Initial Observations Concerning the Text of Targum 2 Samuel 22 as Preserved in European Liturgical Manuscripts

Hector M. Patmore and Johanna M. Tanja

Introduction

The text of Targum Jonathan to the Prophets is fairly stable, as might be expected from a text that had an almost canonical status. Nevertheless, small changes crept into the text in the process of its transmission through the ages and in different cultural surroundings. Not all of Targum Jonathan was used in the same way; for example, only selected chapters, the so-called haftarot, had a place in the weekly liturgical service. It is conceivable that those parts of the text that were used regularly, such as the haftarot, changed more in the process of transmission than texts that were used only for study. As part of the preparations for a new critical edition of Targum Samuel, which will be produced by our colleague Eveline van Staaldhuine-Sulman, we decided to examine this possibility.

The initial stemma of the manuscripts of Targum Samuel, which was produced by Van Staaldhuine-Sulman and which has given our current research project its basic structure (Van Staaldhuine Sulman 2009, 22–79), incorporated a selection of Yemenite haftarot collections. The relationship between those Yemenite haftarot collections and the continuous texts of the Eastern groups (Yemenite and Babylonian) proved to be so close that Van Staaldhuine-Sulman was able to conclude that within this subgroup there exists ‘no textual division between continuous and liturgical texts’ (Van Staaldhuine-Sulman 2009, 43). But since her sample did not include European liturgical texts, she recommended that a broad stemma of 2 Sam 22 be made, including liturgical texts of the Western tradition (ibidem). A comparison between the liturgical texts and the continuous texts of the Western tradition will allow us to determine whether or not the liturgical and continuous texts in the Western tradition represent distinct textual traditions. To this end we have collated the text of the Targum to Samuel from a sampling of liturgical manuscripts. We have also collated the best extant European manuscripts of the continuous text of Targum Samuel, so that a comparison between liturgical and continuous texts from culturally contiguous zones is now possible.

Our aim in this paper is to provide some initial observations concerning the text of 2 Sam 22 (i.e. the haftarah for the 7th day of Pesach) in the liturgical
manuscripts, in particular its character, the relationship between the wit-
nesses of the liturgical text, and its relation to the continuous text of Targum
Jonathan. However, because not all the examined liturgical sources record the
entire chapter (see further below) we restrict our comparison to the first 14
verses, which are included in all sources.

A brief note on terminology is necessary before we proceed. We employ the
term ‘liturgical manuscripts’ broadly to include not only liturgies sensu stricto,
for example mahzorim (festival prayer books), which reflect a usage of Targum
during the synagogue liturgy, but also collections of haftarot whose purpose
was study.

The Sources

All known extant manuscripts containing the continuous text were included
in our research, except ms Par. 3187–89 (Bibliotheca Palatina, Parma) and ms
Add. 9403 (British Library, London) because of the poor quality of their text.
Van Staalduine Sulman created a stemma of the manuscripts using a sample
survey of sixty-five verses drawn from throughout the two books of Samuel,
including some haftarah readings (Van Staalduine Sulman 2009, 13–21). The
result was a stemma based solely on similarities and differences in the text,
rather than external factors, such as the script, codicology, provenance (if
known), etc. While the resulting textual families broadly correspond to dis-
tinct geographical and cultural zones (e.g. all Yemenite manuscripts belong to
one text family), this is not always the case. The ‘Mixed Western’ group, for
example, contains two manuscripts of Italian provenance, five of Ashkenazi
provenance, and one Sephardi manuscript (see further Patmore 2012a, 23–29).
One possible explanation of this phenomenon is that the high degree of con-
tact between Jews across regional borders and the frequently itinerant nature
of medieval European Jewish existence resulted in a high degree of cross-fertil-
isation between textual traditions (Patmore 2012a, 27–29, 51).

The manuscripts containing the continuous text are as follows. The numbers
in square brackets are the sigla used in our project (www.targum.nl Standard
List of Sigla).

**Mixed Western Family**
- Ms Reuchlinianus 3, Badische Hof- und Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe,
  Germany (Italian, 1105/1106 CE or 1107/1108 CE) [t705i];
- Ms Or. 72, Biblioteca Angelica, Rome (Frascati, 1326 CE) [t701i];