CHAPTER ELEVEN

SUMMARY AND PROSPECTUS

The study of the Pentateuchal Targums enjoys the considerable bonus of being able to be conducted on a synoptic basis because of the existence not only of Tg Onqelos but also of the recensionally active Palestinian Targum tradition. This means that, even when other areas of inquiry are unproductive, there remains the important task of explaining the pattern of relationships among the several extant witnesses. And a great deal of writing on the Pentateuchal Targums is of this order. Engagement with Tg Prophets, on the other hand, offers such opportunities only rarely, as when an haphtaric fragment preserves readings significantly different from the standard Targum. For Tg Twelve Prophets Sperber's 'Additional Targum' to Zech. 2:14-15 provides one of those rare occasions for synoptic study (see ch. 6). In these circumstances, the choice of Tg Nahum-Malachi for investigation in this monograph has proved particularly fortunate in that this expanse of Tg has raised a series of issues more representative and more varied than would be likely to be suggested by any other group of twenty-eight chapters (so the MT) chosen from within Tg Prophets.

The review of previous work on Tg Prophets in ch. 1 notes various advances in our perception and characterization of this Tg, but it also witnesses to some of the problems that remain. Tg Prophets may have brushed lightly several other texts and traditions in the course of its development, yet the evidence of contact is rarely compelling, and this is especially unfortunate for the earliest period when even the existence of a written Tg Prophets cannot be taken for granted. Is it Tg as such that is paralleled in certain 'dominical' sayings in the Gospels, as is argued by Chilton?1 Did Josephus really make use of written Targums in his account of Israelite history? Are the agreements between Tg and the Peshitta ever substantial enough to support a theory of literary dependence? Was Jerome acquainted with Targumic texts, or did he merely retail Jewish traditions that sometimes happen also to be reflected in Tg Prophets?

M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, in one of his last-published contributions on the Targums, observed that the gap between the dicta on Targumic origins and the extant Targums remains unbridged in spite of the refinements that have been introduced in the area of Aramaic dialectology and despite the

1 See his A Galilean Rabbi, pp. 57-147.
availability for some time now of Qumran Targumic material.\textsuperscript{2} In the
circumstances, ‘we may at best connect isolated exegetical traditions’. Goshen-Gottstein recognizes, however, that even in the absence of such basic historical information there is much else that can be undertaken, and he enters his own plea for a ‘total-context’ approach to the Targums in which all the relevant rabbinic data are brought to bear upon the Targumic text (p. 42). The danger in such an undertaking is, of course, that it will drown under its own weight, that the amassing of data on this scale will get in the way of the productive analysis of it. Thankfully, there is also scope for more focussed approaches, as the next two sections will try to show. First we shall summarize some of the findings presented elsewhere in this monograph, and then briefly discuss other possible lines of approach to the study of Tg Prophets.

**SUMMARY**

Modern theorizing about Tg Prophets has sometimes confused, rather than clarified, certain basic issues. In short, there is ground-clearing to be done, and ch. 5, in seeking to deny the status of ‘law’ to the fragile hypothesis of dependence by the Qumran Habakkuk pesher upon an early form of Tg Habakkuk, is intended to fulfil such a function. The same applies to some sections within ch. 2 where consideration of a broader range of data tends to undermine some simple ‘certainties’.

The main chapters in this monograph reflect in a variety of ways on the origin and development of Tg Twelve Prophets. It is perhaps also to be expected that the majority of the historical indicators fall on this side of the A.D. 70 divide.

1. Most of the seven texts examined in ch. 2 are compatible with a dating in the Tannaitic / Amoraic period(s). Neither the apparent reference to the Roman taxation of Jerusalem (sic) in Hab. 3:17 nor the decoding of ‘Lebanon’ to mean ‘the nations’ in Zech. 11:1 is incontrovertibly a relic of pre-A.D. 70 Targumizing. Mal. 3:6, which challenges unorthodox views on afterlife and judgment that apparently were entertained by some within the Jewish community, probably has the strongest claim to be recognized as a survival of the Second Temple period, though even this might be contested.

2. The case for dependence by the Qumran Habakkuk pesher upon an early (presumably pre-A.D. 70) version of Tg Habakkuk is very weak (ch. 5).

3. The haphnicar ‘Additional Targum’ to Zech. 2:14-15 expands on the basis of the standard Tg or something very similar; it does not appear to