to convey the sense of the particle of affirmation הֲלֵא, depending on how the stress of the clause is understood, that is, whether the clause is understood to be a declarative statement or a rhetorical question. Wellhausen writes: “Die bedeutendste Wirkung mit dem geringsten Aufwande an Laut und Schrift erzielt jedenfalls die Einsetzung der Negation, sie erscheint uns dafür auch als das non plus ultra eines willkürlichen Verfahrens. Um übrigens gerecht zu urtheilen, muss man in Betracht ziehen, das לֹא durch den blossen Ton die Bedeutung von הֲלֵא erhalten kann, הֲלֵא aber im Hebräischen rein als Affirmativpartikel (= ܠܘܢ Syr.) gebraucht wird, welche an dem objectiven Inhalte der Aussage nichts ändert und derselben nur eine besondere subjective Färbung giebt, während in anderen Fällen umgekehrt eine affirmative Aussage, bloss durch die Betonung in Frage gesetzt, negativen Sinn gewinnen kann. An gar nicht wenigen Stellen des A. T. streiten sich noch heutiges Tages die Erklärer darüber, ob sie kategorisch oder interrogative, d. h. negativ aufzufassen seien” (Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*, 26–27). See also discussion of this in Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 13, n. 27.

demands a negative answer.<sup>62</sup> The result of this transformation is the apparently converse sense of Cain’s speech.<sup>63</sup> The passage reads as follows:

MT	הוּ גְרַשְׁתָּ אֹתִי הַיּוֹם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּמִפְּנֵי אֶסְתֵּר וְהִיִּיתִי גֵעַ וְנָדָל בְּאֶרֶץ וְהָיָה כָּל־מַצְאֵי יְהַרְגֵנִי:
NRSV	“Today you have driven me away from the soil, and <b>I shall be hidden from your face</b> ; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me.”
Ps-J	הָא טְרַדְתָּ יְתִי יוֹמָא דִין מַעַל אַנְפִי אַרְעָא וּמִן קַדְמָךְ הָאִיפְשֵׁר דְאִיטְמַר וְאִין אַהִי מְטַלְטַל וְגַלִּי בְאַרְעָא כָּל זַכִּי דִישְׁכַּחִינִי יְקַטְלִינִי
Ps-J	“Behold, you have driven me out this day from the face of the earth. <b>Is it possible that I be hidden from you?</b> And if I will be wanderer and an exile upon the earth, any righteous person who will find me will kill me.”
TO	הָא תְרִיבַת יְתִי יוֹמָא דִין מַעַל אַפִי אַרְעָא וּמִן קְדָמְךָ לִית אַפְשֵׁר לְאַטְמָרָא וְאִיָּהִי מְטַלְטַל וְגַלִּי בְאַרְעָא וְיָהִי כָּל דִישְׁכַּחִינִי יְקַטְלִינִי:
TO	“Behold, you have driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and <b>it is not possible to hide from before you</b> , and I shall be a wanderer and an exile on earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me.”
Neof	הָא טְרַדְתָּ יְתִי יוֹמָא דִין מַעִלְוִי אַפִי דַארְעָא וּמִן קַדְמִי[ן] לִית אַפְשֵׁר לִי לְמַטְמָרָה וְיָהִי קִין גַּלִי וּמְטַלְטַל בְּאַרְעָא וְיָהִי כָּל דִי יַאֲרַע יְתָה יְקַטִיל יְתִיָּה:
Neof	“Behold, you have driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and <b>it is not possible for me to hide from before you</b> . And Cain shall be an exile and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who encounters him will kill him.”
Genizah B	הָא טְרַדְתָּ יְתִי יוֹמָה הַדִּן מִן עֵלְוִי אַפִי אַרְעָא וּמִן־קַדְמִיָּד אֲדָנִי לִית־אַפְשֵׁר לְבָרְנָשׁ לְמַטְמָרָה וְיָהִי קִין גַּלִּי וּמְטַלְטַל בְּגוֹ אַרְעָא וְיָהִי כָּל־דְּמַשׁ[כַּח יְתָה יְקַ]טוֹל יְתָה

<sup>62</sup> For a more detailed study of Gen 4:3–16, see David Shepherd, “Translating and Supplementing: A(nother) Look at the Targumic Versions of Genesis 4:3–16,” *Journal for the Aramaic Bible* (now *Aramaic Studies*) 1:1 (1999): 125–46; Geza Vermes, *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 92–127; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 132–40; and Martin McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1966), 156–60.

<sup>63</sup> Klein, “Converse Translation,” 516–18; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 34, n. 33; cf. Israel Drazin and Stanley M. Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Genesis* (New York: Gefen Books, 2006), 25; Moses Aberbach and Bernard Grossfeld, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis Together with an English Translation of the Text* (New York: Ktav, 1982), 43, n. 13; Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 110; Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 91; Levine, “The Aggadah in Targum Jonathan ben ‘Uzziel and Neofiti 1 to Genesis: Parallel References,” 547.

Genizah B “Behold, you have driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and **it is not possible for man to hide from before you, O Lord.** And Cain shall be an exile and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who finds him will kill him.”

Whereas the Hebrew text suggests that it is *possible* to hide from God, the Aramaic translation implies that it is *impossible* to hide from God. Explaining the theological difficulty in the Hebrew text, Levine remarks, “Cain’s cry: ‘Behold, you have driven me this day from the land, and from your face I shall be hidden’ (Gen 4:14) implies a limitation upon God’s universality, with his power circumscribed by a particular parameter.”<sup>64</sup> Also seeking to articulate the issue that the Hebrew text posed for Ps-J, Schmerler points to Jer 23:24 to demonstrate the theological presupposition of the targumist:

אִם־יִסְתֵּר אִישׁ בְּמִסְתָּרִים וְאֲנִי לֹא־אֶרְאֶנּוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה הֲלוֹא אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲנִי מְלֵא  
נְאֻם־יְהוָה

Can a man hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD.<sup>65</sup>

Faced with this theological difficulty in the Hebrew version of the story, which results from the grammatical ambiguity of Cain’s speech, the targumist engaged in an act of exegesis to resolve this difficulty.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Levine, *Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 33.

<sup>65</sup> My translation. Note, also, that Jer 23:23 begins with an interrogative (הֲאֵלֹהִי מְקַרֵּב אֲנִי...), thus explicitly introducing this portion of the discourse as a question. See Benjamin Schmerler, ספר אהבת ספר בראשית (Bilgoraj, Poland: Kronenberg, 1932; repr., Brooklyn, NY: Achim Goldenberg, 1992), 50. See also Psa 139:7–12; Amos 9:3–4.

<sup>66</sup> Seeing the words of Cain at MT Gen 4:14 as a lament, Westermann suggests that “To hide oneself, to cover oneself before God (before his face) refers to the anger of God” (Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, A Continental Commentary, trans. John J. Scullion [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1994], 310). See also John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, ICC (New York: Scribner, 1910), 109; Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. Mark E. Biddle, Mercer Library of Biblical Studies (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 46; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 (Dallas: Word Books, 1987), 108–9. Kenneth A. Mathews remarks, however: “That Cain does not receive divine forgiveness is

The ambiguity in the Hebrew text manifests itself in the fact that the grammatical construction of Cain’s speech allows for it to be read either as a statement or as a question. That is, **וּמִפְּנֵי אָסְתָּר** may be read as a declarative statement: “And from your face I shall be hidden,” or as a rhetorical question that demands a negative answer: “And from your face shall I be hidden?” On the one hand, two aspects of Cain’s speech suggest that Cain is uttering a statement. First, the Hebrew lacks any grammatical markers that would require this clause to be an interrogative (in contrast to the Aramaic that introduces **הַאִיפֶשֶׁר** “is it possible...,” i.e., the adverb **איפשר** with an interrogative **ה**).<sup>67</sup> Second, the structure of Cain’s utterance seems to imply an indicative, and not an interrogative, reading of the clause. That is, Cain’s exclamation **הֲזוֹ גֵרְשֶׁתָּ אֶתִּי הַיּוֹם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּמִפְּנֵי אָסְתָּר** (“You have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden”) depicts a chiasmic structure—A-B-B<sub>1</sub>-A<sub>1</sub>—which suggests that the first part and the second part of the exclamation are parallel to one another in form.<sup>68</sup>

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shown by his expulsion ‘from the LORD’S presence’” (Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, NAC [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996], 277).

<sup>67</sup> On interrogative clauses, see Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 187 §5.3.1a; GKC §150; Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., *Porta Linguarum Orientalium* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2006), 45, §94, see also §93 and §95; Hans Bauer und Pontus Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1927), 253–54, §68.4g–k; Edward Morgan Cook, *Rewriting the Bible: The Text and Language of the Pseudo-Jonathan Targum* (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1986), 161.

<sup>68</sup> On parallelism, see Adele Berlin, “Parallelism,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:155–62; idem, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, revised and expanded, *The Biblical Resource Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), esp. 83–88; James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and Its History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 1–59, and esp. 6 on the structure A-B-B<sub>1</sub>-C, which arguably could be the structure of 4:14; Greenstein, “How Does Parallelism Mean?” 41–70; idem, “Direct Discourse and Parallelism,” in *Discourse, Dialogue, and Debate in the Bible: Essays in Honour of Frank H. Polak*, ed. Athalya Brenner-Idan, *Hebrew Bible Monographs* 63 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014), 79–91.



**Table 1: Chiastic Structure of Genesis 4:14**

A: הַן גִּרְשָׁתָּ אֶתִּי הַיּוֹם	A: You have driven me today
B: מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה	B: away from the ground
B <sub>1</sub> : וּמִפְּנֵיךָ	B <sub>1</sub> : and from your face
A <sub>1</sub> : אֶסְתָּר	A <sub>1</sub> : I shall be hidden

According to this structure, as Cain pronounces a *statement* in the first part of the utterance that God has driven him away, so does he seemingly pronounce a *statement* in the second part of the utterance that he shall be hidden from the face of God. These two observations, then, show that from a grammatical point of view Cain’s speech can be read as a statement.

On the other hand, Cain’s speech can also be understood as a rhetorical question.<sup>69</sup> Inasmuch as the clause וּמִפְּנֵיךָ אֶסְתָּר is part of direct discourse, the intended intonation of the speaker needs also to be taken into consideration—that is, whether the intonation indicates that the clause should be understood as a statement or as a question. Peter Cotterell and Max Turner write:

In all languages there are ways of asking questions, giving commands, making statements. The actual way in which this is effected will differ from language to language. Some languages use interrogatives, words that signal questions. Some do the same thing by using intonation.... [T]he very fact that intonation may be used to turn a statement into a question should warn us against the naïve assumption that the form of a sentence necessarily determines its meaning.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Genesis Rabbah 22.11: הַן גִּרְשָׁתָּ אֶתִּי הַיּוֹם שְׂמָא מִפְּנֵיךָ אֶסְתָּר “Behold, you have driven me out this day – is it possible that *from your face I will be hidden?*” (Judah Theodor and Chanoch Albeck, eds., עם מראה מקומות וחילופי נוסחאות, מדרש בראשית רבא: Veröfentlichungen der Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums [Jerusalem: Wahrman Books, 1965], 22.11 [כב”יא], 1:218); translation, with some modification, from H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds. and trans., *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 10 vols. (London: Soncino, 1939), 1:190–91. See Schmerler, בראשית יהונתן: בראשית, 50.

<sup>70</sup> Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 23; see also idem, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 17, 188, and on interrogative questions see p. 193. Longacre and Hwang suggest

Intonation in discourse, in effect, must be taken into consideration in interpreting dialogue in biblical narrative.<sup>71</sup> However, inasmuch as written text sometimes does not capture the actual tone-of-voice of the speaker, the responsibility of interpreting the meaning of the spoken words in the narrative falls upon the reader.

Consider, for example, MT Gen 27:24 with a similar ambiguity, the interpretation of which can be determined only by context, inasmuch as the intonation of the speaker is indiscernible. Jacob, disguised as Esau, comes to Isaac to receive Isaac's blessing, and Isaac addresses Jacob as follows: *וַיֹּאמֶר אֵתָהּ זֶה בְּנִי עֵשָׂו וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי*. Grammatically, Isaac's words can be understood either as a statement (“‘This is you, my son, Esau!’”) or as a question (“‘Is this you, my son, Esau?’”). Only because of the context—clearly indicated by the fact the Jacob responds with “‘It is I!’”—does the reader know with certainty that Isaac's words are intended to be read as a question. It is this lack of precision in the formulation of Gen 4:14 that creates an ambiguity in the meaning of Cain's speech, resulting in a theological difficulty within the Hebrew narrative.<sup>72</sup>

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that a change in word order from normative to irregular can be used to express “questions, exclamations, and emotion-packed sentences” (Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 1–2; and see idem, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 16 and 26–27).

<sup>71</sup> See Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*, 26–27; Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 13, n. 27; and see n. 61 above.

<sup>72</sup> Ambiguity in the text is a major factor that, in the view of Wellhausen, contributed to the emergence of textual variation. He explains: “Wie die hebr. Schrift dazu kam, subjective Elemente in sich eindringen zu lassen, begreift sich leicht. Sie ist von Anfang an kein für sich festes Bild des Lautes und bedingt nicht rein durch sich selbst die Aussprache, sondern sie rechnet vielmehr von Natur auf die selbständig deutende Tätigkeit des Lesers, der den Satz verstehen muss, ehe er die Worte aussprechen kann; so konnte sie nicht verlangen, dass die Deutung, welche sie auf jedem Punkte provocierte, sich in keinem in sie selbst einmischte und sie deutlicher zu machen strebte” (Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*, 21). Teeter offers a helpful explanatory translation of this as follows: “In Wellhausen's view, rather than socio-political or theological developments, it is above all the defective character of the Hebrew text and its inherent ambiguities that were responsible for creating an environment which not only facilitated the addition of ‘subjective elements’ (clarifications, interpretative additions, substitutions, changes, etc.), but made them extremely difficult for scribes to avoid altogether. The reading of such a text

This theological difficulty consists of the fact that the meaning of Cain’s clause remains undefined: if Cain’s speech is understood as an indicative statement, then Cain appears to be claiming that he is able to be hidden from God; if Cain’s speech is read as a rhetorical question, then Cain appears to be claiming the opposite, that neither he nor anyone can hide from God.<sup>73</sup> If read as a rhetorical question, in other words, the response to Cain’s question “Is it possible that I be hidden from you?” is expected to be: “No! It is *not* possible that I be hidden from you.” Commenting on Ps-J’s translation of Gen 4:14, yet bearing in mind other Targumim as well, Maher states: “None of the Targums accepts the idea that one can hide from God. [Onqelos, Neofiti, and Cairo Genizah B] have Cain proclaim that it is impossible to hide from God...”<sup>74</sup> That is to say, on account of the targumist’s belief that God is an omniscient and an omnipresent God, it was simply inconceivable to the targumist that Cain’s utterance *וּמִפְּנֵי דְאִסְתֵּר* would mean that Cain could be hidden from God.<sup>75</sup> Accordingly, the targumist translated the text in a way that expressed more precisely the notion that Cain cannot be hidden from God.

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as this depends on the active interpretive engagement and critical faculties of the reader, who must understand the text before bringing it to concrete articulation” (Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 12).

<sup>73</sup> Shepherd, however, remarks: “Even if Ps.-J.’s question is to be taken as rhetorical (which, in the light of the other modifications in this passage, is by no means certain) its status as question introduces the grammatical possibility of a ‘wrong’ answer into the situation” (Shepherd, “Translating and Supplementing,” 135).

<sup>74</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 34, n. 33. See also, Gordon, “‘Converse Translation,’” 4. Commenting on this verse in Neofiti—which expresses the same theological stance—McNamara suggests that Neofiti’s translation is an attempt to “avoid attributing limitation to God” (McNamara, *Neofiti I: Genesis*, 67, n. 16). Similarly, with respect to Onqelos and its rendering of 4:14, Cathcart, Maher, and McNamara state: “‘and from Your face I shall be hidden’ is here paraphrased due to its extreme anthropomorphic overtone” (Grossfeld, *Onqelos to Genesis*, 49, n. 9).

<sup>75</sup> On the nearness, distance, and omnipresence of God, see Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs, The World and Wisdom of the Rabbis of the Talmud*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 66–79; and on the Shekhina, see Urbach, *Sages*, 37–65,

Israel Drazin and Stanely M. Wagner go further and suggest that the targumist actually sought to preclude misinterpretation of the text. They write: “Since it is impossible to hide from the omnipresent deity, and since the *Targum* readers might be misled, failing to understand that Cain had the wrong idea, the translator changed the verse.”<sup>76</sup> The targumist, that is, sought to eliminate any hint that someone could be hidden from God lest a wrong view be mistakenly adopted.<sup>77</sup> In the end, whether or not the translation was influenced by a fear of misinterpretation, the targumist reworked the surface structure of the text and specified the meaning of Cain’s words. Therefore, a clause that might have been understood either as a statement or a question in the Hebrew was transformed into a clause that could be understood solely as a rhetorical question in the Aramaic. In this way, the targumist constricted the sense of Cain’s utterance to a single possible interpretation—that Cain cannot hide from God. Addressing the targumic practice of specifying the meaning of words and statements in the translation of the text from the Hebrew to the Aramaic, Samely states:

[T]he range of meaning of these terms is narrowed down or modified by a new linguistic neighbourhood created by the targumist. In the case of single words, the addition may take the form of a genitive object, a direct or indirect object, or an adjective. In the case of whole sentences (in our passages often the utterance) the

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and Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Heavenly Torah: As Refracted through the Generations*, ed. and trans. Gordon Tucker (New York: Continuum, 2007), 93–100.

<sup>76</sup> Drazin and Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Genesis*, 25.

<sup>77</sup> Commenting on the Targumim, Smelik writes: “Although optional, the oral-performative translation was taken seriously enough to demand instantaneous correction of any perceived errors. . . . Still, it would be wrong to believe that the text was entirely fluid or an oral-performative improvisation: the rabbis still sought to control the *wording* of the interpretation, and it is reasonable to assume that the translational choices were compulsory to a large extent. *The extent of the control that is exercised over translation—concerning its contents, context and performance, whether real or virtually—points to a fear from improper influence, whether by status or content of the translations*” (italics mine; Smelik, *Rabbis, Language and Translation in Late Antiquity*, 180).

addition can be a word (in the speech report), a clause, an independent sentence or a number of sentences (in the text directly preceding the speech report).<sup>78</sup>

In the case of Ps-J Gen 4:14, the targumist specified the meaning of Cain's exclamation by adding the adverb **איפשר** with the interrogative **ה** to give Cain's utterance the form of a question that expects a negative answer.

That the omniscience and omnipresence of God were theological concepts that the targumist took into consideration in his translation of the Torah is also evident in the Aramaic translations of Gen 3:8–10. This brief portion from the Fall narrative describes how Adam and Eve hid from God, then how God inquired where Adam was, and finally how Adam admitted that he was hiding from God. Once again demonstrating sensitivity to a narrative that seems to imply the human ability to hide from God, Ps-J (and Neofiti, but not Onqelos<sup>79</sup>) rendered the text in a way that removed from the narrative the potential reading that man can hide from God, and instead affirmed the theological concept that God is omniscient and that in fact man cannot hide from God.<sup>80</sup> Gen 3:8–10 reads:

MT **וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִתְּהַלְךְ בְּגֵן לְרֵיחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה**<sup>8</sup>  
**אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹד עַץ הַגֶּזֶן: <sup>9</sup> וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל-הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אַיֶּכָּה: <sup>10</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת-קוֹלְךָ**  
**שָׁמַעְתִּי בְּגֵן וַאֲיָרָא כִּי-עִירָם אָנֹכִי וַאֲחָבָא:**

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<sup>78</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 181.

<sup>79</sup> It is interesting that Onqelos does not expand on the theological implications at Gen 3:8 as do Ps-J and Neofiti. This may be an indication that, while the targumist interacted with and reproduced the Hebrew text interpretively, the interaction was not systematic; not every passage that exhibited ambiguity was treated.

<sup>80</sup> While the MT terminology for “hide” differs between 3:8–10 (**חבא**) and 4:14 (**סתר**), the Targumim use the same Aramaic root **טמר**. However, though the Aramaic lexicon does list the meaning “to hide” under the root **סתר**, none of the Targumim use this root with this sense. Cf. Ps-J Deut 29:5, where the adjectival form **מסתרא** appears.

NRSV <sup>8</sup> They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” <sup>10</sup> He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

Ps-J <sup>8</sup> ושמעו ית קל מימרא דיי אלקים מטייל בגינוניתא למנח יומא ואיטמר אדם ואינתתיה מן קדם יי אלקים במציעות אילני גינוניתא <sup>9</sup> וקרא יי אלקים לאדם ואמר ליה הלא כל עלמא דבריתי גלי קדמיי חשוכא כנהורא והיך אנת סבר בליבך לאיטמרי מן קדמי הלא אתר דאנת דאת מיטמר ביה אנא חמי ואין ואי אינון פיקודייה דפקדיתו דפקדיתך <sup>10</sup> ואמר ית קל מימרך שמעית בגינוניתא ודחילת ארום ערטיליי אנא דמצותא דפקידתני אעברית מיני ואיטמרית מן כיסופא

Ps-J <sup>8</sup> They heard the voice of *the Memra* of the Lord God moving in the garden at the *decline* of the day; and *Adam* and his wife hid themselves from before the Lord God in the midst of *the trees* of the garden. <sup>9</sup> The Lord God called to *Adam* and said to him, “*Is not the whole world which I created manifest before me, the darkness as well as the light? How then do you imagine in your heart that you can hide yourself from before me? Do I not see the place where you are hiding? And where are the commandments that I commanded you?*” <sup>10</sup> He said, “I heard the voice of *your Memra* in the garden and I was afraid, for I am naked, *because I transgressed the commandment you gave me*, and I hid myself *for shame*.”

The question of God’s omniscience and omnipresence is dealt with much more directly at 3:8 than at 4:14. Whereas at 4:14 Ps-J merely implies the theological question in its Aramaic rendering of the text but does not develop it, at 3:8 Ps-J actually has God confront Adam explicitly on this issue. In this targumic rendition, God no longer asks Adam: “Where are you?” Instead, God instructs Adam that everything is in his sight. Such a direct discussion of this theological issue indicates that this question was indeed of concern to the targumist. Consequently, 3:8 serves to demonstrate that the theology of God’s omniscience and omnipresence was an important concept for the targumist that influenced his Aramaic translation of 4:14.

Furthermore, as already noted above and as Klein records, Ps-J is not the only Targum to rework Gen 4:14.<sup>81</sup> Onqelos, Neofiti, and Cairo Genizah B also rendered the verse interpretively. In each of these cases, the Aramaic versions added the negative particle לית at the beginning of Cain’s utterance, thus producing the exact negative sense of Cain’s speech *vis-à-vis* the plain-sense of the Hebrew text.

TO	וּמִן קִדְמֵךְ לִית אִפְשָׁר לְאַטְמָרָא
TO	it is not possible to hide from before you
Neof	וּמִן קִדְמֵיךְ לִית אִפְשָׁר לִי לְמַטְמֵרָא
Neof	it is not possible for me to hide from before you
Cairo Genizah B	וּמִן־קִדְמֵיךְ אֲדִנִי לִית־אִפְשָׁר לְבְרִנְשׁ לְמַטְמָרָא
Cairo Genizah B	it is not possible for man to hide from before you, O Lord

Whereas Ps-J expressed the notion that it is impossible to hide from God by means of the rhetorical question, that is, implicitly, the above three texts—Onqelos, Neofiti, and Cairo Genizah—made this claim explicit.

Analyzing specifically the Neofiti text, Levy and Grossfeld contend that the apparent contradictory translation reflects the targumist’s understanding of the Hebrew text. In a comment on Neofiti Gen 4:14, Levy concludes that Neofiti’s clause וּמִן קִדְמוֹךְ לִית אִפְשָׁר לִי לְמַטְמֵרָא is an “expanded translation of Biblical [וּמִפְנֵיךְ אֶסְתֵּר] (“from your face I shall be hidden”),” and he proceeds to suggest that the MT “probably should be

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<sup>81</sup> Klein, “Converse Translation,” 517–18.

read as a question.”<sup>82</sup> Similarly, in his study of the Neofiti rendition of 4:14, Grossfeld writes: “N[eofiti] renders the *positive rhetorical* question of the Heb. **ומפניך אסתר** by a *negative absolute* equivalent, a practice which is in line with N’s normal treatment of rhetoric.”<sup>83</sup> In other words, Grossfeld proposes that the targumist of Neofiti read the Hebrew text, understood Cain to be exclaiming a rhetorical question, and rather than translating Cain’s speech in the form of a question (as did Ps-J) Neofiti transformed the question into a negative statement to convey the sense of the passage more explicitly. Thus, both Levy and Grossfeld conclude that the idea that Cain cannot be hidden from God was understood by the targumist to be implied in the Hebrew. While Neofiti, Onqelos, and Cairo Genizah B differ from Ps-J in their formal representation of the text in Aramaic—a negative statement appearing in Neofiti, Onqelos, and Cairo Genizah B, and a rhetorical question in Ps-J—both renditions are partly determined by the targumist’s theological assumptions about God.

In the end, analysis of Gen 4:14 in the Hebrew text and in Ps-J—as well as in Onqelos, Neofiti, and Cairo Genizah—demonstrates that the Aramaic translation of the verse is the result of careful exegesis of an ambiguity in the Hebrew text. Inasmuch as the Hebrew construction could be understood either as a statement or as an interrogative,

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<sup>82</sup> Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 110.

<sup>83</sup> Italics mine. Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 91. Grossfeld further states: “TO is identical to N, but Ps. Jon. retains the Hebrew rhetoric. M. L. Klein ... mistakenly considers N here as employing a converse translation because of the negative **לית אפשר** [it is not possible] here. *In fact, the Hebrew essentially implies the negative inherent in its rhetorical question*” (Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 91). Cf. Targum Isa 37:23, where Gordon argues that 37:23, which has ““and you did not lift up your eyes on high to the holy one of Israel’ is in formal contradiction of the MT, but the significance of the inserted negative depends on whether the sentence is read as a statement or as a question [in the MT]” (Gordon, ““Converse Translation,”” 12).



thereby generating a theological question within the narrative, the targumists resolved the ambiguity and interpreted the text in accord with their theological beliefs. In their resolution of the ambiguity, the targumists preferred the interrogative reading of the Hebrew clause, and reworked the text in a manner that ensured that such was the sole possible reading in the Aramaic. Being an interpretation of the Hebrew text, the targumic rendering of the passage is not intended to be a rejection of the Hebrew, but a more precise rendering thereof. The targumist read the Hebrew text, perceived the ambiguity in the passage, interpreted the text in the light of his set of theological assumptions, and integrated his interpretative understanding of the passage into the Aramaic translation.<sup>84</sup>

## 2.3 Addition of the Negative Particle

### 2.3.1 Genesis 4:23–24

Ps-J's apparently converse translation of Lamech's poetic speech to his wives at Gen 4:23–24 raises the same question discussed above: Is the targumist contradicting the Hebrew text, or is he rather encountering, interpreting, and resolving a literary issue

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<sup>84</sup> Another case of an apparent converse translation occurs at Ps-J Gen 21:7, in which verse a rhetorical question in the Hebrew is transformed into a statement in the Aramaic. The Hebrew text states: *וְתֹאמֶר מִי מִלֵּל לְאַבְרָהָם הִינִיְקָה בָנִים שָׂרָה כִּי־יִלְדֵתִי בֶן לְזָקְנִי* “And she said, ‘Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.’” The Ps-J text states: *וְתֹאמֶר מִי מִהֲמִין מִבְּשָׂרָא דְבִשְׂרָא לְאַבְרָהָם וְאִמְרַת עֵתִידָא דְתוֹנִיק בְּנִין שָׂרָה אַרוֹם יִלְדַת לִיהָ בִּיר לְאַיְשׁוֹן* “And she said, ‘How trustworthy was the messenger who announced to Abraham, saying “Sarah is destined to nurse children.” For she has borne him a son at the time of his old age.’” While the rhetorical question in the Hebrew expects a negative answer, that is, “No one would have ever said that Sarah would nurse children,” the targumist interpreted the *rhetorical* question as an *actual* question and provided an actual answer. That is, reading 21:7 in the light of 17:19 and 18:10, in which verses the angel makes this announcement to Abraham, the targumist interpreted 21:7 literally, as posing the question: “Who said to Abraham that Sarah...?” Having read 21:7 in this way, then, the targumist rendered a translation that provided an answer to this question: “How trustworthy was the messenger who announced to Abraham...” Komlosh explains that the rhetorical question in the Hebrew text generated an impression that God’s ability to fulfill his promise to Abraham and Sarah was in question. Therefore, the targumist rendered the verse in a way that clearly expressed God’s ability to fulfill his promises. See Komlosh, *המקרא באור התרגום*, 240–41; and Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 119–20, and 180.

within the Hebrew text? In the Hebrew Bible, Lamech appears to announce to his wives that he killed a man; however, in Ps-J the exact opposite seems to be the sense of Lamech’s declaration—that he did *not* kill a man and that he did *not* wound a youth.<sup>85</sup> The formal difference between the Hebrew and the Aramaic is the targumist’s insertion of the negative particle לא into his rendition of 4:23. Thus, whereas in the Hebrew Lamech appears to be making an absolute *positive* statement, in Ps-J (and in Onqelos, Neofiti, and Neofiti Marginalia) Lamech exclaims an absolute *negative* statement.

- MT וַיֹּאמֶר לְמֶדֶךָ לְנָשָׁיו עֲדָה וְצִלְלָה שְׁמַעְנָן קוֹלִי נָשִׁי לְמֶדֶךָ הַאֲזִנָּה אִמְרָתִי כִּי אִישׁ הֲרַגְתִּי  
 לְפָצְעִי וְיָלַד לְחִבְרָתִי: <sup>24</sup> כִּי שְׁבַעַתִּים יִקָּם-קִיּוֹן וְלֶמֶד שְׁבַעִים וְשִׁבְעָה:  
 NRSV <sup>23</sup> Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: **I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me.** <sup>24</sup> If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”
- Ps-J וַאֲמַר לְמֶדֶךָ לְנָשָׁיו עֲדָה וְצִלְלָה קְבִילִן קוֹלִי נָשִׁי לְמֶדֶךָ אִצִּיתִן לְמִימְרֵי אַרוּם לֹא גִבְרָא  
 קְטִילִית דְּנִתְקַטְלָא תַּחְוָתוּהִי וְאוּף לֹא עוֹלִימָא תְּבִילִית דְּבִגִּינִיהּ יְהוּבְדוֹן זֹרְעִי <sup>24</sup> אַרוּם קִין  
 דִּהַב וְתַב בְּתִיבָא עַד שׁוּבְעָא דְרִין אֲתִילִיו לִיהּ וְלֶמֶד בַּר בְּרִיהּ דְּלֹא חַב דִּינָא הוּא דִּיִּתְלִי  
 לִיהּ עַד שׁוּבְעִין וְשִׁבְעָא  
 Ps-J <sup>23</sup> Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hearken to my voice; wives of Lamech, listen to my word: **I have not killed a man so that I should be killed for him; neither have I wounded a young man so that my offspring should be exterminated because of him.** <sup>24</sup> If [judgment] was suspended for seven generations for Cain who sinned and repented, it is just that [judgment] should be suspended for seventy-seven [generations] for Lamech, his grandson, who did not sin.”

<sup>85</sup> Klein, “Converse Translation,” 518–19; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 35, n. 47; Levine, *Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 33–34; cf. Drazin and Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Genesis*, 27; Aberbach and Grossfeld, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis Together with an English Translation of the Text*, 45, n. 22; Levy, *Targum Neofiti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 112–13; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 140; Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 93–94; Levine, “The Aggadah in Targum Jonathan ben ‘Uzziel and Neofiti 1 to Genesis: Parallel References,” 547–48.

TO 23 ואמר למך לנשוהי עדה וצלה שמעא קלי נשי למך אציתא למימרי לא גברא קטילית  
 דבדיליה אנה סביל חובין ואף לא עולימא חבילית דבדיליה ישתיעי זרעי: 24 ארי שבעה  
 דרין אתליו לקון הלא ללמד בריה ושבועא:

TO 23 Then Lamekh said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah hear my voice; you  
 wives of Lamekh, listen to my word: *I have not slain a man that on his  
 account I should hear guilt, neither have I injured a youth that on his  
 account my seed should he destroyed.* 24 For [if] for seven generations  
 [judgment] was *suspended* for Cain, will there not be for his son Lamekh  
 seventy-seven?”

Neof 23 ואמר למך לתרתין נשוהי עדה וצלה שמעו בקלי נשוהי דלמך א[צ]יתן למימריה  
 דפומי ארום לא גבר קטלת דאתקטל מן בגללה ולא עולם חבלת דיתחבלון זרעיתני מן  
 בתרי: 24 ארום קין דקטל להבל עד שבועה דרין איתלי לי[ה] ולמד בר ברה די לא קטל  
 בדינא הוא דיתלי ליה עד שבועה דרין יתלי ליה:

Neof 23 And Lamech said to his *two* wives: “Adah and Zillah: Listen to my voice,  
 wives of Lamech; attend to the word *of my mouth*. For I have not killed a man  
 so that I should be killed because of him, and I have not destroyed a young  
 man so that my descendants should be destroyed after me. 24 If Cain, *who  
 killed Abel, had [judgment] suspended for him for seven generations, it is just  
 that for Lamech, his grandson, who did not kill, [judgment] be suspended for  
 him—for seventy-seven generations may it be suspended for him*”

Neof 23 לא גבר ... ולא  
 Margin

Analysis of this passage demonstrates that this Aramaic translation is also the targumist’s interpretative response to a literary issue in the Hebrew text. What seems to have troubled the targumist is the apparent lack of obvious continuity between v. 23 and v. 24.<sup>86</sup> Klein already observed that v. 23 seems to present Lamech as guilty (“I killed a man...”), while v. 24 implies that Lamech is innocent (in that Lamech will be avenged seventy-sevenfold). The implication of Lamech’s innocence is manifested in Lamech’s

<sup>86</sup> Klein, “Converse Translation,” 518–19; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 35, n. 47; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 140; and cf. Aberbach and Grossfeld, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis Together with an English Translation of the Text*, 45, n. 22; Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 112–13; Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 93–94.

exclamation that he will be avenged more than Cain. Employing a *qal wa-ḥomer* argument (*argumentum a fortiori*), Lamech declares: if Cain (who has killed a man and is guilty) is avenged sevenfold, then I Lamech (implication: who have not killed a man and, therefore, am not guilty) shall be avenged seventy-sevenfold.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, while at v. 23 Lamech is a self-pronounced killer, at v. 24 Lamech's statement implies innocence.

It is precisely this potential implication of Lamech's innocence at v. 24 that severs the continuity between v. 24 and v. 23. And this disparity, in effect, compelled the targumist of Ps-J to render the text in a way that would present the two verses coherently. For in the view of the targumist, the biblical text does not contain contradictions. As

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<sup>87</sup> For remarks on the principle *qal wa-ḥomer*, see Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 18 and 24. Lamech's exclamation could also be understood as a "gigantic boast" (Gunkel, *Genesis*, 53–54) or as "brutal arrogance" (W. Gunther Plaut, Bernard J. Bamberger, and William W. Hallo, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* [New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981], 45, nn. 23–24). According to this reading, Lamech's exclamation might serve to reveal his personal view on vengeance that is based on the viciousness of the individual (which is still *qal wa-ḥomer*). That is, if Cain is avenged sevenfold and he is considered to be vicious, it follows then that Lamech will be avenged seventy-sevenfold because he is so much more vicious than Cain. Levine prefers this reading of the text, and explains the apparent converse translation in the Targumim as follows: "When Lamech brags to his wives, 'I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me' (Gen 4:23), he then concludes that since Cain had been granted the protection of seven-fold revenge, he himself would be granted seventy-seven-fold protection. The implication is *not* that Lamech's offense was less severe than Cain's, but rather, that if Cain the murderer received such magnanimous protection, Lamech, because of his double murder, deserved a far greater one. . . . By directly contra[di]cting Scripture the targum changes a bloodthirsty song of triumph into an affirmation of divine justice" (italics original; Levine, *Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 33–34). See also James L. Kugel, *In Potiphar's House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 160–61; idem, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 31–32; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 114; Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, The JPS Torah Commentary, eds. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1989), 39; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 289–90; Westermann sees Lamech's words as an exclamation of threat, "horrific retribution," in Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 336–37; cf. 1 Kings 12:1–15 (=2 Chr 10:1–15), where Rehoboam compares himself to and declares that he is more fierce than his father Solomon. In addition, Kugel discusses how Lamech's words have been understood by early exegetes as an apology. According to this reading of the passage, Lamech accidentally killed Cain and his son, and exclaimed the words at 4:23 as a defense that he did not kill them as an act of vengeance, but inadvertently (Kugel, *In Potiphar's House*, 159–72). For additional references to versions of this tradition, see Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah*, 92–93; Louis Ginzberg, "Die Haggada bei den Kirchenvätern und in der apokryphischen Literatur," in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 43 (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1899), 293–99; idem, *Legends of the Jews*, trans. Henrietta Szold, 7 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968), 1:116–17; 5:145–47; idem, *On Jewish Law and Lore* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1955), 61–62.

Roger le Déaut exclaims (from the perspective of the ancient Jewish exegete): “The Bible, a book that is inspired, is able to contain neither error nor contradiction.”<sup>88</sup> Rather, as Kugel points out, early exegetes postulated “the unity and univocality of all of Scripture.”<sup>89</sup> To achieve continuity between the two verses, then, the targumist, in accordance with v. 24, demonstrated Lamech’s innocence at v. 23 as well, so that Lamech becomes, in effect, innocent in both verses. Thus, just as at v. 24 Lamech implies that he is not a murderer, so at v. 23 the targumist has Lamech declare that he has not killed a man or a young man.

As in the case of Gen 4:14 studied above, the targumist harmonized the two verses by exegeting the Hebrew text of v. 23. The text in question is Lamech’s exclamation: **כִּי אִישׁ הֲרַגְתִּי לְפָצְעִי וְיָלֵד לְחַבְרָתִי**, which the targumist rendered as: **אָרוּם לֹא** גברא קטילית דנתקטלא תחותיה ואוף לא עולימא חבילית דבגיניה יהובדון זרעי. The question is: How did the targumist start with the Hebrew text and arrive at his Aramaic rendition? If the Hebrew is read as a declarative statement, then the Aramaic appears to be the exact opposite of the Hebrew. Lamech’s utterance, however, need not necessarily be

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<sup>88</sup> In the original: “La Bible, livre inspiré, ne peut contenir ni erreur, ni contradiction” (Le Déaut, “Un phénomène spontané de l’herméneutique juive ancienne: le ‘targumisme,’” 517). Samely too remarks: “The presuppositions of the great variety of operations and exegetical ideas that are employed in accounting for the wording of MT can be grouped around three concepts: Scriptural text is *coherent*; it is *complete*; and it is *relevant*. These three features are the ones in whose respect the text is accounted for by the targumic additions” (italics original; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 171, and see 171–73). See also Goldberg, “The Rabbinic View of Scripture,” 153–66; and Yonah Frenkel, *מדרש ואגדה* (Tel Aviv: Open University of Israel, 1996), 3:597–98.

<sup>89</sup> James Kugel, “Two Introductions to Midrash,” in *Midrash and Literature*, eds. Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick, 77–103 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 78. He further adds: “[T]he idea of the Bible itself, that is, both the establishing of the special character of divine speech, and therefore the need for (inspired) interpretation, and the propounding—or rather the presuming—of the Scriptural Presumption, making the (still increasing) corpus of sacred books into a single, unified, revelatory pool” (Kugel, “Two Introductions to Midrash,” 91).

understood as a declarative statement that announces his guilt. Analysis of the Hebrew demonstrates that Lamech's speech can also be read as a rhetorical question that expects a negative answer (again, similar to the case at 4:14).<sup>90</sup> Schmerler remarks that the targumist of Ps-J read the clause *הָאִישׁ הִרְגֵנִי כִּי אִישׁ הִרְגֵנִי*, that is, as a rhetorical question.<sup>91</sup> Read as a rhetorical question, Lamech's exclamation implies the rejection of all guilt on Lamech's part: "Did I kill a man for wounding me, or a youth for striking me?"<sup>92</sup> The expected answer is: "No!" Grammatically, either the declarative statement or the rhetorical question is permissible. For the targumist, reading the text as a declarative

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<sup>90</sup> So V. Aptowitzer in his comments on Onqelos, which he compares to Ps-J: "Die Übersetzung von V. 23 aber, die die Aussage des Textes in ihr Gegenteil wendet, erklärt sich daraus, daß Onkelos כִּי als Frage faßt ... und die mit der Frage beabsichtigte Negierung direct ausdrückt" (V. Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel in der Agada den Apokryphen, der hellenistischen, christlichen und muhamedanischen Literatur* [Vienna: R. Löwit, 1922], 69–70); and cf. Kugel, *In Potiphar's House*, 170, n. 11; Klein, "Converse Translation," 519, n. 10; and idem, *The Masorah to Targum Onqelos*, 216–17, where Klein points out that the Masorah to Onqelos takes כִּי as a negative particle: "כִּי דמתרג לֹא." Even if this process of translation—of reading כִּי as a question—were the original exegetical cause for reading the words of Lamech as a rhetorical question, this is not self-evident within Ps-J, since Ps-J translates כִּי with its Aramaic equivalent אַרוּם, a term that functions as a conjunction and not as an interrogative particle. Jastrow defines אַרְי, אַרוּם as "behold, in most cases corresponding to [Biblical Hebrew] כִּי, that, so that, because, if" (Marcus Jastrow, "אַרְי, אַרוּם" in *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* [New York: Luzac & Co., 1903], 118). See Cook, *Rewriting the Bible: The Text and Language of the Pseudo-Jonathan Targum*, 159; David M. Golomb, *A Grammar of Targum Neofiti*, HSM 34 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press: 1985), 31; Miguel Pérez Fernández, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, trans. John Elwolde (Boston: Brill, 1999), 192, §§3 and 6; Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 149–55 §4.3.4; GKC §104a and §157b; J. Muilenburg, "The Linguistic and Rhetorical Uses of the Particle כִּי in the Old Testament," *HUCA* 32 (1961): 135–60; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 335 (כִּי calls the hearer to attention like הִנֵּה); E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 35 ("כִּי corresponds to our colon"); Wenham translates this verse as follows: "Truly I have killed a man for bruising me, a youth for hitting me" (Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 93).

<sup>91</sup> Benjamin Schmerler, *ספר אהבת יהונתן: ספר בראשית* (Bilgoraj, Poland: Kronenberg, 1932; repr., Brooklyn, NY: Achim Goldenberg, 1992), 54. So also, in their comments on Targum Onqelos, Drazin and Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Genesis, 27*; and for some discussion of rhetorical questions in the Hebrew Bible translated as statements in the Targumim, see Komlosh, *המקרא המוקרא*, 240–41; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 180.

<sup>92</sup> So Genesis Rabbah 23.4 (discussed below); cf. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:195; Kugel, *In Potiphar's House*, 170, n. 11.

statement, however, was not acceptable, for he translated Lamech's speech in a way that removed all guilt from Lamech: "I have *not* killed ... I have *not* wounded..." Rather, the targumist read Lamech's utterance as a rhetorical question that demanded a negative response, and formulated his Aramaic translation as a statement that provided the expected answer to the rhetorical question. In this way, the targumist relieved Lamech of any indication of guilt in the pericope, and, in effect, forged continuity between v. 23 and v. 24.

As noted above, Neofiti renders this passage just as Ps-J, and in an analysis of this passage in Neofiti, Levy and Grossfeld conclude that such a rendering of the Hebrew in the Aramaic is thoroughly exegetical. Neofiti reads:

Neofiti            23 ואמר למך לתרתין נשוהי עדה וצלה שמעו בקלי נשוהי דלמך א[צ]יתן למימריה  
                          דפומי ארום לא גבר קטלת דאתקטל מן בגללה ולא עולם חבלת דיתחבלון זרעיתי מן  
                          בתרי: 24 ארום קין דקטל להבל עד שבעה דרין איתלי ליה] ולמך בר ברה די לא קטל  
                          בדינא הוא דיתלי ליה עד שבעין ושבעה דרין יתלי ליה:

Neofiti    23 And Lamech said to his *two* wives: "Adah and Zillah: Listen to my voice, wives of Lamech; attend to the word *of my mouth*. For I have not killed a man so that I should be killed because of him, and I have not destroyed a young man so that my descendants should be destroyed after me. 24 If Cain, *who killed Abel, had [judgment] suspended for him for seven generations, it is just that for Lamech, his grandson, who did not kill, [judgment] be suspended for him—for seventy-seven generations may it be suspended for him.*"

Analyzing this expansion in Neofiti, Levy states: "Apparently the translator read the Heb. text as a question and simply expanded the text in his usual manner."<sup>93</sup> Also commenting on Neofiti, Grossfeld remarks:

N understood the Heb. *כי איש הרגתי לפצע* to be a rhetorical question – 'Have I slain a man, for which I shall be slain?' .... N accordingly transforms this positive rhetorical question into the implied answer – *לא גברא קטלתי* as does Ps. Jon. and

<sup>93</sup> Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 112.

TO לא גברא קטילית. Likewise וילד לחברתי is rendered ולא עולם חבלתי, an outright denial.<sup>94</sup>

Both commentators perceive that the targumist read the Hebrew as a rhetorical question, and then rendered the rhetorical question in the form of the expected negative answer. The text of Ps-J, as Grossfeld also suggested, appears to be implementing the very same technique.

A question arises, however: Does Ps-J provide evidence that the targumist would read an apparent statement *in the Hebrew* as a question, or that he would take a question *in the Hebrew* and render it in the form of an answer *in the Aramaic*? Both questions receive a response in the affirmative. Ps-J Gen 4:14, already studied above, serves as a prime example of the targumist reading an apparent statement in the Hebrew ( ומִפְּנֵיךְ ) (אֶסְתֵּר) as a rhetorical question in the Aramaic (ומן קדמך האיפשר דאיטמר). As regards the second question, Deut 20:19 illustrates how the targumist took an apparent rhetorical question in the Hebrew and reformulated it in the form of a *statement* in the Aramaic that serves as the *answer* to the question. The rhetorical question in the Hebrew text of Deut 20:19 “Are trees in the field human beings that they should come under siege from you?” is rendered in Ps-J as a declarative statement that is, in fact, the expected answer: ארום לא כבר נש אילן דאנפי ברא למטמרא מקמיכון בצ׳ירא “for a tree in the open field is not like a man *able to hide from you during* the siege.”<sup>95</sup> This

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<sup>94</sup> Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 93–94.

<sup>95</sup> Jeffrey Tigay translates the clause as: “Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city?” He remarks: “The syntax of the Hebrew is difficult and the translation uncertain” (Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, The JPS Torah Commentary, eds. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996], 190). He also notes that “the ancient translations, which



very technique is evidently in effect at Ps-J Gen 4:23–24. The targumist of Ps-J considered the alternative ways of reading Lamech’s speech, and preferring the sense that better preserved the continuity between v. 23 and v. 24, he read Lamech’s speech as a rhetorical question and then produced a negative answer to the question in the Aramaic text in order to make the coherent reading of the two verses obvious.

Indeed, this reading of Lamech’s speech is found in Genesis Rabbah 23.4 (to 4:23–25), in which midrash Lamech poses a rhetorical question and then exclaims a negative statement, both of which serve to deny that he killed or injured anyone.<sup>96</sup> The midrash reads:

כי איש הרגתי לפצעי שיבואו לי פצעים בשבילו וילד לחבורתי שיבואו עלי חבורות  
אתמהא, קין הרג ונתלה לו שבעה דורות, אני שלא הרגתי אינו דין שיתלה לי  
שבעים ושבעה<sup>97</sup>

*For have I slain a man for my wounding—that wounds should come to me on his account! And a youth for my bruising—that bruises should come upon me! Cain killed, yet [judgment] was suspended for him for seven generations; for me, who did not kill, is it not just that [judgment] would be suspended seventy-seven generations!*

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render ‘a tree is *not*’ also imply that the clause is interrogative” (Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPS, 190, n. 38; cf. LXX; Onqelos; Neofiti; Ps-J; Peshitta; Vulgate). With an interrogative, one would expect to see the interrogative particle הַ rather than הָ; but Tigay explains, “This does not require emending the vocalization of *ha`adam*; the interrogative particle is frequently vocalized like the definite article as here (see, e.g., Gen 17:17 and, before an *aleph*, Gen 19:9; Num. 16:22)” (Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPS, 190, n. 38). See Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 187 §5.3.1a; GKC §150. For another and clearer case of a rhetorical question in the Hebrew reproduced in the form of an answer in the Aramaic, see Neofiti Gen 29:15.

<sup>96</sup> See also Klein, “Converse Translation,” 518–19; and Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 93–94.

<sup>97</sup> Theodor-Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 23.4 (כג”ד), 1:224–25. Klein proposes that “The textual basis of this midrash is the word כִּי taken as the interrogative וְכִי of Rabbinic Hebrew” (Klein, “Converse Translation,” 519, n. 10). See Aptowitz, *Kain und Abel*, 69; Kugel, *In Potiphar’s House*, 170, n. 11.

Klein suggests that “It is this midrashic tradition that is reflected in the converse translation, shared by all of the targumim.”<sup>98</sup> Likely familiar with this interpretive reading of the passage, the targumist of Ps-J (as well as of Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia) brought this interpretation to articulation in its distinctive formal expression in his Aramaic rendering of the passage.

In summary, key to understanding the Aramaic translation of Gen 4:23–24 in Ps-J is recognizing that when the targumist read v. 23 and v. 24, he sensed discontinuity between the two verses. In the light of this lack of continuity, the targumist considered the alternative ways of reading Lamech’s words—as Lamech exclaiming that he *did* kill, and Lamech posing a rhetorical question which suggests that he did *not* kill. On account of his assumption about the unity of Scripture, the targumist, following the reading in the midrash, preferred the rendering that offered a coherent narrative and interpreted Lamech’s words as a rhetorical question that demanded a negative response. In order to make the coherent reading of the two verses explicit and unequivocal, the targumist reproduced this rhetorical question in his translation in the form of a negative statement. Klein, therefore, is surely correct to conclude that the ultimate reason for this translation in Ps-J and in the other Targumim is the “harmonization” between the two verses, that is,

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<sup>98</sup> Klein, “Converse Translation,” 519; so also Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 140; Aberbach and Grossfeld, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis Together with an English Translation of the Text*, 45, n. 22; Hayim Feivel Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות (Lakewood, NJ: Avraham Yesha‘yahu Eli‘ezer Vagner, 2009), 92 (בראשית in צב). Kugel contends that this midrash too exhibits an element of inconsistency. He writes: “The only problem that exegetes might find with this understanding is that, if Lamech has indeed killed no one, even by accident, then why is he urging that his ‘punishment’ be put off for seventy-seven generation? What punishment?” However, the answer to this query seems to lie in the context of Lamech’s words in the midrash, namely, the punishment of the world by means of the flood. As Freedman and Simon remark, the meaning of Lamech’s statement is that the Flood “would certainly be postponed for many generations” (Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:195, n. 2; so also Jacob Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah, The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis, A New American Translation* [Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1985], 1:258).

the targumist's desire to present the text coherently.<sup>99</sup> The exegetical process underlying the apparently contradictory translation at 4:23–24 suggests that this translation is not a rejection of the Hebrew text, but explication of the sense that in the targumist's view was latent in the Hebrew.

### 2.3.2 Genesis 37:33

Ps-J Gen 37:33 also presents an apparently contradictory translation on account of its addition of the negative particle **לֹא** where the narrative lacks it in the Hebrew.<sup>100</sup> In the Hebrew text, the brothers of Joseph come to Jacob with Joseph's bloodied garment; they lead Jacob to believe that Joseph was torn to pieces by an animal, and at v. 33 Jacob exclaims in lamentation that Joseph is dead. In Ps-J, however (and in the Fragment Targumim and in Manuscript D), Jacob declares that Joseph is *not* dead, but rather alive.<sup>101</sup>

MT	וַיִּכְרָה וַיֹּאמֶר כְּתָנֶת בְּנֵי תָיָה רָעָה אֲכָלְתָּהּוּ טָרְף טָרְף יוֹסֵף:
NRSV	<sup>33</sup> He recognized it, and said, "It is my son's robe! <b>A wild animal has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.</b> "
Ps-J	וַאֲשֶׁתְּמוֹדָעָה וַאֲמַר פְּרָגוּד דְּבָרֵי הָיָא לֹא חַיּוֹת בְּרָא אֲכָלְתִּיהּ וְלֹא עַל יַד בְּנֵי נִשְׂא אֵיתְקַטַּל אֵלֹא חַמֵּי אַנָּא בְּרוּחַ קוֹדֶשׁא דְאִיתָא בִישְׁתָּא קִימָא לְקוּבְלִיָּה

<sup>99</sup> See LXX Judg 1:18–19, where the LXX apparently seeks to resolve a conflict in the Hebrew text, and therefore introduces converse translation (Gordon, "Converse Translation," 13).

<sup>100</sup> Klein, "Converse Translation," 522–23; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 127, n. 29; Shinan, אגדתם של מתורגמנים, 1:102, 150–51; Levine, "The Aggadah in Targum Jonathan ben 'Uzziel and Neofiti 1 to Genesis: Parallel References," 565; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 242; Schmerler, אהבת ה' in תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות, 273; Ben-Mendel, בראשית-שמות, 310 (רש"י in בראשית).

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Neofiti Gen 43:14 that implies a similar converse translation: היך מה דלא תכלת על יוסף ברי (but not 37:32–33).

Ps-J <sup>33</sup> He identified it and said, “*It is my son’s cloak. **It was not a wild beast that devoured him; and he was not killed by men.** But I see by the Holy Spirit that an evil woman is standing before him.*”

P ... לא חיות ברא אכלתיה ולא איתקטלא איתקטל ברי <sup>33</sup>  
“*It was not a wild beast that devoured him; and indeed my son has not been killed...*”

V, N, L ...לא חיות ברא אכלת יתיה ולא מיתקטלא איתקטל ברי יוסף <sup>33</sup>  
“*It was not a wild beast that devoured him; and indeed my son Joseph is not killed...*”

2755 לא חיות ברה אכלת יתה ולא מתקטל איתקטל ברי <sup>33</sup>  
“*It was not a wild beast that devoured him; and indeed my son is not killed...*”<sup>102</sup>

D ...לא מתקטלא איתקטל יוסף ברי ולא חיותא בישתא אכלת יתה... <sup>33</sup>  
“*Joseph, my son, is not killed, and no wild beast devoured him...*”

Again the question arises: How did the targumist start with the Hebrew text and arrive at the Aramaic rendition in this case? Analysis of the passages shows that in this instance too the targumist encountered a number of textual incongruities that prompted him to look at the verse interpretively and to resolve the incongruities he perceived to emerge in the Hebrew.

First, the targumist sensed an incongruity between the literal meaning of the statement of Jacob that Joseph has been torn to pieces (חַיָּה רָעָה אֶכְלָתָהּ טָרֵף טָרֵף יוֹסֵף) and the remark of the narrator that Jacob recognized “it” (וַיִּכְרָה). In other words, when the

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<sup>102</sup> The superscript לא and איתקטל reflect Klein’s correction of the original text, which reads: חיות ברי ברה אכלת יתה ולא מתקטל ברי (Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, 1:85, ln. 17). The negative particle לא seems to have dropped out of the manuscript and is reinserted by Klein on account of the parallel ולא מתקטל in the latter part of the verse. Klein alters איתקטל to מתקטל evidently to adjust the tense of the verbal form. See also Klein, “‘Converse Translation’: A Targumic Technique,” 522–23.

sons presented Joseph's garment to Jacob, the narrator states that Jacob recognized "it" (MT: וַיִּכְרָה; Ps-J: ואשתמודעה)—to be sure, meaning that Jacob recognized the coat.<sup>103</sup>

But the targumist, apparently, understood וַיִּכְרָה to mean that Jacob recognized the entire situation and the happenings behind the bloodied garment. Indeed, this understanding of וַיִּכְרָה is in keeping with Jewish tradition, as Genesis Rabbah 84.19 indicates:

ויכירה ויאמר כתנת בני אמר ליה אנא ידע מה אבא חמי כתנת בני חיה רעה אכלתהו, אמר ר' חוניה נצנצה בו רוח הקודש חיה רעה אכלתהו זו אשת פוטיפר<sup>104</sup>  
“He recognized it and said: ‘My son’s garment!’: I know what a father sees: My son’s garment! A ferocious beast has devoured him!’ R. Hunia said: The holy spirit was kindled within him. A ferocious beast has devoured him – this is a reference to Potiphar’s wife.”<sup>105</sup>

In other words, the midrash delineates exactly what Jacob recognized, and he recognized much more than the coat itself: he recognized that Mrs. Potiphar and Joseph will have an encounter.<sup>106</sup> The implication of this is that Joseph has not been killed, but that he is alive. To arrive at this reading of the passage, however, the midrash read חיה רעה as a metaphor for Mrs. Potiphar. Commenting on this midrash, Schäfer writes, “According to the author of this midrash, Jacob ‘in fact’ saw right through the deception of his sons.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 262; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 448–49; Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 43; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 356.

<sup>104</sup> Theodor-Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 84.19 (פד"יט), 2:1024.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:784.

<sup>106</sup> For a study of the encounter between Joseph and Mrs. Potiphar in the Targumim, see Maren Niehoff, “The Figure of Joseph in the Targums,” *JJS* 39, no. 2 (1988): 234–50.

<sup>107</sup> In the original: “Jakob hat für den Verfasser des Midraschs in ‘Wirklichkeit’ den Betrug seiner Söhne durchschaut” (Peter Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur*, Studien zum alten und neuen Testament [Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1972], 69 and see 33). See also Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 242–43.

As regards Ps-J, then, what troubled the targumist is that, while the Hebrew states that Jacob “recognized it,” Jacob’s response that “a wild beast has devoured him...” makes it seem as though Jacob actually failed to recognize the actual circumstances. But with the targumist’s apparent converse translation, the lack of continuity is resolved—Jacob recognizes the coat and explains the events (both past and future) surrounding the coat. The past—that Joseph was *not* killed by a wild animal or by any man; the future—that Joseph will face a wicked woman.

Second, the targumist perceived an incongruity between Jacob’s statement that Joseph was torn to pieces (which implies that Joseph was dead) and Jacob’s later refusal to be comforted (v. 35: וַיִּמְאַן לְהִתְנַחֵם; which, in Jewish tradition, came to mean that Joseph was alive). Describing Jacob’s refusal to be comforted, Westermann writes: “The verb נחם means not only that they spoke words of comfort, but rather that they wanted to bring about a change and have Jacob put an end to the rites of mourning.... But Jacob remains obdurate.... He will remain in mourning until death.”<sup>108</sup> The incongruity here is comprised of the fact that a person accepts consolation for someone who is dead, not for someone who is alive. Since Jacob refused to accept consolation for Joseph, Jewish tradition interpreted this to mean that Jacob knew that Joseph was alive. Midrash Tanhuma 9.8 expresses this tradition as follows:

A certain heretic (*min*) asked our Rabbi: Is it possible for the dead to live again? Your ancestors do not acknowledge <the belief>, yet you do acknowledge <it>!  
What is written about Jacob (in Gen 37:35)? THEN ALL HIS SONS AND DAUGHTERS

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<sup>108</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 44. Gunkel writes: “Jacob does not want ‘to be comforted’ (technical term...), but to continue the mourning ceremonies until he dies.... He wants to go to Sheol with ashes still on his head and sackcloth on his loins” (Gunkel, *Genesis*, 394). See also Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 262–63; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 448–49; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 356–57.

AROSE TO COMFORT HIM [BUT HE REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED]. If he had known that the dead would live <again>, would he have refused to be comforted and said (ibid., cont.): NO I WILL GO DOWN MOURNING UNTO MY SON IN SHEOL? Our Rabbi said to him: You are the biggest fool in the world. <It was> *because our father Jacob knew through the Holy Spirit that Joseph was alive. For that reason he did not accept consolation over him. After all, one does not accept consolation over one who is alive.*"<sup>109</sup>

In other words, the heretic contended that if Jacob had known about the resurrection of the dead, he would have received the comfort of his family over the death of Joseph, for he would have known that he would see Joseph again. However, the Rabbi turned the argument of the heretic on its head and exclaimed that the fact that Jacob refused to be comforted proves that he knew that Joseph was still alive. Commenting on Ps-J Gen 37:33, Klein points to this midrash and states: "This [Ps-J's converse] interpretation is no doubt related to the midrash about Jacob's refusal to be comforted (Gen 37:35)."<sup>110</sup> For had Jacob thought that Joseph was dead, Jacob would have accepted condolences on account of him. Thus, the lack of congruity between Jacob's words that Joseph is dead and Jacob's refusal to accept consolation bothered the targumist.

Third, the targumist demonstrated interpretive sensitivity to the apparent incongruity between the image of Jacob presented in the Hebrew text of 37:33 and the image of Jacob in Jewish tradition. In Jewish tradition, Jacob is considered to be endowed

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<sup>109</sup> Italics mine. John T. Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma, S. Buber Recension* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1997), 1:236. As indicated in the introduction to *Midrash Tanhuma* by Townsend, [square brackets] signify Buber's comments, {braces} signify Buber's parenthesis which contain manuscript readings that Buber rejected, (parenthesis) signify biblical references and parenthetical explanations incorporated into the text by Townsend, and <angle brackets> signify Townsend's additions (Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma*, xiii–xiv). For comments on this midrash, see Klein, "Converse Translation," 523; a similar tradition appears in Genesis Rabbah 84.21. So also Rashi on Gen 37:33 in M. L. Katzenellenbogen, ed., *תורת חיים: בראשית: חמשה חומשי תורה עם ההפטרות* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1993), 2:155 (קנה).

<sup>110</sup> Klein, "Converse Translation," 523.

with the Holy Spirit, but being endowed with the Holy Spirit, how could he have misconstrued the circumstances behind the bloodied coat? How could he have missed the fact that Joseph was still alive? In the view of the targumist, Jacob had to have understood the situation accurately because he had the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, as Shinan explains, Ps-J and the other Targumim transform the words of Jacob into a prophecy on account of which Jacob *does* know that Joseph is alive.<sup>111</sup>

Genesis Rabbah 84.19, already quoted above, also expresses the view that Jacob possessed the Holy Spirit:

ויכירה ויאמר כתנת בני אמר ליה אנא ידע מה אבא חמי כתנת בני חיה רעה אכלתהו, אמר ר' חוניה נצנצה בו רוח הקודש חיה רעה אכלתהו זו אשת פוטיפר<sup>112</sup>  
*“He recognized it and said: ‘My son’s garment!’: I know what a father sees: My son’s garment! A ferocious beast has devoured him!” R. Hunia said: The holy spirit was kindled within him. A ferocious beast has devoured him – this is a reference to Potiphar’s wife.”<sup>113</sup>*

Similarly, the text of Ps-J Gen 37:33 itself demonstrates this, as the verse states: חמי אנא

“*But I see by the Holy Spirit that an evil woman*

*is standing before him.*”<sup>114</sup> Once again commenting on Ps-J Gen 37:33, Klein remarks:

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<sup>111</sup> In the original: אל אשׁאיתא, על פיה יודע יעקב שבנו חי וקיים, אלא שׁאיתא (Shinan, אגדתם של מתורגמנים, 1:102). היא אשת פוטיפר

<sup>112</sup> Theodor-Albeck, מדרש בראשית רבא, 84.19 (פד״יט), 2:1024.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:784.

<sup>114</sup> Ben-Mendel expresses no doubt that Jacob had to have possessed the Holy Spirit; however, he does remark that Jacob may have spoken prophetically without actually understanding the significance of his prophetic word: תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: (Ben-Mendel, בראשית-שמות 310 [in שי]; cf. Shinan, אגדתם של מתורגמנים, 1:150–51. See also, for example, Gen 45:27; 43:14; 46:2; 49, in which verses Jacob is also depicted possessing the Holy Spirit. The inspiration for this, no doubt, derives from passages in which God reveals heavenly matters to humans, for example, Gen 28:10–17 (where Jacob dreams of a ladder on which angels are ascending and descending), 32:22–32 (where Jacob wrestles with a man, or with an angel according to Ps-J Gen 32:25; cf. Hos 12:3–4), 46:1–4



“This [Ps-J’s converse] interpretation is no doubt related ... to the rabbinic conviction that the patriarchs were endowed with prophetic powers.”<sup>115</sup> On account of this view of Jacob, the targumist pursued a reading of the Hebrew text that cohered with his perception of Jacob.

While these textual issues evidently prompted the targumist to render the text interpretively in order to bring resolution to these issues and to bring coherence to the narrative, the question remains: How did the targumist achieve this “converse” translation? Did he simply transform the meaning of the text by converting a positive statement into a negative statement by means of the negative לֹא? Yet again, comparative analysis of the Hebrew and the Aramaic texts suggests that the targumist was attentive to a grammatical ambiguity in the Hebrew text and that he interpreted the ambiguous element in a way that, in his view, conveyed the passage most coherently.

From a grammatical perspective, as in the cases considered above, the Hebrew clauses *חַיָּה רָעָה אֶכְלָתָהּ טָרֵף טָרֵף יוֹסֵף* could be understood as declarative statements or as rhetorical questions that demand a negative answer. As statements, they read: “A wild animal has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.” As questions, they read: “Has a wild animal devoured him? Has Joseph indeed been torn to pieces?” As a

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(where God speaks to and promises to make Jacob into a great nation), Gen 49 (where Jacob reveals the matters concerning the last days *אחרית הימים*), and Psa 147:19 (where God announces his word to Jacob) among other such passages.

<sup>115</sup> Klein, “Converse Translation,” 523. For references in Ps-J to the Holy Spirit *רוח קודשא* see Gen 6:3; 27:5; 27:42; 30:25; 31:21; 33:16; 35:22; 37:33; 43:14; Exod 31:3; Deut 5:24; 18:15, 18; Deut 28:59; 32:26, and to the Spirit of Prophecy *רוח נבואה* Gen 41:38; 45:27; Ex 33:16; 35:21, 31; 37:8; Num 11:17, 25 (2x), 26, 28, 29; Num 24:2; 27:18. For a helpful discussion of these two terms in the Targumim, see Peter Schäfer, “Die Termini ‘heiliger Geist’ und ‘Geist der Prophetie’ in den Targumim und das Verhältnis der Targumim zueinander,” *VT* 20 (1970): 310–12.

result of the fact that the targumist perceived the interpretive issues in the verse that needed specification, and having observed the grammatical ambiguity in the clauses, the targumist interpreted the ambiguous elements in a way that produced—in his view—the most congruous reading of the text. He first interpreted Jacob’s words as rhetorical questions, and he then rendered Jacob’s words in the form of responses to these rhetorical questions. He did not simply transform the verse from expressing one message to it expressing the exact opposite message. Rather, he exegeted the text that was in front of him, and produced what he believed to be the most accurate rendering of the verse in the light of the immediate context and the greater context of the Bible and Jewish tradition.<sup>116</sup>

The targumist’s exegetical approach to this verse is also evident in his attention to the construction of the Hebrew text and his dependence on the greater context of the narrative to develop his translation. The targumist produced a double interpretation of the single clause *חִיָּה רָעָה אֲכַלְתָּהּ* evidently on account of the *figura etymologica* in the clause *טָרַף טָרֵף יוֹסֵף* (i.e., a finite verb *טָרַף* used with a cognate infinitive absolute *טָרֵף*) and on account of the context provided at 37:20.<sup>117</sup> Each of the words *טָרַף טָרֵף* functioned

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<sup>116</sup> This, however, generates some literary tension—tension that arguably may be resolved—with other parts of Ps-J’s translation of the Joseph narrative, inasmuch as in a series of other instances Jacob seems to suggest that Joseph is dead (e.g., Ps-J Gen 42:36, 38; 44:28; 45:28; 46:30; 48:11). See Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 127, n. 29; and 146, n. 13; Schmerler, *בראשית יונתן: אהבת יהונתן: בראשית*, 302–5, 310, 315, 320, 326; Ben-Mendel, *בראשית-שמות: בראשית יונתן: עם פירוש יונתן: על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות* (i.e., a finite verb *טָרַף* used with a cognate infinitive absolute *טָרֵף*); Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur*, 35; and see n. 402 below for a discussion of some resolution of this tension.

<sup>117</sup> GKC §113m, §117p–r; Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 74–76, §3.4.2b, and see n. 85; Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 584–88, §35.3.1. The literary connection between 37:33 and 37:20 is already evident in the Hebrew text in that at 37:33 Jacob utters the very words that his sons intend for him to utter at 37:20: *חִיָּה רָעָה אֲכַלְתָּהּ*. See Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 262; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 356; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 448–49.

in a specific way to help bring out a particular meaning from the immediately preceding clause *חַיָּה רָעָה אֶכְלָתָהּ* that the targumist sought to explicate. The first *טָרַף* relates to the statement *לֹא חַיּוֹת בְּרָא אֶכְלָתֶיהָ*, and addresses the ruse of the brothers to deceive Jacob into thinking that Joseph was devoured by an animal. For as 37:20 indicates, after proposing to kill Joseph, the brothers exclaim: *וְאָמְרָנוּ חַיָּה רָעָה אֶכְלָתָהּ*. The second *טָרַף* relates to the statement *וְלֹא עַל יַד בְּנֵי נֶשֶׂא אֵיתְקַטֵּל*, and addresses the actual plan of the brothers to kill Joseph. Again as 37:20 indicates, in devising the plot, the brothers state: *וְנִיקְטְלִינֶיהָ/וְנִהְרֶגָהּ*, to which Reuben replies at v. 22: *וְיָד אֶל־תִּשְׁלַח־וּ*. The two negative statements that take the place of the *figura etymologica* in the Hebrew, evidently, result from the targumist's sensitivity to the *figura etymologica* in the text and from the targumist's attention to the greater context of the narrative.<sup>118</sup>

To offer the opposite side of these negative statements, the targumist explained in a positive statement what actually did happen to Joseph: *חַמִּי אֲנִי בְרוּחַ קוֹדֶשׁ דְּאֵיתָא*. This expansion too demonstrates a literary link to the brothers' plot of murder and deception articulated at 37:20. For after developing the plot, the brothers mockingly remark: *וְנִיחַמִּי מַה יְהִי פֶשַׁר חַלְמוּי/וְנִרְאָה מַה־יְהִי חַלְמָתִי*. Therefore, as the

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<sup>118</sup> Schmerler proposes a slightly different explanation for the targumic expansions. He suggests that *לֹא חַיּוֹת בְּרָא אֶכְלָתֶיהָ* represents *חַיָּה רָעָה אֶכְלָתָהּ*, and that *וְלֹא עַל יַד בְּנֵי נֶשֶׂא אֵיתְקַטֵּל* represents *טָרַף טָרַף* (Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן: בראשית*, 273).

brothers claim that they will *see* (וּנִיחְמִי) what will become of Joseph's dreams, so Jacob does, in fact, *see* (חָמִי) what truly had become and what will become of Joseph: Jacob sees that Joseph is alive and that he will be assailed by a wicked woman (אִיתָא בִישְתָא). To be sure, this reference to אִיתָא בִישְתָא also derives from the greater context of the narrative in that it is imported into 37:33 specifically from Gen 39, the chapter that describes Mrs. Potiphar's sexual advances on Joseph and the chapter that employs these two locutions אִיתָא (all throughout the chapter) and בִישְתָא (at 39:9 וְאִיךְ אֶעֱשֶׂה הָרְעָה בִישְתָא).<sup>119</sup> Therefore, by explicating the Hebrew text and by giving attention to the surrounding context of the passage, the targumist explained both, what did *not* happen to Joseph and what *did* happen to Joseph.

In the end, analysis of this passage demonstrates that the targumist's apparent converse translation of the verse indicates careful exegesis of the Hebrew narrative. Faced with various elements of incongruity in the narrative, and perceiving the grammatical ambiguity in the text, the targumist interpreted the ambiguity in a manner

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<sup>119</sup> See Niehoff, "The Figure of Joseph in the Targums," 234–50. While at Ps-J Gen 37:33 the targumist translated the Hebrew phrase חָיָה רָעָה as אִיתָא בִישְתָא, at 37:20 the targumist translated the same Hebrew phrase חָיָה רָעָה as חִיתָא בִישְתָא, and at 42:36 the targumist also inserted this phrase חִיתָא בִישְתָא into the text, as though the expressions אִיתָא בִישְתָא and חִיתָא בִישְתָא are to be associated throughout the narrative. As regards other translations of this Hebrew phrase חָיָה רָעָה at 37:33, Onqelos has חִיתָא בִישְתָא, Neofiti has חִייה בִישָא, Samaritan Targum has חִיה בִישָה, and the Peshitta has *ܚܝܬܐܐ ܒܝܫܬܐܐ*; these translations do not render the phrase חָיָה רָעָה as אִיתָא בִישְתָא (cf. also 37:20). The interpretation of the wicked woman as an animal also appears in Genesis Rabbah 42.3, where she is called a bear (דּוּב) (Theodor-Albeck, *Mדרש בראשית רבא*, 42.3 [מב"ג]), 1:406; and see comments in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:345).

that would render the passage most coherently. Thus, he understood חִיָּה רָעָה אֲכַלְתֶּהּוּ טָרֶף as a set of rhetorical questions that demanded a negative answer; and he then rendered these questions in the form of statements that answered these rhetorical questions: לֹא חִיּוֹת בְּרָא אֲכַלְתִּיהָ וְלֹא עַל יַד בְּנֵי נֶשֶׂא אִיתְקַטְל. Additionally, the fact that each of the elements that the targumist incorporated into his translation derives either from a specific part in the immediate context of the narrative or from the broader context of the narrative and Jewish tradition is indicative of the care and strategy the targumist applied to the text to produce his translation and expansion. On account of this manner of exegesis, the text of Ps-J does not exhibit an intent to contradict or reject the Hebrew narrative, but, rather, to explicate it.

## 2.4 Replacement of the Verb

### 2.4.1 Exodus 33:3–5

To achieve the apparent converse translation at Exod 33:3–5, the targumist of Ps-J modified a verb in the text and adjusted the necessary grammatical elements that come with the verb change (so also Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia). The sense of the verse, in effect, is altered from suggesting that God *will not go* with the Israelites (in the Hebrew) to suggesting that God *will not remove* his presence from going with the Israelites (in the Aramaic).<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> See Klein, “Converse Translation,” 530–31; Martin McNamara, Robert Hayward, and Michael Maher, eds. and trans., *Targum Neofiti 1: Exodus* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, The Aramaic Bible 2, eds. Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1994), 255, n. 5; Le Déaut, “Un phénomène spontané de l’herméneutique juive ancienne: le ‘targumisme,’” 517; Israel Drazin and Stanley M. Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Exodus* (New York: Gefen Books, 2006), 229; Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis*,

- MT <sup>3</sup> אֶל-אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ כִּי לֹא אֶטְלֶה בְּקִרְבְּךָ כִּי עִם-קִשְׁה-עֲרָף אֶתָּה פְּוֹ-אֶכְלֶךָ  
<sup>4</sup> וַיִּשְׁמַע הָעָם אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַרְע הַזֶּה וַיִּתְאַבְּלוּ וְלֹא-שָׁתוּ אִישׁ עֲדִיף עָלָיו:  
<sup>5</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אָמַר אֶל-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתֶּם עִם-קִשְׁה-עֲרָף רַגַע אֶחָד אֶטְלֶה  
בְּקִרְבְּךָ וְכִלְיִתִּיךָ וְעַתָּה הוֹרֵד עֲדִיף מֵעַלְיֶיךָ וְאַדְעָה מִה אֶעֱשֶׂה-לָּךְ:
- NRSV <sup>3</sup> "Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; **but I will not go up among you**, or I would consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."  
<sup>4</sup> When the people heard these harsh words, they mourned, and no one put on ornaments. <sup>5</sup> For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'You are a stiff-necked people; **if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you.** So now take off your ornaments, and I will decide what to do to you.'"
- Ps-J <sup>3</sup> לְאֶרֶע עֲבָדָא חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ אַרוֹם לִית אִיפְשֵׁר דְּאִיסְלַק שְׁכִינַת יִקְרִי מִבְּנִיכּוֹן בְּרַם לֹא יְהִי  
יִקְרִי שְׂרִי בְּמִדּוֹר מִשְׂרִיתִיכּוֹן אַרוֹם עִם קִשִּׁי קִדְל אַנְת דִּילְמָא אִישִׁיצִינְכוֹן בְּאוֹרְחָא  
<sup>4</sup> וּשְׁמַע עֲמָא יִת פִּיתְגָמָא בִישָׂא הַדִּין וְאִיתְבְּלוּ וְלֹא שׁוּוּי גְבַר יִת תִּיקוֹן זִינִיָּה דְּאִיתִיָּהּ  
לְהוֹן בְּסִינִי דְּבִיָּה שְׁמָא רַבָּא וְקִדִּישָׂא חֲקִיק וּמִפְרֶשׁ עֲלוּי <sup>5</sup> וְאִמֵּר יִי לְמֹשֶׁה אִימֵר לְבְנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתּוֹן עִם קִשִּׁי קִדְל שְׁעָא חֲדָא קְלִילָא אִיסְלִיק אִיקֶר שְׁכִינַתִּי מִבְּנִיךְ וְאִישִׁיצִינְךְ  
וְכַדּוֹן אַעֲדִי תִיקוֹן זִינְךְ מִינְךְ דְּאַתְגְּלִי קִדְמִי מֵאַן אַעֲבִד לָךְ
- Ps-J <sup>3</sup> "(Go up) to a land *producing* milk and honey; for **it is not possible that I would remove the Shekinah of my Glory from among you.** *But my Glory will not dwell where you reside in your camps*—for you are a stiff-necked people—lest I wipe you out on the way."  
<sup>4</sup> When the people heard this harsh word they went into mourning, and no one put on the *armament that had been given to them on Sinai (and) on which the great and holy Name was clearly engraved.* <sup>5</sup> The Lord said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. **Were I to remove the Glory of my Shekinah for one short moment from among you, I would wipe you out.** And now, take off your *armament*, for what I should do to you *has been revealed before me.*'"
- TO <sup>3</sup> לְאֶרֶע עֲבָדָא חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ אֶרֶץ לֹא אֶסְלִיק שְׁכִינַתִּי מִבְּנִיךְ אֶרֶץ עִם קִשִּׁי קִדְל אַת דְּלִמָּא  
אִישִׁיצִינְךְ בְּאוֹרְחָא: <sup>4</sup> וּשְׁמַע עֲמָא יִת פִּתְגָמָא בִישָׂא הַדִּין וְאִתְאַבְּלוּ וְלֹא שׁוּוּי גְבַר תִּיקוֹן  
זִינִיָּה עֲלוּהִי: <sup>5</sup> וְאִמֵּר יוֹי לְמֹשֶׁה אִימֵר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַתּוֹן עִם קִשִּׁי קִדְל שְׁעָא חֲדָא אֶסְלִיק  
שְׁכִינַתִּי מִבְּנִיךְ וְאִישִׁיצִינְךְ וְכַעַן אֶעֱד תִּיקוֹן זִינְךְ מִינְךְ גְּלִי קִדְמִי מָא אַעֲבִיד לָךְ:
- TO <sup>3</sup> "To a land *producing* milk and honey, but I will not *remove My presence from your midst*, even though you are a stiff-necked people, lest I destroy

*Exodus*, 422; and McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Exodus and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 134, n. *h*, in which note Hayward considers whether Neofiti is rendering the clause אַרוֹם לֹא אֶסְלַק אִיקֶר שְׁכִינַתִּי as a rhetorical question; he does not think this to be the case in Ps-J.

you on the way.”<sup>4</sup> When the people heard this *distressing* matter, they mourned and no one put his armament equipment on himself.<sup>5</sup> Then said the Lord to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for one moment I were to *remove My Presence from your midst* I would destroy you; so now *remove your armament equipment from yourself and it will be revealed to Me* what I will do with you.’”

Neof <sup>3</sup> לארעא דעבדא פירין טבין נקיין כחלבא וחליין כדובשא ארום לא אסלק איקר שכינתו  
מביניכון ארום עם קשין למקבלה אולפן אינון דלא אשיצא יתכון באורחא: <sup>4</sup> ושמע[ו]  
עמא ית פתגמא בישא הדין ואתאבלון ולא שוון גבר מני זייניה עלוי: <sup>5</sup> ואמר יי למשה  
אמור לבני ישראל [ל] אתון עם קשין למקבלה אולפן כקליל זעיר אין אסלק איקר שכינתו  
מן ב[<sup>1</sup>]ניכון אשיצא יתכון וכדון אחתו גבר מני זיינן מעלוי ואדע מה אעבד לכון:

Neof <sup>3</sup> “to a land that *produces good fruits, pure as milk and sweet as honey*; but I will not remove *the glory of my Shekinah* from among *you*, because they are a difficult people *to receive instruction*, lest I blot you out on the way.”  
<sup>4</sup> When the people heard this *distressing* word, they mourned and no one put on his *articles of weaponry*.<sup>5</sup> And the Lord said to Moses: “Say to the Israelites: ‘You are a difficult people *to receive instruction*; if I remove *the glory of my Shekinah* from among you for a little while, I would blot you out. And now, let everyone put off his *articles of weaponry* and I will know what to do with you.’”

Neof <sup>3</sup> לית מימרי מדבר קדמיכון...  
Margin <sup>5</sup> ...אדבר יקר...  
Neof <sup>3</sup> ...my word (מימרי) will not lead you...  
Margin <sup>5</sup> I will lead ...glory (יקר)

To set the context of the passage, Klein offers the following helpful synopsis:

The gist of [MT] Exod 33:2–5, is that having sinned, Israel is no longer worthy of God’s presence. God will, therefore, send an angel to lead them. Moreover, because they are a stiff-necked people, they are no longer able to bear God’s presence in their midst; it would devour them. In fact, if God wanted to punish Israel, he need only appear for a moment among them and they would be destroyed.<sup>121</sup>

The formal transformation of the text at vv. 3 and 5 is, indeed, very subtle. First, as noted above, the stem of the verb is altered: while the Hebrew *עלי* appears in the G stem (“to go

<sup>121</sup> Klein, “Converse Translation,” 530–31.

up”), the Aramaic סלק (the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew עלי) appears in the D stem (“to cause to go up, to remove”).<sup>122</sup> Second, the preposition ב of the Hebrew בקרב is replaced by the preposition מן in the Aramaic מביניכון. The combination of these two grammatical changes results in the apparent converse translation within the verse.

The literary feature that troubled the targumist in these verses is the change of relationship between the Israelites and God—from God’s being among them to his departing from them.<sup>123</sup> The Hebrew text itself declares the awful nature of this occurrence—אֶת־הַדְּבָר הָרַע הַזֶּה, a situation that the targumist evidently could not accept (v. 4). Klein states, “This is a drastic change from the original and ideal situation, in which God’s dwelling in the midst of Israel and his personal leadership are marks of distinction, just as they are protective.”<sup>124</sup> While the targumist believed God’s presence to be protective and his departure to be detrimental, Sarna explains that in the biblical text

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<sup>122</sup> Frederick E. Greenspahn, *An Introduction to Aramaic*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 48; Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, “עלה,” in *BDB* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 748; Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, “עלה,” in *HALOT*, trans. M. E. J. Richardson (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 3:827; Jastrow, “סלק,” in *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 997; Michael Sokoloff, “סלק,” *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Dictionaries of Talmud, Midrash and Targum II and Publications of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project (Israel: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002), 379–80. Were the targumist of Ps-J to retain the G stem in his use of סלק, the sense of the Hebrew עלי (“to go up”) would have been preserved.

<sup>123</sup> Commenting on God’s utterance “I will not go...” Sarna suggests, “This statement contradicts the promise of verses 2 and 32:34. Even assuming that the ‘angel’ is to be understood as an entity apart from God, God has nevertheless just pledged to drive out the native peoples” (Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, The JPS Torah Commentary, eds. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991], 211). Nothing in the Ps-J translation, however, suggests that this might be the trigger for the targumist’s interpretive rendering. For a historical-critical discussion of this chapter see Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 584–600.

<sup>124</sup> Klein, “Converse Translation,” 531.



the departure is, instead, intended to serve the purpose of Israel's preservation. Sarna writes: "Paradoxically, God's withdrawal of His presence is a mercifully preventive measure; it is intended to avert what would inevitably be the very destructive consequences of another episode such as that of the golden calf."<sup>125</sup> In fact, Brevard Childs remarks that "God fears that his presence would now be a threat to their existence."<sup>126</sup> The targumist, however, could not endure this separation between God and Israel, for according to the ideology of the targumist, as Klein remarks, "The presence of God among Israel must always be desirable."<sup>127</sup> Drazin and Wagner add a further perspective in their remark that this is also related to the dignity of the Israelites: "[The targumist] enhances Israel's honor by having God promise that His presence (*Shekhinah*) will abide with the Israelites."<sup>128</sup> In short, the targumist's theological assumptions did not commend an interpretation according to which God would depart from the Israelites.

This necessity of God's presence to dwell among the Israelites is certainly a notion that is sustained by the broader context of Exodus in the Hebrew text. At 33:14–16 and 34:9, Moses appeals to God to dwell among the Israelites, to go before them, and, in

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<sup>125</sup> Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS, 211; so also Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 690. See also John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 436–38, where he focuses on the perspective of the people, compares it to the separation of Adam and Eve from the Garden (Gen 3:14–24) and the separation of Cain from his family (Gen 4:10–16), and describes the reaction of the people as "bitter and hopeless grief" (437).

<sup>126</sup> Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 588. See also Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 425–28; Plaut, Bamberger, and Hallo, *The Torah*, 649; Christoph Dohmen, *Exodus 19–40*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 2004), 329–36, where Dohmen compares the danger of God to the episode of Nadab and Abihu's death in Lev 10; and see Rashi, Ramban, and Ibn Ezra in M. L. Katzenellenbogen, ed., *תורת חיים: חמשה חומשי תורה עם ההפטרות* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1993), 2:203–4 (רג–רד).

<sup>127</sup> Klein, "Converse Translation," 531.

<sup>128</sup> Italics original. Drazin and Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Exodus*, 229.

this way, to distinguish the Israelites from among the peoples.<sup>129</sup> At 40:33–38 (esp. vv. 34–35), the narrative in Exodus comes to a conclusion with the glory of God filling the tabernacle.

- MT           -וַיִּכַּס הָעֲנָן אֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה מָלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן: 35 וְלֹא־יָכַל מֹשֶׁה לְבוֹא אֵל־  
אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד כִּי־שָׁבַן עָלָיו הָעֲנָן וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה מָלֵא אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן:
- NRSV       34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
- Ps-J         34 וחפא ענן יקרא ית משכן זימנא ואיקר שכינתא דיי איתמלי ית משכנא 35 ולא הוה אפשר למשה למיעל למשכן זימנא ארום שרא עלוי ענן יקרא ואיקר שכינתא דיי איתמלי ית משכנא
- Ps-J         34 The cloud *of glory* covered the tent of meeting, and the Glory of *the Shekinah* of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 35 And *it was not possible for* Moses to enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud *of glory* had settled upon it, and the Glory of *the Shekinah* of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

These few passages illustrate that this concept of the necessity of God’s presence to dwell among the Israelites is very much a feature of the biblical narrative. Therefore, the targumist’s resolution to render the passage in a way that averted God’s departure from the Israelites—in this way resolving the difficulty in the Hebrew text—in no way deviated from the greater context of Exodus.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>129</sup> See, however, Ps-J’s interpretive rendering of 33:14–15, in which verses פנים may refer either to the presence of God’s anger or to God’s presence in general.

<sup>130</sup> The targumist of Ps-J further reveals his commitment to this notion of the desirability of the presence of God to dwell among the Israelites at Exod 39:43, where in a brief expansion he has Moses explicitly articulate this desire: וחמא משה ית כל פולחנא והא עבדו יתה היכמה דפקיד יי היכדין עבדו וברידך יתהון: “Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it just as the Lord had commanded; so they had done. And Moses blessed them *and said*: “*May the Shekinah of the Lord dwell in the works of your hands.*”

The question, however, is: How did the targumist derive this apparently converse translation from the Hebrew text? The ambiguity to which the targumist was sensitive in the Hebrew text and which he employed to his interpretative advantage pertains to the sense of the root עָלָי. What does the verb עָלָי mean in the clause כִּי לֹא אֶעֱלֶה בְּקִרְבְּךָ: “to go [among]” or “to go up, ascend”?<sup>131</sup> Is the clause stating “I will not go among you” or, as translated very literally, “I will not go up [i.e., depart] while [i.e., being that I am] among you” (i.e., I will not depart from you)? In the view of the targumist, the clause actually conveyed both of these meanings, though with different nuances: first, it meant that God’s presence would *not depart* from among the Israelites; second, it meant that God’s presence would *not continue to dwell* in the same way that it had formerly dwelt among the Israelites. That is, as will be shown below, God’s presence would *not dwell* in the camps where the Israelites dwelt.<sup>132</sup> According to Ps-J, then, while a change as to how God will dwell among the Israelites will occur, God will not abandon the Israelites.

As regards the first meaning of the clause, the targumist understood עָלָי to mean “to go up, ascend” with the nuance of separation or departure. In order to bring this sense of the verb across most clearly, the targumist rendered אֶעֱלֶה as אִיסְלַק and בְּקִרְבְּךָ as מִבִּינֵיכֶן, that is, with the preposition מִן instead of בּ.<sup>133</sup> Schmerler also takes note of this

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<sup>131</sup> Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “עלה,” BDB, 748; Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, “עלה,” in HALOT, 3:827.

<sup>132</sup> For a discussion of another example where the targumist translates one word twice (אל as “to” and as “God” in Fragment Targumim Exod 19:9), see Golomb, “‘A Liar, a Blasphemer, a Reviler’: The Role of Biblical Ambiguity in the Palestinian Pentateuchal Targumim,” 145.

<sup>133</sup> GKC §101a; §119v.

interpretive issue with the root עלי and similarly concludes that the targumist understood the verb to mean “to go up” with the sense of “to depart.”<sup>134</sup> As an explanation of this, Schmerler points to Num 16:24 to illustrate this sense of עלי in the Hebrew: דַּבֵּר אֶל־הָעֵדָה: לֵאמֹר הָעֵלֹ מִסְבֵּיב לְמִשְׁכַּן־קֹרַח דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם “Say to the congregation: *Get away from the dwellings of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.*”<sup>135</sup> Also, Ben-Mendel points to Gen 17:22 to demonstrate the same point. Gen 17:22 reads: וַיִּבֶל לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ וַיַּעַל אֱלֹהִים מֵעַל אַבְרָהָם “And when he had finished talking with him, *God went up from Abraham.*”<sup>136</sup> To be sure, in both of these passages, Num 16:24 and Gen 17:22, the root עלי comes with the preposition מן to convey a sense of separation or motion of departure (מִסְבֵּיב at Num 16:24; and מֵעַל at Gen 17:22), while at Exod 33:3 the preposition is ב (בְּקִרְבָּךְ). For the targumist, however, the semantic possibility of departure in the root עלי itself served as a sufficient warrant to allow the interpretive reading of the clause כִּי לֹא אֶעְלֶה בְּקִרְבָּךְ to be that God will not depart from the Israelites.

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<sup>134</sup> Schmerler writes: מפרש מלת עלה מל' הסתקלות (Schmerler, שמות: אהבת יהונתן: שמות, 225).

<sup>135</sup> Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: שמות, 225.

<sup>136</sup> Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות (שמות in רלד) [234, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות, 234]. See also Zvi Fishbane, עם תרגום אונקלוס ופירוש רש"י ותרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל עם פירוש המליץ בינותם–, ספר שמות (תרמב–תרמז) (2:642–647), where explains the same point by referring to Exod 40:36: וּבְהֶעֱלֹת הָעֵנָן מֵעַל הַמִּשְׁכָּן.

As regards the second meaning of the clause **כִּי לֹא אֶעֱלֶה בְּקִרְבְּךָ**, the targumist understood **עָלִי** to mean “to go,” with the nuance of inclusion, that is, “among, within,” as the preposition **ב** would naturally suggest.<sup>137</sup> That is, after establishing that the presence of God will not depart from the Israelites, the targumist added a qualifying statement to explain the precise manner in which the presence of God will actually remain among the Israelites.<sup>138</sup> The statement reads: **ברם לא יהי יקרי שרי במדור משריתכון** “*But my Glory will not dwell where you reside in your camps.*” In other words, while God will *not remove* his presence from the Israelites (**עָלִי מ...**), he will *not dwell* within the camps of the Israelites (**עָלִי ב...**).<sup>139</sup> The targumist, in effect, capitalized on both senses of **עָלִי**—that of separation and that of inclusion. With this two-part explication of the clause **כִּי לֹא אֶעֱלֶה בְּקִרְבְּךָ**, the targumist provided the explanation as to what this clause truly means, in his view. Thus, the targumist’s apparently converse rendering of the Hebrew text again proves to be careful exegesis of the text.

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<sup>137</sup> Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 146 §4.1.5a; GKC §1631–q.

<sup>138</sup> Commenting on the biblical text, David Clines points out that “[T]he debate of ch. 33 revolves around the question of what kind of a relationship there can be [between God and Israel], now that it has been strained almost to breaking point [at Exod 32]” (David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., JSOTSup 10 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997], 53).

<sup>139</sup> Ben-Mendel makes a similar point as he paraphrases the statement in the following way: **אע”פ שאני שולח מלאך להנחותכם ושכינתי לא ישרה ביניכם מפני שעם קשי עורף אתה מ”מ לא אסלק שכינתי לגמרי מכם** (Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות [שמות in רלד], 234).

As in the cases studied above, then, the targumist's interpretive rendering of this passage also stems from a textual matter in the Hebrew text, and the Aramaic rendering is yet again rooted in and derives from the biblical text itself. Consequently, in the view of the targumist, this translation does not replace or reject the message of the Hebrew text; rather, the Aramaic explicates the Hebrew.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In each of the cases discussed above, the surface text of the targumic translation appears to be “diametrically opposite” to the plain sense of its Hebrew source-text.<sup>140</sup> Considering this phenomenon, the analysis above seeks to demonstrate that for the targumist the Aramaic translation and its Hebrew source-text do not, however, maintain a relationship of opposition; rather, the Aramaic derives from the Hebrew text, both with respect to the immediate and the greater context of the Hebrew narrative, as well as with respect to the Jewish tradition pertaining to the passages in question. This discussion shows that if one considers merely the scope of a single verse, then a contradiction between the targumic text and the Hebrew text seems undeniable. But if the Hebrew text is understood in its broader context, then the rendering of the targumic text proves to reflect the targumist's commitment to the ultimate logical consistency of the Hebrew text. This study suggests, then, that the Aramaic translation was achieved by the targumist by means of careful exegesis, the starting point of which was always the Hebrew source-text in the light of the greater context of the narrative. A key, though not the only, element of the targumist's exegetical technique—as presented above—is to read the apparently

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<sup>140</sup> Klein, “Converse Translation,” 529; idem, *The Masorah to Targum Onqelos*, 216–17.

declarative sentences of the Hebrew text as interrogatives. The intent of this exegetical procedure was to bring resolution to the literary or theological ambiguities and difficulties that the targumist perceived in the Hebrew narrative. The ultimate rendering that the targumist presented in the Aramaic version of the narrative, then, was, in the view of the targumist, latent in the Hebrew text. The targumist sought to discover and make explicit this implicit material in the narrative. Inasmuch as the Aramaic product of the targumist is the result of this process of exegesis that takes into account a specific passage and the relevant broader context of the passage, the continuity between the Aramaic and its Hebrew text is not disrupted. Therefore, this analysis shows how in the view of the targumist converse translation is not a rejection of the Hebrew text, but an exegetical rendering thereof.

At the same time, the study above indicates that the targumist of Ps-J was content with producing a surface structure that exhibited tension within his narrative. This suggests, in effect, that the targumist expected his audience to be active interpreters of his narrative, filling in gaps in the Aramaic text in order to determine the implied coherence in the narrative. That is to say, the targumist expected the audience to be able to follow his interpretive approach to the text—his point of departure, his process of analysis, and the reasoning behind his conclusions; and in this way, the targumist expected the audience to discern the broader contextual logic that he presupposed in the narrative.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN PSEUDO-JONATHAN**  
**AND ITS HEBREW *VORLAGE*:**  
**CONVERSE TRANSLATION – GENESIS 19:33 –**  
**LOT DID KNOW WHEN HIS OLDER DAUGHTER AROSE**

**3.1 Introduction**

Thorough analysis of Ps-J Gen 19:33 develops the discussion of the phenomenon of converse translation and the question of congruity between the Hebrew and the Aramaic texts. The study below shows that despite the literary tension between the Hebrew and the Aramaic on the level of surface structure, recognition of the targumist's assumptions about the text helps to discern the congruity that the targumist believed to exist between the Hebrew and the Aramaic. Therefore, as in the cases considered above, in producing the converse translation at Ps-J Gen 19:33, the targumist did not demonstrate a rejection of the Hebrew text, but an explication of it.

**3.2 Deletion of the Negative Particle**

**3.2.1 Converse Translation and Its Significance for the Meaning of Genesis 19:33**

The biblical text narrates that after Lot and his two daughters escaped the destruction of Sodom, Lot unwittingly became a participant in an incestuous affair with each of his daughters (Gen 19). The text states plainly, it seems, that on account of his drunken state Lot did not know when his daughters lay down with him or when they arose (19:33–35). Corresponding to this plain-sense reading of the Hebrew text, the *editio*



*princeps* of Ps-J (printed in Venice in 1591 by Asher Forins) and its reprinted editions make this understanding of the passage explicit in their expanded translation of the verse.<sup>141</sup> In contrast, however, the manuscript of Ps-J—Ms Add 27031, the only extant manuscript of Ps-J (1598?)—renders this passage differently: the manuscript states that Lot *did*, in fact, know when his older daughter arose after the act of sexual intercourse was completed.<sup>142</sup> In other words, the manuscript of Ps-J appears to state the exact opposite of what the biblical text (and the printed editions of Ps-J) states. The targumist produced this meaning by rendering the implied negative particle לא “not” in the Hebrew as an adversative conjunction אלא “but” in the Aramaic.<sup>143</sup> Thus, the passage in its context of 19:33–35 reads:

- MT ותשקין את־אביהוּן גַּזְזוּ בלילהּ הוּא ותבא הבכירה ותשכב את־אביהּ ולא־ידע בשכבהּ <sup>33</sup>  
ובקומהּ: <sup>34</sup> ויהי ממחרת ותאמר הבכירה אל־הצעירה הן־שכבתי אמש את־אבי נשכננו  
יזן גם־הלילהּ ובאלי שכבי עמוּ ונתתיה מאבינו זרע: <sup>35</sup> ותשקין גם בלילהּ ההוא את־אביהוּן  
יזן ותקם הצעירה ותשכב עמוּ ולא־ידע בשכבהּ ובקומהּ:
- NRSV <sup>33</sup> So they made their father drink wine that night; and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; **he did not know when she lay down or when she rose.** <sup>34</sup> On the next day, the firstborn said to the younger, ‘Look, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, so that we may preserve offspring through our father.’ <sup>35</sup> So

<sup>141</sup> For a brief discussion of the *editio princeps* and the printed editions of Ps-J, see Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 13; and Flesher and Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction*, 87–89. For a list of the printed editions of Ps-J, see Iulius Henricus Petermann, *De duabus Pentateuchi paraphrasibus chaldaicis* (PhD diss., Berolini: Typis Academicis, 1829), 5–6. For differences between the manuscript and the *editio princeps*, see Díez Macho, *Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuchum: Additur Targum Pseudojonatan Ejusque Hispanica Versio*, 125, n. 33. The discrepancy between the Ps-J manuscript and the Ps-J printed editions will be discussed below in greater detail.

<sup>142</sup> See Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 13; and Flesher and Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction*, 87–89. The Ps-J manuscript is held at the British Library in London, and a digitized version of the manuscript can be accessed at: [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add\\_MS\\_27031](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_27031) (Gen 19:33 is at f.20v).

<sup>143</sup> On conjoining pairs in opposition, see Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 117.

they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger rose, and lay with him; **and he did not know when she lay down or when she rose.**

Ps-J **ואשקיאן ית אבוהון חמר בליליא ההוא ורוא וקמת רבתא ושמישת עם אבוהא ולא**<sup>33</sup>  
**ידע במישכבה אלא ידע במקימה**<sup>34</sup> והוה מיומחרא ואמרת רבתא לזעירתא הא כבר  
שמישית רמשי עם איבא נשקיניה חמרא אוף בליליא דין וירוי ועולי שימושי עימיה  
ונקיים מאבונא בנין<sup>35</sup> ואשקיאן אוף בליליא ההוא ית אבוהון חמר ורוי וקמת זעירתא  
ושמישת עימיה **ולא ידע במשכבה ולא בימקימה**

Ps-J <sup>33</sup> That night, they made their father drink wine, and he got drunk. And the older arose and had sexual relations with her father; **and he did not know when she lay down, but he knew when she arose.**<sup>34</sup> The next day, the older said to the younger, ‘I have already had sexual relations with my father last evening. Let us make him drink wine tonight also that he may get drunk, and then you go and have sexual relations with him, that we may raise up children from our father.’<sup>35</sup> So that night also they made their father drink wine, and he got drunk. And the younger arose and had sexual relations with him; **and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.**<sup>144</sup>

This converse translation has implications for the entire character of the story. Most significantly, the Aramaic rendition of the narrative distinguishes itself from the Hebrew in that the Aramaic exhibits a more overt judgment of Lot. In the Hebrew, Lot, on account of his drunken state, becomes a participant in an incestuous affair with his two daughters out of whom issue two nations, the Moabites and the Ammonites, who are generally depicted as enemies of the Israelites (Deut 23:3–6).<sup>145</sup> Yet the biblical version

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<sup>144</sup> As will be discussed below, no other translation expands this verse as does Ps-J. Targum Onqelos, Targum Neofiti, the Samaritan Targum, the Peshitta, the LXX, and the Vulgate all render these two verses more or less literally.

<sup>145</sup> But see, for example, 1 Kgs 14:21–31; 2 Chron 12:13; and the book of Ruth, which texts appear to depict amicable relations between the Israelites and the Moabites and Ammonites. For discussion of the biblical narrator’s disapproval of the events at Gen 19:33, see Gunkel, *Genesis*, 216–17. Sarna writes: “There is no explicit condemnation of the actions of the two girls; but their anonymity implies censure” (Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 140). Skinner too shares this view: “The intoxication of Lot shows that the revolting nature of the proposal was felt by the Hebrew conscience” (Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 313). Michael Fishbane cites Leviticus 18 and remarks that the Israelites were forbidden to engage in “the outrage practised by the daughters of Lot, who conceived and bore (the eponymous ancestors of) Ammon and Moab” (Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1985], 119). Rashi understands the text to condemn the daughters as well, though he considers the verse to be more critical of the older daughter than of the younger daughter, because it was the older daughter who initiated the idea of engaging in sexual relations with their father. Rashi in

of the story expresses no hint of condemnation of Lot. Lot appears to be a victim who remains ignorant and ergo, apparently, innocent. Commenting on the Hebrew text, Nahum Sarna writes, “Lot, who is entirely unaware of what is happening, receives no blame.”<sup>146</sup>

This disinterested presentation of the episode and of Lot becomes even more apparent when the passage is compared to a parallel narrative only several chapters earlier concerning Noah and his sons (Gen 9:18–29), which narrative delivers a decidedly different coda. In this narrative, Noah does discover that one of his sons, namely Ham, acted improperly toward him, and Noah responds to the improper act decisively: he curses the offspring of Ham.<sup>147</sup> The two stories parallel each other in key aspects of the plot. Both stories concern fathers and their offspring who escaped a mass cataclysm of human destruction exacted by God as punishment for sin; both stories depict characters who are burdened with a sense of need to reproduce human life on earth; both stories include wine as a principal component for developing the plot of the episode; both stories involve drunken fathers; and both stories reach their climax with the fathers’ nakedness

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Katzenellenbogen, ed., *בראשית*: תורת חיים, 1:234 (רלד). Claus Westermann, however, writes with regard to this episode: “When one makes evaluations such as ‘incestuous’ or ‘incest’ ... then one is unable to understand what it intends to say” (Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, A Continental Commentary, trans. John J. Scullion [Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1985], 314). For a brief discussion of incest in the ancient Near East, see Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, WBC 2 (Dallas: Word Books, 1998), 61–62. For further discussion of this episode, see James L. Kugel, *The Bible as It Was* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 193; and idem, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 338–39.

<sup>146</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 139. So also Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 61.

<sup>147</sup> See Speiser, *Genesis*, 60–63; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 79–85; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 487–95; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 181–87; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 198–202; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 65–67.

and some type of sexual misconduct committed by the offspring against the father.<sup>148</sup> But whereas Noah *knows* that he was exploited by Ham and as a consequence curses Ham's offspring, Lot *does not know* that he was exploited by his daughters. Thus Gunkel, much like Sarna mentioned above, reasons that the ending of this episode "wants to exonerate Lot."<sup>149</sup>

The targumist of Ps-J evidently sensed this appearance of Lot's innocence in the Hebrew narrative, but did not sanction it. In Ps-J's version, Lot does come to know when his older daughter arose after the sexual encounter, and Lot, therefore, is no longer completely innocent. For upon discovering what had happened, Lot, on the one hand, does not condemn the act committed by his daughter, and, on the other, he becomes inebriated yet again the subsequent night, bringing about the necessary conditions for the situation to repeat itself with his younger daughter. Viewing the narrative in this way, and aware of the tradition recorded in Ps-J, Ralbag (Levi ben Gershon, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> c.) remarks:

[The daughters] served wine to their father and caused him to become drunk to the point that he would not sense when they lay with him. Thus, he did not sense when the older one lay with him, but he did have a slight sense of it when she arose. In spite of this, he did not keep himself from drinking wine and becoming drunk a second time. So, he lay with the younger one and he did not sense it when she lay down or when she arose, for she arose strategically, while he was still deep asleep.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> See Genesis Rabbah 51.8; Kugel, *Bible as It Was*, 194; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 216–17; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 313. Westermann sees "a primeval and a tribal-historical" connection between Gen 9 and 19, but states, "there is no discernible connection between the drunkenness of Noah and that of Lot" (Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 312, and see 312–15). For a brief discussion of analogy in the Hebrew Bible, see Zakovitch, "Inner-biblical Interpretation," 43–44; idem, "Through the Looking Glass: Reflections/Inversions of Genesis Stories in the Bible," *BibInt* 1, no. 2 (1993): 139–52.

<sup>149</sup> Gunkel, *Genesis*, 218. See also Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 139; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 61.

<sup>150</sup> In the original: חשקו את אביהן יין ושכרוהו בדרך שלא ירגיש בשכבן עמו ולא הרגיש בשכב עמו והבכירה אבל הרגיש בקומה הרגש מעט. ועם כל זה לא נשמר משתיית היין ומהשתכר שנית ושכב עם הצעירה ולא

Ps-J's rendition of the narrative similarly but prior to Ralbag brings Lot's culpability to light, and in this way the story assumes a significantly different tenor: the narrative is no longer silent about the happenings of the episode; rather, a subtle though unambiguous verdict against Lot is rendered.<sup>151</sup>

### 3.2.2 Two Questions Regarding the Converse Translation at Genesis 19:33

This distinctive rendering of the narrative in the manuscript of Ps-J prompts two questions. First, is the Aramaic text of the manuscript authentic or is it a transcriptional error? To be sure, a variant reading does appear in the printed editions of Ps-J, and this reading disagrees with the Ps-J manuscript but agrees with the plain-sense reading of the Hebrew Bible. The following table shows the similarities and the differences between the Hebrew Bible, the Ps-J manuscript, and the Ps-J printed editions.

Hebrew Bible	... וְלֹא יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבְקוֹמָהּ <sup>33</sup>
	... וְלֹא יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבְקָמָהּ <sup>35</sup>
Ps-J Manuscript	... ולא ידע במישכבה <b>אלא ידע</b> במקימה <sup>33</sup>
	... ולא ידע במשכבה ולא בימקימה <sup>35</sup>
Ps-J Printed Editions	... ולא ידע במישכבה <b>ולא ידע</b> במקימה <sup>33</sup>
	... ולא ידע במשכבה ולא בימקימה <sup>35</sup>

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[New York: Edison Lithographing Corporation, 1958], 28 [כח] and see 27 [כז]).

<sup>151</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Hirsch Chumash: The Five Books of the Torah, Sefer Bereshis*, trans. Daniel Haberman (New York: Feldheim, 2002), 445–46.

As the table makes evident, while the manuscript produces an apparent converse translation, the printed editions agree with the biblical narrative.<sup>152</sup> Hence the question: Which reading is original, אֱלֹהִים or אֱלֹהִים? The answer to this question determines whether אֱלֹהִים should be considered an error of transcription or an intentional rendering that is consequential for the meaning of the Ps-J narrative.

The second question issues out of the first: If the אֱלֹהִים of the Ps-J manuscript is not an error of transcription, but is indeed deliberate, then what is the mechanism of its derivation? Is the Aramaic an unwarranted and forced transformation of the Hebrew text that is intended to contradict the Hebrew? Or is the Aramaic indeed interpretation of the biblical narrative that is derived from the Hebrew text itself? And if so, how is this task achieved? The answer to this question helps to elucidate the targumist's interpretive approach to the biblical narrative and the meaning the targumist sought to convey in his Aramaic rendition of the story.

### **3.2.3 Is the Converse Translation at Genesis 19:33 Deliberate or Inadvertent?**

Three observations suggest that אֱלֹהִים is not an accident of transcription, but that it is, to the contrary, part of the targumist's deliberate program to render the passage with a specific interpretation.

First, Ps-J's אֱלֹהִים rendition bespeaks deliberation inasmuch as it coincides with and, indeed, aligns the text of Ps-J with an existing tradition that understands Gen 19:33

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<sup>152</sup> For sources, see nn. 141–42 above.

precisely as Ps-J translates it—that Lot did indeed know when his older daughter arose.

This tradition focuses on *ובקומה* (v. 33), specifically on the unusual dot above the second *vav* (a *punctum extraordinarium*), and explains how this unusual dot represents a tradition that Lot did actually know that his older daughter arose after she had lain with him.<sup>153</sup> Genesis Rabbah 51.8 to Gen 19:33 records this tradition as follows:

ותשקין את אביהן יין וגו' ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה נקוד עליו שבשכבה לא ידע אבל בקומה ידע<sup>154</sup>

*And they made their father drink wine, etc., and he did not know when she lay down and when she arose. There is a dot over it [ובקומה], which indicates that when she lay down he did not know, but when she arose he did know.*<sup>155</sup>

The same tradition is also recorded in b. Naz. 23a, as follows:

והא מינס אניס תנא משום רבי יוסי בר רב חוני למה נקוד על וי"ו ובקומה של בכירה לומר שבשכבה לא ידע אבל בקומה ידע<sup>156</sup>

Was he [Lot] a victim of compulsion? It was taught in the name of R. Yossi, son of R. Honi: Why is there a dot over the *vav* in *ובקומה* [“when she arose”] with regard to the older daughter? To indicate that when she lay down he did not know, but when she arose he did know.

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<sup>153</sup> Martin Jan Mulder suggests that the dot is pre-masoretic (i.e., before the second half of the first millennium C. E., and, therefore, before the completion of Ps-J) (Martin Jan Mulder, “The Transmission of the Biblical Text,” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading & Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism & Early Christianity*, eds. Martin Jan Mulder and Harry Sysling [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004], 93 and 108). Emanuel Tov explains the function of a dot above a particular letter as follows: “Although these dots originally denoted the erasure of letters ... traditionally they were explained as indications of doubtful letters” (Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012], 52, and see 203). See also Geoffrey Khan, *A Short Introduction to the Tiberian Masoretic Bible and Its Reading Tradition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Georgias Handbooks (Piscataway, NJ: Georgias, 2013), 1; Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, trans. E. J. Revell, SBLMS 5 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for the Society of Biblical Literature, 1980), 44–46 §§79–80; Christian D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1897), 318–34, esp. 320; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 321.

<sup>154</sup> Theodor-Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 51.8 (נא”ה), 2:537. See also Numbers Rabbah 3.13; Sifre Numbers 69.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. translation in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:448.

<sup>156</sup> B. D. Klein and I. Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Nazir* (London: Soncino, 1985), 23a; see also b. Hor. 10b.

Commenting on this passage much later, Rashi maintains the same reading of the text:

ובקומה: של בכירה נקוד, לומר שבקומה ידע, ואע"פ כן לא נשמר ליל שני מלשתות.<sup>157</sup>

*When she arose* [ובקומה]: With reference to the older daughter, there is a dot to indicate that when she arose he knew it. Despite this, he did not guard himself from drinking on the second night.

As these three sources demonstrate, the *punctum extraordinarium* over ובקומה represents a tradition that understands the text of Gen 19:33 in a manner that appears to invert the plain-sense meaning of the Hebrew. What the targumist of Ps-J appears to be doing, then, is deliberately incorporating the same tradition into his Aramaic text.<sup>158</sup> In such a case, the אלא variant is not an error; it is, rather, the targumist's conscious rendition of the narrative.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, תורת חיים: בראשית, 1:234 (רלד). For a similar comment, see Radak in Katzenellenbogen, תורת חיים: בראשית, 1:234 (רלד).

<sup>158</sup> See Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 72, n. 25; Roger Le Déaut with Jacques Robert, eds. and trans., *Targum du pentateuque: Traduction des deux recensions palestiniennes complètes avec introduction, parallèles, notes et index, Genèse*, Sources Cretiennes 245 (Paris: Latour-Baubourg, 1978), 201, n. 12; David Rieder and Mordechai Zamir, מתורגם לעברית עם באורים (Jerusalem: Miryam Rieder, 1984), 26–27, n. 18 (in the section with their Hebrew translation of the text).

<sup>159</sup> In ARN, it is the younger daughter whom Lot notices rising, not the older daughter. The text reads: בשכבה ובקו"מה (שם י"ט ל"ג) נקוד על וי"ו שבקומה הראשון מלמד שלא הרגיש אלא בעמידתה של צעירה *“When she lay down and when she arose* (Gen 19:33). A dot over the *vav* in the first בקומה teaches that he did not sense anything except when the young one arose” (Solomon Schechter, ed., אבות דרבי נתן, p. 100, נוסחא א פרק לד). In a commentary on ARN, Yom Tov Zahalon and Me’ir Ze’ev Etrog remark that the text is faulty and that צעירה should read בכירה (Yom Tov Zahalon and Me’ir Ze’ev Etrog, מסכת אבות דרבי נתן, [שפז] 387, [Jerusalem: Bene Beraq, 2014]). See also discussion of this text in Me’ir Ze’ev Etrog, (שיט) 319 (Jerusalem: Bene Beraq, 2000), 319 (שיט); Eliyahu ben Avraham, מסכת אבות דרבי נתן עם פירושים (Vilna: 1832 or 1833; repr., Lakewood, NJ: Machon Mishnas Rabbi Aaron, 2005), 62. Compare Bowker who attempts to resolve this text in ARN by rendering the following translation: *“And he knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose. That is to show that he did not know only when the younger daughter arose”* (Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 321). Schmerler, however, treats the variant reading in ARN as an accurate text that records an alternative tradition (Schmerler, ספר אהבת יהונתן: ספר בראשית, 166). So also Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על



Second, Ps-J's אלא also connotes intent in that this rendition presupposes a negative view of Lot—as one who is culpable; and this negative view of Lot corresponds to a prevailing negative image of Lot in Jewish tradition.<sup>160</sup> This culpability of Lot is addressed in a later portion of the discussion introduced above in b. Naz. 23a:

והא מינס אניס תנא משום רבי יוסי בר רב חוני למה נקוד על וי' ובקומה של בכירה לומר שבשכבה לא ידע אבל בקומה ידע ומאי הוה ליה למיעבד מאי דהוה הוה נפקא מינה דלפניא אחרינא לא איבעי למישתי חמרא<sup>161</sup>

Was he [Lot] a victim of compulsion? It was taught in the name of R. Yossi, son of R. Honi: Why is there a dot over the vav in ובקומה [“when she arose”] with regard to the older daughter? To indicate that when she lay down he did not know, but when she arose he did know. But what could he have done? For what’s done is done! What’s the difference? He should not have drunk wine the next evening.<sup>162</sup>

In addition, various midrashim also express a negative view of Lot. In Genesis Rabbah 41.6 and 41.7 (on Gen 13), Lot is compared to a mule, depicted as one who rejected both Abraham and God, and portrayed as one who burned with sexual desire.<sup>163</sup> In Genesis

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בראשית (קעג-קעד) 74–173, התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות. See also Baal HaTurim’s comments on Gen 19:33 in which he states that the dot indicates that Lot did not learn of the affair *even* when his older daughter arose. He then connects Gen 19:33–35 to Ruth 3.14 and seeks to explain why it is that Lot did *not* realize when his older daughter came at night while Boaz *did* discover when Ruth came at night (Avie Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim’s Classic Commentary: Bereishis*, Artscroll Series [New York: Mesorah, 1999], 154, n. 33 [לג] and 155, n. 33).

<sup>160</sup> For sources that record a negative view of Lot, see Kugel, *Bible as It Was*, 183–85; and idem, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era*, 330–31. In contrast, for sources that depict Lot in a positive light, see Kugel, *Bible as It Was*, 182–83, 190–91. For a synopsis of this story from a modern critical perspective, see James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 129–30.

<sup>161</sup> Klein and Epstein, *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Nazir*, 23a.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. translation in Klein and Epstein, *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Nazir*, 23a.

<sup>163</sup> Theodor–Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 41.6–7 (מא”ז-ז), 1:393–94.

Rabbah 42.7 (on Gen 14), Lot is compared to a fool.<sup>164</sup> And in Genesis Rabbah 51.9 and 51.10, particularly relevant for Gen 19:33, Lot is condemned for being immoral and for lusting after his daughters.<sup>165</sup> Genesis Rabbah 51.9 reads:

אמר רב נחמן בר חנן כל מי שלהוט אחר בולמוס של עריות סוף שמאכילין אותו מבשרו: ר' יודן דמן גלייה ור' שמואל בר נחמן תריהון מש' ר' אליהו עיניני אין אנו יודעין אם לוט נתאוה לבנותיו אם בנותיו נתאוו לו, מן מה דכת' לתאוה יבקש נפרד (משלי יח א) הוי לוט נתאוה לבנותיו<sup>166</sup>

R. Nahman b. Hanin said: Whoever burns with sexual desire is ultimately fed his own flesh [i.e., commits incest<sup>167</sup>]. R. Judan of Gallia and R. Samuel b. Nahman both said in the name of R. Elijah Enene: We would not know whether Lot desired his daughters or his daughters desired him, but [for the fact] that it says, He that separates himself seeks desire (Prov 18.1; [cf. Gen 13:9–11]); thus it follows that Lot desired his daughters.<sup>168</sup>

These are a few select examples of a prevalent Jewish tradition that portrays Lot in a negative light, and this negative image of Lot is presupposed in the targumist's translation of Gen 19:33.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Theodor–Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 42.7 (מב"ז), 1:413.

<sup>165</sup> Theodor–Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 51.9–10 (מא"ט-י), 2:539.

<sup>166</sup> Theodor–Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 51.9 (מא"ט), 2:539.

<sup>167</sup> See Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:448, n. 4.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. translation in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:448–49. See also b. Naz. 23a, where the daughters are considered to be among the righteous. Kugel also provides a list of traditions that are sympathetic to the daughters (Kugel, *Bible as It Was*, 193–94); and cf. Komlosch, המקרא באור התרגום, 246. Sarna remarks that “The daughters do not act out of lust” (Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 139). See Speiser, *Genesis*, 145–46 and Gunkel, *Genesis*, 216–17 who suggest that there may have been a favorable memory of the daughters of Lot as matriarchs who make desperate but heroic decisions to overcome childlessness (cf. Gen 38).

<sup>169</sup> Ps-J Gen 19:29 and Ps-J Deut 2:19 also seem to assume a less than favorable image of Lot. At Ps-J Gen 19:29, Lot is saved from destruction in Sodom only because of Abraham's merit; and at Ps-J Deut 2:19, Lot's descendants receive land inheritance only on account of Abraham's merit.

Third, that **אלא** is deliberate in Ps-J also manifests itself in the targumist's intricate exegesis of vv. 33 and 35, achieved for the purpose of rendering the text in a specific manner and with a specific message. The following table shows precisely at which points of the text the targumist explicated the two verses.

**Table 2: Linguistic Analysis of Genesis 19:33**

MT	בְּקוֹמָהּ	ו	בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ	יָדַע	לֹא	וְ	v. 33
Ps-J	במקימה	<b>אלא ידע</b>	במישכבה	ידע	לא	ו	
MT	בְּקֹמָהּ	ו	בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ	יָדַע	לֹא	וְ	v. 35
Ps-J	במקימה	<b>ולא</b>	במשכבה	ידע	לא	ו	

In both verses, the targumist translated the first part of each statement literally: **ולא ידע** **בשכבה** is rendered as **ולא ידע במ[י]שכבה**. Each linguistic element in the Hebrew is represented in the Aramaic. However, as regards the second part, namely, the phrase **ובק[ו]מה**, the targumist offered a different rendition in each verse. At v. 33, the targumist introduced the adversative **אלא** and the verb **ידע**, which produces **ולא ידע במישכבה אלא** **ידע במקימה**. The verb **ידע** is implied in the Hebrew and is made explicit in the Aramaic, while **אלא** takes the place of the implied **ולא** in the Hebrew that negated the phrase **ובקומה**. At v. 35, in contrast, the targumist introduced only **ולא**, which produces **ולא ידע במשכבה ולא בימקימה**. This negative **ולא** is, again, implied in the Hebrew and is made

explicit in the Aramaic, while the verb ידע, which is implied in the Hebrew, remains implied in the Aramaic as well.<sup>170</sup>

This different rendering of each verse is consequential and suggests careful exegesis of each verse on the part of the targumist. In interpreting v. 33, the targumist produced two independent clauses: ולא ידע במישכבה is the first clause; and אלא ידע במקימה is the second clause. This two-clause construction allowed the targumist to express a more pronounced distinction between במישכבה and במקימה, as each phrase came to be governed by its own verb ידע. Certainly, the targumist's addition of אלא into the verse reinforces the view that the targumist was, indeed, reading במישכבה and במקימה at v. 33 as distinct from each other. In short, the verse was constructed such that it could make two opposing claims: in clause one, Lot does *not* know that his daughter lay with him; in clause two, Lot *does* know that his daughter arose.

In interpreting v. 35, however, the targumist chose to retain the single-clause construction with two prepositional phrases governed by a single verb ידע: ולא ידע במשכבה ולא בימקימה. Being governed by the same verb, the two phrases במשכבה and בימקימה demonstrate a close syntactical relationship, which, in effect, makes the clause

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<sup>170</sup> Schmerler too notes that the absence of ידע at v. 35 is meaningful. However, he suggests that this absence of the verb might intimate that Lot *did* sense the movement of the younger daughter; that is, Schmerler explains that perhaps Lot sensed that the younger daughter arose, though he did not know whether or not she lay with him (Schmerler, ספר אהבת יהונתן: ספר בראשית, 166). See also Ben-Mendel, (בראשית in קעג-קעד) 74–173, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות.

particularly suitable for conveying the same idea in both parts of the clause—that Lot did *not* know when the younger daughter lay down or arose. These differences between the two verses, as well as the explication of the implied elements in each verse, suggest that the targumist was working with each verse closely, with a goal to convey a particular message in each verse.

Such exegetical work in the manuscript of Ps-J gains even more significance on account of the fact that no other translation expands this verse as does Targum Ps-J. Targum Onqelos, Targum Neofiti, the Samaritan Targum, the Peshitta, the LXX, and the Vulgate all render these two verses more or less literally. They all leave the implied elements at vv. 33 and 35 implied. Only Ps-J expanded the verse, which suggests that, in contrast to the other translations of this passage, the expanded version of Ps-J endeavored to deliver a more nuanced reading of the verse.

MT	33 וְלֹא יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבְקוּמָהּ 35 וְלֹא יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבְקוּמָהּ	33 and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose 35 and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose
Ps-J	33 וְלֹא יָדַע בְּמִשְׁכָּבָהּ אֲלֵא יָדַע בְּמִקְוֵימָהּ 35 וְלֹא יָדַע בְּמִשְׁכָּבָהּ וְלֵא בְּמִקְוֵימָהּ	33 and he did not know when she lay down but he knew when she arose 35 and he did not know when she lay down and neither when she arose
TO	33 וְלֹא יָדַע בְּמִשְׁכָּבָהּ וּבְמִקְוֵימָהּ 35 וְלֹא יָדַע בְּמִשְׁכָּבָהּ וּבְמִקְוֵימָהּ	33 and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose 35 and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose
Neof	33 וְלֹא יָדַע בְּדַמְכָהּ וּבְמִקְוֵימָהּ 35 וְלֹא יָדַע בְּדַמְכָהּ וּבְמִקְוֵימָהּ	33 and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose 35 and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose
Samaritan Targum	33 וְלֹא יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבְמִקְוֵימָהּ 35 וְלֹא יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבְמִקְוֵימָהּ	33 and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose 35 and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose

Peshitta	·ܡܚܘܪܘܐ ܡܚܘܪܘܐ ܘܢܐ ܠܘ <sup>33</sup> ·ܡܚܘܪܘܐ ܡܚܘܪܘܐ ܘܢܐ ܠܘ <sup>35</sup>	<sup>33</sup> and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose <sup>35</sup> and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose
LXX	<sup>33</sup> καὶ οὐκ ᾔδει ἐν τῷ κοιμηθῆναι αὐτήν καὶ ἀναστῆναι <sup>35</sup> καὶ οὐκ ᾔδει ἐν τῷ κοιμηθῆναι αὐτήν καὶ ἀναστῆναι	<sup>33</sup> and he did not know when she lay down and arose <sup>35</sup> and he did not know when she lay down and arose
Vulgate	<sup>33</sup> at ille non sensit nec quando accubuit filia nec quando surrexit <sup>35</sup> et ne tunc quidem sensit quando concubuerit vel quando illa surrexerit	<sup>33</sup> but he did not perceive, neither when his daughter lay down nor when she arose. <sup>35</sup> and neither then did he perceive when she lay down nor when she arose

In other words, the distinctive rendering of Ps-J Gen 19:33 further demonstrates the targumist’s sensitivity to the interpretive issues in the verse and his interest in carefully explicating the text to bring out a specific interpretation of the passage.

In the light of the evidence presented above, it is reasonable to conclude that אלא at v. 33 does not exhibit the characteristics of a transcriptional error. Rather, the evidence suggests that the targumist’s perspective was interpretive and that the targumist introduced אלא along with other exegetical elements into the verse in order to convey the idea that Lot *did* indeed know when the older daughter arose.

### 3.2.4 Is the Converse Translation at Genesis 19:33 the Product of Exegesis or Imposition?

The question, however, remains: Is the אלא rendering exegetically derived from the Hebrew text or is it imposition of a foreign meaning upon the text? In other words: Is the Aramaic rendition intended to be an outright contradiction of the Hebrew text? And

if not, then how is the Aramaic translation exegetically warranted? The answer lies in the presence of an ambiguity in the Hebrew text to which the targumist was attentive and which the targumist interpreted in order to communicate the meaning that he perceived to be in the passage. This ambiguity pertains to two related aspects in the clause **ולא ידע** **ובקומה**: first, the targumist took note of the fact that the negative particle **לא** in the Hebrew is not made explicit in **ובקומה**, but is left implied (i.e., gapped); second, the targumist perceived that the meaning of the conjunction *vav* in **ובקומה** is ambiguous, potentially functioning as a coordinating conjunction “and” or as an adversative conjunction “but.”<sup>171</sup>

Inasmuch as the negative particle **לא** is not explicitly stated in the phrase **ובקומה**, the task of filling this gap by importing the negation from the first part of the clause **ולא ידע** to the second part of the clause **ובקומה** remains with the reader of the text.<sup>172</sup>

Daniel Boyarin explains, “The gaps are those silences in the text which call for

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<sup>171</sup> On the adversative *vav* connecting contrasting clauses, see Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, “ו,” HALOT, 1:258; Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “ו,” BDB, 252; GKC §163a; and Arnold and Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 146 §4.3.3a.

<sup>172</sup> Schmerler, who makes no mention of the variant **אלא** that appears in the Ps-J manuscript and who was, therefore, likely working with the printed editions of Ps-J, explains that this is precisely what the targumist of Ps-J did—he imported the negative particle **לא** and the verb **ידע** from the first part of the clause to the second part of the clause to produce the text **ולא ידע במישכבה ולא ידע במקומה** (Schmerler, *ספר אהבת יהונתן*, 166).

interpretation if the reader is to ‘make sense’ of what happened.”<sup>173</sup> The reader, therefore, is necessarily presented with an exegetical choice—either to explicate the implied negative אֵל or to interpret the text as though the negative אֵל is excluded from the text purposefully, that is, to indicate that the latter part of the clause is not making a *negative* statement but a *positive* statement. Accordingly, when the targumist of Ps-J read the clause וּלֹא־יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבִקְוִמָהּ, he encountered this very exegetical question, and in contrast to the negative statement in the first part of the clause (“he did not know”), the targumist read the second part of the clause as a positive statement (“he did know”). The targumist was able to achieve this, in part, because the negative particle אֵל is gapped in the Hebrew.

Directly related to the issue of the gapped אֵל is the interpretative question of the syntactical function of the conjunction *vav*. Is the *vav* functioning as a coordinating conjunction “and” or as an adversative conjunction “but”? In other words, is the Hebrew supposed to mean: “and he did not know when she lay down *or* when she arose” or “and he did not know when she lay down, *but* when she arose...”? The targumist evidently viewed either function of the *vav* to be possible. An illustration of comparable structure as regards the adversative conjunction—though with the *vav* connecting two clauses—appears at 1 Sam 1:2: וַיְהִי לְפִנְנָה יְלָדִים וּלְחַנָּה אֵין יְלָדִים “Peninnah had children, *but* Hannah

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<sup>173</sup> Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, 41; and see 17. See also Zakovitch, “Inner-biblical Interpretation,” 44–45; Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*, 21–22; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 169; Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 12.



had no children.”<sup>174</sup> The first clause makes a positive claim, while the second clause makes a negative claim; and the two antithetical claims are linked by a *vav*, in this case, a *vav* that functions as an adversative. Just so, the targumist perceived to be the case at Ps-J Gen 19:33: he read and understood the Hebrew to be making two antithetical claims joined by an adversative *vav*. That is, he read the verse as *וְלֹא־יָדַע בְּשִׁכְבָּהּ וּבְקוּמָהּ יָדַע*, which in the Aramaic he rendered as *וְלֹא יָדַע בְּמִשְׁכָּבָהּ אֲלֵא בְּמִקּוּמָהּ*. Thus, the targumist explicated the *vav* in *וּבְקוּמָהּ* as an adversative, and translated it as *אֲלֵא* so that his rendering of the passage would present the two clauses at v. 33 as antithetical clauses.<sup>175</sup> This enabled the targumist to make absolutely clear that Lot *did* know when his daughter arose.

In the end, the starting point of the targumist’s interpretive work proves to have been the Hebrew text itself, albeit with his consideration of the interpretive tradition associated with the text.<sup>176</sup> In working with the Hebrew text, the targumist encountered gaps and ambiguities in the narrative, and in order to render the story most accurately—in his view—he interpreted these gaps and ambiguities in the light of the interpretive tradition associated with the passage.<sup>177</sup> The targumist brought the Hebrew text and the

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<sup>174</sup> Italics mine. Cf. also Ruth 1:14: *וַתִּשָּׂק עֲרֻפָּה לְחַמּוֹתֶיהָ וְרוּת דְּבָקָה בָּהּ*.

<sup>175</sup> Usually, the targumist prefers to render the Hebrew *vav* as a *vav* in the Aramaic as well. However, in Deut 23:22, where the Hebrew has the conjunction *vav*, the Aramaic has *אֲלֵא*. Note also two cases in which Ps-J renders *כִּי* as *אֲלֵא* (Gen 42:34 and Deut 15:8); and see Klein, “Converse Translation,” 535–37, where he notes that some Targumim interpret *vav* as *דִּלֵּא* (“lest”).

<sup>176</sup> See Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 106, 181.

<sup>177</sup> See Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, 39–56; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 186–229; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 169; and Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 177, n. 10.

interpretive tradition together on the basis of the gaps and ambiguities in the text. He made explicit in the Aramaic what he believed to be implicit in the Hebrew.<sup>178</sup> The negative image of Lot affected the targumist's reading of the biblical text and the targumist's presentation of Lot in the Aramaic rendition of the narrative. As Samely writes regarding the interpretive renderings in the Targumim: "The resulting, narrower, meaning can often be shown to present the result of an exegetical operation on the Hebrew."<sup>179</sup> Consequently, the discussion above suggests that the targumist was not simply imposing a converse meaning upon the narrative, and that he was not rejecting the Hebrew text. Rather, the targumic text suggests that the targumist was rendering explicitly in the Aramaic what he believed to be implied in the Hebrew.

### **3.2.5 Variant Responses in Modern Scholarship to the Converse Translation at Genesis 19:33**

This textual difficulty has not gone unnoticed in modern scholarship. A brief survey quickly reveals how differently this passage has been treated by a selection of scholars. Moses Ginsburger, in his printed edition of the manuscript *Pseudo-Jonathan* (1903), appears to regard the adversative conjunction אלא as an error, and so, without any notation, he alters the אלא to ולא, such that the text reads ולא ידע במישכבה ולא ידע במקומה. In effect, his emended text corresponds to the text of the printed editions and to

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<sup>178</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 174–75.

<sup>179</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 175.



Though arriving at similar conclusions about the alleged erroneous status of אלא, Díez Macho treats the matter in a slightly different manner. In his edition of Ps-J in *Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuchum* (1988), he retains אלא, but he includes a dot under the first *aleph* of אלא to signify that the “letter is defective”; and in note 33 to the verse, he remarks: “leg V אלא,” that is to say, read אלא with the Venice *editio princeps*.<sup>183</sup> Moreover, the Spanish translation of Ps-J done by Teresa Martínez Sáiz in this same *Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuchum* also emends אלא to אלא, so that the text reads: “Y se levantó la mayor y tuvo relaciones sexuales con su padre *que no se enteró cuando se acostó ella ni cuando se levantó*” “And the older daughter arose and had sex with her father, *who did not sense it when she lay down or when she arose*.”<sup>184</sup> Note 1 to this translation states: “Ms. 'l'; corr. con Ed. Pr. wl',” that is, the manuscript has אלא, but correct the text to אלא with the *editio princeps*.<sup>185</sup> In addition, the editors of the online *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* (CAL) also suggest to emend the text, which is represented on the CAL website as אלא ידע במישכבה {א} <ו>לא ידע במקימה.<sup>186</sup> In other

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<sup>183</sup> Díez Macho, *Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuchum*, 125, n. 33. In the section “Sigla et Verba Breviata,” the legend has the following: “X = littera mendosa, quod saepe accidit in V” “X = faulty letter, which is often the case in V” (V being the symbol for the Ps-J *editio princeps* of Venice, 1591) (Díez Macho, *Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuchum*, IX and XX).

<sup>184</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>185</sup> Díez Macho, *Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuchum*, 125, n. 1.

<sup>186</sup> Stephen A. Kaufman, ed., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch* (Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project, Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, released 1986) at Gen 19:33, <http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/>. The editors of CAL indicate that the editions upon which CAL relies for Ps-J are “E. Clarke et al., *Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance* (Ktav, 1984), with variants

words, the editors of CAL understand אלא to be an error and, following the printed editions, recommend correcting the text to ולא.<sup>187</sup> As a final example, Eldon Clem, in an English translation of Ps-J for the *Accordance Bible Software* program, similarly emends the text to ולא and includes no comment on the emendation.<sup>188</sup> Sensing the difficulty of אלא in the manuscript of Ps-J Gen 19:33, these scholars opt to introduce an emendation into the text to align the manuscript with the printed editions of Ps-J and with the meaning of the passage in the Hebrew Bible.

In contrast, some scholars prefer to leave the text of Ps-J as אלא, and while some of these scholars give no indication as to whether they consider the text to be accurate or erroneous, others seem to suggest that they believe the אלא variant to be deliberate. E. G. Clarke, in his edition of the manuscript *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch* (1984), retains the adversative conjunction אלא, so that the text reads: ולא ידע במישכבה

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from the editio princeps as given in the Madrid Polyglot”  
([http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/get\\_file\\_info.php?coord=81001119](http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/get_file_info.php?coord=81001119)).

<sup>187</sup> On the page “CAL Code Help,” the legend explains that the symbol {\_\_} signifies a “text deleted by editor,” and the symbol <\_\_> signifies a “text added by editor” (Kaufman, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch*, at Gen 19:33, <http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/>). Similarly, the electronic version of *Pseudo-Jonathan* in *Logos Libronix* (based on the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon) renders the text as ולא ידע במישכבה (ולא) ידע במקימה [i]ndicates a place in the text where the analyzed form is an editorial emendation of the manuscript form: אלא, with ו added to the manuscript reading by the modern editor(s) and א removed from the manuscript reading by the modern editor(s)” (*Late Jewish Aramaic Version of the Pentateuch from the Files of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch* [Logos Libronix Software, Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2005] at Gen 19:33).

<sup>188</sup> Eldon Clem, ed. and trans., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* (Accordance, Altamonte Springs, FL: OakTree Software, 2007) at Gen 19:33.

אלא ידע במקימה.<sup>189</sup> Noteworthy also is Clarke’s list of textual errors in the Ps-J manuscript: Gen 19:33, significantly, is not among the passages on this list.<sup>190</sup> Le Déaut’s French translation of Ps-J in *Targum du pentateuque* (1978) also preserves the אלא reading: “Il n’en sut rien quand elle se coucha, *mais il sut* quand elle se leva” “He did not know when she lay down, *but he knew* when she arose.”<sup>191</sup> Similarly, Michael Maher, in his English translation and commentary *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis* (1992), prefers the אלא reading.<sup>192</sup> Moreover, both Le Déaut and Maher (cf. Rieder mentioned above) suggest that the אלא reading is following a tradition according to which Lot does indeed know when his older daughter arose.<sup>193</sup> In the view of these scholars, Ps-J’s version of 19:33 is not necessarily an error, but might be a conscious and an interpretive rendering of the Hebrew text.

While the disagreement among these scholars testifies to the complexity of Ps-J Gen 19:33, the evidence laid out above commends the view that considers אלא to be part of the targumist’s deliberate program in his translation of the passage.

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<sup>189</sup> Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance*, 21.

<sup>190</sup> Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance*, x.

<sup>191</sup> Italics original. Le Déaut, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 201.

<sup>192</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 72.

<sup>193</sup> Maher states: “The reading in Lond. (‘... *but he knew* ...’) follows the midrashic tradition which took the dot over the second *waw* in the word *wbqwmh*, ‘or when she arose,’ in HT to mean that Lot noticed his daughter when she arose” (Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 72, n. 25; and see Le Déaut, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 201, n. 12).

### 3.2.6 Discrepancy between the Manuscript and the Printed Editions of Ps-J Genesis

#### 19:33

This survey of scholarship prompts the remaining question: What, then, is the explanation for the discrepancy between the manuscript (containing אלא) and the printed editions (containing ול)? Two hypothetical scenarios are conceivable in which this discrepancy might have emerged.

According to the first scenario, theoretically possible but unlikely, as shown above, the Ps-J text with ול is original and the variant אלא is a later emendation of the text. In such a scenario, a scribe would have been copying a Ps-J manuscript and would have altered the original ול to אלא based on his knowledge of the interpretive issues in the verse as it concerns ובקומה. While this scenario in which ול is original is not inconceivable, the motivation for explicating the implied elements of the verse (ול and ידע at v. 33, and ול at v. 35) in the original manuscript, on the part of the targumist, eludes explanation. Why exegete the text in this way to make the verse say exactly what the Hebrew text already says according to its natural reading? And, moreover, why explicate v. 33 and v. 35 differently if they are intended to convey the same message (i.e., explicating at v. 33 the verb ידע and, in effect, making a two-clause construction, while excluding the verb ידע from v. 35 and, in effect, preserving a one-clause construction)? This view of the priority of ול over אלא fails to render a compelling explanation for the exegesis in the text. The exegetical work in this scenario seems to serve no other purpose

than to reiterate what the Hebrew already states, and it, therefore, begs another explanation.<sup>194</sup>

According to the second scenario, and arguably the more likely option, אלא is original and ול is a later variant introduced into the text. Two reasons commend this view. Firstly, the view that אלא is the original text offers the most compelling explanation for the exegetical activity in this pericope. In such a scenario, a targumist who was attentive to the gaps and ambiguities in the Hebrew text and who was aware of the interpretive tradition associated with ובקומה sought to represent this tradition in his rendition of the narrative and, therefore, produced a Ps-J manuscript with אלא in his translation. To highlight the contrast between the interpretive traditions of v. 33 and v. 35, the targumist rendered the two verses differently, each verse serving its distinct purpose to convey a particular message. This exegetical effort on the part of the targumist suggests that the targumist sought to convey a nuanced message that is not immediately obvious in the Hebrew narrative. The אלא rendition achieves this aim. Since, therefore, the אלא rendition serves to provide a good reason for the presence of the exegesis in the targumic text, it lends itself to being original.

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<sup>194</sup> The same reasoning precludes the likelihood of the hypothetical scenario in which two independently produced manuscripts of Ps-J contained conflicting renditions of 19:33 from the very outset. Such a scenario fails to give an explanation for the initial production of a manuscript with an exegetical rendering of 19:33 that conveys the exact same message that the Hebrew text conveys, that is, that Lot did not know when his older daughter arose. Why would a targumist exert any exegetical effort to make an Aramaic version of the verse say exactly what the Hebrew verse already says? This lack of explanation for the exegesis in the text renders this scenario unlikely.



Secondly, the view that אלא is the original text also offers a compelling explanation for the development of the text from אלא to ולא. In such a scenario, the variant ולא of v. 33 that appears in the printed editions entered the Ps-J text by a copyist either accidentally or deliberately: 1) If accidentally, then the change may have been the result of the copyist’s non-conscious and inadvertent harmonization of the narrative with the biblical text. That is, knowing that according to the natural reading of the biblical narrative Lot does *not* learn of his daughters’ sexual exploitation of him, the copyist “copied” the text according to his memory of the biblical version, unwittingly changing אלא to ולא because of the interference of his memory and because of his lack of attentiveness to the manuscript before him and to the targumist’s interpretive goal in this pericope.<sup>195</sup> 2) If deliberately, then the change may have been a corrective measure on the part of a copyist. Seeing that אלא contradicted the natural reading of the Hebrew text, the copyist decided to harmonize v. 33 with the Hebrew text, and to change the adversative conjunction אלא to the negative particle ולא.<sup>196</sup> This deliberate change, in essence, is similar to what the modern scholars (e.g., Ginsburger, Rieder, Sáiz) have done with their

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<sup>195</sup> On the phenomenon of scribal “incidental changes” in the Hebrew Bible, which could be either intentional or accidental, see Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 227–39.

<sup>196</sup> On the phenomenon of scribal “content changes” in the Hebrew Bible, including exegetical changes and harmonizations, which could be either intentional or accidental, see Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 240–62. For a helpful discussion of accidental changes as against deliberate changes in the ancient texts, see Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 7–14.

production of the text of Ps-J as well: they interpreted the אלא of the manuscript to be an error and corrected it to read ולא.

The presence of אלא in the manuscript of Ps-J, then, is best understood to be the original reading and an accurate representation of the targumist's attempt to incorporate into his Aramaic translation the tradition associated with ובקומה. The variant ולא, on the other hand, appears to have entered the text of Ps-J at a later stage, either as an error of transcription or as a corrective measure on the part of a copyist.

### 3.3 Conclusion

Despite the appearance of converse translation in the manuscript of Ps-J Gen 19:33, analysis of the passage demonstrates that the rendition of the narrative in this verse is, in fact, the targumist's explication of the Hebrew text. The targumist considered the Hebrew text of v. 33, took note of the ambiguities in the text and the literary difficulty this posed with regard to the image of Lot, reflected on the tradition associated with ובקומה and its implications for demonstrating the culpability of Lot, and incorporated this tradition into his translation by explicating the Hebrew text and elucidating its ambiguous elements. In the light of this analysis, the Aramaic translation does not exhibit evidence either of rejecting the Hebrew narrative or of coercing a foreign meaning upon the text.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> See Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*, 32; Kratz, *Das Judentum im Zeitalter des Zweiten Tempels*, 147; and Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 13.

Rather, the Aramaic translation proves to be an explication of the Hebrew text with the intent to render the narrative more precisely.

The targumist's method of translation described in these two chapters may have been perceived to be in keeping with the principle articulated by R. Judah in b. Qid. 49a: "He who translates a verse literally is a liar; and he who adds to it is a reviler and a blasphemer."<sup>198</sup> The targumist of Ps-J neither reproduced the verse literally nor—as he might plausibly contend—did he add to the passages anything he did not believe to be implicit in the text; rather, he rendered in the Aramaic the meaning of each respective verse that he derived from the Hebrew. Though he reworked the surface text of the narrative, in his view he was accurately representing the meaning of the story.

In the end, the analysis of the so-called "converse translations" reveals that the targumist approached the Hebrew text with a particular set of assumptions—as regards both his exegetical reading of the passage and his knowledge of the interpretive tradition associated with the passage. These assumptions, once recognized, help to elucidate the basis of the Aramaic translation and the congruity that, in the view of the targumist, obtains between the Aramaic and the Hebrew text, that is, the vertical dimension of Ps-J. This manner of targumic congruity—wherein the congruity exists below the surface structure—is also evident in apparent contradictions that emerge between passages *within*

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<sup>198</sup> In the original: המתרגם פסוק כצורתו הרי זה בדאי והמוסיף עליו הרי זה מחרף ומגדף (H. Freedman and I. Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Kiddushin* [London: Soncino, 1977], 49a). See also t. Meg. 4.41 in Moses S. Zuckerman and Saul Lieberman, eds., תוספתא: על פי כתבי יד ערפורט וולנה: עם מראה מקומות וחלופי גרסאות ומפתחות (Jerusalem: Sifre Vahrman, 1970), 228. For comments on this remark and on this principle of translation, see Smelik, *Rabbis, Language and Translation in Late Antiquity*, 39–40; Golomb, "A Liar, a Blasphemer, a Reviler": The Role of Biblical Ambiguity in the Palestinian Pentateuchal Targumim," 145; and for a discussion of the interpretive aspect of translation in general, see Lasair, "Targum and Translation: A New Approach to a Classic Problem," 265–87.

the boundaries of the Ps-J literary corpus itself, that is, the horizontal dimension of Ps-J.

To this phenomenon this study turns in the following chapter.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN PSEUDO-JONATHAN:**  
**NUMERALS**

**4.1 Introduction**

This chapter turns to the study of those apparent contradictions that occur within the corpus of Ps-J—specifically the contradictions in the sphere of numerals—and it considers their effect on Ps-J’s narrative coherence. These apparent contradictions issue out of the targumist’s additions to the base text of the Hebrew Bible. That is, the contradictions arise either between Ps-J’s translated (un-expanded) base text and one or more of Ps-J’s expansions, or between two or more of Ps-J’s expansions. This discussion seeks to show that, despite the initial appearance of conflict between various passages in Ps-J, recognition of the targumist’s assumptions about the passages in question reveals the coherence that the targumist presupposed to exist between them. Thus, with respect to the horizontal dimension of Ps-J, analysis of the passages considered below demonstrates that the targumist was indeed committed to a logical consistency in his presentation of the narrative. As regards specifically the introduction of numerals into the text, this study will suggest that the aim of the targumist was to make the narrative both coherent and precise.

Inasmuch as targumic additions are often laconic, they are, in effect, often difficult to reconcile at first sight with the broader context of the narrative. Attention to the targumist’s assumptions, therefore, is necessary to discern the way the apparently discrepant passages hang together. As already stated above, this suggests that the

targumist expected his audience either to be familiar with the full extent of the tradition implied or to seek out the tradition underlying the expansion, in order to ascertain the sense of the translated and expanded text and to discern the overall coherence of the narrative.<sup>199</sup> The goal of this discussion is to discover the traditions that were presupposed by the targumist behind the text and to reconstruct the exegetical procedure the targumist implemented in incorporating those traditions into his Aramaic rendition, in order to determine how apparently incompatible passages actually work together in the Aramaic narrative.

## **4.2 Contradictions in the Sphere of Numerals**

### **4.2.1 Genesis 15:14 vs. Exodus 14:21 (cf. chs. 7–12)**

At Gen 15:14—in the context of God making a covenant with Abram—God foretells Israel’s slavery in Egypt and God’s subsequent judgment of Egypt (as part of God’s deliverance of Israel out of Egypt). While the Hebrew version leaves the details of God’s judgment of Egypt unspecified, Ps-J mentions that this judgment will consist of two hundred fifty plagues. This expansion, however, seems to produce a textual problem, inasmuch as in an expansion at Ps-J Exod 14:21 the targumist states that there were ten plagues. At first blush, then, Ps-J appears to generate a contradiction between these two expansions.<sup>200</sup> The two passages read as follows:

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<sup>199</sup> Smelik, *Rabbis, Language and Translation in Late Antiquity*, 222–23.

<sup>200</sup> Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion.

### Gen 15:13–14

MT <sup>13</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם יְדַע תְּדַע כִּי־גֵר | יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם וְעַבְדֻם וְעָנּוּ אֹתָם  
אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה: <sup>14</sup> וְגַם אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ בְּן אֲנֹכִי וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יֵצְאוּ בְּרִכְשׁ  
גָּדוֹל:

NRSV <sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years; <sup>14</sup> but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

Ps-J <sup>13</sup> ואמר לאברם מינדע תינדע ארום דיירין יהון בנד בארעא דלא דילהון חלף  
דלא הימנת וישעבדון בהון ויסגפון יתהום ארבע מאה שנין <sup>14</sup> ואוף ית עמא  
דיפלחון להום דיין אנא במאתן ותמשין מחן ומן בתר כדין יפקון לחירותא  
בניכסין סגיאין

Ps-J <sup>13</sup> He said to Abram, “Know for certain that your *children* will be *residents* in a land that is not theirs, *because you did not believe*; and they will be enslaved and afflicted four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> But the people whom they shall serve I will judge *with two hundred fifty plagues*; and after that they will go forth *to freedom* with great wealth.

### Exod 14:21

MT <sup>21</sup> וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיִּזְלַךְ יְהוָה | אֶת־הַיָּם בְּרוּחַ קְדָיִם עֲזָה כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה  
וַיִּשֶׁם אֶת־הַיָּם לְחֶרְבָּה וַיִּבְקְעוּ הַמַּיִם:

NRSV <sup>21</sup> Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided.

Ps-J <sup>21</sup> וארכין משה ית ידיה על ימא בחוטרא רבא ויקרא דאיתברי מן שירויא וביה  
חקיק ומפרש שמא רבא ויקרא ועישרתי אהוותא <sup>אתוותא</sup> די מחא ית מצראי  
ותלת אבהת עלמא ושית אימהתא ותריסר שיבטוי דיעקב ומן יד דבר ייי ית ימא  
ברוח קידומא תקיף כל ליליא ושוי ית ימא נגיבא ואתבזעו מיא לתריסר בזיען  
כל קבל תריסר שיבטוי דיעקב

Ps-J <sup>21</sup> And Moses inclined his hand over the sea, *holding the great and glorious rod that had been created in the beginning, and on which the great and glorious Name was clearly inscribed, as well as the ten signs with which he had smitten the Egyptians, the three fathers of the world, the six patriarchs, and the twelve tribes of Jacob*. And *immediately* the Lord drove back the sea with a strong east wind all the

night, and he turned the sea into dry land. And the waters were split into twelve divisions, corresponding to the twelve tribes of Jacob.

The targumic insertion of the ten plagues at Ps-J Exod 14:21 is certainly alluding to the narrative of the ten plagues recorded at Exod 7–12.<sup>201</sup> The insertion of the two hundred fifty plagues at Ps-J Gen 15:14, however, is a conundrum—both, as regards the impetus for its insertion and its relationship to the mention of the ten plagues at Ps-J Exod 14:21 (cf. Exod 7–12).<sup>202</sup>

The element in the Hebrew narrative of Gen 15:14 that prompted the targumist of Ps-J to introduce this addition into his text is the literary gap—at least in the view of the targumist—that leaves unstated as to how God will judge Egypt that will enslave

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<sup>201</sup> See Fishbane, *חומש: ספר שמות*, 2:415 (טטו); Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן: שמות*, 81; Ben-Mendel, *שמות* (in פט), 89. תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות. For a discussion of the difficulty in enumerating the plagues, see William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 317–21; and for a general discussion of the plagues narrative see Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 286–354; Helmut Utschneider and Wolfgang Oswald, *Exodus 1–15*, IECOT, eds. Walter Dietrich et al. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2015), 181–232; Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS, 38–61; Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 121–77; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 94–135; for Friedman’s division of the plagues narrative into sources, see Richard Elliot Friedman, *The Bible with Sources Revealed: A New View into the Five Books of Moses* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 130–38.

<sup>202</sup> See Levine, “The Aggadah in Targum Jonathan ben ‘Uzziel and Neofiti 1 to Genesis: Parallel References,” 553. *Sekhel Tov*, however, suggests that 15:14 is referring to the tradition of the ten plagues, and that this is manifested in the *yodh* that appears in וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן (as opposed to כֵּן), since the numerical value of *yodh* is ten: וְאַחֲרֵי כֵּן לֹא נֶאֱמַר, אֲלֵא וְאַחֲרֵי כֵּן, הוֹסִיף י, רִמּוֹ לֹא עַל י מְכוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא עַל אוֹתוֹ גּוֹי (Menahem ben Solomon ben Isaac, *בראשית טוב: בראשית* [Jerusalem: Zikhron Aharon, 2008], 2 [ב]). Sarna too sees Gen 15:14 as referring to the ten plagues; commenting on the participle וְאֵן in the Hebrew text, he states: “The reference, of course, is to the plagues, which are so referred to at Exodus 6:6, 7:4, and 12:12” (Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 116); so also Drazin and Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Genesis*, 82. But contrast this view with Westermann’s comments on Gen 15:14: “Such a reflection on the punishment of Egypt is very striking. It can scarcely be a reference to the plagues, because they occur in the context of the liberation of Israel.... What is striking here is that it is not the liberation from slavery that is announced, but the fact of the return, just as at v. 16a” (Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 227).



Abram’s descendants.<sup>203</sup> This gap can be discerned when the structures of v. 14 in the MT and Ps-J are juxtaposed:

**Table 3: Literary Structure of Genesis 15:14**

MT		Ps-J	
וְגַם אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנִכִּי	14a	וְאוֹף יֵת עִמָּא דִּיפְלַחוּן לְהוּם דִּיין אַנְא	14a
-----		<b>בְּמֵאתָן וְחֲמֵשִׁין מַחֲן</b>	
וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יֵצְאוּ	14b	וּמִן בְּתַר כְּדִין יִפְקוּן לְחִירוּתָא	14b
בְּרִכְשׁ גְּדוֹל		בְּנִיכְסִין סְגִיָּאִין	

To fill this gap, the targumist stated that God’s judgment will manifest itself in two hundred fifty plagues. Ps-J’s addition, thereby, contributes to the coherence of the narrative in two ways: it answers the question as to how God will fulfill this promise, and it completes the parallel structure between vv. 14a and 14b, so that both vv. 14a and 14b provide adverbial phrases with specific information.<sup>204</sup>

The question remains, however: How does this expansion of two hundred fifty plagues coexist with the tradition that there were ten plagues? The answer to this question lies in the tradition that the targumist was presupposing in inserting this two hundred fifty

<sup>203</sup> Modern commentators too note that the text is laconic. Westermann observes that “A reason why Israel is to live through this period of suffering is not stated” (Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 227). For the proposition that Israel’s enslavement in Egypt was a form of punishment, see Yair Zakovitch, ‘*And You Shall Tell Your Son...: The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible*’ (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 15–45. Sol Scharfstein remarks, “Notice that [God] did not reveal the name or location of the country that would enslave them” (Sol Scharfstein, *Torah and Commentary: The Five Books of Moses* [Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2008], 62). Gunkel notes: “Now, the future of his seed is revealed to Abraham in the style of prophecy, that is, in solemn (יָדַע תְּדַע) and mysterious (consequently the Egyptians are not mentioned by name) words” (Gunkel, *Genesis*, 181).

<sup>204</sup> Note also that in the conversation between God and Abram at Gen 15, on two occasions God utters a statement to Abram, and Abram responds with an inquiry for more detailed information, to which God responds with additional information (vv. 1–5 and 8–11). Verse 14 corresponds to this pattern in offering additional information to a statement God utters.

plague figure. In fact, the tradition contends that there were two distinct episodes in which God delivered plagues upon Egypt. First, there were ten plagues in Egypt, and then there were two hundred fifty plagues at the sea. As recorded in Midrash Tehillim 78.15 to Psalm 78:49, the tradition reads:

ישלח בם חרון אפו. (קיט) ר' יוסי הגלילי אומר עשר מכות לקו המצריים במצרים, שנאמר אצבע אלהים הוא (שמות ח טו), ובים לקו חמשים מכות, שנאמר וירא ישראל את היד הגדולה (שם יד לא), (קכ) והיד חמש אצבעות, (קכא) ר' אליעזר אומר ארבע מכות, שנאמר אצבע אלהים הוא (שם ח טו), טטראגון שהוא מרובע, ועל כל אחת ואחת עשר מכות, הרי ארבעים מכות, ועל הים לקו מאתים מכות, שנאמר ישלח בם חרון אפו עברה וזעם וצרה משלחת מלאכי רעים, עברה אחת, זעם שתיים, צרה שלש, משלחת מלאכי רעים ארבע, הרי מאתים מכות שלקו על הים, שנאמר וירא ישראל את היד הגדולה (שמות יד לא). (קכב) ר' עקיבא אומר במצרים לקו (חמשים) [חמש] מכות, ועל כל אחת ואחת עשרה, הרי חמשים מכות, שנאמר אצבע אלהים הוא (שמות ח טו), (קכג) (טטראגון הוא) [פנטיגון הוא], וראש אצבע הרי עשרה, הרי חמשים מכות שלקו במצרים, ועל הים לקו חמשים ומאתים מכות, שנאמר ישלח בם חרון אפו [עברה וזעם וצרה משלחת מלאכי רעים, חרון אפו אחת], עברה שתיים, זעם שלש, צרה ארבע, משלחת מלאכי רעים חמש.<sup>205</sup>

*He sent out upon them his fierce anger.* R. Yossi the Galilean says: The Egyptians were smitten in Egypt with ten plagues, as it says, “It is the finger of God” (Exod 8:15). And in the sea they were smitten with fifty plagues, as it says, “And Israel saw the great hand” (Exod 14:31), for the hand consists of five fingers. R. Eliezer says [that each plague consisted of] four plagues, as it says, “It is the finger of God” (Exod 8:15). Now a finger is four-sided, and each [side] represents ten plagues, therefore, there were forty plagues. But at the sea they were smitten with two hundred plagues, as it says, “He sent out upon them his fierce anger, wrath, indignation, and distress, a company of destroying angels.” Wrath is one, indignation is two, distress is three, a company of destroying angels is four, therefore, at the sea they were smitten with two hundred plagues, as it says, “And Israel saw the great hand” (Exod 14:31). **R. Akiba says, “In Egypt the Egyptians were smitten with (fifty) [five] plagues, each of the ten plagues consisting of five, therefore [there were] fifty plagues, as it says, “It is the finger of God” (Exod 8:15). (It [the finger] is four-sided) [It (the finger) is five-sided], including the tip of the finger. Thus, the ten [plagues] were really fifty plagues with which they were smitten in Egypt, but at the sea they were smitten with**

<sup>205</sup> Salomon Buber, ed., מדרש תהלים המכונה שוחר טוב (Vilna: Wittwe & Gebrüder Romm, 1891), 354–55.

**two hundred fifty plagues, as it says, “He sent out upon them his fierce anger, [wrath, indignation, and distress, a company of destroying angels.” His fierce anger is one], wrath is two, indignation is three, distress is four, a company of destroying angels is five.**<sup>206</sup>

As Schmerler remarks, then, “According to R. Akiva, [the Egyptians] were smitten with 250 plagues at the sea.”<sup>207</sup> The targumist’s brief addition of “two hundred fifty plagues” intends to evoke in the mind of the audience the above-cited rabbinic discussion on the different plagues delivered against Egypt—one set of plagues in Egypt (ten plagues) and another set of plagues at the sea (two hundred fifty plagues).<sup>208</sup> The audience is expected to understand the distinction between the nature and the context of these two episodes of plagues. This expectation to be familiar with rabbinic tradition manifests itself in that the targumist makes no effort to explain the background of his terse insertion.

In effect, the following conclusion is admissible: despite the sense of literary tension on the surface structure of the narrative, the expansion of the two hundred fifty plagues does *not* contradict the expansion of the ten plagues in the Aramaic narrative (on account of the cited rabbinic tradition), and, therefore, the two expansions pose no problem for the coherence of the narrative in Aramaic. The ten plagues of Ps-J Exod 14:21 (cf. Exod 7–12) take place in Egypt, while the two hundred fifty plagues of Ps-J Gen 15:14 take place at the sea.

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<sup>206</sup> Cf. the translation in William G. Braude, trans., *The Midrash on Psalms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 2:36–37. See also Jacob Z. Lauterbach, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael: A Critical Edition, Based on the Manuscripts and Early Editions, with an English Translation, Introduction, and Notes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 1:166; Exodus Rabbah 23.9.

<sup>207</sup> Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 136. Cf. Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש, 144 (שמות in קמד). בראשית-שמות

<sup>208</sup> For a discussion of apparent inconsistencies that prove to be coherent on account of the relation of each statement to the greater context of the narrative, see van Dijk, *Text and Context*, 95–98; and de Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, 115–16.

#### 4.2.2 Genesis 25:20 and 26 vs. 25:21

An apparent discrepancy in Ps-J’s calculation of years occurs in the narrative of Isaac and Rebekah with respect to the duration of the barrenness of Rebekah. In the Hebrew, the text does not explicitly specify the number of years that Rebekah was barren; however, calculation of the numbers mentioned in the text seems to render the duration of her barrenness to be 20 years: at 25:20, Isaac marries Rebekah when he is forty years old; and at 25:26, Esau and Jacob are born when Isaac is sixty years old. The difference between forty and sixty amounts to a twenty-year waiting period, which presumably reveals the years of Rebekah’s barrenness.<sup>209</sup> While these details are represented in Ps-J, the targumist of Ps-J inserted an additional number that seems to create a conflict with this calculation. Rather than concluding that Rebekah was barren for twenty years, the targumist remarked at Ps-J Gen 25:21 that Rebekah was barren for twenty-two years.<sup>210</sup> The passage reads:

##### Gen 25:21

MT וַיַּעֲתֵר יִצְחָק לַיהוָה לְנִכְחַ אִשְׁתּוֹ כִּי עֲקָרָה הִיא וַיַּעֲתֵר לֹא יְהוָה וַתֵּהָר רֵבֶקָה אִשְׁתּוֹ:<sup>21</sup>

NRSV <sup>21</sup> Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived.

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<sup>209</sup> Plaut, Bamberger, and Hallo, *The Torah*, 173, n. 21; Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis: The World of the Bible in the Light of History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 182. Wenham observes that “The initial barrenness of the matriarchs is a recurrent theme in Genesis” (Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 175); and for more discussion of this “favored” motif see Gunkel, *Genesis*, 288–89; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 273; Skinner who points to similarities in “the cases of Sarah, and Rachel (29:31), the mothers of Samson (Ju. 13:2), Samuel (1 Sa. 1:2), and John the Baptist (Lk. 1:7)” (Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 358); and Plaut, Bamberger, and Hallo, *The Torah*, 111, n. 2; for a historical-critical discussion of this narrative in the Hebrew text see Gunkel, *Genesis*, 285–91; and Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 410–19; and for a literary-theoretical discussion of the function of time in the biblical narrative, see Jean Louis Ska, S. J., “*Our Fathers Have Told Us*”: *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, *Subsidia Biblica* 13 (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 2000), 7–15, esp. 13–14 on the duration of time.

<sup>210</sup> Both the manuscript and the printed editions read “twenty-two years.” In contrast, Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion.

Ps-J ואזל יצחק לטוור פולחנא אתר דכפתיה אבוי והפך יצחק בצלותיה דעתיה <sup>21</sup>  
ממה דגזר על אינתתיה ארום עקרא הוות גביה עשרין ותרתין שנין ואתהפיך  
בגיניה דעתיה ממה דגזר עליה דאף הוא הוה עקר ואתרווח ואיתעברת רבקה  
אינתתיה

Ps-J <sup>21</sup> Isaac went to the mountain of worship, the place where his father had tied him. And by his prayer Isaac changed the intention of the Holy One, blessed be He, from what he had decreed concerning his wife, because she was barren, with respect to him, for **twenty-two years**; and because of him the intention of the Holy One, blessed be He, was changed from what he had decreed concerning him, for he also was childless. And he was relieved, and Rebekah his wife became pregnant.<sup>211</sup>

Taking note of the difficulty this addition poses for the text, Ginzberg states that Ps-J's statement that "Rebekah was without a child for twenty-two years of her married life is very strange."<sup>212</sup> Schmerler calls this expansion "a great wonder" inasmuch as according to the biblical text, he explains, Rebekah is barren for only twenty years.<sup>213</sup> Menachem Brayer comments that this calculation differs from all other Jewish traditions and he admits that he could not locate the source "of the calculation of 'twenty-two' years of barrenness."<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Cf. translation in Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 25.

<sup>212</sup> Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:270, n. 7.

<sup>213</sup> In the original: אהבת יהונתן; בראשית, (Schmerler) כאן גדלה התימה. של"ה עקרה רק עשרים שנה (199).

<sup>214</sup> In the original: ברם לא מצאנו מקור לחשבון עשרים ושתים שנות העקרות (Menachem Brayer, ספר זכרון לשמואל בלקין, "מדרשי אגדות וביאורים תמוהים ועלומי מקור בתרגום התורה המיוחס ליונתן בן עוזיאל" eds. Moshe Carmilly and Hayim Leaf [New York: Erna Michael College of Hebraic Studies Yeshiva University, 1981], 67; and see 81, n. 28 for further discussion). So also Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן; בראשית, 199.

Indeed, no other targumic text makes this expansion; and the LXX, Syriac Peshitta, and Latin Vulgate render the Hebrew literally.<sup>215</sup> However, in contrast to Ps-J, Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer (PRE) 32 explicitly states that Rebekah was barren for twenty years, instead of Ps-J's twenty-two years:

רבי יהודה אומר, עשרים שנה היתה רבקה עקרה. לאחר עשרים שנה לקחה והלך עמה לחר המוריה למקום שנעקד שם, והתפלל על ההריון ונעתר לו, שנאמר, ויעתר יצחק לה' וגו' (שם כה כא).<sup>216</sup>

Rabbi Yehudah said: **Rebecca was barren for twenty years**. After **twenty years**, Isaac took her and went with her to Mount Moriah, to the place where he had been bound, and he prayed concerning [her] conception; and it was granted to him, as it is said, Isaac prayed to the Lord, etc. (Gen 25:21).<sup>217</sup>

Considering the text of PRE to be more accurate than that of Ps-J (in this case), Maher concludes that Ps-J contains here a copyist error, and suggests that one read “twenty years” instead of “twenty-two years.”<sup>218</sup> Rieder and Le Déaut propose the same emendation as Maher.<sup>219</sup> Ginsburger too implies this understanding of the expansion in a

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<sup>215</sup> B. Yebam. 64a discusses the barrenness of Isaac and Rebekah, but no explicit mention of the duration of their barrenness is included; as in the Hebrew text, the implication seems to be that they were barren for twenty years.

<sup>216</sup> Avraham Aharon, ed., ביאור הבית הגדול: עם בראשית ויעקב: פרקי דרבי אליעזר: (Jerusalem: Bene Beraq, 2005), 159 (קנט).

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Abraham Yaakov Finkel, trans., *Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* (Scranton, PA: Yeshivath Beth Moshe, 2009), 126.

<sup>218</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 89, n. 24. Schmerler also proposes this suggestion as an option (Schmerler, *בראשית*: אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 199).

<sup>219</sup> Rieder and Zamir, *בראשית-שמות*: תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה: 54, n. 20 (in the section with their Hebrew translation of the text); idem, Rieder, *תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל*, 36, n. 8: he notes that the “twenty-two years” in Ps-J are *אולי מיותר*; and Le Déaut suggests: “lire ‘vingt’” (Le Déaut, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 245, n. 14). Shinan seems to defer to Rieder that the text of Ps-J is erroneous (Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:53, n. 50).

comment on 25:21, though he retains עשרין ותרתין שנין in his printed edition of Ps-J.<sup>220</sup>

Meanwhile, Clarke does not include this passage as a mistake in his list of textual errors

in Ps-J.<sup>221</sup> The main challenge for the proponents of the view that עשרין ותרתין שנין is an

error is to provide a reasonable explanation as to how the allegedly correct עשרין שנין

(“twenty years”) became עשרין ותרתין שנין (“twenty-two years”). How did ותרתין enter the

Ps-J text? Was it, for example, the targumist’s failure to calculate the numbers correctly?

Was it sheer carelessness? Or might there have been another reason that caused the

targumist to make this allegedly incorrect insertion?

Contrary to the view that the text of Ps-J is erroneous, two possible ways of reading this verse render a coherent narrative. According to these two readings of the passage, close attention to the Aramaic text and awareness of the traditions about Isaac and Rebekah demonstrate that the targumist’s introduction of twenty-two years into the narrative is neither a mistake nor a contradiction within the context of chapter 25.

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<sup>220</sup> In a note on עשרין ותרתין שנין, Ginsburger refers the reader to Rashi, suggesting that Rashi offers a view that is different from that of Ps-J. Ginsburger writes: “S. dag. Raschi zu Vers 20” (Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, 44, n. 4). Rashi, in fact, does not state anything in his comments on 25:20 about the duration of Isaac’s and Rebekah’s barrenness. He merely mentions the tradition that Isaac was forty years old and Rebekah was three years old when the two were married. In his comments on 25:26, however, Rashi writes: **בן ששים שנה: עשר שנים משנשאה עד שנעשית בת שלש עשרה שנה וראויה להריון ועשר** “*Sixty years old*: Ten years from the time that he had married her until she became thirteen years old and became able to conceive, and these [i.e., the subsequent] ten years he expected and waited for her, as his father had done for Sarah.” Perhaps Ginsburger intended to make reference to this comment in Rashi, inasmuch as Rashi makes mention of two periods of ten years each, amounting to twenty years in total, during which Isaac waited for Rebekah to bear children. In any case, Ginsburger is suggesting that the text of Ps-J and the comments of Rashi disagree (see Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., **תורת חיים: בראשית**, 2:1–2 and 6 [א–ב and ו]).

<sup>221</sup> Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance*, ix–x.

The first possible reading of this passage concerns the meaning of the verb הוות in the clause ארום עקרא הוות גביה עשרין ותרתין שנין: Does הוות express a simple statement of fact or does it convey intent? Ben-Mendel proposes that instead of interpreting the passage as “she *was* barren with him for twenty-two years” (a simple statement of fact), the text should be understood as “she *was supposed* to have been barren with him for twenty-two years” (a statement of intent). In such a case, Ps-J would be indicating that the original decree for Rebekah’s barren state was merely *intended* to be twenty-two years in contrast to the twenty years that it actually lasted. Ben-Mendel explains:

ושם הק' מה הועילו מהגהתן דאם הגזירה היתה על עשרים שנים שוב ק' במה היפך דעתיה דהקב"ה הרי היתה עקרה כ' שנים (ע"כ למד שמספר השנים המוזכר בת"י הוא זמן הגזירה לא מציאות)... ואכן היתה הגזירה שתהיה עקרה כ"ב שנים.... לכן מעיקרא היתה הגזירה שתהיה עקרה עוד ב' שנים רק יצחק הפך את הגזירה בתפילתו לכן ילדה...<sup>222</sup>

Thus asks the tradition: What is the meaning of their explanatory note [i.e., twenty-two years...] if the decree was intended to last twenty years? Again, asks the tradition: In what regard did [Isaac] alter the intent of the Holy One, blessed be He? For [Rebekah] was [indeed] barren for twenty years? (Consequently, this teaches that the number of years mentioned in Ps-J [i.e., twenty-two years] refers to the *decree* [of the duration of barrenness], not to [the duration of barrenness] in *reality*).... Indeed, according to the decree she was intended to be barren for twenty-two years.... Therefore, according to the initial decree she was supposed to have been barren for an additional two years, but Isaac altered the decree by means of his prayer, and as a result [Rebekah] gave birth... (emphasis mine)

While this is a possible reconciliation of the apparent discrepancy between the numbers in this passage, the interpretation actually faces a major objection: nothing in the text suggests that the targumist is setting up an antithesis between twenty-two years of intent and twenty years of actuality. Were he to do this, the text, as hypothetically constructed here, might read something as follows:

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<sup>222</sup> Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות, 214 (בראשית in ריד), 214.



ארום עקרא הוות גביה עשרין ותרתינ שנין ואתהפיך בגיניה דעתיה ממה דגזר עליה דאף  
הוא הוה עקר [ולא הוה עקרין אלהין עשרין שנין] ואתרווח ואיתעברת רבקה איתתיה

For she was **supposed to have been barren, with respect to him, twenty-two years**, but, on account of Isaac, God altered his intent that he had decreed concerning him, for he too was barren, [**and they were barren for only twenty years**]. Then Isaac was able to have children and Rebekah his wife became pregnant.

The clause in the brackets is the addition that might have set up the intended twenty-two years against the actual twenty years of the duration of their barrenness. According to this formulation of the verse, Rebekah was supposed to have been barren for twenty-two years, but in the end she, along with Isaac, was barren for only twenty years. This added clause, however, does not appear at 25:21.

Compare, on the other hand, this type of structure at Ps-J Gen 50:3, which passage discusses the original intent for the duration of the famine in contrast to the actual duration of the famine:

### Gen 50:3

ושלימו ליה מן דאתבסם ארבעין יומין ארום כדין שלמין יומי בסימיא ובכוון יתי מצראי  
שובעין יומין אמרין אילין לאילין איתון ניבכי על יעקב חסידא דבזכותיה עדת כפנא מן  
ארעא דמצרים דהוות גזירתא למיהוי כפנא ארבעין ותרתינ שנין ובזכותיה דיעקב אתמנען  
ארבעין שנין מן מצרים ולא הוה כפנא אלהין תרתינ שנין בלחודיהן

Forty days were spent *in embalming* him, for so many days are spent in embalming, and the Egyptians wept for him seventy days, *saying to one another*, “*Come, let us weep over Jacob the righteous, for whose merit the famine passed from the land of Egypt.*” *For it had been decreed that there would be a famine for forty-two years. But for the merit of Jacob forty years were withheld from Egypt, and there was a famine for two years only.*

That is, the famine was supposed to have lasted for forty-two years, but in the end it lasted for only two years. At Ps-J Gen 50:3, the narrative is unequivocal in its presentation of the intended against the actual duration of the famine. As indicated above,

such is not the case in the instance of 25:21. Therefore, the explanation that Hayim Feivel Ben-Mendel proffers is objectionable.

The second, and more favorable, interpretation of עשרין ותרתינין at 25:21 is that Rebekah was indeed barren for the precise number of twenty-two years, a period of time that extended from the day of her birth until the day of her pregnancy at age twenty-two, then followed by the birth of Jacob and Esau approximately one year later when she was twenty-three years old and when Isaac was sixty years old. This interpretation finds support in a series of traditions about Isaac and Rebekah, the linchpin of which is the tradition that Rebekah was three years old when she and Isaac were married. This key tradition is recorded in *Midrash Seder Olam* chapter 1.<sup>223</sup>

בו בפרק נולדה רבקה, נמצא אבינו יצחק נשא את רבקה בת (י"ד) [ג'] שנה<sup>224</sup>

In the same chapter, Rebekah was born. We discover, then, that our father Isaac married Rebekah when she was (14) [3] years old.

This tradition relies upon a method of exegesis called *semikhut* (“thematic juxtaposition”) and is grounded in the following reasoning:<sup>225</sup> 1) Since the narrative of Sarah’s death

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<sup>223</sup> See also Genesis Rabbah 57.1–3, where the same tradition appears to be implied; Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: בראשית, 2:1–2 and 6 (א–ב) (1); and Brayer, “מדרשי אגדות וביאורים,” ספר זכרון לשמואל בלקין, 67. Cf. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:504–5. See also Genesis Rabbah 55.4; Ps-J Gen 22:2; and Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:6, which passages record that Isaac was thirty-seven years old at the Aqedah.

<sup>224</sup> Yose ben Halafta with comments by Elijah ben Solomon, Jacob Emden, Yeruham Me’ir Lainer, and Yitzhak ben Moshe Vinberg, מדרש סדר עולם (Warsaw: 1904–1905; repr., Jerusalem: Agudat Midrash ha-Pardes, 5747/1986–1987), 49 (מט). The parenthesis and the bracket reflect the work of the editors of the text. As can be seen, this passage preserves two traditions about Rebekah’s age when she married Isaac—age fourteen and age three. See Ginzberg for the tradition that Rebekah was fourteen years old when she married Isaac, in Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:6; and 5:270, n. 4; and Brayer, “מדרשי אגדות וביאורים,” ספר זכרון לשמואל בלקין, 67. Cf. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:6; and 5:270, n. 4; and Brayer, “מדרשי אגדות וביאורים,” ספר זכרון לשמואל בלקין, 67.

<sup>225</sup> Heschel writes that *semikhut* (סמכות) is an exegetical method that is committed to “interpreting contiguous scriptural passages” and to deriving meaning from these passages on account of their literary order in the Torah, that is, from the fact that the passages stand in certain proximity to other passages.

immediately follows the narrative of the Aqedah, the rabbis concluded that Sarah's death was caused by the near-sacrifice of Isaac, and, therefore, the two events took place in the same time-period. Freedman and Simon remark that "Sarah was ninety years old at [Isaac's] birth and a hundred and twenty-seven years at her death, which, according to the Rabbis, was caused by the shock when she was wrongly informed that Isaac had been sacrificed."<sup>226</sup> 2) Since at her death Sarah was 127 years old (Gen 23:1), and when Isaac was born she was 90 (Gen 17:17), this means that Isaac was 37 when Sarah died as well as when the Aqedah took place (127–90=37). 3) Since the birth of Rebekah is mentioned in the context of the Aqedah (Gen 22:20), this means that Rebekah was born at the same time-period as that of the Aqedah, that is, when Isaac was thirty-seven years old.<sup>227</sup> 4) Since Isaac was forty when he was married to Rebekah (that is three years after the

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Heschel explains that this exegetical method stood in opposition to another rabbinic method known as אֵין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה "there is no chronological order in the Torah," which method assumes that the narrative in the Torah violates the order in which the events actually transpired (Heschel, *Heavenly Torah*, 241–42). For further discussion of this, see Zakovitch, "Inner-biblical Interpretation," 42–43; idem, "Juxtaposition in the Abraham Cycle," in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. D. Wright et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 509–24; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 166, n. 26, and p. 172; Isaac Heinemann, *דרכי האגדה* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1949), 56; Frenkel, *מדרש ואגדה*, 1:174–76.

<sup>226</sup> Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:485, n. 1; and see Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., *תורת חיים: בראשית*, 1:263 (רסג).

<sup>227</sup> On account of the introductory formula וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה at v. 20, Wenham writes: "It is not clear how long after the sacrifice of Isaac news about his brother's family reached him, but in the time span of Genesis, it is likely to have been years rather than weeks"; in other words, in the view of Wenham this verse indicates not when Rebekah was born, but when Abraham received the report of her birth, that is, sometime (perhaps years) after the Aqedah. From the perspective of composition, Wenham remarks: "It is not clear whether [the announcement of Rebekah's birth] continues the report given to Abraham about his brother's children beginning in v 21, or whether it is part of the editor's summary in v 23b. In other words, it is uncertain whether Abraham knew about Rebekah before he sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac. The mention of Rebekah in this short genealogy sticks out. She is the only female descendant of Nahor listed here among twelve males" (Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 120, nn. 20–23). Westermann remarks, "A subsequent elaboration names Rebekah as a daughter of Bethuel, an *anticipation* of 24:15, 24" (italics mine; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 368). For source-critical comments on 22:20–24, see Gunkel, *Genesis*, 240–41.

Aqedah and, in effect, three years after the birth of Rebekah), this means that Rebekah was three years old when she and Isaac were married.<sup>228</sup> On account of the same logic, evidently, the tradition in *Midrash Seder Olam* records that Rebekah was three years old when she married Isaac.

It is this tradition that the targumist of Ps-J appears to have presupposed at Ps-J Gen 25:21 when he stated that Rebekah was barren for twenty-two years. Two premises of this tradition are mentioned explicitly at Ps-J Gen 22:1 and 22:20: first, Ps-J Gen 22:1 explicitly states that Isaac was thirty-seven years old at the time of the Aqedah (מתיב) “Isaac answered, ‘I am now thirty-seven years old’”);<sup>229</sup> and second, 22:20 explicitly sets the death of Sarah immediately after the event of the Aqedah (וקמת שרה ופגנת ואשתנקת ומיתת מן אניקא) “*And Sarah arose and cried out and was choked and died of anguish*”). These two premises in Ps-J serve as strong evidence to suggest that the targumist presupposed that Rebekah was three years old when she and Isaac were married. For inasmuch as the targumist implemented the principle of *semikhut* in placing Sarah’s death at the Aqedah, it is reasonable to conclude that he would have implemented the principle of *semikhut* in interpreting the mention of Rebekah’s birth at the Aqedah, that is, that Rebekah was born when the Aqedah took place. This would mean, then, that Rebekah was three years old when she married Isaac,

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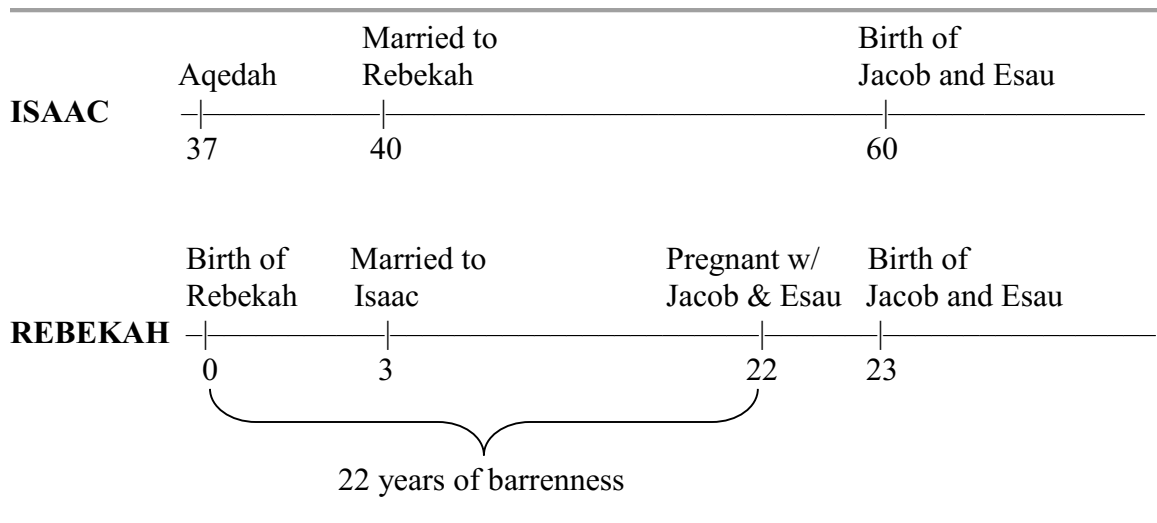
<sup>228</sup> See also this reasoning in Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., בראשית, תורת חיים: 2:1–2 (א-ב).

<sup>229</sup> The printed editions of Ps-J Gen 22:1 state that Isaac was thirty-six years old at the time of the Aqedah. Schmerler considers the text of the printed editions erroneous and states that the text should read “thirty-seven” (Schmerler, בראשית, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 178). For the tradition that Isaac was thirty-seven years old at the Aqedah, see also Neofiti Exod 12:42; Fragment Targumim V and N at Exod 12:42; Fragment Targum P at Exod 15:18; Genesis Rabbah 55.4; 56.8; Midrash Tanhuma 4.42 (Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma*, 1:125); *Midrash Seder Olam* 1; PRE 31.

since Isaac is said to have been thirty-seven when Rebekah was born and forty years old when he married Rebekah. In short, the text of Ps-J arguably assumes that Isaac was forty and Rebekah was three when the two were married.

It is this very presupposition that explains how עשרין ותרתין שנין fits into the narrative in a coherent manner. The following points present the reasoning behind the presupposition: 1) Isaac was thirty-seven years old when Rebekah was born (Ps-J Gen 22:1 and 23). 2) Three years later, Isaac was forty years old and Rebekah was three years old when they were married (Ps-J Gen 25:20; *Midrash Seder Olam* 1). 3) Twenty years later, when Isaac was sixty and Rebekah was twenty-three, the couple gave birth to Jacob and Esau (Ps-J Gen 25:26; Ps-J Num 7:88). 4) This means that Rebekah did not have children from her birth until age twenty-three, a period of twenty-three years. However, her actual state of barrenness came to an end when she became pregnant nearly one year prior to her giving birth, that is, at age twenty-two; thus, Rebekah was barren from her birth until age twenty-two, that is, a period of twenty-two years, precisely as the text of Ps-J states. The following timeline illustrates this chronology:

**Figure 1: Timeline of the Period of the Barrenness of Isaac and Rebekah**



Furthermore, that the targumist distinguished between Rebekah's time of pregnancy and her time of childbearing is also demonstrable in that Ps-J Gen 25:24 notes that she was pregnant for two-hundred-seventy days (ושלימו מאתן ושובעין יומי עיבורהא).

The targumist, in other words, distinguished between Rebekah's point of conception, duration of pregnancy, and time of childbearing. Thus v. 21 declares the end of her barrenness and the time of her conception (ואיתעברת רבקה), v. 24 recognizes the duration of her pregnancy (מאתן ושובעין יומי עיבורהא), and v. 26 announces the time of her childbearing (ויצחק בר שיתין שנין כד ילידת יתהום).

According to the reasoning outlined here, then, the insertion עשרין ותרתין שנין demonstrates perfect congruity within the narrative, and, moreover, the insertion reflects the targumist's careful exegesis of the text and his astute attentiveness to the traditions associated with the text.

The question arises, however: Is there any traditional basis for beginning the calculation of the years of Rebekah's barrenness at her birth? Such a tradition is indeed recorded in Genesis Rabbah 63.5:

ויעתר יצחק וגו' ר' יוחנן וריש לקיש ר' יוחנן אמר ששפך תפילות בעושר, וריש לקיש אמר שהפך את הגזירה ולפום בן קריין ליה עתרה דהפיך אדרה. **לנכח אשתו** מלמד שהיה יצחק שטוח כאן והיא שטוחה כאן, אמר לפני הקב"ה רבונו של עולם כל בנים שאתה עתיד ליתן לי יהיו מן הצדקת הזו, אף היא אמרה כן. **כי עקרה היא ר' יודן בשם ר' שמעון בן לקיש עקר** <sup>230</sup> **מטרין לא היה לה וגלף לה הקב"ה עיקר מיטריין.**

*And Isaac entreated, etc.* R. Yohanan and Resh Lakish said: This means that he poured out prayers in abundance. Resh Lakish said: He reversed the decree, and consequently they call it *athra* (i.e., a pitchfork), inasmuch as it turns the grain. *On behalf of/Before (Lenokah) his wife:* This teaches that Isaac was prostrated in one place and that she [Rebekah] was prostrated in another place. He said to the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of the Universe, may all the children that you will give to me be from this righteous woman. She too prayed thus. **Because she was barren: R. Yudan, in the name of R. Shimon ben Lakish, said: She did not have ovaries, so the Holy One, blessed be He, fashioned ovaries for her.**<sup>231</sup>

This reference to Rebekah's ovaries conveys a rabbinic conception—at least according to this midrash—that Rebekah was decreed to be barren since the day of her birth.

Commenting specifically on Ps-J Gen 25:21, Yochanan ben Yochanan Har Habarzel believes the same perspective to be true of Ps-J: “The intent of [Ps-J's expansion] is to show that Rebekah was barren from the time of her birth.”<sup>232</sup> Thus, the tradition behind

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<sup>230</sup> Theodor-Albeck, *Midrash Rabbah*, 63.5 (סג"ה), 2:681. See also Genesis Rabbah 25.1; 47.2; and 53.5, in which midrashim Sarah is also said to lack ovaries and then to have them fashioned by God; and see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:116, n. 117.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. the translation in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:558.

<sup>232</sup> In the original: **ההפך יצחק בצלותיה דעתיה ממה דגזר על אינתתיה ארום עקרא הוות גביה עשרין** וכוונתו להורות שהיתה עקרה מתולדתה ותרתיין שנין. (Yochanan ben Yochanan Har Habarzel, *ספר ינחנו לשלשה*, תרגומים מחמשה חומשי תורה [Warsaw: N. Sokolov, 1902], 44, at: <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=iOkQAQAIAAJ&rdid=book-iOkQAQAIAAJ&rdot=1>).

Ps-J's insertion of עשרין ותרתין שנים appears to be that Rebekah was barren from her birth until age twenty-two, at which age she became pregnant, and about a year thereafter gave birth to Jacob and Esau. In total, therefore, she was barren for twenty-two years.

The final question concerns the function of גביה in the clause ארום עקרא הוות  
גביה עשרין ותרתין שנים “For she was barren, *with respect to him*, for twenty-two years.”<sup>233</sup>  
How could Rebekah have been barren *with Isaac* for *twenty-two* years if the two had been married for only *twenty years* at the time that Rebekah gave birth to Jacob and Esau (according to 25:20 and 25:26)?<sup>234</sup> The proposed answer is to read גביה with the preceding clause ארום עקרא הוות (“for she was barren”), but not with the subsequent phrase עשרין ותרתין שנים (twenty-two years). The translation would read as follows: “For she was barren as he [was barren]. Twenty-two years [was she barren].” The suggestion here is to understand גביה as making a comparison between Isaac and Rebekah specifically with reference to their mutual state of barrenness, not with reference to the duration of their barrenness. The passage, therefore, would indicate that Rebekah was barren just as Isaac was barren, but the specification of twenty-two years would serve to

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<sup>233</sup> Samely translates this as: “for she had been barren because of him for 22 years” (Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 25); Rieder translates this as: “כי עקרה היתה אצלו עשרים ושנים שנה” “for she was barren with him twenty-two years” (Rieder, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל, 54); and Le Déaut renders it as: “qui, avec lui, avait été stérile pendant vingt-deux ans” “for, along with him, she was barren for twenty-two years” (italics original; Le Déaut, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 245).

<sup>234</sup> See Jastrow, “גב, גבא,” in *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 203; Sokoloff, “גב,” in *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, 118.



describe further Rebekah's barrenness without making any statement regarding the duration of Isaac's barrenness.

This reading finds support in the overall structure of the verse and the targumist's attempt to create symmetry between the barrenness of Rebekah and the barrenness of Isaac. While the Hebrew narrative imagines only Rebekah to be barren, the targumist expanded the verse to indicate that Isaac too was barren.<sup>235</sup> Making this observation, Yochanan ben Yochanan Har Habarzel suggests: "It seems that it was difficult for Jonathan to explain 'he responded to him' [ויעתר לו] rather than 'he responded to her' [ויעתר לה].... So he interpreted 'he responded to him' to be a comment about Isaac himself ... to indicate that he too was barren."<sup>236</sup> The following block diagram demonstrates the targumist's attempt to create this symmetry in the verse.

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<sup>235</sup> As Westermann observes, the key role of Isaac in the MT version of the narrative is that of the intercessor for Rebekah. Westermann writes, "The result of Isaac's intercession is that Rebekah becomes pregnant.... It is in accord with patriarchal religion in that the father is the intercessor" (Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 412). See also Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: Norton, 1996), 126, nn. 21–23.

<sup>236</sup> In the original: נ"ל כי להיונתן קשה לפרש "ויעתר לו" ולא לה. כי זהו פחיתות גדול לומר על אמנו רבקה. לכן הוא מפרש "לנכח אשתו" לא כפירש"י. ששניהם התפללו זה עומד בזוית זו ומתפלל. וזו עומדת בזוית זו ומתפללת. רק הוא מפרש "לנכח אשתו" לתקנת אשתו כשיטתו בשופטים (יח, ו) "נכח ה' דרככם" מתרגם "אתקן ה' אורחתכון" כי רבקה היתה צריכה תיקון גדול.... ומפרש "ויעתר לו" על יצחק עצמו וכמו יאמר הבעה"ט "כי עקרה היא. ספר ינחנו לשלשה תרגומים (Yochanan ben Yochanan Har Habarzel, הוא כתיב לומר לך. שאף הוא הוה עקר" (43–44). For additional remarks on Isaac's barrenness, see Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim's Classic Commentary: Bereishis*, 208–9. For a discussion of the meaning of עתר, see Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 175; and GKC §121f.

**Table 4: Block Diagram of Genesis 25:21**

<u>Introduction</u>	ואזל יצחק לטוור פולחנא אתר דכפתיה אבוי
<u>Clause 1: Focus on Rebekah</u>	והפך יצחק בצלותיה דעתיה ממה דגזר על אינתתיה ארום עקרא הוות גביה עשרין ותרתינ שנין
<u>Clause 2: Focus on Isaac</u>	ואתהפיך בגיניה דעתיה ממה דגזר עליה דאף הוא הוה עקר
<u>Conclusion: Comments on Isaac and Rebekah</u>	ואתרווח [יצחק] ואיתעברת רבקה אינתתיה

As the diagram indicates, Clause 1 records the circumstances surrounding Rebekah, while Clause 2 records the circumstances surrounding Isaac. The interpolation of the preposition *גביה* raises the following question then: In inserting this preposition, did the targumist intend it to refer to the *state of barrenness* of Rebekah and Isaac ( ארום עקרא ) (הוות) or to the *twenty-two year duration* of the barren state (עשרין ותרתינ שנין)? Inasmuch as the focus of the entire verse is on the *state* of the barrenness of Isaac and Rebekah (rather than on the *duration* of their barrenness), and, moreover, inasmuch as the focus of Clause 1 is on the barrenness specifically of Rebekah (rather than on that of Isaac), the phrase עשרין ותרתינ שנין should be read in distinction from גביה, and should be understood to be providing further information specifically about Rebekah, not about both Rebekah and Isaac. In effect, the particular function of גביה in the verse is to demonstrate that Rebekah was not the only barren person in this relationship, but that Isaac was barren as

well. The focus of גבייה is not on the years of barrenness, but on the status of barrenness of Isaac and Rebekah. Thus, although the syntax is difficult, the meaning is discernible: Rebekah was barren along with Isaac, but not necessarily for the same amount of time.

In the end, the coherence of the narrative is yet again ascertained once the text of Ps-J is informed by the tradition that lies behind the text. Once the reader takes into account the tradition that Rebekah was barren since her birth until age twenty-two (when she became pregnant with Jacob and Esau), Ps-J's remark that Rebekah's barrenness lasted for twenty-two years makes good sense. While Ps-J's reference to the twenty-two years of barrenness refers specifically to Rebekah, the text leaves implicit that Isaac was barren for twenty years, which number is derived from the calculation of the numbers mentioned at 25:20 (where Isaac is forty when he marries Rebekah) and at 25:26 (where Isaac is sixty when Jacob and Esau are born). In this way, the narrative informs the audience that both Isaac and Rebekah were barren, and that Isaac was barren for twenty years, while Rebekah was barren for twenty-two years. The targumist expected his audience to make the connection between his expansion and the traditions he was assuming about Isaac and Rebekah; and with this expectation met, the narrative reads with logical consistency and coherence.

#### **4.2.3 Genesis 35:29 vs. 37:35**

The apparent conflict between Ps-J Gen 35:29 and 37:35 consists of the narrative's announcement that Isaac died at 35:29 and then Ps-J's later reference to Isaac as alive at 37:35. At the end of the Jacob Cycle (Gen 25–36) and shortly before the beginning of the Joseph narrative (Gen 37–50), Gen 35:29 explicitly states that Isaac

died. Only a few chapters later, however, at 37:35, the targumist of Ps-J incorporates an expansion into the text in which Isaac (alongside Jacob and the family) mourns for the death of Joseph.<sup>237</sup>

### Gen 35:29

MT וַיִּגָּע יִצְחָק וַיָּמָת וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל-עַמּוּי זָקֵן וּשְׁבַע יָמִים וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ עֶשָׂו וַיַּעֲקֹב בְּנָיו:<sup>29</sup>  
 NRSV <sup>29</sup> And Isaac breathed his last; he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Ps-J וַאִיתְנַגִּיד יִצְחָק וּמִית וַאֲתַכְנַשׁ לְעַמִּיהָ סִיב וּשְׁבַע יוֹמִין וּקְבְּרוּ יִתִּיה עֶשָׂו וַיַּעֲקֹב בְּנָיו<sup>29</sup>

Ps-J <sup>29</sup> And Isaac expired and died, and was gathered to his people, old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

### Gen 37:35

MT וַיִּקְמוּ כָּל-בְּנָיו וְכָל-בְּנֹתָיו לְנַחֲמוֹ וַיִּמְאֵן לְהִתְנַחֵם וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי-אֶרְדּ אֶל-בְּנֵי אָבִי וְשָׂאֵלָה וַיִּבֶד אֹתוֹ אָבִיו:<sup>35</sup>

NRSV <sup>35</sup> All his sons and all his daughters sought to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning. Thus his father bewailed him.”<sup>מִפְּלֵ</sup>

Ps-J וּקְמוּ כָּל בְּנָיו וְכָל נְשֵׁי בְנָיו וַאֲזָלוּ לְמַנְחָמָא לֵיהּ וּסְרִיב לְקַבְּלָא תְנַחוּמִין וַאֲמַר אַרוֹם אֵיחוֹת לוֹת בְּרִי כַד אֲבִילְנָא לְבִי קְבוּרְתָא וּבְכָה יִתִּיה בְּרַם יִצְחָק אֲבוּי<sup>35</sup>

Ps-J <sup>35</sup> All his sons and all *his sons' wives* arose and went to console him, but he refused to *accept consolation*, and said, “No, I will go down mourning to my son in *the grave*.” And his father *Isaac also* wept for him.

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<sup>237</sup> Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion. Speiser sees a contradiction between Gen 35:28–29 and ch. 27: “There still remains the chronological discrepancy between the present notice of Isaac’s death at the age of 180 (vs. 28), and the account in 27, according to which Isaac was all but dead before Jacob ever set out for Haran. Yet on the basis of 25:26 and 26:34 (both from *P*), Isaac would have had to survive that deathbed scene by some 80 years” (Speiser, *Genesis*, 274–75). Westermann too states that there is a discrepancy here and writes, “The only explanation is that there are two different conceptions of the patriarchal story” (Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 557). And Skinner writes: “In *P*’s chronology, Jacob at his father’s death had reached the age of 120 years (cf. 35:28 with 25:26); he was 40 years old when he set out for Paddan Aram. The interval of 80 years has to be divided between his sojourn with Laban and his subsequent residence with Isaac; but in what proportions we have no data to determine” (Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 428). See also Gunkel, *Genesis*, 374. In accord with this analysis, Friedman attributes Gen 27:1–45 to *J* and 35:28–29 to *P*; in addition, he attributes 37:35 to *J* (Friedman, *Bible with Sources Revealed*, 74–76; 90; and 95).

The targumist (following Genesis Rabbah 84.22 to Gen 37:35) introduced Isaac into the narrative on account of any one or a combination of the following three reasons.<sup>238</sup> First, the unclear antecedents of the personal pronouns in the clause **וַיִּבֶךְ אֹתוֹ** **וַיִּבֶךְ אֹתוֹ אָבִיו** make the entire clause ambiguous. Who wept? For whom? Which father? And whose father? Sarna remarks: “The slight ambiguity of the pronouns gave rise to the notion that Isaac wept over his grief-stricken son Jacob.”<sup>239</sup> Second, the assumption of rabbinic exegesis is that Scripture does not include superfluous text; in other words, there is no gratuitous repetition. However, as Schmerler observes, in the clause **וַיִּבֶךְ אֹתוֹ אָבִיו** the term **אָבִיו** appears to be superfluous inasmuch as v. 34 already states that Jacob was the one mourning: **וַיִּקְרַע יַעֲקֹב שְׂמֹלְתָיו**. As a result, the term **אָבִיו** needed to carry distinct significance for the targumist, and the targumist concluded that this was a reference to Isaac.<sup>240</sup> Third, while the entire family is present in the scene as mourning, Isaac is not

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<sup>238</sup> Genesis Rabbah 84.22 to Gen 37:35 (Theodor-Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 84.22 [כב”פד], 2:1028) reads:

**וַיִּבֶךְ אֹתוֹ אָבִיו** זה יצחק, ר' לוי ור' סימון ר' לוי אמר אצלו היה בוכה וכיון שהיה יוצא מאצלו היה רוחץ וסך ואוכל ושותה, ולמה לא גילה לו אמר הקב"ה לא גילה לו ואני אגלה לו, ר' סימון אמר על שם כל המתאבלים עליו מתאבלים עמו.

*And his father wept for him.* This is Isaac. R. Levi and R. Simon discussed this. R. Levi said: In his presence, he wept; but when he would leave him, he would wash up, anoint himself, eat, and drink. And why did he not reveal [it] to him? [He said to himself]: The Holy One, blessed be he, did not reveal [it] to him, but I will reveal [it] to him? R. Simon said: [He wept with him] because whenever anyone mourns for another, you must mourn with him.

<sup>239</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 263.

<sup>240</sup> Schmerler writes: *ופי' אביו של בנו הנז' בכ' . הוא מיותר . שהי' די בשיאמר ויבך אותו כב' וימאן ויאמר* (Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן: שמות*, 274). As already noted above, concerning rabbinic assumptions of Scripture, Samely writes: “The presuppositions of the great variety of operations and exegetical ideas that are employed in accounting for the wording of MT can be grouped around three concepts: Scriptural text is *coherent*; it is *complete*; and it is *relevant*. These three features are the ones in whose respect the text is accounted for by the targumic additions”; and in elaborating on the concept of *relevance*, he explains: “The

explicitly mentioned and is seemingly absent in the rendition of the source-text. But according to Genesis Rabbah 84.22, a father was obligated to mourn alongside his son in a mourning rite.<sup>241</sup> Ps-J's transformation of the text makes the mourning scene for Joseph proper—Jacob's children mourn with their father Jacob, and Jacob's father Isaac mourns with his son Jacob. However, these three reasons are applicable only if Ps-J is assuming that Isaac is alive. The question then arises: Does this assumption that Isaac is alive at 37:35 contradict the statement at Gen 35:29 that Isaac had already expired?

In his comments on Ps-J Gen 37:35, Maher addresses this very question and remarks: “Despite Gen 35:29, which says that ‘Isaac breathed his last,’ Isaac was still thought to be alive. *The haggadist can ignore chronology.*”<sup>242</sup> In other words, the targumist appears to disregard chronology here in the sense that inasmuch as Gen 35 precedes Gen 37, Isaac should have died (35:29) before Joseph was sold (37:13–36). However, the targumist of Ps-J violated this sequence of events by incorporating Isaac into the Joseph narrative. Sifre Numbers 64 discusses this phenomenon of the narrative's occasional disregard for the sequence of events, and articulates the following principle:

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interpretation of speech units under the assumption of relevance seems to consist basically of operations which show that there are no superfluous words in Scripture. Repetition is the most obvious case of such apparent irrelevance” (italics original; Samely, *Interpretation to Speech*, 171, and 173; but also see 124–28, 134–35, 169–74).

<sup>241</sup> As noted above, Genesis Rabbah 84.22 (to Gen 37:35) states: ר' סימון אמר על שם כל המתאבלים: עליו מתאבלים עמו “R. Simon said: [He wept with him] because whenever anyone mourns for another, you must mourn with him.” Freedman and Simon explain this as follows: “Thus: a father must mourn for the death of his son; when his son is in mourning for another, he (the father) must mourn with him. Since Jacob had to mourn for Joseph, Isaac had to mourn with him” (Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:786, n. 4).

<sup>242</sup> Italics mine. Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 127, n. 33. Cf. similar comments in Le Déaut, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 247, n. 23.

אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה “There is neither anterior nor posterior in the Torah.”<sup>243</sup> This is to say, the narrational order of events in the biblical text does not always line up with the linear chronology of the lives of the characters; the figures may be referred to as being alive even after they are said to have already died. Bowker explains: “Events [in the Bible] are not always told in strict sequence but are sometimes anticipated if an earlier mention seems more appropriate.”<sup>244</sup>

With respect to the two passages in question, Gen 35:29 and 37:35, the reasoning goes as follows: though Isaac was said to have died at Gen 35:29 (in a passage that precedes the sale of Joseph at Gen 37), in fact, Isaac died sometime after the sale of Joseph (that is, after Gen 37); yet it was necessary for the narrative to mention the death of Isaac at Gen 35 in order to achieve a particular literary function—perhaps to form a literary transition that would advance the narrative from recounting the events of the family of Isaac to recounting the events of the family of Jacob. With the death of Isaac at Gen 35 (and a genealogy at Gen 36), the narrative is made ready to shift focus to Jacob’s family at the outset of Gen 37.<sup>245</sup> Amit explains, “The biblical story, which claims to be a

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<sup>243</sup> See Menahem Y. Kahana, *מהדורה מבוארת: ספרי במדבר* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2011), 1:157. For a discussion of this interpretive principle, see Heschel, *Heavenly Torah*, 241–42; Zakovitch, “Inner-biblical Interpretation,” 42–43; idem, “Juxtaposition in the Abraham Cycle,” 509–24; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 172; Frenkel, *מדרש ואגדה*, 1:176. Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., *תורת חיים: בראשית*, 2:128 (קכח) on Gen 35:29; Le Déaut, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 247, n. 23: Le Déaut’s formulation of this principle is: “Dans l’Écriture, il n’y a ni antérieur ni postérieur”; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 242–43; and for an example of this phenomenon in Ps-J Exod 2:21, see Maher, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Exodus 2.21,” 96–97, and see 97, n. 74. Samely, however, remarks: “The relevance for targum of the rabbinical rule that there is ‘no before and after in Scripture’, in its often found interpretation as licence to alter the sequence of events, has also to be questioned. It seems rather the other way round; a different order is indicated *in order to solve what is perceived as a difficult problem of scriptural consistency*” (italics mine; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 166, n. 26).

<sup>244</sup> Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 243; and see Alter, *Genesis*, 201.

<sup>245</sup> This appears to be Westermann’s perspective of chapter 35 as a whole: “The transition from the patriarchal period to the beginnings of the people of Israel is heralded in ch. 35: Israel is the new name of

historical narrative, is naturally bound to the chronological sequence, yet nevertheless, it contains some deviations from it, and they are always significant and functional.”<sup>246</sup>

Demonstrating limited commitment to this literary construction of the narrative, the early exegetes—the midrashist as well as the targumist of Ps-J—were able to transcend the biblical sequence of events and to interact with the components of the narrative in an interpretative manner.

However, as already insinuated in the discussion above, while the targumist overlooked the narrational order of events, he nonetheless adhered to another chronology in the narrative—the chronology of the years of the life of Isaac. Explicit biblical mention of the specific ages of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph in different contexts of Genesis sustains the targumist’s incorporation of Isaac into the Joseph narrative. The targumist, in keeping with Genesis Rabbah 84.22, took note of the fact that the calculation of the ages of these figures would render Isaac alive when Joseph was sold into Egypt.<sup>247</sup> Therefore,

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the 12 tribes of Israel, and the promises made to Jacob in conclusion (vv. 11-12) are the two that are determinative for the people of Israel, namely, increase and the land (so in Deut.)” (Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 557). With more focus on the immediate context of the passage, Sarna remarks: “This report of Isaac’s death does not appear in chronological order. It is placed here because it gives the opportunity to reintroduce Esau, thus providing a connective with the next chapter” (Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 246).

<sup>246</sup> Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 110, and see 103–14; Bar Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (New York: T & T Clark, 1989), 141–84; Ska, “*Our Fathers Have Told Us*”: *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 9–12.

<sup>247</sup> Upon calculating the years of Isaac’s life, Rashi states: מכירתו של יוסף קדמה למיתתו של יצחק “The sale of Joseph preceded the death of Isaac by 12 years” (Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., *בראשית*: תורת חיים, 2:128 [קבח]). The book of Yashar too conceives of Isaac as being alive during the sale of Joseph in that it places Isaac’s death after the episode in which Joseph interprets the dreams of the baker and cupbearer. After concluding this episode in chapter 46, chapter 47 begins with: “And Isaac the son of Abraham was still living in those days in the land of Canaan” (Albinus Alcuin, *Book of Jasher*, trans. Paul Tice [Escondido, CA: Book Tree, 2000], 146); Stemmerger and Strack suppose the date for *Sefer HaYashar* to be 11<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> c. in Stemmerger and Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 339. See Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 428, who attributes this chronology of Isaac’s life to P; and for further discussion of these calculations, see Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 246, n. 17; 254–55; 263; 368, n. 17.



according to this chronology, the targumist's reference to Isaac as alive at Ps-J Gen 37:35 after he was said to have died at 35:29 poses no problem for and produces no contradiction within the narrative of the Targum.

The following analysis serves to demonstrate the age of Isaac in relation to the events within the narrative (for reference, see chart below).

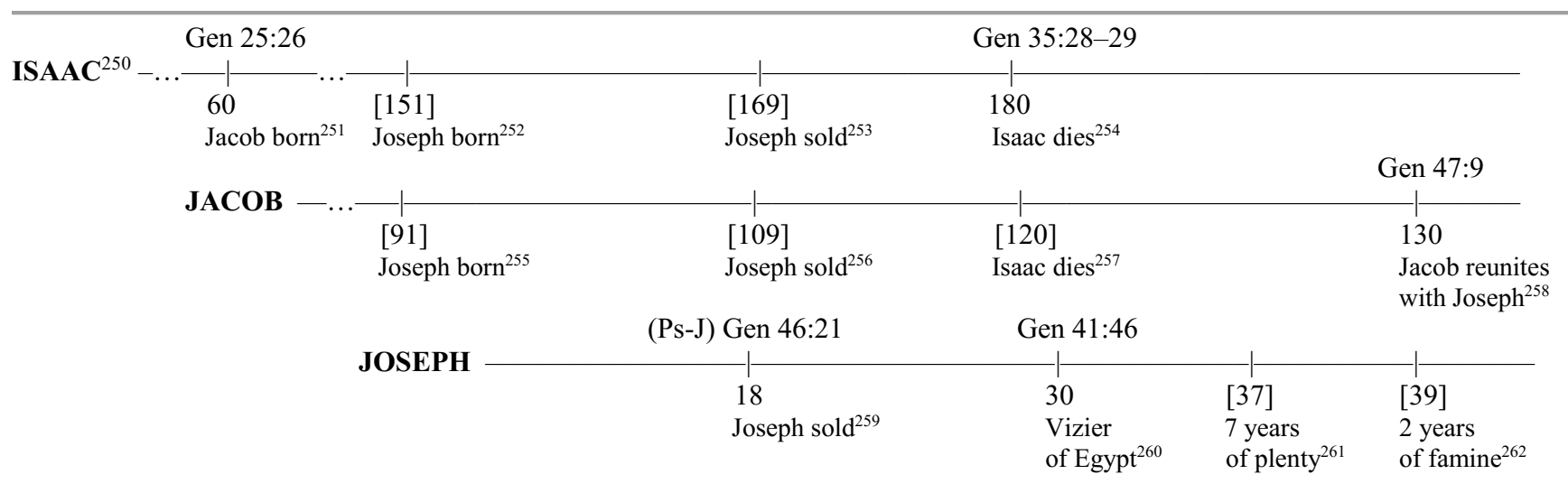
- 1) First, Gen 41:46 states that Joseph was 30 years old when he became vizier over Egypt. After seven years of plenty (Gen 41:29–30), Joseph was 37 years old; and after two more years of famine (Gen 45:6), Joseph was 39 years old. It is at this point—when Joseph was 39 years old—that the entirety of Joseph's family arrived in Egypt to be reunited with him (Gen 45:6).
- 2) Second, when, along with his family, Jacob arrived in Egypt—when Joseph was 39 years old—Jacob told Pharaoh that he was 130 years old (Gen 47:9). If Jacob was 130 years old when Joseph was 39 years old, the difference between these two ages reveals that Jacob was 91 years old when Joseph was born ( $130 - 39 = 91$ ).
- 3) Third, if Jacob was 91 years old when Joseph was born, then a simple addition of 18 years (which is when, according to Ps-J Gen 46:21, Joseph was sold) indicates that Jacob was 109 years old when Joseph was sold to travelers going down to Egypt.<sup>248</sup>
- 4) Fourth, the question remains: was Isaac alive when Joseph was sold? Gen 25:26 states that Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born. This means that the age difference between Isaac and Jacob amounts to 60 years. To discover Isaac's age when Joseph was sold, then, we add 60 (the age difference between Isaac and Jacob) to 109 (Jacob's age when Joseph was sold). Thus, were Isaac to have been alive when Joseph was sold, he would have been 169 years old.<sup>249</sup>
- 5) Finally, did Isaac live to see 169 years of life? Gen 35:28–29 states: “<sup>28</sup> Now the days of Isaac were *one hundred eighty years*. <sup>29</sup> And Isaac breathed his last; he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.” Therefore, according to this chronology Isaac was indeed alive when Joseph was sold. He was 169 years old.

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<sup>248</sup> If, on the other hand, one considers Joseph to have been 17 when he was sold (so Rashi; Genesis Rabbah 84:22; cf. Gen 37:2), then Jacob would have been 108 when Joseph was sold.

<sup>249</sup> Or, Isaac would have been 168 if Joseph was 17 when he was sold.

**Figure 2: Timeline of the Lives of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph**



<sup>250</sup> The numerals without brackets signify the numbers that are stated in the text of the Hebrew Bible and the text of Ps-J; the numerals within brackets signify calculated deductions based on the details of the narrative.

<sup>251</sup> Gen 25:26: "...Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them."

<sup>252</sup> If Isaac was age 60 when Jacob was born (Gen 25:26), and Jacob was age 91 when Joseph was born (see n. 255 below), then Isaac was age 151 when Joseph was born (60+91=151).

<sup>253</sup> If Isaac was 151 when Joseph was born, then (18 years later; Ps-J Gen 46:21) Isaac was 169 when Joseph was sold to Egypt (151+18=169).

<sup>254</sup> Gen 35:28-39: "<sup>28</sup> Now the days of Isaac were one hundred eighty years. <sup>29</sup> And Isaac breathed his last; he died and was gathered to his people..."

<sup>255</sup> When Jacob reunites with Joseph, Jacob is 130 (Gen 47:9). At this time, Joseph is 39 (he was 30 when he began to serve Pharaoh as vizier of Egypt; add seven years of plenty; add 2 years of famine; and the result is 39). If Jacob was 130 when Joseph was 39, then Jacob was 91 when Joseph was born (130-39=91).

<sup>256</sup> If Jacob was 91 when Joseph was born (see n. 255 above), then Jacob was 109 when Joseph was sold at age 18 (91+18=109).

<sup>257</sup> If Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born (Gen 25:26) and 180 when he (Isaac) died (Gen 35:28-29), then Jacob was 120 when Isaac died (180-60=120).

<sup>258</sup> Gen 47:9: "Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my earthly sojourn are one hundred thirty..."

<sup>259</sup> Ps-J Gen 46:21: "Huppim, because at the time that he [Joseph] was separated from him [Benjamin] he [Joseph] was eighteen years..."; but cf. MT Gen 37:2 (so Ps-J Gen 37:2): "... Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers."

<sup>260</sup> Gen 41:46: "Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

<sup>261</sup> Gen 41:29-30: "<sup>29</sup> There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. <sup>30</sup> After them there will arise seven years of famine..."

<sup>262</sup> Gen 45:6: "For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest."

This analysis demonstrates that the targumist's incorporation of this tradition into his rendition of the narrative was not thoughtless, but, in fact, scrupulous. For while the targumist overlooked the literary function of the pronouncement of Isaac's death at Gen 35:29 in the broader scheme of the plot, he based his expansion on a tradition that regarded the chronology of Isaac's life.

For the targumist, the chronology of the life of Isaac took precedence over the narrational sequence of events laid out in the Hebrew text; and because of the implications of the chronology of Isaac's life—that Isaac was still alive when Joseph was sold—the targumist interpreted יִצְחָק to be a reference to Isaac. According to this chronology, no actual contradiction between 35:29 and 37:35 exists. Samely's general point on targumic exegesis is applicable here: “[T]he new targumic connexions and the net of relationships between events and actions in MT are, in TT [the Targumic Text], still *chronological*, i.e. they do not explode the framework given by the biblical story as told in MT.”<sup>263</sup> In effect, while the sequence of events is upset, the coherence of the narrative of Ps-J remains unimpaired. The targumist's expectation is that the audience be familiar with, or seek out, the details of the narrative—even to the point of giving close attention to the ages of the characters in the biblical stories. Therefore, whether or not the audience fully experiences the coherence in this text is contingent on whether or not the audience successfully fulfills the readerly expectation for this portion of Ps-J.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Italics original. Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 172.

<sup>264</sup> On the role of the audience in the task of discerning coherence within a text, see Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 16; Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 258; Tanskanen, *Collaborating towards Coherence*, 20; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 41.

#### 4.2.4 Genesis 25:8 vs. 25:29

Another, and very brief, example of similar nature further reinforces the contention that the targumist of Ps-J was scrupulous in his reproduction of the biblical text, even if at first blush the translated and expanded text appears to manifest a contradiction. In addition to the apparent contradiction between 35:29 and 37:35, Maher points to a similar conflict between Ps-J Gen 25:8 and 25:29 as regards Ps-J's treatment of the narrative's sequence of events. The issue with 25:29, according to Maher, is that the verse places the event in which Esau sells his birthright to Jacob on the day that Abraham died; however, the narrative had already recorded Abraham's death many verses earlier (at 25:7–8), even prior to the narration of the birth of Esau and Jacob (at 25:19–28).<sup>265</sup> Since the targumist did not make explicit the fact that he imagined the death of Abraham to have taken place *after* the birth of Jacob and Esau—even though he reiterated the mention of Abraham's death at 25:29, that is, after Jacob and Esau are said to have been born at 25:19–28—the narrative appears to present an inconsistency. Thus, once again, Maher concludes: “[T]he haggadist can ignore chronology.”<sup>266</sup> Le Déaut also notes this apparent tension and comments: “The death of Abraham is related at Gen 25:8. But the haggadah constantly upsets the chronology, following the principle in *Sifre to Numbers* 9.1 [Piskah 64] ... that ‘In Scripture, there is neither anterior nor posterior in the

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<sup>265</sup> Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion. See Genesis Rabbah 63.11 which records the same tradition, and cf. b. B. Bathra 16b.

<sup>266</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 90, n. 38, and cf. p. 127, n. 33. For a discussion of time in the biblical narrative, see Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 103–14; and Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 141–84.

Torah” (אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה).<sup>267</sup> According to this opinion, therefore, Ps-J violated the chronology of the narrative here by associating Abraham’s death with the episode in which Esau sells his birthright, an event that, according to the layout of the narrative, seems to have taken place *after* Abraham had already died. The passages in question read:

### Gen 25:8

- MT וַיִּגָּע וַיָּמָת אַבְרָהָם בְּשֵׂיבָה טוֹבָה זָקֵן וְשָׂבַע וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל-עַמּוּיוֹ: <sup>8</sup>
- NRSV <sup>8</sup> Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.
- Ps-J וַאֲתַנְגִּיד וּמֵית אַבְרָהָם בְּשִׁיבוֹ טַבָּא סִיב וְשַׁבַּע כֹּל טוֹבָא בְּרַם יִשְׁמַעְאֵל עַבְדִּי <sup>8</sup>  
תְּתוּבָא בְּיוֹמוֹי וּבִתְרֵי כֵן אֲתַכְנַשׁ לְעַמִּיָּה
- Ps-J <sup>8</sup> Abraham expired and died in a good old age, old and satisfied *with everything [being] good; even Ishmael had repented in his days; and then* he was gathered to his people.

### Gen 25:29

- MT וַיֵּזֶד יַעֲקֹב נֹזֵד וַיָּבֵא עֵשׂוֹ מִן-הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עֵיִף: <sup>29</sup>
- NRSV <sup>29</sup> Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished.
- Ps-J וּבַהֲוֹא יוֹמָא דְמֵית אַבְרָהָם בְּשִׁיל יַעֲקֹב תְּבַשְׁלִי דְטְלוֹפְחֵי וְאִזְל לְנַחְמָא לְאַבּוּי <sup>29</sup>  
וְאַתָּא עֵשׂוֹ מִן בְּרָא וְהוּא מְשַׁלְּהֵי אַרוּם חַמֶּשׁ עֵבִירֵן עֵבֵר בַּהֲוֹא יוֹמָא פְּלַח  
פּוֹלְחָנָא נּוֹכְרָאָה שְׁפַךְ אַדְמָא זְכִיָּא וְעַל עַל עוֹלִימְתָא מְאַרְשָׁה וְכַפֵּר בַּחֵי עֵלְמָא  
דְּאַתִּי וּבִזָּה יֵת בְּכִירוּתָא
- Ps-J <sup>29</sup> *The day Abraham died, Jacob boiled dishes of lentils and went to comfort his father. Esau came from the country, and he was exhausted because he had committed five transgressions that day: he had practiced idolatry; he had shed innocent blood; he had gone in to a*

<sup>267</sup> In the original: “La mort d’Abraham est racontée à Gen. 25,8. Mais l’aggadah bouleverse constamment la chronologie, suivant le principe de *Sifré Nombr.* 9,1 ... que ‘dans l’Écriture, il n’y a ni antérieur ni postérieur’” (Le Déaut, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 247, n. 23). See Kahana, ספרי 2:128, תורת חיים: בראשית, ed., in Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., (בהעלתך ט, א) 1:157, במדבר: מהדורה מבוארת (קכח) on Gen 35:29; and Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 242–43.

*betrothed maiden; he had denied the life of the world to come, and had despised the birthright.*

As in the case discussed above, once the chronology of the actual years of Abraham's life is taken into consideration in relation to the lives of Jacob and Esau, the targumist's association of these two events and his incorporation of Abraham's death at 25:29 poses no problem whatsoever.

The following analysis demonstrates this point: Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born (Gen 21:5); Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob and Esau were born (Gen 25:26), at which point Abraham was 160 years old (100+60=160); and Abraham died when he was 175 years old (Gen 25:7–8), that is, fifteen years after Jacob and Esau were born. Thus, inasmuch as Jacob and Esau were born when Abraham was 160 years old, the narrative leaves a period of 15 years during which Esau might have sold his birthright to Jacob (Gen 25:29), before Abraham died at age 175.<sup>268</sup> According to the imagination of the targumist of Ps-J, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob on the day that Abraham died (at age 175), which means that Jacob and Esau would have been fifteen years old when this event transpired. This layout of the ages of the characters is entirely conceivable and internally coherent. With this chronology in the background of Ps-J Gen 25:29, the narrative proves to be perfectly coherent. As stated above, then, in transcending the sequence of events in the biblical narrative the targumist was not handling the biblical narrative unscrupulously. The targumist's concern, instead, to attend to the details of chronology as seen in the cases of Isaac (Ps-J Gen 37:35) and Abraham (25:29) should

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<sup>268</sup> See Speiser, *Genesis*, 189; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 174; Genesis Rabbah 62.6.

serve as testimony to the targumist's concern for and interaction with the detail in the narrative.

#### 4.2.5 Genesis 37:2 vs. 46:21

In the Joseph narrative, Ps-J Gen 37:2 and 46:21 (itself a reference to ch. 37) appear to present conflicting information as to Joseph's age in the opening scenes of the story. At 37:2, Joseph is said to be seventeen years old, with no indication that he ever becomes older throughout the chapter, even when he is sold to a caravan of travelers heading down to Egypt; but in an expansion at Ps-J Gen 46:21, Joseph is said to have been eighteen years old when he was separated from his family.<sup>269</sup> The question, then, arises: Was Joseph seventeen or eighteen years old when he went out from his home to find his brothers and ultimately to be sold to the travelers on their way to Egypt?

##### Gen 37:2

MT אֵלֶּה | תְּלֻדֹת יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף בֶּן־שִׁבְע־עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת־אֶחָיו בְּצֹאן וְהוּא  
נָעַר אֶת־בְּנֵי בְלָהָה וְאֶת־בְּנֵי זִלְפָּה נָשִׂי אֲבִיו וַיָּבֵא יוֹסֵף אֶת־דְּבָרָם רָעָה אֶל־  
אֲבִיהֶם:

NRSV <sup>2</sup> This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

Ps-J אֵילִין זֹרְעִית יַעֲקֹב יוֹסֵף בֶּן־שִׁבְעֵיָן שָׁנִין הוּא בְּמִיפְקִיָּה מִן־בֵּית מִדְּרָשָׁא וְהוּא  
טְלָה מִתְרַבֵּי עִם בְּנֵי בְלָהָה וְעִם בְּנֵי זִלְפָּה נְשִׂיא דְּאֲבִי וְאִיִּתִּי יוֹסֵף יֵת טִיפִּיהוּן  
טִיבִיהוּן בִּישׁ דְּחַמְנֹן אַכְלִין בִּישְׂרָא דְּתַלְיֵשׁ מִן־חִיּוּא חִיּוּא יֵת אֹודְנִיא וִית דְּנַבִּיּא  
וְאֵתָא וְתַנִּי לֹות אֲבוּהוּן

Ps-J <sup>2</sup> These are the descendants of Jacob. **Joseph was seventeen years old when he went forth from the schoolhouse.** He was a youth brought up with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought an evil report about them, *for he had seen them*

<sup>269</sup> Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion.

*eating flesh that had been torn from a living animal, the ears and the tails. And he came and told their father.*

**Gen 46:21**

MT וּבְנֵי בְנִימִן בֶּלַע וְכָר וְאַשְׁבֵּל גֵּרָא וְנַעֲמָן אַחֵי וְרֹאשׁ מִפִּים וְחַפִּים וְאַרְדִּי: <sup>21</sup>

NRSV <sup>21</sup> The children of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

Ps-J וּבְנֵי דְבְנִימִין עֶשְׂרָה וְשׁוּמְהוֹן עַל פְּרִישׁוֹתָא דְיוֹסֵף אַחוּי בְלַע דַּאֲתַבְלַע מִינִיה <sup>21</sup>

וּבְכָר דְהוּא בּוֹכְרָא דַאימִיה וְאַשְׁבֵּל דְהַלִּיךְ בְּשִׁבְיַתָּא גֵרָא דַאיִתְגַר בְּאַרְעָא

נּוֹכְרָאָה וְנַעֲמָן דְהוּה נְעִים וְיִקִּיר אַחֵי דְהוּא אַחוּי בְרַ אַימִיה וְרֹאשׁ דְהוּא רִישׁ

בְּבֵית אַבּוּי מוֹפִים דַּאֲזַדְבֵן בְּמוֹף חוֹפִים דְבּוֹזְמָן דַּאֲתַפְרֵשׁ מִינִיה הוּה בְרַ תְּמַנִּיסָר

שְׁנַי וְחוּזָא לְכִילַת הִילּוּלָא וְאַרְדִּי דְנַחַת לְמַצְרַיִם

Ps-J <sup>21</sup> The sons of Benjamin were ten, and their names were [given] according to the wonders that befell Joseph his brother: Bela, because he was swallowed up from him; Becher, because he was the first-born of his mother; Ashbel, because he went into captivity; Gera, because he sojourned in a foreign land; Naaman, because he was pleasant and honorable; Ehi, because he was his brother, his mother's son; Rosh, because he was at the head of his father's house; Muppim, because he was sold in Memphis; **Huppim, because at the time that he [Joseph] was separated from him [Benjamin] he [Joseph] was eighteen years old and ready for the wedding canopy;** Ard, because he went down to Egypt.

The element in the source-text of Gen 46:21 that triggered the targumic expansion is the name of Benjamin's son חַפִּים. Since חַפִּים sounds like the term חוּפָה—a key component in the marriage ceremony, which the targumist associated with age eighteen, in accordance with rabbinic tradition (see *Pirke Aboth* 5:24)—the targumist exegeted the age of Joseph to have been eighteen at his separation from Benjamin (i.e., at the sale of Joseph).<sup>270</sup> And this, in effect, produced the appearance of a contradiction in the Joseph

<sup>270</sup> See R. Travers Herford, ed., *Pirke Aboth: The Ethics of the Talmud: Sayings of the Fathers* (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), 144. Genesis Rabbah 94.8 (to Gen 46:21), however, has a different midrash on Huppim: וחפִּים שלא ראה בחופתי ואני לא ראיתי בחופתי “*Huppim*: he did not see my marriage



narrative. The force of this apparent contradiction, however, resides in the assumption that the events recounted at Gen 37 all transpired in Joseph's seventeenth year. For 37:2 explicitly states that Joseph was seventeen years old, while nothing overt in the same chapter suggests that he turned eighteen by the time he was sold. But a question arises: Is this assumption warranted, or are there textual grounds for rejecting it?<sup>271</sup>

To be sure, this impression that Joseph is seventeen years old all throughout the chapter is not unreasonable; nothing in the chapter indicates that Joseph might have turned eighteen by the time he was sold. This perspective certainly proves true for the ancient exegetes. First, Genesis Rabbah 84.20 to Gen 37:34 concludes that Jacob mourned for Joseph "twenty-two years," which implies that Joseph was seventeen when he was separated from Jacob and from the family. For if separated at age seventeen and reunited at age thirty-nine, then the period of separation lasted twenty-two years.<sup>272</sup> Thus

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canopy (*huppah*) and I did not see his marriage canopy (*huppah*)" (cf. Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:874).

<sup>271</sup> As regards the meaning of *דבזמן דאתפרש*, a question arises: Does this refer to the specific point in time at which Joseph was separated from his family when he was sold at the end of Gen 37, or does this refer to the prolonged period of time during which he was separated from his family, in the sense of not being with his family while he was in Egypt? The term *אתפרש* can be used in either sense. At Ps-J Gen 43:34, a form of *אתפרש* is clearly used to refer to the moment of separation; at Ps-J Deut 5:30, a form of *אתפרש* is clearly used to refer to a prolonged period of time characterized by separation. Other cases must be determined by the context of the passage (e.g., Ps-J Gen 12:1; 13:9; 38:1; 42:8; Ps-J Lev 8:29; Ps-J Num 1:17; 12:2; etc.). See Jastrow, "פֶּרֶשׁ," in *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 1241–43; Sokoloff, "פֶּרֶשׁ," in *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*, 451–52. Our passage, Ps-J Gen 46:21, exhibits some ambiguity. However, since the punctiliar sense is possible, and since this punctiliar sense potentially poses a conflict in the narrative, this discussion will analyze the text as though *אתפרש* refers to the specific point in time at which Joseph was separated from the family.

<sup>272</sup> Genesis Rabbah 84.20 (to Gen 37:34) reads: "ויתאבל על בנו ימים רבים אלו עשרים ושתים שנה" (And he mourned for his son many days. That is, twenty-two years" (Theodor-Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 84.20 [פד"כ], 2:1026). The calculation is as follows: Joseph was 30 years old when he became vizier over Egypt (Gen 41:46). After seven years of plenty (Gen 29–30), Joseph was 37 years old; and after two more years of famine (Gen 45:6), Joseph was 39 years old, which is when he reunited with his family. Therefore, if

this midrash imagined Joseph to be seventeen years old both at the beginning and at the end of ch. 37 when Joseph was separated from his family. Second, Midrash Tanhuma 9.5 to Gen 37:1 records the same tradition that Jacob and Joseph were separated for twenty-two years. Therefore this midrash too assumes that Joseph was separated from the family at age seventeen, and was, in effect, seventeen both at the beginning and at the end of chapter 37.<sup>273</sup> In addition, b. Ber. 55b calculates the years between Joseph’s dreams and the family reunion to be twenty-two years, implying the same perspective about Joseph’s age in chapter 37.<sup>274</sup> While these three sources merely imply that Joseph was seventeen years old when he was sold, Rashi states this explicitly: “Joseph was sold at seventeen years of age.”<sup>275</sup> In other words, the assumption that Joseph remained seventeen years old all throughout chapter 37, including at the time when he was sold, is sensible.

For the targumist, however, this assumption may not have been necessary or even entirely warranted on account of the details in the Hebrew text. First, the pericope that

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Jacob and Joseph were separated for 22 years, then Joseph must have been 17 years old when he was sold (39-22=17).

<sup>273</sup> Midrash Tanhuma 9.6 reads: “Just as Jacob hid from his father for twenty-two years, so did Joseph hide from his father for twenty-two years” (Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma*, 1:234).

<sup>274</sup> B. Ber. 55b reads: א"ר לוי לעולם יצפה אדם לחלום טוב עד כ"ב שנה מנלן מיוסף דכתיב אלה תולדות יעקב יוסף בן שבע עשרה שנה וגו' וכתיב ויוסף שלשים שנה בעמדו לפני פרעה וגו' מן שבסרי עד תלתין כמה הוי תלת י"ז. ר. לוי said: A man should await the fulfilment of a good dream for as much as twenty-two years. From where do we know this? From Joseph. As it is written: These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph being seventeen years old, etc.; and it is written, And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh. How many years is it from seventeen to thirty? Thirteen. Add the seven years of plenty and the two of famine, and you have twenty-two” (Maurice Simon and I. Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Berakoth* [London: Soncino, 1984], 55b).

<sup>275</sup> Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: בראשית, 2:128 (קכח).

deals specifically with the sale of Joseph is silent about Joseph's age at the time of his sale. And second, the entire chapter is silent about the amount of time it might have taken for all the recounted events to take place. This silence on the part of the Hebrew narrative, then, conceivably allowed for the targumist to imagine Joseph to be seventeen years old at the start of chapter 37 and then to be eighteen years old at the end of the chapter when he was sold. Consequently, for the targumist to claim that Joseph was eighteen when he was separated from the family is not to make a statement about Joseph's age at the beginning of chapter 37, but to make a statement about Joseph's age at the end of the chapter.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> The targumist betrays this perspective that some (though an unspecified) amount of time elapsed specifically between 37:1–12 (a series of episodes in Jacob's home) and 37:13–36 (a series of episodes outside of Jacob's home) by means of his brief expansion at 37:13: וְהָיָה לְיָמֵי יוֹמֵי "After a period of time..." Ps-J designates here an undefined amount of time to the gap between the departure of the brothers to pasture the flock (v. 12) and the subsequent departure of Joseph to discover the welfare of his brothers (vv. 13–14). Maher opines: "It is clear from the scriptural text that some time must have elapsed between v. 12 and v. 13. Ps.-J. makes this explicit..." (Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 125, n. 10). Westermann's comment to this passage in the Hebrew text also reflects a similar reading: "After some time Jacob sends Joseph to the brothers..." (italics mine; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37–50, A Continental Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2002], 39). The amount of time that elapses, however, is unspecified. Samely's deliberation as to how much time this might have been is helpful: "We have here a very different use of time in the targumic interpretative endeavour. The rhetorical question opening Jacob's speech betrays in two ways the fact that the brothers must have left quite a while before the time of speaking. One is the use of the present tense for 'pasturing'; since there was a substantial distance to travel, the present tense could not have been used, say, two hours after they had left. Perhaps more important is the fact of the rhetorical question itself. It mentions something both dialogue partners know in order to provide a starting point for something new to be said on the same topic. As a conversation opener it does not require an answer (nor does it get one). But the subject matter would have needed no re-introduction, say, three hours after the brothers have left. How much time must pass for a question of this type depends, of course, on circumstances. Accordingly vague is the targumic addition 'and after some days...'. All the targumist does is to make clear that the setting of the utterance in verse 13 is *not* given by verse 12 despite their immediate succession" (italics original; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 29). Samely clearly indicates that while the text of Ps-J leaves undefined the amount of time that the targumist perceived to have passed between the brothers' and Joseph's departures, Ps-J is entirely explicit that some time, indeed, did pass. If this case-in-point intimates Ps-J's general perspective of time in ch. 37, then it is conceivable that the targumist did not necessarily see the events of 37:1–12 and those of 37:13–36 to have taken place at the same point in time in Joseph's life. For the targumist, during the first set of events Joseph might have been seventeen (vv. 1–12); but during the second set of events Joseph might have been eighteen (vv. 13–36). For a discussion of the function of time in the biblical narrative, see Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 103–14; Ska, "Our Fathers Have Told Us": *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 7–15; for a grammatical discussion of the implications of time in sentences, see van Dijk, *Some Aspects of Text Grammars*, 81–91; Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 234–36; and for a discussion of apparent inconsistencies that are in fact coherent on account of the relation of each statement

Indeed, in his expansion at 37:2, the targumist revealed that in his view the mention of Joseph's age at 37:2 was linked to a particular event in Joseph's life, that is, the point at which Joseph went out from the schoolhouse ( יוסף בר שביסרי שנין הוה ) "Joseph was seventeen years old *when he went forth from the schoolhouse*"; but this statement was not necessarily related to the events that transpired in the remainder of chapter 37. Schmerler explains that the targumist derived this interpretive rendering from the Hebrew text on account of the statement that Joseph began to shepherd the flock at the age of seventeen: יוסף בן־שבע־עשרה שנה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת־ (אֶחָיו בְּצֹאן). For the Hebrew text raises the question: What was Joseph doing until age seventeen? Schmerler explains that in the view of the targumist this implied that Joseph was studying in the schoolhouse with his father.<sup>277</sup> In making this expansion, however, the targumist dissociated the mention of Joseph's age at 37:2 from the remainder of the chapter and from the events that transpired in the remainder of the chapter. For the mention of Joseph's age was related specifically to the event of Joseph leaving the

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to the greater context of the narrative, see van Dijk, *Text and Context*, 95–98; and de Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, 115–16.

<sup>277</sup> In the original: ועד עתה למד עם אביו בבית מדרשו. ועד עתה להיות רועה. ועד עתה למד עם אביו בבית מדרשו (Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן: שמות*, 267). Cf. Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: (בראשית in שב) 302, בראשית-שמות 22:19, in which verse Isaac is taken to the schoolhouse of Shem; 25:27 in which verse Jacob ministers in the schoolhouse of Eber; Genesis Rabbah 84.8, which midrash describes how Jacob transmitted to Joseph the laws that he had learned from Shem and Eber; and Genesis Rabbah 94.3, in which midrash Joseph tells his brothers what text he was studying with Jacob shortly before he was sold. See also Genesis Rabbah 63.10; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 124, n. 3; Levine, "The Aggadah in Targum Jonathan ben 'Uzziel and Neofiti 1 to Genesis: Parallel References," 565; Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 2:343, n. 210; and cf. Aberbach and Grossfeld, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis Together with an English Translation of the Text*, 152, n. 18; and 215, n. 1.

schoolhouse, but this age did not necessarily pertain to the events that happened after Joseph went out from the schoolhouse. On account of this, the mention of Joseph's age at 37:2 did not preclude the targumist from imagining Joseph to be age eighteen when he was separated from the family at the end of chapter 37, as the targumist stated at 46:21.

With regard to the alleged contradiction, then, 37:2 and 46:21 ultimately pose no conflict for the narrative at all, inasmuch as the two passages refer to different times in Joseph's life—one when he went out from the schoolhouse, the other when he was separated from his family. Thus the targumist's statement at 46:21—**חופים דבזמן דאתפרש**—**יוסף**—**מיניה הוה בר תמניסר שנין**—can stand in perfect accord with the statement at 37:2—**בר שביסרי שנין הוה**. This apparent contradiction is, in the end, no contradiction at all, and it consequently in no way impugns the coherence of the targumic narrative.

#### 4.2.6 Genesis 41:27, 30 vs. 50:3

The discrepancy between Gen 41:27, 30 and 50:3 (cf. 45:6; 47:7) pertains to the predicted duration of the famine in the Joseph narrative. At Ps-J Gen 41:27 (as in the Hebrew), the famine is foretold to last seven years; but at Ps-J Gen 50:3, the targumist adds an expansion to explain that the famine was supposed to have lasted forty-two years.<sup>278</sup> Thus the question arises: Was the famine intended to prevail for seven years or forty-two years? And where in the *biblical* text does the number forty-two come from? The passages read as follows:

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<sup>278</sup> Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion.

**Gen 41:27, 30**

MT <sup>27</sup> וְשִׁבַע הַפְּרוֹת הַרְקוֹת וְהַרְעֵת הָעֵלֶת אַחֲרֵיהֶן שִׁבַע שָׁנִים הִנָּה וְשִׁבַע הַשְּׂבָלִים  
הַרְקוֹת שְׂדֵפוֹת הַקָּדִים יִהְיוּ שִׁבַע שָׁנֵי רָעָב....  
<sup>30</sup> וְקָמוּ שִׁבַע שָׁנֵי רָעָב אַחֲרֵיהֶן וְנִשְׁפַח כָּל־הַשִּׁבַּע בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם וְכֻלָּה הָרָעָב אֶת־  
הָאֶרֶץ:

NRSV <sup>27</sup> The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, as are the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind. They are seven years of famine....  
<sup>30</sup> After them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; the famine will consume the land.

Ps-J <sup>27</sup> וּשְׁבַע תּוֹרֹתַי כַּחֲשֵׁתָא וּבִישְׁתָּא דַסְלָקוֹן בְּתַרְיָהוֹן שְׁבַע שְׁנֵיִיא חוֹרְנֵיִיתָא אִינִין  
מִבְּשָׂרוֹן וּשְׁבַע שׁוּבְלֵיִיא לְקֵיִיתָא שְׁקִיפֹן קִידוּם הֵם הַכִּי מִבְּשָׂרוֹן דִּיִּיהוּיִין שְׁבַע שְׁנֵי  
כַּפְנָא...  
<sup>30</sup> וְיִקְוֹמוּן שְׁבַע שְׁנֵי כּוֹפְנָא מִן בְּתַרְיָהוֹן וְיִתְנַשִּׂי כָל שׁוּבְעָא דְהוּוּה בְּאַרְעָא דְמִצְרַיִם  
וְיִשִּׁיִּצִי כַּפְנָא יֵת דִּירִי אַרְעָא

Ps-J <sup>27</sup> The seven emaciated and ugly cows that came up after them *announce* seven *other* years, and the seven ears, blighted and beaten by the east (wind), *announce this: that there will be seven years of famine...*  
<sup>30</sup> **But after them will arise seven years of famine**, and all the abundance *that was* in the land of Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will blot out *the inhabitants* of the land.

**Gen 50:3**

MT <sup>3</sup> וַיִּמְלְאוּ־לוֹ אַרְבַּעִים יוֹם כִּי בָן יִמְלְאוּ יְמֵי הַחַנְטִים וַיִּבְכוּ אֹתוֹ מִצְרַיִם שְׁבַעִים יוֹם:  
NRSV <sup>3</sup> they spent forty days in doing this, for that is the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days.

Ps-J <sup>3</sup> וּשְׁלִימוֹ לִיָּה מִן דַּאֲתַבְסַם אַרְבַּעִין יוֹמִין אַרוּם כַּדִּין שְׁלִמִין יוֹמֵי בְּסִימֵיא וּבְכוּן יֵתִי  
מִצְרַאי שׁוּבְעִין יוֹמִין אַמְרִין אֵילִין לְאֵילִין אֵיתוֹן נִיבְכִי עַל יַעֲקֹב חֲסִידָא דְבְּזֻכוּתִיָּה  
עַדֵת כַּפְנָא מִן אַרְעָא דְמִצְרַיִם דְּהוּוּת גְּזִירְתָּא לְמִיָּהוּי כַּפְנָא אַרְבַּעִין וְתַרְתִּין שְׁנֵין  
וּבְזֻכוּתִיָּה דִיעֲקֹב אַתְּמַנְעִין אַרְבַּעִין שְׁנֵין מִן מִצְרַיִם וְלֹא הוּוּה כַּפְנָא אֱלֵהִין תַּרְתִּין  
שְׁנֵין בְּלַחוּדִיָּהוֹן

Ps-J <sup>3</sup> Forty days were spent *in embalming* him, for so many days are spent in embalming, and the Egyptians wept for him seventy days, *saying to one another, "Come, let us weep over Jacob the righteous, for whose merit the famine passed from the land of Egypt."* **For it had been decreed that there would be a famine for forty-two years.** *But for the*

*merit of Jacob forty years were withheld from Egypt, and there was a famine for two years only.*

Commenting on 50:3 and its mention of the forty-two years of famine, Maher writes: “Ps.-J. does not take into account the fact that Joseph foretold that there would be seven years of famine (cf. Gen 41:27, 30).”<sup>279</sup> This comment certainly implies that a contradiction exists between 41:27, 30 and 50:3, and that due to carelessness or sheer disregard for the rest of the story, the targumist of Ps-J failed to retain coherence in the narrative by introducing the tradition of a forty-two year famine.<sup>280</sup> However, understanding the interpretative relationship that the targumist of Ps-J appears to have presupposed between the tradition of the forty-two year famine and that of the seven year famine shows that these two traditions are not at all incompatible. Rather, the forty-two year tradition derives from the seven year tradition.

The interpretative relationship between the seven year tradition and the forty-two year tradition, as Schmerler points out, is made manifest in Genesis Rabbah 89.9 to Gen 41:26.<sup>281</sup> The midrash records the following discussion about the duration of the famine:

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<sup>279</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 164, n. 7.

<sup>280</sup> That Maher sees Ps-J’s forty-two-year famine as contradictory to the seven-year famine tradition is further manifested in his comment on Ps-J Gen 41:27 in note 10: “In Gen 50:3 Ps.-J. says that God had decreed that there would be a famine of forty-two years, but that the famine was reduced to two years because of the merit of Jacob. See below 47:7 and n. 6 to that verse, and 50:3 with n. 7 to that verse. *On contradictions in Ps.-J.*, see above, Introduction, pp. 5–6” (italics mine; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 136, n. 10).

<sup>281</sup> Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 354, and see 293. Cf. Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, 95, n. 1; Rieder and Zamir, בראשית-שמות, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה: 100, n. 8 (in the section with their Hebrew translation of the text); Le Déaut, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 450, n. α; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 296; Levine, “The Aggadah in Targum Jonathan ben ‘Uzziel and Neofiti 1 to Genesis: Parallel References,” 565.

שבע פרות וגו' ר' יהודה א' י"ד שנה היו שכן פרעה רואה, ר' נחמיה אמ' כ"ח שנה היו שכן  
פרעה רואה ואמר ליוסף, רבנין אמ' מ"ב שנה היו שכן פרעה רואה ואמר ליוסף ויוסף חוזר  
וא' לפרעה<sup>282</sup>

*Seven cows*, etc. R. Judah said: Fourteen years were determined, since that is what Pharaoh saw. R. Nehemiah said: Twenty-eight years were determined, since Pharaoh saw it and then repeated it to Joseph. **The Rabbis said: Forty-two years were determined, since Pharaoh saw it, repeated it to Joseph, and Joseph repeated it to Pharaoh.**<sup>283</sup>

As this midrash shows, the tradition of the forty-two year famine is in fact the interpretative rendition of the tradition of the seven-year famine. Ben-Mendel explains that the targumist arrived at the number forty-two by multiplying the number seven (the number of years that, according to the biblical text, the famine was initially said to prevail) by the number six (the number of times the famine is referred to in the biblical text).<sup>284</sup> That is, Pharaoh saw the dream (about the cows and the ears of grain, which amounts to 2 references), he repeated it to Joseph (mentioning both the cows and the ears of grain, which now amounts to 4 references), and then Joseph explained the dream to Pharaoh (referring both to the cows and the ears of grain, which now amounts to 6 references). The targumist took these six references to the famine and multiplied them by the seven years of famine that in his view were designated for each reference. Thus, the total amount of years that the famine was intended to prevail, according to the targumist,

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<sup>282</sup> Theodor-Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 89.9 (פ"ט), 3:1098. See also Neofiti Marginalia to Gen 47:10; Sifre Deuteronomy 38; t. Sotah 10.9; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:360, n. 329.

<sup>283</sup> Cf. translation in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:826. This forty-two-year famine tradition is further linked in the remainder of this midrash to Ezek 29:12, in which verse God promises to send a forty-year famine against Egypt. While two years of famine had already transpired in Egypt during the time of Joseph, the remaining forty years would come at a later time.

<sup>284</sup> In the original: (Ben-Mendel, *דיוקו מספור החלום דכתיב ששה פעמים שבע שהוא מ"ב וע' ברבה פ"ט (ט')* [בראשית in שצו] 396, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות).



was forty-two years. From a theological perspective, this tradition demonstrates belief in the effective power of seeing and speaking; in other words, seeing the dreams and recounting them verbally affects the way in which the dreams are realized.<sup>285</sup> For the purposes of this study, however, this midrash reveals the tradition on which the targumist of Ps-J likely depended in his composition of the expansion of the forty-two-year famine at 50:3.<sup>286</sup>

Once the exegetical relationship between the tradition of the seven-year famine and that of the forty-two-year famine is recognized, the contention that Ps-J presents a contradiction between 41:27, 30 and 50:3 is no longer sustainable. For the seven-year tradition represents the bare form of the prophetic dream that remains to be interpreted, but the forty-two-year tradition represents the fully interpreted rendition of the same prophetic dream. The targumist of Ps-J expected his readers to ascertain this relationship between these traditions and he expected his readers to understand that the forty-two-year famine does not intend to contradict the seven-year famine, but to complement it. Pace Maher, Ps-J appears to have incorporated the forty-two-year famine tradition into his narrative with full awareness of the seven-year famine tradition; and this forty-two-year tradition is an exegetical derivation from the passage in which the seven-year famine tradition is recounted.

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<sup>285</sup> For a similar understanding of the effective power of words in midrash, see Genesis Rabbah 63.6 and Exodus Rabbah 1.8. On a discussion of the efficacy of words in the context of blessings and curses, see Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 151–54.

<sup>286</sup> Regarding the repetitions in the biblical text, Westermann writes: “It is obvious here that the repetitions are intended by the narrator. The same is true for other apparent doublets, e.g., vv. 30–31” (Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 90). Friedman attributes 41:1–45 to E (Friedman, *Bible with Sources Revealed*, 99–101). For a source-critical discussion of ch. 41, see Gunkel, *Genesis*, 415–21.

#### 4.2.7 Exodus 1:6 vs. 6:16–20

Another apparent contradiction pertaining to the duration of the lives of individuals occurs between two genealogies, one genealogy at Ps-J Exod 1:1–6, with a focus on v. 6, and the other at 6:16–20. A conflict emerges as a result of the targumist's claim in his additions at 6:16–20 that Levi lived to see Moses and Aaron, and that Kohath lived to see Phinehas, while 1:6 seems to indicate that both Levi and Kohath died long before Moses, Aaron, and Phinehas were even born.<sup>287</sup> The passages read as follows:

##### Exod 1:6

MT וַיָּמָת יוֹסֵף וְכָל-אָחָיו וְכָל הַדּוֹר הַהוּא:<sup>6</sup>

NRSV <sup>6</sup> Then Joseph died, and all his brothers, and that whole generation.

Ps-J וּמֵית יוֹסֵף וּבִתְרִיה מֵיתוּ אַחָיו וְכָל דְּרָא הַהוּא<sup>6</sup>

Ps-J <sup>6</sup> Joseph died, and *after him* all his brothers *died*, and all that generation.

##### Exod 6:16–20

MT וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי-לֵוִי לְתַלְדֹּתָם גֵּרְשׁוֹן וְקָהָת וּמֵרָרִי וּשְׁנֵי חַיֵּי לֵוִי שִׁבְעַ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים  
וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה: <sup>17</sup> בְּנֵי גֵרְשׁוֹן לְבִנָּי וְשִׁמְעִי לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם: <sup>18</sup> וּבְנֵי קָהָת עֲמָרָם וְיִצְחָר  
וְחִבְרוֹן וְעִזִּיאֵל וּשְׁנֵי חַיֵּי קָהָת שְׁלֹשׁ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה: <sup>19</sup> וּבְנֵי מֵרָרִי מַחְלִי  
וּמוֹשִׁי אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת הַלְוִי לְתַלְדֹּתָם: <sup>20</sup> וַיִּקַּח עֲמָרָם אֶת-יְוִכָבֵד דָּדָתוֹ לֵוִי לְאִשָּׁה  
וַתֵּלֶד לּוֹ אֶת-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת-מֹשֶׁה וּשְׁנֵי חַיֵּי עֲמָרָם שִׁבְעַ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה:

NRSV <sup>16</sup> The following are the names of the sons of Levi according to their genealogies: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, and the length of Levi's life was one hundred thirty-seven years. <sup>17</sup> The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their families. <sup>18</sup> The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, and the length of Kohath's life was one hundred thirty-three years. <sup>19</sup> The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their genealogies. <sup>20</sup> Amram married Jochebed his father's sister and she bore him Aaron and Moses, and the length of Amram's life was one hundred thirty-seven years.

<sup>287</sup> Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion. For a discussion of the difficulties in this genealogy in the Hebrew text, see Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 116–17; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 84–88; Durham, *Exodus*, 82–83.

Ps-J                    16 ואילין שמהת בנוי דלוי לייחוסיהון גרשון וקהת ומררי ושני חייוי דלוי מאה ותלתין ושבע שנין חייא עד דחמא ית משה וית אהרן פריקייא דישראל 17 בנוי דגרשום לבני ושמעיי לייחוסיהון 18 ובנוי דקהת עמרם ויצהר וחברון ועזיאל ושני חייוי דקהת חסידא מאה ותלתין ותלת שנין חייא עד דחמא ית פנחס הוא אליהו כהנא רבא דעתיד למשתלחא לגלזותא דישראל בסוף יומיאי 19 ובנוי דמררי מחלי ומושי אילין ייחוסין דלוי לגניסיהון 20 ונסב עמרם ית יוכבד חביבתיא ליה לאינתו וילידת ליה ית אהרן וית משה ושני חייוי דעמרם חסידא מאה ותלתין ושבע שנין חייא עד דחמא ית בני רחביה בר גרשום בר משה

Ps-J                    16 These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their lineage: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari; and the years of Levi's life were one hundred and thirty-seven years. *He lived until he saw Moses and Aaron, the redeemers of Israel.* 17 The sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei according to their families. 18 The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel; and the life of Kohath *the pious* was one hundred and thirty-three years. *He lived until he saw Phinehas, he is Elijah the high priest who is to be sent to the exiles of Israel at the end of days.* 19 The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of Levi according to their lineage. 20 Amram took Jochebed, his beloved, as wife, and she bore him Aaron and Moses; and the years of the life of Amram *the pious* were one hundred and thirty-seven years. *He lived until he saw the sons of Rehabiah, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses.*

At Ps-J Exod 1:6, Levi and Kohath belong to the generation that presumably dies before the enslavement of Israel in Egypt begins (i.e., before the new king arises at 1:8), while at 6:16–20 they are said to live to see individuals who belong to the enslaved generation. Maher, focusing specifically on 6:16, but making a comment that is applicable to v. 18 as well, notes that “There is no known source for this addition which contradicts Exod 1:6, according to which Joseph and all his brothers died before the Israelites were subjected to slavery.”<sup>288</sup> Indeed, in addition to the deaths of Joseph and his brothers, according to 1:6

<sup>288</sup> McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Exodus and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 176, n. 13; cf. Schmerler, שמות יהונתן: אהבת יהונתן; 30; Ben-Mendel, בראשית- יונתן: פירוש יונתן; 1:136–37 (קלז–קלז). Ps-J's expansion contradicts the reasoning of *Midrash Seder Olam* 3, which states: “the entire time during which Levi was alive, the Israelites were not enslaved to Egypt” (Yose ben Halafta et al.,

“all that generation” also died, which would include Kohath in this summary statement as well.<sup>289</sup> The following table seeks to display this apparent contradiction that seems to be in effect between 1:6 and 6:16–20.

**Table 5: Genealogy of Exodus 6:16–20**

	<u>Genealogy</u>	<u>Those Who Were Seen</u>
Generation 1	Levi	
Generation 2	Kohath	
<b>Death of Joseph, His Brothers, and All That Generation</b>		
Generation 3	Amram	
Generation 4	Moses	▲ Moses & Aaron
Generation 5	Gershom	
Generation 6	Rehabiah <sup>290</sup>	▲ Phinehas
Generation 7	Sons of Rehabiah	▲ Sons of Rehabiah

וימת יוסף וכל אחיו וכל הדור ההוא. ללמדך שכל זמן שהיה אחד מהם קיים מאותן שירדו למצרים לא שעבדו המצרים בישראל *Joseph died and all of his brothers and all that generation*: This teaches that as long as one of those who went down to Egypt was alive, the Egyptians did not enslave Israel” (Issachar Berman ben Naphtali and Ze’ev Volf Ainhorin, eds., חלק ראשון, חלק מגילות, חמש מגילות, חלק ראשון, ספר מדרש רבה על חמשה חומשי תורה וחמש מגילות, חלק ראשון, [Wilna: 1897 or 1898; repr., Jerusalem: Hotsa’at Sefer, 5730/1969], שמות פרשה א”ח, 1.8, p. ג [p. 5 in Arabic numerals]). However, according to Ps-J’s reasoning, Levi, who originally went down to Egypt, lived through a large portion of the enslavement and all the way to the birth of Moses. See also Rashi on Exod 6:16 who reiterates the view of Exodus Rabbah 1.8 in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: שמות, 1:73 (עג); see similar comments in Rieder and Zamir, בראשית-שמות: התורה על עזיאל על התורה: בראשית-שמות, 109, n. 10 (in the section with their Hebrew translation of the text); and cf. b. B. Bathra 121b.

<sup>289</sup> According to Gen 46:11, Kohath belonged to the generation that entered Egypt with Jacob and his sons, so the statement “and all the generation” in Exod 1:6 would certainly apply to him. With regard to Amram, however, inasmuch as he is not mentioned anywhere as being born prior to the entrance into Egypt, and, moreover, inasmuch as he married Jochebed (who was born upon entering Egypt; Ps-J Gen 46:27), it is conceivable that the targumist of Ps-J imagined Amram to have been born around the same time as Jochebed, that is, at the time that Jacob and his sons arrived in Egypt. He, therefore, would not have belonged to “all that generation” of Exod 1:6, but to the subsequent generation that arose already in Egypt. In effect, the conflict between 1:6 and 6:16–20 that concerns the life and death of Levi and Kohath does not affect the life and death of Amram. However, a conflict concerning the specific number of years that Amram lived does arise, and this will be discussed in the next section.

<sup>290</sup> According to 1 Chr 23:17 and 26:25, Rehabiah is the son of Eliezer.

The technique that the targumist appears to be implementing in his narrative here is comparable (but not identical) to one described above at Gen 35:29 and 37:35 (in which context Isaac dies at 35:29, but is then reintroduced into the narrative at a later point at 37:35). That is, while Exod 1:6 states that Levi and Kohath died, the targumist reintroduced these characters at 6:16–20 as living much longer lives, beyond the point of their aforementioned deaths at 1:6. The literary element that allowed the targumist to rework the text in this way is the impression, even in the Hebrew text, that at 1:6 Levi and Kohath died only *after* Joseph died. Following the genealogy at 1:1–5, 1:6 is a concluding summary statement concerning the individuals who came down to Egypt and who ultimately died. Whether they died immediately after Joseph died or much later than that is not mentioned in the verse, nor does it appear to be the concern of the verse. This interpretation of 1:6 manifests itself in Ps-J in the targumist’s addition of **ובתריה** “and after him” into his rendition of 1:6: **מיתו אחוי וכל דרא ההוא** **ובתריה** “Joseph died, and **after him** his brothers died and all that generation.” Thus, the targumist of Ps-J understood “all that generation” to have died after the death of Joseph. The lack of specificity as to how much later than Joseph these individuals died allowed the targumist to re-imagine Levi and Kohath as alive subsequent to their reported deaths at Exod 1:6, and, moreover, as living lives much longer than the impression conveyed in the Hebrew text of Exod 1:6.<sup>291</sup> In effect, even though the deaths of Levi and Kohath at 1:6 are

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<sup>291</sup> Ps-J’s seemingly inconsequential addition of **ובתריה** “and *after him* [i.e., after Joseph]” at 1:6 appears to be more than a mere grammatical filling of an implicit element that is left unstated in the Hebrew text. This addition is arguably a deliberate attempt on the part of Ps-J to mitigate the appearance of contradiction between 1:6 and 6:16. Samely notes that the function of certain additions can be, but does not always have to be, “on the level of grammar: the filling of the slot” that may be lacking or implied in the Hebrew text (Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 14, and see 21–23 and 30).

pronounced before the enslavement begins with the rise of the “new king” at 1:8, the addition “after” at 1:6 allowed the targumist to extend their lives into the era of the enslavement. Thus the added “after” obviates the potential impression of a fracture in the coherence between 1:6 and 6:16–20.

#### 4.2.8 Exodus 6:16–20

These expansions at Ps-J Exod 6:16–20 present further tension in the narrative as regards Levi, Kohath, and Amram. The duration of life attributed to Levi (137 years), Kohath (133 years), and Amram (137 years) appears insufficient to sustain Ps-J’s claim that they lived to see Moses & Aaron, Phinehas, and the sons of Rehabiah, respectively; for the latter would have been born long after Levi, Kohath, and Amram would have already died according to the listed ages in the text. Again, 6:16–20 reads as follows:

##### Exod 6:16–20

MT 16 וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי־לֵוִי לְתַלְדוֹתָם גִּרְשׁוֹן וְקָהָת וּמֵרָרִי וּשְׁנֵי חַיֵּי לֵוִי שִׁבְעַ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים  
 וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה: 17 בְּנֵי גִרְשׁוֹן לְבִנָּי וְשִׁמְעִי לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם: 18 וּבְנֵי קָהָת עֲמָרָם וְיִצְחָר  
 וְחִבְרוֹן וְעֻזִּיאֵל וּשְׁנֵי חַיֵּי קָהָת שְׁלֹשׁ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה: 19 וּבְנֵי מֵרָרִי מַחְלִי  
 וּמוּשִׁי אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת הַלְוִי לְתַלְדוֹתָם: 20 וַיִּקַּח עֲמָרָם אֶת־יְוֹכָבֵד דָּדָתוֹ לֵוִי לְאִשָּׁה  
 וַתֵּלֶד לּוֹ אֶת־אֶהֱרֹן וְאֶת־מֹשֶׁה וּשְׁנֵי חַיֵּי עֲמָרָם שִׁבְעַ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאֵת שָׁנָה:

NRSV 16 The following are the names of the sons of Levi according to their genealogies: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, and the length of Levi’s life was one hundred thirty-seven years. 17 The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, by their families. 18 The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, and the length of Kohath’s life was one hundred thirty-three years. 19 The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their genealogies. 20 Amram married Jochebed his father’s sister and she bore him Aaron and Moses, and the length of Amram’s life was one hundred thirty-seven years.

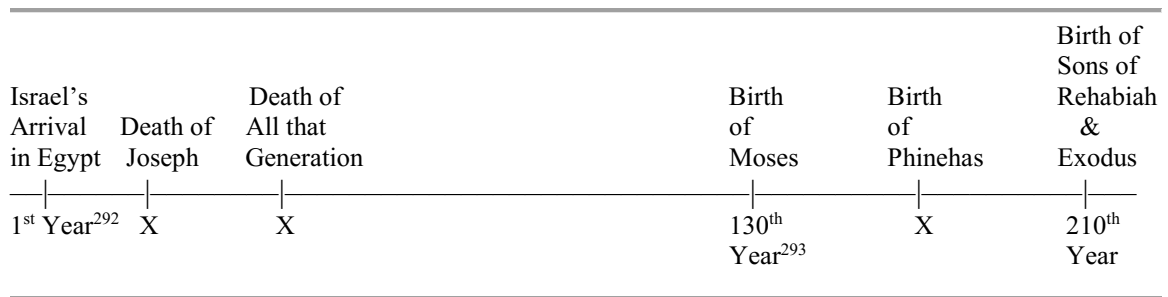
Ps-J 16 ואילין שמהת בני דלוי לייחוסיהון גרשון וקהת ומררי ושני חיייו דלוי מאה  
 ותלתין ושבע שנין חייא עד דחמא ית משה וית אהרן פריקייא דישראל 17 בני

דגרשום לבני ושמעי לייחוסיהון<sup>18</sup> ובנוי דקהת עמרם ויצהר וחברון ועזיאל ושני  
 חייוי דקהת חסידא מאה ותלתין ותלת שנין **חייא עד דחמא ית פנחס** הוא אליהו  
 כהנא רבא דעתיד למשתלחא לגלוותא דישראל בסוף יומי<sup>19</sup> ובנוי דמררי  
 מחלי ומושי אילין ייחוסין דלוי לגניסתהון<sup>20</sup> ונסב עמרם ית יוכבד חביבתיה ליה  
 לאינתו וילידת ליה ית אהרן וית משה ושני חייוי דעמרם חסידא מאה ותלתין  
 ושבע שנין **חייא עד דחמא ית בני רחביה בר גרשום בר משה**

Ps-J <sup>16</sup> These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their lineage: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari; and the years of Levi's life were one hundred and thirty-seven years. **He lived until he saw Moses and Aaron, the redeemers of Israel.** <sup>17</sup> The sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei according to their families. <sup>18</sup> The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel; and the life of Kohath *the pious* was one hundred and thirty-three years. **He lived until he saw Phinehas, he is Elijah the high priest who is to be sent to the exiles of Israel at the end of days.** <sup>19</sup> The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of Levi according to their lineage. <sup>20</sup> Amram took Jochebed, his aunt, as wife, and she bore him Aaron and Moses; and the years of the life of Amram *the pious* were one hundred and thirty-seven years. **He lived until he saw the sons of Rehabiah, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses.**

The following timeline seeks to diagram this tension related to the ages of the characters and the claims of Ps-J concerning their long lives:

**Figure 3: Timeline of the Israelites' Stay in Egypt**



Based on this timeline, the following observations stand to reason: 1) Levi would need to live until the 130<sup>th</sup> year of Israel's presence in Egypt to see Moses (and Aaron, who was born three years prior to Moses; Exod 7:7); 2) Kohath would need to live beyond the 130<sup>th</sup> year to see Phinehas (Aaron's grandson); and 3) Amram would need to live to the fourth generation after Israel's arrival in Egypt to see the sons of Rehabiah, possibly to the 210<sup>th</sup> year (according to a conservative calculation<sup>294</sup>).

<sup>292</sup> According to Ps-J Exod 12:40–41, the Israelites were in the land of Egypt for 210 years. For other discussions of this, see Genesis Rabbah 44:18 (on Gen 15:13), 57.4 (on Gen 22:20), 63.3 (on Gen 25:19); Lauterbach, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, 1:77, n. 3a; G. Naftali, ed., *על ספר בראשית*, אוצר המדרשים: על ספר שמות (Jerusalem: Machon Hamidrash, 1999), 123–24 (קכג-קכד); G. Naftali, ed., *על ספר שמות*: אוצר המדרשים (Jerusalem: Machon Hamidrash, 1999), 122–23 (קכב-קכג); Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:373, n. 7; 1:374, n. 1; 2:557, n. 6; Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim's Classic Commentary: Bereishis*, 480, at 50:24, and see also n. 32; Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., *תורת חיים*: בראשית, 1:181 (קפא); Jastrow, "אספטיה, אספטיה, אספטיא," in *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 53; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 2:327; Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 65–74; and cf. Acts 7:2–8, and Gal 3:15–18.

<sup>293</sup> First, Moses was 80 years old when he brought Israel out of Egypt (Exod 7:7) on the 210<sup>th</sup> year of Israel's stay in Egypt (Ps-J Exod 12:40–41); therefore, he was born in the 130<sup>th</sup> year of Israel's stay in Egypt (210–80=130). Second, Ps-J Exod 2:1–2 indicate that Jochebed was 130 years old when she remarried Amram and conceived and gave birth to Moses; and Ps-J Gen 46:27 and Ps-J Num 26:59 state that Jochebed was born upon Jacob's entrance into Egypt (cf. MT Num 26:59; Genesis Rabbah 94.9; Exodus Rabbah 1:19; b. Sotah 12a; b. B. Bathra 119b–120a; PRE 48).

<sup>294</sup> So Baal HaTurim in Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim's Classic Commentary: Bereishis*, 120–21. If Moses was forty years old when he fled to Midian and shortly thereafter was married to Zipporah who gave birth to Gershom, Gershom would have been born around the 170<sup>th</sup> year of Israel's stay in Egypt (130<sup>th</sup> year, when Moses was born + 40 years, when Gershom is born = 170<sup>th</sup> year). The conservative speculation that Gershom was 20 years old when he gave birth to Rehabiah would place Rehabiah's birth at the 190<sup>th</sup> year of Israel's stay in Egypt. And the speculation that Rehabiah was 20 when



As Ben-Mendel points out, however, none of this appears plausible with the ages of Levi, Kohath, and Amram provided in the narrative.<sup>295</sup> In order for Levi to see Moses and Aaron, he would need to be born in Egypt (to have approximately seven years of overlap with Moses and ten years with Aaron); but the narrative depicts him as an adult already in Genesis, even as having children prior to arriving in Egypt (Gen 46:11). Therefore, he could not have lived a mere 137 years and also seen Moses and Aaron. Similar is the case with Kohath: Gen 46:11 lists him as one who was born prior to entering Egypt. But even if he were born in Egypt when Jacob's family had just arrived in Egypt, Kohath could not have lived only 133 years and also seen Phinehas, for Phinehas was a grandson of Aaron. Indeed, Phinehas would have been born two generations after Kohath would have died.<sup>296</sup> With Amram the situation is more

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he gave birth to his first son would place the birth of that son at the 210<sup>th</sup> year of Israel's stay in Egypt. The precise year during which the sons of Rehabiah were born is immaterial for this discussion; the essential element is that the earliest they could have been born is in the 210<sup>th</sup> year of Israel's stay in Egypt, and this proves to be much later than Amram could have lived until if 137 years indicate the sum of Amram's life. For various traditions on Moses' age (whether he was 12, 18, 20, 21, 22, or 40) when he fled to Midian, see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:404, n. 69 and 5:406, n. 76. For the tradition that Moses was forty years old when he fled to Midian, see Genesis Rabbah 100.10; Sifre Deuteronomy 357; PRE 40 (Moses was with Jethro 40 years); Acts 7:23; F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 198; Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, eds. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 291; Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 327.

<sup>295</sup> Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות, 29–30 (ל-כט in in כט-ל). Cf. Schmerler, שמות, אהבת יהונתן: שמות, 30; Fishbane, ספר שמות, חומש: 1:136–37 (קלו-קלז); McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Exodus and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 176, n. 13.

<sup>296</sup> Ben-Mendel writes: בכאן תימה גדולה שזה מן הנמנע שהרי לוי מת צ"ד שנה לגלות מצרים כי בן מ"ג היה בירידתן למצרים שהרי יוסף ל"ט שנה היה שבו ל' עמד לפני פרעה וז' שני השובע וב' שני הרעב ולוי נולד קודם יוסף ד' שנים שהרי בתוך ז' שנים נולדו כל השבטים כנודע ומבואר ברא"ם הוצא מהם ג' שנים מה שנולד לוי שהוא ג' לראובן נמצא שהיה לוי בן מ"ג שהרי היה גדול מיוסף ד' שנה ומת בן קל"ז שהוא צ"ד לגלות מצרים לפי חשבון רד"ו ומשה נולד לזמן ק"ל שנה לגלות מצרים לפי חשבון רד"ו שבו פ' שנים היה בעמדו לפני פרעה בדברו עמו ואותה שנה יצאו ממצרים נמצא בין מיתת לוי ולידת משה ל"ז שנה והדבר צ"ע לגביה איברא לגבי קהת שראה פנחס ותרגמו בפסוק ובנוי דקהת וזה לכאורה ג"כ מן הנמנע שהרי אהרון נולד לקב"ז שנה לגלות מצרים וקהת מת לק"ל ואין מלידת אהרון עד מיתת קהת

speculative inasmuch as less information about him is provided. Nonetheless, if he married Jochebed (who was born upon entering Egypt; Ps-J Gen 46:27), it is conceivable that the targumist of Ps-J might have imagined him to have been born around the same time. It is impossible, then, that he could have lived only 137 years and also lived to see the 210<sup>th</sup> year of Israel's time in Egypt, when the sons of Rehabiah would have been born.<sup>297</sup> In short, contradictions concerning the ages and the lives of Levi, Kohath, and Amram seem to permeate this genealogy.

The targumist, however, appears to have been working very closely with the text in an interpretive manner, the result of which permitted him to incorporate these expansions into 6:16–20 without, in fact, violating the coherence of the narrative. In all three cases—with regard to the lives of Levi, Kohath, and Amram—the targumist (re)interpreted the meaning of the provided age of each individual. In other words, though the *prima facie* reading suggests that the listed age intends to signify the sum of each character's life, for the targumist, evidently, the text was not overt enough to require such a reading of the text. Consequently, the targumist did not feel confined by the text to understand the ages as indicating when the individuals died. Rather, on account of the function of ages in certain genealogies of the biblical text, the numbers, in the view of the targumist, could theoretically convey any one of the following four meanings: 1) at which age the individuals began to bear offspring; 2) how long the individuals lived after they began to bear offspring; 3) by which age the individuals had begotten all of their

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תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה (Ben-Mendel, אלא י' שנה ואיך אפשר שיהיה באותו זמן נולד פנחס נכדו של אהרן [שמות in כט–30, עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות]).

<sup>297</sup> See n. 294 above.

offspring; and 4) at which age the individuals died. These four functions of ages appear in the formulaic genealogical record at Gen 5:3–5 and 32:

<sup>3</sup> וַיְחִי אָדָם שְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאָת שָׁנָה וַיֻּלְּד בְּדַמוּתוֹ כְּצַלְמוֹ וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שֵׁת׃ <sup>4</sup> וַיְהִי יְמֵי־אָדָם  
אֶחָדִי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־שֵׁת שְׁמֻנֵּה מֵאָת שָׁנָה וַיֻּלְּד בָּנִים וּבָנוֹת׃ <sup>5</sup> וַיְהִי כָּל־יְמֵי אָדָם אַשְׁרֵ־חָי  
תְּשַׁע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וַיָּמָת....  
<sup>32</sup> וַיְהִי־נֹחַ בְּוַחֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה וַיֻּלְּד נָח אֶת־שֵׁם אֶת־חָם וְאֶת־יָפֶֶת׃

<sup>3</sup> When Adam had lived one hundred thirty years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. <sup>4</sup> The days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years; and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup> Thus all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred thirty years; and he died....

<sup>32</sup> After Noah was five hundred years old, Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

In the genealogical listing of Gen 5:3–5, the number 130 signifies the age at which Adam begot a son, the number 800 signifies the number of years Adam lived after he begot that son, and the number 930 signifies the totality of the years that Adam lived, that is, the age at which he died.<sup>298</sup> At 5:32, particularly relevant for understanding the targumist’s interpretative approach at Exod 6:16–20, the number 500 signifies the age by which Noah had begotten all three of his sons. Similar is the case at Gen 11:26, in which verse Abraham is said to have been 70 by the time that he begot all three of his sons: וַיְחִי־אַבְרָהָם וַיְחַיֶּהֱרֶה וַיְחַיֶּהֱרֶה וַיְחַיֶּהֱרֶה “Terah lived seventy years, and he begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.” In these genealogical records, the significance of each numeral is explicitly stated.

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<sup>298</sup> For a discussion of the genealogy in Gen 5, see Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 39–45; Speiser, *Genesis*, 39–43; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 119–27; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 127–39; and for a helpful discussion of genealogies in the context of the ancient Near East, see Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 345–60.

As already noted above, however, for the targumist the text of Exod 6:16–20 was not explicit enough in its identification of the significance of the numerals; therefore, the targumist did not feel obligated to interpret the years attributed to each individual as an indication of the total duration of each of their lives, that is, as the ages at which they died. Presupposing this interpretative perspective of the targumist, Schmerler proposes a solution that is plausible though objectionable. He suggests that the listed number in the text signifies the number of years that Levi, Kohath, and Amram lived *after* they had begotten all the offspring until they died. He writes:

As it is written, on account of the reward according to the measure that is fitting him [i.e., Levi], the Scripture did not count [any of his years] except those years after sons were born to him. It did not count the years before he came to Egypt. According to this, Moses was close to seven years old when Levi died. The same applies to the lives of Kohath and Amram. In effect, Amram was among those who entered the land after Moses died.<sup>299</sup>

To be sure, this manner of understanding a number attributed to a person does appear in the genealogical record at Gen 5:4, as pointed out above:

וַיְהִי יְמֵי אָדָם אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ אֶת־שֵׁשׁ שָׁמֹנֶה מֵאֹת שָׁנָה וַיֻּלְּדוּ בָנָיו וּבָנוֹת:

<sup>4</sup> The days of Adam **after** he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years; and he had other sons and daughters.

However, the Hebrew text clearly marks this specific meaning of the number by including the preposition אחרי in the verse (אַחֲרֵי הוֹלִידוֹ).<sup>300</sup> The text of Ps-J, in contrast,

<sup>299</sup> In the original: ולא מנה. וכ' באגרא דכלה שס"ל שלא מנה הכ' רק אותן השנים אחר שנולדו לו הבנים. ולא מנה. ואתן השנים קודם שבא למצרים. ולפ"ז הי' משה קרוב לשבע שנים כשמת לוי. וכצ"ל לדידי' בחיי קהת ועמרם. ולפ"ז הי' (30, אהבת יהונתן; שמות, Schmerler) עמרם מבאי הארץ אחר פטירת משה.

<sup>300</sup> Cf. also Job 42:16–17: וַיֵּחִי אִיּוֹב אַחֲרֵי־זֹאת מֵאָה וָאַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה וַיֵּרָא אֶת־בָּנָיו וְאֶת־בָּנֵי בָנָיו אַרְבָּעָה: <sup>16</sup> After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children, and his children's children, four generations. <sup>17</sup> And Job died, old and full of days.”

lacks such a preposition; therefore, Schmerler's explanation actually presupposes a form of בתר/אחרי "after" that is not, in fact, in the Ps-J text. Thus, Schmerler understands the statements about the lives of Levi, Kohath, and Amram to be as follows:

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Levi   | <sup>16</sup> ואילין שמהת בנוי דלוי לייחוסיהון גרשון וקהת ומררי ו[בתר כן]<br>שני חייו דלוי מאה ותלתין ושבע שנין חייא עד דחמא ית משה וית<br>אהרן....                                    |
| Kohath | <sup>18</sup> ובנוי דקהת עמרם ויצהר וחברון ועזיאל ו[בתר כן] שני חייו דקהת<br>חסידא מאה ותלתין ותלת שנין חייא עד דחמא ית פנחס....   |
| Amram  | <sup>20</sup> ונסב עמרם ית יוכבד חביבתיה ליה לאינתו וילידת ליה ית אהרן<br>וית משה ו[בתר כן] שני חייו דעמרם חסידא מאה ותלתין ושבע שנין<br>חייא עד דחמא ית בני רחביה בר גרשום בר משה.... |

While this proposition does explain the interpretive rendering of Ps-J and while it does offer a possible resolution to the apparent conflict in the targumic narrative, it presumes a targumic text that is not fully represented in Ps-J. Consequently, the explanation is objectionable.

In contrast to Schmerler's proposition, according to the actual text that does appear in Ps-J, it is conceivable that for the targumist the listed numbers attributed to Levi, Kohath, and Amram signified the age by which each of them had begotten all of their offspring (similar to the function of the numbers attributed to Noah at Gen 5:32, and to Terah at 11:26). This suggestion works well with the structure of the genealogy at 6:16–20, in that the genealogy first names the sons that Levi, Kohath, and Amram had, and then the genealogy states the age of each begetter. Consider the text again:

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Levi   | <sup>16</sup> ואילין שמהת בנוי דלוי לייחוסיהון גרשון וקהת ומררי ושני חייו<br>דלוי מאה ותלתין ושבע שנין חייא עד דחמא ית משה וית אהרן.... |
| Kohath | <sup>18</sup> ובנוי דקהת עמרם ויצהר וחברון ועזיאל ושני חייו דקהת חסידא<br>מאה ותלתין ותלת שנין חייא עד דחמא ית פנחס....                 |

Amram            20 ונסב עמרם ית יוכבד חביבתי ליה לאינתו וילידת ליה ית אהרן  
 וית משה ושני חייו דעמרם חסידא מאה ותלתין ושבע שנין חייא עד  
 דחמא ית בני רחביה בר גרשום בר משה....

To infer then that the number associated with Levi, Kohath, and Amram indicates the age by which they had their offspring is not a remote possibility. The meaning of the text would be that, when Levi was 137 years old, he had already begotten Gershon, Kohath, and Merari; when Kohath was 133 years old, he had already begotten Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel; and when Amram was 137 years old, he had already begotten Aaron and Moses. In such a case, the targumist perceived the Hebrew text to leave unstated how long each of these individuals actually lived. And on account of this, the targumist was able to incorporate the expansions at 6:16–20, according to which these individuals lived impressively long lives, even so as to see figures belonging to generations of a much later time.

The targumist's motivation to make the life-span of Levi, Kohath, and Amram to appear to be much longer than it seems in the Hebrew text stems from his interpretative perspective of the genealogy that is presented in the Hebrew text of Exod 6:16–20. The targumist's expansion is his response to the fact that in the Hebrew version of the genealogy at 6:14–27, among the many names that are listed, Levi, Kohath, and Amram are the only individuals to whom a specific number of years is attributed. Viewing the mention of their years as consequential, the targumist interpreted this detail to mean that these individuals lived particularly long lives, and he accentuated this in his Targum by stating whom these figures lived to see.<sup>301</sup> That the targumist achieved these expansions

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<sup>301</sup> See b. B. Bathra 121b, which states: תנו רבנן שבעה קפלו את כל העולם כולו מתושלח ראה אדם שם ראה מתושלח יעקב ראה את שם עמרם ראה את אחיה השילוני ראה את אחיה השילוני

by means of careful exegesis is evident in his close interaction with the original text of the genealogy. That is, the figures whom Levi, Kohath, and Amram live to see (i.e., Moses and Aaron, Phinehas, and the sons of Rehabiah) are all mentioned in or linked to this same genealogy at 6:14–27 (Moses and Aaron at v. 20; Phinehas at v. 25; and the sons of Rehabiah, while not explicitly mentioned in the Hebrew, are the descendants of Gershom and Moses who are, in fact, mentioned at v. 17, and cf. v. 20).<sup>302</sup> In other words, the targumist carefully composed his expansions based on the genealogy that was before him in the Hebrew text.

In the end, whereas at first blush the targumist's expansions at Ps-J Exod 6:16–20 appear to produce an implausible and self-contradictory narrative, a study of the exegesis the targumist implemented in formulating these expansions reveals that the passages are, rather, coherent.<sup>303</sup>

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קיים ועדיין קיים “Our Rabbis taught: Seven [men] spanned [the life of] the whole world. Methuselah saw Adam; Shem saw Methuselah; Jacob saw Shem; Amram saw Jacob; Ahijah the Shilonite saw Amram; Elijah saw Ahijah the Shilonite, and he [Elijah] is still alive” (Maurice Simon, Israel W. Slotki, and I. Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Baba Bathra II* [London: Soncino, 1976], 55b). See also McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Exodus and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 177, n. 17. Rashi suggests that the specific years of life of Levi and Kohath were given to provide the necessary information to calculate the length of Israel's slavery in Egypt (Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: שמות, 1:73 [עג]). See Cassuto's analysis of these ages and their significance in Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 84–88; and see Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 116–17.

<sup>302</sup> In his analysis of the Mekhilta's presentation of the story of the waters of Mara, Boyarin articulates the following principle of midrashic interpretation: “[W]hile the strategies employed to foreclose and reduce the ambiguities of the story are clearly an effect of reading, these are also not merely an arbitrary choice on the part of the rabbis of what they want the text to mean. These processes of foreclosure of ambiguity are also authorized by choice of different controlling contexts or intertextual allusions given within the textual system for resolving the local narrative and its axiological meanings” (Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, 70).

<sup>303</sup> As noted earlier, at Ps-J Gen 46:27 and Ps-J Num 26:59, Ps-J expands upon the Hebrew text by stating that Jochebed was born during Jacob's entrance into Egypt, which, therefore, means that she was part of the generation that came down to Egypt with Jacob. Ps-J Exod 1:5, however, does not mention this detail. Concerning these passages, Maher remarks: “There is a certain inconsistency between Ps.-J.'s version of our present verse [i.e., Ps-J Gen 46:27], where Jochebed is counted among the seventy who entered Egypt, and the same Targum's version of Exod 1:5, where that name is not mentioned” (Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 151, n. 25; see also McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Exodus and*

### 4.3 Conclusion

The above discussion contends that contradictions that arise as a result of numerals in Ps-J's expansions are only apparent contradictions, and that once the traditions that lie behind the additions and the function of the additions in the Aramaic narrative are ascertained, the coherence of the apparently discrepant passages becomes evident. More than this, the targumist's expansions are frequently designed specifically to remedy apparent cases of incoherence in the biblical text, which, in turn, suggests that the targumist was indeed concerned with producing a coherent narrative on the horizontal dimension of Ps-J.

Moreover, analysis of the apparent contradictions above indicates that Ps-J's numerical additions demand a knowledge about the tradition to which the added number alludes,<sup>304</sup> and this testifies to the fact that the targumist had expectations of his readers either to possess or to pursue this knowledge of Jewish tradition. For unless the reader was familiar with and understood the tradition behind any one of the targumist's expansions, the text would appear to be contradictory.<sup>305</sup> However, once the relevant tradition is taken into consideration, the narrative of Ps-J demonstrates coherence. This

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*Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 160, n. 5; Martin McNamara and Ernest G. Clarke, eds. and trans., *Targum Neofiti 1: Numbers* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Numbers*, *The Aramaic Bible 4*, eds. Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1995], 268, n. 26; and *Genesis Rabbah* 94.9). Pace Maher, however, I fail to see a necessary inconsistency here, inasmuch as Jochebed can be easily understood to be implicitly included at Ps-J Exod 1:5: וְהוּא סְכוּם כָּל נַפְשָׁתָא נַפְקֵי יִרְכָא דִיעֻקְבָּ שׁוּבְעִין “The *sum total* of the persons who were direct descendants of Jacob was seventy.” Jochebed, being the daughter of Levi and therefore a descendant of Jacob, may be considered to be included in the statement of Exod 1:5.

<sup>304</sup> On additions in speech acts that presuppose knowledge of preceding utterances, see Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 111.

<sup>305</sup> See Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 16.



discussion, then, commends the view that the targumist was scrupulous in his integration of Jewish tradition into his rendition of the text and that he took care to craft a narrative that was consistent even, and especially, at the level of minute detail.

## CHAPTER 5

### APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN PSEUDO-JONATHAN:

#### MISCELLANEOUS

##### 5.1 Introduction

The present chapter studies a selection of apparent contradictions that are not defined by any one theme, but which encompass an array of topics and appear in a variety of contexts in Ps-J. Analysis of these seemingly inconsistent passages seeks to demonstrate further that the passages in question need not necessarily be considered contradictory, inasmuch as an underlying coherence may be discerned. That is, where the surface text of certain passages appears to produce an inconsistency, discovery of the targumist's assumptions about the content of those passages reveals how his assumptions sustained the congruity between the conflicting texts. In fact, the following analysis seeks to show that the passages in question are products of the targumist's careful exegesis of the text—that these expansions derive from the targumist's interpretive interaction with individual words in the text, with the immediate and broader contexts of the Torah, and with Jewish tradition that informs the portions of the Torah in question. Although at times the targumist appears to make no effort to make plain the literary elements that would foster the coherence in his narrative, the study below shows that he did, indeed, presuppose a coherent relationship between passages in question in his narrative. Once the assumptions of the targumist are taken into consideration, the underlying coherence of the narrative becomes evident.

## 5.2 Apparent Contradictions between a Variety of Miscellaneous Statements

### 5.2.1 Genesis 3:17 vs. 5:29

The apparent point of conflict between Ps-J Gen 3:17 and 5:29 concerns the cause on account of which God curses the earth. At 3:17, Ps-J seems to suggest that the fault lies with the earth; but at 5:29, Ps-J appears to indict mankind. Maher, therefore, writes: “This tradition in our present verse [Ps-J Gen 3:17] contradicts Ps.-J. Gen 5:29, where it is said that the earth was cursed ‘because of the sins of the children of men.’”<sup>306</sup> The passages read as follows:

#### Gen 3:17

MT וְלָאָדָם אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתֶּךָ וְתָאֵכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכְל מִמֶּנּוּ אַרְוֶה הָאֲדָמָה בְּעִבּוּרְךָ בְּעֵצְבוֹן תֹּאכְלֶנָּה כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:

NRSV And to the man he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

Ps-J ולאדם אמר ארום קבילת למימר אינתתך ואכלת מן פירי אילנא דפקידתך  
למימר לא תיכול מיניה ליטא ארעא בגין דלא חויאת לך חובך בעמל תיכלינא  
תיכלינה כל יומי חיך

Ps-J And to Adam he said, “Because you listened to *the word of* your wife, and ate of *the fruit of* the tree concerning which I commanded you saying, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ **cursed be the earth because it did not declare to you your sin**; by toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

#### Gen 5:29

MT וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ נֹחַ לֵאמֹר זֶה יִנְחַמְנוּ מִמַּעֲשֵׂנוּ וּמִעֵצְבוֹן יִלְיֶנוּ מִן־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אָרְרָה יְהוָה:

NRSV He named him Noah, saying, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the toil of our hands.”

<sup>306</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 28, n. 33. Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion.

- Ps-J וקרא ית שמיה נח למימר דין ינחמיננא מפולחננא דלא מצלחא ומליעות ידנא מן ארעא דלטא יי בגין חובי בני אינשא
- Ps-J And he called his name Noah, saying, “This one will bring us relief from our work *which does not prosper*, and from the toil of our hands, from the earth **that the Lord cursed because of the sins of the sons of man**.

A close look at these passages demonstrates that the tradition that places the blame on the earth is intended to work together with, not to the exclusion of or against, the tradition that places the blame on the sins of mankind. This can be demonstrated with the following three observations about the literary structure of the Ps-J text.

First, the point of departure for the expansions at 3:17 and 5:29 is the same exegetical question that arises out of the Hebrew text: Why does God curse the earth?<sup>307</sup> Abraham Geiger points to this very issue, stating that “the earth receives the curse on account of mankind, that it, the guiltless, should expiate the guilt of mankind.”<sup>308</sup> Neither 3:17 nor 5:29 in the Hebrew provides a specific answer. While MT 3:17 generally states that the cause of this curse is somehow related to Adam: אַרְוֵרָה הָאֲדָמָה בְּעִבּוּרָךְ,<sup>309</sup> MT

<sup>307</sup> For various rabbinic propositions as to why the earth was cursed, see Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: בראשית, 1:63 [סג]; Naftali, ed., על ספר בראשית: אוצר המדרשים: 28–29 (כח-כט); and A. Melinek, “The Doctrine of Reward and Punishment in Biblical and Early Rabbinic Writings,” in *Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, eds. H. J. Zimmels, J. Rabbinowitz, and L. Finestein (London: Soncino, 1967), 288. Onqelos, Neofiti, the Neofiti Marginalia, LXX, the Peshitta, and the Vulgate do not provide a reason as to why the earth was cursed. On the nature of the curse of the earth, see Genesis Rabbah 20:8; 25:2–3; Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma*, 1:12; and Romans 8:20–22.

<sup>308</sup> In the original: “1 Mos. 3,17 is allen alten Uebers. hinderlich, dass die Erde der Fluch treffe wegen des Menschen, dass sie, die Unschuldige, die Schuld des Menschen büßen solle” (Abraham Geiger, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der inneren Entwicklung des Judentums. Zweite Auflage mit einer Einführung von Prof. Dr. Paul Kahle und einem Anhang enthaltend: Nachträge zur Urschrift, Verzeichnis der Bibelstellen und Bibliographie zusammengestellt und bearbeitet von Dr. Nachum Czortkowski*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Mada, 1928 [Breslau: Julius Hainauer, 1857], 456).

<sup>309</sup> Commenting on MT Gen 3:17, Friedman writes, “As a consequence of human behavior, the environment suffers”; and with regard to 4:11, he adds: “Central again is the idea that the environment becomes hostile to humans as a result of human corruption” (Richard Elliot Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah with a New English Translation and the Hebrew Text* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001],

5:29 offers no reason whatsoever, simply stating: הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אֲרָרָה יְהוָה. PRE raises the same question explicitly and then offers its own answer:

אם אדם חטא, ארץ מה חטאה שנתאררה. אלא שלא הגידה המעשה, לפיכך נתאררה.<sup>310</sup>  
If it was Adam who sinned, what was the sin of the earth that it was cursed?  
Indeed, that it did not pronounce the act; therefore it was cursed.<sup>311</sup>

This informational gap in the Hebrew prompted Ps-J to introduce the expansions at 3:17 and 5:29.<sup>312</sup> Thus, underlying these expansions is the one and the same question that the targumist encountered in the Hebrew text.

Second, Ps-J Gen 3:17—which seems to suggest that the fault lies with the earth—in fact affirms the notion presented at Ps-J Gen 5:29 that mankind bears guilt for God’s cursing the earth. At Ps-J Gen 3:17, the addition בגין דלא חויאת לך חובך recognizes the guilt of Adam in its inclusion of the term חובך. Adam’s guilt, which is conveyed in the

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24 and 28, respectively). With regard to Ps-J Gen 5:29, Maher writes: “After the sin of Adam neither the soil nor the animal kingdom was responsive to man’s efforts. After the birth of Noah, however, the soil became productive and there was order in the animal world” (Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 37, n. 11). Looking at the text from a source-critical perspective, Westermann states: “The curse is not directed precisely at the man, but at the ground because of the man. It must follow the man then, and it does in v. 19a\*, b\*” (Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 263); and also: “Behind the different parts of vv. 17–19\* are different answers to the same question—why is man’s work, and in particular the work of the farmer, so difficult and so full of obstacles. These different answers, once independent, go right back to the stage of oral tradition. It is unlikely that vv. 17–19\* can be separated into literary sources. One can only try to find out the origin of the motifs and how they hang together” (Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 263). And see Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 372.

<sup>310</sup> Aharon, ed., פרקי דרבי אליעזר, 66 (סז).

<sup>311</sup> Cf. the translation in Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 128. Note also how at Gen 4:10 Abel’s blood (blood being an inanimate object) cries out from the ground, an image that Onqelos, Ps-J, and Neofiti preserve (cf. Genesis Rabbah 22.9). For brief grammatical remarks on the verse, see Gerard J. Kuiper, *The Pseudo-Jonathan Targum and Its Relationship to Targum Onkelos* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1972), 36.

<sup>312</sup> See Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 75, n. 156 for a brief discussion of additional interpretative renderings of this passage in other ancient texts.

Hebrew בַּעֲבוּרָךְ, is made explicit in the Aramaic חֻבּוּךְ. Teeter suggests that the targumist of Ps-J understood בַּעֲבוּרָךְ “on the basis of עֵבֶר” *to transgress*,” and expressed this understanding with חֻבּוּךְ.<sup>313</sup> The association of Adam with sin, therefore, is evident in the Ps-J text. Considering Ps-J Gen 3:17 in the light of PRE, Schmerler perceives this to be the case, stating: “...in what way did the earth sin that it should be cursed? Indeed, it is because of you [Adam]! It was you who brought this [curse] upon [the earth].”<sup>314</sup> In other words, the expansion acknowledges that Adam does bear responsibility for the curse of the earth. Therefore, even if 3:17 condemns the earth for not declaring Adam’s guilt, the guilt of Adam is still not erased from, but remains in, the Aramaic narrative. Both

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<sup>313</sup> Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 75, n. 156. Hirsch, however, objects to this reading, stating: “In our verse, then, בעבורך means not ‘because you sinned,’ but ‘for your sake, for the sake of rectifying your ways’”; yet in making this negative claim Hirsch implies that such a reading is possible (italics original; Hirsch, *Hirsch Chumash: Sefer Bereshis*, 110). Teeter, moreover, further notes that Ps-J translates בעבורך “doubly as ‘on your account’ and ‘when you sinned’” (Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 75, n. 156). A similar understanding of בעבורך on the basis of עֵבֶר, as Teeter also points out, is evident in Theodotion: ἐν τῇ παραβάσει σου (Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 75, n. 156; see John William Wevers, ed., *Genesis*, *Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974], 1:93). And see also Gordon who observes that in translating Deut 29:11 “The Syriac translator took BH ‘ābar in this verse to mean ‘transgress’, whereas in this context it denotes entering into a covenant (‘so that you may enter into the covenant of the Lord your God’)” (MT: לְעִבְרָךְ בְּבְרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ; Peshitta: ܠܥܒܪܐ ܕܥܒܪܐ ܕܥܒܪܐ ܕܥܒܪܐ) (Gordon, “‘Converse Translation’ in the Targums and Beyond,” 7).

<sup>314</sup> The full quotation of Schmerler appears as follows: פּי' בשביל שלא הגידה לך חטאך. כי היא כאמו. והוא או' (בפר"א שם), דאל"כ שממנה נוצר. ועלי' לפקח על דרכיו. וכמשל רש"י ... הבריות מקללות שדים שינק מהם. והוא או' (בפר"א שם), דאל"כ זה “The interpretation of ‘it did not declare to you your sin’ [is as follows]: [The earth] is like his mother from whom he was formed. It is, therefore, incumbent upon her to oversee his ways. As a proverb mentioned by Rashi states...: ‘The created ones [i.e., the people] curse the breasts from which he nursed.’ Thus it states (in PRE): For if this were not so, then in what way did the earth sin that it should be cursed? Indeed, [ultimately] it is because of you [Adam]! For it was you who brought this [curse] upon [the earth]” (Schmerler, *בראשית: בראשית*, 37). Cf. Luke 11:27, in which verse a woman exclaims to Jesus: “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!”

expansions, in effect—at 3:17 and at 5:29—recognize the guilt of mankind in the cursing of the earth.

Moreover, Ps-J's addition בני אינשא at 5:29 betrays literary dependence on, and therefore awareness of, 3:17. This is evident in the following two points: First, MT Gen 5:29 provides no reason on account of which the earth is cursed, let alone the specific claim that the earth is cursed on account of mankind. The Hebrew text merely states that God cursed the earth (מִן־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אֶרְרָה יְהוָה). Nevertheless, Ps-J Gen 5:29 puts forth the same cause for the curse that appears at 3:17 in חובד (בְּעִבּוֹרָךְ). At 5:29, the singular suffix in חובד (בְּעִבּוֹרָךְ)—in reference to Adam—is applied representatively to all of mankind in Ps-J in בני אינשא. Second, Ps-J Gen 5:29 uses the same noun חוב that appears at Ps-J Gen 3:17 to refer to the sin of mankind. Of the various terms for guilt or sin that the targumist could have utilized, he opted for the very word that appears at 3:17.<sup>315</sup> These two observations suggest that the targumist relied on 3:17 for his interpretation of 5:29. While he carried over the tradition from 3:17 to 5:29 that mankind is culpable, he did not make any statement at 5:29 that stands in direct contradiction to 3:17. The targumist's manner of dependence on 3:17 contends that the targumist intended to produce a coherent, not a conflicting, literary relationship between these two passages.

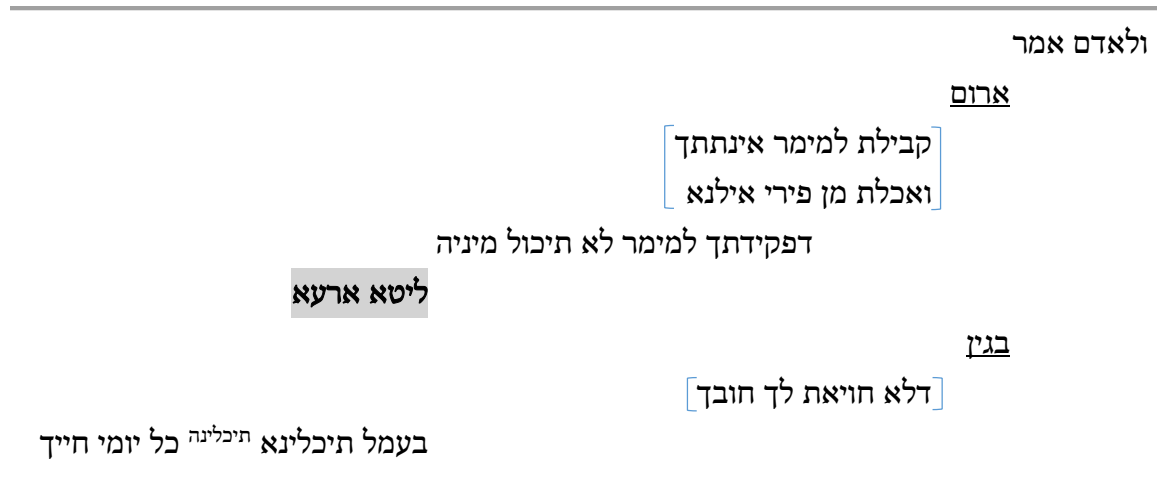
Finally, the structure of Ps-J Gen 3:17 (as well as the content of the broader context of chapter 3) also indicates that these two traditions—the sin of mankind and the

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<sup>315</sup> Among other terms, the targumist could have chosen to use סורחן (e.g., Gen 31:36; 39:23; 41:9; Deut 9:27), עבירה (e.g., Gen 25:29; Lev 26:18, 21, 24, 28; Num 35:25), חטאה (e.g., Gen 4:7; Exod 34:7; Lev 16:16), מרוד (e.g., Gen 3:24 [verbal form]; Exod 34:7), etc.

sin of the earth—are meant to co-exist coherently. The following diagram of Ps-J 3:17 seeks to illustrate this point:

**Table 6: Block Diagram of Genesis 3:17**



The verse begins with the formula ולאדם אמר that introduces direct speech, in this case, God’s speech to Adam.<sup>316</sup> This direct speech contains two main clauses that God articulates: 1) ליטא ארעא and 2) בעמל תיכלינא תיכלינא כל יומי חייד. The first main clause ליטא ארעא is of primary interest to our discussion. On each end of the main clause—that is, prior and subsequent to the clause—appear subordinate clauses that serve as causal premises for the main clause in question. The two preceding subordinate clauses, introduced by the particle ארום, list the sin of Adam: 1) ארום קבילת למימר אינתתך and 2) ואכלת מן פירי אילנא. The subordinate clause following the main clause, introduced by

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<sup>316</sup> On quote formulas in narrative discourse, see Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 48.



the particle בגין, lists the sin of the earth: בגין דלא חויאת לך חובך. These three subordinate clauses explain why the earth was cursed. The earth was cursed 1) because Adam obeyed the voice of his wife, 2) because Adam ate of the fruit of the tree, and 3) because the earth did not declare Adam's sin.<sup>317</sup> In the context of this verse then—which reflects the logic of the targumist—both Adam and the earth are culpable for the curse of the earth. The final main clause—בעמל תיכלינא תיכלינה כל יומי חייד—names the practical ramifications that Adam will suffer on account of his sin and on account of the sin of the earth. The implication of this structure in the passage is that the inserted tradition that the earth is (partially) responsible for the curse serves specifically as an addition to—not as a replacement of or a contradiction to—the tradition that Adam's sin is the cause for the curse of the earth.

Precisely how these two traditions were imagined to co-exist harmoniously is another presupposition of the targumist's that went unstated. Seeking to answer the question as to why the earth was cursed, Rashi writes:

ארורה האדמה בעבורך: מעלה לך דברים ארורים כגון זבובים ופרעושים ונמלים, משל ליוצא לתרבות רעה והבריות מקללות שדים שינק מהם.<sup>318</sup>

Cursed be the ground for your sake: It will bring up cursed things for you, such as flies, fleas, and ants. This can be compared to one who falls into evil ways, and the created ones [i.e., the people] curse the breasts from which he suckled.

As Rashi compares the relationship between a mother and a son (wherein the mother is cursed for her evil son) to the relationship between the earth and Adam, he implicitly

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<sup>317</sup> On causation clauses, see Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 119.

<sup>318</sup> Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: בראשית, 1:63 (סג).

attributes some guilt to the earth for the sin of Adam. Relying on Rashi and taking this concept further, as already quoted in part above (see n. 314), Schmerler explains:

The interpretation of 'it did not declare to you your sin' [is as follows]: [The earth] is like his mother from whom he was formed. It is, therefore, incumbent upon her to oversee his ways. As a proverb mentioned by Rashi states....: 'The peoples curse the breasts from which he nursed.'<sup>319</sup>

Schmerler appeals here to the inherent relationship between Adam and the earth (אדם and אדמה in Hebrew; אדם and ארעא in Aramaic) that appears at Gen 3:17–23 (cf. Gen 2:7).

This relationship expresses itself in the narrative in three ways: 1) the earth is the source of origin for Adam (vv. 19, 23); 2) the earth is the source of sustenance for Adam (vv. 17, 18, 19, 23); and 3) the earth is the place of return for Adam (v. 19).<sup>320</sup> According to the reasoning of Schmerler, this relationship between the earth and Adam is sufficiently intrinsic and participatory so as to implicate the earth in the sins of Adam. The earth, in other words, should have declared to Adam that the act of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was sin.<sup>321</sup> Not having done this, the earth participated (albeit, by means of its sin of omission) in Adam's sin (of commission). This reasoning accounts for the targumist's expansion of Gen 3:17.

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<sup>319</sup> In the original: פ'י בשביל שלא הגידה לך חטאך. כי היא כאמו שממנה נוצר. ועלי' לפקח על דרכיו. (Schmerler, בראשית, 37). אהבת יהונתן; בראשית, 37). ... הבריות מקללות שדים שינק מהם

<sup>320</sup> Note, also, that according to Ps-J Gen 3:19, Adam (as representative of all of mankind) will arise from the earth. Commenting on MT Gen 3:23, Alter writes: "This reminder of the first man's clayey creatureliness occurs as a kind of refrain in this chapter, first in the act of God's fashioning man, then in God's curse, and now in the banishment. It is a mere thing shaped from clay that has aspired to be like a god" (Alter, *Genesis*, 15, n. 23).

<sup>321</sup> At the same time, as noted above (see n. 314), Schmerler still exclaims that Adam is the culprit: אהבת יהונתן; בראשית, 37). (Schmerler, בראשית, 37). אד הוא בעבורך. ואתה גרמת לה זה

In the end, the analysis of Ps-J Gen 3:17 and 5:29 suggests that the apparent contradiction between these two passages does not necessarily prove to be actual. Since 3:17 recognizes both the sin of Adam and the sin of the earth, it, in effect, does not rescind 5:29, which recognizes specifically the sin of mankind (with Adam as the representative). Rather, 3:17 renders the full perspective of the tradition, while 5:29 renders the partial perspective of the tradition.

### 5.2.2 Genesis 11:29 vs. 20:12

An apparent contradiction seems to emerge between Ps-J Gen 11:29 and 20:12 regarding the familial relationship between Abraham (Abram) and Sarah (Sarai). On the one hand, 11:29 imagines Sarai to be Abram’s niece; on the other hand, 20:12 seems to suggest that Sarah is Abraham’s cousin.<sup>322</sup> Shinan writes: “According to 11:29, Sarai is identified as Ischah, daughter of Haran, brother of Abraham. At 20:12, she is the daughter of Abraham’s uncle. The two statements are not given to compromise.”<sup>323</sup> The text and the family trees representing the text, as Shinan understands them, are as follows:

#### Genesis 11:29

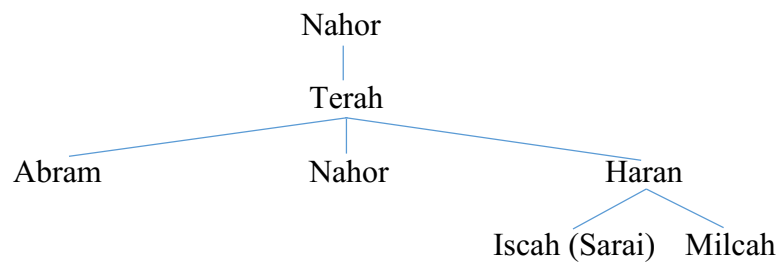
MT וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם וְנָחֹר לְהֵם נָשִׁים שֵׁם אִשְׁת־אַבְרָם שָׂרַי וְשֵׁם אִשְׁת־נְחֹר מְלֵכָה בַת־הָרָן  
אַבְי־מְלֵכָה וְאָבִי יִסְכָּה:

<sup>322</sup> Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack these expansions. Vermes remarks that the tradition that Sarah is Abraham’s niece (rather than cousin) “appears to be the traditional belief” (Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Studia Post-Biblica 4 [Leiden: Brill, 1973], 75; see also Frenkel, *מדרש ואגדה*, 1:74–75, 74, n. 12, and p. 129). See Genesis Rabbah 18.5; 52.11; b. Meg. 14a; b. Sanh. 58a–b, 69b; *Midrash Psalms* 118.11; Alcuin, *Book of Jasher*, 22, at 9:3; Josephus, *Ant.* 1 §151; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:214, n. 38; Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:143, n. 7; see Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., *תורת חיים: בראשית*, 1:146 (קמו).

<sup>323</sup> Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 85, n. 46. See also Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:139; and Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 51, n. 20.

- NRSV Abram and Nahor took wives; the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah. She was the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and Iscah
- Ps-J ונסיב אברם ונחור להון נשין שום איתת אברם שרי ושום איתת נחור מלכא ברת הרן אבוי דמלכא ואבוי דיסכה היא שרי
- Ps-J And Abram and Nahor took wives to themselves; the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah—*she is Sarai*.

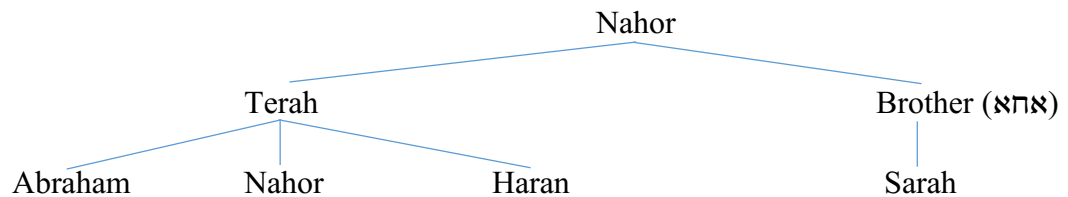
**Figure 4: Family Tree of Nahor at Genesis 11:29**



**Genesis 20:12**

- MT וְגַם־אֲמִנָּה אֶחְתִּי בַת־אָבִי הוּא אָדָּךְ לֹא בַת־אִמִּי וְתַהֲיִלִּי לְאִשָּׁה:
- NRSV Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife
- Ps-J וברם בקושטא אחתי ברת אחא דאיבא היא ברם לא מגניסת אימא והות לי לאינתו
- Ps-J Besides, she is, in truth my sister, the daughter *of the brother* of my father, but not *of the family* of my mother; and she became my wife.

**Figure 5: Family Tree of Nahor at Genesis 20:12**



In considering these two passages, Shinan contends that because the two statements are separated by eight chapters, the Targum is able to contain the incompatible claims (a category of contradictions he designates as הקשר ארוך “extended context”).<sup>324</sup> This great gap, he argues, mitigates the severity of the discrepancy inasmuch as two or three weeks of time would pass between the two readings of the passages.<sup>325</sup> This explanation, however, fails to satisfy on two accounts: 1) the tradition that Abraham married his niece, as Ps-J Gen 11:29 states, was prevalent in Jewish tradition, which Shinan himself recognizes;<sup>326</sup> therefore, even if some time passes between the reading of 11:29 and 20:12, the claim that the audience would simply overlook a contradiction to a well-known tradition about Abraham and Sarah is dubious; and 2) apparent contradictions of a similar nature appear in very close textual proximity in Ps-J, sometimes in adjacent chapters (e.g., Ps-J Gen 37:32 and 38:25) and adjacent verses (e.g., Ps-J Gen 10:8–12), and sometimes, even, within the very same verse (e.g., Ps-J Exod 32:5), which instances are discussed below. In effect, the supposition that textual gaps between contradictions allowed the contradictions to coexist fails to convince.

Vermes explains the discrepancy by suggesting that the claim at 20:12 that Abraham married his cousin intended, in essence, to supersede the claim at 11:29 that Abram married his niece. He surmises that the aunt-nephew marriage prohibition (Lev

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<sup>324</sup> Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:139; cf. Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 85, n. 46.

<sup>325</sup> In the original: המרחק הטכסטואלי הרב שבין שני פתרונות אלו (8 פרקים) מקוחח, כמובן, את חריפות (Shinan, הבעיה, שכן — כפי שאמרתי — גם אותו מתורגמן יכול, בהפרש של שבועיים-שלושה, לסתור את עצמו (Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:139). See Vermes, *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies*, 40–41.

<sup>326</sup> Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:139, n. 81.

18:12–13; 20:17) was extended to apply to the uncle-niece marriage as well—which, as he himself admits, is actually not explicitly prohibited in the Bible—therefore, Vermes writes, “Ps.-Jonathan’s interpretation of Genesis xx. 12, that Sarah was Abraham’s cousin, was an attempt to satisfy everyone.”<sup>327</sup> Shinan appropriately objects to this suggestion, stating that “the assumption of internal interaction between the two sections of Ps-J is impossible to prove.”<sup>328</sup> Indeed, Ps-J Gen 20:12 expresses no indication that it intends to supplant 11:29.

Schmerler and Ben-Mendel, in contrast to Shinan and Vermes, propose to read 20:12 in harmony with 11:29, that is, to understand אַחָא דְאִיבָא as referring to Abraham’s brother Haran, in this way viewing Sarah as Abraham’s niece, in agreement with 11:29. Schmerler proposes to emend the text of Ps-J, adding בַּר (“son”) into the text, so that the passage reads: “She is the daughter of the brother, *the son* of my father [ בַּר אַחָא בַּר ] אַהֲבַת יְהוֹנָתָן.”<sup>329</sup> Rendering the text in this way, Schmerler explains that “The meaning of this is that [Sarah] is the daughter of Haran, [Abraham’s] brother, the son of Terah.”<sup>330</sup> A

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<sup>327</sup> Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, 40–41; and cf. comments on an aunt-nephew marriage in Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS, 34; Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 277.

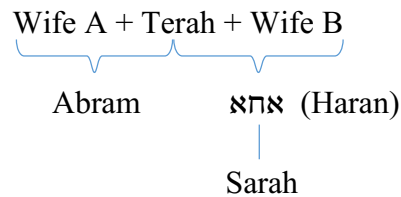
<sup>328</sup> In the original: אַגְדָּתָם שֶׁל מְתוּרְגְּמָנִים (Shinan, *אך הנחת קשר פנימי בין שני קטעי ת"י אין להוכיחה*, 1:139). Also, see Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 85, n. 46; and Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 51, n. 20.

<sup>329</sup> Italics mine. In the original: אַהֲבַת יְהוֹנָתָן; אַחָתִי בְרַת אַחָא בַּר אִיבָא הִיא (כַּצ"ל) (Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן*; בראשית, 168).

<sup>330</sup> In the original: פִּיל' שְׁהִיא בַת הָרֵן אַחִיו בֶּן תְּרַח (Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן*; בראשית, 168). He explains this by saying that “The daughters of sons are considered to be as though they were children themselves; therefore, [Abraham] referred to [Sarah] as the daughter of my father Terah. In this way she is his sister” (Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן*; בראשית, 168).

slightly different reading suggested by Ben-Mendel understands the passage in a similar way, as Ben-Mendel explains: “It appears that ‘The daughter of the brother of my father [ברת אחא דאיבא]’ should read ‘[The daughter of the brother] *from* my father [ברת אחא דאיבא].”<sup>331</sup> He reasons that reading the text as מאבא “from my father” rather than דאיבא “of the father” corresponds better to its parallel counterpart מגניסת אימא “from the lineage of my mother,” which, in turn, better articulates Abraham’s argument that Sarah is from Abraham’s *father’s* line, but not from Abraham’s *mother’s* line. The implication here is that Abraham and Haran had the same father, Terah, but that they had a different mother. This view can be diagrammed as follows:

**Figure 6: Diagram of the Family of Terah**



In contrast to Shinan and Vermes, then, Schmerler and Ben-Mendel are optimistic that the text of 20:12 can be read congruously with 11:29.

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<sup>331</sup> Italics mine. In the original: ברת אחא דאבא. נדצ"ל מאבא (Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על, 176 [התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות קורבא]). B. Sanh. 58b has a similar structure: “she is a sister to me in the following sense: she comes from my father, but not from my mother” (Jacob Shachter, H. Freedman, and I. Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Sanhedrin* [London: Soncino, 1987], 58b).

A careful look at the literary structure of Ps-J Gen 20:12 does suggest that in accordance with Ben-Mendel and Schmerler, viewing 20:12 and 11:29 as incongruous is unnecessary. As the discussion above shows, the Aramaic rendering ברת אחא דאיבא contains an ambiguity: Is אחא a reference to *the brother of Abraham's father* or to *the brother of Abraham*? In other words, which of the following two statements is Abraham articulating in his claim וברם בקושטא אחתי ברת אחא דאיבא היא ברם לא מגניסת אימא?

Indeed, she is my sister, the daughter of the brother of my father, but not of the lineage of my mother.

Or:

Indeed, she is my sister, the daughter of the brother, the one of my father, but not of the lineage of my mother.

The key element that demands particular attention in answering this question is the implication of the parallel structure of Abraham's two clauses, which the following block diagram outlines:<sup>332</sup>

**Table 7: Block Diagram of Genesis 20:12**

	וְגַם־אֶמְנָה אַחֲתִי	וּבְרָם בְּקוֹשְׁטָא אַחְתִּי
Statement A	בֵּת־אָבִי הוּא	בֵּרְת אַחָא דַאיבָא הִיא
Statement B	אֵד לֹא בֵּת־אִמִּי	בְרָם לֹא מְגַנִּיסַת אִימָא
	וְתַה־יְלִי לְאִשָּׁה	וְהוּת לִי לְאִינְתוּ

<sup>332</sup> See Greenstein, "How Does Parallelism Mean?" 41–70; idem, "Direct Discourse and Parallelism," 79–91; Berlin, "Parallelism," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5:155–62; Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 1–59, and on the "forgetting" of parallelism in rabbinic exegesis see 96–108.



Statement A and Statement B are inextricably linked and are intended to work hand-in-hand to prove Abraham's claim that Sarah is both his sister and his wife. In the Hebrew, this parallelism is clear: first, Abraham contends that Sarah is his *sister* because of her *relation* to the lineage of Abraham's father (בת־אבי); second, Abraham contends that Sarah is his *wife* because of her *lack of relation* to the lineage of Abraham's mother (לא בת־אמי). In the Aramaic, while this parallel structure is less obvious in the surface text, the parallelism, nevertheless, does prove to serve as the foundation of the text.

In his discussion of parallelism in "How Does Parallelism Mean?" Edward L. Greenstein argues that text that manifests parallel structure requires that attention be given not only to its surface structure but also to its deep structure, so that the meaning that appears "below the surface" might be discerned.<sup>333</sup> The surface structure represents the words explicitly stated in the line of the text; the deep structure represents the unstated "underlying relations" between the words in the text.<sup>334</sup> Whereas the surface structure of the text demonstrates a penchant for elision of words in parallel lines, argues Greenstein, the deep structure of the text helps to bring out the coherent meaning that the parallel lines intend to convey.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Greenstein, "How Does Parallelism Mean?" 46 (and 41–70). For some discussion of surface structure and deep structure in parallelism, and for some critical interaction with Greenstein's work, see Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, 18–30, and 132–34; idem, "Parallelism," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5:155–62; and for further discussion of surface vs. deep structure, see Plett, "Intertextualities," 9–10; van Dijk, *Some Aspects of Text Grammars*, 34–162; Schmidt, *Texttheorie*, 156–58; Teeter, *Scribal Laws*, 177, n. 11; de Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, 26–27; 30, nn. 16 and 19; 49; 57–58.

<sup>334</sup> Greenstein, "How Does Parallelism Mean?" 46.

<sup>335</sup> Greenstein, "How Does Parallelism Mean?" 46–54, esp. 53–54; and see Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 87–94.

A case study with which Greenstein illustrates this point comes from Psalm 50:8:

Not for-your-sacrifices do-I-reprove- you	לֹא עַל-זִבְחֶיךָ אוֹכִיחֶךָ
(Nor for) your-burnt-offerings ever before-me (do-I-reprove-you).	וְעוֹלֹתֶיךָ לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד

Greenstein explains that “It is only by acknowledging deep structure that the ... verse, Ps 50:8, makes sense.”<sup>336</sup> He proceeds to state:

Ignoring deep structure in the second line would mean: ‘And-your-burnt-offerings are-ever before-me.’ This creates a ludicrous non-sequitur. Clearly the second line must be understood as it usually has been, to contain the phrases ‘not for’ and ‘do-I-reprove-you’ in its deep structure, although these constituents are deleted in the surface representation.<sup>337</sup>

From this, he derives the following principle: “Illustrations such as this suffice to establish the need to examine deep as well as surface structure in the analysis of parallelism.”<sup>338</sup>

Application of this principle to the parallel statements at Ps-J Gen 20:12 reveals that the targumic text exhibits various gaps, that is, omissions of various locutions; and this produces the ambiguity mentioned above—the precise meaning of אַחָא דְאַיבָא.<sup>339</sup> The surface structure of the parallel lines demonstrates four omissions. First, statement B lacks the subject בְּרַת אַחָא, which is to be supplied from statement A. Second, statement B lacks the pronoun הִיא, also to be supplied from statement A. Third, statement B lacks

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<sup>336</sup> Greenstein, “How Does Parallelism Mean?” 47.

<sup>337</sup> Greenstein, “How Does Parallelism Mean?” 47.

<sup>338</sup> Greenstein, “How Does Parallelism Mean?” 47.

<sup>339</sup> On differentiation between parallel lines, see Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 22–23; and on ellipses, see Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 87–94.

the particle **ד**, the counterpart to **ד** in statement A. Fourth, statement A lacks the phrase **מגניסת**, to be supplied from statement B. The following diagram presents the text with the ellipses identified and filled (underlined and in red):

**Table 8: Block Diagram of Genesis 20:12 with the Ellipses Filled**

	וּבְרָם בְּקוֹשֵׁטָא אַחְתִּי
Statement A	בְּרַת אַחָא דְ <b>מְגִנִּיסַת</b> אִיבָא הִיא
Statement B	בְּרַת אַחָא דְ <b>מְגִנִּיסַת</b> אִימָא <b>הִיא</b>
	וְהוּת לִי לְאִינְתוּ

When the ellipses in each statement are filled on account of the text in the corresponding slots of the parallel lines, the meaning of each statement becomes unequivocal and the ambiguity in the text sees resolution. Abraham is stating:

Sarah is the daughter of the brother [who comes from the lineage] of my father, but [she is] not [the daughter of the brother] who comes from the lineage of my mother.

In other words, **אַחָא דְאִיבָא** refers to Abraham's brother, and Sarah is imagined to be

Abraham's niece: she comes from Abraham's brother who had the same father as

Abraham, though not the same mother as Abraham.

This analysis also demonstrates how the parallel structure that is obvious in the Hebrew text is also the foundation of the Aramaic text: Sarah is Abraham's *sister* because of her *relation* to the lineage of Abraham's father (via Abraham's brother); and Sarah is Abraham's *wife* because of her *lack of relation* to the lineage of Abraham's mother (because Abraham's brother had a different mother). In short, reading this passage with

attention to the deep structure of the text reveals that the statements imagine Sarah to be Abraham's niece.<sup>340</sup>

The warrant for considering the deep structure of Ps-J Gen 20:12 is the potential fracture in the parallel symmetry in the surface structure of the text, which results in a nonsensical argument on the part of Abraham. The force of Abraham's argument—inherited from the Hebrew text and retained in the deep structure of the Aramaic text—is the “father/mother” antithesis: Sarah is Abraham's *sister* on account of her *relation* to the lineage of his *father*; and Sarah is Abraham's *wife* on account of her *lack of relation* to the lineage of his *mother*. However, the grammatically potential reading of this passage that Sarah is the daughter of Abraham's uncle—rather than the daughter of Abraham's brother—completely explodes this symmetry and, in effect, compromises Abraham's defense. For according to such a reading, Sarah is removed from the lineage of Abraham's father; and yet, as though to serve as a counterpoint to this, Sarah is still stated *not* to be from the lineage of Abraham's mother. The relevance of the latter statement is altogether indiscernible inasmuch as the fact is self-evident: if Sarah is the daughter of Abraham's uncle, then quite obviously she is not the daughter of Abraham's mother, unless Abraham's uncle and Abraham's mother gave birth to Sarah. In other words, the “father/mother” antithesis is replaced by an “uncle/mother” antithesis, and, in effect, the force of Abraham's defense founders. The nonsensical structure looks as follows:

Sarah = the lineage of Abraham's *uncle*  
Sarah ≠ the lineage of Abraham's *mother*

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<sup>340</sup> Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, 75.

Consequently, Statement A and Statement B no longer work together as two counterparts of the same argument. The two statements, rather, articulate two claims that are unrelated to each other.

Attention to the deep structure of this passage, on the other hand, makes manifest the parallel symmetry that obtains between the two statements; as a result, Abraham's defense does deliver forcefully. This parallel symmetry looks as follows:

Sarah = the lineage of Abraham's *brother's father*  
Sarah  $\neq$  the lineage of Abraham's *brother's mother*

According to this formulation, the two sentences work hand-in-hand to demonstrate two sides of the same coin. To echo Greenstein above, ignoring the deep structure underlying the two statements results in two parallel lines that lack parallel symmetry and produce an incoherent argument; but acknowledging the deep structure in this verse reveals the symmetry between the two lines and renders a cogent defense on Abraham's part.

By introducing these expansions, the targumist resolved what he perceived to be a textual difficulty in the Hebrew text as it pertained to the meaning of the term **בת** and the implications this had for the meaning of Abraham's argument. In other words: Is **בת** being used in its strict sense to mean that Sarah is the *daughter* of Abraham's father but not of Abraham's mother (a half-sister)? Or is **בת** being used broadly to mean that Sarah is a *descendant* of Abraham's father but not of Abraham's mother?<sup>341</sup> The impetus for

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<sup>341</sup> See Vermes, *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies*, 40–41. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “**בַּת**,” BDB, 123–24; Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, “**בַּת**,” HALOT, 1:165–66; Jastrow, “**בַּת**,” in *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 200.

even raising this question is the legal implications the meaning of this word may have for the kinship between Abraham and Sarah. As Vermes explains:

Since Leviticus xvii. 9 and xx. 17 forbids marriage between brother and sister, it seemed scandalous to [Jewish interpreters] that the father of the Chosen People should have disobeyed a divine law. Therefore the word ‘sister’ was broadened to include ‘niece’. Although the corresponding nephew-aunt relationship was forbidden in marriage [Lev 18:13], the uncle-niece degree of kinship was not explicitly prohibited.<sup>342</sup>

Even beyond the legality of this kinship, Vermes writes that Abraham’s claim that Sarah is *בת-אבי* generated a “scandalous” impression that “the Chosen People were descended from an incestuous union”; not surprisingly, the targumist sought to resolve this by interpreting the meaning of the term *בת* more broadly.<sup>343</sup>

The targumist certainly had biblical precedent for interpreting terms of familial relationship broadly: at Gen 34:17, the brothers of Dinah refer to Dinah as their daughter (*בתנו*);<sup>344</sup> at Ruth 2:8; 3:10 and 11, Boaz addresses Ruth as a daughter (*בתי*; cf. Ruth 1:11, 13; 2:2);<sup>345</sup> by analogy, at Gen 13:8, Abram, who is Lot’s uncle, refers to Lot as a brother

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<sup>342</sup> Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, 75–76. See Shinan, *של מתורגמנים*, 1:139. On the discussion of Abraham marrying his half-sister Sarah, see Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 143; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 318; Benno Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora: Genesis* (Berlin: Schocken, 1934), 471–72; Speiser, *Genesis*, 149–50; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 221; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 326. Cf. also Deut 27:22, but see 2 Sam 13:13.

<sup>343</sup> Vermes, *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies*, 40–41.

<sup>344</sup> Westermann remarks, “The formulation ‘our daughter’ does not fit v. 17; it is to be understood as corresponding to ‘your daughter’ in v. 8” (Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 541).

<sup>345</sup> Remarking on the non-literal sense of *בת* specifically in this context of Ruth 2:8, Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Tikva Frymer-Kensky write: “This language need not convey biological kinship but often indicates differences in age or status” (Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Ruth*, The JPS Bible Commentary [Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2011], 29).

(אָחִים אֲנָחְנוּ),<sup>346</sup> similarly, at 29:15, Laban, Jacob’s uncle, refers to Jacob as a brother (אָחִי אֶתְהָ) (and cf. Gen 31:32, 46; Lev 10:4).<sup>347</sup> In line with such broader understandings of the terms of familial relationship, the targumist rendered בת־אבי as אחא דאיבא and בת־אמי as מגניסת אימא, in order to indicate that the meaning of the term בת was not to be understood literally; rather, בת, in his view, was to be interpreted to mean that Sarah was a *descendant* of Abraham’s father while *not a descendant* of Abraham’s mother.

In the end, the parallel structure at 20:12 demands analysis of both its surface structure and its deep structure, inasmuch as parallelism demonstrates a penchant for elision of text. While the surface text is ambiguous in that it can be understood as introducing an otherwise unknown cousin-cousin relationship between Abraham and Sarah, the deep structure renders an unambiguous meaning to Abraham’s statements that Sarah is his niece, in accordance with Ps-J Gen 11:29, as well as with Jewish tradition in general. The targumist, as he is wont to do, expected his audience to read each line of the verse with careful attention to the context in which the lines appear, and to fill the gaps in each line in order to discern the implied material in his expansion of the text.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Wenham remarks, “‘Brothers,’ אָחִים, is used here in the sense of ‘kinsmen’.... Lot was in fact Abram’s nephew, his brother’s son” (Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 297).

<sup>347</sup> Specifically on Gen 31:46, see Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 9 and 30–31.

<sup>348</sup> Compare an analogous text-interpretative situation at Neofiti Exod 6:20: whereas in the Hebrew text Amram is married to Jochebed, *his aunt* (וַיִּקַּח עִמְרָם אֶת־יְוֹכָבֵד דָּדָתוֹ לֹא לְאִשָּׁה), in Neofiti Amram is married to Jochebed, *the daughter of his father’s brother*, that is, *his cousin* (וּנְסַב עִמְרָם ית יוכבד ברת אחוי (דאבוי לה לאתה). So also LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate. Recognizing the aunt-nephew marriage-law, Propp explains, “Since such a union is forbidden by Lev 18:12; 20:19 (P), by Priestly canons Aaron, Miriam and Moses are of illegitimate birth! This must be why LXX, Syr, Vg and Tg. *Neofiti I* make Amram and

### 5.2.3 Genesis 37:32 vs. 38:25

Ps-J Gen 37:32 and 38:25 appear to produce a discrepant picture with regard to who asks Jacob to identify Joseph's bloodied garment. At 37:32, Ps-J seems to implicate the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah (i.e., Gad and Asher of Zilpah, and Dan and Naphtali of Bilhah) in this deed; but at 38:25, Ps-J has Judah assume the responsibility for addressing Jacob. On account of this, Ginsburger includes Ps-J Gen 37:32 and 38:25 in his list of contradictions in Ps-J in a section he titles: "Haggadische Zusätze in Ps. Jon. widersprechen sich."<sup>349</sup> The passages read as follows:

#### Gen 37:32

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| MT   | וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶת־כְּתֻנַת הַפְּטִים וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אֲבִיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ זֹאת מְצָאנוּ הַכְּרִי־נָא הַכְּתֻנָּה בְּנֶךְ הוּא אִם־לֹא:  |
| NRSV | They had the long robe with sleeves taken to their father, and they said, "This we have found; see now whether it is your son's robe or not."   |
| Ps-J | ושדרו ביד בני זלפה ובני בלהה ית פרגוד מציר ואייתיוהי לות אבוהון ואמרו דא אשכחנא אישתמודע כדון מפרגודא דברך היא אין לה   |
| Ps-J | And they sent the <i>embroidered</i> cloak <i>with the sons of Zilpah and the sons of Bilhah</i> . And they brought it to their father and they said, "We have found this. <b>Identify, now, whether it is your son's tunic or not.</b> " |

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Jochebed mere cousins in 6:20" (Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 277; see also Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS, 34, n. 28; Plaut, Bamberger, and Hallo, *The Torah*, 421).

<sup>349</sup> Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, XX. See also Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 130, n. 29; Levine, "מקורות סותרים בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל," 36–38; idem, "Internal Contradictions in Targum Jonathan Ben Uzziel to Genesis," 118–19; idem, *Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 36; Shinan, אגדתם של מתורגמנים, 1:141–42; idem, "The 'Palestinian' Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions," 82–86. Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack the expansion at 37:32; but cf. the expansion at 38:25 with Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts (Oxford Bodleian Ms. Heb. c 75r; Cambridge University Library MS T-S NS 184.81r; Cambridge University Library MS T-S NS 182.2r).



Gen 38:25

MT הוא מוצאת והיא שלחה אל-חמיה לאמר לאיש אשר-אלה לו אנכי הרה ותאמר  
הפרגא למי החתמת והפתילים והמטה האלה:

NRSV As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "It was the owner of these who made me pregnant." And she said, "Take note, please, whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff."

Ps-J תמר מיתאפקא לאיתוקדא ובעת תלת משכוניא ולא אשכחתנון תלת עיינהא  
לשמי מרומא וכן אמרת בבועו ברחמין מן קדמך יי עני יתי בהדא שעת אננקי  
ואנהר עייני ואשכח תלת סהדיי ואנא מקימא לך מן חרציי תלתא קדישייא  
דמקדשין שמך ונחתין לאתון נורא בבקעת דורא בה שעתא רמז קודשא למיכאל  
ואנהר עיינה ואשכחתנון ונסיבת יתהון וטלקת יתהון קמי רגלי דיינייא ואמרת  
גברא דאילין משכונייא דידיה מיניה אנא מעברא ואף על גב דאנא יקדא לית אנא  
מפרסמא ליה ברם מרי עלמא יתין בלבביה דיכיר יתהום וישיזב יתי מן דינא רבא  
הדין וכיון דחמא יתהום יהודה אכר יתהום בכן אמר בליביה טב לי בהית בעלמא  
הדין דהוא עלם עביר ולא נבהית באנפי אבהתיי צדיקייא בעלמא דאתי טב לי  
יקיד בעלמא הדין באישא טפייא ולא ניקד בעלמא דאתי באישא אכלא אשא  
דמיכלא קבל מיכלא היא לפום דאמרת ליעקב אבא אכר כדון פרגודא דברך  
לופום כן צרכית למשמע בבי דינא למן הינון סיטומתא וחוטיא וחוטרא האילין

Ps-J So Tamar was brought out to be burned, and she looked for the three pledges, but did not find them. She lifted up her eyes to the heavens on high and said thus: "I beseech by the mercies before you, O Lord, answer me in this hour of my distress, and enlighten my eyes that I may find my three witnesses. And I will raise up for you from my loins three holy ones who will sanctify your name by going down to the furnace of fire in the valley of Dura." That hour, the Holy One, blessed be he, beckoned to Michael, and he enlightened her eyes so that she found them. She took them and cast them at the feet of the judges and said, "The man to whom these pledges belong, by him I am pregnant. Yet even if I were burned I would not make him known. But the Lord of the world will put it in his heart to recognize them, and he will deliver me from this great judgment." And when Judah saw them, he recognized them. Then he said in his heart, "It is better for me to be ashamed in this world, which is a passing world, than to be ashamed in the presence of my fathers, the righteous ones, in the world to come; it is better for me to be burned in this life in extinguishable fire than to burn in the world to come in inextinguishable fire. **For this is measure for measure, according to what I said to my father Jacob: 'Identify, now, your son's cloak.' Because of that I must hear in the courthouse: 'Whose are these, the signet-ring, the fringes, and the staff?'**"

Ps-J Gen 37:32, in fact, appears to contradict not only 38:25, but the predominant Jewish tradition that contends that it was, indeed, Judah—rather than the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah—who was responsible for the nefarious utterance “Identify...”<sup>350</sup> Genesis Rabbah 84.19, in the context of Gen 37:32, states:

וישלחו את כתנת הפסים וגו' הכר נא הכתנת בנך אמר ר' יוחנן אמר הקב"ה ליהודה אתה אמרת לאביך הכר נא חייך שתשמע הכר נא (בראשית לח כה). ויכירה ויאמר כתנת בני אמר ליה אנא ידע מה אבא חמי כתנת בני חיה רעה אכלתהו, אמר ר' חוניה נצנצה בו רוח הקודש חיה רעה אכלתהו זו אשת פוטיפר.<sup>351</sup>

*And they sent the long robe with sleeves, etc. Identify! Is this your son's coat? R. Johanan said: The Holy One said to Judah: It was you who said: Identify! As you live, [now] you will hear: Identify! He recognized it and said: My son's garment! He [Jacob] said to him [Judah]: I know what a father sees: My son's garment! A ferocious beast has devoured him! R. Hunia said: The holy spirit was kindled within him. A ferocious beast has devoured him – this is a reference to Potiphar's wife.*

And Genesis Rabbah 85.11, with reference to Gen 38:25, reiterates this tradition:

אמר ר' יוחנן אמר הקב"ה ליהודה אתה אמרת לאביך הכר נא (בראשית לז לב) חייך שתמר ואמרת לך הכר נא.<sup>352</sup>

R. Johanan said: “The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Judah: ‘You said to your father, “Identify!” (Gen 37:32), as you live, [now] Tamar is about to say to you, “Identify!””

<sup>350</sup> Ps-J here indubitably contradicts Genesis Rabbah 84.8 (on Gen 37:3) according to which it is Judah, rather than the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, who is delegated the task of bringing the garment to Jacob: “*He made him a coat of many colors.... [It is called] passim because they cast lots (hefissu) over it as to who should carry it to their father, and the lot fell on Judah*” (Theodor-Albeck, מדרש בראשית רבא, 84.8 [פד"ח], 2:1010).

<sup>351</sup> Theodor-Albeck, מדרש בראשית רבא, 84.19 (פד"ט), 2:1024. Cf. translation in Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:784.

<sup>352</sup> Theodor-Albeck, מדרש בראשית רבא, 85.11 (פה"א), 2:1045. Cf. translation in Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:796.

These two midrashim present the standard Jewish interpretation of 37:32 and 38:25.<sup>353</sup> Indeed, with reference to the tradition at Ps-J Gen 37:32 that the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah presented the coat and made the announcement to Jacob, Maher observes, “This tradition is found, apart from Ps.-J., only in the late (twelfth century) midrashic work *Sekel Tob* in a commentary on Gen 37:32.”<sup>354</sup> Ps-J’s unusual expansion at Ps-J Gen 37:32, in effect, prompts the question: Does Ps-J Gen 37:32, indeed, unambiguously advocate the view that the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah pronounced the words “Identify!” to Jacob; and, at the same time, does this passage reject the tradition that it was Judah who spoke these words? As this question intimates, the discrepancy between Ps-J Gen 37:32 and 38:25 relies on a certain interpretative assumption about Ps-J Gen 37:32—that Judah is *not* an implicit party in the speech that is directed at Jacob. This assumption, however, must be examined. For the text of Ps-J does not explicitly exclude Judah from participating in the speech; this merely appears to be the implication in Ps-J.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> See also Targum Neofiti 38:25; Genesis Rabbah 84.8; Numbers Rabbah 13.14; b. Soṭah 10b. In Neofiti, Judah even takes the responsibility for dipping Joseph’s garment in the blood of the goat: על בדמא דצפירא ודנסיב[י]ת פרגודה דיוסף אחי ואצבעת יתיה בדםא דצפירא “Inasmuch as I took the cloak of my brother Joseph and dipped it in the blood of the goat...” (Cf. English translation in Macho, *Neophyti I: Genesis*, 604).

<sup>354</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 126, n. 28. See Menahem ben Solomon ben Isaac, מדרש בראשית, 241 (רמא), the discussion of which will follow below.

<sup>355</sup> Judah’s participation in this speech is implied already in the Hebrew. This implication emerges out of the literary link between 37:32 and 38:25 forged by means of the root נכר that appears in both passages. At 37:32, the text presents the brothers in general exclaiming הִכְרִינָא to Jacob; at 38:25, Tamar exclaims הִכְרִינָא to Judah. Moreover, at 37:33 Jacob recognizes the coat, expressed by וַיִּכְרֶה; and at 38:26, Judah recognizes his items of pledge, expressed by וַיִּכֶר. The full effect of Tamar’s הִכְרִינָא to Judah and Judah’s וַיִּכֶר of the pledges manifests itself only if Judah was complicit in the group’s utterance of these words to Jacob. For in this way the narrative presents a case of measure for measure. Therefore, if, in the Hebrew, 38:25 hearkens back to 37:32, then it presupposes Judah’s guilt in uttering these words to Jacob. Alter observes, “In precise correspondence to Judah and his brothers, Tamar ‘sends’ evidence—in this case, true evidence—to argue her case. Like them, she confronts the father figure with the imperative, ‘Recognize, pray’ (*haker-na*) ... and, like his father, Judah is compelled to acknowledge that he recognizes what has been brought to him” (Alter, *Genesis*, 222, n. 25). Skinner, however, writes concerning Gen 38:

An exegetical study of Ps-J Gen 37:32 suggests that the identity of the speakers is ambiguous. Consider, again, Ps-J's addition at 37:32:

MT	וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶת־כְּתֻנַת הַפְּסִים וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אֲבִיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ זֹאת מָצְאָנוּ הַכֶּר־נָא הַכְּתֻנָּת בְּנֵךְ הוּא אִם־לֹא:
NRSV	And they sent the embroidered tunic, and they brought [it] to their father, and they said, “This we have found. Identify, now, is the tunic your son’s or not.”
Ps-J	ושדרו ביד בני זלפה ובני בלהה ית פרגוד מצ״יר ואייתייזיה לות אבוהון ואמרו דא אשכחנא אישתמודע כדון מפרגודא דברך היא אין לה
Ps-J	And they sent the embroidered coat <b>with the sons of Zilpah and the sons of Bilhah</b> , and they brought it to their father, and they said, “This we have found. Identify, now, whether it is your son’s tunic or not.”

A key factor to be recognized in this expansion is that the addition ביד בני זלפה ובני בלהה addresses a specific textual issue in the verse, namely, the identity of the agents *through whom* the garment was sent (not the identity of the speaker(s) of the utterance!).<sup>356</sup> Because the Hebrew text does not include an explanatory note that identifies the agent(s) of וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ (ושדרו), the identity of the persons who carry the garment is not clear.

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“It is obvious that the legend belongs to a cycle of tradition quite independent of the story of Joseph.... Since the sequence of 39:1 on 37:36 would be harsh, it is probable that ch. 38 was inserted here by R<sup>JE</sup>” (Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 450). Notwithstanding, Skinner concedes that הכרנא in 38:25 is related to 37:32 in that in his view the locution belongs to J (Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 450). Cf. Gunkel, *Genesis*, 395.

<sup>356</sup> The verb וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ does not necessarily require the explicit identification of an agent, but it allows for and even implies one in the present verse. Cf. Gen 38:20 which has the same root in the Qal stem and which includes a prepositional phrase to identify the agent of the verb: וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוּדָה אֶת־גְּדֵי הָעִזִּים בְּיַד רַעְהוּ ...הַעֲדֵלְמִי. Cf. also Gen 45:24 which has the same root in the Piel stem and which does not include a prepositional phrase to identify the agent of the verb: וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־אָחִיו וַיִּלְכוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם אֶל־תַּרְגּוּזוֹ בְּדֶרֶךְ. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “שָׁלַח,” BDB, 1018–19. Commenting on the Hebrew text, Sarna notes, “Literally, ‘They sent ... and they brought,’ preserving a separate subject for each verb. Hoping to avoid any suspicion of involvement in Joseph’s fate, the brothers apparently sent the bloodstained tunic to their father by way of others who pretended they had found it” (Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 262, n. 32). Cf. Alter, *Genesis*, 215, n. 32.

Westermann observes, “The verbs in v. 32 present a difficulty: the brothers either brought the tunic themselves as the verb וַיְבִיאוּ says, or they sent it through another וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ.”<sup>357</sup> To clarify this ambiguity, the targumist inserted the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah into the text. The targumist delegated this task particularly to the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah for two reasons: first, they are the sons of the maidservants and are, therefore, subordinate in status;<sup>358</sup> and second, Joseph is associated with the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah at 37:2, and

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<sup>357</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 43. He proceeds to explain: “The contradiction is usually solved by source division. If one reads the text as a unity, two possibilities present themselves. (a) The brothers send the tunic by means of a messenger, and so וַיְבִיאוּ is to be understood personally (B. Jacob: ‘they sent ... and someone brought...’; R. de Vaux: ‘they sent ... and had it brought...’); (b) The brothers bring it themselves.... The movement of the narrative, however, seems to me to make it impossible that the brothers send the tunic by means of messengers, especially as in that case they would not hear the father’s lament” (Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 43). Cf. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 356; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 262, n. 32; Alter, *Genesis*, 215, n. 32. Gunkel recognizes the same textual problem in his source-critical analysis of 37:32: “The way Jacob learns of Joseph’s supposed death is recounted twice. According to the declaration in v 20 E, the brothers simply told him ‘a wild animal devoured him.’ This statement recurs in v. 33ab and will, therefore, have originally been the brothers’ words, not Jacob’s, here, too. According to the J report, the brothers ‘sent over’ Joseph’s garment dipped in blood (vv 31, 32). They did not come to him themselves, then, and did not directly report Joseph’s death to him (so E), but stayed in the field (because they were averse to seeing their father’s face) and only indirectly suggested to him (so that no suspicion would fall on them) the conclusion that Joseph was dead. Accordingly, here, too, only one variant spoke of Joseph’s garment.... וַיְבִיאוּ (v 32) causes difficulties since the brothers did not come along themselves. One may read וַיְבִיאוּ and attribute v 32aβ through וַיִּאֲמְרוּ to E” (Gunkel, *Genesis*, 389, and cf. 394). Skinner, on the other hand, rejects Gunkel’s confinement of the coat to J: “[I]n E they dip the coat in blood, *come* to their father, and *say* ‘an evil beast,’ etc.; in J they *send* the coat unstained, and let Jacob form his own conclusion. In any case, ‘וַיְבִיאוּ וגו’ is E’s parallel to J’s ‘וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ וגו’ (italics original; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 448).

<sup>358</sup> See Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 13. Note that Bilhah and Zilpah are also identified as נָשִׂיא “wives” of Jacob, but see Ben-Mendel who contends that this does not take away from their remaining slavegirls (Ben-Mendel, *בראשית-שמות: בראשית-שמות*; תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות, 253 [בראשית in רנג]). See also Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 115, n. 2 where he points out the discrepancy between references to Bilhah and Zilpah as wives (אֵינָתוֹ) and as concubines (לְחֵינָתָא) in chapters 30:3–4, 9 and 33:1–2 (cf. 32:23; 33:6; 35:22; and 37:2); Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן: בראשית*, 227–31; and Ben-Mendel, *בראשית in רנב-רנו*, 252–56 (תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות). For comments on these references to Bilhah and Zilpah in the biblical text of Gen 30:1–21, see Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 208–10; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 325–27; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 386–88; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 473–77; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 244–48.

the targumist carried this association over to the end of the chapter as well.<sup>359</sup> This insertion, in the end, answered the question as to who it was through whom the brothers sent the garment.

While the targumist specified the agents who carried out the task expressed in וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ (ושדרו), he, as noted above, did not specify the subjects of וַיִּבְיֵאוּ, or וַיֹּאמְרוּ; and this made it necessary for the reader to carry out this step of interpretation. The following, then, is a brief analysis of the verbs in question in Ps-J:

- 1) The subject of וַיִּשְׁדְּרוּ appears to be the brothers in general, for the brothers are the antecedent of this verb in the preceding verses (see v. 23ff).
- 2) The agents who carried out the task expressed in וַיִּשְׁדְּרוּ, as specified by the targumist, are the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah.
- 3) The subject of וַיֹּאמְרוּ is unspecified in Ps-J, but it is clearly the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah, since the verb וַיֹּאמְרוּ (“they carried it”) conveys the follow-up act resulting from וַיִּשְׁדְּרוּ (“they sent [it]”).
- 4) The subject of וַיֹּאמְרוּ, at first blush, appears to be the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah because it follows וַיֹּאמְרוּ, but, in fact, it is not specified. It does not necessarily follow that if the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah are the subject of וַיֹּאמְרוּ that they are therefore naturally the subject of the subsequent verb וַיִּשְׁדְּרוּ. The fact that one verb follows the other in sequence ( וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹת ) (אבוהון וַיִּשְׁדְּרוּ) does not necessarily mean that for the targumist the two verbs were governed by the same subject.<sup>360</sup> For, on the one hand, two parties are present in the episode (the brothers in general and the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah); and, on the other hand, no logical relationship between the two verbs

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<sup>359</sup> See Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 165, n. 16.

<sup>360</sup> This principle is evident at Gen 45:24: וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־אֶחָיו וַיִּלְכוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם אֶל־תְּרִגְזוּ בְּדַרְדָּר. The subject of וַיִּשְׁלַח is Joseph; the subject of וַיִּלְכוּ is the brothers; and the subject of וַיֹּאמְרוּ is, once again, Joseph, even though וַיֹּאמְרוּ immediately follows וַיִּלְכוּ. This is clearly marked here by means of the singular forms of וַיִּשְׁלַח and וַיֹּאמְרוּ (in reference to Joseph) and by means of the plural form of וַיִּלְכוּ (in reference to the brothers).

exists, as, for example, between וַשְׁדָּרוּ and וַאֲיִתֵּיּוּהִי. Therefore, an ambiguity emerges as to whether the speakers are the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah or the brothers in general (among whom Judah would be a participant as well).

In the light of the targumist's focused intent to supply the agents of וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ (וַשְׁדָּרוּ)—rather than the subjects of וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ, וַיְבִיאוּ, or וַיֹּאמְרוּ—the ambiguity of the subject of וַאֲמָרוּ leaves the targumist's assumption about the speaker(s) in the text unrevealed. Consequently, the targumist who expanded Ps-J Gen 37:32 may very well have imagined the implied speakers in וַאֲמָרוּ to have been the brothers in general, and Judah to have been one of the speakers with the brothers, and possibly even the lead speaker.<sup>361</sup> Thus, Judah would not be excluded from the statement וַאֲמָרוּ; rather, he would be a participating party in the group that exclaimed דָּא אֲשַׁכְּחָנָא אִישְׁתְּמוּדַע כְּדוֹן מִפְּרָגוּדָא דְבִרְךְּ הִיא אִין לָהּ. If this is the case, 37:32 may certainly be read congruously with 38:25.

Responding to the same textual difficulty at Ps-J Gen 37:32, but offering a slightly different solution, the 12<sup>th</sup> century midrashic work *Sekel Tov* contends that Judah is, indeed, the speaker of the words “Identify!” (just as he, Judah, claims to be at 38:25, in accordance with the midrashim mentioned above). In the view of *Sekel Tov*, the two traditions expressed at Ps-J Gen 37:32 and 38:25 are very much congruous. In its interpretation of Gen 37:32, *Sekel Tov* explains the passage as follows:

וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ אֶת כְּתוֹנַת הַפְּסִים. כִּשְׁהִיא מְגוּלְגֶלֶת בְּדָם שְׁעִיר: וַיְבִיאוּ אֶל אֲבֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ זֹאת מִצְאָנוּ. וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ מִשְׁמַע עַל יְדֵי שְׁלִיחַ, וַיְבִיאוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ. הֵן עֲצֻמָּן, אֲלֵא וַיִּשְׁלְחוּ ע"י בְּנֵי הַשְּׁפָחוֹת, וַיְבִיאוּ בְּנֵי הַשְּׁפָחוֹת אֶל אֲבֵיהֶם וְלֹא אֲמָרוּ כְּלוּם, אֲלֵא זֹאת מִצְאָנוּ, בֵּא יְהוּדָה וְאָמַר הֲכֵר נָא

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<sup>361</sup> Amit suggests that the omniscience of the narrator at times accounts for the emergence of different details in parallel narratives (Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 97).

הכתונת... שמא כתונת בנד היא אם לא, עשה עצמו כמתנכר ומתעתע בעיני אביו. א"ר יוחנן אמר הקב"ה חייד בו בלשון אני גובה ממך, שכן תמר אומרת לך הכר נא למי החותמת וגו' (בראשית לח כה).<sup>362</sup>

*And they sent the long robe with sleeves.* When it was drenched in the blood of a goat. *And they brought [it] to their father, and they said: This we found. And they sent.* This means [that they sent the coat] by means of a messenger. *And they brought [it] and they said.* Indeed, they themselves [did this]. However, they sent [the coat] by means of the sons of the maidservants. And the sons of the maidservants brought [it] to their father, but they said nothing except: This we found. Then Judah came and said: Identify the coat... Perhaps this is the coat of your son, or not? He himself did this, as one who acts as a stranger and a deceiver in the eyes of his father. Rabbi Yohanan said: The Holy One, blessed be He, said: As you live, with this very language I am about to require of you, for Tamar is about to say to you: Identify! To whom does the seal, etc. (Gen 38:25).

For the midrashist of *Sekel Tov*, the two traditions are mutually inclusive in the context of this verse. On the one hand, the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah bring the coat and utter part of the speech; on the other hand, Judah utters the words that are traditionally attributed to him. Whether or not this harmonization of the two traditions is ultimately found to be persuasive, the explanation of *Sekel Tov* does bring to light the ambiguity regarding the actual speaker(s) to whom *ואמרו* refers at Ps-J Gen 37:32. The key question, here, is whether Ps-J intended Judah to be entirely excluded from this scene or if he imagined Judah to be one of the participants in the address to Jacob, without Ps-J's explicitly stating this.<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Menahem ben Solomon ben Isaac, *מדרש שכל טוב: בראשית*, 241 (רמא).

<sup>363</sup> The differences in language between 37:32 and 38:25 are also of consequence. First, 37:32 introduces the utterance with the plural verb *ואמרו* ("and they said"), while 38:25 has Judah introduce the statement with the singular verb *דאמרת* ("as I said"). Second, 37:32 employs *אישתמודע*, while 38:25 employs *אבר* (on *אישתמודע* vs. *אבר*, see remarks in Cook, *Rewriting the Bible*, 49). Third, 37:32 adds the preposition *מן* to the noun *מפרגודא*, while 38:25 lacks this preposition. And fourth, the statement at 37:32 is longer by three words *היא אין לה*, which words are lacking at 38:25. The literary effect of these differences is the resulting impression of a plurality of voices in the address to Jacob. In other words, 37:32 records what some of the brothers may have said to Jacob, and 38:25 records specifically that which Judah uttered to Jacob. If the targumist truly imagined these utterances to be distinct, then in the view of the targumist,



Shinan points to this and other apparent contradictions in Ps-J and contends: “The phenomenon of contradiction, found scattered in PsJ is marginal and accidental, the result of careless editing or transposition of material by copyists.”<sup>364</sup> To be sure, Ps-J Gen 37:32 contains an ambiguity, the implication of which appears to present an otherwise unknown tradition.<sup>365</sup> This, however, seems to be the result of the targumist’s particular focus on supplying the agents of וַיִּשְׁלַח (ושדרו) and his lack of interest in specifying the subjects of וַיִּשְׁלַח, וַיְבִיא, or וַיֹּאמְרוּ, rather than the result of sheer carelessness. If the targumist, indeed, never intended to reject the tradition that Judah was among the speakers at 37:32, then it is conceivable that the targumist expected his audience to fill this gap with the understanding that Judah was indeed present and one of the speakers, which reading would exhibit congruity with 38:25.<sup>366</sup> If this is the correct understanding of Ps-J Gen 37:32, then the targumic narrative here does not manifest the targumist’s carelessness, but rather the role of the targumist’s assumptions in the production of the Aramaic text.

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these two passages are complementary rather than contradictory. However, from the perspective of the history of composition, these differences may be explained by the process of translation and borrowing texts from a variety of documents, namely, the Hebrew *Vorlage* of Ps-J and midrash (whether written or oral) on which the targumist of Ps-J relied.

<sup>364</sup> Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 84.

<sup>365</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 126, n. 28.

<sup>366</sup> As noted above, for another example in which the targumist of Ps-J demonstrates his expectations of the audience to be familiar with certain Jewish traditions, see Maher, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Exodus 2.21,” 81–99, esp. 89, 90, 97, 98, and 99.

## 5.2.4 Genesis 37:33; 43:14 vs. 45:27

According to Ps-J Gen 45:27, “the Spirit of Prophecy” (רוח נבואה) departs from Jacob when Joseph is sold into Egypt, but at 37:33 and 43:14—both passages describing Jacob after Joseph is sold—“the Holy Spirit” (רוח קודשא) appears to be present with Jacob.<sup>367</sup> These references prompt the question: Is this an inconsistency in Ps-J, or is “the Spirit of Prophecy” (רוח נבואה) to be distinguished from “the Holy Spirit” (רוח קודשא)? Levine writes: “There is a direct contradiction between 43:14 and 45:27, as to whether or not Jacob retained his spirit of prophecy during his separation from Joseph.”<sup>368</sup> The passages in question read as follows:

### Gen 37:33

MT	וַיִּכְרָה וַיֹּאמֶר בְּתִנָּת בְּנֵי חַיָּה רָעָה אֲכַלְתָּהּ טָרֵף טָרֵף יוֹסֵף:
NRSV	He recognized it, and said, “It is my son’s robe! A wild animal has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.”
Ps-J	ואשתמודעה ואמר פרגוד דברי היא לא חיות ברא אכלתיה ולא על יד בני נשא איתקטל אלא חמי אנא ברוח קודשא דאיתא בישתא קיימא לקובליה
Ps-J	He identified it and said, “ <i>It is my son’s cloak. It was not a wild beast that devoured him; and he was not killed by men. But I see by the Holy Spirit that an evil woman is standing before him.</i> ”

<sup>367</sup> See also versions of this tradition in ARN 30; PRE 38, which has רוח הקודש departing from and returning to Jacob (Aharon, ed., פרקי דרבי אליעזר, 205 [רה]); Braude, trans., *The Midrash on Psalms*, 1:338–39; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 2:116; 5:356, n. 294; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 265–66.

<sup>368</sup> Levine, “Internal Contradictions in Targum Jonathan Ben Uzziel to Genesis,” 119. See also idem, “מקורות סותרים בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל,” 37; idem, *Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 36; Shinan, אגדתם 1:134; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 148, n. 24; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:356, n. 294. The expansions in Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts are inconsequential to the study of the literary tension manifested in Ps-J.

**Gen 43:14**

MT וְאֵל שְׂדֵי יִתֵּן לָכֶם רַחֲמִים לִפְנֵי הָאִישׁ וְשִׁלַּח לָכֶם אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם אַחֵר וְאֶת־  
בְּנֵימִין וְאֲנִי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁכַלְתִּי שָׁכַלְתִּי:

NRSV May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man, so that he may send back your other brother and Benjamin. As for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

Ps-J ואל שדי יתן לכון רחמין קדם גברא ויפטור לכון ית אחוכון חורנא וית  
בנימין ואנא הא כבר אתבשרית ברוח קודשא ארום אין איתכלית על יוסף  
איתכל על שמעון ועל בנימין

Ps-J And may El Shaddai grant you mercy before the man, and may he release to you your other brother, as well as Benjamin. And as for me, *behold, I have already been informed by the Holy Spirit* that if I have been bereaved of Joseph, I will be bereaved of Simeon and of Benjamin.”

**Gen 45:27**

MT וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֵלָיו אֶת כָּל־דִּבְרֵי יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֲלֵהֶם וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הַעֲגָלוֹת אֲשֶׁר־  
שָׁלַח יוֹסֵף לְשֵׂאת אֹתוֹ וַתְּחִי רוּחַ יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם:

NRSV But when they told him all the words of Joseph that he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived.

Ps-J ומלילו עימיה ית כל פיתגמי יוסף דמליל עמהון וחמא ית סדנייא דשדר  
יוסף למיטול יתיה ושרת רוח נבואה דאיסתלקת מיניה בעידן דזבינו ית יוסף  
ותבת עילוי יעקב אבוהון

Ps-J But they recounted to him all the words that Joseph had spoken with them, and when he saw the carriages that Joseph had sent to take him, **the spirit of prophecy** which had departed from him when they sold Joseph returned and rested upon their father Jacob.

In addressing this very issue—the usage and meaning of “the Spirit of Prophecy”

(רוח נבואה) and “the Holy Spirit” (רוח קודשא) within the Targumim—Peter Schäfer

delivers a compelling case that within Ps-J, the terms “the Spirit of Prophecy” (רוח נבואה)

and “the Holy Spirit” (רוח קודשא) are used distinctly.<sup>369</sup> He argues that Ps-J presupposes a nuanced theological difference between the two titles. After a study of a series of passages in which these titles appear in various Targumim, including Ps-J, Schäfer contends that there is sufficient evidence that the term “Holy Spirit” is used in a broader sense than the term “Spirit of Prophecy.”<sup>370</sup> He explains that the term “Spirit of Prophecy” refers to a very narrow and a clearly defined circumstance in which the Spirit is sent to man to deliver a prophetic message.<sup>371</sup> In contrast, the “Holy Spirit” is not

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<sup>369</sup> Schäfer, “Die Termini ‘heiliger Geist’ und ‘Geist der Prophetie’ in den Targumim und das Verhältnis der Targumim zueinander,” 304–14. As Schäfer points out, Ps-J differs from Onqelos and Neofiti in its usage of these two terms. Onqelos uses only “the Spirit of Prophecy” (רוח נבואה), with the exception of one instance (i.e., Gen 45:27); and Neofiti and the Fragment Targumim use only “the Holy Spirit” (רוח קודשא), with the exception of one instance in the Neofiti Marginalia (at Exod 2:12) (Schäfer, “Die Termini ‘heiliger Geist’ und ‘Geist der Prophetie’ in den Targumim und das Verhältnis der Targumim zueinander,” 306–8). Moreover, in his book *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur* Schäfer notes that the Targumim treat the terms “Holy Spirit” and “Spirit of Prophecy” differently from rabbinic literature in general: “Die Unterscheidung zwischen ‘rabbinischer Literatur’ im allgemeinen und ‘Targumim’ im besonderen ist deshalb notwendig, weil die Targumim eine eigene literarische Gattung darstellen” (Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur*, 21). For a helpful discussion on the history of research on the topic of holy spirit in Judaism, see Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur*, 13–17. Dissenting from the view of Schäfer, it seems, Drazin and Wagner write (with reference to Onqelos Gen 45:27): “Our *Onkelos* edition has ‘holy spirit,’ which is synonymous with prophecy” (Drazin and Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Genesis*, 311). Similarly, Schmerler remarks that Onqelos inserts רוח קודשא into 45:27 and states that the terms רוח נבואה and רוח קודשא are the same (Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן: בראשית*, 314). In his discussion of 43:14, moreover, he does not identify the possibility of a contradiction between Ps-J Gen 37:33; 43:14; and 45:27, which may hint that in his view the terms are identical in meaning (or that he overlooked this apparent discrepancy). Finally, two additional comments are worth noting here: 1) at Ps-J Exod 33:16, the targumist employed both רוח נבואה and רוח קודשא in the same verse, seemingly with an understanding that they are distinct; and 2) as a counterpoint to this, at Ps-J Exod 31:3, the targumist described Bezalel receiving רוח קודשא, but at Ps-J Exod 35:31, the targumist referred back to Bezalel as having received רוח נבואה. Since the Hebrew base text (according to the MT) of both passages is רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, the discrepant Aramaic rendition of this title in Ps-J is puzzling (cf. Num 24:2, in which verse רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים is rendered as רוח נבואה, similar to 35:31).

<sup>370</sup> In the original: “Die angeführten Belege mögen genügen, um den Nachweis zu erbringen, daß der Terminus ‘hl. Geist’ in weiterem Sinne gebraucht wird als der Terminus ‘Geist der Prophetie’” (Schäfer, “Die Termini ‘heiliger Geist’ und ‘Geist der Prophetie’ in den Targumim und das Verhältnis der Targumim zueinander,” 313).

<sup>371</sup> In the original: “Der Terminus ‘Geist der Prophetie’ bezeichnet einen eng begrenzten und fest umrissenen Sachverhalt, nämlich den von Gott dem Menschen gesandten Geist, der prophetische Gaben

confined merely to delivering prophecy in the Targumim, even though mediation of prophecy does appear to be one of the functions of the “Holy Spirit.” Schäfer also remarks that the function of the Holy Spirit’s mediation of prophecy is oftentimes not overt or obvious in the biblical text, and that it is introduced into the Targumim on account of the interpretive reading of the passage offered in midrash.<sup>372</sup> In other words, Schäfer suggests that the targumist of Ps-J strategically employed רוח נבואה in certain contexts and רוח קודשא in other contexts. Formally, analysis of the relevant passages in Ps-J indicates that רוח נבואה primarily appears in passages that have the word רוח “spirit” in the Hebrew, which the targumist interpreted as an indication of some type of prophetic reference.<sup>373</sup> In contrast, רוח קודשא primarily appears in passages that lack the word רוח

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vermittelt” (Schäfer, “Die Termini ‘heiliger Geist’ und ‘Geist der Prophetie’ in den Targumim und das Verhältnis der Targumim zueinander,” 310).

<sup>372</sup> Schäfer writes: “Die Verwendung des Terminus ‘hl. Geist’ unterscheidet sich von der Verwendung des Terminus ‘Geist der Prophetie’ in zweierlei Hinsicht. 1) Auch der Terminus ‘hl. Geist’ bezeichnet den von Gott gesandten prophetischen Geist. Nur—and dies ist ein bedeutsamer Unterschied zum Terminus ‘Geist der Prophetie’—wird die Beziehung zur Prophetie nicht direkt aus dem biblischen Kontext nahegelegt, sondern ist oft erst verständlich, wenn man den Midrasch zum Vergleich heranzieht.... 2) Der Terminus ‘hl. Geist’ geht in seiner Bedeutungsbreite über den Terminus ‘Geist der Prophetie’ hinaus. Es gibt im Targum relativ zahlreiche Belege dafür, daß die Vorstellung von der Prophetie für das Verständnis des hl. Geistes nicht ausreicht; auch diese Belege lassen sich häufig im Midrasch verifizieren bzw. werden erst durch die Tradition des Midraschs verständlich” (Schäfer, “Die Termini ‘heiliger Geist’ und ‘Geist der Prophetie’ in den Targumim und das Verhältnis der Targumim zueinander,” 310–11). With regard to Onqelos, he writes: “Darüberhinaus zeigt eine Untersuchung der Verse, in denen TO den Terminus ‘Geist der Prophetie’ verwendet, daß auch sachlich ein Zusammenhang mit der Prophetie sich in fast allen Fällen direkt aus dem biblischen Kontext ergibt. Die Übersetzung ‘Geist der Prophetie’ ist zwar nicht im strengen Sinne wörtlich, aber fast immer durch den MT bedingt... Mit anderen Worten: Der Terminus ‘Geist der Prophetie’ bezeichnet einen eng begrenzten und fest umrissenen Sachverhalt, nämlich den von Gott dem Menschen gesandten Geist, der prophetische Gaben vermittelt” (Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur*, 310).

<sup>373</sup> Of the fourteen appearances of רוח נבואה in Ps-J (Gen 41:38; 45:27; Ex 33:16; 35:21, 31; 37:8; Num 11:17, 25 [2x], 26, 28, 29; Num 24:2; 27:18), only two instances (Exod 33:16 and 37:8) do not have the word רוח in the Hebrew.

“spirit” in the Hebrew; and the function of רוח קודשא may be either prophetic or non-prophetic.<sup>374</sup> Accordingly, Schäfer contends that the usage of these terms in their respective contexts is not coincidental.<sup>375</sup>

These conclusions help to explain the appearance of these terms within the passages in question—Ps-J Gen 37:33; 43:14; and 45:27. Formally, all three passages follow Ps-J’s pattern of usage of the terms רוח קודשא and רוח נבואה: 37:33 and 43:14 both lack the word רוח in the Hebrew, and, accordingly, receive רוח קודשא in Ps-J; meanwhile, 45:27 does have the word רוח in the Hebrew, and, accordingly, the verse receives the insertion רוח נבואה.

From a text-interpretive perspective, the targumist inserted רוח קודשא at 37:33 and 43:14 because in the Ps-J version of these verses, Jacob—who is, according to rabbinic tradition, endowed with the gift of prophecy—would utter statements that he

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<sup>374</sup> Of the fifteen appearances of רוח קודשא in Ps-J (Gen 6:3; 27:5; 27:42; 30:25; 31:21; 33:16; 35:22; 37:33; 43:14; Exod 31:3; Deut 5:24; 18:15, 18; Deut 28:59; 32:26), thirteen instances lack the word רוח in the Hebrew, while two instances (Gen 6:3 and Exod 31:3) actually do have the word רוח in the Hebrew; yet the targumist still used רוח קודשא instead of רוח נבואה in these two passages contrary to his general tendency. See discussion of some of the examples in Schäfer, “Die Termini ‘heiliger Geist’ und ‘Geist der Prophetie’ in den Targumim und das Verhältnis der Targumim zueinander,” 310–12.

<sup>375</sup> He writes, “man daher voraussetzen darf, daß ihre Verwendung nicht zufällig ist” (Schäfer, “Die Termini ‘heiliger Geist’ und ‘Geist der Prophetie’ in den Targumim und das Verhältnis der Targumim zueinander,” 306). Tsubiri too recognizes a distinction between the spirit of prophecy and the holy spirit, and even remarks that there is a hierarchical distinction: *זאת מדרגה ממדרגות רוח הקדש, והיא למטה*, “This is the hierarchical level of the holy spirit: it is below the [spirit of] prophecy, but above the *bat qol*” (Yosef ben Ya‘akov ben Yehudah Tsubiri, *פרשה מפורשה: חומש בראשית*, (Bene Beraq: Mossadot bi-netivot emet, 2000), 1:219 (ריט)).

could not have known of his own accord, but only through the agency of the holy spirit.<sup>376</sup> At 37:33, Jacob exclaims that Joseph is alive and that an evil woman would pose a threat to him; and at 43:14, Jacob states that just as he was bereaved of Joseph, so would he be bereaved of Benjamin and Simeon, a statement that refers to a future time and one that he could not have known without revelation.<sup>377</sup> Schmerler, moreover, understands וַאֲנִי at 43:14 to be a trigger word—וַאֲנִי כְּאִשֶּׁר שְׁכַלְתִּי שְׁכַלְתִּי; he suggests that the targumist inserted רוח קודשא into the passage “because we find the word [וַאֲנִי] in contexts of prophecy and the holy spirit.”<sup>378</sup> In order to answer the question as to how

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<sup>376</sup> As already noted above, with reference to Jacob’s utterance at 37:33 that Joseph is alive (as opposed to dead, according to the Hebrew text), Klein writes: “This [Ps-J’s converse] interpretation is no doubt related to the midrash about Jacob’s refusal to be comforted (Gen 37:35), as well as to the rabbinic conviction that the patriarchs were endowed with prophetic powers” (Klein, “Converse Translation,” 523). See also Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma*, 1:236; and Yosef ben Ya‘akov ben Yehudah Tsubiri, פרשה (ריח), 1:218, מפורשה: חומש בראשית.

<sup>377</sup> The meaning of Ps-J Gen 43:14 is not entirely clear. Schäfer offers a helpful review of the interpretive options: “Das heißt, Jakob hat durch Eingebung des hl. Geistes die Hoffnung noch nicht aufgegeben, Josef lebend wiederzusehen. (Strack-) Billerbeck II 130 übersetzen ähnlich und interpretieren: ‘Wenn also letzteres (der Verlust Simons und Benjamins) nicht eintrete, würde auch ersteres (der Verlust Josefs) nicht geschehen’. Eher ist umgekehrt zu argumentieren: Wenn ich durch Josef nicht kinderlos geworden bin (und das glaube ich im hl. Geist zu wissen), werde ich auch durch Simon und Benjamin nicht kinderlos werden. – Vielleicht trifft aber auch keine der beiden Übersetzungen zu. Die Ankündigung durch den hl. Geist ist fast kryptisch und will möglicherweise sagen, daß Jakob in Wirklichkeit nichts über das Schicksal Josefs gewußt hat” (Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur*, 35). Schmerler presupposes that Jacob knew that Joseph was alive, therefore, he interprets the verse conversely, stating: פ'ל כי אם נשכלתי על יוסף אשכל על שמעון ועל בנימין. הכוונה כשם שלא נשכלתי מיוסף כי ישנו (Schmerler, בראשית, 304). Neofiti, in fact, translates 43:14 conversely: ואנה היך מה דלא תכלת על יוסף ברי לא אוסף למתכלה על בנימן “As for me, just as I have *not* been bereaved of my son Joseph, [so] I shall *not* be bereaved of Benjamin.” For a discussion of the converse translation of this passage, see Klein, “Converse Translation,” 523–24.

<sup>378</sup> The quote in its context is as follows: פ'ל ואני גו' קודשא. פ'ל ואני הנה כבר נתבשרתי ברוה"ק. כי (Schmerler, בראשית, 304). He refers to the following passages as evidence: Ezek 1:1; Dan 8:2; 10:4–5, 8.

Jacob was able to state that which he could not have known, the targumist inserted רוח קודשא to point to the source of this special information to which Jacob was made privy.

Ps-J's exegetical reasoning with respect to the third passage, 45:27, is also related to Jacob's ability—in fact, Jacob's inability at first and then his ability only later—to perceive that which is concealed from the human mind without special revelation. At 45:26, Jacob's sons inform Jacob that Joseph is still alive; however, 45:27 indicates that Jacob hesitates to believe them: MT: ופליג ליביה ארום לא /Ps-J: ויפג לבו כי לא האמין להם. R. Hiyya said: "He was stunned; he could not believe them." Genesis Rabbah 94.3 captures the context of the situation effectively:

ויגידו לו לאמר עוד יוסף חי וגו'. ויפג לבו כי לא האמין להם. תני ר' חייא: מה טיבו שלבדאי הזה, אפילו דברים של אמת הוא א', אין מאמינין לו.<sup>379</sup>  
*And they told him that Joseph is still alive, etc. But his heart was numb, for he did not believe them. R. Hiyya said: What is the liar's fate? Even when he speaks the truth, he is not believed.*<sup>380</sup>

That is, even though Jacob was presented with the truth, he was not able to discern it, as his response of disbelief clearly indicates. Why does he not believe his sons? While the Hebrew does not provide an explicit answer to this question, Ps-J states that it is because Jacob lacked the רוח נבואה "Spirit of Prophecy" (45:27). In other words, Jacob did not

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<sup>379</sup> Theodor-Albeck, *Midrash Brashit Raba*, 94.3 (צד"ג), 3:1173.

<sup>380</sup> Translation of Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:870. Cf. ARN 30.



perceive the truth of the situation because the רוח נבואה was not present to make the truth known to him.<sup>381</sup>

The literary reason the targumist was able to reintroduce the presence of רוח נבואה into Jacob's life at 45:27 was because the Hebrew text states: וְתָהִי רוּחַ יַעֲקֹב / "the spirit of Jacob revived"; that is, on account of the presence of the term רוּחַ in the verse. The contextual component that prompted the targumist to make this רוח נבואה into רוח נבואה appears to have been the fact that with the reviving of Jacob's רוּחַ, Jacob begins to understand the true circumstances of the situation.<sup>382</sup>

In addition, the targumist may have had an ideological reason for introducing רוח נבואה at 45:27—the preservation of the dignity of the patriarch Jacob. Shinan remarks that preserving the honor of the Jewish patriarchs (and he names specifically Jacob) is “a very common trait of the targumic world.”<sup>383</sup> In other words, Jacob, who is traditionally

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<sup>381</sup> As to why the spirit of prophecy departed from Jacob in the first place, Ginzberg explains: “The spirit of prophecy never visits a seer when he is in a state of lassitude or in a state of grief; it comes only together with joy” (Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 2:116). Compare the tradition in PRE 38, in which account the Holy One does not reveal to Jacob the fact that Joseph is alive because of a ban that the brothers made in order to keep the sale of Joseph secret. See discussion of this also in Yosef ben Ya‘aqov ben Yehudah Tsubiri, *פרשה מפורשה: חומש בראשית*, 1:218 (ריח).

<sup>382</sup> See discussion in Schmerler, *בראשית: אהבת יהונתן*, 314.

<sup>383</sup> Shinan, “Post-Pentateuchal Figures in the Pentateuchal Aramaic Targumim,” 132, n. 30. See also Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 2:318–20; Komlosh, *המקרא באור התרגום*, 208–16; Moses Aberbach, “Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Onkelos,” *Journal of Hebraic Studies* 1 (1969): 13–24; idem, “Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets,” *Hebrew Abstracts* 15 (1974): 89–90; and Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah*, 41. Another interpretative translation that demonstrates intent to preserve Jacob's patriarchal stature appears at Ps-J Gen 27:35. The MT states: וַיֹּאמֶר בָּא אָחִיךָ בְּמַרְמָה וַיִּקַּח בְּרִכְתְּךָ: “But he [Isaac] said, ‘Your brother [Jacob] came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing’”; but Ps-J, viewing the term בְּמַרְמָה “deceitfully” to be unfitting for Jacob, renders the verse as follows: וַאֲמַר עָאֵל

believed to be endowed with the gift of prophecy, fails to demonstrate this special quality at 45:27.<sup>384</sup> To preserve Jacob's patriarchal stature, the targumist made sure to remark that this was a temporary state caused by a specific event, namely the sale of Joseph. In this way the targumist was able to mitigate the less favorable presentation of Jacob.

In the end, inasmuch as the targumist employed the terms רוח קודשא and רוח distinctively, the conclusion need not be that Ps-J Gen 37:33; 43:14; and 45:27 produce a contradiction. Maher, first admitting the appearance of a contradiction between these passages, ultimately states: "But if, as Schäfer (1970, 309–311) claims, the 'Holy Spirit' and 'the spirit of prophecy' are not to be identified in the Targums, there is no real contradiction in the texts."<sup>385</sup> In the view of the targumist, then, it is conceivable that Jacob lacked the specific presence of "the Spirit of Prophecy" (because the spirit of prophecy departed from him when Joseph was sold; 45:27) all the while being endowed with "the Holy Spirit," who revealed to Jacob certain, but not all, pieces of information (37:33 and 43:14).

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אחוד בחכמתא וקבל מיני ברכתך "He said, 'Your brother came in with *wisdom* and *received* your blessing *from me*.'" In a conversation, Professor Teeter suggested that the targumist possibly read במרמה interpretively as בערמה, switching the consonants מ and ע, and then rendered ערמה as חכמה, thus deriving בחכמתא from במרמה (see Ps-J and MT of Gen 3:1; 34:13; Targum and MT Prov 1:4; 8:5 and 12). Commenting on this same translation in Targum Onqelos, Grossfeld writes: "The change of adverb employed in the Targum was meant to place Jacob in a more favorable light in view of Jacob's identification with Israel during the Talmudic period. Accordingly, 'cleverly' merely emphasizes Jacob's superior wisdom or intelligence rather than an act of deceit" (Grossfeld, *Onqelos to Genesis*, 102, n. 12). See midrashim on this in Genesis Rabbah 67.4 and Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma*, 1:172. Similarly, see discussion of this phenomenon as it pertains to Joseph in Gen 37 and 39 in Niehoff, "The Figure of Joseph in the Targums," 234–50. Finally, note the manifestation of the same ideology at Ps-J Num 11:25 with regard to Moses.

<sup>384</sup> See PRE 38, which appeals to Psa 147:19 to show that the Holy One brings revelation to Jacob.

<sup>385</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 148, n. 24.

### 5.2.5 Genesis 49:21 vs. 46:17; Numbers 26:46

A seeming discrepancy appears with regard to who announced the news to Jacob that Joseph was still alive after he was sold into slavery. Ps-J Gen 49:21 attributes the act to Naphtali, but Ps-J Gen 46:17 and Ps-J Num 26:46 credit this act to Serah. Commenting on Ps-J Num 26:46, Clarke takes note of this apparent inconsistency and remarks that in contrast to Ps-J Num 26:46, according to Ps-J Gen 46:17 and “Gen 49:21 (Ps.-J.), Nf, and Frg. Tgs. (PV),<sup>386</sup> it was Naphtali who announced that Joseph was still alive.”<sup>387</sup> The passages read:

#### Gen 49:21

MT נַפְתָּלִי אֵילָה שְׁלַחַה הַנֶּתֶן אִמְרֵי־שֹׁפָר:  
NRSV Naphtali is a doe let loose that bears lovely fawns.

Ps-J נפתלי עוגד קליל דמי לאיילא דרהיט על שיני טוריא מבשר בשורן טבן הוא  
בשר דעד כדון יוסף קיים והוא אזדרז ואזל למצרים ואייתי אוניתא דחקיל  
כפילתא דלית בה לעשו חולקא וכד הוא פתח פומיה בכנישתא דישראל  
למשבחה מבחר מכל לישניא

Ps-J Naphtali is a swift messenger, like a hind that runs on the tops of the mountains, announcing good tidings. **He announced that Joseph was still alive**; he hurried and went to Egypt and brought the title deed of the field of the double [cave] in which Esau has no portion. When he opened his mouth to praise [God] in the assembly of Israel, he could choose from all languages.

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<sup>386</sup> Neofiti (Paris BN Frg.Tg. MS and Vatican Library Frg. Tg. MS). Maher also adds the Nürnberg Frg.Tg. MS. to this list (Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 150, n. 15).

<sup>387</sup> McNamara and Clarke, *Neofiti 1: Numbers and Pseudo-Jonathan: Numbers*, 268, n. 23. See also Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 150, n. 15; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 270; Levine, “מקורות סותרים בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל,” 37; idem, “Internal Contradictions in Targum Jonathan Ben Uzziel to Genesis,” 119; idem, *Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 36; Shinan, “אגדתם של מתורגמנים,” 1:143; idem, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 86. Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this conflict.

**Gen 46:17**

MT :וּבְנֵי אָשֶׁר יִמְנָה וְיִשְׁוֶה וְיִשְׁוִי וּבְרִיעָה וְשָׂרָח אַחֲתָם וּבְנֵי בְרִיעָה חָבֵר וּמַלְכִּיֶּאל:  
NRSV The children of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. The children of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel

Ps-J :וּבְנוֹי דָאָשֶׁר יִמְנָה וְיִשְׁוֶה וְיִשְׁוִי וּבְרִיעָה וְשָׂרָח אַחֲתָהוֹן דַּאֲדִבְרַת כַּד הָיָא קַיָּמָא  
לְגַיְנוּנִיתָא עַל דְּבִשְׂרַת לִיעֻקֵּב דִּיּוֹסָף קַיָּים הָיָא שְׁזִיבַת לִיתְבִּי אַבְל מִן דִּין קָטוּל  
בְיוֹמֵי יוֹאָב וּבְנוֹי דְּבְרִיעָה דְּנַחַתוּ לְמִצְרַיִם חָבֵר וּמַלְכִּיֶּאל

Ps-J The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, **and their sister Serah, who was taken to the garden [of Eden] while she was alive because she had announced to Jacob that Joseph was alive.** *It was she who delivered the inhabitants of Abel from the judgment of death in the days of Joab.* And the sons of Beriah who went down to Egypt were Heber and Malchiel.

**Num 26:46**

MT :וְשֵׁם בֵת-אָשֶׁר שָׂרָח:  
NRSV And the name of the daughter of Asher was Serah.

Ps-J :וְשׁוּם בְרַת אָשֶׁר סָרָח דַּאֲדִבְרַת בְּשִׁיתִין רִיבוּון מִלְאַכִּין וְאִיתְעֵלַת לְגַיְנַתָּא דְּעָדָן  
בְּחַיְיָהּ מִן בְּגַלָּל דְּבִשְׂרַת יִתְיַעֲקֵב דְּעָד כַּדוֹן יוֹסָף קַיָּים

Ps-J And the name of Asher's daughter was Serah, **who was led by the sixty myriads of angels and was brought alive to the Garden of Eden because she told Jacob that Joseph was still alive.**

If these apparently conflicting verses are to present an actual contradiction, the verses must necessarily refer to one and the same episode. However, analysis of these passages suggests that there may be two separate announcement traditions that refer to two different episodes in the narrative. The discussion below seeks to distinguish these two traditions as follows: on the one hand, the tradition that it was Naphtali who brought the news to Jacob seems to coincide best with the context of Gen 45, that is, after Joseph discloses his identity to his brothers and upon the brothers' return to Jacob in Canaan; on the other hand, the tradition that it was Serah who brought the news to Jacob seems to coincide best with the context of Gen 37, that is, immediately after Joseph is sold to the

caravan of travelers, when the sale of Joseph was intended to be kept secret from Jacob. This discussion hopes to show that since each tradition belongs to a distinct place in the narrative, the suggestion that there is a discrepancy between these passages is dubious.

As noted, Naphtali's announcement to Jacob that Joseph is alive (Ps-J Gen 49:21) coincides with the circumstances in which the brothers are returning from Egypt after Joseph had just disclosed his identity to them in Gen 45. The literary element in the Hebrew text that prompted the targumist to associate Naphtali with this news was the Hebrew expression אַמְרֵי־שֵׁפֶר at Gen 49:21. The NRSV translates this phrase as "lovely fawns," or, in a footnote, as "beautiful words."<sup>388</sup> Interpreting the expression to mean "good news" (בשורן טבן), the targumist proceeded to offer an example of Naphtali bearing good news, which he imported from an earlier portion of the Joseph narrative, specifically Gen 45.<sup>389</sup> In forging this link between Gen 49 ("beautiful words") and Gen 45 (that Joseph is alive), the targumist was merely following suit of the structure that he perceived to be already present in Gen 49. That is, for example, Gen 49:4 bears a literary

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<sup>388</sup> The expression אַמְרֵי־שֵׁפֶר is difficult to understand. Wenham writes, "The sense of both words is uncertain. The noun שֵׁפֶר occurs only here, but the verb in Ps 16:6 and in Aramaic means 'to be beautiful.' Hence, the noun is usually understood to mean 'beauty' (hence RSV 'comely'; JPS, NAB, REB 'lovely'; NIV 'beautiful'). אַמְרֵי is most easily understood as the construct plural of אָמַר [sic] 'word.' This suggests the translation 'who gives words of beauty.'" He continues to note, however, that most modern commentators "suppose that אַמְרֵי is the construct plural of a common Semitic word meaning 'sheep' or 'lamb' (Akk. *immeru*; Ugaritic *imr*; Aramaic אַמְרָא). This is the basis of the translation 'lovely/comely fawns.' But F. I. Andersen (*The Verbless Clause* [1970] 44, 123) and Gevirtz *JBL* 103 [1984] 515–17) have pointed out that the whole phrase אַמְרֵי־שֵׁפֶר has parallels in Ugaritic *imr špr* and Akkadian *immir supūri*, which should be translated 'lambs of the fold' or, assuming that אַמְרָא may also refer to the offspring of deer, 'fawns of the fold'" (Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 483). Cf. discussions in Westermann, *Genesis*, 236; Alter, *Genesis*, 298, n. 21; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 342 and 372, n. 42; Speiser, *Genesis*, 367; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 528; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 459; Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 305–6, n. 50.

<sup>389</sup> See McNamara, *Neofiti 1: Genesis*, 223, n. 37.

association with Gen 35:22, where Reuben is said to have lain with his father's concubine Bilhah. Gen 49:5–7 exhibits a connection with Gen 34, where Simeon and Levy are said to have slaughtered an entire city. In the light of this pattern of associations between Gen 49 and other passages in the narrative, the targumist linked Gen 49:21 to the context of Gen 45, and imported the words *עד כדון יוסף קיים/עוד יוסף חי* from Gen 45:26 to Gen 49:21: *דעד כדון יוסף קיים*. In the mind of the targumist, evidently, the choice example of Naphtali bearing good news to Jacob was the announcement that Joseph is alive.<sup>390</sup>

The specific context in which Naphtali arguably delivers this announcement is described at Gen 45:24–27:

**Gen 45:24–27**

MT 24 וישלח את אחיו וילכו ויאמר אליהם אל־תִּרְגְּזוּ בַדֶּרֶד: <sup>25</sup> ויעלו ממצרים ויבאו ארץ כנען אל־יעקב אביהם: <sup>26</sup> ויגדו לוֹ לֵאמֹר עֹד יוֹסֵף חַי וְכִי־הוּא מִשָּׁל בְּכָל־  
27 ארץ מצרים ויפג לבו כי לא־האמין להם: <sup>27</sup> וידברו אליו את כל־דברי יוסף אשר דבר אליהם וירא את־העגלות אשר־שלח יוסף לשאת אתו ותחי רוח יעקב אביהם:

NRSV 24 Then he sent his brothers on their way, and as they were leaving he said to them, “Do not quarrel along the way.” <sup>25</sup> So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. <sup>26</sup> And they told him, “Joseph is still alive! He is even ruler over all the land of Egypt.” He was stunned; he could not believe them. <sup>27</sup> But when they told him all the words of Joseph that he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived.

Ps-J 24 ושדר ית אחוי יטיילו ואמר להום לא תתנצון על עיסק זבינתי דילמא ירגזון בכון עברי אורחא <sup>25</sup> וסליקו ממצרים ואתו לארעא דכנען לות יעקב אבוהון <sup>26</sup> ותניאו למימר עד כדון יוסף קיים וארום הוא שליט בכל ארעא דמצרים ופליג ליביה ארום לא הימין להום <sup>27</sup> ומלילו עימיה ית כל פיתגמי יוסף דמליל עמהון

<sup>390</sup> See Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 294.

וחמא ית סדנייא דשדר יוסף למיטול יתיה ושרת רוח נבואה דאיסתלקת מיניה

בעידן דזבינו ית יוסף ותבת עילוי יעקב אבוהון

Ps-J<sup>24</sup> Then he sent his brothers away, and they set off. He said to them, “Do not quarrel *about my sale, lest those who make the journey [with you] become angry with you.*”<sup>25</sup> They went up from Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob.<sup>26</sup> And they told him, saying, “Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler in all the land of Egypt.” But his heart *was divided*, because he did not believe them.<sup>27</sup> But they recounted to him all the words that Joseph had spoken with them, and when he saw the carriages that Joseph had sent to take him, the *spirit of prophecy which had departed from him when they sold Joseph returned and rested upon their father Jacob.*

Two reasons commend the view that this context ideally suits the tradition of Naphtali bringing the good news to Jacob. First, the episode notes that it was the brothers who brought this news to Jacob (as opposed to a sister), and Naphtali is one of the brothers. Commenting on this tradition about Naphtali at 49:21—albeit as it appears in Neofiti—Levy writes, “It thus complements 45:24–25 but contradicts the impression given by vv. 25–26 that all of the brothers told him.”<sup>391</sup> Indeed, this tradition of Naphtali bringing the news to Jacob works well with this episode only to a certain extent. For some tension does emerge here in that the verbs at 45:24–27 appear in the plural—MT: וַיִּבְאוּ, וַיַּעֲלוּ, וַיִּגְדְּלוּ; Ps-J: וַיִּגְדְּלוּ, וַיִּבְאוּ, וַיַּעֲלוּ—while the expansion at 49:21 names

Naphtali alone to be the messenger. But this tension is not insurmountable. The targumist

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<sup>391</sup> Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 294. Neofiti Genesis 49:21 presents the tradition as follows: נפתלי אזגד קליל מבשר בשורן טבן דהוא בשר לאבונן יעקב מן שירויה דעד כדון יוסף בחיין “Naphtali is a *swift runner announcing good news. Indeed, it was he who announced to our father Jacob at the outset that Joseph was still alive.*” The implication of the expression “at the outset” or, more literally, “from the beginning” is not entirely clear. Does this expression mean that Naphtali made this announcement as soon as Joseph was sold (which would associate the expansion of 49:21 with Gen 37 rather than 45)? Or does this mean that Naphtali was the first among the brothers to arrive and announce this news to Jacob? Levy makes no comment on this issue, while Ps-J lacks this expression altogether. Cf. the use of שירויה at Ps-J Gen 25:1, where the term appears to mean “already, previously, earlier, formerly.”

may have perceived the plural verb וַיִּדְבְּרוּ at 45:27 as a general statement that referred to all the brothers, and yet a statement that still allowed for Naphtali to play a distinct role of herald of this news among his brothers. This understanding of וַיִּדְבְּרוּ would work, for example, in a scenario within which Naphtali would be the first among his brothers to announce the good news to Jacob, and within which Naphtali's brothers would then follow with a later reiteration of this news to Jacob.<sup>392</sup> In other words, the targumist may be reading וַיִּדְבְּרוּ as a general statement about the presentation of the good news to Jacob.

Second, Ps-J's mention of Naphtali's quality of swiftness—נפתלי עזגד קליל דמי—also reinforces the claim that Naphtali brought this news to Jacob particularly in the context of 45:24–27.<sup>393</sup> In order for Ps-J's remark on Naphtali's swiftness to have any literary significance in Ps-J's expansion at 49:21, this swiftness needs to prove usefulness for Naphtali. But what better way to demonstrate Naphtali's swiftness than to have him be the first to arrive and make the announcement to Jacob that Joseph is alive, that is, before the arrival of any of his brothers! For this to be so, the brothers must be present in the scene and engaged in a similar mission; for in this way, Naphtali's speed is displayed in relation to someone slower than he. Naphtali's speed

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<sup>392</sup> A similar interpretative approach appears to be at play at Ps-J Gen 38:25, in which text Ps-J has Judah confess that he was the brother who declared “Identify!” while MT Gen 37:32 describes this act by using the plural verb וַיִּאמְרוּ (Ps-J: וַאֲמָרוּ). See above discussion on the apparent contradiction between 37:32 and 38:25. Cf., also Genesis Rabbah 84.19 and 85.11.

<sup>393</sup> Ps-J Gen 31:4 and 50:13 also record the tradition that Naphtali was a swift runner. See comments in Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 108, n. 3; cf. Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 236. Note also MT Judg 5:18: וַנִּפְתְּלֵי עַל מְרוֹמֵי שָׂדֵה “Naphtali, too, on the heights of the field.”



makes no literary contribution to the context of Gen 37, for he would not be racing against anyone in Gen 37, since no one would be engaged in the same mission to bring the news to Jacob inasmuch as the brothers had agreed to deceive their father. Rather, a quality of value in the context of Gen 37 would be defiance with regard to the conspiracy of the brothers to deceive Jacob, not swiftness. However, if Naphtali is traveling with his brothers, and they are all working in collaboration to bring the good news to Jacob (as happens to be the case in Gen 45), then Naphtali's swiftness explains why it was specifically he who brought the news to Jacob, rather than all the other brothers—because he was swifter than they. Therefore, while Naphtali would be the first to announce this news to Jacob, he would be later followed by the rest of the brothers who would reiterate the same news to Jacob as well. In short, these two reasons commend Gen 45:24–27 as being the context in which Naphtali brought the good news to Jacob in the conception of Ps-J.

A 17<sup>th</sup> century midrashic commentary on the Torah, *Yalqut Reuveni*,<sup>394</sup> commenting on Gen 45 (on *vayyigash*), understands the tradition about Naphtali in a similar manner:

נפתלי אילה שלוחה (להלן מט, כא), על נפתלי נאמר, שהיה איש של[ו]ם, ולו עשו אחיו שליח לבשר שלום לאביהם, והוא בישר ליעקב ביוסף ואמר לו עוד יוסף בני<sup>395</sup> חי, כשהיה רואה יעקב לנפתלי שהיה בא מרחוק, אמר הנה נפתלי בא, אדם טוב הוא ומבשר שלום, שנאמר הנותן אמרי שפר.<sup>396</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> For dating, see Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 353.

<sup>395</sup> The word בני should probably be deleted here.

<sup>396</sup> Reuben Hoeshke ben Hoeshke Katz, ילקוט ראובני החדש, מאמרים ומדרשים חדשים גם ישנים, לחמשה חומשי תורה: ספר בראשית-שמות (תעח) 478, ed. Yehudah Aryeh Leib Kuperberg (Jerusalem: Vagshal, 2012).

*Naphtali is a loose hind.* Concerning Naphtali it is said that he was a man of peace, and it was he whom his brothers appointed to be the messenger to proclaim the news of peace to their father; and it was he who proclaimed to Jacob concerning Joseph, saying to him that Joseph is still alive. When Jacob saw Naphtali who was coming at a distance, he said: Behold, Naphtali is coming, he is a good man, and one who proclaims peace, as it says: One who gives good tidings.

That the commentator imagined Naphtali's announcement to take place in the context of Gen 45 is unquestionable inasmuch as the commentator includes this tradition about Naphtali in his discussion of the Torah portion *Vayyiggash* (ויגש; Gen 44:18–47:27).

Moreover, when would the brothers have appointed one of the brothers to announce to Jacob that Joseph is still alive? Certainly not when they had just conspired to deceive Jacob into thinking that Joseph is dead! Rather, only after Joseph would have revealed his identity to his brothers and after he would have sent his brothers with a message to their father that he, Joseph, is alive.

In contrast to the tradition about Naphtali, the tradition about Serah best coincides with the episode described at the end of Gen 37, immediately after the sale of Joseph. Both expansions—i.e., at Ps-J Gen 46:17 and at Ps-J Num 26:46—commend this view in that they both describe Serah as escaping death (i.e., being taken to the Garden of Eden alive), that is, receiving a reward that presupposes an impressive act on her part.<sup>397</sup> It is

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<sup>397</sup> On Serah living a long time, see also *Genesis Rabbah* 94.9; PRE 20; and the discussion in Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 56. Moshe Reiss suggests that two factors may have contributed to the development of the tradition that Serah lived a long time: 1) at Gen 46:17 Serah is mentioned in the list of those who descended to Egypt, while at Num 26:46 Serah is mentioned in the list of those who participated in the Exodus a few hundred years after the descent to Egypt; and 2) the name שרה is sometimes spelled סרח in non-biblical literature (e.g., Ps-J Gen 26:46; *Hadar Zekenim* on Deut 33:24), and Reiss points out that סרח can also mean “overhanging, overlapping” (cf. also the possible meanings “to go free; to be unrestrained; to be extended beyond limits,” etc.; see Exod 26:12; and see Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “סרח,” BDB, 710; Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, “סרח,” in HALOT, 3:769; and Jastrow, “סרח,” in *A*

the end of Gen 37 that provides the context in which Serah could have achieved such an impressive act to warrant this reward. That is to say, when the brothers were rid of Joseph and conspired to deceive their father Jacob, Serah demonstrated courage in defying the brothers and revealed this secret to Jacob.

Advancing this very position about the tradition of Serah, Heinemann points to a reference to this tradition in *Hadar Zekenim* on Deut 33:24.<sup>398</sup> The text of *Hadar Zekenim* reads:

ולאשר אמר ברוך מבנים אשר ... ויש במדרש למה ברכו משה בלשון זה יותר מכל השבטים. וי"ל לפי שהיה בנידוי על שגילתה סרח בתו של אשר ליעקב שיוסף חי. כי כשנמכר יוסף השביעו השבטים זה את זה שלא לגלות הדבר וסרח שמעה והגידה ליעקב עוד יוסף חי שמעה מאביה כדאמר' קל שותא דינוקא דאבא או דאימא שמע. וא"ך שמעה הדבר מאביה ועל שגילתה היה בנידוי.<sup>399</sup>

And to Asher he said: “May Asher be blessed more than the sons” ... There is a midrash that explains why Moses blessed him with such language, that is, above all the tribes. There are those who say that he was in exile because Serah, the daughter of Asher, revealed to Jacob that Joseph is alive. For when Joseph was sold, the tribes swore to each other that they would not reveal this matter, but Serah heard this and told Jacob that Joseph is still alive. She heard this from her father, as it is said, “Whatever the child utters, he heard it either from his father or his mother” [b. Sukkah 56b]. Accordingly, she heard the matter from her father, and because she revealed it, he was in exile.

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*Dictionary of the Targumim*, 1024–25). Moshe Reiss, “Serah bat Asher in Rabbinic Literature,” *JBQ* 42, no. 1 (2014): 45–51, esp. 45 and 50, n. 1.

<sup>398</sup> Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 61.

<sup>399</sup> Asher ben Jehiel, *פרושים יחד, פרושים*, פרוש רש"י, פרוש רבינו הרא"ש על התורה (Jerusalem: Bene Beraq, 1986?), 454, 456 (תנד, תנו). See discussion in Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 61. Commenting on Gen 37:33, Rashi remarks that the brothers set a curse against anyone who would reveal this secret to Jacob: “Now why did the Holy One, blessed be He, not reveal [it] to him? Because they [the brothers] excommunicated and cursed anyone who would reveal [it], and they included the Holy One, blessed be He, with them” (Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., *רלב"ג על התורה*, 44 (מד); [קנה] 2:155, תורת חיים: בראשית, ed., so also Ralbag in Shurkin, ed., *התורה*).

In other words, *Hadar Zekenim* places Serah's announcement to Jacob that Joseph is alive at the end of Gen 37. As Heinemann exclaims: "Here, it is certain beyond any doubt that Serah revealed the matter related to the sale of Joseph after she heard *the secret* from her father; for if this were not the case, for what purpose, then, did the brothers impose exile on Asher?"<sup>400</sup> That is to say, when Serah heard about the sale of Joseph, this information was still a secret, rather than news that the brothers intended to deliver to Jacob. Further emphasizing the point that Serah had to have done this in the context of the sale of Joseph (ch. 37) rather than in the context of Joseph's self-disclosure to his brothers (ch. 45), Heinemann explains:

For after Joseph made himself known to them in Egypt, the brothers too had no intention to keep this secret any longer; so that even if Serah told this matter to Jacob before they did, it is certain that there was no longer any purpose to exile Asher on account of this matter, that is, as though Asher had violated the agreement which they swore to each other.<sup>401</sup>

In other words, if Serah were to have made the announcement to Jacob in the context of Gen 45, then she would not have deserved a reward, for she would not have achieved any extraordinary feat, inasmuch as at this point the brothers would have been on the verge of bringing this announcement to Jacob of their own accord. Consequently, if the

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<sup>400</sup> Italics mine. The original reads: כאן ברור למעלה מכל ספק, שסרח גילתה את הדבר סמוך למכירת בן-יוסף, לאחר ששמעה את הסוד מפי אביה; שאילולא כן—מה טעם הטילו האחים נידוי על אשר בשל כך? (Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 61–62). For Serah's quality of revealing secrets in various contexts, see Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 56–63.

<sup>401</sup> In the original: כי לאחר שיוסף גילה עצמו להם במצרים, גם האחים לא התכוונו עוד לשמור על סוד זה; ואפילו הקדימה אותם סרח בספרה את הדבר ליעקב, ודאי שאין עוד טעם לנדות בשל כך את אשר, על שעבר כביכול [The word וַיְגַדֵּי is spelled defectively,] without a י (=10) after the ג. For they [the brothers] did not tell him [Jacob] until they lifted the ban of excommunication that the ten of them had established [forbidding them to give this information to Jacob]" (Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim's Classic Commentary: Bereishis*, 425, n. 26; see also n. 32); and cf. PRE 38 that records a version of the same tradition.

presupposed context about Serah is indeed Gen 37, then Ps-J Gen 46:17 and Ps-J Num 26:46 are perfectly congruous with the expansion at Ps-J Gen 49:21 that identifies Naphtali as the individual who brought the news to Jacob. For, though both Serah and Naphtali bring the news to Jacob, each does this on a different occasion.<sup>402</sup>

This interpretation of the Serah tradition, however, contends against a variant tradition, which explicitly sets Serah's announcement to Jacob at the end of Gen 45. If this was the context with which the targumist associated the Serah tradition, then this, to be sure, would result in an actual contradiction between the passages. Variations of the tradition are recorded in *Midrash HaGadol* (14<sup>th</sup> century?) and *Sefer HaYashar* (11<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century?).<sup>403</sup> *Midrash HaGadol* relates the following:

ויגידו לו לאמר עוד יוסף חי. רבנין אמרי אמרו [האחים] אם אנו אומרין לו תחילה יוסף קיים שמא תפרח נשמתו. מה עשו אמרו לשרח בת אשר לכי אמרי לאבינו יעקב שיוסף קיים והוא במצרים. מה עשת המתינה לו עד שהוא עומד בתפילה ואמרה בלשון תימה יוסף במצרים, יולדו לו על ברכיים, מנשה ואפרים. פג לבו כשהוא עומד בתפילה. כיון שהשלים ראה את העגלות מיד ותחי רוח יעקב אביהם.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> The conclusion that Ps-J presupposes both of these traditions to be part of the narrative—that first, Serah revealed to Jacob that Joseph is alive in the context of Gen 37, and that ultimately the brothers revealed to Jacob that Joseph is alive in the context of Gen 45—does produce some tension. Did Jacob really learn twice that Joseph was alive? Commenting on the Serah tradition, Heinemann proposes a plausible resolution to this tension: בכך היא ניחמה את יעקב, ובמשך השנים הארוכות עד לפגישת האחים עם יוסף: “In this way she comforted Jacob, so that throughout the long years until the brothers and Joseph were reunited in Egypt, he [Jacob] knew that there is hope that he would again see his beloved son” (Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 61). However, even this creates some tension with Ps-J Gen 45:28, where Jacob says: “As for this, I did not expect that Joseph, my son, is alive until now.” But this too can be brought to resolution with the understanding that Jacob's statement focuses on the issue of duration—that Jacob did not know that Joseph would be alive until that very point (דעד כדון). See also Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 2:221, where Ginzberg records that God had revealed to Jacob the actions of the brothers against Joseph.

<sup>403</sup> For dating, see Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 354 and 339.

<sup>404</sup> Mordecai Margulies, ed., *ספר בראשית*: על חמשה חומשי תורה: ספר בראשית (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1967), 766 (תשסו).

*They said to him: Joseph is still alive.* The Rabbis say: [The brothers] said: If we are first to say to him that Joseph is alive, it may be that his life will flee from him. So what did they do? They said to Serah, the daughter of Asher: Go, tell our father Jacob that Joseph is alive and that he is in Egypt. What did she do? She waited for him [Jacob] until he stood praying, and then spoke in amazement: Joseph is in Egypt, and Manasseh and Ephraim have been born to him on his knees. His heart became numb as he stood in prayer. When he finished, he saw the wagons: Then the spirit of Jacob, their father, revived.

*Sefer HaYashar* offers a similar, but a more elaborate version of this tradition:

ויבואו עד גבול הארץ, ייאמרו איש אל רעהו: מה נעשה בדבר הזה לפני אבינו, כי אם נבוא אליו פתאום ונגד לו הדבר ונבהל מאד מדברינו ולא יאבה לשמוע אלינו. וילכו להם עד קרבם אל בתיהם, וימצאו את שרח בת אשר יוצאת לקראתם, והנערה טובה עד מאד וחכמה ויודעת לנגן בכנור. ויקראו אליה ותבוא אליהם ותשק אליהם ויקחוה ויתנו לה כנור אחד לאמר: בואי נא לפני אבינו וישבת לפניו והך בכנור ודברת ואמרת כדברים האלה לפניו. ויצו אותה ללכת אל ביתם, ותקח הכנור ותמהר ותלך לפניהם ותבוא ותשב אצל יעקב. ותיטיב הכנור ותנגן ותאמר בניעם דבריה: יוסף דודי חי הוא וכי הוא מושל בכל ארץ מצרים ולא מת. ותוסף ותנגן ותדבר כדברים האלה, וישמע יעקב את דבריה ויערב לו. וישמע עוד בדברה פעמים ושלוש, ותבוא השמחה בלב יעקב מנועם דבריה, ותהי עליו רוח אלהים, וידע כי כל דבריה נכונה. ויברך יעקב את שרח בדברה הדברים האלה לפניו. ויאמר אליה: בתי, אל ימשול מות בך עד עולם, כי החיית את רוחי. אך דברי נא עוד לפני כאשר דברת, כי שמחתני בכל דבריך. ותוסף ותנגן כדברים האלה, ויעקב שומע ויערב לו וישמח ותהי עליו רוח אלהים. עודנו מדבר עמה והנה בניו באו אליו בסוסים ומרכבות ובגדי מלכות ועבדים רצים לפניהם. ויקם יעקב לקראתם, וירא את בניו מלובשים בלבוש מלכות, וירא את כל הטובה אשר שלח יוסף אליהם. ויאמרו אליו: התבשר, כי יוסף אחינו חי, וכי הוא מושל בכל ארץ מצרים, והוא אשר דבר אלינו ככל אשר דברנו אליך.<sup>405</sup>

They came to the border of the land, and said to each other, "What shall we do concerning this matter before our father, for if we suddenly come to him and tell him the matter, he will be greatly alarmed at our words and will not want to hear us." So they went on until they approached their houses, and found Serah, the daughter of Asher, going out to meet them. The maiden was exceedingly good and wise, and she knew how to play the harp. When they called her, she came to them and kissed them, and they took her and gave her a harp, saying, "Go now before our father, sit before him, strum the harp, and say these words to him." When they commanded her to go to their house, she took the harp, hastened and went before them, and came and sat with Jacob. Then she played the harp

<sup>405</sup> Shemaryahu Yosef Hayim ben Y. Y. Kanevski, ed., ספר הישר (Israel: Bene Beraq, 2002 or 2003/ג"תשס"ג), 226–27 (רכו-רכז). See also discussion in Heinemann, ותולדותיהן, 60.

beautifully, and uttered her words pleasantly: “Joseph my uncle is living, and indeed he is governing over all the land of Egypt; he is not dead.” She continued to play and utter these words, and Jacob heard her words and they were pleasing to him. He continued to listen to her words a second time and a third time, and joy entered the heart of Jacob at the pleasantness of her words, and the spirit of God was upon him, so he knew that all her words were true. And Jacob blessed Serah when she spoke these words before him. He said to her, “My daughter, may death never prevail over you, for you have revived my spirit. Only speak now before me as you have spoken, for you have gladdened me with all thy words.” So she continued to make melody with these words, and Jacob listened and it pleased him, and he rejoiced, and the spirit of God was upon him. While he was yet speaking with her, behold his sons came to him with horses and chariots and royal garments and servants running before them. And Jacob arose to meet them, and saw his sons dressed in royal garments, and he saw all the goods that Joseph had sent to them. And they said to him, “Let it be known that Joseph our brother is alive, and that it is he who governs in all the land of Egypt, and it is he who has spoken to us everything that we have told you.”

In assessing these two midrashim, Heinemann argues that they developed after the tradition that places Serah’s announcement in the context of Gen 37. He contends that neither of these midrashim attributes to Serah an action of any magnitude deserving of the reward of escaping death. Therefore, it would seem that this particular reward emerged in a different tradition (i.e., in the context of Gen 37) and that it was then readapted in a later rendition of this tradition. In the words of Heinemann:

It appears, however, that neither of these is the original tradition. For the reward seems much too great for what is expected, if indeed it is the case that Serah’s merit was nothing more than that she preceded her brothers by a mere hour or that she carried out their message.<sup>406</sup>

In other words, why should Serah be granted the privilege of escaping death if she did what the brothers were about to do anyway? Heinemann proceeds to argue that Serah

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<sup>406</sup> In the original: ברם דומה, שלא זו ולא זו היא המסורת המקורית. שכן השכר נראה גדול למעלה מכל מידה סבירה, אם אמנם כל זכותה של סרח לא היתה אלא שהקדימה את האחים שעה קלה או שעשתה את שליחותם (Heinemann, אגדות ותולדותיהן, 61).

must have done something of consequence that would befit the great reward she receives.

He exclaims:

It becomes apparent, however, that from the very outset the intent of these words [i.e., of Serah's announcement to Jacob that Joseph is alive] was that she revealed to Jacob the essence of the secret, that Joseph is not dead but that he was sold, and that he is still alive, and all this is related to the act of the sale [of Joseph]. In this way she comforted Jacob, so that throughout the long years until the brothers and Joseph were reunited in Egypt, he [Jacob] knew that there is hope that he would again see his beloved son.<sup>407</sup>

Heinemann's argumentation is compelling. The tradition of Serah's reward of evading death seems most likely to have originated within the context of the sale of Joseph, that is, at the end of Gen 37, when she reveals to Jacob the secret that Joseph is alive.

If, then, Ps-J imagined the Serah tradition to be associated with the sale of Joseph (Gen 37) and the Naphtali tradition with the brothers' return from Egypt (Gen 45), then the narrative of Ps-J remains coherent. For the passages can be viewed as contradictory only under the assumption that they both refer to the same period of time and the same circumstances; but this assumption is unnecessary. If each tradition is granted its fitting context, the contention that there is a contradiction between the traditions is unsustainable.<sup>408</sup> The key, once again, to ascertaining the underlying coherence of the narrative is the recognition of the presuppositions of the targumist about the text, presuppositions which the targumist, apparently, expected the audience to ascertain.

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<sup>407</sup> In the original: אולם מסתבר כי מתחילה היתה כוונת הדברים, שהיא גילתה ליעקב את עצם הסוד, שיוסף לא מת אלא נמכר, ועדיין הוא בחזקת חי, וזאת—סמוך למעשה מכירה. בכך היא ניחמה את יעקב, ובמשך (Heinemann, השנים הארוכות עד לפגישת האחים עם יוסף במצרים ידע שיש תקווה כי ישוב ויראה את בנו האהוב (61), אגדות ותולדותיהן). See note 401 on the tension this causes with Ps-J Gen 45:28 and the proposed resolution.

<sup>408</sup> For a discussion of apparent inconsistencies that are in fact coherent on account of the relation of each statement to the greater context of the narrative, see van Dijk, *Text and Context*, 95–98; de Beaugrande and Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, 115–16.



### 5.2.6 Exodus 4:20–26 vs. 18:1–4

Ps-J Exod 4:20–26 narrates an episode in which Moses leaves Midian and embarks on a journey to Egypt with his wife Zipporah and their two sons. Appearing to contradict this narrative, Ps-J Exod 18:1–4 states that when Moses had set out on this journey to Egypt, he had actually sent his wife Zipporah away and had completed this journey without her.<sup>409</sup> The two passages read as follows:

#### Exod 4:20–26

MT 20 וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־בָּנָיו וַיִּרְכַּבֵם עַל־הַחֲמֹר וַיָּשָׁב אֶרְצָה מִצְרַיִם וַיִּקַּח  
מֹשֶׁה אֶת־מַטֵּה הָאֱלֹהִים בְּיָדוֹ: 21 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּלִכְתּוֹךָ לָשׁוּב מִצְרָיִמָּה  
רְאֵה כָּל־הַמִּפְתִּיחַ אֲשֶׁר־שַׁמְתִּי בְיָדְךָ וְעָשִׂיתָם לִפְנֵי פַרְעֹה וְאָנֹכִי אֶתְחַזֵּק אֶת־לְבָבוֹ  
וְלֹא יִשְׁלַח אֶת־הֶעָם: 22 וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה בְּנִי בְכֹרִי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 23  
וְאָמַר אֱלֹהֵיךָ שְׁלַח אֶת־בְּנֵי וַיַּעֲבֹדְנִי וְתִמְאַן לְשַׁלְּחוֹ הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי הֹרֵג אֶת־בְּנֶיךָ בְּכַרְדָּךָ:  
24 וַיְהִי בְדָרֶךְ בְּמִלּוֹן וַיִּפְגְּשֶׁהוּ יְהוָה וַיִּבְקֹשׁ הַמִּיתוֹ: 25 וַתִּקַּח צִפּוֹרָה צִפְרָה יָצָר וַתְּכַרֵת  
אֶת־עֶרְלַת בְּנֶהּ וַתַּגַּע לְרַגְלָיו וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי חַתּוּן־דָּדַי אָתָּה לִּי: 26 וַיִּרְרָ מִמֶּנּוּ אַז  
אָמְרָה חַתּוּן דָּדַי לְמוֹלֵת:

NRSV 20 So Moses took his wife and his sons, put them on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt; and Moses carried the staff of God in his hand. 21 And the LORD said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. 22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD: Israel is my firstborn son. 23 I said to you, “Let my son go that he may worship me.” But you refused to let him go; now I will kill your firstborn son.’ ” 24 On the way, at a place where they spent the night, the LORD met him and tried to kill him. 25 But Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son’s foreskin, and touched Moses’ feet with it, and said, “Truly you are a bridegroom of blood to me!” 26 So he let him alone. It was then she said, “A bridegroom of blood by circumcision.”

Ps-J 20 וּדְבַר מֹשֶׁה ית אינתתיה וית בנוי וארכיבנין על חמרא ותב לארעא דמצרים  
ונסיב משה ית חוטרא דנסב מן גינוניתא דחמוי והוא מספיר כורסי יקרא  
מתקליה ארבעין סאין ועילוי חקיק ומפרש שמא רבא ויקירא וביה איתעבידו  
ניסין מן קדם ייי בידיה.... 24 והוה באורחא בבית אבתותא וארע ביה מלאכא

<sup>409</sup> Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion.

דיי ובעא למיקטליה מן בגלל גרשום בריה דלא הוה גזיר על עיסק יתרו חמוי  
 דלא שבקיה למגזריה ברם אליעזר הוה גזר בתנאה דאתניי תרוויהון<sup>25</sup> ונסיבת  
 צפורה טינרא וגזרת ית ערלת גרשום ברה ואקריבת ית גזירת מהולתא לריגלוי  
 דמלאך חבלא ואמרת חתנא בעא למגזור וחמוי עכיב עלוי וכדון אדם גוזרתא  
 הדין יכפר על חתנא דילי<sup>26</sup> ופסק מלאך חבלא מיניה בכך שבחת צפורה

Ps-J

**20 So Moses took his wife and his sons, mounted them on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt.** And Moses took in his hand the rod which he had taken from the garden of his father-in-law. It was of sapphire from the throne of glory, its weight was forty seahs, and the great and glorious name was clearly engraved on it, and with it miracles were performed from before the Lord....<sup>24</sup> At a lodging place on the way the angel of the Lord met him and sought to kill him because of Gershom, his son, who had not been circumcised on account of Jethro, his father-in-law, who had not allowed him to circumcise him. But Eliezer had been circumcised according to an agreement which they had made between them.<sup>25</sup> Then Zipporah took a flint-stone and cut the foreskin of Gershom, her son, and brought the circumcised foreskin to the feet of the Destroying Angel and said, "The bridegroom wanted to circumcise, but his father-in-law prevented him. And now may the blood of this circumcision atone for my husband."<sup>26</sup> And the Destroying Angel left him alone. Then Zipporah praised (God) and said, "How precious is the blood of this circumcision that saved the bridegroom from the hands of the Destroying Angel."

**Exod 18:1-4**

MT

<sup>1</sup> וישמע יתרו כהן מדין חתן משה את כל אשר עשה אלהים למשה ולישראל עמו כיהוציא יהוה את ישראל ממצרים: <sup>2</sup> ויקח יתרו חתן משה את צפורה אשת משה אחר שלוחיה: <sup>3</sup> ואת שני בניה אשר שם האחד גרשם כי אמר גר היתי בארץ נכריה: <sup>4</sup> ושם האחד אליעזר כי אלהי אבי בעזרי ויצלני מחרב פרעה:

NRSV

<sup>1</sup> Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro took her back, <sup>3</sup> along with her two sons. The name of the one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been an alien in a foreign land"), <sup>4</sup> and the name of the other, Eliezer (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh").

- Ps-J                    ושמע יתרו אונס מדין חמוי דמשה ית כל מאן דעבד ייי למשה ולישראל<sup>1</sup>  
עמיה ארום אפיק ייי ית ישראל ממצרים<sup>2</sup> ודבר יתרו חמוי דמשה ית צפורה  
אינתתיה דמשה בתר דשלחה מלותיה כד הוה אזיל למצרים<sup>3</sup> וית תרין בנהא  
דשום חד גרשום ארום אמר דייר הוותי בארע נוכראה דלא הידי דיי' היא  
ושום חד אליעזר ארום אמר אלקא דאבא הוה בסעדי ושיזבני מחרבא דפרעה<sup>4</sup>
- Ps-J                    <sup>1</sup> Jethro, the *ruler* of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard all that *the Lord* had done for Moses and for Israel his people, that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> **And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her away from him when he was going to Egypt,** <sup>3</sup> as well as her two sons—one of whom was named Gershom, for he said, "I have been a resident in a foreign land *that was not mine*"; <sup>4</sup> and the other was named Eliezer, for *he said*, "The God of my father *was* at my assistance, and he delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh."

If in the Hebrew these two passages raise questions as to how they are to be read together, in Ps-J the targumist's expansions sharpen the appearance of contradiction between the two narratives.<sup>410</sup> In the Hebrew, 18:2 does not explicitly specify that the

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<sup>410</sup> Friedman attributes 4:19–20 mostly to J, 18:1–4 mostly to E, and the clause אַחַר שְׁלוּחֶיהָ at 18:2 to a redactor (RJE) (Friedman, *Bible with Sources Revealed*, 125 and 149–50). Friedman contends, then, that a major difference between the J tradition and the E tradition is that in E "Moses does not take his wife and sons with him to Egypt" (Friedman, *Bible with Sources Revealed*, 125, note \*) while in J "Moses took his son and Zipporah with him to Egypt" (Friedman, *Bible with Sources Revealed*, 150, note \*). In the light of this apparent discrepancy in the biblical text, Friedman suggests that "The words 'after her being sent off' [אַחַר שְׁלוּחֶיהָ] appear to have been added by RJE to solve this contradiction" (Friedman, *Bible with Sources Revealed*, 150, note \*). Also commenting on the apparent tension between Exod 4:20–26 and 18:1–4, Childs similarly suggests that אַחַר שְׁלוּחֶיהָ at 18:2 seeks to reconcile this tension, though he seems to attribute this phrase to the author of the pericope rather than to a redactor: "Zipporah had last been heard of in the strange story of the circumcision in 4:24–26. Now suddenly she reappears with Jethro. The author of the present story is aware of the sudden disappearance of Zipporah, and therefore he tries to pick up the lost thread by adding a note. *She had been earlier sent back to her father*" (italics mine; Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 326, and see 321). Cf. also August Knobel, *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1857), 179; August Dillmann, *Die Bücher Exodus und Leviticus* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1897), 202; Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, AB, 196; Plaut, Bamberger, and Hallo, *The Torah*, 508; Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 228–29; Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS, 99; cf. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC, 55 and 243; Thomas B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary, eds. David Noel Freedman and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 150 and 402; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 53–54 and 213–14.

As regards the meaning of שְׁלוּחֶיהָ, Propp remarks on 18:2: "*Šillûhe(y)hā* is usually understood as Zipporah's 'dismissal' (<*šillah* 'release'), Moses having left her behind in the safety of Midian. (In the composite Torah, one can well imagine Zipporah's own second thoughts after the Bloody Bridegroom incident [4:24–26(J)]!) Since *šillah* can connote divorce (Deut 22:19, 29, etc.), some Rabbis even infer that Moses had dissolved his marriage after fulfilling the commandment to procreate.... There is probably no etymological relationship between *šillûhe(y)hā* and *šlh* 'send, dismiss.' Rather, *šillûhîm* denotes a wedding

passage is referring to Moses' return to Egypt (cf. 4:20); but in Ps-J, the targumist made this literary link explicit by stating that Moses sent Zipporah away "when he was going to Egypt." Despite the appearance of this discrepancy, a close study of these passages demonstrates that the contradiction is not actual. Rather, the expansions at 4:20–26 and 18:1–4 exhibit literary interdependence, which, in turn, suggests that the targumist read the two passages congruously.

First, the expansion at 4:20–26 demonstrates dependence on and is produced by the targumist in the light of 18:1–4. The Hebrew rendition of 4:20–26, in the view of the targumist, seems to present an inconsistent picture regarding the son(s) of Moses. That is, while 4:20 states that Moses had "sons" (בְּנָיו), that is, more than one son, the remainder of the narrative, and particularly v. 25, appears to assume the presence of only one son (הַבֵּן). Durham notes, "The inconsistent note is introduced by 4:24–26, a passage that mentions only one son."<sup>411</sup> The targumist of Ps-J filled this gap in the scene by inserting the names of both of Moses' sons and by incorporating an explanation as to why Zipporah circumcised only one of the sons. Significantly, the targumist draws his

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gift.... Thus, 'aḥar šillūhe(y)hā probably describes, not when Jethro took Zipporah in, but when she became Moses' wife: after the transfer of šillūhîm" (Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 629). Childs, however, remarks, "The noun šillūhîm denotes both a 'dismissal' as well as a 'dowry'. The latter meaning does not fit the context, although some have suggested it" (Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 320, n. 2). Cf. Durham, *Exodus*, 239, n. 2a; Dozeman, *Exodus*, 399. For the tradition of Moses divorcing Zipporah, see Lauterbach, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, 2:274–75. Cf. also Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 2:291–95, 329; 3:64; and 3:255–58, sections that record the tradition that Moses abstained from conjugal relations with Zipporah. Naftali notes that Zipporah's departure from Moses did not entail a divorce (Naftali, ed., *על ספר שמות*, אוצר המדרשים, 207 [רז]). For a similar position, see Avie Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim's Classic Commentary: Shemos*, Artscroll Series (New York: Mesorah, 1999), 716–17. See also discussion in Fishbane, *על חומש: ספר שמות*, 2:1–2 (א-ב); and Asher ben Jehiel, *הדר זקנים: על חמשת חומשי התורה*, 179 (קעט).

<sup>411</sup> Durham, *Exodus*, 243.

information about the names of Moses' sons from Exod 18:3–4, which verses mention that the names of the sons are Gershom and Eliezer. This interpretative move on the part of the targumist suggests that the targumist sought to ensure harmony between these two pericopes.

Second, the expansion at 18:2 derives from and depends on the episode narrated at 4:20–26. As 4:20–26 sets its narrative during Moses' trip from Midian to Egypt ( **וַיֵּשֶׁב** ( **וְתָב לָאֲרַעָא דְמִצְרַיִם/אֲרַצָּה מִצְרַיִם**), so Ps-J Exod 18:2 places its episode into the same context with Ps-J's addition **כִּד הוּוּ אַזִּיל לְמִצְרַיִם** (“when he was going to Egypt”). This addition at Ps-J Exod 18:2 seeks to answer the lurking question left unanswered in the Hebrew statement **אַחַר שֶׁלִּוְחָיָהּ** “after he [Moses] sent her [Zipporah] away”: that is, when exactly did Moses send Zipporah away? The targumist's expansion establishes that Moses did this sometime during his journey to Egypt.

The implication of this interdependence between 4:20–26 and 18:1–4 is that the targumist understood these passages as complements. In the view of the targumist, the material at 18:1–4 informs the episode described at 4:20–26, and the material at 4:20–26 informs the episode at 18:1–4. This complementary view of the passages helps to explain the apparent contradiction between these two pericopes—as to whether Zipporah did or did not go with Moses to Egypt. That is, by introducing the explanatory clause at 18:2 **כִּד הוּוּ אַזִּיל לְמִצְרַיִם** “*when he was going to Egypt*,” the targumist appears to have assumed that Moses' trip to Egypt included two stages: 1) 4:20–26 describes how at the outset Zipporah accompanied Moses on his journey to Egypt; and 2) 18:1–4 describes how at a

certain point thereafter Zipporah was sent away by Moses. In Ps-J, the two passages are designed to be read in tandem; and once read in this way, the two pericopes prove to be sequential rather than incompatible.

*Mekhilta-de-Rabbi Ishmael* to 18:2 addresses the question as to how 4:20–26 and 18:1–4 are to be read together within the Hebrew text, and offers the following discussion:

ויקח יתרו חותן משה את צפורה אשת משה אחר שלוחיה רבי יהושע אומר מאחר שנפטרה ממנו בגט נאמר כאן שלוח ונאמר להלן שילוח מה שלוח האמור להלן גט אף שלוח האמור כאן גט רבי אלעזר המודעי אומר מאחר שנפטרה ממנו במאמר שבשעה שאמר לו המקום למשה לך והוצא את עמי בני ישראל ממצרים שנאמר ועתה לכה ואשלחך אל פרעה וגו' באותה שעה נטל אשתו ושני בניו והיה מוליכם למצרים שנאמר ויקח משה את אשתו ואת בניו וירכיבם על החמור וישב ארצה מצרים באותה שעה נאמר לאהרן לך לקראת משה המדברה וגו' יצא לקראתו והיה מגפפו ומחבקו ומנשקו אמר לו משה אחי היכן היית כל השנים הללו אמר לו במדין אמר לו מה טף ונשים אלו עמד אמר לו אשתי ובניי אמר לו ולהיכן אתה מוליכם אמר לו למצרים אמר לו על הראשונים אנו מצטערים ועכשיו הבאת עלינו את האחרונים באותה שעה אמר לה משה לצפורה לכי לבית אביך נטלה שני בניה והלכה לה לכך נאמר אחר שלוחיה.<sup>412</sup>

*And Jethro, Moses' Father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her away. R. Joshua says: After she had been dismissed from him by a bill of divorce. Here the term "send" (Shiluah) is used and there (Deut. 24.1) the term "send" (Shiluah) is used. Just as the term "send" used there implies a bill of divorce, so also the term "send" used here implies a bill of divorce. R. Eleazar of Modi'im says: After she had been dismissed from him by a mere speech. For at the time when God said to Moses: "Go and bring out My people, the children of Israel, from Egypt," as it is said: "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh," etc. (Ex. 3.10), Moses immediately took his wife and his two sons and led them to Egypt, as it is said: "And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass and he returned to the land of Egypt" (ibid. 4.20). At the same time Aaron was told: "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses" (ibid. 4.27). Aaron then went to meet him. He threw his arms around him, embraced him and kissed him, and said to him: "Moses, my brother, where have you been all these years?" Moses said to him: "In Midian." Then Aaron said to him: "What about the*

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<sup>412</sup> The Hebrew text and the English translation are taken from Lauterbach, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, 2:274–75. Rashi follows the *Mekhilta* in his interpretation of Exod 18:2 (Katzenellenbogen, ed., [רכון] 1:226 תורת חיים: שמות).

children and women that are with you?” Moses said to him: “My wife and my sons.” “And whither are you taking them?” asked Aaron. “To Egypt,” answered Moses. Then Aaron said to him: “We are worrying about those already there and now you bring upon us these newcomers.” At that moment Moses said to Zipporah: “Go to your father’s house.” She then took her two sons and went. Referring to this it is said: “After he had sent her away.”

The midrash resolves this apparent discrepancy by viewing the two statements about Zipporah as sequential: first she went with Moses; then she was sent away by Moses. And as Schmerler indicates in his commentary on Ps-J Exod 18:2, the tradition preserved in this midrash may have been the presupposition that the targumist harbored about the two passages in producing the Aramaic text.<sup>413</sup> Though the targumist did not explicitly state this same reasoning, the fact that he imported the context of 4:20–26 into the text of 18:1–4 and imported information from 18:1–4 into 4:20–26 does suggest that he read the two passages as complements. For the targumist, then, the two passages comprised a coherent relationship. The targumist assumed this relationship between the two passages and expected of the audience no less.<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: שמות, 111.

<sup>414</sup> In contrast to Onqelos, Neofiti, and other Jewish traditions (see below), Ps-J Num 12 makes no effort to identify Moses’ Cushite wife with Zipporah the Midianite. For the targumist of Ps-J, Num 12 refers to an entirely separate episode in which Moses is coerced into a marriage with a Cushite queen. So Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:410, n. 80 (“the oldest rabbinic source where reference is made to [the tradition of Moses’ marriage to an Ethiopian princess] seems to be Targum Yerushalmi Num 12:1” [i.e., Ps-J]) and 6:90, n. 488; see also Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:412, n. 96. For a discussion of this tradition, see Avigdor Shinan, “Moses and the Ethiopian Woman: Sources of a Story in the Chronicles of Moses,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 27 (1978): 66–78; and some comments in Maher, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Exodus 2.21,” 87. For traditions that identify the Cushite woman with Zipporah, see Targumim Onqelos and Neofiti at Num 12, Sifre Numbers 99, discussions in Grossfeld, *Targum Onqelos: Numbers*, 103, nn. 1–3; Roger Le Déaut with Jacques Robert, eds. and trans., *Targum du pentateuque: Traduction des deux recensions palestiniennes complètes avec introduction, parallèles, notes et index, Nombres*, Sources Cretiennes 261 (Paris: Latour-Baubourg, 1979), 115, nn. 1–3; McNamara, *Targum Neofiti: Numbers*, 76, nn. 1 and h, as well as c that mentions the Neofiti Marginalia that says that Moses’ wife was not a Cushite; B. Barry Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, Studies in Judaism 2 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 86; McNamara and Clarke, *Neofiti 1: Numbers and Pseudo-Jonathan: Numbers*, 222, n. 2. See, however, Ps-J Num 25:6, in which text the targumist appeals to the tradition of Moses marrying a Midianite woman to explain the difficulties in the narrative of Num 25; and additional traditions that deal with interpretive difficulties in Num 25 in Townsend, ed., *Midrash*

### 5.2.7 Exodus 13:21–22 vs. 14:19–20

The apparent inconsistency between Ps-J Exod 13:21–22 and 14:19–20 pertains to the function of the pillar of cloud.<sup>415</sup> At 13:21–22, the function of the pillar of cloud *at night* is singular: to cast darkness on the Egyptians; whereas at 14:19–20, the function of the pillar of cloud *at night* is two-fold: to cast darkness on the Egyptians and, at the same time, to shine light on the Israelites.<sup>416</sup> Thus Ginsburger concludes that these two passages contradict one another;<sup>417</sup> and as Maher explains, “There is a certain contradiction between Ps.-J.’s version of our present verse [13:21] (the pillar of cloud brought darkness on the Egyptians) and Ps.-J. 14:20 (the pillar of cloud was part light, part darkness, bringing darkness on the Egyptians, and giving light to Israel at night).”<sup>418</sup>

The passages read as follows:

#### Exod 13:21–22

MT                    וַיֵּהְיוּ הַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵיהֶם יוֹמָם בְּעַמּוּד עָנָן לְנַחֲתָם הַדֶּרֶךְ וּלְיָלָה בְּעַמּוּד אֵשׁ לְהַאֲרִי־  
לָהֶם לְלֶכֶת יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה: <sup>22</sup> לְאֵ-יְמִישׁ עַמּוּד הָעָנָן יוֹמָם וְעַמּוּד הָאֵשׁ לְיָלָה לִפְנֵי  
הָעָם:

NRSV                <sup>21</sup> The LORD went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night. <sup>22</sup> Neither the pillar of

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*Tanhuma*, 3:234–35; b. Sanh. 82a; and McNamara and Clarke, *Neofiti 1: Numbers and Pseudo-Jonathan: Numbers*, 264, n. 19.

<sup>415</sup> Cf. Exod 14:24; 33:9–10; 40:34–38; Num 9:15–23; 10:11–12; 12:5; 14:14; Deut 1:32–33.

<sup>416</sup> According to some passages, both in the MT and in Ps-J, shining light is the function of the pillar of fire (see Exod 13:21–22; Deut 1:32–33; cf. Exod 14:24).

<sup>417</sup> In a section entitled “Haggadische Zusätze in Ps. Jon. widersprechen sich,” Ginsburger cites the two passages in question as being contradictory: “Exod. 13,21 gegen 14,20 (bezüglich der Wolkensäule)” (Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, XX).

<sup>418</sup> McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Exodus and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 198, n. 21. Onqelos, Neofiti, and Neofiti Marginalia (but not the Genizah Manuscripts) have a similar expansion at Exod 14:20.



cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

Ps-J 21 ואיקר שכינתא דיי מידבר קדמיהון ביממא בעמודא דענגא לדברותהון באורחא ובליליא הדר עמודא דענגא מבתריהון למיחשך למרדפיך מן בתריהון ועמודא דאישתא לאנהרא קדמיהון למיזל ביממא ובליליא 22 לא עדי עמודא דענגא ביממא ועמודא דאישתא בליליא למידברא קדם עמא

Ps-J 21 *The Glory of the Shekinah of the Lord was leading before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to guide them on the way; at night the pillar of cloud went back behind them to create darkness for those who pursued them, and [they had] the pillar of fire to give light before them, that they might travel by day and by night.* 22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not cease to lead before the people.

#### Exod 14:19–20

MT 19 וישע מלאך האלהים ההלך לפני מחנה ישראל וילך מאחריהם וישע עמוד הענן מפניהם ויעמד מאחריהם: 20 ויבא בין מחנה מצרים ובין מחנה ישראל ויהי הענן והחשך ויאר את הלילה ולא קרב זה אל זה כל הלילה:

NRSV 19 The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. 20 It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Ps-J 19 ונטל מלאכא דיי דמדבר קדם משרייתא דישראל ואתא מן בתריהון ונטל עמודא דענגא מן קדמיהון ושרא מן בתריהון מן בגלל מצראי דפתקין גירין ואבנין לישראל והוה ענגא מקביל יתהון 20 ועאל בין משרייתא דישראל ובין משרייתא דמצראי והוה ענגא פלגיה נהורא ופלגיה חשוכא מסיטריה חד מחשך על מצראי ומסיטריה חד אנהר על ישראל כל ליליא ולא קרבא משרי כל קבל משרי למסדרא סדרי קרבא כל ליליא

Ps-J 19 And the angel of the Lord who was leading before the camp of Israel moved and came behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from [being] before them and settled behind them because of the Egyptians who were throwing arrows and stones against Israel, and the cloud intercepted them. 20 It came between the camp of Israel and the camp of the Egyptians, and the cloud was part light and part darkness; on one side it cast darkness over the Egyptians, and on the other side it gave light over Israel all the night. And through the

whole night *one camp* did not approach *against* the other *to engage in battle*.

Analysis of these passages demonstrates that the two depictions of the pillar of cloud are not mutually exclusive. At 13:21–22, in a particular set of circumstances, the function of the cloud is limited to casting darkness on the Egyptians; at 14:19–20, in a different set of circumstances, the function of the cloud is expanded to casting darkness and shining light. The distinct functions of the cloud, in other words, do not take place at the same time or in the same circumstances; therefore, they do not produce an actual contradiction. The targumist, moreover, is not rejecting the portrayal of the cloud at 13:21–22, but, rather, expanding the cloud’s functionality at 14:19–20. This expansion of the cloud’s complex function at 14:19–20 is prompted by three factors: 1) the perplexing clause in the Hebrew text of Exod 14:20—*וַיְהִי הָעֲנָן וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־הַלַּיְלָה*; 2) the multifarious functions of the cloud in other portions of the Torah; and 3) the Jewish tradition that connects the role of the cloud at 14:19–20 to the darkness plague in Egypt as described at Exod 10:21–23.

First, Ps-J’s expansion is prompted by the perplexing Hebrew clause that appears at 14:20: *וַיְהִי הָעֲנָן וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־הַלַּיְלָה*, which, literally translated, reads: “And there was the cloud and the darkness, and it lit up the night.”<sup>419</sup> The statement is less than clear and

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<sup>419</sup> The following texts also betray efforts to resolve the syntactical difficulty at Exod 14:20. Targum Onqelos: *וְהוּא עֲנָן וְקִבְלָא לְמַצְרָאֵי וְלִישְׂרָאֵל נָהַר כֹּל לַיְלָא*; “*And there was the cloud and the darkness for the Egyptians, but it gave light for the Israelites all night.*” Targum Neofiti: *וְהוּא עֲנָן חֹשֶׁךְ וְפִלְגָא נְהוּרָא*; “*And the cloud was darkness and in part light: obscuring darkness for the Egyptians, but light for Israel all the night.*” Fragment Targumim: *וַיְהִי הָעֲנָן; וְהוּא עֲנָן פִּלְגָא*; “*And there was the cloud: And the cloud was part light and part darkness. The light gave light to the Israelites, and the darkness cast darkness on the Egyptians.*” LXX: *καὶ ἐγένετο ἀσκότος καὶ γνόφος, καὶ διήλθεν ἡ νύξ*; “*And there was darkness and blackness, and the night passed.*” The Syriac Peshitta: *וַיְהִי הָעֲנָן וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־הַלַּיְלָה*

raises at least two questions: 1) What does it exactly mean that “there was the cloud and the darkness”? And 2) what is the “it” that “lit up the night”?<sup>420</sup> The targumist resolved these questions by attributing both darkness and light to the cloud: that is, הַחֹשֶׁךְ is read as a predicate nominative that defines the cloud (at least in part), and וַיֹּאֲרֶה is read as referring back to the cloud (at least in part) as the antecedent of the unspecified subject in וַיֹּאֲרֶה. In this way, the targumist has both the darkness and the light serve as attributes of the cloud. Golomb refers to this type of activity as “creative exploitation of ambiguity,” where the targumists sometimes choose one possible interpretation over another, and other times, as

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“And there was a cloud and darkness the whole night, and it gave light *to the Israelites the whole night.*” And the Latin Vulgate: *et erat nubes tenebrosa et inluminans noctem* “And it was a dark cloud, and it illuminated the night.” For a discussion of this text in midrash, see Lauterbach, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* 5:37–41, 1:150. Rashi understands הענן והחשך as casting darkness on the Egyptians, and וַיֹּאֲרֶה as referring to עמוד האש which illuminated the night for the Israelites (Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: שמות, 1:175 [קעה]). For further discussion of this text see Grossfeld, *Targum Onqelos: Exodus*, 38, n. 6; Klein, *Fragment Targum*, 168; Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 218; Durham, *Exodus*, 188–89, 192–93; Noth, *Exodus*, 108–9; Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, AB, 476, 480, 549–50; Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS, 70; T. W. Mann, “The Pillar of Cloud in the Sea Narrative,” *JBL* 90 (1971): 15–30; W. Gross, “Die Wolkensäule und die Feuersäule in Ex 13 + 14: Literarkritische, redaktiongeschichtliche und quellenkritische Erwägungen,” in *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel: Für Norbert Lohfink* (Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 142–65; and C. Vervenne, “Exodus 14, 20 MT-LXX: Textual or Literary Variation?” *Lectures et relectures de la Bible: festschrift P.-M. Bogaert*, eds. J. M. Auwers and A. Wénin, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium* 144 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 3–25, where Vervenne suggests that the LXX is to be preferred over the MT.

<sup>420</sup> Sarna prefers to understand וַיֹּאֲרֶה as deriving from the root אָרַר, explaining: “The usual meaning of Hebrew *va-ya’er*, ‘it lit up,’ would not seem to be consistent with the ‘cloud and the darkness.’” Thus he offers the following translation of v. 20: “and it [the pillar of cloud] came between the army of the Egyptians and the army of Israel. Thus there was the cloud with the darkness, and it cast a spell upon the night, so that the one could not come near the other all through the night” (Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS, 73). See also Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 498 on the interpretation of וַיֹּאֲרֶה; and Durham, *Exodus*, 192–93. Commenting on Neofiti’s translation of 14:20, which is similar to that of Ps-J (see n. 419 above), Levy exclaims: “This expansion and addition builds on the obvious contradiction of simultaneous light and darkness” (Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 374).

in this case, “rather than choose ‘either-or,’ they [the targumists] pick ‘both-and.’”<sup>421</sup> The targumist of Ps-J made clear that this was his interpretation of the difficult text by filling in the gaps in the Hebrew text, in order to ensure that his understanding of the passage was unequivocally conveyed. The following table demonstrates the targumist’s exegetical work:

**Table 9: Literary Structure of Exodus 14:20**

אֶת־הַלַּיְלָה	וַיֹּאֶר	וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ	וַיְהִי עֲנָנָה
כל ליליא	ומסירתיה חד	ופלגיה חשוכא	פלגיה נהורא
	אנהר על ישראל	מחשך על מצראי	
	<i>Interpretive insertion inspired by</i>	<i>Interpretive insertion inspired by</i>	
	וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ	וַיֹּאֶר	

As the table shows, in the view of the targumist, it is not enough that the text have a verb related to light (וַיֹּאֶר) but not a noun; therefore, the targumist inserted the nominal form נהורא. At the same time, it is not enough that the text have a noun for darkness (וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ) but not a verb; therefore, the targumist inserted the verbal form מחשך. Longacre and Hwang explain that in order to reinforce the coherence of a text, “The same entity or concept is not referred to by the same linguistic expression throughout the text.”<sup>422</sup> Thus, by referring to light and darkness in nominal and verbal forms, the targumist brought

<sup>421</sup> David Golomb, “Ambiguity in the Pentateuchal Targumim,” in *Textual and Contextual Studies in the Pentateuchal Targums*, Targum Studies 1, ed. Paul V. M. Flesher (Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1992), 141.

<sup>422</sup> Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 81.

clarity and coherence to the text, indicating that the cloud fulfilled two functions simultaneously. *Midrash Tehilim* 27:1 helpfully captures this image:

ויהי הענן והחשך (שם יד, כ), אם ענן למה חשך, ואם חשך למה ענן, אמר ר' אושעיא שני פרצופין היו, פרצוף של אור לישראל, ופרצוף של חשך למצרים.<sup>423</sup>

*And there was the cloud and the darkness* (Exodus 14:20). If a cloud, then why [does it say] darkness? And if darkness, then why [does it say] a cloud? Said R. Hoshaya: There were two faces: there was a face of light for the Israelites, and a face of darkness for the Egyptians.

Similarly, commenting on Exod 14:20 as it appears in the Hebrew, Sarna writes,

“Traditional interpretation took it that the side of the cloud facing the Egyptians remained dark, while the other side illuminated the night for the Israelites.”<sup>424</sup> Ultimately, the targumist’s expansion at 14:20 is his attempt at interpretively resolving the ambiguities in the Hebrew text. His solution is to attribute both the darkness expressed in וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ and the light expressed in וַיֵּאָר to the cloud (הָעֲנָן).<sup>425</sup>

The second factor that contributed to the expansion at 14:19–20 is the greater context of the Torah, in which the pillar of cloud exhibits various functions in different

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<sup>423</sup> Buber, ed., מדרש תהלים המכונה שוחר טוב, 222. See also Naftali, ed., אוצר המדרשים: על ספר שמות, 152 (קמב); and cf. translation in Braude, trans., *The Midrash on Psalms*, 1:366.

<sup>424</sup> Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS, 73.

<sup>425</sup> Propp raises the question as to the number of pillars present in the text: “Of how many pillars are we speaking: one pillar with two aspects, or two different pillars? Probably of one, since 14:20 may refer to the pillar turning from cloud to fire, while 14:24 likely describes the opposite transformation at dawn” (Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 489; and see also 498–99). Also arguing that in the MT the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire are one and the same pillar that changes form during the day and the night, Stuart states: “This is consistent with the descriptions of the cloud that covered the top of Mount Sinai as described in Exod 24:15–18. That cloud was dark to Moses, who was permitted to enter it, but appeared as a blazing fire to the other Israelites, who were not” (Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC, 327). See Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim’s Classic Commentary: Shemos*, 664–65, where Gold suggests that Baal HaTurim envisioned two pillars, one pillar of cloud and one pillar of fire.

circumstances and at different times.<sup>426</sup> At Exod 13:21, besides casting darkness on the Egyptians *by night*, the pillar of cloud is also depicted guiding the Israelites *by day* (וַיְהִי־הָיָה לְלַיְלָה לְהַטֹּחַ אֶת-הַחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-מִצְרָיִם וְלַיּוֹם לְהַדְרִיחַ אֶת-הַעַמּוּד לְפָנֵיהֶם וַיִּבְרָא יְהוָה אֶת-הַעַמּוּד לְהַדְרִיחַ אֶת-הַיּוֹם). At 14:19–20, one of the functions of the pillar of cloud is to separate the Israelite camp from the Egyptian camp in order to protect the Israelites (וַיִּשְׁעַתְּ עַמּוּד הָעָנָן מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲמֵד מֵאַחֲרֵיהֶם: וַיִּבְרָא בֵּין מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין מַחֲנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל). At 33:9–10, the pillar of cloud descends and rests at the entrance to the tabernacle when God speaks to Moses (וַיְהִי כִּבְאֵר מִשְׁחַת הָאֹהֶלֶת יָרַד עַמּוּד הָעָנָן וַעֲמַד פְּתַח הָאֹהֶל וַדַּבֵּר עִם-מֹשֶׁה). At Num 12:5, the pillar of cloud serves as a vehicle of the Lord as the Lord descends in the pillar of cloud to address Aaron and Miriam (cf. 11:25).<sup>427</sup> In line with the Torah’s presentation of the various functions of the cloud, the targumist imagined the pillar of cloud to be able to fulfill different functions in different contexts. This perception of the pillar of cloud allowed the targumist to attribute to the pillar of cloud new and different functions without producing a narrative that was inconsistent. Consequently, for the targumist to state that the pillar of cloud casts darkness at 13:21–22, but then casts

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<sup>426</sup> For a brief discussion of the various functions of the cloud in the Bible see Sarna, *Exodus*, JPS, 70; Plaut, Bamberger, and Hallo, *The Torah*, 482, and 482, n. 1.

<sup>427</sup> Jacob Milgrom notes, “Each Tent tradition transmitted a different mode for the Lord’s revelation” (Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, The JPS Torah Commentary, eds. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990], 94). With respect to Num 12:5, Propp remarks, “Yahweh lives or travels in a cloud, from which he speaks to mortals” (Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 549). He lists the following references as examples of this phenomenon: Exod 24:16, 18; 33:7–11; 34:5; 40:34–35; Num 11:25; 12:5; 14:14; Deut 1:33; 5:22; 1 Kgs 8:10–12; Isa 6:4; 19:1; Ps 99:7. He later adds, “We might also consider Yahweh’s vehicle of fire and cloud the literary analogue to the Covenant Ark, equally symbolic of the divine presence” (Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 550). But Propp concedes, “In Exodus 13–14, the precise relationship between Deity and pillar is not clear. Yahweh seems to be within or atop the pillar (14:24), apparently his vehicle ... somewhat like the fiery chariots of 2 Kgs 2:11; 6:17” (Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 550).

darkness and shines light at 14:19–20 is not to introduce mutually exclusive claims into the narrative.

The third factor that contributed to the targumist's expansion is the particular association, recorded in two midrashim, between the pillar of cloud at 14:19–20 and the darkness plague in Egypt at 10:21–23.<sup>428</sup> *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* (3<sup>rd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>429</sup>) and *Exodus Rabbah* 14.3 (10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>430</sup>) observe an analogous set of circumstances between the crossing of the sea event and the plague of darkness. *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, commenting on Exod 14:19–20, provides the following discussion:

ויבא בין מחנה מצרים ובין מחנה ישראל ויהי הענן והחשך הענן אל ישראל והחשך אל מצרים מגיד הכתוב שהיו ישראל באורה ומצרים באפלה כענין שנאמר לא ראו איש את אחיו ולא קמו איש מתחתיו שלשת ימים... ולא קרב זה אל זה כל הלילה מגיד הכתוב שהיה המצרי עומד ואינו יכול לישב יושב ואינו יכול לעמוד פורק ואינו יכול לטעון טוען ואינו יכול לפרוק מפני שהוא מש באפלה שנאמר וימש חשך.<sup>431</sup>

*And it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud and the darkness—The cloud upon Israel and the darkness upon the Egyptians. Scripture tells that the Israelites were in the light and the Egyptians were in the dark; just as it is said: “They saw not one another, neither rose any*

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<sup>428</sup> As noted above (see n. 419), the Syriac Peshitta has a brief expansion: *ממאם חנא סנאמכר* “And there was a cloud and darkness the whole night, and it gave light to the Israelites the whole night.” Propp notes that this brief expansion “is probably a midrashic expansion inspired by the plague of darkness (10:21–23)” (Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 469). Furthermore, in his comment on Exod 14:19, Ephrem of Syria also alludes to the plague of darkness, as he writes: “*The angel took the pillar of cloud that was in front of them, and placed it between the Hebrew camp and the Egyptians (14:19). The cloud had provided shade for the people by day. And when he placed it between the camps at night it produced darkness for the Egyptians like that which had covered them for three days and nights. But for the Israelites it was bright, because the pillar of fire shone on them*” (italics original; Syrus Ephrem, *The Exodus Commentary of St. Ephrem: A Fourth Century Syriac Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Alison Salvesen [Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011], 36).

<sup>429</sup> Strack and Stemberger place the redacted form of the *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* in the second half of the third century (Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 255).

<sup>430</sup> Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 308–9.

<sup>431</sup> Text and translation is taken from Lauterbach, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, 1:150–51. See a similar connection made between Exod 14:19–20 and Exod 10:23 in Buber, ed., *מדרש תהלים המכונה שוחר*, 222; and cf. Braude, trans., *The Midrash on Psalms*, 1:366.

from his place for three days; but all the children of Israel had light” (Ex. 10:23)... *And the one came not near the other all night*. Scripture tells that if an Egyptian was standing he could not sit down, if he was sitting he could not stand up; if he was unladen he could not load, and if he was laden he could not unload, because he was groping in the darkness, as it is said, “even darkness which may be felt” (Ex. 10:21).

One key effect of this midrash is the parallel it forges between Exod 14:19–20 and 10:23 in order to shed light on the meaning of 14:19–20. Thus, according to this midrash, just as the Egyptians were plagued with darkness all the while the Israelites had light in Egypt, so the Egyptians were in the dark all the while the Israelites were in the light at the crossing of the sea event.

Exodus Rabbah 14.3, commenting on the same Exodus passage, presents a more elaborate midrash:

מהו חשך אפלה. א”ר אבדימי מן חפה אותו חשך כפול ומכופל היה. רבותינו אמרו ז’ ימים של חשך היו. כיצד ג’ ימים הראשונים מי שהיה יושב ובקש לעמוד עומד. והעומד בקש לשוב יושב. ועל אלו הימים נאמר ויהי חשך אפלה בכל ארץ מצרים שלשת ימים לא ראו איש את אחיו. ג’ ימים אחרים מי שהיה יושב לא היה יכול לעמוד, והעומד אינו יכול לישב. ומי שהיה רובץ אינו יכול לזקוף. עליהן נאמר ולא קמו איש מתחתיו שלשת ימים.... ולכל בני ישראל היה אור וגו’. בארץ גושן לא נאמר, אלא במושבותם שכל מקום שהיה יהודי נכנס היה אור נכנס ומאיר לו מה שבחביות ובתיבות ובמטמוניות. ועליהם נאמר (תהלים קיט) נר לרגלי דבריד וגו’. הרי ו’ ימים של חשך שהיה במצרים והז’ של חשך זה יום חשך של ים שנאמר (שמות יד) ויהי הענן והחשך ויאיר את הלילה. כך היה הקב”ה שולח ענן וחשך ומחשך למצרים ומאיר לישראל כשם שעשה להם במצרים.<sup>432</sup>

What is the meaning of dense darkness (חשך אפילה)? R. Abdimi of Haifa said: The darkness was doubled and redoubled. Our Rabbis said: There were seven days of darkness. How so? During the first three days, the one who was sitting and wished to stand could stand, and the one who was standing and wished to sit could sit. Concerning these days it says: And there was dense darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. People could not see one another. During the latter

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<sup>432</sup> Issachar Berman ben Naphtali and Ze’ev Volf Ainhorin, eds., ספר מדרש רבה על חמשה חומשי (Vienna: 1897 or 1898; repr., Jerusalem: Hotsa’at Sefer, 5730/1969), שמות, חלק ראשון 14.3, p. 50 in Arabic numerals), פרשה יד, ג.



three days, he who was sitting could not stand up, he who was standing could not sit down, and he who was lying down could not rise. Concerning these days it says: They did not rise from their places for three days.... *But all the Israelites had light*, etc. It does not say “In the land of Goshen,” but “in their dwelling places [במושבותם],” for wherever a Jew went, light went there and illumined for him whatever was within the barrels, boxes, and treasure-chests. Concerning them it says (Psalm 119): “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,” etc. **These were the six days of darkness that occurred in Egypt, but the seventh day of darkness was a day of darkness at the sea, as it says (Exodus 14): “And there was the cloud and the darkness, and it gave light at night.” So also God sent a cloud and darkness and cast darkness on the Egyptians, but gave light to Israel, as he had done for them in Egypt.**<sup>433</sup>

This midrash too forges a link to the plague of darkness, but the imagined relationship in this case is direct and sequential. The midrash views the crossing of the sea (Exod 14) as a unique event in which the plague of darkness finds its final act through the agency of the pillar of cloud. The plague of darkness that began in Egypt comes to completion at the crossing of the sea.

If the targumist was familiar with this association between Exod 14:19–20 and the darkness plague, he may have understood the function of the pillar of cloud at 14:19–20 (the crossing of the sea) in the light of the episode described at 10:21–23 (the plague of darkness). That is, the distinctive link between the two passages may have warranted, in the view of the targumist, a distinctive function of the pillar of cloud in the crossing of the sea episode. Therefore, whatever the function of the pillar of cloud proves to be in other passages, in the specific context of 14:20, the cloud assumes a complex function of both shining light and casting darkness.

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<sup>433</sup> Cf. Lehrman, *Midrash Rabbah: Exodus*, 3:157–59. The same midrash proceeds to import this theme of light and darkness into the messianic time, during which time the wicked will be covered with darkness while Israel will have light.

These three factors that lie behind the Aramaic rendition of the narrative demonstrate that the text of Ps-J is carefully constructed, and that the contradiction between Ps-J Exod 13:21–22 and Ps-J Exod 14:19–20 is merely apparent. The targumist’s attempt at interpreting a difficult Hebrew expression, the multifarious functions of the cloud in different contexts of the Torah, and the special association of the crossing of the sea narrative with the plague of darkness narrative allowed for the targumist to attribute to the cloud a function that was distinct from its function of casting darkness alone, as expressed at 13:21–22. At 13:21–22 the function of the pillar of cloud is depicted in its limited form; at 14:19–20, it is portrayed in a more complex form. The different depictions of the pillar of cloud are not antithetical; they are complementary.<sup>434</sup>

### **5.2.8 Exodus 14:3 vs. Numbers 26:4–9 (cf. Numbers 16:1ff; Deuteronomy 11:6)**

A certain inconsistency may seem to arise with regard to the appearances of Dathan and Abiram in the narrative of Ps-J. At Ps-J Exod 2:13, Dathan and Abiram are present with all the Israelites in Egypt, and then at Ps-J Exod 16:20ff., Ps-J Num 16:1ff., 26:4–9, and Ps-J Deut 11:6, Dathan and Abiram are depicted as wandering in the wilderness with the Israelites. The conclusion these data suggest is that Dathan and

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<sup>434</sup> Interestingly, in his discussion of Ps-J Exod 13:21–22 and 14:19–20, Fishbane does not deal with this contradiction, but, instead, attempts to explain another apparent conflict: why at 13:21–22 the pillar of cloud creates darkness upon the Egyptians while at 14:19–20 the pillar of cloud intercepts the arrows that the Egyptians were shooting at the Israelites. His solution, nevertheless, is similar to the one proposed in this discussion. He states: חזרה לפרש שהענן היה מחשיך לרודפיהם כנ"ל, התורה: "According to Ps-J, in addition to the fact that the cloud cast darkness upon those [the Egyptians] who pursued them [the Israelites], as it is noted above, the Torah reiterates this in order to indicate that the cloud stood behind them also in order to intercept the arrows and the stones" (Fishbane, חומש: ספר שמות, 1:412 [תיב]). In other words, the cloud had the capacity to fulfill different functions.

Abiram went out from Egypt with the Israelites, as, indeed, Ps-J Num 26:4–9 explicitly claims. Contradicting this claim, however, Ps-J Exod 14:3 remarks that Dathan and Abiram, in fact, remained in Egypt.<sup>435</sup> Hence, the conflict: If Dathan and Abiram remained in Egypt according to Ps-J Exod 14:3, how is it that Ps-J Num 26:4–9 states that they went out from Egypt, and how is it that they appear in the wilderness with the Israelites on numerous occasions?<sup>436</sup> The two key passages—Ps-J Exod 14:3 and Ps-J Num 26:4–9—that produce this seeming conflict state the following:

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<sup>435</sup> Onqelos, Neofiti, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion at Exod 14:3. Differing slightly from Ps-J, the Neofiti Marginalia offers the following rendering of 14:3: עתיד דיימר פרעה לדתן ... ואבירים דמשת"ירין במצרים על עסק בני ישראל. "It will be that Pharaoh will say to Dathan and Abiram, who remained in Egypt, concerning the Israelites..." And Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 3:13 records this tradition as well.

<sup>436</sup> A similar tradition, with a similar apparent inconsistency, survives in the comments of the 17<sup>th</sup> century R. Yihya Bashiri (Maharibash) within the Yemenite Haggadah in the context of the question of the wicked son.

רשע. כיון שהוציא עצמו מכלל ישראל ויצא אל הכחש והכפירה אף אתה הקהה את שניו, כלומר אף אתה הכעיסהו והרגיזהו ואמור לו בגלל כבש הפסח עשה לי ה' את כל המופתים האלו, ואלו היית אתה במצרים ועודך מחזיק ברשעך לא היית יוצא משם. ודע שהיו במצרים רשעים שהיו מתעצמים שלא יצאו ממצרים והיו מלעיגים על משה ואהרון, והביא הקב"ה עליהם דבר גדול ונתפללו עליהם משה ואהרון, ואמר לו הקב"ה אני משאיר לך דוגמא מהן, נשאר מכולן דתן ואבירים שני אחים רשעים גמורים שהיו נגדם כשהיו ישראל במדבר עד אשר בלעתם הארץ הם וכל אשר להם וטפם ונשיהם ולא נותר להם זכר ועליהם נאמר ובאבוד רשעים רנה (משלי יא י), כלומר שבאבוד המקוללים ומיתתם תועלת שנצולים מנזקיהם.

Wicked One: Because he separated himself from the law of Israel and preferred falsehood and heresy, "You shall blunt his teeth." That is, you should antagonize him, saying to him, "Because of the lamb of the Passover, the Lord performed all these wonders for me." For if you had still been in Egypt and if you had still clung to your wicked son, you would not have gone out from Egypt. You shall know that in Egypt there were wicked ones who were stubborn and who did not go out from Egypt, but, rather, they mocked Moses and Aaron. Therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, brought a mighty plague upon them. Then Moses and Aaron prayed for them. So the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: "I am leaving for you an example from among some of them [i.e., some of the wicked ones]." Thus, from among all of them, Dathan and Abiram remained [alive], brothers who were exceedingly wicked. They opposed Moses and Aaron when the Israelites were in the wilderness until the earth swallowed them up, them and everything that belonged to them, [including] their children and their wives, so that no memory of them remained. As it is said of them, "But when the wicked perish there are shouts of joy" (Proverbs 10:1). That is, in the utter destruction of those who curse, those who are preserved benefit from the harm [brought upon those who perish].

In other words, the Haggadah first states that Dathan and Abiram remained in Egypt, but later the Haggadah assumes that the two brothers were with the Israelites in the wilderness. Joseph Kappah, trans.

**Exod 14:3**

MT וְאָמַר פֶּרְעֹה לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִבְכִּים הֵם בְּאֶרֶץ סֹגֵר עָלֵיהֶם הַמִּדְבָּר:  
NRSV Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, “They are wandering aimlessly in the land; the wilderness has closed in on them.”

Ps-J וַיֹּמַר פֶּרְעֹה לְדָתָן וְלֵאבִירָם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל דְּמִשְׁתִּירִין בַּמִּצְרַיִם מִיִּטְרַפִּין הַיְנוּן עִמָּא  
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בֶּאֲרַעָא טַרְדַּ עֲלֵיהוֹן טַעוּוֹת צַפּוֹן נִגְהוּי נִגְדוּי דְּמַדְבְּרָא

Ps-J **And Pharaoh will say to Dathan and Abiram, Israelites who remained in Egypt,** “The people of the house of Israel are wandering around in the land. The idol Zephon has closed the passes of the wilderness on them.”

**Num 26:4–9**

MT <sup>4</sup> מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיְצֵאִים מֵאֶרֶץ  
מִצְרַיִם: <sup>5</sup> רְאוּבֵן בְּכוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן חֲנוּךְ מִשְׁפַּחַת חֲנוּכִי לְפִלֹּא מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הַפְּלֹאִי: <sup>6</sup> לְחֶזְרֹן מִשְׁפַּחַת הַחֶזְרוּנִי לְכַרְמֵי מִשְׁפַּחַת הַכַּרְמִי: <sup>7</sup> אֵלֶּה מִשְׁפַּחַת  
הָרְאוּבֵנִי\* וַיְהִיו פְּקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה וָאַרְבָּעִים אֶלֶף וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת וּשְׁלֹשִׁים: <sup>8</sup> וּבְנֵי  
פִלֹּא אֵלִיאָב: <sup>9</sup> וּבְנֵי אֵלִיאָב נְמוּאֵל וְדָתָן וְאַבִּירָם הוּא־דָתָן וְאַבִּירָם קְרוּאֵי הָעֵדָה  
אֲשֶׁר הִצּוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן בְּעֵדַת־קִרַח בְּהַצֵּתָם עַל־יְהוָה:

NRSV <sup>4</sup>“Take a census of the people, from twenty years old and upward,” as the LORD commanded Moses. The Israelites, who came out of the land of Egypt, were: <sup>5</sup> Reuben, the firstborn of Israel. The descendants of Reuben: of Hanoch, the clan of the Hanochites; of Pallu, the clan of the Palluites; <sup>6</sup> of Hezron, the clan of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the clan of the Carmites. <sup>7</sup> These are the clans of the Reubenites; the number of those enrolled was forty-three thousand seven hundred thirty. <sup>8</sup> And the descendants of Pallu: Eliab. <sup>9</sup> The descendants of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the same Dathan and Abiram, chosen from the congregation, who rebelled against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they rebelled against the LORD.

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and ed., כמנהג עולי תימן: (Jerusalem: Ha-Agudah La-Hatsalat Ginze Teman, 1959), 40–41 (מ-מא). In the introduction to this work, Kappah notes that R. Yihya Bashiri lived “in the seventh century of the sixth millennium” (במאה ה[ש]ביעית לאלף הששי), i.e., the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Kappah, trans. and ed., ספר [ח] 8). Cf. the English translation in Mark B. Greenspahn, trans., ספר אגדתא דפסחא: כמנהג עולי תימן (New York: Oceanside Jewish Center, 2012), 44.

Ps-J מבר עשרין שנין ולעילא היכמא דפקיד ייי ית משה ובני ישראל דנפקו <sup>4</sup>  
מארעא דמצרים <sup>5</sup> ראובן בוכרא דישראל בנוי דראובן חנוך גניסת חנוך לפלוא  
גניסת פלוא <sup>6</sup> לחצרון גניסת חצרון לכרמי גניסת כרמי <sup>7</sup> אילין גניסתא דראובן  
והוו סכומהון ארבעין ותלת אלפין ושבע מאה ותלתין ... <sup>9</sup> ובני אהליאב נמואל  
דתן ואבירם הוא דתן ואבירם מערעי כנישתא דאתכנשו ופליגו על משה ועל  
אהרן בכנישתא דקרח בזמן דאתכנשו ופליגו על יי <sup>437</sup>

Ps-J <sup>4</sup> “You are to number them from twenty years old and up, as the Lord commanded Moses.” **Now the Israelites who came out of the land of Egypt are:** <sup>5</sup> Reuben, the first-born of Israel: Reuben’s sons—[for] Hanoch, the family of Hanoch; for Pallu, the family of Pallu; <sup>6</sup> for Hezron, the family of Hezron; for Carmi, the family of Carmi. <sup>7</sup> These are Reuben’s families and their count was forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty ... <sup>9</sup> **And Eliab’s sons: Nemuel, Dathan and Abiram—the same Dathan and Abiram who were summoning the congregation who *united* and made a schism against Moses and against Aaron in the congregation of Korah when *they united* and made a schism against the Lord.**

Despite the appearance of contradiction here, the study of all the relevant passages suggests that in his expansion of Exod 14:3, the targumist applied careful attention to the text and context of the narrative and that he presupposed a congruous relationship between Ps-J Exod 14:3 and Ps-J Num 24:6–9; 16:1ff; and Ps-J Deut 11:6.

The targumist’s careful attention to the text and context of the narrative is demonstrated in that the apparent conflict between his expansion at 14:3 and the later parts of the Torah emerges, in fact, as a result of his attempt to resolve two exegetical questions at 14:3 in the clause וְאָמַר פְּרַעֲהָ לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל—1) the meaning of the preposition ל (*lamedh*) in לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל and 2) the unspecified identity of the Israelites to whom or about whom Pharaoh speaks. As regards the preposition ל (*lamedh*), the question is: Does the ל

<sup>437</sup> The Ps-J manuscript omits v. 8.

(*lamedh*) mean “to” or “of/about/regarding”?<sup>438</sup> That is, will Pharaoh speak *to* the Israelites or *about* the Israelites? Menahem Rymanower remarks: “It is noteworthy that the expression לבני ישראל is used, which normally means *to the Israelites*, when the expression על בני ישראל, *regarding the Israelites*, would appear to be more appropriate in the context of this verse.”<sup>439</sup> The reason על בני ישראל would be more appropriate here is because the Israelites would have already gone out from Egypt by this point of the narrative (see 12:37, 38, 39 [2x] 41, 42, 51; 13:3 [2x], 4, 9, 16, 17, 18 [2x], 20, 21).<sup>440</sup> However, the targumist’s resolution of the first exegetical question is literalistic: he decided to interpret the preposition as “to”; therefore, in his narrative, Pharaoh will speak *to* the Israelites.<sup>441</sup>

Resolution of the first question immediately prompts the second question: Who are these Israelites to whom Pharaoh will speak? As Samely observes, “Once it is decided to understand the phrase as ‘to the Israelites’ the question of identity arises.”<sup>442</sup> That is, since, as noted above, the Israelites would have already gone out from Egypt by this

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<sup>438</sup> See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “לָ,” BDB, 510–18.

<sup>439</sup> Menahem Mendel Rymanower, *The Torah Discourses of the Holy Tzaddik Reb Menachem Mendel of Riminov*, trans. Dov Levine (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publication House, 1996), 193. Cf. also Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 466, 491.

<sup>440</sup> Cf. also Exod 13:8, 14.

<sup>441</sup> Fishbane writes, ובתרג"י תרגם אות למ"ד [בתיבת לבנ"י] כמו בשאר מקומות דכתיב לבני ישראל, “In Ps-J, [the targumist] translated the letter *lamedh* (in the expression ‘to the Israelites’) as in the other places where לבני ישראל ‘to the Israelites’ appears, thus rendering the sense that Pharaoh spoke *to* Dathan and Abiram who were from among the Israelites” (italics mine; Fishbane, *חומש: ספר שמות*, 1:391 [שצא]).

<sup>442</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 11.

point, בני ישראל “the Israelites” cannot be a general reference to the people of Israel.

Recognizing this, the targumist decided to insert the names Dathan and Abiram into the passage, the names of the Israelites who are characterized as rebellious at Num 16:1ff, 26:9, and Deut 11:6. To obviate any appearance of contradiction—namely, that two Israelites are said to be in Egypt when the text states that the Israelites had already gone out—the targumist added the explanatory comment that Dathan and Abiram *remained* in Egypt (דמשתײרין במצרים). In other words, Dathan and Abiram were the outliers; whereas all the Israelites departed, they, in contrast, remained. In this way, the targumist exhibited care in the production of his expansion to be sure not to introduce a contradiction into the immediate context of Exod 14.

The targumist’s particular decision to introduce Dathan and Abiram at 14:3 also reveals his attention to the broader context of the Torah, as well as his assumption that a congruous relationship exists between 14:3 and the rest of his Aramaic version of the Torah (i.e., Ps-J Num 16:1ff; 26:4–9; and Ps-J Deut 11:6). As suggested above, the targumist appears to have relied on the content of Num 16:1ff, 26:4–9, and Deut 11:6 for his expansion at 14:3. This literary dependency manifests itself in that the underlying assumption of the expansion at 14:3 is that Dathan and Abiram are wicked, for the fact that they remained in Egypt implies that they refused to submit to Moses who was appointed by God to bring the Israelites out of Egypt (see Exod 3:7–12). Commenting on this negative portrayal of Dathan and Abiram at Ps-J Exod 14:3, Samely remarks, “Pseudo-Jonathan’s identification is one instance of a consistent characterization of Dathan and Abiram as bad men, long before they chose to go down with Korah’s group

rather than side with Moses (Num 16).”<sup>443</sup> However, explicit characterization of Dathan and Abiram as wicked Israelites appears specifically in those passages that make reference to Dathan and Abiram when they are already in the wilderness, not when they are still in Egypt. Num 16 narrates how Dathan and Abiram (along with Korah) lead a rebellion against Moses, and Num 26:9 and Deut 11:6 recall this account of the rebellion.<sup>444</sup> Worthy of note, moreover, is their specific act of wickedness according to Num 16: they refuse to come to Moses when he sends for them; instead, they remain in their tents and respond to Moses with *לֹא נֵעְלָה* (Ps-J: *לֹא נִיסוּק*; vv. 12 and 14). Similarly, at Ps-J Exod 14:3, Dathan and Abiram refuse to go with Moses and the Israelites out of Egypt; instead, they remain in Egypt.<sup>445</sup> This expansion displays the targumist’s exegetical technique of relying on other parts of the Torah to interpret a text that demands explanation.<sup>446</sup> In importing this wicked characterization of Dathan and Abiram into 14:3,

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<sup>443</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 11.

<sup>444</sup> George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers*, ICC (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1903), 193–208, 390–91; Levine, *Numbers 21–36*, AB, 315–18; Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, AB, 441–44; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 13.

<sup>445</sup> Gray, however, sees a contradiction between MT Num 16:1–3 and 16:12, 25. He contends that *וַיִּקְהָלוּ* at v. 3 includes Dathan and Abiram, meaning that they did come to Moses; but Gray then states, “this is inconsistent with the implication of v. 12, 25 that Dathan and Abiram remained in their tents till Moses came to them” (Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers*, 197, 205). For a study of the composite nature of MT Num 16, see Milgrom, *Numbers*, JPS, 414–23.

<sup>446</sup> The same technique is evident at Ps-J Exod 2:13 and 16:20. At Ps-J Exod 2:13, the targumist inserted the names of Dathan and Abiram as the individuals who are quarreling with one other. And at 16:20, the targumist identified Dathan and Abiram as the disobedient individuals who disregard Moses’ directive against keeping manna overnight. With regard to 2:13, Maher suggests that “The identification of the ‘two Hebrews’ mentioned in Exod 2:13 with Dathan and Abiram is based on the use of the word *nšym*, ‘struggling together,’ in that verse, and the use of the related word *hšw*, ‘contended,’ in Num 26:9” (McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Exodus and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 165, n. 20). The weakness of this suggestion, however, is manifested in that the targumist does not translate these terms with the same roots in Aramaic. While at Ps-J Exod 2:13 the targumist translated *נָצִים* with the corresponding term *נָצַן*, at Ps-J Num 26:9 the targumist translated *הָרָצוּ* and *בְּהִרְצָתָם* with the term *וּפְלִיגוּ*. Therefore, it is difficult to maintain that the targumist necessarily relied on Num 26:9 to interpret Exod 2:13 on account of specific locutions. And with respect to 16:20, Maher suggests: “Since in our present



the targumist revealed that he was, indeed, aware of the later passages in the Torah in which Dathan and Abiram appear in the narrative. This serves to show that even as the targumist penned the expansion at 14:3 that Dathan and Abiram remained in Egypt, he understood that ultimately these two brothers must end up in the wilderness with the rest of the Israelites. It stands to reason, then, that in the targumist's conception of the greater narrative, Dathan and Abiram ultimately did go out from Egypt.<sup>447</sup>

Addressing the same discrepancy in his commentary on Ps-J Exod 14:3, Schmerler mentions an explanation that, despite its creative license, also demonstrates a perspective according to which Dathan and Abiram first remained in and then went out of Egypt:

It is necessary to conclude that [Dathan and Abiram] remained in Egypt only for a period of time. They thought that Pharaoh would forcibly bring Israel back to Egypt.... But after they saw the miracles of the Sea of Reeds and the rescue in the war against Amalek, they turned their backs to Egypt to go after Israel.<sup>448</sup>

Naftali records a midrash with a similar explanation of Exod 14:3:

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verse (Exod 16:20) the word *'nšym* (lit. "men"; RSV: "some") is used, and in Num 16:25–26 the term *'nšym rš 'ym* is applied to Dathan and Abiram, the midrash concludes that the *'nšym* of Exod 16:20 are also Dathan and Abiram" (McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Exodus and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 208, n. 22). The weakness of this suggestion is that the term *'nšym*, translated at Ps-J as גוברייא, is much too common to require literary dependence specifically on this locution (e.g., Num 1:5; 9:6, 7; 14:36, 37; 16:2, 14 are just a few examples in Numbers preceding Num 16:25–26 that refer to men other than Dathan and Abiram). Therefore, *'nšym/גוברייא* is too general a term to mark a necessary direct link between two passages.

<sup>447</sup> For additional Jewish traditions on Dathan and Abiram, see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:405–6, n. 75.

<sup>448</sup> In the original: להכרח לומר שרק לפי שעה נשארו במצרים. מצד שחשבו שפרעה יחזיר את ישראל למצרים בעל כורחם.... אולם אח"כ כשראו נסי י"ס גם הצלת מלחמת עמלק הפנו ערפם ממצרים ללכת אחרי ישראל (Schmerler, *שמות*, 75). So also Fishbane, *שפר*, 1:391 (שצא).

ואמר פרעה לבני ישראל. [למי אמר פרעה?] לדתן ואבירם, שנשארו במצרים ובאו עם פרעה: ואחר כך, כשראו הם נבקע לבני ישראל, מיד תהו [התחרטו] בלבם ונתערבו עם אחיהם בני ישראל [ועלו מן הים].<sup>449</sup>

Pharaoh said to Israel. [To whom did Pharaoh say?] To Dathan and Abiram who remained in Egypt and came with Pharaoh. But afterwards, when they saw the sea split for the Israelites, they were immediately amazed, [they regretted] in their hearts, and they joined their brothers, the Israelites [and went up out of the sea].

Similar to Schmerler, this midrash imagines Dathan and Abiram initially remaining in Egypt, but ultimately going out from Egypt after the Israelites.

This intermediate step of the exodus of Dathan and Abiram from Egypt is certainly absent from the text of Ps-J. However, the targumist's awareness of and dependence on the passages in which Dathan and Abiram appear in the wilderness suggests that the targumist maintained the assumption that Dathan and Abiram ultimately did go out from Egypt. For the targumist, then, the coherence between the passages that discuss Dathan and Abiram throughout Ps-J is partly sustained by his assumption of their eventual exodus from Egypt.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> The text in the brackets reflects the text of Naftali, אוצר המדרשים: על ספר שמות, 151 (קמא).

<sup>450</sup> Rymanower also notes this contradiction, albeit with respect to different verses; and, moreover, he proposes a different resolution. He suggests that there is a discrepancy between Ps-J Exod 14:3 and 14:12, stating that 14:12 identifies the speakers as Dathan and Abiram. In fact, however, neither the Ps-J manuscript nor the printed editions identify Dathan and Abiram by name at 14:12. Rymanower either had a different Ps-J text before him, or he interpreted רשיעי דרא (i.e., the speakers at 14:11–12) to be a reference to Dathan and Abiram. In order to resolve this textual conflict, then, Rymanower suggests that at 14:3 the Israelites had actually not yet gone out from Egypt, and that Dathan and Abiram were in the presence of Pharaoh because the Exodus had not yet taken place. To maintain this position, however, Rymanower must overlook two major points: 1) numerous references to the exodus as an event that had already transpired by the time of the events narrated in Exod 12–13 (12:37, 38, 39 [2x] 41, 42, 51; 13:3 [2x], 4, 9, 16, 17, 18 [2x], 20, 21; and cf. 13:8, 14); and 2) the targumist's recognition in the clause דמשתירין במצרים that the exodus had already transpired by the time of 14:3, which expansion seeks to indicate that Dathan and Abiram were the outliers who did not take part in the exodus (Rymanower, *The Torah Discourses of the Holy Tzaddik*, 193–95).

### 5.2.9 Exodus 32:5

At Ps-J Exod 32:5, Aaron is depicted as being overcome with fear, and yet in this very state of fearfulness Aaron declares a bold statement that seems to imply courage on his part. Samely, therefore, remarks that the two parts of the verse containing these statements “produce narrative inconsistency in TT [the Targumic Text].”<sup>451</sup> The passage reads:

#### Exod 32:5

- MT וַיֵּרָא אֶהֱרֹן וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ לְפָנָיו וַיִּקְרָא אֶהֱרֹן וַיֹּאמֶר חַג לַיהוָה מָחָר:
- NRSV And Aaron saw and built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a festival to the LORD.”
- Ps-J וחמא אהרן ית חור נכיס קדמוי ודחיל ובנא מדבחא קדמוי וקרא אהרן בקל  
עציב ואמר חגא קדם יי מחר מניכסת קטול בעלי דבבוי איליין דכפרין במריהון  
ופרגו איקר שכינתיה בעיגלא הדין
- Ps-J Aaron saw *Hur slain before him*; **and he was afraid**; and he built an altar before him. **And Aaron cried out in an anguished voice and said, “Tomorrow shall be a festival before the Lord on account of the slaughtering to death of his enemies, those who denied their Lord and exchanged the Glory of his Shekinah for this calf.”**

The point of conflict here, as Samely describes, is the simultaneous depiction of Aaron’s fear of the people and Aaron’s courage to oppose the people. Samely explains:

Aaron, according to the Hebrew, saw something. What he saw is not reported; from the suffix of “before” one could assume he saw the golden calf, but the verb (ראה) has no direct object. The targumist provides a direct object, an event to be seen, and makes explicit the effect it has on Aaron. Hur and Aaron are the two whom Moses put in charge before he left to go up the mountain (see Ex. 24:14). With Hur slain, Aaron might be excused doing the will of the people in announcing an idolatrous feast. But the utterance itself is also changed. In its targumic version it is not the announcement of a celebration of the golden calf, but a feast for the Lord indeed, after the purge of idolaters (Ex. 32:27ff.). *If so, it is courage, not fear, that lies behind the utterance. In brief, the two targumic changes do not tally. They represent the rare case of one interpretation of the*

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<sup>451</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 45. Onqelos and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion at 32:5; while the expansions in Neofiti and Neofiti Marginalia will be discussed below.

*utterance being incorporated into the preceding co-text, and another, incompatible one, into its rendering. Both on their own are related exegetically to the original wording, but together they produce narrative inconsistency in TT.*<sup>452</sup>

In seeing the people kill Hur—so goes the reasoning of Samely—Aaron became afraid of the people that they would take his life too; thus it states ודחל “and he feared.”<sup>453</sup> But if he became afraid, he should not have opposed the people for the sake of his own life. Yet doing the exact opposite of what is expected of a frightened person, Aaron opposed the people in his pronouncement of the feast to the Lord. On account of all this, Samely alleges that there is irreconcilable tension in the verse. A close look at this text, however, demonstrates that, when these expansions are considered in the light of the context of vv. 1–5 and in the light of the underlying traditions about this episode, the targumic rendering of the verse proves coherent.

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<sup>452</sup> Italics mine. Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 45. McNamara and Hayward arrive at a similar interpretation with regard to the text of Neofiti. Neofiti has: וחמא אהרן ית חור נביא קדמוי ודחל ובנה מדבח “And Aaron saw *Hur the prophet before it and was afraid*; and he built an altar before it; and Aaron declared and said: ‘A feast *before* the Lord tomorrow!’” Implying an emendation of נביא “prophet” to נביס “slain,” McNamara and Hayward write: “The Targum needed to indicate what Aaron saw, for the verb in Hebrew has no object. Tg. Nf may have preserved a small relic of a tradition according to which Hur the prophet had objected to the calf, and had been killed for his pains by the mob.... By this means, Targum attempts to exonerate Aaron of blame for making the calf: *had he not agreed to make it, the people would have killed him as surely as they had killed Hur*” (italics mine; McNamara and Hayward, *Targum Neofiti*, 129, n. 3; for variants in this verse, see Díez Macho, *Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuchum*, 248). Objecting to an emendation of נביא “prophet” to נביס “slain,” Levy argues: “Hur was important enough to be called a prophet. There is no need to emend the text, but in either case the story underlying the translation ... relates how Hur was killed for trying to prevent the sin of the calf. Aaron did not agree to be martyred” (Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study: Introduction, Genesis, Exodus*, 422).

<sup>453</sup> Shinan explains that the addition ודחל entered the text on account of the potential double reading of the Hebrew וירא without the vocalization, where the root could be understood to be ראי “to see” or ירא “to fear”; Shinan suggests that the targumist included both readings in his Aramaic rendition—Aaaron saw and Aaron feared (Avigdor Shinan, *סיפורי התורה בראי תרגומיהם*, מקרא אחד ותרגומים הרבה: סיפורי התורה בראי תרגומיהם (Israel: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1993), 166–67.

The interpretive question that is essential to understanding the meaning of v. 5, and the question that Ps-J leaves unanswered, is: What was the nature of Aaron's fear? One view, which Samely seems to assume, is that Aaron feared for his life: that is, he feared that the people would kill him—just as they killed Hur—should he fail to fulfill their wishes. If this is correct, then Samely's claim that there is an inconsistency is sustained. An alternative view, however, maintains that Aaron responded in fear to the wicked conduct of the people: that is, he feared the fact that the people began to engage in wicked conduct. In this case, Aaron's fear not only does not contradict his bold statement, but, to the contrary, empowers him to declare the feast.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> For sources that seem to presuppose view one (that Aaron feared for his life), see Exodus Rabbah 41.7; 48.3; 51.8; PRE 45; Numbers Rabbah 15.21; Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma*, 2:156–57; see also discussion in Rymanower, *The Torah Discourses of the Holy Tzaddik*, 228–29; Fishbane, חומש: ספר שמות, 2:598–99 (תקצח-תקצט), who mentions both views; and Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: שמות, 216–17.

For sources that implicitly or explicitly espouse view two (that Aaron had fear on account of the wicked conduct of the people), see the Neofiti Marginalia on Exod 32:5; Leviticus Rabbah 10.3; b. Sanh. 7a; Ephrem, *The Exodus Commentary of St. Ephrem*, 50; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 3:121; Naftali, ed., על ספר שמות: אוצר המדרשים: 373–75 (שעג-שעה); see also discussion in Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim's Classic Commentary: Shemos*, 900–1; and Rashi in in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: שמות, 2:187 (קפז), who remarks that Aaron saw many things, including the fact that the calf was alive, that Hur was slain, and that the people had been led astray; and Rashi emphasizes that Aaron sought to delay the sin and even to take the guilt of the sin upon himself rather than to have it fall upon the people.

Furthermore, accentuation of the wickedness of the people, with a view toward mitigating the guilt of Aaron, can also be seen in the following sources: Amos Hakham writes, ואהרן עצמו לא דבר מאומה, לא בתחלת מעשה העגל, ולא בסופו. בשתיקה לקח את הזהב מהם, ובשתיקה הציג את העגל לפניהם, והניח להם שיאמרו "As for Aaron himself, he did not say anything, neither at the start of the making of the calf, nor at its completion. In silence he received the gold from them, and in silence he presented the calf before them, allowing them to say what they said. This, then, is an indication that the heart of Aaron was not at peace with his actions, but that he merely surrendered to the will of the people" (Amos Hakham, פרשיות משפטים-פקודי, [Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Cook, 1991], 2:289 [רפט]). Benno Jacob writes that "It must have been Aaron's intent to form a calf as a mode of mockery.... Aaron realized that he could not withstand the pressure of the people and so sought to frustrate their intentions. The form which he prepared was to appear as nonsense from an Israelite point of view" (italics original; Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus*, trans. Walter Jacob and Yaakov Elman [Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1992], 939). Moreover, Friedman suggests that even in the MT one might deduce that Aaron saw and feared the improper "behavior on the people's part," which then compelled him to declare the feast to the Lord to turn the people back to God (Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 280); Childs remarks that there is a tone of threat in the address of the people toward Aaron (Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 564); and Cassuto explicitly states, "And when Aaron

Four factors suggest that in the narrative of Ps-J the nature of Aaron's fear does not pertain to the preservation of his life, but to the wicked conduct of the people. First, the expansions at v. 5 commend a holistic (i.e., a synchronic as opposed to a diachronic<sup>455</sup>) reading of the verse, which reading, in turn, demonstrates this understanding of Aaron's fear—that he was disconcerted by the wickedness of the people. Analysis of the expansions at v. 5 reveals a logical and literary relationship between each part of v. 5, suggesting by means of this that in the view of the targumist the expansions in these two parts of the verse worked together to convey a unified and coherent thought. This logical and literary relationship between the parts of the verse is seen in the following: first, Aaron sees that Hur is slain (חור נכיס); second, logically related both to the beginning and to the end of v. 5, Aaron cries out with an anguished voice, presumably on account of the death of Hur and on account of the slaughtering of the people at the feast (בקל עציב);<sup>456</sup> third, using the same diction as that in the first point, Aaron pronounces a feast that will include the slaughter of the rebellious Israelites

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saw ... the evil trend of the people, he endeavored to curb them..." (Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 413, and see 420); and see also Plaut, Bamberger, and Hallo, *The Torah*, 646.

<sup>455</sup> As noted earlier, Samely himself contends that the scholar of ancient Jewish literature has "the obligation to articulate how the text—as it is—actually works as a whole" (italics original; Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity*, 4; see also 14 and 20–26).

<sup>456</sup> Compare Ps-J Exod 12:31, in which verse after the death of the firstborn, Pharaoh cries out with an anguished voice: מתחנן הוה פרעה בקל עציב. Abraham Gutenplan considers בקל עציב to be related to the festival to the Lord. He writes: ר"ל שהיה עצוב על שראה שביום מחרת ימותו אותו שכפרו בהקב"ה לפי שאין חפץ ה' במות רשע "That is, he was despondent because he foresaw that on the next day shall die those who denied the Holy One, blessed be He, for the Lord has no delight in the death of the wicked" (Abraham Gutenplan, *ספר כתר תורה*, חלק שני על ספר שמות, ביאור רחב על תרגום המיוחס להתנא הקדוש יונתן בן עוזיאל, [Munkaṭsh: Ba-defus shel Eli'ezer Yehi'el Kallush, 1938/1939], 74 [עד]). Rymanower connects בקל עציב to the subsequent repentance and remorse of the people (Rymanower, *The Torah Discourses of the Holy Tzaddik*, 229).

(מניכסת קטול בעלי דבבוי);<sup>457</sup> and fourth, forming a parallel structure in the verse, the targumist expresses that whereas the calf event resulted in the death of Hur, the feast to the Lord will result in the death of the rebellious Israelites. These points show that in the view of the targumist the different parts of v. 5 are interrelated, and that the expansions throughout this verse are intended to work together in congruity to produce a unified message.

These literary features strongly contend against Samely's view that the additions at v. 5 are unrelated one to another, on account of which reasoning he concludes that the verse contains a contradiction. Though Samely remarks that both parts of the verse are apologetic,<sup>458</sup> he argues that Aaron's fear and Aaron's declaration of the feast to the Lord are to be considered as having developed and as functioning independently of one another.<sup>459</sup> With regard to the beginning of v. 5, argues Samely, the targumist of Ps-J

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<sup>457</sup> The commentator of התורה עם פרוש על התורה remarks that the celebration of the Lord will be "the rejoicing over the slaughtering, the death of his [God's] enemies" שמחת שחיטה מיתת בעלי דבבוי (unknown author, פרוש על התורה, בעלי דבבוי [Warsaw: Bi-defus Aleksander Ginez, 18--?], at Exod 32:5).

<sup>458</sup> Samely remarks, "This passage ... is of course of the greatest apologetic interest"; for, Samely proceeds, "This biblical chapter (Ex. 32) contains the report of what in post-biblical times was perhaps regarded as the gravest of all of Israel's sins against God" (Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 45).

<sup>459</sup> Samely's argument is partly comparative vis-à-vis Targum Neofiti. He points out that Neofiti expands only 5a in that it inserts ודחל, and that it does not expand 5b. The implication of this comment is that 5a was embellished independently of the expansion in 5b (Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 45). And as quoted above, he writes: "Both [5a and 5b] on their own are related exegetically to the original wording, but together they produce narrative inconsistency in TT" (Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 45). In other words, the expansions were introduced into the text to address a local issue in the verse without regard to the effect of the expansions on the context of the whole verse. Very interestingly, however, the Neofiti Marginalia adds an expansion to 5b that is similar to that of Ps-J, and in this instance Samely notes that the Marginalia "seems to modify both co-text [5a] and utterance [5b] in a coordinated fashion" (my italics; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 45). Nevertheless, Samely is irresolute about the state of coherence within the verse in the Marginalia, stating, "depending on whether [Neofiti's] mention of fear is supposed to be accepted by [Marginalia] or not, [Marginalia] is either internally inconsistent like PJ or not (if fear is not stressed, the same event (Hur's death) suits the new utterance)" (Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 46). For some discussion of the rabbinic atomistic approach to Scripture, which I argue above is not a

inserted the event of Hur's death to explain what Aaron saw (רֵאָה); and the effect of this is the targumist's exoneration of Aaron for arranging the idolatrous worship, for Aaron carried out this act out of fear for his life: "With Hur slain, Aaron might be excused doing the will of the people in announcing an idolatrous feast."<sup>460</sup> As it concerns the end of v. 5, Samely proposes that the targumist inserted the expansion to relieve Aaron of coordinating an idolatrous feast to the calf altogether.<sup>461</sup> For according to this expansion, the feast is now to the Lord, to be understood as in contradistinction to the calf.<sup>462</sup> Samely finds an explanation for these expansions at 5a and 5b by means of diachronic analysis of the verse, while suggesting that synchronic analysis of this verse produces an incoherent text. He writes:

It seems clear that PJ's version calls for an explanation of the historical kind – I cannot see how it can have been meant quite the way it stands today. If so, the most probable purpose for the introduction of a second, incidentally conflicting, modification to the utterance is apologetic. Someone might have thought that two modifications are safer than one to remove from Aaron guilt for a particularly disconcerting announcement.<sup>463</sup>

While Samely is correct to observe that the expansions are apologetic in nature, his analysis is unsatisfying in that he does not take into account the coordinated formulation

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satisfactory explanation in the case of Ps-J Exod 32:5a and 5b, see Goldberg, "The Rabbinic View of Scripture," 153–66, esp. 156; and Kugel, "Two Introductions to Midrash," 92–94.

<sup>460</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 46; and for similar comments see Shinan, מקרא אחד, 67. ותרגומים הרבה: סיפורי התורה בראי תרגומיהם הארמיים

<sup>461</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 45.

<sup>462</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 45.

<sup>463</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 46. Samely implies that the targumist was less concerned with the coherent presentation of the Aramaic narrative than with presenting Aaron in a positive light. In another discussion on the surface text of Ps-J, Samely writes that "the interest of the targumists was directed primarily at the coherence of Scripture, *not at the coherence of the resulting Aramaic version as such*" (italics mine; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 168; see also 179 and 183).



of the expansions (in language and thought) in the different parts of v. 5. The expansions are introduced in the light of one another and work together to form one narrative.

This unified literary structure at v. 5, then, conveys the view that Aaron's fear stems not out of the possibility that the people might kill him, but out of his observation of the wicked conduct of the people in the context of the calf event. In other words, Aaron's courageous conduct at the end of v. 5 defines the nature of Aaron's unspecified fear at the beginning of v. 5. First, inasmuch as Aaron was willing to oppose the people, he demonstrated by this that he was not concerned with ensuring the safety of his life; for opposition to the people risked Aaron's provoking the people to kill him, but this factor did not worry him. Second, the verse explicitly states that Aaron's interest was the glory of the Lord (אִיקָר שְׂכִינֹתֶיהָ), not, again, the preservation of his life. That is, Aaron sought to restore the status of the glory of the Shekinah in the Israelite camp, and to uproot from the camp God's "enemies, those who denied their Lord and exchanged the Glory of his Shekinah for this calf" (דַּבְּבוּ אֵילִיִּן דְּכַפְרִין בְּמַרְיָהוֹן וּפְרָגוּ אִיקָר שְׂכִינֹתֶיהָ בְּעִיגְלָא הַדִּין).<sup>464</sup> This holistic analysis of v. 5 shows that Aaron's focus was on the wickedness of the people; and that it was this wickedness that provoked his response of fear, which, in effect, produced fervor in him to destroy the enemies.

The second factor that commends this interpretation derives out of the latter part of the narrative at Ps-J Exod 32:18–25, which verses emphasize the wicked character of the people and exclude any mention of Aaron's fear for his life. At v. 18, Moses refers to

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<sup>464</sup> See Ps 106:20: אֵלֶּיךָ אֵלֹהֵינוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדֵךָ בְּתַבְנִית שׁוֹר אֲכָל עֵשֶׂב; and note also Neh 9:18.

the people as “*those who practice foreign worship and sport before it*” (פלחי פולחני). At v. 19, the targumist remarked that Moses saw “the musical instruments in *the hands of the wicked people who played and bowed down before it [the calf]*” (וחינגין בידיהון דרשיעיא מחנגין ומגחנין קדמוי); and then, further expanding the text, the targumist had Moses exclaim “*Destruction be upon the people ... [who] made a molten calf*” (חבל על עמא ... עבדו עיגל). The most telling evidence of this view of Aaron’s fear appears at vv. 21–22. At v. 21, Moses inquires of Aaron: “What did this people do to you that you brought a great sin upon them?” (מה עבד לך עמא הדין ארום אתיתא עלוי חובא). This is a perfect opportunity for Aaron to exclaim to Moses that the people had killed Hur and were on the verge of killing him unless he make for them a calf. However, Aaron’s reply places all the focus on the conduct of the people:

ואמר אהרן לא יתקף רוגזא דריבוני אנת ידעת ית עמא ארום בני צדיקיא אינון ברם  
יצרא בישא הוא דאטעינון<sup>23</sup> ואמרו לי עיבד לנא דחלן דיטיילון קדמנא ארום דין משה  
גברא דאסקנא מארעא דמצרים אישתלהב בטוורא באישא מצלהבא מן קדם יי ולא  
אשתמודענא מה הוה ליה בסיפיה

<sup>22</sup> And Aaron said, “Let not the anger of my master be enkindled. You know that the people *are children of righteous men. But it is the evil inclination that led them astray.* <sup>23</sup> And they said to me, ‘Make us *deities* that will go before us, because this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, *was burned on the mountain in glowing fire from before the Lord.* We do not know what became of him *in the end.*’

Given the perfect opportunity to declare that his life was at stake, Aaron did not appeal to this reason to justify his actions. Rather, he focused on the wicked conduct of the people. Additionally, at v. 25 the targumist yet again referred to the people and remarked that “their bad reputation had spread abroad among the nations of the earth, and they acquired

a bad name for themselves” (ונפק טיבהון ביש בעממי ארעא וקנון להון שום ביש לדריהון). As far as the targumist was concerned, Aaron’s fear for his life at the hands of the people was not part of the episode. Instead, as the latter part of the narrative retells and reflects on the happenings of vv. 1–5, the focus is unequivocally on the wicked conduct of the people.<sup>465</sup>

The third factor that suggests that the nature of Aaron’s fear did not pertain to the preservation of his life, but to the state of the people, is as follows: it is Aaron’s fear of the conduct of the people (rather than his fear for his life) that achieves the targumist’s literary objective of the expansions at v. 5—this literary objective being to explain how it is that Aaron went from shaping a calf at vv. 1–4 to declaring the feast to the Lord (rather than to the calf) at v. 5. The Hebrew text states that Aaron declared חג ליהוה מחר which the targumist translated as חגא קדם יי מחר. Commenting on MT Exod 32:4–5, Friedman writes that one of the questions concerning these verses is: “Why does [Aaron] proclaim a festival to YHWH in the middle of a pagan heresy?”<sup>466</sup> In the text of Ps-J, the expansions of v. 5 clearly indicate that the targumist understood חג ליהוה “feast to the Lord” to be truly to the Lord. Samely recognizes this, stating, “In its targumic version it is not the announcement of a celebration of the golden calf, but a feast for the Lord

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<sup>465</sup> In his remarks on this episode as it appears in the MT, Childs sees Aaron’s focus on the wicked conduct of the people as Aaron’s attempt at exonerating himself of the sin (Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 570).

<sup>466</sup> Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 280. See also Komlosh on the ambiguity of the clause ויבן מזבֿח לְפָנָיו, specifically as regards for/before whom Aaron built the altar (Komlosh, *המקרא באור התרגום*, 210).

indeed, after the purge of idolaters (Ex. 32:27ff.).”<sup>467</sup> In other words, this feast to the Lord appears as an unexpected announcement in the Hebrew, inasmuch as the preceding four verses record how Aaron did everything to produce the calf.<sup>468</sup> At v. 2, Aaron instructs the people to bring gold to him; at v. 3, the people bring all the gold to Aaron; and at v. 4, Aaron gathers up all the gold and forms the calf. With the text’s presentation

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<sup>467</sup> Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 45. So also Fishbane, חומש: ספר שמות, 2:598–99 (תקצח-); Leviticus Rabbah 10.3; Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: שמות, 2:187 (קפז); unknown author, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל עם פרוש על התורה (Warsaw: Bi-defus Aleksander Ginez, 18--?), at Exod 32:5; Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 566; Dozemann, *Exodus*, 704 (who discusses a parallel between Exod 32 and 1 Kings 12). For further discussion of the literary relationship between Exod 32, 1 Kings 12, and Deut 9, see Zakovitch, “*And You Shall Tell your Son...*”: *The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible*, 87–98; Avigdor Shinan and Yair Zakovitch, *From Gods to God: How the Bible Debunked, Suppressed, or Changed Ancient Myths & Legends*, trans. Valerie Zakovitch (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 101–8; Moses Aberbach and Leivy Smolar, “Aaron, Jeroboam, and the Golden Calves,” *JBL* 86 (1967): 129–40; Gary A. Anderson, “Biblical Origins and the Problem of the Fall,” *Pro Ecclesia* 10, no. 1 (2001): 17–30; Dozemann, *Exodus*, 697–701. Dohmen, who also allows for the calf narrative to be an allusion to the story of Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12, writes: “Da im vorliegenden Kontext kein spezifisches Fest genannt ist, muss man das ‘für JHWH’ entweder im Kontext der genannten Ehrenrettung Aarons deuten, und zwar in dem Sinn, das sehr eine positive Absicht im ganzen Geschehen zu unterlegen versucht, oder man muss hier eine Anspielung an die Jeroboam-Geschichte sehen, den dort wird ein spezifisches Fest im Zusammenhang mit dem Kalb von Bet-El und dem Kalb von Dan erwähnt” (Dohmen, *Exodus 19–40*, 299).

<sup>468</sup> Commenting on MT Exod 32:5, Sarna argues that one might conclude even from the Hebrew that the people demanded a visible element in order to feel the presence of Yahweh (as opposed to making an idol); and, additionally, Sarna contends that the feast that Aaron declared is indeed a feast to the true God of Israel. Sarna writes: “What they [the people] demanded of Aaron was some material, visible entity that would fill the spiritual void created by Moses’ absence, something that, by virtue of the symbolism invested in it, would extend the Sinaitic experience of closeness to God and the awareness of His ever-present providential care. It is all but certain that in demanding ‘a god,’ they intended nothing more than an appropriate object emblematic of the Divine Presence. That is why Aaron could declare in all sincerity, after making the image, that the next day would be ‘a festival of the Lord.’ He uses the Tetragrammaton YHVH, the solemn, distinctive Israelite Name of God. There is no rejection of the national God. The people themselves associate the manufactured image with the God who brought them out of Egypt. It is the God who operates in history that they recognize, not a deity with mythological associations” (Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 217). At the same time, Sarna writes in a footnote: “It is clear that the plural verb in v. 1 and the plural demonstrative pronoun and verb in v. 4 are nothing but a stylistic device intended to express the incompatibility of the image with monotheism. After all, Aaron only made one calf” (Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 244, n. 138). See also a similar view in Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 407–8. But commenting on אשר ילכו לפנינו at v. 2, Rashi writes: אלהות הרבה אינו להם “they wanted many gods” (Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: שמות, 2:184 [קפד]; cf. b. Sanh. 63a). For further discussion of this, see Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 280; Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 564–65; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 411, 420; Dohmen, *Exodus 19–40*, 296–99; A. J. Rosenberg, trans., *Shemoth*, Miqraot Gedolot (New York: Judaica Press, 1997), 524.

of this effort on Aaron’s part to make the calf, suddenly followed by Aaron’s urgent proclamation of a feast to the Lord, the targumist sensed the need to clarify this progression of events to explain how Aaron went from shaping a calf to announcing a feast to the Lord.<sup>469</sup> The targumist’s introduction of Aaron’s fear of the wickedness of the people allowed the targumist to fill this gap in the text. When Aaron saw the wicked conduct of the people, he feared for their state as a people of God, and sought to restore their good standing before God by declaring a feast to the Lord.<sup>470</sup> This expansion provides an explanation for the shift in the narrative from Aaron’s molding a calf to Aaron’s declaring a feast to the Lord.

If, on the other hand, Aaron’s fear were to pertain to the preservation of his life, then the progress of events would defy logic: Aaron built the calf at vv. 1–4; then, observing the death of Hur who was killed presumably because he did not fulfill the will of the people, Aaron began to fear for his own life; and, in response to this fear, at v. 5 he declared a feast to the Lord as an act of opposing the people, an act that would ensure his death as well. This type of progression of events appears entirely incomprehensible. To suppose that this is the narrative the targumist produced is to overlook the purpose the

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<sup>469</sup> As noted earlier (see n. 466), Friedman explains this plot development from the calf to the feast by suggesting that Aaron began to fear the wicked conduct of the people. He writes: “Indeed, the word for ‘And Aaron *saw*’ is Hebrew וירא. In the original Hebrew text, before the vowels were added, it can also have meant ‘And Aaron *was afraid*’! That would make it even clearer why he would redirect the worship back to YHWH” (Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 280). Note the Peshitta, which has: אגבא דאראון פורחא, אבא דאראון פורחא “And Aaron feared and built an altar before him”; but see Childs’ comment on the (un)reliability of the Peshitta text in Childs, *Book of Exodus*, 556, n. 5.

<sup>470</sup> This is precisely how Cassuto understands the passage in the MT as well: “And when Aaron saw ... the evil trend of the people, he endeavored to curb them, *and he built an altar before it* — before the throne of the deity in the form of a calf — *and Aaron made proclamation and said, Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord* — to the Lord, not to the calf” (italics original; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 413).

targumist sought to achieve in inserting the fear of Aaron into the verse. Aaron's fear of the wickedness of the people provides the necessary literary element within the narrative to forge a logical development of events in the plot.<sup>471</sup>

The fourth factor that reinforces this interpretation—that Aaron's fear pertained to the wickedness of the people rather than to the preservation of his life—is the fact that this view of Aaron's fear held a notable place in Jewish tradition and at least in one instance in Christian tradition.<sup>472</sup> Four sources illustrate this claim. First, the Neofiti Marginalia records this tradition as follows:

ואכרו אהרן ואמר יהא רעוה דיהי נכסא בי כחגה מן רשיעיה קדם יי מחר  
And Aaron declared, saying, "May it please [God] that the slaying of *me* be the feast rather than that of the *wicked* before the Lord tomorrow."<sup>473</sup>

Despite the difficulty of discerning the precise meaning of this verse, two elements are clear: 1) Aaron announces a wish of death upon himself (דיהי נכסא בי), which indicates that he is not concerned with preserving his own life for the sake of living; and 2) the verse depicts Aaron's fervor against the wicked conduct of the people (כחגה מן רשיעיה), which presupposes Aaron's bold statement against the wicked as in Ps-J, and, again, his

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<sup>471</sup> On coherence and progression of discourse within a narrative, see Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 247–48.

<sup>472</sup> Indeed, a number of Jewish sources do not explicitly express this particular view (e.g., Exodus Rabbah 41.7; 48.3; 51.8; PRE 45; Numbers Rabbah 15.21; Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma*, 2:156–57). In these cases, it is the task of the reader to ascertain whether the traditions are ambiguous concerning Aaron's fear, or if they support the view to which Samely adheres.

<sup>473</sup> Italics mine. Cf. the translation of Samely: "Aaron made a proclamation and said: 'Be the slaying against me if there should be a feast of the impious ones before the Lord tomorrow'" (Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 46); and of McNamara and Hayward: "And Aaron made announcement and said: Would that the sacrifice be against him (correcting text *by*) [in reference to Hur] as the feast of the wicked before the Lord tomorrow" (McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Exodus and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 129, n. j).

lack of preoccupation to preserve his life. In short, the Neofiti Marginalia seems to suggest that Aaron was not expressing fear for his life but, rather, was responding to the wicked conduct of the people.

Second, Leviticus Rabbah 10.3 discusses the episode of the calf as follows:

רבי ברכיה בשם רבי אבא בר כהנא פתר קריא באהרן בשעה שעשו ישראל אותו מעשה בתחלה הלכו אצל חור אמרו לו (שמות לב) קום עשה לנו אלהים כיון שלא שמע להן עמדו עליו והרגוהו הה"ד (ירמיה ב) גם בכנפיך נמצאו דם וגו' וזהו דמו של חור לא במחתרת מצאתים כי על כל אלה על אשר עשו אלה אלהיך ישראל ואח"כ הלכו אצל אהרן אמרו לו קום עשה לנו אלהים כיון ששמע אהרן כן מיד נתיירא הה"ד (שמות לב) וירא אהרן ויבן מזבח לפניו נתיירא מהזבוח לפניו אמר אהרן מה אעשה הרי הרגו את חור שהיה נביא עכשיו אם הורגים אותי שאני כהן מתקיים עליהם המקרא שכתוב (איכה ב) אם יהרג במקדש ה' כהן ונביא ומיד הם גולין.<sup>474</sup>

R. Berekiah, in the name of R. Abba b. Kahana, explained the verse as referring to Aaron. When the Israelites were about to commit that act, at first they went to Hur. They said to him (Ex 32): “Arise, make us a god!” Inasmuch as he did not listen to them, they rose up against him and killed him. As it is written (Jer 2): “Also on your skirts is found the lifeblood...” and this refers to the blood of Hur. “I did not find them breaking in. Rather, for all these...” (Jer 2:34): because they made these [statements]: “These are your gods, O Israel”; and [because] afterwards they went to Aaron, and said to him: “Up, make us a god.” Inasmuch as Aaron heard this, he became afraid. As it is written (Ex 32): “And Aaron saw [or: became afraid] and built the altar [or: and perceived (the slaughtering)] before him.” He became afraid on account of the slaughtered one before him. Aaron said [to himself]: “What shall I do? **They have already killed Hur who was a prophet; if they now kill me, namely, a priest, the verse will be fulfilled against them, which says (Lam 2): ‘Should priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?’**” **And then they will immediately be exiled.**

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<sup>474</sup> Issachar Berman ben Naphtali and Ze'ev Volf Ainhorin, eds., ספר מדרש רבה על חמשה חומשי, ויקרא פרשה, תורה וחמש מגילות, חלק שני (Vilna: 1897 or 1898; repr., Jerusalem: Hotsa'at Sefer, 5730/1969), י"ג, 10.3, p. 27 in Arabic numerals).

This midrash indicates that while it was, indeed, the slaying of Hur that provoked the fear within Aaron, the nature of this fear was that the people would commit a horrendous sin for which they would then suffer exile.<sup>475</sup>

Third, b. Sanh. 7a, appeals to this episode in a similar light:

וירא אהרן ויבן מזבח לפניו מה ראה א"ר בנימין בר יפת א"ר אלעזר ראה חור שזבוח לפניו אמר אי לא שמענא להו השתא עבדו לי כדעבדו בחור ומיקיים בי אם יהרג במקדש ה' כהן ונביא ולא הויא להו תקנתא לעולם מוטב דליעבדו לעגל אפשר הויא להו תקנתא בתשובה.<sup>476</sup>

*And Aaron saw, and he built an altar before it.* What did he see? R. Benjamin bar Japhet says that R. Eleazar said: He saw Hur who was slain before him, so he said [to himself]: If I do not obey them, they will now do to me what they did to Hur; thus it will be fulfilled through me: Shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the Sanctuary of the Lord? [For this] they will never receive forgiveness. It is better that they make the calf, [for on account of this sin] they may find forgiveness through repentance.

Again, this passage shows that Aaron's primary fear was the wicked conduct of the people, that is, that they might commit an act for which they would never receive forgiveness.<sup>477</sup> Aaron was willing to commit a sin himself and be punished for it, rather

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<sup>475</sup> Another midrash recorded in Leviticus Rabbah 10.3 also demonstrates how Aaron was troubled specifically by the wickedness of the people: וירא אהרן מה ראה אמר אהרן אם בונין הן אותו הסרחון נתלה בהן "And Aaron saw this. What did he see? [Perceiving the situations as follows] Aaron said: If they build [the calf], the iniquity will fall upon them; it is better that the iniquity fall upon me rather than upon the Israelites" (Ben Naphtali and Ainhorin, eds., *ספר מדרש רבה על חמשה חומשי*, ויקרא פרשה, [עד] 74, ספר כתר תורה, חלק שני על ספר פרשה, [Vilna: 1897 or 1898; repr., Jerusalem: Hotsa'at Sefer, 5730/1969], תורה וחמש מגילות, חלק שני י"ג, 10.3, p. יד [p. 28 in Arabic numerals]). See similar comments in Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim's Classic Commentary: Shemos*, 900–1.

<sup>476</sup> Shachter, H. Freedman, and I. Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Sanhedrin*, 7a.

<sup>477</sup> Gutenplan explains this point further: והטעם שלא יהי' להם תקנה אם יהרג במקדש כהן לפי שכהן "The reason for this is that they would not have an ordinance of restoration if the priest is killed in the sanctuary, for it is the priest who intercedes on their behalf, and, in effect, they will not have anyone to intercede on their behalf in the sanctuary" (Gutenplan, [עד] 74, ספר כתר תורה, חלק שני על ספר פרשה, ביאור רחב על תרגום המיוחס להתנא הקדוש יונתן בן עוזיאל, See also discussion in Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim's Classic Commentary: Shemos*, 900–1.



than to permit the people to commit a sin for which the people would receive a more severe punishment.<sup>478</sup> Once again, preserving his own life for the sake of living was not the concern of Aaron.

Fourth, in his commentary on Exodus, the Christian commentator Ephrem (306–373)<sup>479</sup>—possibly borrowing some of his interpretations from Jewish tradition<sup>480</sup>—includes the following comments on 32:1–5:

“When the people saw that Moses was a long time coming down from the mountain,” they pressed Aaron to make them gods who would go before them.... Aaron argued with them, and he saw that they wanted to stone him as they had stoned Hur. For when Moses went up the mountain, he told the elders to bring their judgments to Hur, but after Moses’ descent, Hur is nowhere mentioned. Because of this people say that the Israelites killed him when they rioted against Aaron over the image of the Calf, since Hur forbade them to change gods. **So Aaron was afraid that he too would die, that they would incur blood-guilt for his murder, and that they would make themselves not one calf but several; and even though they would not enter Egypt, they might turn back.**<sup>481</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> Compare also the tradition in *Hadar Zekenim*: וירא אהרן. ראה שטעו אמ' מתיירא אני שמא ישימו לב לאמר מה יושיענו זה וישימו להם ראש. לפי' בנה להם מזבח להטעותם עד שיבא משה: חג לה' מחר. כלומר למחר הדר זקנים: על (Asher ben Jehiel) נעמידהו על המלוכה ונעשה חג לשמים עד שיתן לנו מנהיג. ואחר עד למחרת (רלד] 234, חמשת חומשי התורה). Also, consider the tradition recorded in the *Legends of the Jews* by Ginzberg: “When Hur, the son of Miriam, whom Moses during his absence had appointed joint leader of the people with Aaron, owing to his birth which placed him among the notables of highest rank, beheld this, he said to them: ‘O ye frivolous ones, you are no longer mindful of the many miracles God wrought for you.’ In their wrath, the people slew this pious and noble man; and, pointing out his dead body to Aaron, they said to him threateningly: ‘If thou wilt make us a god, it is well, if not we will dispose of thee as of him.’ Aaron had no fear for his life, but he thought: ‘If Israel were to commit so terrible a sin as to slay their priest and prophet, God would never forgive them.’ He was willing rather to take a sin upon himself than to cast the burden of so wicked a deed upon the people” (Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 3:121).

<sup>479</sup> For the date of Ephrem’s commentary, see Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah*, 135.

<sup>480</sup> In his comment on the disappearance of Hur from the text, Ephrem prefaces his explanation with “*people say* that the Israelites killed him...” thus indicating that he is receiving this interpretation from elsewhere, and possibly from a Jewish tradition (italics mine). Salvesen writes in her introduction to *The Exodus Commentary of St. Ephrem*, “Ephrem was no friend of Judaism or Jews, but as in the case of his other works, his Exodus Commentary contains many parallels to rabbinic traditions and Jewish haggadic developments of the narrative” (Ephrem, *The Exodus Commentary of St. Ephrem*, 2–3).

<sup>481</sup> Ephrem, *The Exodus Commentary of St. Ephrem*, 50.

Aaron's fear of death is, once more, mentioned here; but, yet again, the essence of this fear is that if the people kill him, they would become guilty of a terrible sin and they would commit more and more wickedness (i.e., idolatry and the turning back to Egypt).

All these passages, recording interpretive traditions on Exod 32, imagine Aaron as a pious figure ultimately concerned with the conduct of the Israelites.<sup>482</sup> His fear is that the people would commit a sin that would lead them into further sin and would bring about a terrible punishment upon the nation. This view of Aaron and of the nature of Aaron's fear strongly lends itself to being the underlying assumption behind the expansions at Ps-J Exod 32:5. In the light of these traditions, then, Samely's conclusion that the present form of Ps-J Exod 32:5 conveys the inconsistent narrative that Aaron declared the feast to the Lord to oppose the people because he feared that the people would take his life is not necessarily representative of the implied logic of the text. The fear of Aaron that is mentioned in the first part of the verse is not the type of fear that would deter Aaron from making the utterance in the second part of the verse. This fear,

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<sup>482</sup> Ps-J's expansions in other parts of this pericope also contribute to this image of Aaron as one who is concerned with preventing the people from committing the sin of worshiping the calf. After Aaron instructs the Israelites to bring to him all the gold to build a calf (v. 2), Ps-J continues the narrative with the following addition: "but the women refused to give their ornaments to their husbands" (v. 3). The tradition behind this remark relates how Aaron sought to delay the process of making the calf by first instructing that the gold of the women be brought to him, thinking that the women would refuse this directive (see PRE 45 in Aharon, ed., פרקי דרבי אליעזר, 249 [רמט]; Exodus Rabbah 41.7; and Ephrem, *The Exodus Commentary of St. Ephrem*, 51). In other words, ancient tradition on this pericope depicts Aaron as being focused on the sin of the people and specifically on seeking to delay or prevent the sin from coming to fruition. See also Asher ben Jehiel, הדר זקנים: על חמשת חומשי התורה, 234 (רלב); Fishbane, ספר שמות, 2:598–99 (תקצה-תקצט); Raphael Pelcovitz, ed. and trans., *Sforno: Commentary on the Torah*, The Artscroll Mesorah Series (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1987), 452; Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: שמות, 2:187 (קפז); Hakham, פרשיות משפטים-פקודי, ספר שמות, 2:287 (רפז); Gutenplan, חלק שני על ספר שמות, ביאור רחב על תרגום המיוחס להתנא הקדוש יונתן בן עוזיאל (עג), 73; Rosenberg, trans., *Shemoth*, Miqraot Gedolot, 524–27; and Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 411–12.

rather, is the type of fear that would and actually did embolden Aaron to act against the wicked according to the targumist's conception. In effect, Aaron's state of fearfulness in the first part of v. 5 and Aaron's pronunciation of the feast in the latter part of v. 5 work hand-in-hand rather than in opposition. To suggest, therefore, that there is an inconsistency in this narrative is unnecessary.

### 5.2.10 Leviticus 10:1 vs. 10:9

The appearance of a contradiction between Ps-J Lev 10:1 and 10:9 pertains to the cause of Nadab and Abihu's deaths. Ps-J Lev 10:1 seems to suggest that Nadab and Abihu died on account of foreign fire,<sup>483</sup> while 10:9 seems to suggest that they died because they, presumably, drank wine.<sup>484</sup> Maher remarks: “[10:9] contradicts 10:1–2

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<sup>483</sup> See, for example, Leviticus Rabbah 20.8. In fact, the MT narrative is opaque as to the specific sin of the brothers. Levine writes: “The text does not specify the offense committed by the two young priests; it merely states that they brought an offering that had not been specifically ordained” (Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus*, The JPS Torah Commentary, eds. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 58–59). Sailhamer also suggests that the narrative is ambiguous: “The reader is not told any details about the fire which the two sons of Aaron offered” (John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MA: Zondervan, 1992], 330, and see 329–32). For further discussion of this passage see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 595–600; idem, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics*, A Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 93–97; James W. Watts, *Leviticus 1–10*, Historical Commentary on the Old Testament (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2013), 525–44; Thomas Hieke, *Leviticus 1–15*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament (Freiburg: Herder GmbH, 2014), 383–93; Menahem Haran, “המשכן: טאבו מודרג של קדושה,” in ספר סגל, ed. J. Liver (Jerusalem: Kiriat Sefer, 1964), 33–41; Edward Greenstein, “Deconstruction and Biblical Narrative,” *Prooftexts* 9 (1989) 43–71; Shinan, “חטאייהם של נדב ואביהוא באגדת חז"ל,” 201–14; Gary A. Anderson, “‘Through Those Who Are Near to Me, I Will Show Myself Holy’: Nadab and Abihu and Apophatic Theology,” *CBQ* 77 (2015): 1–19; Robert Kirschner, “The Rabbinic and Philonic Exegeses of the Nadab and Abihu Incident (Lev 10:1–6),” *JQR* 73 (1983): 375–93; Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 341–42; and for a concise survey of different views, see Israel Drazin and Stanley M. Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Leviticus* (New York: Gefen Books, 2008), 296–97; and John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, WBC 4 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 132–33.

<sup>484</sup> See Leviticus Rabbah 12.1 (cf. 20.6, 8–10 which list other causes); *Pesikta de Rav Kahana* 26.9; Midrash Tanhuma 6.7 (Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma*, 2:285); so Rashi in M. L. Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: ויקרא: חמשה חומשי תורה עם ההפטרות (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1993), 72 (עב); so Baal HaTurim in Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim's Classic Commentary*:

(Ps.-J.), which say that Aaron’s sons died because they offered forbidden fire.”<sup>485</sup>

However, a close reading of Ps-J’s expansions in the entirety of 10:1–11 indicates that the targumist did not actually perceive the references to foreign fire and to the drinking of the wine as mutually exclusive. According to Ps-J, each action contributed to their deaths, though only in part; for the overarching reason for their deaths—the reason that the targumist introduced into the text—appears at v. 3: that Nadab and Abihu were not attentive (לא מזדהרין) in bringing their offering to God.<sup>486</sup> The narrative reads as follows:

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*Vayikra*, 1089–90, 1095; for a discussion of this interpretation as well as of a variety of interpretations of the passage in early rabbinic literature see Shinan, “חטאיהם של נדב ואביהוא באגדת חז”ל,” 201–14; Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah*, 135; Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 342–43; and Hartley, *Leviticus*, 135. Commenting on MT Lev 10:9, Rooker writes: “In fact, many commentators maintain that the admonition against drunkenness immediately after the death of Nadab and Abihu suggests that drunkenness may have a role in their not accurately adhering to God’s law” (Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, NAC [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000], 160, n. 93; he cites here Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 158, and R. L. Harris, “Leviticus,” *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990], 567). But Milgrom contends: “The relation between this prohibition [i.e., prohibition to drink wine, at 10:9] and the preceding pericope is unclear. . . . [T]he entire section, vv 8–11, is a heterogeneous piece, which was probably added at a later date” (Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, AB, 611). Note, however, Levine’s explanation of a relationship between God’s warning to Aaron concerning wine and the deaths of Nadab and Abihu: “Intoxicants were forbidden to the priests precisely because imbibing them would impair their faculties and they would not be able to distinguish between the sacred and the profane. This responsibility is emphasized throughout Leviticus and at Ezekiel 44:23 as well. It is likely that, in using this occasion to stress the major roles of the priesthood, the text is linking the restriction on intoxicants to the horrendous deaths of Aaron’s two sons” (Levine, *Leviticus*, JPS, 61). Similarly, Rooker writes, “Abstention from alcoholic beverage may help to insure obedience to the next stated role of the priest: ‘to distinguish the holy and the common, between the clean and the unclean.’ Certainly a priest under the influence of alcohol would be impaired in his ability to make these distinctions accurately” (Rooker, *Leviticus*, NAC, 160–61). See like comments in Hieke, *Leviticus 1–15*, 390–91.

<sup>485</sup> Martin McNamara, Robert Hayward, and Michael Maher, eds. and trans., *Targum Neofiti 1: Leviticus and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Leviticus*, The Aramaic Bible 3, eds. Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1994), 146, n. 18. Ginsburger also notes this apparent contradiction and states: “Leviticus 10,9 widerspricht dem Zusatze in Vers 1 [i.e., מן תפין],” in this way implying that the cause of the brothers’ deaths was the fact that they used profane fire (Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, XX). The expansions in Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts are inconsequential to the study of this passage in Ps-J.

<sup>486</sup> Kirschner notes that rabbinic literature recognizes “carelessness” as among the causes of the deaths of Nadab and Abihu (Kirschner, “The Rabbinic and Philonic Exegeses of the Nadab and Abihu Incident (Lev 10:1–6),” 390). See also Anderson, who discusses the pattern of the immediacy of sin in the biblical narrative, as exemplified in the sin of Adam and Eve at Gen 3 immediately after the creation at Gen 1–2; the episode of the golden calf at Exod 32 immediately after the event at Sinai at 19–31 (before even the building of the tabernacle begins); and the deaths of Nadab and Abihu at Lev 10 immediately after the

<sup>1</sup> Now Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his censer, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered strange fire before the LORD, such as he had not commanded them. <sup>2</sup> And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD meant when he said, 'Through those who are near me I will show myself holy, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron was silent. <sup>4</sup> Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come forward, and carry your kinsmen away from the front of the sanctuary to a place outside the camp." <sup>5</sup> They came forward and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, as Moses had ordered. <sup>6</sup> And Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not dishevel your hair, and do not tear your vestments, or you will die and wrath will strike all the congregation; but your kindred, the whole house of Israel, may mourn the burning that the LORD has sent. <sup>7</sup> You shall not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting, or you will die; for the anointing oil of the LORD is on you." And they did as Moses had ordered. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD spoke to Aaron: <sup>9</sup> Drink no wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons, when you enter the tent of meeting, that you may not die; it is a statute forever throughout your generations. <sup>10</sup> You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; <sup>11</sup> and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them through Moses.

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<sup>1</sup> Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his censer, put fire in it, and laid *aromatic* incense on it; **and they offered before the Lord foreign fire from the (profane?) fireplaces, which he had not commanded them.** <sup>2</sup> And there came forth *in anger* from before the Lord *a flame of fire which was divided into four jets. It entered their noses and burned their souls; but their bodies*

<sup>1</sup> ויקחו בני־אֱהֶרֶן נֹדֶב וְאַבִּיהוּא אִישׁ מִחֲתָתוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ בָהֶן אֵשׁ וַיִּשְׂימוּ עָלֶיהָ קִטְרֶת וַיִּקְרְבוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֵשׁ זָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אַתֶּם: <sup>2</sup> וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: <sup>3</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אֱהֶרֶן הוּא אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה לֵאמֹר בְּקִרְבִי אֶקְדֹשׁ וְעַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָעַם אֶפְבֹּד וַיִּדַם אֱהֶרֶן: <sup>4</sup> וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־מִישָׁאֵל וְאֶל אֶלְצָפָן בְּנֵי עֻזִּיאֵל יָד אֱהֶרֶן וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם קְרִבּוּ שָׂאוּ אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם מֵאֵת פְּנֵי־הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה: <sup>5</sup> וַיִּקְרְבוּ וַיִּשְׂאֵם בְּכַתְנֵתָם אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה: <sup>6</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אֱהֶרֶן וְלֹא־לְעֹזֵר וְלֹא־לְיִתְמָר וְלֹא־לְרֵאשִׁיכָם אֶל־תִּפְרְעוּ וּבְגַדֵיכֶם לֹא־תִפְרְמוּ וְלֹא תִמָּתוּ וְעַל כָּל־הָעֵדָה יִקְצֹף וְאֲחֵיכֶם כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְכוּ אֶת־הַשְּׂרָפָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף יְהוָה: <sup>7</sup> וּמִפֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֹא תֵצֵאוּ פֹתְמֹתוֹ כִּי־שָׁמֶן מִשְׁחַת יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כַדְבָר מֹשֶׁה: <sup>8</sup> וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־אֱהֶרֶן לֵאמֹר: <sup>9</sup> יֵין וְשִׁכָר אֶל־תִּשְׁתּוּ אֶתְהוּ וּבְיַיִד אֲתֵד בְּבִאכֶם אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְלֹא תִמָּתוּ חֲקַת עוֹלָם לְדוֹרֵיכֶם: <sup>10</sup> וְלֹהֲבִדִּיל בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין הַחֹל וּבֵין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטְּהוֹר: <sup>11</sup> וְלִהְיוֹת אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כָּל־הַחֻקִּים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֲלֵיהֶם בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה:

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<sup>1</sup> ונסיבו בני אהרן נדב ואביהוא גבר מחתיתיה ויהבו בהן אישתא ושויאו עלה קטורת בוסמין וקריבו קדם יי אישתא נוכרתא מן תפיין מה דלא פקיד יתהון <sup>2</sup> ונפקת שלהובית אישתא מן קדם יי ברגו ואיתפליגת לארבעתי חוטין ואעלת בגוא

inauguration of the priesthood and the sacrifice that God accepted at Lev 9 (Anderson, "Biblical Origins and the Problem of the Fall," 17–30).

<sup>487</sup> NRSV translation with minor adjustments.

were not burnt; and they died before the Lord. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said, "This is what the Lord said to me on Sinai, saying: 'Through those who come before me I shall consecrate the tabernacle. **If they are not careful while making the offerings, I shall burn them in a flame of fire from before it,** so that I may be glorified in the sight of all the people.'" Aaron heard and was silent; and he received a good reward for his silence. <sup>4</sup> Moses called the Levites Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Draw near and take your brothers from the sanctuary and carry them outside the camp."<sup>5</sup> So they drew near and carried them with iron hooks by their tunics, and they buried them outside the camp, as Moses had said. <sup>6</sup> And Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazer and Ithamar, his sons, "Do not let the hair of your heads grow long, and do not rend your clothes, lest you die in a conflagration of fire and the anger (of God) come upon all the congregation. But be silent, and regard as just the judgment (made) against you. But your brothers, all the house of Israel, shall bewail the conflagration which the Lord has kindled. <sup>7</sup> And do not depart from the entrance of the tent of meeting lest you die, for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you." And they did according to the word of Moses. <sup>8</sup> And the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying: <sup>9</sup> **"You shall drink no wine or anything intoxicating, you or your sons with you, when you enter the tent of meeting, as did your sons who died in the conflagration of fire;** it is a perpetual ordinance throughout your generations, <sup>10</sup> for you must distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, <sup>11</sup> and teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has communicated to them through Moses."

אפיהון ואוקידת ית נשמתהון ברם גופיהון לא איתחרכו ומיתו קדם יי<sup>3</sup> ואמר משה הוא דמליל יי עימי בסיני למימר בדיקריבין קדמי אנא מקדש משכנא דאין לא מזדהרין בעיבדת קורבניא אוקידינון בשלהובית אשתא מן קדמוי מטול דעל מיחמי כל עמא איתיקר ושמע אהרן ושתיק וקבל אגר טב על משתוקיה<sup>4</sup> וקרא משה למישאל ולאצפן בנוי דעוויאל ליואי חביבא דאהרן ואמר להון קריבו טולו ית אחיכון מן קודשא ותסוברונון למברא למשריתא<sup>5</sup> וקריבו וסוברונון באונקלוון דפרזלא בכיתונהון וקברונון למברא למשריתא היכמא דמליל משה<sup>6</sup> ואמר משה לאהרן ולאעזר ולאיתמר בנוי רישיכון לא תרבון פרוע ולבושיכון לא תבזעון ולא תמותון ביקידת אישתא ועילוי כל כנישתא יהי רוגזא ברם שתוקו ותזכון ית דינא עליכון ואחיכון כל בית ישראל יבכון ית יקידתא דאוקד יי<sup>7</sup> ומתרע משכן זימנא לא תיפקון דילמא תמותון ארום משח רבותא דיי עליכון ועבדו הי כפיתגמא דמשה<sup>8</sup> ומליל יי עם אהרן למימר<sup>9</sup> חמר וכל מידעם מרוי לא תשתי אנת ובנד עימד ביזמן מעלכון למשכן זימנא היכמה דעבדו בנד דמיתו ביקידת אישתא קים עלם לדריכון<sup>10</sup> ולאפרשא ביני קודשא וביני חולא וביני מסאבא וביני דכיא<sup>11</sup> ולא לפא ית בני ישראל ית כל קיימייא דמליל יי להון בידא דמשה

First, analysis of this narrative indicates that neither bringing נוכרתא אישתא

"foreign fire" (10:1) nor consuming מרוי מידעם חמר וכל מידעם מרוי "wine or anything intoxicating"

(10:9) is presented as the sole cause of the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, for the narrator

does not pronounce an explicit cause-and-effect relationship between these actions and

the deaths of the brothers.<sup>488</sup> At 10:1, the narrative merely *describes* how the brothers offered “foreign fire,” and at 10:2, the narrative proceeds, again, merely to *describe* how the brothers died. While the reader may infer a causal relationship between the action and the consequence, the verses in Ps-J, in fact, do not explicitly state that the death resulted from this action. Consequently, it is imprecise of Maher to conclude that according to Ps-J 10:1–2, “Aaron’s sons died because they offered forbidden fire.”<sup>489</sup>

Similarly, at 10:9 God first utters an item of instruction to Aaron that Aaron and his sons are not to drink “wine or *anything intoxicating*” when they enter the tent of meeting, and God then states as a point of fact that this is what Nadab and Abihu did who died in the fire. But, significantly, God does not state that this is the reason on account of which Nadab and Abihu died. Shinan mentions Leviticus Rabbah 12.1—which reckons that the brothers died for no other reason than for entering into the tabernacle drunk—and claims that “Ps-J adheres to the same notion at Lev 10:9.”<sup>490</sup> Pace Shinan, however, the

<sup>488</sup> On causation see Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 119.

<sup>489</sup> McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Leviticus and Pseudo-Jonathan: Leviticus*, 146, n. 18.

<sup>490</sup> In the original: 'לא מתו שני בני אהרן אלא על ידי שנכנסו שתויי יין' (וי"ר יב:א...), בדעה זו אוהזו אף התרגום המיוחס ליונתן (Shinan, “חטאיהם של נדב ואביהוא באגדת חז"ל,” 208); cf. a similar view in unknown author, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל עם פרוש על התורה (Warsaw: Bi-defus Aleksander Ginez, 18--?), at Lev 10:9. In fact, the change at v. 9 from the Hebrew to the Aramaic is noteworthy:

MT	וַיִּן וְשָׁכַר אֱלֹהֵי תַשְׁתֵּן   אֶתְהָ   וּבְנִיךָ אֶתְךָ בְּבִאָכְם אֶל־אֱהֵל מוֹעֵד   וְלֹא תָמָתוּ חֲקַת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם
Ps-J	חמר וכל מידעם מרוי <b>לא תשתי</b> אנת ובנד עימד ביזמן מעלכון למשכן זימנא <b>היכמה דעבדו בנד דמיתו</b> ביקידת אישתא קים עלם לדריכון

In the MT, the jussive construction אֱלֹהֵי תַשְׁתֵּן + the imperfect וְלֹא תָמָתוּ gives the sense of purpose or result (“so that you would not die”). Friedman, for example, renders the MT text as “so you won’t die...” (Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 343). For the grammar of this construction, see Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 119, §107c. The Hebrew text, therefore, might suggest a cause-and-effect relationship between consuming wine and the consequence of death. The Aramaic, however, does not preserve this construction (i.e., “as did

text of Ps-J does not actually state that this act of the brothers is the cause for their deaths; this deduction is already the interpretation of the reader. In other words, the narrative of Ps-J presents the actions of Nadab and Abihu descriptively, not as the causes for their deaths. Since the actions are not intrinsically contradictory (i.e., this is not a case in which Nadab and Abihu both *did* and *did not* do a specific act), in the view of the targumist the actions need not necessarily be mutually exclusive: the brothers committed both acts; therefore, the mention of one action at 10:1 and a different action at 10:9 is not an inconsistency in the narrative.

Second, in contrast to the narrative's treatment of the two actions at 10:1 and 10:9, the narrative of Ps-J at 10:3 does designate a particular type of conduct that merits death by conflagration—the lack of care in making the offerings: דאין לא מזדהרין בעיבידת קורבניא אוקידינון בשלהובית אשתא מן קדמוי (*"If they are not careful while making the offerings, I shall burn them in a flame of fire from before it"*). The cause-and-effect relationship between the conduct and the punishment is reflected in the grammatical construction of the verse: the *protasis* presents the conditional clause דאין לא מזדהרין בעיבידת קורבניא (*"If they are not careful in the making of the offerings"*); and the *apodasis* delivers the result clause אוקידינון בשלהובית אשתא (*"I shall burn them in a flame of fire."*)<sup>491</sup> Broad though it may be, the conduct that, in the view of the targumist, provokes

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your sons who died"). Thus, the purpose or result nuance is no longer expressed in the construction of the clause; and this, in effect, removes this apparent relationship of causality.

<sup>491</sup> For a discussion of cause-and-effect structures (or "reason-result" structures), see Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation*, 209–13; and Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 118.



God to exact death by fire is carelessness in bringing up the offerings. Schmerler understands this carelessness as follows: “This means that they do not bring and make the offerings according to the law and the *halacha*”; still, the specifics remain elusive.<sup>492</sup> Thus, while the targumist did not identify one single and specific misdeed of the two brothers for which they were killed, he did recognize that the brothers brought the offering improperly. The significance of this expansion is that it mitigates the appearance of inconsistency within the narrative and produces a compatible relationship between the differing statements.<sup>493</sup> Cotterell and Turner remark that “in a paragraph, one sentence usually dominates and so gives coherence to the rest.”<sup>494</sup> In this case, the overarching reason the brothers die is that they are careless in their offering; and this allows for both the offering of foreign fire and the drinking of wine to coexist in the same context as reasons for their deaths.<sup>495</sup>

This analysis demonstrates that the targumist did not reproduce this narrative carelessly without regard for the apparent inconsistency between 10:1 and 10:9. To the

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<sup>492</sup> In the original: אהבת יהונתן: ויקרא (Schmerler, ויקרא, 67). וכהלכה ויעשום כדת ויהינן שלא יקריבום ויעשום כדת וכהלכה.

<sup>493</sup> Schmerler comes to a similar conclusion, that neither the sin mentioned at v. 1 nor the sin mentioned at v. 9 is the sole cause of the deaths of Nadab and Abihu. Rather, both acts contribute to the demise of the brothers. As Schmerler writes: תני ר"ש לא מתו בניו של אהרן אלא על שנכנסו שתויי יין לאוה"מ מ ע"ש. ה"ל של המדרש אינו מדויק. שבכתוב מפורש (לעיל פ"א) שהקריבו אש זרה ולכן מתו... אך הכוונה שגם בעבור ע"ש. ה"ל של המדרש אינו מדויק. שבכתוב מפורש (לעיל פ"א) שהקריבו אש זרה ולכן מתו... אך הכוונה שגם בעבור זה מתו (Schmerler, ויקרא, 69). אהבת יהונתן: ויקרא, 69).

<sup>494</sup> Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 195.

<sup>495</sup> Note how Baal HaTurim also perceives the sins of Nadab and Abihu to be mutually inclusive rather than contradictory: “אותם — Them. This word is spelled in full with a ו (=6). For they [Nadab and Abihu] sinned in six ways: (i) [They brought] an alien fire; (ii) they issued a *halachic* ruling in the presence of [Moses] their master; (iii) [they entered the Sanctuary] while intoxicated; (iv) they did not father children; (v) they set their eyes on positions of leadership; and (vi) they did not seek counsel” (Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim’s Classic Commentary: Vayikra*, 1089–90; and see the editor’s comments on 1098, n. 30a). Cf. also Frenkel, *מדרש ואגדה*, 3:735, who lists various sins and concludes that they all amount to the overarching sin of the pride of Nadab and Abihu.

contrary, the targumist took care to introduce an explicit, though broad, reason for which God put Nadab and Abihu to death. In effect, this shows that the targumist was reading the pericope coherently, and that he perceived 10:1 and 10:9 to complement rather than to contradict one another.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

While the surface text of the passages discussed above appears to produce contradictions, recognition of the targumist's assumptions about the text helps to discern an underlying coherence that the targumist presupposed, but which he did not make obvious in his narrative. This analysis suggests that these apparent contradictions are not products of the targumist's carelessness or his lack of concern for congruity in the narrative. Rather, they are the result of his assumptions about the text and his expectation of the audience to fill in the potential gaps that might arise within the Ps-J narrative. The study of the various passages above reveals the targumist's careful exegesis of the text and his attention to the immediate and the greater context of the Bible and Jewish tradition, and it suggests that the targumist was indeed committed to logical consistency in his production of the Targum.

**CHAPTER 6**  
**CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN PSEUDO-JONATHAN:**  
**CHARACTERS**

**6.1 Introduction**

Ps-J's character depiction that at times demonstrates literary tension within the surface structure of the narrative, specifically between passages within the narrative of Ps-J (i.e., the horizontal dimension), also proves to sustain coherence once the targumist's presuppositions are taken into account. In various portions of the narrative, Hagar is presented as a slavegirl who is granted freedom, but in her freed state she continues to be treated and referred to as a slavegirl. Nimrod, Esau, and Ishmael are depicted as wicked character types, but they nonetheless do deeds that seem thoroughly noble.<sup>496</sup> The narrative, in other words, presents non-sequiturs in its portrayal of these characters. The question, therefore, arises: Can such inconsistent depictions of characters coexist without their compromising the coherence of the narrative?

Analysis of these characters in Ps-J demonstrates that as the targumist incorporated seemingly incongruous descriptions of certain characters into the narrative, he was fully aware of the dominating portrait of each character. This suggests that in the view of the targumist, characters could command a particular image and yet be associated

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<sup>496</sup> Kugel writes: "Believing that the purpose of biblical narratives was to present readers with moral exemplars and role models (either positive or negative), [ancient] interpreters naturally had a tendency to exaggerate the virtues and vices of the people involved. As a result, readers soon came to expect biblical figures to come with a clear label: 'altogether righteous' or 'completely wicked'" (Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, 137). On characterization and character types in the Hebrew Bible, see Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 321–64, esp. 325–28; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 47–92, esp. 90–92; Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 69–92, esp. 71–72; Ska, "Our Fathers Have Told Us": *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 83–94.

with an exceptional act or reference without their forfeiting their dominating portrait. In effect, the tension in Ps-J's depiction of characters too finds relief once the targumist's assumptions about the nature of each character are drawn out from the text.

## 6.2 Contradictions in the Depiction of Characters

### 6.2.1 Genesis 16:3 vs. 21:14—Is Hagar Slave or Free?

At Ps-J Gen 16:1–3, the narrative describes how Sarai grants freedom to Hagar so that Abram could marry Hagar and produce offspring.<sup>497</sup> But subsequent to this episode, on various occasions in chapters 16, 21, 22, and 25 the narrative of Ps-J continues to refer to Hagar as a slavegirl. Levine points to this inconsistency specifically between Ps-J Gen 16:3 and 21:14, and states: “In 16:3 Hagar is explicitly given her freedom by Sarah before being given as wife to Abraham, whereas in 21:14 Hagar is still referred to as a slave.”<sup>498</sup> Levine's objection is that since Hagar is granted freedom at 16:3, the passages that follow should recognize her new status and should no longer refer to her as a slavegirl; but, as Levine observes, the text of Ps-J continues to see Hagar as a slavegirl. The two passages read as follows:

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<sup>497</sup> Genesis Rabbah 45.1, 3, 6; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:237; 5:179; Alter, *Genesis*, 67–68.

<sup>498</sup> Levine, “Internal Contradictions in Targum Jonathan Ben Uzziel to Genesis,” 118. See also idem, “מקורות סותרים בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל,” 37; idem, Levine, *Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 35–36; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 75, n. 15; Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:139–40, n. 86, who suggests that this contradiction entered Ps-J when the targumist incorporated the tradition that Hagar had been freed from PRE 30. Wenham notes this tension between 16:3 and 21:10–13 already in the Hebrew Bible (Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 6). For a critical analysis of chapters 16, 21, and 25 see Gunkel, *Genesis*, 183–92; 225–30; and 256–57; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 286–89, 321–323, 349–50; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 232–45, 339–41, 395–96; and for the division of the passages into sources, see Friedman, *Bible with Sources Revealed*, 55 and 62, where he identifies ch. 16 as J and P, and ch. 21 as J, E, and P. Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack the expansions that Ps-J has regarding Hagar being freed.

### Genesis 16:2–3

- MT 2 וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל־אַבְרָם הִנֵּה־נָא עָצַרְנִי יְהוָה מִלְדֹת בָּאֵנָּה אֶל־שִׁפְחָתִי אוּלַי אֲבִנָּה מִמֶּנָּה וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם לְקוֹל שָׂרַי: 3 וַתִּלָּח שָׂרַי אֶשֶׁת־אַבְרָם אֶת־הַגֵּר הַמִּצְרִית שִׁפְחָתָהּ מִקֶּץ עֶשְׂרֵי שָׁנִים לְשֵׁבֶת אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַתִּתֵּן אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָם אִישָׁהּ לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה:
- NRSV 2 and Sarai said to Abram, “You see that the LORD has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.” And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. 3 So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave-girl, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife.
- Ps-J 2 ואמרת שרי לאברם הא כדון מנעני ייי מן למילד עול כדון לות אמתי ואחררינה מאים אתבני מינה וקביל אברם למימר שרי 3 ודברת שרי איתת אברם ית הגר מצריתא אמתא מסוף עשר שנין למיתב אברם בארעא דכנען וחררתה ויהבת יתה לאברם בעלה ליה לאינתו
- Ps-J 2 Sarai said to Abram, “Behold, I pray, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Now, go in to my slavegirl, *and I will set her free*. Perhaps I may have children through her.” And Abram listened to the word of Sarai. 3 Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her slavegirl—after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan for ten years—*set her free* and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.

### Genesis 21:14

- MT וַיִּשְׁבֹּם אַבְרָהָם | בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח־לֶחֶם וְחִמְת מַיִם וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הַגֵּר שָׁם עַל־שִׁכְמָהּ וְאֶת־ הַיֶּלֶד וַיְשַׁלְּחָהּ וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתֵּתַע בְּמִדְבַר בְּאֶר שָׁבַע:
- NRSV So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.
- Ps-J וַאֲקִדִים אַבְרָהָם בַּצִּפְרָא וְנָסִיב לַחְמָא וְקִרוּוָא דְמִיָּא וַיְהִיב לְהַגֵּר שׁוּי עַל כִּיתְפָּה וְקִשֵּׁר לָהּ בְּמוֹתְנָהָא לְאוּדוּעֵי דְאַמְתָּא הִיא וַיִּתּ רִיבָא וּפְטָרָה בְּגִיטָא וְאִזְלָת וְטַכְנַת מִן אֶרְחָא לְמִדְבְּרָא דְסַמִּיד לְבִירָא דְשָׁבַע
- Ps-J Abraham rose early in the morning, took some bread and a skin of water, and gave (them) to Hagar. He placed (them) on her shoulder—*tying (them) to her loins to show that she was a slavegirl*—along with the child. He sent her away *with a bill of divorce*. She went off and strayed *from the way*, to the desert *which is near* Beer-sheba.

In inserting the plus “set her free” at 16:2–3 (v. 2: וואחררונה; v. 3: וחורתה), the targumist appears to have been responding to a key question that he sensed was unanswered in the Hebrew text: How does a foreign slavegirl (שפחה) come to attain the status of a wife (אשה) of a free Israelite man, let alone, of the patriarch Abraham? For as Alter points out, the specific locution used to describe Hagar is not merely “concubine” (פלוגש), but “wife” (אשה), that is, “the same term that identifies Sarai at the beginning of the verse. The terminological equation of the two women is surely intended, and sets up an ironic backdrop for Sarai’s abuse of Hagar.”<sup>499</sup> Moreover, related to this question, b. Yebam. 100b explicitly states that Abraham should not marry a slavegirl:

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<sup>499</sup> Alter, *Genesis*, 68, n. 3. Alter appears to be responding here to the view expressed by Speiser that the Hebrew אשה should be understood to mean “concubine” rather than “wife,” as Speiser explains: “Like its Akk. cognate *aššatum*, Heb. *’iššā* may signify either ‘wife’ or ‘concubine.’ For the principal wife, however, in non-legal contexts Akkadian uses the term *hūrtum* ‘chosen woman’” (Speiser, *Genesis*, 117). For additional remarks on the tension in Hagar’s character as regards her being both a slave and Abraham’s wife in the Hebrew Bible, see Pelcovitz, ed. and trans., *Sforno: Commentary on the Torah*, 77, n. 5, and 104–5, nn. 10, 14; Hirsch, *Hirsch Chumash: Sefer Bereshis*, 371; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 184; Speiser, *Genesis*, 117–18, 120–21; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 239–42; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 119–20, and 208; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 8. See also Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “אשה,” BDB, 61; idem, “פלוגש,” BDB, 811; idem, “שפחה,” BDB, 1046; idem, “אמה,” BDB, 51; Koehler, Baumgartner, and Stamm, “אשה,” HALOT, 1:93; idem, “פלוגש,” HALOT, 3:929; idem, “שפחה,” HALOT, 4:1620–22; idem, “אמה,” HALOT, 1:61; Jastrow, “איתר,” in *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 61; Jastrow, “פלוקתא,” in *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 1185; Jastrow, “שפחה,” in *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 1614; Jastrow, “אמה,” in *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, 75. And for a discussion of ancient practices of surrogacy, see Gunkel, *Genesis*, 184; Speiser, *Genesis*, 117–18, 120–21; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 239; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 119–20, and 208; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 7–8. For some discussion of slave laws in the Bible and the ancient Near East, see Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh, The Biblical Resources Series, eds. Astrid Beck and David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 80–90; Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, trans. Sr. Pascale Dominique (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 41–45; N. P. Lemche, “The Hebrew Slave: Comments on the Slave Law Ex. xxi 2–11,” *VT* 25 (1975): 129–44; J. P. M. van der Ploeg, “Slavery in the Old Testament,” in *Congress Volume: Uppsala, 1971*, VTSup 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 72–87.

מתקיף לה רב פפא אלא מעתה גבי אברהם דכתיב להיות לך לאלהים ולזרעך אחריו התם  
מאי קא מזהר ליה רחמנא הכי קאמר ליה לא תנסב עובדת כוכבים ושפחה דלא ליזיל זרעך  
בתרה<sup>500</sup>

R. Papa contended: If that is so in the case of Abraham, where it is written: “To be a God to you and to your seed after you,” what does the All Merciful exhort him with regard to this? It is that which he said to him: **“Do not marry an idolatress or a slavegirl so that your seed would not go after her.”**

With regard to this imperative, then, how does Abram maintain his honor since the Hebrew text records that a slavegirl was given to Abram to be his wife? The Hebrew text leaves these issues in the passage unexplained. In order to fill this gap, therefore, the targumist inserted the comment that Sarai freed Hagar prior to giving her to Abram. Consequently, this addition explains that Hagar could become a wife because she was emancipated by Sarai, and this insertion indicates that Abram did not marry a slavegirl but a freedwoman.

The principle upon which the targumist seems to have relied for this expansion appears in the following sources in Jewish tradition. First, b. Giṭ. 41a–b discusses the legal prohibition of marriage between a slave (or a half-slave) and a free person, and deliberates the necessity for the slave to be granted freedom to marry a free person.<sup>501</sup>

The beginning portion of the discussion in b. Giṭ. 41a–b reads:

מי שחציו עבד וחציו בן חורין עובד את רבו יום אחד ואת עצמו יום אחד דברי ב"ה ב"ש  
אומרים תקנתם את רבו ואת עצמו לא תקנתם לישא שפחה אי אפשר שכבר חציו בן חורין  
בת חורין אי אפשר שכבר חציו עבד יבטל והלא לא נברא העולם אלא לפריה ורביה שנאמר

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<sup>500</sup> Israel W. Slotki and I. Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Yebamoth* (London: Soncino, 1984), 100b.

<sup>501</sup> See n. 499 for some sources that make reference to a slave who is part slave and part free.

לא תוהו בראה לשבת יצרה אלא מפני תיקון העולם כופין את רבו ועושה אותו בן חורין  
וכותב שטר על חצי דמיו וחזרו ב"ה להורות כדברי ב"ש<sup>502</sup>

One who is half-slave and half-free works one day for his master and one day for himself. This was the ruling of beth Hillel. Beth Shammai said: You have made matters right for the master, but you have not made matters right for the slave. It is impossible for him to marry a female slave because he is already half-free; it is impossible for him to marry a free woman because he is half-slave. Shall he then remain unmarried? But was not the world made to be populated, as it says: He did not create it a waste, he formed it to be inhabited. Thus, to prevent abuses his master is compelled to liberate him and give him a bond for half his purchase price. Beth Hillel thereupon retracted [their opinion and] ruled like beth Shammai.<sup>503</sup>

In other words, amidst the sophisticated discussion here, the principle is clear that in order for a slave (or a half-slave) to marry a free person, the slave must be freed. Second, the same notion is articulated in b. Pesah. 113a:

שלשה דברים א"ר יהושע בן לוי משום אנשי ירושלים אל תרבה בגנות משום מעשה שהיה  
בתך בגרה שחרר עבדך ותן לה והוי זהיר באשתך מחתנה הראשון מ"ט [מאי טעמא] רב  
חסדא אמר משום ערוה רב כהנא אמר משום ממון הא והא איתנהו<sup>504</sup>

R. Joshua b. Levi stated three things in the name of the men of Jerusalem. Do not practice immodesty on account of the incident which occurred; **if your daughter has attained puberty, free your slave and give [him] to her**; and beware of your wife with her first son-in-law. What is the reason? R. Hisda said: On account of immorality: R. Kahana said: On account of money. Both are correct.<sup>505</sup>

While both of the discussions above are concerned with a male (rather than a female) slave and his ability to marry a woman, the principle may be applicable to Abram and Hagar by implication, that is, wherein the slave is a woman (Hagar) and the free person is

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<sup>502</sup> Maurice Simon and I. Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Giṭṭin* (London: Soncino, 1977), 41a.

<sup>503</sup> Cf. translation in Simon and Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Giṭṭin*, 41a.

<sup>504</sup> H. Freedman and I. Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Pesahim* (London: Soncino, 1983), 113a.

<sup>505</sup> Cf. translation in Freedman and Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Pesahim*, 113a.



a man (Abram).<sup>506</sup> The principle, in short, is that the slave must be freed to marry a free person.<sup>507</sup>

As regards the expansion in the text of Ps-J, then, inasmuch as the Hebrew states that Sarai gave Hagar to Abram to be his *wife* (אִשָּׁה), the targumist understood the text to imply that Sarai first emancipated Hagar, and that only then did she give Hagar to Abram as a wife, on account of the principle that a slave and a free person cannot be married. This addition achieves two purposes: on the one hand, it fills the gap as to how Hagar went from being a slavegirl to being a wife; on the other hand, it preserves Abraham's dignity. Addressing specifically the honor of Abraham in this passage, Shinan contends that Sarah freed Hagar in Ps-J because it is impossible that Abraham would have married a slavegirl.<sup>508</sup> And Maher remarks that "It would be unbecoming for the patriarch to have children by a slave."<sup>509</sup> With the targumist's plus "set her free," the dilemma is resolved:

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<sup>506</sup> 1 Chr 2:34–35 records how an Israelite daughter is given in marriage to a male Egyptian slave. Regarding this case, de Vaux writes that "the slave was *ipso facto* emancipated" (de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, 85–86).

<sup>507</sup> See discussion of a free Israelite man marrying a foreign captive woman at Deut 21:10–14 and cf. Ps-J Deut 21:10–14. For remarks on this text, see De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, 87, and see 81; Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPS, 194, n. 12–13; S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), 246; Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, WBC 6B (Dallas: Word, 2002), 474; Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 629; Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Hirsch Chumash: The Five Books of the Torah, Sefer Devarim*, trans. Daniel Haberman (New York: Feldheim, 2002), 481–84; and Rashi in M. L. Katzenellenbogen, תורת חיים: דברים: (קפ–קפב). Cf. also Lev 19:20, which implies that a female slave may be granted freedom; and compare Ps-J Lev 19:20; Sifra, Parashat Kedoshim, Perek 5; b. Ker. 11a; b. Giṭ. 41a–b; and see comments in McNamara, Hayward, and Maher, *Neofiti 1: Leviticus and Pseudo-Jonathan: Leviticus*, 177, n. 37; Drazin and Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Leviticus*, 153.

<sup>508</sup> In the original: שרה שיחררה את הגר לפני שנתנה אותה לאברהם, שהרי לא ייתכן שנשא שפחה (Shinan, אגדתם של מתורגמנים, 2:318).

<sup>509</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 62, n. 3. See also Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 138–39; Ben-Mendel, בראשית in קמו–קמו, 146–47, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות, For additional comments on preserving the honor of the patriarchs, see Shinan, "Post-Pentateuchal Figures in

inasmuch as Sarai grants Hagar freedom, Hagar is given to Abram as a wife when she no longer bears the status of a slavegirl. In effect, if Abram's honorable character were to be potentially impugned in the Hebrew text for taking a slavegirl as a wife, the targumist's expansion satisfies any possible objection that Abram acted unbecomingly. In the end, the targumist's expansion once again demonstrates the targumist's sensitive reading of the passage with the intent to clarify the text. Believing the intermediate step of Hagar's emancipation to be implied in the Hebrew text, the targumist explicated this step and incorporated it into his narrative in order to elucidate the sense of the verse.<sup>510</sup>

This very attempt to resolve the difficulty in the Hebrew text, however, also introduced an apparent incongruity into the Aramaic text, in that though the narrator has Sarah grant freedom to Hagar, the narrative, as noted above, continues to refer to Hagar as a slavegirl. In fact, beyond the two passages cited above—Ps-J Gen 16:2–3 and 21:14— a significant number of additional references and allusions to Hagar as a slavegirl appear subsequent to the episode of her emancipation. This conflict, moreover, appears on various compositional and literary levels in the narrative—Hagar is referred to as a slavegirl both by the narrator and by the characters, and both in the non-expanded text

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the Pentateuchal Aramaic Targumim,” 132, n. 30; Komlosh, המקרא באור התרגום, 208–16; Moses Aberbach, “Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Onkelos,” *Journal of Hebraic Studies* 1 (1969): 13–24; idem, “Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets,” *Hebrew Abstracts* 15 (1974): 89–90; and Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah*, 41.

<sup>510</sup> See also similar expansions at Ps-J Gen 30:4–21 with regard to the patriarch Jacob and Rachel's slavegirl Bilhah and Leah's slavegirl Zilpah. At 30:4 Rachel grants freedom to Bilhah, and at 30:9 Leah grants freedom to Zilpah so that the two slavegirls could marry Jacob in order to bear children for Rachel and Leah.

and in the expansions of Ps-J.<sup>511</sup> However, the passages that include these allegedly unfitting references to Hagar as a slavegirl also betray the targumist's awareness of Hagar's freed status, either by virtue of their close textual proximity to one another, or by virtue of an allusion made to Hagar's freedom in the same context. A necessary conclusion, then, is that the targumist deliberately allowed this apparent discrepancy to exist in the narrative. The reason for this, as the analysis below demonstrates, is that the targumist perceived Hagar to embody a particular character type, that is, that of a slave; and in the view of the targumist, the newly admitted status of Hagar as a freedwoman did not take away from her essential image as that of a slave.<sup>512</sup>

The improper references to Hagar as a slavegirl begin in the very same episode in which Hagar receives her freedom at Ps-J Gen 16. Immediately after Hagar is granted freedom at 16:2–3, at 16:4 the narrator refers to Sarai as Hagar's mistress (רִיבוֹנְתָא), thereby implying Hagar's status as a slavegirl. Yet following this, at 16:5, Hagar's freedom is once again mentioned as Sarai recounts how she granted freedom to her slavegirl Hagar (חֲרִיטָא אֲמַתִּי). At 16:6, the narrative returns to referring to Hagar as a slavegirl when Sarai complains to Abram about Hagar, and Abram replies to Sarai: “[Y]our slavegirl [אֲמַתִּיךָ] is in your power.” At 16:8, after Hagar flees from Sarai, an angel questions Hagar: “Hagar, slavegirl of Sarai [אֲמַתָּא דְשַׂרַי], where are you coming

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<sup>511</sup> For a discussion of characterization achieved by the voice of the narrator as opposed to the voice of the characters, see Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 54–64; Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 74–78.

<sup>512</sup> For a discussion of how words and actions of characters affect characters, see Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 80.

from...?” In response, Hagar states: “I have fled from Sarai my mistress [שרי ריבונתי].” In other words, the perception that Hagar is a slavegirl appears in the very same context in which Hagar is freed. This strongly suggests that the targumist was well aware of and yet not troubled by the tension that these mixed references to Hagar produced in the pericope.

In the same vein, 21:10–14 continues to refer to Hagar as a slavegirl, even though at 21:14 the text betrays knowledge of the episode in which Hagar had been granted freedom. At 21:10, 12, 13, and 14, Hagar is referred to as a slavegirl (אמתא, אמתך) on six occasions by Sarah, by the Lord, and by the narrator. As regards 21:14, the passage includes both perspectives of Hagar—as that of a slavegirl and of a freedwoman. On the one hand, the targumist, in the voice of the narrator, underscored the fact that Hagar is a slavegirl in that he added an expansion explaining that Abraham tied bread and a skin of water to Hagar’s loins “to show that she was a slavegirl” (לאודועי דאמתא היא). On the other hand, the targumist revealed that he was perfectly aware of the fact that Hagar had already been set free, inasmuch as he included an expansion, again speaking in the voice of the narrator, that Abraham “sent her away with a bill of divorce” (ופטרה בגיטא).<sup>513</sup> The presupposition of this expansion is self-evident—Abraham had at one point been married to Hagar. The literary element in the verse that triggered this expansion is, no doubt, the term וישלחה, which locution is associated with divorce.<sup>514</sup> As it concerns the broader

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<sup>513</sup> Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:264; see also Deut 22:19, 29; 24:1–4; Matt 5:31; 19:3–9.

<sup>514</sup> See also Exodus Rabbah 1.1; and Deut 22:19, 29; 24:1–4; and cf. Exod 11:1–2; Deut 15:13; and Jer 34:9, 16 where the root is used to speak of releasing a slave. For comments on the issue of divorce

narrative, however, Maher astutely remarks that this expansion “fits in with Gen 16:3, which says that Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham as wife.”<sup>515</sup> But part of the storyline in Ps-J Gen 16 is that Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham only *after* she granted freedom to Hagar.<sup>516</sup> In effect, this expansion assumes the tradition that Hagar had been freed. In spite of this—that is, all the while bearing in mind the tradition at 16:1–3 in which Hagar was set free—the targumist expressed no hesitation at 21:10–14 to describe Hagar as a slavegirl.

The literary situation is similar at Ps-J Gen 25:1 and 25:12, in which the targumist, on the one hand, bespeaks knowledge of Hagar’s freed status, while on the other, he exhibits no reluctance to refer to her as a slavegirl. At 25:1, the text identifies Hagar with Keturah, and states that Hagar-Keturah was bound, that is, married, to Abraham previously (playing on the root קט”ר “to bind”: קטורה היא הגר דקטירא ליה).<sup>517</sup>

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in Gen 21, see Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 173; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 147; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 84. For a legal discussion of divorce see b. Git. 86. And for another instance in which the root שלח triggers a discussion of divorce in midrash, see Lauterbach, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, 2:274–75 (on Exod 18:2); and for helpful comments on this passage in the biblical text see Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 196; Plaut, Bamberger, and Hallo, *The Torah*, 508; Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 228–29.

<sup>515</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 75, n. 17.

<sup>516</sup> See Genesis Rabbah 61.4; PRE 30; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:237–39.

<sup>517</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 88, n. 1; and see Genesis Rabbah 61.4; Midrash Tanhuma 5.9 (Townsend, ed., *Midrash Tanhuma*, 1:143). See Rashi on 25:1 in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: בראשית, 1:289 (רפט); Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim’s Classic Commentary: Bereishis*, 123; Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 195; Ben-Mendel, בראשית-עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית, 208 (רח in בראשית); Hirsch, *Hirsch Chumash: Sefer Bereshis*, 542; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:298; 5:232, n. 120; 5:264, n. 309; but where Hagar is not identified with Keturah see Rashbam and Ibn Ezra on 25:1 in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: בראשית, 1:289 (רפט-רצ); Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:265, n. 309; Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 85, n. 1; Alter, *Genesis*, 124, n. 6; Plaut, Bamberger, and Hallo, *The Torah*, 166; and for further discussion on this verse see Gunkel, *Genesis*, 256–57; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 170–72; but see Wellhausen who writes: “Ursprünglich freilich ist Keturah wol nur eine andere Version der mündlichen Überlieferung für Hagar” (Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition des*

Maher, again, sees this expansion to be an allusion to Ps-J Gen 16:1–3, in which Hagar was granted freedom in order to marry Abraham,<sup>518</sup> and Schmerler links this to 21:14 in which Hagar was sent away, that is, divorced, from Abraham, which passage also assumes Hagar's freed status.<sup>519</sup> At the same time, only several verses after 25:1, at 25:12, the narrative yet again refers to Hagar as a slavegirl (אמתא דשרה). In the passages above, then, though Hagar obtains freedom from being a slavegirl, the text of Ps-J continues to refer to her as a slavegirl, while simultaneously suggesting that the targumist who produced the text was aware of the fact that Hagar had been freed.

Only Ps-J Gen 22:1 refers to Hagar as Sarah's slavegirl without making any reference or allusion to Hagar's freedom. In this passage, Isaac and Ishmael quarrel over who is the rightful heir of Abraham. One of the arguments Isaac brings to build his case is that he is the son of Abraham's wife Sarah (בר שרה אינתתיה), while Ishmael is the son of Sarah's slavegirl Hagar (בר הגר אמתא דאימי). The expansion admits no hint of Hagar's ever being freed. This silence, however, appears to be strategic in the light of the literary nature of the passage. The argument issues out of the mouth of the *dramatis persona*, namely Isaac, with the purpose of delivering a particular point—that Isaac is the rightful heir of Abraham; and the narrator, namely the targumist, had every intent to ensure that

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*Hexateuchs und der Historischen Bücher des alten Testaments*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963], 27, n. 1; cf. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 349).

<sup>518</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 88, n. 1.

<sup>519</sup> Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 195; and also Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 180 (פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות); and Genesis Rabbah 61.4.

Isaac prevailed in this exchange.<sup>520</sup> Indeed, it is telling that this passage overlooks not only that Hagar was freed (which appears in the Ps-J expansion of Gen 16:3), but even that Hagar was given to Abraham as a wife (which appears in the Hebrew text of Gen 16:3). In other words, 22:1 seems to leave out certain pieces of information deliberately in order to craft Isaac's speech in a very careful manner to make Isaac's argument as persuasive as possible. This silence about Hagar's freedom, then, does not demonstrate a lack of awareness of her freedom, on the part of the targumist; rather, it shows a resolve to exclude this material from the text in order to achieve a literary purpose. On account of this program in the verse, Ps-J Gen 22:1 does not serve as a suitable example of a passage that contradicts Ps-J Gen 16:3; and, indeed, 22:1 has not been cited by scholars as a text that contradicts 16:3. In the end, aside from 22:1 that presents a particular literary situation, the texts discussed above indicate that the targumist was aware of and at ease with the seemingly incompatible references to Hagar as slave and free.

Shinan, like Maher, considers this contradiction specifically between 16:3 and 21:14, and similar to his abovementioned assessment of 11:29 and 20:12,<sup>521</sup> Shinan suggests that these incompatible passages are able to coexist in Ps-J because they occur at a great distance from one another, that is, a distance of five chapters (using a category we

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<sup>520</sup> On the discourse of the *dramatis personae*, see Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 74–78, and on the silence of the narrator, see Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 80; and see Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 54–64. For a general study of Ps-J Gen 22, see Bruce Chilton, “Genesis in Aramaic: The Example of Chapter 22,” in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, eds. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen, *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 152 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 495–518. For some comments on the translation of Ps-J Gen 22:1, see Lasair, “Targum and Translation: A New Approach to a Classic Problem,” 266–71.

<sup>521</sup> See chapter 5.2.2 on Genesis 11:29 vs. 20:12.

have seen him invoking before as הקשר ארוך “extended context”).<sup>522</sup> But this assessment of the contradiction does not reckon with the fact that this contradiction also appears in adjacent passages, such as 16:2–3 vs. 16:4–8; 21:10–13 vs. 21:14; 25:1 vs. 25:12, or even within the boundaries of the same verse as at 21:14. Shinan’s analysis does not consider the fact that the targumist was aware of and that he presupposed the tradition that Hagar was granted freedom when he made repeated references to her as a slavegirl. The fact of the targumist’s awareness of this discrepancy indicates that the targumist did not perceive the inconsistent references to Hagar to be incompatible.

Moreover, as already noted above, essentially the same alleged contradiction occurs at Ps-J Gen 30:4–21, though in this instance with regard to Rachel and her slavegirl Bilhah, and Leah and her slavegirl Zilpah.<sup>523</sup> At 30:4, Rachel grants freedom to Bilhah so that she could marry Jacob; but a few verses later, at 30:7, Bilhah is referred to as a slavegirl. Similarly, at 30:9 Leah grants freedom to Zilpah, but at 30:10, 12, and 18, Zilpah is referred to as a slavegirl. And in an expansion at 30:21, Leah refers to both Bilhah and Zilpah as slavegirls. In very close textual proximity, in other words, the targumist referred to Bilhah and Zilpah as slavegirls even though they had already been granted freedom. This suggests that in the view of the targumist a character could be

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<sup>522</sup> Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:139–40, n. 86; cf. Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 85, n. 46.

<sup>523</sup> See Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 115, n. 2 where he points out the discrepancy between references to Bilhah and Zilpah as wives (אינות) and as concubines (לחינות) in chapters 30:3–4, 9 and 33:1–2 (cf. 32:23; 33:6; 35:22; and 37:2). See Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן: בראשית*, 227–31; and Ben-Mendel, (בראשית in רנב-רנו) 252–56, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות. For comments on these references to Bilhah and Zilpah in the biblical text of Gen 30:1–21, see Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 208–10; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 325–27; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 386–88; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 473–77; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 244–48.



perceived as both slave and free. These references, therefore—whether to Hagar, Bilhah, or Zilpah—are not contradictions in the mind of the targumist. The characters, rather, maintain a dominant image that represents their essence, and the added feature does not cancel out or take away from who they are as a type.<sup>524</sup>

This perspective of Hagar is clearly discernible in PRE 30. When Abraham hesitates to write a bill of divorce to send Hagar away, God appears to Abraham and states:

אברהם, אי אתה יודע שהיתה שרה ראויה לך לאשה ממעי אמה והיא חברתך ואשת נעורידך. לא נקראת הגר, אשתך, ולא נקראת שרה, שפחתך. שנאמר, אבל שרה אשתך ילדת לך בן.... והגר לא נקראת אשתך אלא שפחתך<sup>525</sup>

Abraham! Do you not know that Sarah was appointed for you as a wife from her mother's womb, and that it is she who is your mate and the wife of your youth? Hagar is not called your wife; and Sarah is not called your slavegirl. As it says, But Sarah, your wife, is about to bear you a son. Hagar is not called your wife, but your slavegirl.

Inasmuch as PRE pronounced this statement in the context of Abraham's writing a bill of divorce for Hagar, it stands to reason that PRE most certainly understood that Hagar was Abraham's wife. However, the point that PRE sought to make in this exclamation was that, though Hagar was Abraham's wife, she was still a slavegirl.<sup>526</sup> Ben-Mendel senses the same tension in Ps-J with regard to Hagar, Bilhah, and Zilpah, and focusing first on Bilhah he explains that she continued to be referred to as a slavegirl because this corresponded with her status, which she demonstrated in her continued submissive

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<sup>524</sup> See Genesis Rabbah 74.13; PRE 36; Menahem ben Solomon ben Isaac, מדרש שכל טוב: בראשית, 150 (קנ); Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:297, nn. 167 and 179.

<sup>525</sup> Aharon, ed., פרקי דרבי אליעזר, 144 (קמד). Cf. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:264.

<sup>526</sup> See Genesis Rabbah 45.6; and Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:239; 5:232, n. 122.

service to Rachel.<sup>527</sup> Shifting his focus to Hagar, then, Ben-Mendel states: “Perhaps, therefore, the angel addressed Hagar as ‘slavegirl of Sarai,’ even though [Sarai] had already granted her freedom, in order to instruct her in proper conduct—that going forward she must behave submissively toward Sarah, that which she had not done in the past.”<sup>528</sup> Similarly, in the view of the targumist, the slavegirl’s right of freedom to marry did not do away with her obligations and her essence of being a slave.

In effect, Ps-J’s continued references to Hagar as a slavegirl do not demonstrate contradiction in the narrative, but the targumist’s perspective that the essence of Hagar’s character is that of a slave, and that this essence cannot be done away with even if she is granted freedom.

### 6.2.2 Genesis 10:8–10 vs. 10:11–12—Is Nimrod Righteous or Wicked?

In the few references that Nimrod receives in Ps-J Genesis, he is nearly always portrayed in the negative light, which is, indeed, in line with the broader Jewish tradition.<sup>529</sup> Bowker explains that the negative image of Nimrod may have emerged from

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<sup>527</sup> Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות (בראשית in רנג) 253.

<sup>528</sup> In the original: ואולי לכן קרא המלאך את הגר “שפחת שרי” אף ששיחררתה כדי להורות לה דרך ישר (Ben-Mendel, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם, מה שלא עשתה כן בעבר [בראשית in רנג] 253, פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות).

<sup>529</sup> For sources that depict Nimrod in a negative light, see Genesis Rabbah 23.7; 37.2–3; 42.4; 63.13; b. Pesah. 94b; b. ‘Erub. 53a; b. Ḥag. 13a; b. Meg. 11a; b. ‘Abod. Zar. 53b; Josephus, *Ant.* 1 §113–14; PRE 11 and 24; Targum Neofiti and Neofiti Marginalia at Gen 10:9; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:177–78 and 318; 5:198–99, n. 77, and p. 276, n. 38. For some discussion of the negative image of Nimrod, see Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: בראשית, 1:133 (קלג); Ralbag in Shurkin, ed., רלב"ג, על התורה (כב) 22; Hirsch, *Hirsch Chumash: Sefer Bereshis*, 255–57; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 179–80; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 47, n. 17; Shinan, אגדתם של מתורגמנים, 1:140–41; Schmerler, בראשית יונתן: אהבת יהונתן, 94, who explains the exegetical reasoning for relating Nimrod to sin and rebellion; Kugel, *Bible as It Was*, 123–27; and Hayward, “Inconsistencies and Contradictions,” 45–48. For some analysis of Nimrod by critical commentators, see Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 514–17; Wenham,

“the description of him in Genesis as ‘mighty’, but was made more specific by deriving his name, Nimrod, from *marad*, ‘he rebelled.’”<sup>530</sup> Commenting on the names of biblical characters, Sternberg remarks: “A person’s name may be the essence of his being.... [T]o bear a name is to assume an identity.”<sup>531</sup> In this line of thinking, evidently, Ps-J Gen 10:8–9 refers to Nimrod as a “mighty sinner and rebel,” and 11:28 records how Nimrod cast Abram into a furnace, which episode is remembered at 14:1 and 16:5. However, a brief expansion at 10:11–12 depicts Nimrod in an unusually positive light.<sup>532</sup> The passage describes how Nimrod separated himself from the generation that tried to build the Tower of Babel (i.e., דרא דפלוגתא “the generation of division”).<sup>533</sup> Moreover, on account of this pious act, Nimrod is rewarded by God with new territory to reign over. Taking note of the two antithetical presentations of Nimrod in this pericope, Levine writes, “In 10:9 Nimrod

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*Genesis 1–15*, 222; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 73–74; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 207; and Ephraim A. Speiser, “In Search of Nimrod,” *Eretz-Israel* 5, Mazar Volume (1958): 32–36.

<sup>530</sup> Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 179–80; see also Hayward, “Inconsistencies and Contradictions,” 53.

<sup>531</sup> Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 331; see also Isaac Heinemann, דרכי האגדה, 110–12.

<sup>532</sup> For the tradition that imagines Nimrod in a positive light, see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:198–99, n. 77; and Salomo Rappaport, *Agada und Exegese bei Flavius Josephus* (Vienna: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1930), 98–99, n. 72. *Jubilees* 10:18–26 describes the Tower of Babel story without any mention of Nimrod in the episode (James C. Vanderkam, trans., *The Book of Jubilees*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 511, Scriptorum Aethiopicum 88 [Louvain: In Aedibus E. Peeters, 1989], 61–63). Ephrem of Syria describes Nimrod as a hunter who brought the choicest offerings to God (Edward G. Mathews, Jr., trans., *The Armenian Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Ephrem the Syrian*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 573, Scriptorum Armeniaci 24 [Louvain: In Aedibus Peeters, 1998], 75). See R.-M. Tonneau, *Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarii*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 72 (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste L. Durbecq, 1955), 65–66 (section VIII). Cassuto remarks that “When people wanted to pay the highest tribute to anyone for his prowess in the chase, they used to say of him that he was *like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord*,” which implies here a positive memory of Nimrod (italics original; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. Israel Abrahams [Jerusalem: Central Press, 1964], 2:202).

<sup>533</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 48, n. 21; Hayward, “Inconsistencies and Contradictions,” 47; and see Gen 11; cf. Deut 32:8.

is described as the arch-rebel against God's rule, whereas at 10:11 he is immortalized as the outstandingly righteous individualist of his generation."<sup>534</sup> The passage reads:

**Genesis 10:8–12**

MT 8 וְכוֹשׁ יֵלֵד אֶת־נִמְרֹד הוּא הֵחֵל לְהִזְוֹת גְּבַר בְּאַרְצָא: <sup>9</sup> הוּא־הָיָה גְבַר־צֵיד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה  
 עַל־כֵּן יֵאמָר כְּנִמְרֹד גְּבוֹר צֵיד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: <sup>10</sup> וְהָיָה רֵאשִׁית מַמְלַכְתּוֹ בְּבָבֶל וְאַרְדּוּ  
 וְאַכַּד וְכַלְנֶה בְּאַרְצָא שְׁנַעֲרָא: <sup>11</sup> מִן־הָאָרֶץ הַהִיא יָצָא אַשּׁוּר וַיְבִן אֶת־נִיְנִוָּה וְאֶת־  
 רְחֹבֹת עִיר וְאֶת־כַּלַּח: <sup>12</sup> וְאֶת־רֶסֶן בֵּין נִיְנִוָּה וּבֵין כַּלַּח הוּא הָעִיר הַגְּדֹלָה:

NRSV 8 Cush became the father of Nimrod; he was the first on earth to become a mighty warrior. <sup>9</sup> He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD."  
<sup>10</sup> The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar. <sup>11</sup> From that land he went into Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, and <sup>12</sup> Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.

Ps-J 8 וְכוֹשׁ אוֹלִיד יֵת נִמְרוֹד הוּא שְׂרִי לְמִיּהוּי גִיבֵר בְּחִיטָאָה וּלְמִרְדָּא קִדְם יֵי בִּארְעָא  
<sup>9</sup> הוּא הוּוּה גִיבֵר מִרְוֹדָא קִדְם יֵי בְּגִין כֵּן יֵתֵאמֵר מִן יוֹמָא דֵּאִיתְבְּרִי עֵלְמָא לֹא הוּוּה  
 כְּנִמְרוֹד גִיבֵר בְּצִידָא וּמִרְוֹדָא קִדְם יֵי <sup>10</sup> וְהוּוּת שִׁירוּי מַלְכוּתֵיהָ בְּבַל רַבְתִּי וְהִדְס  
 וְנִצְיָבִין וְקִטְסִיפּוֹן בִּארְעָא דְפּוֹנְטוֹס <sup>11</sup> מִן אֶרְעָא הַהִיא נִפְק נִמְרוֹד וּמִלְךְ בִּאתוֹר  
 דְּלֵא בְעָא לְמִיּהוּי בְעִיטָת דְּרָא דְפְלוֹגְתָא וְשִׁבְק אַרְבַּע קוֹרֵיין אֵילִין וַיְהִי לֵיהָ יֵי  
 בְּגִין כֵּן אֵתְרָא וּבִנָא אַרְבַּע קוֹרֵיין אוּחְרַנִין יֵת נִיְנוּה וַיֵּת פְּלִטִיאַת קֶרְתָּא וַיֵּת חֲדִיּוֹת  
<sup>12</sup> וַיֵּת תְּלָסֵר דְּמִתְבְּנִיא בִּינֵי נִיְנוּה וּבִינֵי חֲדִיּוֹת אֵיהִי קֶרְתָּא רַבְתִּי

Ps-J 8 Kush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty *sinner and rebel* on earth *before the Lord*. <sup>9</sup> He was a mighty *rebel* before the Lord. Therefore it is said: "From the day the world was created there has not been a mighty hunter *and rebel* like Nimrod before the Lord."  
<sup>10</sup> The beginning of his kingdom was Babylon the Great, Edessa, Nisibis, and Ctesiphon, in the land of Pontus. <sup>11</sup> From that land Nimrod went forth and ruled over Assyria, because he did not wish to participate in the scheme of the generation of the Division. So he left those four cities. Therefore the Lord gave him [another] place and he built four other

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<sup>534</sup> Levine, "Internal Contradictions in Targum Jonathan Ben Uzziel to Genesis," 118. See also idem, "מקורות סותרים בתרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל," 37; idem, Levine, *Aramaic Version of the Bible*, 35; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 48, n. 22; Shinan entertains the possibility that this is a contradiction when he writes: (והוא בכללם!) לפסוק 9 (Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:141). Ginzberg implies this as well in Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:213–14, n. 36. Neofiti Marginalia and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion; the interpretative renderings of Onqelos and Neofiti will be noted below.

*cities, Nineveh, Streets-of-the-City, Hadiath,*<sup>12</sup> and *Talsar, which is built between Nineveh and Hadiath; that is the great city.*

A close look at this pericope demonstrates that, in fact, the negative image of Nimrod at vv. 8–9 is not done away with by Nimrod’s positive act at vv. 11–12. To the contrary, this noble deed both presupposes and affirms Nimrod’s negative character type.

The targumist’s incorporation of the positive depiction of Nimrod into this pericope proves to be an exegetical move on the part of the targumist to bring literary coherence to the pericope, which includes both acknowledging and reinforcing Nimrod’s wicked character. The textual difficulty issues out of a remark at verse 10: the verse states that Babel, Erech, and Accad were merely the beginning of Nimrod’s reign, **רַאשִׁית** מַמְלַכְתּוֹ, on account of which the targumist, evidently, inferred that Nimrod must have had a subsequent reign, since the narrative would otherwise appear incomplete. The difficulty, however, is that the narrative does not seem to proceed to describe Nimrod’s subsequent reign, at least not explicitly. Commenting on the biblical text, Cassuto writes: “[A]fter reading the previous verse [i.e., v. 10] about the *beginning* of Nimrod’s kingdom, we expect to be told something about the sequel to this beginning.”<sup>535</sup> And in

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<sup>535</sup> Italics original. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 2:203. In their notes on *Onkelos* 10:11, Drazin and Wagner observe that Babylonia “was the *first* kingdom Nimrod founded,” although they make nothing of the implication this has for Nimrod having an additional kingdom (italics mine; Drazin and Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Genesis*, 54, n. 10). So also Ramban in Katzenellenbogen, ed., *תורת חיים: בראשית*, 1:134 (קלד); the view is considered in Schmerler, *בראשית*; אהבת יהונתן; 96; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 450; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 517. Westermann, moreover, disagrees with Benno Jacob, who translates the phrase **רַאשִׁית מַמְלַכְתּוֹ** as “der Gipfel seines Königtums” “the *culmination* of his kingdom” (italics mine; Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora: Genesis*, 282). Westermann contends that this alters the meaning of **רַאשִׁית** and is “very unlikely” (Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 517–18). See Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 211, who translates **רַאשִׁית מַמְלַכְתּוֹ** as “the prime of his kingdom” and takes Ashur to be the subject of the verb; however, he admits that the term **רַאשִׁית** “has both chronological and qualitative significance” and concedes that from a syntactical

the words of Skinner: “ראשית (v. 10) requires an antithesis.”<sup>536</sup> In order to resolve this textual issue, the targumist forged an explicit literary link between vv. 8–10 and vv. 11–12, so that at vv. 8–10 the narrative would describe Nimrod’s first kingdom, and at vv. 11–12 the narrative would describe Nimrod’s subsequent kingdom. Thus, Ps-J’s attempt at rendering the narrative more coherently has Nimrod first reigning in Babylon, and subsequently in Assyria.<sup>537</sup>

This literary link is achieved by the targumist by virtue of two textual additions. First, the targumist introduced the name Nimrod into v. 11 to resolve the ambiguity regarding the subject of v. 11 and to indicate that it is still Nimrod who is the subject of discussion in the narrative.<sup>538</sup> The Hebrew clause at v. 11 מן־הָאָרֶץ הַהוּא יָצָא אֲשׁוּר allows this rendering of the verse inasmuch as it leaves the identity of the subject unspecified. That is, the Hebrew text does not specify as to who went out from “that land,” Ashur or, as potentially implied in the text, Nimrod. Should the verse read: “Out of that land Ashur went out...” or “Out of that land he [i.e., Nimrod] went out to Ashur...”?<sup>539</sup> Grossfeld points out that “The meaning of the Hebrew is ambiguous,” explaining that from the

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perspective, Nimrod could also be understood as the subject (Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 223–24). Also, see Speiser, *Genesis*, 67, n. 10 on translating ראשית.

<sup>536</sup> Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 211, n. 11.

<sup>537</sup> See Speiser, “In Search of Nimrod,” 33.

<sup>538</sup> On the disambiguation of pronouns, see Longacre and Hwang, *Holistic Discourse Analysis*, 84.

<sup>539</sup> See GKC §118d and f, which identify a location, in this case, Ashur, as an accusative of place (“he went out to Ashur”). So, e.g., Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 515–16; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 451; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 2:203; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 74, n. 11; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 211; but not Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 211; and see LXX, which also takes Ashur as the subject: ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐκείνης ἐξῆλθεν Ἀσσοῦρ.

point of view of grammar the subject could be either Ashur or Nimrod.<sup>540</sup> The implications, however, are significant: if the subject is Ashur, then the narrative introduces a new hero at v. 11 and the events described at vv. 11–12 do not apply to Nimrod, which means that the narrative appears incomplete; but if the subject is Nimrod, then the biographical narrative of Nimrod continues from vv. 8–10 into vv. 11–12, and everything described at vv. 11–12 applies to Nimrod, in which case the narrative of Nimrod’s reign proves to be complete. To make his understanding of this passage absolutely clear, the targumist included the name Nimrod in his translation: מן ארעא נמרוד “from that land Nimrod went out...”; and in this way, the targumist forged explicit continuity between vv. 8–10 and vv. 11–12.

Second, the targumist reinforced the literary link between vv. 8–10 and 11–12 by underscoring the point that the reign described at vv. 11–12 is Nimrod’s *second* reign, that is, one that is subsequent to the preceding reign mentioned at v. 10. The targumist achieved this by adding the word אוחרנין “another” at v. 11 to qualify the kingdom that Nimrod built in Assyria. Thus, the text states: ... מן ארעא ההיא נפק נמרוד ומלך באתור ... ובנא ארבע קוריין אוחרנין “From that land, Nimrod went out and ruled in Assyria ... and he built *another* four cities.” In other words, in the view of the targumist *another* four cities

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<sup>540</sup> Grossfeld, *Onqelos to Genesis*, 60, n. 3. So also Le Déaut and Robert, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 138, n. 27; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 74, n. 11; Hayward, “Inconsistencies and Contradictions,” 47–48; Drazin and Wagner explain this as follows: “Our targumist [Onqelos] renders Ashur as *atura’ah*, ‘to Ashur,’ informing us that the verse should not be interpreted ‘and from the land, Ashur went forth,’ but ‘and from the land, he [Nimrod] went forth to Ashur’” (Drazin and Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Genesis*, 54, n. 11).

שירוי / ראשית ממלכתו (ארבע קוריין אחרנין) stand in direct relation to Nimrod's *first* reign in Assyria. The second kingdom in Assyria is perceived with reference to the first kingdom in Babylon. In this way, these two interpretive additions—the insertion of the name Nimrod and of the qualifier אחרנין—resolve the textual difficulty of an incomplete biographical narrative of Nimrod: the two additions establish that Nimrod first had a kingdom in Babylon and that this same Nimrod later had a kingdom in Assyria.

This very interpretation, however, produced for the targumist a broader narrational and moral question: How is it that wicked Nimrod could be permitted (by God) to proceed from his wicked reign in Babylon (vv. 8–10) to yet another reign in Assyria (vv. 11–12)? After all, the targumist himself clearly indicated at vv. 8–9 that Nimrod was a sinner and a rebel. To answer this question, the targumist added the explanatory comment that Nimrod was granted another reign because he left his land inasmuch as “*he did not wish to participate in the scheme of the generation of the division*” (דלא בעא (למיהוי בעיטת דרא דפלוגתא). In other words, to provide a warrant for wicked Nimrod's additional reign, the targumist attributed to him a pious act on account of which God rewarded him.<sup>541</sup> However, by introducing this explanatory comment, the targumist acknowledged and even reinforced the view that Nimrod was wicked. For the very purpose for which this addition was introduced into the text was to explain how it is that a wicked ruler could be handed an additional reign. The expansion, therefore, is two-

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<sup>541</sup> Cf. the description of the 55-year reign of Manasseh in 2 Kgs 21, and the explanation 2 Chron 33 offers as to why God allowed Manasseh, a wicked king, to reign for such a lengthy period of time—because Manasseh repented (see Urbach, *Sages*, 465); see also 1 Kings 21:20–29 with regard to Ahab.



edged: on the one hand, it generates tension with Nimrod's wicked character in that it attributes to Nimrod an unlikely pious act; on the other hand, it affirms Nimrod's wicked character in that the sole function of this pious act is to explain how it is that *wicked* Nimrod received an additional kingdom.

Responding to this tension between the wicked and the pious Nimrod, Ginzberg surmises that Ps-J might contain here a mistake. He writes: "In the view of the fact that Targum Yerushalmi [Ps-J], in a preceding verse [10:9], described Nimrod as a very wicked man, the sentence *חדיית בלא בעי ...* is very likely to be regarded as a later insertion ... and refers not to Nimrod but to Asshur."<sup>542</sup> Shinan too gives credence to this suggestion when he writes: "There are grounds to suppose that Ps-J has committed a blunder here in that it attributed to Nimrod what was actually, and originally, intended for Ashur."<sup>543</sup> Maher expresses the same sentiment more concretely, appealing even to Genesis Rabbah 37.4 for support: "Since *Gen. R.* 37,4 on Gen 10:11 says that Asshur dissociated himself from the scheme of those who planned to build the tower and that God gave him a new land, Ps.-J., by mistake, may have been applying to Nimrod what is said of Asshur in the *Gen. R. text.*"<sup>544</sup> The text of Genesis Rabbah 37.4 reads as follows:

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<sup>542</sup> Italics mine. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 5:213–14, n. 36. See also Ginzberg, "Die Haggada bei den Kirchenvätern und in der apokryphischen Litteratur," 466–67.

<sup>543</sup> In the original: יש רגליים להשערה, שת"י נשתבש ויחס לנמרוד מה שמכוון באמת ובמקורו לאשור (Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:141). Similar is the case with Rieder and Zamir, who write: אולי צ"ל אשור, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה: (Rieder and Zamir, *שלא רצה להיות בעצת נמרוד למרד בה' ולבנות את המגדל*, בראשית–שמות, 25, n. 11 [in the section with their Hebrew translation of the text]). Also, see Ze'ev Y. Gottlieb, "תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה," *Melilah* 1 (1943): 29, n. 16; and Rappaport, *Agada und Exegese bei Flavius Josephus*, 98–99, n. 72.

<sup>544</sup> Italics mine. Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 48, n. 22.

מִן הָאָרֶץ הַהִיא יֵצֵא אַשּׁוּר מִן הָעֵינָה הַהִיא יֵצֵא אַשּׁוּר, כִּיּוֹן שְׂרָאִם בְּאִיִּם לְחַלֵּק עַל הַקֶּבֶ"ה  
פִּינָה מֵאַרְצוֹ, אָמַר לוֹ הַקֶּבֶ"ה אֶתְּךָ יֵצֵאת לְךָ מֵאַרְבַּע חַיִּיד שְׂאֵנִי נוֹתֵן לְךָ אַרְבַּע וַיִּבֶן אֶת נִינּוּה  
וְאֶת רְחוֹבוֹת עִיר וְאֶת כַּלַּח וְאֶת רֶסֶן. תִּלְתַּסֵּר.<sup>545</sup>

*Out of that land Ashur went out.* It was from that scheme that Ashur went away. When he saw them coming to wage war against the Holy One, blessed be He, he turned away from his land. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: You went out from four [cities], by your life, I am giving you four [cities]. So he built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, and Resen, that is, Talsar.<sup>546</sup>

According to this midrash it is Ashur—not Nimrod—who dissociates himself from the plan to build the Tower of Babel, and it is Ashur who consequently receives the reward of reigning over the four cities. However, the view that the targumist of Ps-J confused Nimrod with Ashur does not satisfy in that it does not explain *how* the targumist could have made such a mistake of identity confusion. In contrast to this, the analysis of the passage above suggests that rather than demonstrating inattentiveness or carelessness, the targumist was engaged in careful exegesis of the text. The targumist perceived an appearance of an incomplete biographical narrative of Nimrod—as regards his beginning and subsequent reigns—and, therefore, to render a narrative that was more obviously complete, the targumist deliberately interpreted the ambiguous subject at v. 11 “*he* went out” to refer to Nimrod. These are indications of deliberate interpretation, not a mistake.

Differing with Ginzberg, Shinan, and Maher, Hayward contends that the targumist did not make an error here, but that he consciously incorporated into his rendition of the text “a very old understanding of this verse, which was partly favourable

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<sup>545</sup> Theodor-Albeck, מדרש בראשית רבא, 37.4 (לז"ד), 1:347. Cf., similarly, *Midrash Tehilim* 118:11.

<sup>546</sup> Cf. translation in Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 1:297. Hayward explains that the scheme referred to is “the proposal to build the Tower of Babel” (Hayward, “Inconsistencies and Contradictions,” 47).

to Nimrod.”<sup>547</sup> He draws attention to the fact that this perspective is also true of *Jubilees* 10:18–26 (which excises Nimrod from the Tower of Babel narrative) and of Ephrem of Syria (who mentions Nimrod in a positive light).<sup>548</sup> He further remarks that this favorable view of Nimrod is also implicit in Ps-J in that “PJ altogether fails to attribute the plan to build the Tower of Babel to Nimrod,” an act that Jewish tradition elsewhere does, indeed, ascribe to him.<sup>549</sup> One might add to Hayward’s supply of evidence here that the Hebrew Bible itself at Micah 5:5 considers Assyria to be the land of Nimrod, which harmonizes well with and may have also inspired the targumist to associate Nimrod with Assyria at Gen 10:11.<sup>550</sup> In short, exegetical and textual evidence strongly suggests that it is unnecessary to conclude that the targumist’s introduction of Nimrod into this pericope is the result of the confusion of Nimrod with Ashur.

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<sup>547</sup> Hayward, “Inconsistencies and Contradictions,” 48. Schmerler also sees the targumic text to be accurate and suggests that Nimrod repented: ה"ה וגתחרט על מעשיו נראה מדבריו שחזר בו נמרוד מלחלוק על ה"ה “According to the text, it appears that Nimrod backtracked from rebelling against the Blessed One and that he regretted his deeds that brought [the people] to the state [of rebellion against God]” (Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 96). For reference to a tradition that Nimrod believed in God, see Rappaport, *Agada und Exegese bei Flavius Josephus*, 98–99, n. 72.

<sup>548</sup> Hayward, “Inconsistencies and Contradictions,” 48. For *Jubilees* 10:18–26, see Vanderkam, trans., *The Book of Jubilees*, 61–63. For Ephrem of Syria, see Mathews, trans., *The Armenian Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Ephrem the Syrian*, 75. See Tonneau, *Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarii*, 65–66 (section VIII). Onkelos has: מן ארעא ההוא נפק אתוראה ובנא... (see Drazin and Wagner, *Onkelos on the Torah: Understanding the Biblical Text—Genesis*, 54, n. 11). Neofiti has: מן ארעא ההיא נפק אתוריא ובנה... (see McNamara, *Neofiti 1: Genesis*, 82, at Gen 10:11: “From that land the Assyrian came out...”; Le Déaut and Robert, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 138, at Gen 10:11: “De ce pays sortit l’Assyrie...”; and Alejandro Díez Macho, *Neophyti 1: Targum Palestinense Ms de la Biblioteca Vaticana* [Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1968], 1:54: “De esa tierra salió Asiria y construyó...”).

<sup>549</sup> Hayward, “Inconsistencies and Contradictions,” 48. See PRE 24; and Kugel, *Bible as It Was*, 123–27, esp. 125–26.

<sup>550</sup> See recognition of this connection to Micah 5:5 in Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 515–16; Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 2:203; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 451; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 223–24; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 73, 74, n. 11; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 211, n. 11.

Thus, while this pericope does describe a positive event in Nimrod’s life, the comment is not at all overlooking or negating in any way the tradition that Nimrod was wicked. To the contrary, this comment is grounded in the fact that Nimrod was a wicked character. Ben-Mendel expresses this very perspective when he states: “Accordingly, this [verse] implies a marvelous point, that although [Nimrod] was a great rebel, as is noted above, still the audacious notion to build a tower in order to make war against the heavens was inconceivable to him.”<sup>551</sup> In other words, Ben-Mendel recognizes that Ps-J’s rendition encompasses both aspects of Nimrod at vv. 11–12—his wickedness and his piety. The pious action of Nimrod is an exception in Nimrod’s life that simultaneously happens to recognize and reaffirm the wicked character type of Nimrod. Consequently, the targumist was able to introduce this positive depiction of Nimrod at vv. 11–12 next to the negative image of Nimrod at vv. 8–9 and in other parts of Genesis and still preserve coherence in the narrative.<sup>552</sup>

### 6.2.3 Genesis 32:12—Is Esau Righteous or Wicked?

The depiction of Esau in Ps-J proves to be a similar case. While the targumist exhibited effort to depict Esau as a wicked character, at Gen 32:12 the targumist added an expansion in which he attributed to Esau an exceptionally praiseworthy deed—in contrast to Jacob, Esau is shown to have been concerned with the honor of his father Isaac. Ben-

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<sup>551</sup> In the original: ויוצא לפי"ז דבר פלא שעל אף היותו המורד הגדול כנ"ל מ"מ עד כדי כך לבנות מגדל (Ben-Mendel, בראשית-שמות, להלחם בעליונים לא היה בדעתו תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן; בראשית-שמות, 118 [בראשית in קיח]).

<sup>552</sup> For a brief discussion of complex characters who are depicted as pious and yet whose character sometimes comes into question on account of their less than pious actions, see Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 345–46.

Mendel observes this unlikely positive representation of Esau, stating that Jacob needed deliverance from Esau “who demonstrated virtue with the degree of honor he rendered to his father and mother, being that he was concerned with this matter numerous years.”<sup>553</sup>

Though Ben-Mendel does not explicitly designate this expansion as inconsistent with the remainder of the portrayal of Esau in Ps-J, he does take note of the particularly positive light in which Esau is presented here.<sup>554</sup> The passage reads:

**Genesis 32:12 [Eng. v. 11]**

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|------|--|
| MT   | הַצִּילֵנִי נָא מִיַּד אָחִי מִיַּד עֵשָׂו כִּי־יִרְאֶה אֶנְכִּי אֹתוֹ פְּוִי־בּוֹא וְהִפְנִי אִם עַל־בָּנָיִם:  |
| NRSV | Deliver me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him; he may come and kill us all, the mothers with the children.  |
| Ps-J | שיזבני כדון מן יד אחי רבא מן יד עשו ארום מסתפי אנא מיניה דהוא עסק באיקרא דאבוי דילמא ייתי וימחיני אימא על בנייא  |
| Ps-J | Deliver me now from the hand of my <i>older</i> brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him—for <i>he has been concerned with the honor of his father</i> —lest he come and smite us, the mother with the children. |

Outside of this instance at 32:12 (and Ps-J Deut 2:4–8 in which context this tradition is repeated; and cf. 2:12, 29), the negative depiction of Esau is uncompromising. Even a non-exhaustive list of the qualities ascribed to Esau in Ps-J demonstrates the targumist’s efforts to establish Esau as a negative character. A selection of these qualities—some of which are direct translations from the Hebrew while others are

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<sup>553</sup> In the original: ועוד [יעקוב היה זקוק להצלה] מיד עשו שהצטיין במדת כיבוד אב ואם ועסק בה זה (Ben-Mendel, בראשית-שמות, כמה שנים [בראשית in רעה] 275, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות, Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion.

<sup>554</sup> Ska classifies Esau as a “flat” character who is defined by his “impulsive” character (Ska, “*Our Fathers Have Told Us*”: *Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 84). For a critical study of chapters 32–33, see Gunkel, *Genesis*, 342–55; Speiser, *Genesis*, 252–61; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 404–17; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 502–31; and for the division of the passages into sources, see Friedman, *Bible with Sources Revealed*, 84–87.

expansions—includes Esau being portrayed as a killer, murderer, deceiver, idolater, ravisher of women, nonbeliever, rebel, subordinate to Jacob, threat to Jacob, and as one who ultimately loses his head at the edge of a sword (see Ps-J Gen 25:27–34; 26:34–35; 27:29–46; 28:6–9; 29:17; 30:25; 32:9–12; 33:1–4; 35:1, 7, 22; 45:28; 50:13; Ps-J Num 7:87; and Ps-J Deut 33:2).<sup>555</sup> Indeed, at Ps-J Gen 50:13, Esau is introduced in the verse with the unequivocal epithet “Esau the wicked” עֵשָׂו רָשִׁיעַ. This characterization is significant, for as Bar-Efrat explains, “Direct characterization often embodies an element of judgment. If a person is defined as being righteous, wicked, wise or foolish, this constitutes both characterization and judgment.”<sup>556</sup> This negative evaluation of Esau is, therefore, presented in the narrative forthrightly.

Moreover, even the positive portrayal of Esau at 32:12 appears in a portion of the narrative in which Esau is depicted as wicked. The entire narrative recounted in chapters 32–33 in Ps-J imagines Esau as a threat to Jacob. Capturing this sense already in the biblical text, Westermann remarks that in this episode Jacob believes that “He is faced with the threat of war in which the opposition is ‘struck down.’”<sup>557</sup> Accordingly, Jacob occupies himself with preparing gifts for Esau to appease him, with developing a strategy to defend his camp from destruction, and with appealing to God for protection. Ps-J preserves and amplifies this perspective. Indeed, at the point of their meeting at Ps-J Gen 33:4, Esau executes an attack on Jacob: “Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and

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<sup>555</sup> For suggestions that the negative portrayal of Esau is a polemic against Christianity, see Levine, “British Museum Aramaic Additional MS 27031,” 8–9. On the identification of Esau with Rome and with Edom, see Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, 139–45.

<sup>556</sup> Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 53.

<sup>557</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 509.

inclined upon his neck and *bit* him” ורהט עשו לקדמותיה וגפיף ליה ואתרכין על צווריה ונשיך”<sup>558</sup> And at the end of the narrative at 33:16, a somewhat enigmatic expansion states that “*a miracle was performed for Jacob*, and Esau returned that day on his way to *Gabla*” ואיתעביד ניסא ליעקב ותב ביומא ההוא עשו לאורחיה לגבלא” which expansion, at the least, implies that the departure of Esau conveys a favorable turn of events.<sup>559</sup> Kugel summarizes that in early Jewish literature “[Esau] became utterly wicked, a crafty, bloodthirsty embodiment of evil.”<sup>560</sup>

This brief survey of the negative depiction of Esau in Ps-J underscores the apparent conflict that the expansion at 32:12 with a favorable portrayal of Esau produces within the narrative. How is it that in every other case the targumist took pains to accentuate the unfavorable image of Esau, while at 32:12 the targumist presented Esau in a positive light without any qualification? As an answer to this query, analysis of this expansion reveals that even this expansion presupposes and reinforces Esau’s utterly

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<sup>558</sup> See Genesis Rabbah 78.9; Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim’s Classic Commentary: Bereishis*, 307–8; see Speiser, *Genesis*, 259 who notes that there is a “Midrashic wordplay—*nšq* ‘kiss’ : *nšk* ‘bite’”; and see Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 525 on the biblical presentation of the reunion between Jacob and Esau, in which Esau is presented favorably; and Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 229.

<sup>559</sup> For a brief discussion of this enigmatic expansion, see Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:56. See Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 527 on the biblical presentation of the peaceful parting of Jacob and Esau at Gen 33:16.

<sup>560</sup> Kugel, *Bible as It Was*, 202, and see 199–214; see also idem, *How to Read the Bible*, 133–51. For more on Esau, see Genesis Rabbah 61.7; 63.10, 12, 13; 65.4, 22; 67.2; 70.16; 73.7; 75.5; 76.2; 78.15; Exodus Rabbah 1.1; b. B. Bathra 16b; 123a-b; b. Meg. 16b–17a; PRE 24; 39; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:316, 318; 1:369; 5:276, n. 38; 5:300, n. 203; Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן: בראשית*, 208, 255; Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:55–56; Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 113, n. 8; Ernest G. Clarke, ed. and trans., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy*, The Aramaic Bible 5B, eds. Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998), 12, n. 3; Le Déaut, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 328, n. 15; Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah*, 2:567; Levine, “British Museum Aramaic Additional MS 27031,” 8–9.

despicable personage, despite the apparent noble conduct attributed to him in the passage. Again, therefore, the discussion below shows that the targumist imagined the character to be such that he could be thoroughly wicked and yet carry out a noble act without compromising his wicked persona.

The expansion is, once again, introduced in order to resolve a particular literary issue in the Hebrew text. The issue at 32:12 is the essence of Jacob's fear. In the light of the fact that Isaac blessed Jacob at 27:29 (esp. see Ps-J), granting him dominance over Esau, and inasmuch as at 28:14–15 God promised to Jacob that he would protect him, the question arises: What generated in Jacob such great terror in meeting Esau? Following Genesis Rabbah 76.2, the targumist found an answer to the question in the tradition that Jacob's fear was related to the fact that Esau, rather than Jacob, demonstrated concern for the honor of his father for a period of twenty years while Jacob was away in Paddan-Aram. Genesis Rabbah 76.2 explains:

אמר כל השנים הללו ישב בארץ ישראל תאמר שהוא בא עלי מכוח ישיבת ארץ ישראל, כל השנים הללו הוא כיבד את אביו שמא בא עלי מכוח כיבוד אב ואם<sup>561</sup>  
He thought: All these years [Esau] dwelt in the land of Israel; perhaps he is about to come against me by virtue of his having dwelt in the land of Israel? All these years he honored his father; perhaps he is about to come against me by virtue of his having honored his father and mother?<sup>562</sup>

In other words, Ps-J makes sure to point out that Jacob's fear was not ill-founded or irrational: Jacob's fear stemmed from Jacob's awareness of and sensitivity to the issue of merit.<sup>563</sup> As the midrash records, Jacob understood that Esau acquired merit for honoring

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<sup>561</sup> Theodor-Albeck, *Midrash Rabbah*, 76.2 (עו"ב), 2:898.

<sup>562</sup> Cf. translation in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:702.

<sup>563</sup> On merit, see Urbach, *Sages*, 483–511. And for a lengthy midrash on Esau's pious conduct with respect to Isaac that gained Esau the reward of a land inheritance, see Deuteronomy Rabbah 1.15.



his father Isaac; therefore, Jacob feared that this merit would empower Esau to prevail against him.

But precisely this same remark that attributes merit to Esau simultaneously presupposes and underscores the utter wickedness of Esau. That is, the tradition imagines that Esau would apply his acquired merit to fulfill his earlier plot to kill Jacob for appropriating his blessing at Gen 27. Freedman and Simon explain that Jacob thought that “perhaps [Esau’s] merit for having done these things will assist him.”<sup>564</sup> And Maher writes: “Jacob was afraid that Esau, who had acquired merit by serving his father, might now prevail over his returning brother.”<sup>565</sup> Indeed, after discussing Esau’s noble conduct of honoring Isaac, Genesis Rabbah 76.2 proceeds to recall Esau’s plot to wait for Isaac to die and then to execute his plan to kill Jacob. Genesis Rabbah 76.2 reads:

אמר כך אמר יקרבו ימי אבל אבי ואהרגה את יעקב אחי (בראשית כז מא) תאמר שמא מת  
אותו זקן<sup>566</sup>

[Jacob] thought: Thus he said, “Let the days of mourning for my father approach, and then I shall kill Jacob, my brother.” Perhaps the aged man is dead?<sup>567</sup>

This plot of Esau’s to murder Jacob after the death of Isaac is even more pronounced at Ps-J Gen 27:41:

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<sup>564</sup> Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:702, n. 2.

<sup>565</sup> Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 113, n. 8; see also Clarke, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Deuteronomy*, 12, n. 3; so also Schmerler: פ׳ שהוא עסק בכיבוד אביו. והמצוה הזאת תעמוד לו ותגרום שיהרגני (Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 248). For additional references to merit in Ps-J, see Ps-J Gen 3:24; 4:8; 15:1; 17; 38:25; 39:10; 49:1; Ps-J Exod 33:13; Ps-J Lev 26:43; Ps-J Num 12:16; Ps-J Deut 7:10. See also Urbach, *Sages*, 436–44; Melinek, “The Doctrine of Reward and Punishment in Biblical and Early Rabbinic Writings,” 275–90, esp. 287.

<sup>566</sup> Theodor-Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 76.2 (עו״ב), 2:898.

<sup>567</sup> Cf. translation in Freedman and Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2:702.

ואמר עשו בליביה לית אנא עביד היכמא דעבד קין דקטל ית הבל בחיי אבוי והדר אבוי  
ואוליד ית שת ברם מתעבב אנא עד זמן דימטון יומי אבלא דמיתת אבא ובכנ אנא קטיל ית  
יעקב אחי ואנא משתכח קטול וירית

And Esau said to himself, “*I will not do as Cain did, who killed Abel while his father was alive; but his father then begot Seth. Rather, I will restrain myself until the time when the days of mourning for the death of my father come, and then I will kill Jacob, my brother, and I will become murderer and heir.*”

Recognition of this perspective in the expansion of Esau’s honorable conduct helps to appraise the noble deed of Esau in a more nuanced light as regards its function in the narrative of Ps-J. While Esau’s honor for Isaac is certainly noble and gains him merit, this merit does not erase his wicked character. Instead, it demonstrates more vividly the extent of Esau’s wickedness, for it suggests that Esau would go so far as to exploit even his merit to murder Jacob. In effect, Ps-J’s introduction of Esau’s praiseworthy conduct into the narrative does not generate an insurmountable conflict; indeed, the noble act depends on and further reinforces the wicked nature of Esau.

#### **6.2.4 Genesis 25:7–11 and 17—Is Ishmael Righteous or Wicked?**

Another character whose image is overwhelmingly wicked to whom Ps-J still attributes an incredible act of piety is Ishmael. Contrary to his wicked character, Ishmael repents, which Ps-J announced on two occasions—in the context of the death of Abraham (Ps-J Gen 25:8) and in the context of the death of Ishmael himself (Ps-J Gen 25:17).<sup>568</sup> Defining repentance, Urbach writes: “Primarily repentance calls for the abandonment of the way of sin and the inner resolve never to return to it...”<sup>569</sup> In the light of Ishmael’s

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<sup>568</sup> See Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:292.

<sup>569</sup> Urbach, *Sages*, 464. See Heschel, *Heavenly Torah*, 179–84; and Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 1:117 and 2:313–15.

overall wickedness and then his ultimate repentance in Ps-J, Hayward remarks that Ps-J depicts a “somewhat ambiguous attitude towards Ishmael.”<sup>570</sup> The text reads:

**Genesis 25:7–11 and 17**

MT 7 וְאֵלֶּה יְמֵי שְׁנֵי־חַיֵּי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר־חַי מֵאֵת שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה וְחֲמֵשׁ שָׁנִים: 8 וַיָּגֹעַ וַיָּמָת אַבְרָהָם בְּשִׁיבָה טוֹבָה זָקֵן וְשִׁבְעַת וַיֵּאָסֵף אֶל־עַמּוּיוֹ: 9 וַיִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ יִצְחָק וַיִּשְׁמַעְאֵל בְּנָיו אֶל־מְעַרַת הַמַּכְפֵּלָה אֶל־שָׂדֵה עֶפְרָן בֶּן־צֹחַר הַחִתִּי אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי מַמְרָא: 10 הַשָּׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר־קָנָה אַבְרָהָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי־חַת שָׂמָה קִבְרָא אַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ: 11 וַיְהִי אַחֲרַי מוֹת אַבְרָהָם וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנֵוֹ וַיֵּשֶׁב יִצְחָק עַם־בְּעֹר לַחֵי רֹאִי:

...

17 וְאֵלֶּה שְׁנֵי חַיֵּי יִשְׁמַעְאֵל מֵאֵת שָׁנָה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה וְשִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים וַיָּגֹעַ וַיָּמָת וַיֵּאָסֵף אֶל־עַמּוּיוֹ:

NRSV 7 This is the length of Abraham’s life, one hundred seventy-five years. 8 Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. 9 His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre, 10 the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried, with his wife Sarah. 11 After the death of Abraham God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi.

17 This is the length of the life of Ishmael, one hundred thirty-seven years; he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.

Ps-J 7 וַאִילֵּין סְכוּם יוֹמֵי חַיֵּי אַבְרָהָם דְּחִיא מָאָה וְשׁוּבְעִין וְחֲמֵשׁ שָׁנִין 8 וְאַתְנַגִּיד וּמִית אַבְרָהָם בְּשִׁיבּוֹ טַבָּא סִיב וְשִׁבְעַת כָּל טוֹבָא בְּרַם יִשְׁמַעְאֵל עֵבֵד תְּתוּבָא בְּיוֹמוֹ וּבִתְרָא בְּן אַתְכַּנְשׁ לְעַמִּיָּה 9 וְקִבְרוּ יִתְיָה יִצְחָק וַיִּשְׁמַעְאֵל בְּנֵי לְמַעְרַת כְּפִילְתָּא לְחַקִּיל עֶפְרוֹן בְּרַ צֹחַר חִיתָאָה דְּעַל אַנְפֵּי מַמְרָא 10 חַקְלָא דִּיזְבֵּן אַבְרָהָם מִן בְּנֵי חִיתָאָה תַּמְן אִיתְקַבְּרַת אַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה אִינְתִּיתָה 11 וּמִן בְּגַלְלָא דְּלָא אַבְרָהָם צְבִי לְבִרְכָא יִתְיִשְׁמַעְאֵל בְּגִין כֵּן לֹא בְּרִידָא יִתְיִצְחָק דְּאִין הוּא מְבִרִיד לְיִצְחָק וְלֹא מְבִרִיד לְיִשְׁמַעְאֵל

<sup>570</sup> Hayward, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic,” 79. Roger Syréen remarks that Ps-J is generous to Ishmael prior to the birth of Isaac but demonstrates “contempt and even condemnation” after Isaac is born (Roger Syréen, “Ishmael and Esau in the Book of *Jubilees* and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, eds. D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara, JSOTSup 166 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992], 310–15). Onqelos, Neofiti, Neofiti Marginalia, and the Genizah Manuscripts lack this expansion at 25:8 and 17.

הוה נטיר ליה דבו דבבו ובתר דמית אברהם בריך ייי ית יצחק בריה ויתיב יצחק  
סמיד לבירא דאתגלי עלוי יקר חי וקיים דחמי ולא מתחמי

...

17 ואילין שני חיי ישמעאל מאה ותלתין ושבע שנין והדר בתייבא ואיתנגיד

ואתכנש לעמיה

Ps-J <sup>7</sup> This is the *total* of the days of the life of Abraham, who lived a hundred and seventy-five years. <sup>8</sup> Abraham expired and died in a good old age, old and satisfied, *with everything good; even Ishmael had repented in his days*; and *then* he was gathered to his people. <sup>9</sup> His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of *Kapheltah*, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, which is facing Mamre, <sup>10</sup> the field that Abraham bought from the sons of *the Hittite*. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife. <sup>11</sup> *Because Abraham had not wished to bless Ishmael, he had not blessed Isaac either; for if he had blessed Isaac and had not blessed Ishmael, the latter would have hated him.* But after Abraham had died *the Lord* blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac dwelt *near the well where the Glory of the Living and Enduring One, who sees but is not seen, was revealed to him.*

...

<sup>17</sup> These are the years of the life of Ishmael: a hundred and thirty-seven years. He *repented* and expired and was gathered to his people.

In addition to Ishmael's repentance, in fact, Hayward raises two more points to argue that the image of Ishmael in Ps-J is ambiguous.<sup>571</sup> First, he mentions that Ps-J Gen 16:2, 3, and 5 imply that Ishmael is the son of a freedwoman, which, he proposes, casts a positive light on Ishmael. While Hagar was, indeed, emancipated—as discussed above—Hayward's suggestion that this serves to portray Ishmael positively seems to be a misreading of the perspective of Ps-J. Ps-J exhibits no intent to cast a positive light on Ishmael in Sarai's granting freedom to Hagar. The fact is that Hagar is freed not to present a positive image of Ishmael, but to explain how it is possible that Hagar went from being a slavegirl to being the wife of a free Israelite man, and, moreover, to preserve the honor of Abraham; for as Shinan explains, Ps-J could not have Abraham the

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<sup>571</sup> Hayward, "Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic," 79.

patriarch marry a slavegirl.<sup>572</sup> Accordingly, Ps-J never actually referred to Ishmael as the son of a freedwoman. In contrast, the narrative does continue to refer to Hagar as a slavegirl, as Hayward himself admits, citing 21:14.<sup>573</sup> This, in effect, suggests that the narrative actually does continue to view Hagar as a slavegirl and Ishmael as the son of a slavegirl, rather than of a freedwoman. More than this, Ps-J Gen 21:10, 12, and 13, and 22:1 explicitly refer to Ishmael as the son of a slavegirl (בר הגר אמתא/בר אמתא). Yet Hayward dismisses this continued perception of Hagar as a slavegirl and of Ishmael as the son of a slavegirl, stating that “Ps-Jon’s aggadah makes no great play of Ishmael’s birth to a slave-woman.”<sup>574</sup> But surely this conclusion begs reconsideration. For at 21:10–14, Sarah argues her case before Abraham that Ishmael, being the son of a slavegirl, cannot be an heir of Abraham, and she therefore compels Abraham to cast both Hagar and Ishmael out (cf. 16:5). And at 22:1, Isaac presents his case to Ishmael that Isaac is the rightful heir to Abraham because he is the son of Sarah, the wife of Abraham (בר שרה) (אינתתיה), while Ishmael is the son of Hagar, the slavegirl of Sarah (בר הגר אמתא)

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<sup>572</sup> In the original: שרה שיחררה את הגר לפני שנתנה אותה לאברהם, שהרי לא ייתכן שנשא שפחה (Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 2:318). See b. Yebam. 100b, which states that Abraham should not marry a slavegirl; b. Git. 41a–b, which discusses the legal prohibition of marriage between a slave (or a half-slave) and a free person; b. Pesah. 113a, which presupposes the principle that a slave must be freed before marrying a free person; and for a discussion of Ps-J Gen 16:2–3, see section 6.2.1 above. For more comments on Abraham marrying Hagar, see Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 62, n. 3; Schmerler, *אהבת אהבת*, 146–47, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות, 138–39; Ben-Mendel, *יהונתן: בראשית* (בראשית in קמו-קמו). For additional comments on preserving the honor of the patriarchs, see Shinan, “Post-Pentateuchal Figures in the Pentateuchal Aramaic Targumim,” 132, n. 30; Komlosh, *המקרא באור התרגום*, 208–16; Aberbach, “Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Onkelos,” 13–24; idem, “Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets,” 89–90; and Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah*, 41.

<sup>573</sup> Hayward, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic,” 79.

<sup>574</sup> Hayward, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic,” 79.

דאימי).<sup>575</sup> Contrary to Hayward's claim, then, the Targum *does* make great play of Ishmael's birth to a slavegirl, as well as of Isaac's birth to Abraham's wife. In short, Ps-J does not employ Ishmael's birth to a "freedwoman" to depict Ishmael positively; therefore, the Targum demonstrates no equivocation on its negative presentation of Ishmael in this regard.

Second, Hayward contends that the presence of Ishmael's house at the deathbed of Jacob at Ps-J Gen 50:1 betrays a positive impression of Ishmael as well. But this interpretation too seems to misunderstand the perspective of Ps-J. The presence of Ishmael's house at the deathbed of Jacob intends to attribute honor not to Ishmael's house that is present at Jacob's burial, but to Jacob, who is being buried. This is in keeping with the Targumim demonstrating a penchant for honoring the patriarchs.<sup>576</sup> Analogous to this, the house of Esau is also present at the deathbed of Jacob at 50:1, and yet just several verses later, at 50:13, Esau is explicitly referred to as wicked. Moreover, so as to certify Ps-J's definitive perspective of the wicked nature of Esau, 50:13 vividly describes how Esau's head is severed from his body on account of his wickedness. Similarly, at 35:29 Esau and Jacob are both described as burying Isaac, but several verses earlier, at 35:22, Jacob refers to Esau as unworthy (פסולא). In other words, neither Ishmael's nor Esau's (or their houses') presence at the burial of Jacob adds any piety to Ishmael or Esau.

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<sup>575</sup> A. Shapira, "עקבות פולמוס אנטי-מוסלמי בתרגום המיוחס ליונתן לפרשת העקדה," *Tarbiz* 54 (1985): 293–96, esp. 293–94. For a general study of Ps-J Gen 22, see Chilton, "Genesis in Aramaic: The Example of Chapter 22," 495–518.

<sup>576</sup> See Shinan, "Post-Pentateuchal Figures in the Pentateuchal Aramaic Targumim," 132, n. 30; idem, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 2:318–20; Komlosh, *המקרא באור התרגום*, 208–16; Aberbach, "Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Onkelos," 13–24; idem, "Patriotic Tendencies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets," 89–90; and Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah*, 41.

Rather, the mention of their presence at Jacob’s burial only serves to render due credit to the honorable status of Jacob. Thus, the presence of Ishmael’s house at Jacob’s burial does not cast a positive light on Ishmael, and, in effect, this passage does not generate a conflict in the narrative of Ps-J regarding its negative representation of Ishmael.<sup>577</sup>

In contrast to these examples, Hayward’s mention of Ishmael’s repentance at 25:8 raises an important question: Does Ishmael’s repentance rescind the otherwise thoroughly negative presentation of Ishmael in the remainder of Ps-J? Ps-J’s negative portrayal of Ishmael is impressively comprehensive.<sup>578</sup> From the time of his very origins, described at Ps-J Gen 16, Ishmael is presented in a negative light, as one who is *not* the son of promise. Beyond his origins, the negative portrayal of Ishmael only amplifies. At Ps-J Gen 21:9 (cf. vv. 11, 15–16), Ishmael is depicted “sporting *with an idol and bowing down to it*” (מגחך לפולחנא נוכראה וגחין לה)<sup>579</sup> at 21:10 (cf. 25:11), Ishmael is perceived as

<sup>577</sup> Shinan seems to be referring to this apparent conflict between Ps-J Gen 50:1 and 50:13 as well when he lists these two passages as contradictions in Shinan, “The ‘Palestinian’ Targums—Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions,” 86, n. 59.

<sup>578</sup> As noted above, Syrén reckons that Ps-J is sympathetic to Ishmael prior to the birth of Isaac but condemns Ishmael after Isaac is born. Developing this point, Syrén comments specifically on Ps-J Gen 16:12, stating: “[I]t is surprising to find that the metaphoric and consequently rather picturesque language of Gen. 16.12 in the Hebrew did not occasion Pseudo-Jonathan to defame Ishmael in anyway”; but only a few sentences later, Syrén himself underscores the “antagonism” between Ishmael and his brothers at Ps-J Gen 16:12 (Syrén, “Ishmael and Esau in the Book of *Jubilees* and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” 313).

<sup>579</sup> Clarke’s edition has a textual error at Ps-J Gen 21:9. Clarke’s edition states that Ishmael was bowing down to God (מגחך לפולחנא נוכראה וגחין ליי); so also the ancient printed editions), while the manuscript actually states that Ishmael was bowing down to “it” (לה), the antecedent of which is an idol (לפולחנא); the correct manuscript text is as follows: מגחך לפולחנא נוכראה וגחין לה. The following compares the manuscript, the ancient printed editions, and Clarke’s printed edition of Ps-J Gen 21:9:

Ps-J Manuscript	מגחך לפולחנא נוכראה וגחין לה <sup>9</sup>
Ancient Ps-J Printed Editions	מגחך לפולחנא נוכראה וגחין ליי <sup>9</sup>
Clarke’s Printed Edition	מגחך לפולחנא נוכראה וגחין ליי <sup>9</sup>

The same error also occurs in Kaufman, ed., *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch* (Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project), at Gen 21:9, <http://call1.cn.huc.edu/>; and in the electronic version of *Pseudo-*

someone who would “*make war with Isaac*” (ויגח קרבא עם יצחק);<sup>580</sup> at 21:12, God declares that Ishmael “*abandoned the training you [Abraham] have given him*” (דינפק (מתרבותך) and that he “*shall not be recorded [in the genealogies] after you [Abraham]*” (לא מתיחס בתרדך);<sup>581</sup> at 21:13, God promises to make Ishmael into “*a nation of robbers*” (לעם ליסטים); at 21:17, an angel states that Ishmael is destined to do evil deeds (עובדוי); at 25:11, Abraham does not want to bless Ishmael (דלא אברהם צבי) (בישיא דעתיד הוה), and again Ishmael is portrayed as potentially hostile to Isaac (לברכא ית ישמעאל

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*Jonathan* in *Logos Libronix*, at Gen 21:9. For the correct text, see the digitized version of the manuscript at [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add\\_MS\\_27031](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_27031) (Gen 21:9 is at f.21v; eighth line from the bottom of the page). Maher considers ליי (the text of the ancient printed editions) to be “clearly a mistake” (Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 75, n. 8). For the correct representation of the manuscript, see Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, 34; Le Déaut and Robert, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 209; Díez Macho, *Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuchum*, 133, n. 9; Rieder and Zamir, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על, 28, n. 7 (in the section with their reproduction of the Aramaic text); and 45, n. 8 (in the section with their Hebrew translation of the text). For more on Ishmael practicing idolatry, see *Genesis Rabbah* 53.11, 14; t. *Sotah* 6.6; *Sifre Deuteronomy* 31; *Exodus Rabbah* 1.1; PRE 30. On the suggestion that these verses are polemical against Islam, see Moise Ohana, “La polémique judéo-islamique et l’image d’Ismaël dans Targum Pseudo-Jonathan et dans Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer,” *Aug* 15, no. 3 (1975): 367–87; Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 2:349, n. 235. Commenting on the biblical text, Friedman notes that “The Israelite who wrote [v. 11] ... still expressed sympathy for Ishmael,” inasmuch as the verse states that Abraham was distressed over expelling Ishmael (Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah*, 71, n. 11); and see additional comments in Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 147.

<sup>580</sup> *Genesis Rabbah* 53.11 and PRE 30 record that Ishmael tried to kill Isaac; and cf. Gal 4:29. See also Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim’s Classic Commentary: Bereishis*, 163; Ben-Mendel, (בראשית in קעט) 179, תרגום יונתן בן עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן; *Genesis*, 226.

<sup>581</sup> See comments in Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 189–90.

<sup>582</sup> Moreover, Ps-J Gen 21:17 suggests that the only reason God has mercy on Ishmael is on account of Abraham’s merit (but cf. *Exodus Rabbah* 3.2; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:265).



דיבבו (נטיר ליה דבו דבבו),<sup>583</sup> at 35:22, Ishmael is identified as an “unworthy one” (פסולא);<sup>584</sup> at Ps-J Num 7:87, the text states that “*the twelve chiefs of Ishmael will perish*” (דיהובדון תריסר) (רברבי ישמעאל),<sup>585</sup> and at Ps-J Deut 33:2, God offers the Law to the Ishmaelites, but they do not accept it (הופע בהדרת איקר מטוורא דפארן למיתנה לבנוי דישמעאל ולא קבילו יתה).<sup>586</sup>

The dominating image of Ishmael that the targumist paints in Ps-J is that Ishmael is wicked.

In the light of this, introduction of Ishmael’s repentance into the narrative might seem to subvert the targumist’s efforts to present Ishmael in the negative light. However, contrary to Hayward’s conclusions, analysis of 25:8–9 and 17 suggests that the targumist was not at all equivocating on his depiction of Ishmael, for the targumic text exhibits no intent on the part of the targumist to contradict Ishmael’s negative portrait and to introduce an upright Ishmael. Three observations commend this position. First, the targumist’s introduction of Ishmael’s repentance into the narrative proves to be an expression of the targumist’s commitment to the explication and the explanation of the

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<sup>583</sup> See Genesis Rabbah 53.11; 61.5, 6; Exodus Rabbah 1.1; Menahem ben Solomon ben Isaac, תרגום יונתן בן, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 197–98; Ben-Mendel, מדרש שכל טוב: בראשית (קב), 102; Schmerler, עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות (בראשית in רי), 210; cf. Rashi on Gen 25:11, where Rashi states that Abraham feared blessing Isaac because he foresaw Esau coming from Isaac (Rashi in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: בראשית, 1:293 [רצג]).

<sup>584</sup> See Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 121, n. 23; Le Déaut and Robert, *Targum du pentateuque: Genèse*, 328, n. 15.

<sup>585</sup> See comments in McNamara and Clarke, *Neofiti 1: Numbers and Pseudo-Jonathan: Numbers*, 209, n. 32.

<sup>586</sup> Sifre Deuteronomy 343; Lauterbach, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, 2:317 (on Exod 20:2); PRE 319; and for the significance of Deut 33:2 in Islam, see Ohana, “La polémique judéo-islamique et l’image d’Ismaël dans Targum Pseudo-Jonathan et dans Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer,” 382.

specific wording of the Hebrew text, *not* an attempt to impose a certain ideological perspective of Ishmael upon the narrative. Second, the targumist's references to Ishmael's repentance and the targumist's near simultaneous declaration of Ishmael's wicked character in the very same context indicates that in the view of the targumist, Ishmael's repentance and Ishmael's wicked character were not mutually exclusive; Ishmael's repentance did not override or annul Ishmael's established negative portrait. Third, the targumist's mention of Ishmael's repentance in fact, and in a particular way, partly contributes to the negative portrayal of Ishmael in Ps-J, inasmuch as the implications of Ishmael's repentance are two-sided: on the one hand, this tradition does present Ishmael favorably in that it attributes to him an act of piety;<sup>587</sup> on the other hand, this tradition seals Ishmael's subordinate status in relation to Isaac, and thus adds to the denigration of Ishmael in Ps-J.

First, a close look at the targumist's introduction of Ishmael's repentance into the narrative demonstrates that the purpose of Ishmael's repentance in Ps-J is not to exonerate Ishmael, but to explicate and explain the specific wording of the Hebrew text. The goal, in other words, is not to redefine Ishmael. Rather, it is to give an account for the distinctive text at 25:8 and 25:17, pertaining both to Abraham and to Ishmael. As regards 25:17, the statement that prompted the integration of Ishmael's repentance is the particular wording of the description of Ishmael's death: וַיָּגוּעַ וַיָּמָת וַיֵּאָסֶף. The question that this clause raised for the ancient interpreters is: Why is the terminology that is otherwise used to describe the death of righteous individuals also used to describe the

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<sup>587</sup> On repentance, see Urbach, *Sages*, 462–71.

death of wicked Ishmael (i.e., וַיָּגוּעַ with וַיִּאָסֶף)? That is, with regard to Abraham's death, Gen 25:8 states: וַיָּגוּעַ אֶל-עֲמִי ... וַיִּאָסֶף. With regard to Isaac's death, 35:29 states: וַיָּגוּעַ אֶל-עֲמִי ... וַיִּאָסֶף. With regard to Jacob's death, 49:33 states: וַיָּגוּעַ אֶל-עֲמִי ... וַיִּאָסֶף. In contrast, with reference to the death of the flood generation, Gen 7:21 states: וַיָּגוּעַ כָּל-בֶּשֶׂר ... וְכָל הָאָדָם, that is, only with the use of וַיָּגוּעַ, but without the verb וַיִּאָסֶף (cf. Gen 6:17). Why then does Ishmael receive the description that is typical of the patriarchs rather than one that is used in the context of the wicked flood generation? Discussing this passage and the implications the language in this passage has for the character of Ishmael, b. B. Bathra 16b contends that this passage indicates that Ishmael repented. The text of b. B. Bathra 16b reads as follows:

ושעשה ישמעאל תשובה בימיו מנלן כי הא דרבינא ורב חמא בר בוזי הוו יתבי קמיה דרבא וקא מנמנס רבא א"ל רבינא לרב חמא בר בוזי ודאי דאמריתו כל מיתה שיש בה גויעה זו היא מיתתן של צדיקים א"ל אין והא דור המבול א"ל אנן גויעה ואסיפה קאמרינן והא ישמעאל דכתיב ביה גויעה ואסיפה אדהכי איתער בהו רבא אמר להו דדקי הכי א"ר יוחנן ישמעאל עשה תשובה בחיי אביו שנאמר ויקברו אותו ויצחק וישמעאל בניו ודילמא דרך חכמתן קא חשיב להו אלא מעתה ויקברו אותו עשו ויעקב בניו מאי טעמא לא חשיב להו דרך חכמתן אלא מדאקדמיה אדבורי אדבריה ומדאדבריה שמע מינה תשובה עבד בימיו<sup>589</sup>

And how do we know that Ishmael repented in his days [i.e., when Abraham was still alive]? From the discussion between Rabina and R. Hama b. Buzi who were sitting before Raba while Raba was dozing. Rabina said to R. Hama b. Buzi: Is it indeed the case that your people maintain that wherever “giving up the spirit” [גוע] is used with reference to the death of a person, it implies that their death is

<sup>588</sup> See also references to the deaths of Aaron and Moses that make use of the verb אסף at Num 20:24, 26; 27:13; 31:2; Deut. 32:50. And see comments on Gen 25:8 in Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 174; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 160; Westermann, *Genesis 12–36*, 397; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 272–73; Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 352.

<sup>589</sup> Maurice Simon, Israel W. Slotki, and I. Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Baba Bathra* (London: Soncino, 1976), 16b.

that of the righteous? He said: That is so! But what about the generation of the Flood? He said: Only if both “giving up the spirit” [גוע] and “gathering in” [אסר] are mentioned. But what about Ishmael, of whom it is written, “gave up the spirit” [ויגוע] and “was gathered in” [ויאסף]? At this point Raba awoke on account of them and said to them: Pupils, this is what R. Johanan said: Ishmael repented in the lifetime of his father. As it says: And Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him. But perhaps the text arranges them in the order of their wisdom? One might think this. But if that were so, then why does it say: And Esau and Jacob his sons buried him! What is the reason for this? Should they too be considered to be arranged in the order of their wisdom? Rather, on account of the fact that the text places Isaac first, we conclude that Ishmael made way for him; and on account of the fact that he made way for him, we learn that he repented in his days [i.e., in Abraham's lifetime].<sup>590</sup>

According to this discussion, then, the usage of both expressions “gave up the spirit” and

“was gathered in” to describe Ishmael’s death at 25:17 indicates that Ishmael repented.

This Talmudic discussion also takes note of the text at 25:9, specifically the statement

ויקברו אתו יצחק וישמעאל “His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him,” a statement that

elicited the question: If Ishmael is older, then why is Isaac named first in the clause? As

the passage explains, the inverted order of Isaac and Ishmael also suggests that Ishmael

repented.<sup>591</sup> In other words, ancient Jewish interpreters understood the language of these

two passages to indicate that Ishmael repented.

As regards the narrative of Ps-J, then, demonstrating sensitivity to the distinct articulation of the language specifically in the Hebrew text of Gen 25:17, and likely familiar with the tradition of Ishmael’s repentance associated with both passages, 25:9 and 25:17, the targumist integrated the brief comment of Ishmael’s repentance into the

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<sup>590</sup> Italics mine. Cf. translation in Simon, Slotki, and Epstein, eds. and trans., *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud: Baba Bathra*, 16b.

<sup>591</sup> See also Rashi on 25:9 in Katzenellenbogen, ed., תורת חיים: בראשית, 1:292 (רצב); Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:292; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 174 states that the order of the names is the “order of importance, not birth.”

targumic narrative in order to explicate the meaning he believed to be embedded in this formulation of the text. The motive behind introducing Ishmael's repentance, in other words, was not ideological, as if to portray Ishmael in a positive light. Certainly, the fact that Ishmael repented does ascribe a pious act to Ishmael, but as will be further demonstrated below this repentance does not rescind Ishmael's otherwise negative portrait. In the end, the apparent motive for introducing this tradition into the narrative was the targumist's commitment to the accurate representation of the Hebrew text.

Similar is the case with regard to 25:8, for here too the targumist demonstrated a commitment to the explication and the explanation of the Hebrew text; however, in this case the targumist introduced the tradition of Ishmael's repentance into the narrative not in response to the text that pertains to Ishmael, but, significantly, in response to the text that pertains to Abraham. The statement at 25:8 that prompted the integration of Ishmael's repentance is *בְּשִׂיבָה טוֹבָה זָקֵן וְשָׂבַע* "in a good old age, an old man and full of years," a statement that describes the death of Abraham. The exclamation that Abraham died well raises the question: Why did Abraham die so well? Sarna observes that "Such a summation of a life is found with no other personality in biblical literature. The phrase describes not his longevity, which is otherwise mentioned, but the quality of his earthly existence."<sup>592</sup> The targumic expansion makes clear that the targumist understood this language to mean that Abraham died well, at least in part, because Ishmael repented. The link between Abraham's good death and Ishmael's repentance is clearly manifested in the

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<sup>592</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 174. Cf. Gen 15:15. For a discussion of the old ages of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, see Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 349–54.

fact that the targumist added the phrase כל טובא “with everything good” into the verse and then qualified it with the clause ברם ישמעאל עבד תתובא “even Ishmael repented,” thus indicating that Abraham’s good death was related to Ishmael’s repentance. As the text reads: בשיבו טבא סיב ושבע כל טובא ברם ישמעאל עבד תתובא ביומוי ובתר כן אתכנש לעמיה “in a good old age, old and satisfied, *with everything good; even Ishmael had repented in his days; and then* he was gathered to his people.” Also, by adding ביומוי “in his days” and ובתר כן “and afterwards,” the targumist made sure to show that Abraham died only after Ishmael repented, in this way establishing that Abraham saw the repentance of Ishmael and that it, therefore, contributed to his dying particularly well.<sup>593</sup> Thus, the targumist’s integration of Ishmael’s repentance into 25:8 proves to have been an exegetical step of unpacking the unique text in the passage, *not* an attempt to redefine Ishmael and to portray him as a positive character.

Furthermore, the contention that the targumist was not seeking to re-characterize Ishmael as a righteous figure in this passage finds additional support in the fact that the targumist linked Ishmael’s repentance to the text that is focusing on Abraham, not on Ishmael, in this way making Abraham the beneficiary of Ishmael’s repentance. In other words, the targumist employed the tradition of Ishmael’s repentance to show honor to Abraham by explaining how this repentance positively contributed to Abraham’s life and death. The father’s concern, or even fear, of having an unworthy and wicked son is

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<sup>593</sup> Schmerler, אהבת יהונתן: בראשית, 197.

expressed in Ps-J explicitly in the case of Jacob and his sons. In Ps-J Gen 35:22, in the context of Reuben violating Jacob's concubine Bilhah, the response of Jacob is recorded as follows:

ושמע ישראל ובאיש ליה ואמר ווי דילמא נפיק מיני פסולא היכמא דינפק מן אברהם  
ישמעאל ומן אבא נפק עשו

When Israel heard of it he was distressed, and he said, "Woe! Perhaps an unworthy person has gone forth from me, as Ishmael went forth from Abraham and Esau went forth from my father."

Similarly, Ps-J Deut 6:4 recalls Jacob on his deathbed and articulates the same concern for Jacob having a son who is unfit. The passage reads:

והוה כיוון דמטא זימניה דיעקב אבונן למתכנשא מיגו עלמא הוה מסתפי דילמא אית בבנוי  
פסולא קרא יתהון ושיילינן דילמא אית בליבהון עקמנותא אתיבו כולהון כחדא ואמרו ליה  
שמע ישראל אבונן יי אלקנא יי חד עני יעקב ואמר בריך שום יקריה לעלמי עלמין

And it was, when the time was reached for our father Jacob to be gathered from the midst of the world, he was afraid lest there be a defect among his sons. He called them and asked them: "Is there any guile in your hearts?" All of them replied as one and said to him: "Hear, Israel, our father, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." Jacob answered and said: "Blessed be his glorious Name for ever and ever."

Commenting specifically on Ps-J Gen 35:22, but citing Ps-J Deut 6:4 as well, Samely writes: "The worry of Jacob and other patriarchs about whether their sons may turn out to be a 'blemish' פסולא is a *topos* to which the targums return time and again."<sup>594</sup> This very fear of having an unworthy son is averted in the case of Abraham and Ishmael inasmuch as Ishmael repents and, as the targumist of Ps-J made clear, Abraham consequently dies a good death.

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<sup>594</sup> Italics original. Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 75. See also Neofiti Deut 6:4 and Fragment Targumim Deut 6:4.

The targumist, in fact, is not alone in making much of Ishmael's repentance for the sake of Abraham rather than for the sake of Ishmael himself. Various midrashim also utilize Ishmael's repentance to revere Abraham. In Genesis Rabbah 30.4 (cf. 38.12), the dialogue cites Gen 15:15 and states:

תקבר בשיבה טובה בישרו שישמעאל עושה תשובה<sup>595</sup>

*You shall be buried in a good old age.* He [God] informed him [Abraham] that Ishmael would repent.

In other words, the mention of בְּשִׁיבָה טוֹבָה in reference to Abraham's death prompted the midrash to associate Abraham's death with the repentance of Ishmael. In Genesis Rabbah 59.7 on Gen 24:1, Ishmael's repentance is once again mentioned in the context of Abraham's old age and the blessing that he receives from God. Gen 24:1 reads: וְאֲבָרְכֶם וְיִי בֵרַךְ אֶת אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל זְמַן בָּא בַיָּמִים וַיְהִי בֵרַךְ אֶת אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל וַיְבָרֶכְהוּ אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶת אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל וַיְבָרֶכְהוּ אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶת אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל וַיְבָרֶכְהוּ אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶת אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things." In its discussion of this verse, Genesis Rabbah 59.7 reads:

וְיִי בֵרַךְ אֶת אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל.... ר' לוי אמר תלת שהשליטו ביצרו ועשה ישמעאל תשובה ושלא חסר קילרין שלו כלום<sup>596</sup>

*And the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things....* R. Levy said: This refers to three things: that He made him master over his evil inclination, that Ishmael repented, and that his storehouses had no shortage in any regard.

According to this midrash, God's blessing of Abraham "in all things" included Ishmael's repentance.<sup>597</sup> Assuming a similar perspective at Ps-J Gen 25:8, the targumist understood

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<sup>595</sup> Theodor-Albeck, מדרש בראשית רבא, 30.4 (ל"ד), 1:271.

<sup>596</sup> Theodor-Albeck, מדרש בראשית רבא, 59.7 (נט"ז), 2:635–36.

<sup>597</sup> For an analysis of this verse in the biblical text, see Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 349.



the remark that Abraham died well to be related to the fact that Abraham saw the repentance of Ishmael.<sup>598</sup>

In short, analysis of 25:8 and 25:17 demonstrates that the targumist introduced the tradition of Ishmael's repentance into the narrative not to exonerate Ishmael, but to explicate and explain the specific wording of the Hebrew text. While Ishmael is indeed attributed the pious act of repentance, the narrative does not capitalize on this act so as to redefine the otherwise negative portrayal of Ishmael. In contrast, the targumist employs Ishmael's repentance to show special honor to Abraham at 25:8. This shows, in effect, that contrary to Hayward's proposition, the targumist's integration of the tradition of Ishmael's repentance into the narrative was not the result of the targumist's ambiguous perception of Ishmael, and it was not guided by a motive to override the wicked portrait of Ishmael in order to present Ishmael as a positive character. Rather, the approach of the targumist was to explicate and explain the specific wording of the Hebrew text.

Second, that Ishmael's repentance did not undermine the targumist's attempts to present Ishmael as a wicked character is also evidenced in the fact that following the pronouncement of Ishmael's repentance at 25:8, the targumist immediately turned to describing the negative image of Ishmael at 25:11. At 25:11, the statement that it was God, rather than Abraham, who blessed Isaac prompted a tradition that Abraham did not

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<sup>598</sup> Repentance is a recurring theme in Ps-J. On the repentance of Cain, see Ps-J Gen 4:13, 24 (see Genesis Rabbah 22.11; Leviticus Rabbah 10.5; PRE 21; b. Sanh. 101b; Josephus, *Ant.* 1 §58; Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:111; 5:140, n. 24; and Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 34, n. 32; Bowker, *Targums and Rabbinic Literature*, 139–40; Urbach, *Sages*, 467–68; and Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 2:313–15); on the repentance of Reuben, see Ps-J Gen 37:29, and cf. 35:22; 49:4, 28; and Deut 6:4 (see Genesis Rabbah 84.19; 98.4; PRE 24; and Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 126, n. 23; 157, n. 11; Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 75, 79); on the repentance of Judah, see Ps-J Gen 38:25–26 (see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 2:34–35; 5:335, nn. 87–89; and Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 129, n. 19). For a general discussion of repentance, see Urbach, *Sages*, 462–71; Heschel, *Heavenly Torah*, 179–84.

bless *Isaac* because he did not want to bless *Ishmael* (as well as the children of Keturah).<sup>599</sup> Incorporating this tradition into his narrative, the targumist disparaged Ishmael in three respects: first, the targumist stated that Abraham did not want to bless Ishmael (...*ישמעאל ית לברכא צבי אברהם*); second, the targumist suggested that Ishmael was a potential threat to Isaac (*הוה נטיר ליה דבו דבבו*); and third, in reiterating the biblical text that God blessed Isaac, the targumist implied that God *wanted* to bless Isaac, but *did not want* to bless Ishmael (*בריד יי ית יצחק*).<sup>600</sup> That is, in Ps-J God carries out the wishes of Abraham inasmuch as Abraham could not carry them out himself. Thus, as Abraham wanted to bless Isaac, so, by implication, God wanted to bless Isaac, inasmuch as that is precisely what he did; and as Abraham did not want to bless Ishmael, so, by implication, God did not want to bless Ishmael, inasmuch as he did not do so. By discussing Ishmael's repentance and his wicked conduct in the very same context, the targumist revealed his conviction that Ishmael's repentance did not erase the memory of Ishmael as a wicked character-type. Ishmael is defined not by his repentance—an exceptional remark introduced tersely and without elaboration—but by his life of wicked

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<sup>599</sup> See Genesis Rabbah 61.6. Also see Gold, ed., *The Torah: With the Baal HaTurim's Classic Commentary: Bereishis*, 27–29; Schmerler, *אהבת יהונתן: בראשית*, 197–98; Ben-Mendel, *תרגום יונתן בן*, 1:52; Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, (בראשית in רי), 210; עוזיאל על התורה עם פירוש יונתן: בראשית-שמות, 37–38; Splansky, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Its Relationship to Other Targumim, Use of Midrashim, and Date,” 92–93; Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 174.

<sup>600</sup> This point is particularly pronounced in the light of Genesis Rabbah 61.6, which explains that when Abraham hesitated to bless Isaac and the children of Ishmael and of Keturah, he concluded: “Whatever God wishes to do in his world, let him do it” (*ומה שהקב"ה רוצה לעשות בעולמו יעשה*). Theodor-Albeck, *מדרש בראשית רבא*, 61.6 [סא"ו], 2:665). Building on this, Ps-J Gen 25:11 demonstrated that the fact that God blessed Isaac meant that God wished to bless Isaac, and the fact that God did not bless Ishmael meant that God did not wish to bless Ishmael. See Splansky, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Its Relationship to Other Targumim, Use of Midrashim, and Date,” 92–93.

conduct, which is thoroughly established throughout the narrative of Ps-J. In the view of the targumist, then, the mention of Ishmael's repentance does not compromise the targumist's attempt to present Ishmael as an utterly wicked character.

Third, the targumist's integration of Ishmael's repentance into the narrative does not disavow the targumist's negative depiction of Ishmael inasmuch as the implications of Ishmael's repentance are two-sided: on the one hand, the tradition presents a favorable aspect of Ishmael's life in that it attributes to him an act of piety; on the other, this tradition seals Ishmael's subordinate status in relation to Isaac. As Ginzberg writes: "Ishmael repented of his evil ways and subordinated himself to Isaac."<sup>601</sup> Indeed, the question of priority is central to the conflict between Isaac and Ishmael throughout the narrative, with Isaac, of course, prevailing. At Ps-J Gen 16:5 and 21:10, Sarah rejects Ishmael as the heir; at 21:12, God too rejects Ishmael as the heir; and at 21:14, Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away in order to secure Isaac as his heir. Moreover, this conflict over who shall be the heir is clearly articulated in an expansion at Ps-J Gen 22:1:

והוה בתר פיתגמיא האילין מן דינצו יצחק וישמעאל ישמעאל הוה אמר לי חמי למירות ית  
אבא דאנא בריה בוכרייא ויצחק הוה אמר לי חמי למירות ית אבא דאנא בר שרה אינתתיה  
ואנת בר הגר אמתא דאימי עני ישמעאל ואמר אנא זכאי יתיר מינד דאנא איתגזרית  
לתלסירי שנין ואין הוה צבותי למעכבא לא הוונא מסר נפשי לאתגזרא ואנת אתגזרת בר  
תמניא יומין אילו הוה בך מגדעא דילמא לא הוית מסר נפשך לאתגזרא מתיב יצחק ואמר  
האנא יומנא בר תלתין ושב שנין ואילו בעי קודשא בריך הוא לכולי איברי לא הויתי מעכב

*After these events, after Isaac and Ishmael had quarreled, Ishmael said, "It is right that I should be my father's heir, since I am his first-born son." But Isaac said, "It is right that I should be my father's heir, because I am the son of Sarah his wife, while you are the son of Hagar, my mother's slavegirl." Ishmael answered and said, "I am more worthy than you, because I was circumcised at the age of thirteen. And if I had wished to refuse, I would not have handed myself over to be circumcised. But you were circumcised at the age of eight days. If you had been aware, perhaps you would not have handed yourself over to be*

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<sup>601</sup> Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, 1:292.

*circumcised.” Isaac answered and said, “Behold, today I am thirty seven years old, and if the Holy One, blessed be He, were to ask all my members I would not refuse.”*

The conflict between Ishmael and Isaac as to who is the true heir of Abraham runs throughout the Abraham cycle in the narrative of Ps-J. However, Ishmael’s repentance, whether referred to in the midrashim, the Talmud, or Ps-J, implies that Ishmael himself acknowledged Isaac’s superior status as son of promise and heir of Abraham. In this way, Ishmael’s repentance contributes to the denigration of Ishmael in the narrative: Ishmael, by his own admission, comes to be subordinate to Isaac.

This perspective on Ishmael’s repentance also helps to explain how it is that the targumist included this tradition in his narrative in the light of his frequent polemical tone against Islam. This nuance in Ishmael’s repentance—that is, Ishmael’s admission of Isaac’s priority—answers Hayward’s objection that Ishmael’s repentance implies a positive image of Ishmael as a character. For Ishmael’s self-subordination to Isaac certainly does not paint a positive image of Ishmael as regards the perspective of Islam. Contending that Ps-J demonstrates an anti-Muslim attitude, Levine writes: “[Ps-J] manifests concern both for conveying positive Jewish values and for engaging in polemics.”<sup>602</sup> Ishmael’s repentance captures both of these elements: Ishmael acknowledges the priority of Isaac, which honors the Jewish values, and Ishmael

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<sup>602</sup> Levine, “British Museum Aramaic Additional MS 27031,” 7. See also Ohana, “La polémique judéo-islamique et l’image d’Ismaël dans Targum Pseudo-Jonathan et dans Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer,” 367–87; Pelcovitz, ed. and trans., *Sforno: Commentary on the Torah*, 105; Splansky, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Its Relationship to Other Targumim, Use of Midrashim, and Date,” 92–93; Shinan, *אגדתם של מתורגמנים*, 2:348; Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, 189–91. In contrast, Hayward contends that “it is very probably a mistake to regard Ps-Jon as a document engaged in dispute with Islam” (Hayward, “Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic,” 78); see idem, “The Date of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Some Comments,” *JJS* 40 (1989): 7–30.

concedes his subordinate status, which functions as a polemic against Islam. Levine then adds: “Before Abraham dies, Ishmael repents and converts (Gen 25:8, 25:17), implying that there is hope for his followers too.”<sup>603</sup> The unavoidable implication of this remark, whether intended by Levine or not, is that the hope for Ishmael’s descendants lies in and is contingent upon their repentance and conversion. This certainly is no compliment to Islam. To the contrary, this perspective reveals how Ishmael’s repentance makes a polemical statement at Islam: to be righteous, you must confess your subordinate status and convert. In this way, Ishmael’s repentance contributes to the targumist’s polemic against Islam.<sup>604</sup> Consequently, Ishmael’s repentance does not altogether rescind the negative image of Ishmael; rather, it renders another slight at Ishmael (and at Islam) indirectly, but effectively.

In the context of the Targum, then, while Ishmael repents, his negative image remains. Commenting on the effects of repentance in the biblical text, Bar-Efrat states: “The change which occurs in [the characters’] personality is, therefore, accompanied by a shift in the reader’s attitude toward them. Nevertheless, this shift is not enough to obliterate completely our negative attitude towards them as a result of their sins.”<sup>605</sup> For the targumist, Ishmael’s repentance does not undo his wicked conduct, and it does not

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<sup>603</sup> Levine, “British Museum Aramaic Additional MS 27031,” 7.

<sup>604</sup> Cf. another polemic against Islam at Ps-J Gen 21:21 (cf. PRE 30), and see comments in Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 76, n. 27. For a discussion of this midrash, see H. Z. Hirschberg, “על מקומם של ‘התרגומים הארמיים בחיי עמנו’” *Bar Ilan* 1 (1963): 16–23. Also, with regard to Ps-J Gen 21:13, Maher remarks: “By describing the descendants of Ishmael—that is, the Arabs—as a nation of robbers, Ps.-J. in our present verse [Gen 21:13] betrays an anti-Moslem mentality” (Maher, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 75, n. 14; and see Ohana, “La polémique judéo-islamique et l’image d’Ismaël dans Targum Pseudo-Jonathan et dans Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer,” 369).

<sup>605</sup> Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 85. Though Bar-Efrat is discussing specifically Saul and David, the principle applies to characters and characterization in general.

erase his wicked character-type. Primarily, both mentions of Ishmael's repentance serve exegetical functions: at 25:8, Ishmael's repentance explains the specific locution that claimed that Abraham had a good death, which, in turn, explains how Abraham could have had a good death at all when he had a wicked son such as Ishmael; and at 25:17, Ishmael's repentance accounts for the specific locution used to describe Ishmael's death, which terminology is otherwise found in the context of the deaths of the patriarchs. Moreover, by mentioning Ishmael's repentance and relating disparaging comments about Ishmael in the very same context, the targumist indicated that Ishmael's repentance did not override or undermine the otherwise negative portrayal of Ishmael throughout Ps-J. Rather, the incorporation of this tradition into the targumic narrative exhibits the targumist's effort to unpack the meaning the targumist perceived to be embedded in the Hebrew text. In effect, this further commends the position that in the view of the targumist the portrayal of characters is not determined by an ideology or dogmatic imposition, but, instead, by the requirements of the wording of the Hebrew text.

In the end, the targumist's mention of Ishmael's repentance does not express an ambiguous attitude toward Ishmael on the part of the targumist, and it does not compromise the coherence of the narrative. For the targumist, a character who is presented in a thoroughly negative light, as Ishmael is, can still contain a positive deed without it overturning the character's negative image.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

To conclude, the imprecise references to Hagar and the introduction of the unexpected pious deeds of Nimrod, Esau, and Ishmael do not constitute consequential

effects on the character types of these figures: Hagar remains a slavegirl; and Nimrod, Esau, and Ishmael remain wicked characters. Speaking on the general principle of depicting characters in stories, Bar-Efrat writes:

Since only important and exceptional deeds are generally recounted, the question arises whether unusual actions, which are more or less unique occurrences by their very nature, are sufficient to indicate characteristic traits of the protagonists. Only if someone repeats the same deed or similar ones several times is it possible to learn about the disposition and, in consequence, the character, while one single action need not necessarily show anything apart from a passing impulse.<sup>606</sup>

Such is the case in Ps-J with respect to the characters studied above: the established type of the character is stronger than any unique act that seemingly threatens to introduce discontinuity into the otherwise uniform presentation of the character.<sup>607</sup>

The unique positive statements, as has been shown above, are, in every case, determined by the Scriptural wording. It is this commitment to the Hebrew text that creates the apparently uneven portraits of the characters, which are, nevertheless, ultimately reconcilable. But this shows that even dogmatic character judgments are subordinate to the exegetical requirements of the Scriptural text and its implications. This

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<sup>606</sup> Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, 80.

<sup>607</sup> Samely supposes that a less than consistent portrayal of Joseph's son Manasseh appears in Ps-J as to whether he is a young child or an adult. While at Ps-J Gen 42:23 Manasseh is presented seemingly as a translator of mature age between Joseph and Joseph's brothers, and while at 43:16 he is depicted as the steward of Joseph's house (cf. *Genesis Rabbah* 91.8), at 48:12 Manasseh, along with Ephraim, appears to be taken down from Jacob's knees as though Manasseh were a child: *וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף / וְאֶפְרַיִם יוֹסֵף יְתוּחוֹן מִלִּוְת רַכּוּבֵי*: *אֵתָם מֵעַם בְּרַכְיֵי*. Regarding this, Samely writes: "There is a problem of age here. According to Gen 48:12, Joseph 'removed' Ephraim and Manasseh from Jacob's knees" (Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, 13, n. 9; cf. Targum Onqelos: *מִן קִדְמוֹהֵי* "from before him"; Neofiti: *מִן דְּבִרְךְ יְתוּחוֹן* "after he blessed them"). But Samely's understanding of *וְאֶפְרַיִם / מִלִּוְת רַכּוּבֵי* as suggesting that Manasseh was sitting on Jacob's lap is unnecessary. Westermann explains, "*מֵעַם בְּרַכְיֵי* need not mean that the boys were sitting on Jacob's knees; this is unlikely in the case of an old man, ailing and sitting on the bed. It probably means that they were standing at or leaning upon his knees" (Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 187; see also Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS, 327; Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 464; Grossfeld, *Targum Neofiti 1: An Exegetical Commentary to Genesis*, 284, n. 13; but Gunkel, *Genesis*, 448; and Speiser, *Genesis*, 357). Consequently, Samely's conclusion that there is a conflict between Ps-J Gen 42:23; 43:16 and 48:12 is unnecessary.

aspect of the Targum testifies to the targumist's commitment to logical consistency as regards the vertical dimension of the Targum, that is, between the Hebrew Text and the Aramaic text. At the same time, examination of the apparently conflicting passage above shows that the targumist also maintained congruity as regards the horizontal dimension of the Targum, that is, within the boundaries of the text of Ps-J. Thus, the Targum exhibits a character of coherence, both as it relates to its Hebrew *Vorlage* and as it relates to its own Aramaic text.



## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

The concern of this dissertation has been the conception of congruity in the text of Ps-J with attention to both the vertical dimension, which pertains to the literary relationship between the targumic text and its Hebrew *Vorlage*, and the horizontal dimension, which pertains to the literary relationship between passages within the boundaries of the narrative of the targumic text. The principal aim has been to demonstrate that despite the appearance of various contradictions in the Ps-J narrative, recognition of the targumist's set of assumptions—as regards both his exegetical approach to reading the passages and his dependence on the interpretive traditions associated with the passages—helps to ascertain the congruity that the targumist presupposed to obtain in his narrative. This analysis, moreover, has sought to demonstrate that the targumist was, in fact, committed to logical consistency on both levels of the narrative, the vertical and the horizontal. On the one hand, the targumist was committed to explaining the specific wording of the Hebrew text. On the other hand, the targumist was committed to rendering a narrative that proved coherent within its own contours and with respect to the broader context of Jewish tradition. Ultimately, the analysis of Ps-J in this dissertation has intended to show how a text such as Ps-J can and should be read.

As the cases studied above indicate, the goal of the targumist in introducing expansions into his Aramaic translation was to elucidate the narrative of the biblical text. He sought to resolve ambiguity in the text, to bring precision to the text, and to remove

any appearance of contradiction from the text. In doing this, however, the targumist at times produced literary tension within his own rendition of the narrative—though not due to carelessness, but on account of his presuppositions about the text. Consequently, certain modern day scholars have, sometimes too readily, concluded that the apparent contradictions in Ps-J destroy the coherence of the targumic narrative.

The present work questions these conclusions and contends that even where the surface text seems to exhibit literary incongruity, coherence may nevertheless be discovered in the implied background of the text beneath the surface structure. This thesis, then, proposes the following conclusion regarding the matter of contradiction and coherence in Ps-J: Inasmuch as the text of Ps-J proves to rely upon an extensive infrastructure of Jewish tradition, which the targumist presupposed but did not always make obvious in his translation and expansion of the text, the coherence of the narrative appears to have been conceived of by the targumist as being comprised of two literary strata—the explicit material, that is the surface text which articulates the narrative; and the implicit material, that is the context of Jewish tradition and interpretation that is presupposed beneath the surface structure, and which context serves as the foundation of the surface structure. On account of the material that is implicit in the narrative, the targumist was able to have tolerance of and exercise patience toward the material that is explicit and apparently incongruous in the narrative. Recognition of the fact that this was the targumist's conception of coherence helps to explain how the Targum of Ps-J is able to contain passages that appear to contradict the text of its Hebrew *Vorlage*, and how the Targum is able to contain passages that appear to generate contradiction within the surface structure in the boundaries of the targumic narrative.

Moreover, inasmuch as the coherence of the Targum manifests itself on the basis of both the explicit and the implicit material in the narrative, a reasonable, if not a necessary, conclusion is that the targumist maintained readerly expectations of his audience to be able to follow his interpretive approach to the text, and, in this way, to determine the overall coherence of the narrative in the Targum. From the perspective of the audience, then, if the targumist's assumptions about the text are not taken into consideration, the narrative appears fractured; however, once they are recognized and taken into consideration, the narrative exhibits sound coherence.

As stated at the outset of this work, the point of departure for this study was Samely's exhortation "to articulate how the text—*as it is*—actually works as a whole."<sup>608</sup> The results of this investigation recommend the view that the apparent contradictions in Ps-J are neither byproducts of the targumist's carelessness, nor the outcome of the targumist's alleged lack of interest in delivering a coherent narrative. Rather, the targumist's perspective of the Targum was such that the surface structure of the narrative could exhibit the appearance of contradiction and yet maintain narrational coherence by virtue of the underlying presuppositions about the narrative.

In examining these aspects of Targum Ps-J, this study has hoped to show how a coherent synchronic reading of a difficult narrative is possible and, indeed, necessary for a better understanding of the literary nature of this early Jewish text and for the understanding of the encounter a text such as Ps-J provided for its audience.

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<sup>608</sup> Italics original. Samely, *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity*, 4.

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