The Proverbs Targum (TgProv) is probably the oddest in the whole targumic canon. It contains very few of the kind of expansions and interpretative interventions which make the targumic literature interesting to us. Those who have written on this targum have drawn attention to a handful of places where the text departs significantly from what is found in the Hebrew and in the other versions. The following are the main examples, often cited (e.g. by Mangenot: 1911: col. 2006):

Prov. 24.14

MT: 'Know that wisdom is such for your soul; if you find it, there will be a future and your hope will not be cut off'.

Tg: 'So have wisdom in your soul, for if you find it at first, a later time comes which is better than it and your hope will not cease'.

Prov. 28.1

MT: 'The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are secure as a lion'.

Tg: 'The wicked flee when there is nobody pursuing them, but the righteous are like a lion which looks out for its food, hoping for wisdom'.

There are many other very minor departures from the MT, usually clarifying the obvious meaning, occasionally introducing circumlocution (e.g. in 29.18 avoiding the implied failure of prophecy). The other side of this literalism is the fact that other known haggadic interpretations of verses of Proverbs (e.g. in 1.8–9; 25.19; 26.4–5) are completely ignored by TgProv (Healey 1991: 7).
As a result of this general adherence to the standard text, interest among scholars has focused on the impact that the main ancient versions may have had on TgProv. An extensive study of the text in relation to the LXX (Kaminka 1931–1932) led to the conclusion that TgProv often reads the text in the same way as the LXX, going against the MT (Kaminka 1931–1932: 171–4). Kaminka concluded that this indicates (in a targum which is generally very literal) that the targumist was using a different Hebrew *Vorlage* from the Hebrew of the MT. This would have dating implications (below). However, some of these cases of following the LXX are paralleled in the Peshitta and a possible conclusion might be that both TgProv and the Peshitta were each directly or indirectly influenced by the LXX. However, this brings us to the other great peculiarity of TgProv, the fact that its text is closely linked with that of the Peshitta, but in a way that is not easily explained.

The introduction to the volume of the *Aramaic Bible* project containing the Targum of Proverbs attempted to summarize debate over this relationship between the Targum and the Peshitta version of the book (Healey 1991: 1–2). What follows is a review of some of the issues involved and adds some reflections on dating and linguistic environment. (A more complete survey of earlier views, with fuller explanations of them, has been published more recently by R.J. Owens [1998]; see also the summaries of Alexander 1992: 326–7; de Waard 2008: 10*–11* and McNamara 2010: 320.)

Since the 18th century scholars have been aware of the fact that there is a close connection between the TgProv and the Peshitta version of the book. J.A. Dathe’s *De ratione consensus versionis Chaldaeae et Syriacae Proverbiorum Salomonis* (Leipzig 1764) demonstrated the connection and this led eventually to a scholarly consensus that the Syriac had been used in the creation of the Targum. According to Kaminka’s figures 300 of the 915 verses of the Book of Proverbs are identical in the two versions (Kaminka 1931–1932: 171). Melammed (1972: xii) had different figures, though making the same point. He identified 410 verses as being effectively identical (sixty literally identical), with a further 150 showing strong similarity. Though reaching a different conclusion about TgProv’s dependence on the Peshitta, D.C. Snell (1998) calculated that 72% of the words in the two are shared. Thus, as most have argued, a Jewish targumist had based his targum text on the Christian Syriac. Those who agreed with Dathe also included H. Pinkuss (1894: 109–13) and Diez Merino (1984: 307). This