Profile Targum Lamentations

Excerpt from: *Database of Anonymous and Pseudepigraphic Jewish Literature of Antiquity, c. 200 BCE to c. 700 CE*, ed. A. Samely, R. Bernasconi, P. Alexander, and R. Hayward

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**Editions, translations and selected studies**


There are two recensions of TgLam—a western and a Yemenite—and it is necessary to consult the editions of both van der Heide and Alarcón Sainz in order to gain access to the complete textual tradition. The present profile is based on the western recension which is generally agreed to be the earlier. The Yemenite recension was a revision of the western aimed at bringing it into closer conformity to the MT and simplifying its language. A profile based on the Yemenite recension might differ significantly from that based on the western: absence of the reference to Jeremiah at 1.1 in Yem. has considerable implications (Yem retains the 3rd pers. reference to Jeremiah at 1.18, but not at 1.2). Other editions of TgLam, e.g., by A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, IVA. *The Hagiographa* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), and by É. Levine, *The


I. Self-Presentation of the text

1.1. The text refers to itself as a verbal entity; its boundaries are implied or explicit.

1.1.5. Important text witnesses attest to a heading which is not integrated with the body of the text or with any introductory frame, implying one or more kinds of information under 1.1.1–4. The text is found under the title ‘Targum Eikhah’ in the First Rabbinic Bible (Bomberg, Venice, 1517), and in a number of medieval manuscripts, and it is referred to as ‘Targum Eikhah’ in works such as the ‘Arubh of Nathan b. Yeḥiel and Elias Levita’s Meturgeman. Ms BN Heb. 110 to 4.20 attaches the rubric ‘Targum Aḥer’ to a passage not found in the other manuscripts, thus indicating its implicit classification of the rest of the text as Targum.

1.5. The text presents a certain homogeneousness of form and/or contents, without claiming (1.1) or projecting (1.2) boundedness, and without being unified by a poetic or rhetorical-communicative form (1.3). TgLam, like the BibLam, is unified as to content (lament for the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple), but not as unified as to form. Key elements of the text-architecture of the biblical text have been lost through expansiveness. As a result the internal coherence of the Targum is less than that of the base text. See further 10.2.1.3 below.

1.6. The approximate word count or other indication of comparative size is: 2,650 words, using the Sperber text available from the CAL website as counted in a Word document.

1.7. The text’s Inventory Profile should be seen in the light of the following further information on completeness, thematic progression, aesthetic effects, etc. The concluding section of the text corresponds with the concluding section of the BibLam (Lam. 5.19–22), and this comprises, as in the biblical text, a direct apostrophe of God, which creates a mild sense of closure, but the tone is bleak with no hint of messianic redemption or restitution. It does not follow the liturgical custom of repeating the more up-beat verse 21 after 22. See further under 6.13.