PART TWO

DATING TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHAN
CHAPTER SEVEN

TARGUM PSEUDO-JONATHAN AND ANTI-ISLAMIC POLEMIC*

The date of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (hereafter Ps-Jon) is a matter of controversy and debate. On the one hand are ranged those who argue that this text is essentially related to the other Palestinian Targums; and that it is, *au fond*, based on early, in some instances pre-Christian, exegetical traditions. In its present form, however, the text shows clear signs of ‘modernization’ to make it relevant to generations living after the Second Revolt against Rome. Modernization continued, on this view, until the seventh century AD, when Islam appeared in the land of Israel: thus the names of ʿĀʿisha and Fāṭima, Muhammad’s wife and sister respectively, feature in Ps-Jon Genesis 21:21. None of this, however, is held to affect the fundamental thesis that many traditions of the Targum are in substance older than the second century AD.

On the other hand a growing number of scholars is persuaded that Ps-Jon is best explained as a late, entirely literary compilation, often

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