Introduction

In his article ‘Offenbaren wird sich das Reich Gottes’ K. Koch starts with the statement that God’s Kingdom is the dominating concept of the New Testament and that the Semitic roots for this concept are limited, except in the Targum (Tg) of the Prophets, especially the prophetae posteriores. As this concept is not demanded by their source text, but is the proper initiative of the meturgemanim, he states that the revelation of God’s Kingdom is typical of the theology of TgJon and that, whenever the word מָלַאכָה occurs, we are to think of this topic. This ought to be studied again. A second point that needs an investigation is Koch’s statement that ‘Reich’ is the best translation for מָלַאכָה; but can we bring this problem resolution by providing a ‘best translation’? And would it be the most frequent appropriate translation? ¹

¹Research for this publication included a five month stay with the team preparing the Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets at the Kampen Theological University in 1998. This was made possible by a research grant of the ‘Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO)’. Special thanks are due to Professor J.C. de Moor, with whom I discussed the framework of this article, and to Dr. E. van Staaldruine-Sulman and Dr. W.F. Smelik, with whom I discussed some of the specific problems it addresses.

Additional Abbreviations:
- KTg: Targum according to Kimchi;
- PalTg: Palestinian Targum (according to ms Reuchlin);
- BCTP: J.C. de Moor (ed.), A Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995-);
- TAB: M. McNamara (ed.), The Aramaic Bible (Wilmington: Glazier; Edinburgh: Clark, 1987-);
- מָלַאכָה, מָלַאכָה, מָלַאכָה, מָלַאכָה (one of) the four derivatives of מֶלֶךְ in Hebrew:

I do not want to doubt what Koch is actually writing in the rest of his article, but in this article I want to work in the other direction: how does the Targum use the word מַלְאָךְ מֶלֶךְ? Does it import its own theology when it uses this word? Or: what is the relation to its Masoretic Text (MT)? In order to test the correctness of Koch’s proposition, we must survey all the occurrences of the word מַלְאָךְ מֶלֶךְ, and not only those texts that attract our attention by their rich theology and their differences from MT. Only then will we be able to know whether Tg.Jon had specific ideas in mind when he used this word. This task has become much easier since the publication of the Bilingual Concordance to the Targum of the Prophets and Kasher’s collection of Toseftot for the same part of Scripture.

Although there seems to be a major difference between Targum Jonathan and other types of Targum to the Prophets (Palestinian, Toseftot, those mentioned only by Kimchi), I have decided to study all of the available Targumic material. Indeed, the ‘other’ Targums, being so few, could be studied only with difficulty in their own right. Nevertheless, we will always consider Targum Jonathan as the standard type and the other Targums as additional evidence.

Fortunately, מַלְאָךְ מֶלֶךְ is the only Aramaic word to be treated, whereas there are four in the Hebrew MT: מַלְאָךְ מֶלֶךְ, מַלְאָךְ מֶלֶךְ, מַלְאָךְ מֶלֶךְ and מַלְאָךְ מֶלֶךְ. Unfortunately, even this one Aramaic word occurs about 327 times in


2 At the time of writing, many of the texts concerned existed in a digital form in Kampen, but the Minor Prophets, the variants of Isaiah, Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets (according to A. Sperber, The Bible in Aramaic based on Old Manuscripts and Printed Texts, III. The Latter Prophets according to Targum Jonathan [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962]) and the Toseftot collected by R. Kasher, Targumic Toseftot to the Prophets (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1996), pp. 65-225, had to be read ‘manually’.

3 Of course, in studying the idea of dominion, it would also be interesting to survey the noun מֶלֶךְ and the verb מַלָּה but, on the one hand, that would have overloaded this article, and, on the other hand, we may presume that studying this derivative will give us a good impression of Tg.Jon’s thinking about this topic.

4 The word מַלְאָךְ מֶלֶךְ, too, is mentioned in Imperial Aramaic, but a writing error seems to account for its lexicographical existence מַלְאָךְ מֶלֶךְ being written instead of מַלְאָךְ מֶלֶךְ, see J. Hoffijzers and K. Jongeling, Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions [Handbuch der Orientalistik, I 21.1; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995, s.v.). At any rate, the word does not occur in Targum Aramaic.