

REMARKS

ON THE

ARAMAIC - ENGLISH PART

In the introduction to his *Targum to Canticles According to Six Yemen MSS*, Raphael Hai Melamed devotes forty pages to review textual variants and mistakes in these manuscripts. As I was working on the Aramaic text which I am proposing in this edition, I went over each one of his remarks; and considering possible alternatives, I made judgments based on all the data available to me. In time, I am sure that I will have to backtrack and maybe even reconsider what I have presently discarded!

As a major *lingua franca* in use for centuries over an immense geographical area, Aramaic displayed a rich variety of forms and syntactical assortments depending on regional factors. Similar to what holds true in Arabic today, there were distinct dialectal blocks which shaped the transmission of the consonantal text first, and later on of the superimposed vowels, whether *sublinear* or *superlinear*. In a basic study-edition like this one, the inclusion of both *variety* and *uniformity*, within the limits of the plausible, is certainly useful:

- *variety*, in preparation for the real texts where diversity reflects the ultimate reality; but also
- *uniformity*, to convey a sense of the underlying common structure which is also subject to change, albeit at a slower pace.

For example:

- vocabulary fluctuations such as *מְשֻׁרְתָּא* for *אֲחֻרְתָּא* in 2:3; or simple vowel changes, such as *נְלִין* in 8:6 *versus* *פִּרְן* in 3:8 belong to the first category;

while

- discrepancies in *gender*, such as *פִּרְתָּא* with *מְבִנָּא* instead of *פִּרְתָּא* with *מְבִנָּא* in 1:16; or in *number* such as *שִׁירָתָא קְמִיתָא* *the first songs* instead of *שִׁירָתָא קְמִיתָא* *the first song* may suggest structural shifts, faulty imitations or just plain mistakes!

THE FEMININE SINGULAR DETERMINED ENDING 𐤍𐤑.

In Hebrew, the *fs* / *fp* opposition relies on a consonantal **and** a vocalic feature such as 𐤒 / 𐤒ִ / 𐤒ִ / 𐤒ִ. Yet, in Aramaic the corresponding 𐤍𐤑 / 𐤍𐤑, *tā/ātā* opposition is solely vocalic. It hinges on the *shewa/qames* opposition to distinguish between the *fs* and the *fp*. It is quite tenuous, but viable. However, when even that disappears in a language which otherwise maintains a solid *fs/fp* opposition in areas such as the verb, then a clarification is necessary. Thus, when a text has 𐤍𐤑, for the *fs*, the reckless substitution of 𐤍𐤑 for 𐤍𐤑, strikes me as a transfer of the Hebrew *pretonic kames* to Aramaic, in line with similar Hebrew reading habits quite frequently occurring in Aramaic. Therefore, in accordance with contextual requirements and the *superlinear* Babylonian vocalization, I have normalized all *fp* formations, changing them to standard *fs* forms.

THIRD WEAK *mp* PARTICIPLES

Deciding the vocalization of the Third Weak Masculine Plural Participles has been an annoyance. It is a fact that in Biblical Aramaic, these forms have a clear-cut 𐤍𐤑 pattern which in Syriac is equally unambiguous with the ܡܢ form. In Talmudic Aramaic, there are at least 7 phonetically related options for the *mp* Third Weak Participle, but in no case is the 𐤍 of *mp* 𐤍 ending vocalized with a *kames*, as if it were a *feminine* plural!

In this Targum, there are a few Third Weak *mp* Participles vocalized 𐤍𐤑. However, in other obvious *mp* contexts, the vast majority of them is vocalized 𐤍 / 𐤍, which is the mark of the *fp*! My hunch is that this does not reflect a change in grammatical gender, but that somehow the sight of an unvocalized 𐤍 ending prompted readers to impose the *-ān* vocalization on it, so familiar to them from other Aramaic contexts. In other words, irrespective of gender considerations, it must have sounded "more Aramaic" to them! I have therefore vocalized as *mp* all Third Weak Participles which according to their contexts should be in the *mp*. Incidentally, *mutatis muntandis*, a similar situation but in reverse occurred in Asa's Ladino version, where it is possible to find *las profetas* side by side with *los profetas*!

TRANSCRIPTION

With so many languages at stake and so many people to please all over the world, transcription has not been a pleasant prospect for me. A simple, all-purpose system would be ideal; I have yet to come across one which fits that specification. Of course, aiming at consistency

was a paramount worry; but the diversity of readers and their interests is such that there will always be a substantial balance of problematic compromises liable to tip the scales towards dissatisfaction.

The assumption that the English alphabet reflects the Roman letters needs the constant reminder that *the voice may be the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau!* Unlike English, the vowels used in this transcription have only one value, as follows:

<i>a</i>	as in	father
<i>e</i>		met
<i>i</i>		in
<i>o</i>		or
<i>u</i>		rule

Here are additional problems:

- Diacritical marks would force me to use the one font I have with that capability, a serious limitation in view of the other beautiful fonts available to me. Being of the Atatürk generation, I have used all my life *h* for *ħ / ḥ / h* and I know that most lay people in our part of the world are as intimidated by the mysterious dots as I am by articles or books where Hebrew quotations are transliterated for economic reasons. We like *haham*; we cannot stand *ḥacham*, because those of us who know French would be tempted to read it *hasham*, while those who do not know Hebrew may read it *hatcham*, somewhat similar to *Yitchak Rabin!*

Even for the *מחורין*, the transliteration of *ח* with *h* is not absolutely certain in every instance. We know that Proto-Semitic had two distinct phonemes *ħ* *ç* and *ḥ* *ç*, and that based on the Arabic *ḥ* *ç* *'ah* for *brother*, the usual transliteration *'ah* for *ח* is in fact wrong! But more than that. Since in Arabic, *ḥ* *ç* *'ah* means *cough*, whereas *ħ* *ç* *'ah* means *brother*, the Arabs must go through some *coughing* and chuckling as we drown trying to make up our minds between Sephardic *h* and Ashkenazic *ḥ* for our *ח*! Uncompromising consistency in transcription often produces ridiculous results, as it can create more problems than it can solve!¹

¹ The Library of Congress, which sets standards way beyond the Beltway, catalogued its Ladino books according to Spanish standards, under the assumption that Ladino was the exclusive domain of Hispanic scholars. Then, for the sake of consistency, their cataloguer extended his peculiar transcription approach to Hebrew and Turkish words in Ladino. Thus, he wrote *nejmadim* (which at first, I took for *Necmeddin*, a Turkish proper name) for the Hebrew word *נְיָמָדִים*; or *Joga* (which at first, I took for our good old *Djoha*) turned out to be *hodja!* And now, Harvard University is perpetuating this unpleasant situation in its latest catalogue of Ladino holdings under the pretext of consistency. We, the people who speak Ladino, didn't count! The problem could have been mitigated with cross-references. When a mistake has once been made, refusing to correct it, and even perpetuating it in the name of consistency, is outrageous.

• Same problem with *ş* for *z* which limits me to one font! Thus, I have everywhere transcribed *z* with *s*.²

• In the transcription of *בְּנֵי* too, I must avoid *friction* with the Arabs who distinguish between a *dual construct* in *-ay* and a *plural construct* in *-I*. That simple statement places me at odds with the entire Ashkenazi-influenced Hebrew-speaking world, conditioned by that *y* sound in that particular slot! For an Arab, however, *בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל* read as *Benei/Beney Yisrael*, means *two Israelites*, because both *bney* and *benei* are *duals* in Arabic! So, too, *פְּרָקֵי* *pirkeil/pirkey* would mean *two chapters-of-*, etc. Therefore, to avoid this unnecessary friction in the *plural construct*, this *y* must go! I prefer the transcription *bené* or *pirké*—which is what most Sepharadim use—over *benei* or *pirkei* which very easily deteriorates into *beney* or *pirkey*!

• Today the Jewish community in the United States is a leader in publishing Jewish materials for the entire world. Most people overseas are able to read English and can thus indirectly get in touch with their Jewish past through many English publications. Their general feeling is that anything coming from the USA must be right and correct; this places an awesome responsibility on our shoulders here.

Lately, I have been getting Jewish publications from Turkey translated from English books. These include proper nouns with their English spellings left intact. Obviously, the people there are unaware of the fact that in English some letters lack phonetic value and should be dropped in their own phonetic transcription system, not to mention those proper names with long-standing Ladino equivalents for which no English substitutions are needed. If they could only ask for some guidance!

For example, more and more I am coming across words like *hallah*, *megillah*, *Torah* and *Elijah* which in the Turkish system must be pronounced *hallakh*, *megillakh*, *Torakh* and *Eleedjakh*. Yet, in their local phonetic spelling, these should simply appear as *halla*, *megilla* and *Tora*. And as for *Eleedjakh*, why even bother with it, since the traditional Ladino form *Eliyahu* is the one they should be using anyway? *O tempora, O mores!* Apparently my own Jews have never heard of *Eliyahu han-Navi!* A mere generation ago, their parents would not be caught dead skipping that *dageshed* double *n*.

² I once attended a Karaite service. In their *minhag*, the *z* is pronounced *ch* as in *chalk*. What an ordeal it was to hear *צִיּוֹן מִצְרַיִם* pronounced *Tchiyon, Mitchrayim!* In my Sephardic tradition, we still eat *masa* on Passover and give *sedaka* to the poor, just as the Turks, too, give *صدقة sadaka* to the poor! I know that in this delicate inter-cultural equation the wave of the future cannot be stopped and that the Ashkenazic *ts* pronunciation of modern Hebrew is here to stay. But in works where I am quoting Sephardic authorities of the past, I cannot "force them" to utter words which would sound to them like *Tchiyon* and *Mitchrayim* in that Karaite service! Asa would laugh at either *Tsadikim* or *Zadikim*; my skin has grown a little thicker, but in my dreams, *z* is still *s* or *ş*. Because of Turkish, I am immune to the loss of that emphatic dot under the *s*, but I do get cold shivers at the sight of a *ts* or a *z*, just as you would, if suddenly you were compelled to *tsing / zing* a *tsong / zong* in *Tsintsinnati / Zinzinnati!*

I also know that there is some friction on the Arab side which does not relish Meccah and Medinah instead of Mecca and Medina. That is why I have taken the risk of transcribing all words ending in ן with a final *-a* and dropping the *h*, the way the *Jerusalem Post* does it with *Tora*, *Sara*, etc.³ I am keeping the *h* for ןׁ *Nogah!*

A R A M A I C T E X T

LAYOUT

The layout of the Aramaic text was dictated by the layout of the printed *Ladino Paraphrasis*, with 2 pages of the *Paraphrasis* corresponding to 1 page of the Aramaic text and a star of David ☆ to mark the beginning of the second page in the *Paraphrasis*.

Within the constraints of typography, I have tried to arrange the layout of the Aramaic text to reflect the Targum's understanding of the underlying Biblical verse. That is why some sentences which could be longer, have been shortened. In 5:3, for example, the layout clearly reflects the Targum's view of how the verse should be interpreted.

Ideally, each Biblical verse should have been printed before its targumic exposition for easier comparison. As a matter of fact, I have done just that in the special edition I use in class. At this time, however, it has not been possible to have the same arrangement for this edition, but we hope to improve next time. The fonts used are *Superhebrew* and *Hebraica* in a comfortable 24 point size. They are available from *Linguist's Software* in Edmonds, WA.

When we study a foreign language in the classroom, and later when we visit the country where that language is spoken, we always feel that the natives are speaking too fast. What is their hurry, we say, can't they speak a little slower? In reality, **they** are not speaking **fast**, we are listening **too slowly!**

What is true for the **ear** is also true for the **eye!** Beginners always complain that the print in their texts is too small and that they cannot clearly see all those dots, whether in Hebrew or in Arabic. In reality, the dots are just about what they should be; it is **they** who are looking at them **too slowly!**

If for the spoken language, the solution to this problem is to insist on speaking **slower**, the solution to the small print/dots problem is to have **larger print with larger dots!** Hebraists

³ Our HUC *Ulpan* teachers in Israel are doing nothing to discourage the firmly established belief that in the so-called *Lamed* ן or Third Weak verb בנה, the final ן is a radical! In spite of forms such as בניתי with a visible *yod* and בני with an audible *yod*, for them the underlying root is still ב-נ-ה! And from this piece of wisdom, students naturally conclude that the *h* in the English word *Torah*, too, represents the final ן of the Hebrew word תורה!

and Arabists, who in their classes are careful to speak **slowly**, enunciating every word with clarity, have yet to discover that a similar **visual** solution is required in the preparation of their reading materials for nurturing speed during the initial stages. For the average small size book, a 20% or 35% enlargement makes quite a difference, with no additional paper requirement, but only one more button to push on the copier!

PUNCTUATION:

Traditional texts lacked not only vowels, but punctuation as well. By today's standards, reading them is like driving on a wide highway with no markings for the lanes, nor signs for expected *exits*. When we study these texts, we are seldom told that something else made up for the lack of navigational piloting: that was the **chanting** which was part of their normal reading. Differently said, these texts were not read silently the way we moderns read our books "to ourselves". Instead, youngsters learned at an early age how to chant their texts by grouping together chunks of subclauses which formed small, semantically balanced packages.

Since we do not chant our texts, I left in this edition more than the usual blank spacing after commas or periods as an advance visual indication of the semantic subgroups and as a hint where to expect the end of a given clause or subclause. In the past, nothing was more frustrating to me than to call upon a student to read a text and then watch that student continue reading long past the expected *exit* for his particular semantic unit!

STRESSED SYLLABLE

In the traditional Sephardic pronunciation, the majority of Hebrew and Aramaic words is stressed *מקדע* (*para abasho*) on the last or *ultima* syllable. Those words which are stressed on the second to last or *penultima* syllable are called *מקעיל* (*para arriva*) and belong to well-defined categories such as *duals*, *segolates*, *Perfect cs*, *2 ms* and *cp* forms, etc. In this Targum, every *מקעיל* word has been marked with the sign [˘] on the first consonant of its stressed syllable.

MAKKEF

To emphasize the important notion of **package**, so basic to Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic syntax, I have used the connecting dash called *makkef* whenever there was a place for it, as in:

כל דרי אנשי קרבא 2:7
 מגודחוקמרנתמצראי 2:8
 בקגורחגוי סנרא 2:14
 מסחותגדפי עגני קרא דה 2:15

which are *constructs in cascade*. Arabic does not use any *makkef* signs *per se*, but their *wasla* is a potential *makkef* incorporated within a given word, as illustrated by the one-word looking amalgamation of *bismillahirrahmanirrahimi* according to the traditional Muslim pronunciation.

KAMES GADOL/KATAN

Every *kames gadol* which is followed by a vocal *sheva* has been provided with a *metheg* for proper identification. Our Sephardic tradition is so intolerant on the matter of the *kames gadol* / *kames katan* that any weakness in that department is seen as a total disaster for one's Hebrew profile! The folkloric basis for this attitude probably rests with elementary education in years past, when everyone of us—at least once—must have gone through the misfortune of missing on the *kames katan*, specifically in the word אֹזְנֵי *ozné*, by reading it *azné*! The teacher would immediately chide the student with the words: *azno sos tu אתה החמור* you are the ass (in Ladino *azno* means *ass*)! After that, we all learned to spot *kames katans*, or else!

However, the case of קַל is delicate because two traditions seem to converge on this particle:

- On the one hand, the Tiberian tradition has קַל-מְלֵךְ, קַל-רֵי, קַל-אֲנֹשׁ with a *makkef* in the Aramaic sections of Daniel, indicating a *kames katan* pronunciation *kol*.

- On the other hand, the Babylonian *superlinear* vocalization in the Targum has a *kames gadol* everywhere, which anyway was more of an *o* than an *a*! Thus, the insistence of the Sepharadim that key liturgical Aramaic words such as קַל נִדְרֵי *kal nidré*⁴ and קַל חַמִּירָא *kal hamira* have a *kames gadol* may go back all the way to a Babylonian tradition which indeed had a *kames gadol*, which we then retroactively pronounced as a long *ā* since in our tradition a *kames gadol* is pronounced as a long *ā*! It is clear that in the absence of such a solid tradition, no amount of scholarly lobbying would have done the trick of conservation so efficiently!

KAL NIDRÉ

I confess complete ignorance of what goes on in Ashkenazic synagogues on Yom Kippur Eve. But in a Sephardic synagogue, as the scrolls of the Law are auctioned off on that night, everybody—men, women and children—knows that the *sefer* before the first *sefer* is indeed the big item of the evening, the one and only annual סֵפֶר קַל נִדְרֵי *Sefer Kal Nidré* (with a soft *d*) and that it will be outbid to the highest possible price. And on their way home that night, members of different congregations see each other on the street, and the big "news" of the evening is always, *kuanto se vendyo el Sefer Kal Nidré*, for how much was the *Kal Nidré Sefer* auctioned off?

⁴ I am insisting on these details because I feel someone should record all vanishing linguistic traditions for future reference. See David De Sola Pool *Prayers for the Day Atonement*. New York: Union of Sephardic Congregations, 5727-1967, p. xii and p. 26, which still has our traditional *Kal Nidré* spelling.

Therefore, if you ever come across a Sephardic congregational bulletin in this country with the words *Kol Nidrei* clearly visible, you can be sure that a change of direction has taken place.

KAL HAMIRA

The day before Passover, known also as Passover Eve, marks the end of a major cleanup period lasting a few days. It is concluded with the search for קמץ and the recitation of an Aramaic passage starting with the words קל חמירא דאיכא ברשותי *any and all קמץ which I may have in my possession, etc.* In years past, when there were no electric gadgets around, this cleaning process over a number of days was extremely taxing on women, especially the elderly. They often got pneumonia from being exposed to drafts while scrubbing unheated basements and attics; many of them fell from ladders trying to clean high windows. Hence the expression *komo dia de kal hamira, like the day of kal hamira*, commonly used by Ladino-speaking women, to describe **any** day of the year spent doing heavy work. Phrases such as, *oy estuvo dia de kal hamira / oy tuvimos dia de kal hamira, today was just like another Kal Hamira day*, meant: "we are dead tired, we just can't take it anymore"! And it is hard to assume that there could be a male conspiracy regulating the pronunciation of the word קל *kal* in key liturgical Ladino words all the way to the clichés used by women, unless there was a basis and a long-standing tradition for such a pronunciation.

Despite *kal nidré / kal hamira* and despite my bias for the Babylonian *superlinear* system, I have decided in the case of קל in favor of the *makkef* of the Tiberian Masoretes which is also part of the tradition we follow in Hebrew today.

METHODOLOGY FOR STUDYING THE TARGUM

IDENTIFICATIONS (Diagramming)

Go over your verse looking for unusual verb or noun formations, *hapax legomena*, repeated sounds, potentially redundant items, ethical datives, conjunctive *waws* liable to become adversative *waws*, etc. Look at the structure of the verse for synthetic or antithetic parallelisms, be prepared to subdivide the verse into a number of subunits—not necessarily full subclauses—as the Targum will exhaust every avenue, including *gematria*,⁵ to bend the text in the direction of its preconceived overall themes. Here are a few illustrations of how the Targum handles the text:

⁵ *Gematria* consists in assigning each letter of the Hebrew alphabet a numerical value based on א *one*, ב *two* and ג *three*, parallel to Γ = 3 γάμμα τρία (*gematria*) in the Greek alphabet. Thus ׀ is 70 for the seventy nations; ׀ is 22, for the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, etc.

- 1:2 יין numerical value 70, for שבועין עממא *the seventy nations*
- 1:3 שִׁמְנֵיךְ read as סְמְנֵיךְ *your signs* and translated נִסֶּיךָ *your signs/miracles*
 עֲלֵמוֹחַ read as עוֹלְמוֹחַ and translated הָרִין וְעֲלָמָא דְאַחֵי *this world and the world to come*
- 1:4 בְּךָ numerical value 22 for the 22 letters of the alphabet with which the Tora is written
- 1:10 חוֹרִים *circular pendants*, read as plural of חוֹרָה and translated פְּתֻמֵי אֹרְחָתָא *words of the Tora*
- 1:15 רַעְיָחִי read רַעְוָחִי *My will* (also in 6:4)
- 2:10 לְכִי־לֵךְ ethical dative taken as the Imperative of הלך, in spite of gender discrepancy, and translated אֵילֵי נִפְקֵי *Come on, get out!*
- 2:11 הֵלֵךְ לֹו another ethical dative split from its main verb and then read as if it were לֹא *no*, subsequently expanded to עַד עֲלָמָא עוֹד לֹא הוֹסְפוֹן לְמַחְזִיחוֹן *Never ever again will you see them in the future!*
 The Targum then interprets הֵלֵךְ הֵלֵךְ, with this severed לֹו, as follows:
 הֵלֵךְ הֵלֵךְ *has passed and gone, has long passed*
- 2:12 הַנְּצַנִּים *blossoms* read הַנְּסָנִים (a combination of נִסְ *miracle* and the agent ending גַּן .) *miracle-workers*, and interpreted as referring to Moses and Aaron
- 2:15 סְמִרָר split into סָם + רָר *spice of the generation* and interpreted as *the Sages* (also in 7:13)
- 3:1 בְּלִילָח translated as כְּלִילָח *like the night*, but also suggestive of כְּלִילָח *crown*
- 3:6 מוֹר *Moriyya* is for Abraham; לְבוֹנָה is for Isaac; אַבְרָהָם is for Jacob who fought אַבְרָם with the Angel
- 3:7 שְׁשִׁים for the 60 letters of the בְּרַכְתֵּי־בְרָכָה and by extension the *Priestly Blessing* itself
- 3:11 אָמוּ read עִמוּ *His people*
 חֲתָנָהוּ *wedding* suggests חֲנֻכָּה *dedication*
- 4:4 כְּמַגְדֵּל split into גְּדוֹל + מִי + כַּ rendered רַב דִּילֵיךְ *who is your teacher*
 תְּלַפְיוֹת split into פִּיּוֹחַ + תְּלָה rendered עַל מִימְרֵי־פִּיּוּמֵיהּ *depending on what he said, by the directive of his mouth*
- 5:4 מִן הַחוּר read מִן אַחוּר rendered מַעְבְּרָא לְיַרְדֵּנָא *on their side of the Jordan*
- 5:12 בְּחֵלֶב read כְּחֵלֶב *as milk*
 מְלֵאחַ (hapax) *with full authority.....to acquit or to condemn*
- 5:13 לְחֵי read לְחֵי *tablets*
 מְגַדְלוֹת *towers* read מְגַדְלוֹת *raising* and translated מְרַבֵּין *raising, generating*
 שׁוֹשְׁבֵי read שׁוֹשְׁבֵי *who learn* and translated דְּעִסְקִין *who are occupied (studying)*
- 5:14 תְּרִישׁ read תְּרִישׁ = 12 and rendered תְּרִישׁ
- 6:3 אֲנִי לְדוֹרֵי with the ל taken as *nota accusativi* (אָחַ), the Targum has אֲנִי פְּלָחָא לְמַרְיֵי־עֲלָמָא

I serve the Master of the world

The phrase אָני לדודי *I belong to my beloved* is ideal for advocates of *unio mystica* in matters divine; or infatuation in earthly relationships.

The Targum, however, demonstrates its dislike of that concept by inserting the verb פִּלְחָא *I serve* before לדודי and making this love relationship conditional on *service*, and therefore on *commitment!* What a beautiful wedding sermon this phrase would be for those who have chosen to engrave אָני לדודי on their wedding rings!

- 6:4 כְּחַרְצָה *Tirsa* read חַרְצָה and translated בּוֹמֵן צְבוּתִיךְ *when your desire is...*
 6:5 שְׂעָרְךָ *your hair* read שְׂאָרְךָ *the rest [of your students]*
 6:12 לֹא split from יִדְעָתִי and translated *no more!*
 יִדְעָתִי נִפְשִׁי translated positively as אֶמְלִיךְ בְּנַפְשִׁי *I promise myself*
 7:5 חֲשֻׁבוֹן read as חֲשֻׁבֵינִי *computations of...*
 7:6 מְלִיךְ identified as Abraham, because of אֶמְלִיךְ *he declared the sovereignty of God*
 אִסּוּר identified as Isaac, because of his having been bound
 רְהֻטִים identified as Jacob, because of the watering-troughs
 7:8 שְׂדִיךְ read שְׂאָרְךָ and interpreted קְהֵלִיךְ *(the rest of) your congregation*
 7:9 שְׂדִיךְ read שְׂאָרְךָ and interpreted *(the rest of you) = the people of the House of Israel*
 7:12 גְּלִינָה *let us lie down*, interpreted as מְצַלִּיא *praying*
 8:9 דְּלַח *door* read דְּלַח *poor, devoid of*
 נְצַרָה עֲלֶיהָ probably read נְצַלִּי (ל > ר) *we shall pray on her behalf*

Since the Targum usually expounds one verse at a time, it is best to proceed initially on a verse by verse basis. Later on, it will become apparent to you that there are clusters of verses which can be grouped and expounded together as part of a larger unit. Setting the closest possible one-to-one relationship between every word in the Biblical text and its counterpart in the Targum is also the best way to probe the expository methodology of the Targum.

To do that:

1. Read and thoroughly master the meaning of a given verse.
2. Read and translate the text of the Targum using the translation provided. Look up unfamiliar forms in the Aramaic-English glossary to check their parsing. This two-pronged strategy builds momentum and is initially very beneficial, until such time—at about midpoint, around chapter 4 or 5—when you are quite familiar with the vocabulary and the thinking of the Targum and will gradually wean yourself from the pony.

3. Pit the targumic text against the Biblical verse, back and forth, until you begin to see possible similarities and dependencies. Since what the Targum is doing often involves a real *tour*

de force, expect at times an introductory statement of one or more lines telling you, the reader, the *Sitz im Leben*, the particular historical circumstance where the verse is going to be fitted. At this point, you are ready for some "algebra type" accounting and simplification, and the best place to start is not necessarily the beginning or the end, but wherever you feel more confident. Hop around, pick your identifications in the order of certainty and narrow it down to the last word. Except for an insignificant number of cases:

- the order of your identifications in the Targum **corresponds** to the word order in the Biblical verse, and
- in a given translation, the expository material may **precede** or **follow** the particular Aramaic word it is translating from the Biblical Hebrew original. Here is an example with the *Biblical* and *Targumic* texts blended into one sequence:

7:1 שׁוּבֵי הַתּוֹבֵי לְוֹתֵי כְנִישְׁתָּא דִּישְׂרָאֵל. שׁוּבֵי הַשְּׁוֹלְמִית הַתּוֹבֵי
 לִירוּשָׁלַם. שׁוּבֵי הַתּוֹבֵי לְבֵית-אוּלְפָן-אוֹרֵיתָא. שׁוּבֵי הַתּוֹבֵי
 לְקַבְלָא נְבוּאָה וְנַחֲזָה מִן נְבִיאֵי דְמַתְנַבְאִין בְּךְ
 בְּשׁוּם-מִמְרָא דֵה. מַה־פְּחֻזּוּ וּמָה טִיבְכוּן, נְבִיאֵי-שְׂקָרָא
 דְאֵתוּן מִמְלִין סְטִיא לְמַטְעֵי יָת עַמָּא דִירוּשָׁלַם
 בְּנְבוּאֵתְכוּן, בְּשׁוֹלְמִית עַל מִמְרָא דֵה פְּמַחֲלַת וּלְאַחֲלָא
 הַפְּחֻזִים: מִשְׂרֵיתָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל וַיְהוּדָה:

Commentary

1. The first תּוֹבֵי calls for a return to the Almighty
2. The second תּוֹבֵי is for a return to Jerusalem [based on *Shulamit*]
3. The third תּוֹבֵי is for a return to the house of the study of the Tora
4. The fourth תּוֹבֵי is for a return of prophecy [based on נַחֲזָה which overlaps with the next part]

נַחֲזָה evokes חוּזוּן *vision, prophecy*, hence *the prophets who prophesy* נְבִיאֵי דְמַתְנַבְאִין

בְּךְ same בּ in בשׁוּם, the Name being the *memra* of God

מַה same מַה in the Targum asking a question

חַחֲזוּ the question reverses the nature of prophecy which now applies to the false prophets

- ב *against* rendered as על
 שולמית interpreted as המלך שהשלום שלו the *memra* of the King To Whom Peace belongs
 מחלת taken as the cognate of לאחלא from חלל *desecrate*
 המחנים *the two camps*, interpreted as referring to Israel and Juda

The same text could be diagrammed vertically, as follows:

7:1 שׁוּבֵי : הַתּוֹבֵי לְנֹתֵי כְּנִישְׁתָּא דִּישְׂרָאֵל
 שׁוּבֵי הַשּׁוּלְמִית : הַתּוֹבֵי לִירוּשָׁלַם
 שׁוּבֵי : הַתּוֹבֵי לְבֵית-אֱוִלְפָן-אֲוֶרְיָתָא
 שׁוּבֵי : הַתּוֹבֵי לְקַבְלָא נְבוּאָה
 וְנַחֲזָה : מִן נְבִיאָא דְמַתְנַבְאִין
 בְּדָ : בְּשׁוּם-מִמְרָא דְה'
 מַדְחִיחִי : וּמָה טִיבְכוֹן, נְבִיאֵי-שְׁקֵרָא לְמַשְׁעֵי יְת עֲמָא
 דִּירוּשָׁלַם בְּנְבוּאָתְכוֹן, דְּאִתּוֹן מְמַלְלִין סְטִיא
 בְּשׁוּלְמִית : עַל מִמְרָא דְה'
 כְּמַחֲלַת : וּלְאַחְלָא
 הַמַּחְנִים : מַשְׂרִיתָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל וִיהוּדָה

Another example of the *Biblical* and *Targumic* texts blended into one sequence:

7:1 אָמַר דְּנִיָּאל וְחִבְרוּהֵי: "קַבְלָא נְקַבֵּל עֲלֵנָא וְחַבְדָּ
 גִּזְרַת-מִמְרָא ה', כִּי הִיכְמָא דְקַבֵּל עֲלוּהֵי אֲבָרְהָם אֲבוּנָא,
 דְּמַתִּיל גַּיַן הַטּוֹב לַחֲמַר עֲתִיק. הוּלָךְ וְנִקְדָּךְ בְּאֲוֶרְחֵן דִּתְקַנְנָן

לְדוּדֵי קַדְמוּהֵי, הֵיכְמָא דְאֵלֹהֵי לְמִישְׁרִים וְאֵלֵיהוּ וְאֵלֵישַׁע,
 נְבִיאֵיא, דְּבִזְכוּתְהוֹן קָמוּ מִיתֵיא דְדַמִּין לְגַבְר דְדַמִּיד;
 וְכִיחֻזְקָא לְבַר-בּוּזֵי כְהָנָא, דּוּכְבַּ שְׁפַתֵי דְמִנְבוּאֵת-פּוּמָה
 אֲתַעְרוּ יְשָׁנִים דְּמַכִּי-מִיתֵיא דִּי בְּבִקְעַת-דְּהוּרָא."

Commentary

אמר דניאל	<i>Daniel said</i> , situates this verse in Daniel's period
חֲכָדָּ	was read חֲכָדָּ and translated as <i>נְזַרְחָּ the decree [of the Lord's memra]</i>
כ	translated as <i>הֵיכְמָא just as</i>
יין הטוב	interpreted as <i>חֲמַר עֲתִיק old wine</i>
הולך	translated as <i>נְהַךְ</i>
לדודי	interpreted as <i>קַדְמוּהֵי before Him</i>
למישרים	interpreted as <i>וְאֵלֵישַׁע Elisha and Eliza</i>
דוכב שפתי	interpreted as <i>דְּמִנְבוּאֵת-פּוּמָה [thanks to whose] spoken prophecy</i>
ישנים	translated as <i>דְּמַכִּי the sleeping</i>

The same text could be diagrammed vertically, as follows:

7:1 אָמַר דְּנִיָּאֵל וְחֲבָרוּהֵי: "קִבְלָא נְקִיבֵל עֲלֵנָא
 וְחֲכָדָּ : גִּזְרַת-מִמְרָא דֵה
 כ : הֵיכְמָא דְקִבְלָא עֲלוּהֵי אֲבָרְהָם אֲבוּנָא, דְמִתִּיל
 יין הטוב : לְחֲמַר עֲתִיק.
 הולך : וְנְהַךְ בְּאוּרְחֵן דְתַקְנֵן
 לדודי : קַדְמוּהֵי
 למישרים : אֵלֵישַׁע וְאֵלֵיהוּ, נְבִיאֵיא, דְּבִזְכוּתְהוֹן קָמוּ

מִיתֵיא דְדָמִין לְגַבְר דְדָמִיד; וְכִיחֻזְקָאֵל
בְּרִבּוּי כְחֵנָא,

דִּזְבֵּב שְׂפָחֵי : דְמִנְבוּאָת־פּוּמָה אֲתַעֲרוּ
יִשְׁנִים : דְמִכִּי־מִיתֵיא דִי בְּבִקְעַת־הַדְּוּרָא .

ENGLISH TEXT

VOCABULARY

In my preface, I mentioned the need to be creative when translating Hebrew/Aramaic texts of a limited vocabulary into modern languages. And I gave **עָסִיק**, *comely* as an example. Here are additional illustrations showing the possibilities inherent in this process.

Let us start with **עָחִיד** and **עָסִיק**. The easy way out is to say that the first looks like a carbon copy of the Hebrew **עָחִיד** *future* and that the second is equally similar to the Hebrew **עָסִיק** *busy*, and there is nothing else to add.

עָחִיד : After some research in the *lexica*, the following picture emerges: **עָחִיד** does not primarily mean *future* but *prepare/ready*, and obviously *prepare/ready* lead to *future/destined to*, etc. Thus depending on context, *prepare/ready* can mean *prone to*, *earmarked for* and even *anticipate*. In my glossary, I have placed these connotations in quotation marks because they are my own subjective *extensions* based on the primary *prepare/ready* meaning.

עָסִיק : The word **עָסִיק** does not even occur in the Bible! Pursuing the matter in Aramaic and other cognate dictionaries, we realize that it has the meaning of *being heavy/burdened* and therefore *engaged in, involved* which puts some "spirit" into *busy*.

חָסִין : Similarly with **חָסִין** which means *strong*. Depending on context, I have translated

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 4:4 | רִישׁ־מַחֲבֵרָא חָסִין בְּזִכּוּתָא | the Head of the Academy is <i>enhanced</i> by merit
(Without some <i>basic</i> זִכּוּת, he would not be Head of the Academy!
What he always needs is additional זִכּוּת to enhance his position) |
| 4:8 | חָסִינִין מִן נְמֵרִין | <i>stronger</i> than leopards |
| 5:15 | כְּעוּלָם גְּבַר וְחָסִין | like a young warrior who is <i>mighty</i> |
| 7:5 | אֲבִדְבִית דִּין חָסִין עַל עַמָּא | the President of the Court is <i>empowered</i> over the people |
| 8:6 | חָסִינָא כְּגִיהֵנָם קִנְאוּתָא | the jealousy they harbor is " <i>unyielding</i> " as Gehinnam |

8:10 בני חסידין כמגדלא my children are *sturdy* like a tower,
and in Modern Hebrew חסון means *inoculation*, as it makes one *strong/resistant* to a given virus!

PUNCTUATION

The *Chicago Manual of Style* belongs to the typewriter era. It needs a thorough revision to reflect the myriad of options which desktop publishing has brought to us. In the meantime, many hardened positions have developed which only common sense will eventually overturn.

One of those is the habit of underlining book titles! You can get killed for not abiding by the "rules" of the *Chicago Manual* which says that book titles must be underlined.

First of all, there is nothing sacrosanct about underlining, since the entire purpose is to bring out titles in a bibliographical listing for easier use. Therefore, if a bibliography is very short, or if all the titles are separately indented so that they do stand out clearly, individuals should have the flexibility of doing as they please.

Second, underlining was a way of telling the printer to use *italics* for a particular word or sentence. Apparently people have not noticed that bibliographies in printed books have no underlined titles because these are *italicized* and that is sufficient! Yet, I sense that there is "bibliographophobia" everywhere. Nowadays, when practically every student has a word processor with numberless functions, including *italics*, some still underline titles, or better, both *italicize* and underline them just to be on the safe side with their boss.

In the area of *parentheses/quotation marks* and *commas/periods*, I find the European system much more satisfactory, as most cases of ") or ." boil down to). or ". I have avoided the combination ", by using *italics* as much as possible⁶. Obviously, there will be some right on either side and in time, some middle ground will be found.

METHODOLOGY FOR STUDYING THE TARGUM IN ENGLISH

With the proper guidance under the direction of someone who can handle the original sources, it is even possible to blend the English translation of the *Song of Songs* with its Targum. Here is a typical example:

⁶ If after typing in black a paragraph with a sequence of words in quotation marks, separated by commas, we decided for emphasis to print just those words in red ink while also getting rid of the quotation marks, would the remaining commas still separating these words be red or black? With the commas before the end quote, they should be red; with the commas after the end quote, they should be black, as is the rest of the punctuation in the sentence. Chicago seems to be saying that they should be red; I am saying they should be black!

REMARKS ON THE ARAMAIC-ENGLISH PART

Song of Songs: You have captured my heart, my sister, my bride; You have captured my heart with one look of your eyes, with one bead of your necklace.

Targum: Pinned upon the wall of My heart is your love, My sister, the Community of Israel, who is comparable to a bride who is bashful. Pinned upon the wall of My heart is My affection for the least one of your members who is righteous as one of the scholars of the *Sanhedrin*, or as one of the kings of the House of Juda upon whose neck a crown of royalty has been placed.

Blended Text: You have captured my heart, pinned upon the wall of My heart is your love, my sister, My sister, the Community of Israel, my bride, who is comparable to a bride who is bashful. You have captured my heart, pinned upon the wall of my heart is My affection for the least one of your members who is righteous, with one look of your eyes as one of the scholars of the *Sanhedrin*, with one bead or as one of the kings of the House of Juda of your necklace upon whose neck a crown of royalty has been placed.

Of course, one can even diagram this blended English text, with the corresponding items in bold face! Figuring out that **capture** corresponds to **pinned** is equally easy or difficult in English as is figuring out that לבקחתי corresponds to קבצת in the Hebrew/Aramaic originals. Here is an example of diagramming based exclusively on the English translations:

You have **captured**: **pinned** upon
my heart: the wall of **My heart** is your love,
my sister: **My sister**, the Community of Israel,
my bride: who is comparable to a **bride** who is bashful.
You have **captured**: **pinned** upon
my heart: the wall of **My heart** is My affection for the least one of your
members who is righteous,
with **one** glance: as **one**
of your eyes: **of the scholars** of the *Sanhedrin*,
with **one** bead: or as **one of the kings** of the House of Juda
of your necklace: upon whose **neck** a crown of royalty has been placed.