

Targum Lamentations' Reading of the Book of Lamentations

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Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the exegetical intent and the translational methods employed in Targum Lamentations (TgLam). There are three primary steps involved in this study of TgLam. The first step involves a survey of the Book of Lamentations (as found in the Masoretic Text [MT]) in order to determine the basic text and meaning of the book which the targumist is interpreting. The second step is a detailed exegetical commentary of TgLam. This involves a verse by verse analysis of the targum with particular attention paid to the ways in which the targumist has departed from or transformed the biblical text. The final step is an analysis of the targum in order to determine how the targumist has modified the biblical text in order to convey or emphasize his message and address the questions of the date, provenance, and *Sitz im Leben* of TgLam.

From the very beginning TgLam presents the argument that Jerusalem was destroyed because Israel had disobeyed God. The people of Judah had transgressed God's Commandments and refused to repent, therefore God decreed that the nations should enter Jerusalem and destroy the city and the Temple. The targumist used a variety of literary devices in order to convey this message. These include the use of aggadic additions and expansions that catalogue the sins of Israel. The first four verses of TgLam are particularly expansive and provide a theological framework within which the audience is to interpret Lamentations. The targumist has also followed the principle of *מדה כנגד מדה* and interpreted the nature of Israel's punishment in light of their sin. Where the biblical text depicts graphic scenes such as cannibalism TgLam does not soften the image, but instead intensifies the language and thus increases the dramatic tension while warning the audience of the real, life-threatening dangers of transgressing God's Commandments. TgLam in its present form was intended for use within the synagogue, presumably during the ninth of Ab service, and provided the congregation with an explanation of the destruction of the Temple. While placing the blame firmly upon the Congregation of Israel the targumist also exhorts his audience to repent and return to the LORD through the study of Mishnah and Torah.

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Abbreviations

GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS

BCE	before the common era
CE	common era
HB	Hebrew Bible
LXX	Septuagint
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
p(p).	page(s)
P	Peshitta
TT	targumic text
WT	Western Text (TgLam)
YT	Yemenite Text (TgLam)
V	Vulgate

RABBINIC TEXTS

CantR	Song of Songs (Canticles) Rabbah
EsthR	Esther Rabah
FrgTg	Fragmentary Targum
GenR	Genesis Rabbah
LamR	Lamentations Rabbah
LevR	Leviticus Rabbah
NumR	Numbers Rabah

RABBINIC TEXTS (CONT.)

PR	Pesikta Rabbati
PRK	Pesikta deRav Kahana
TgEsth	Targum Esther
TgIsa	Targum of Isaiah
TgJon	Targum Jonathan
TgLam	Targum Lamentations
TgOnk	Targum Onkelos
TgNeof	Targum Neofiti
TgPsJ	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

JOURNALS, BOOK SERIES, AND REFERENCE WORKS

BDB	Brown-Drivers-Briggs, <i>Hebrew English Lexicon</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library</i>
<i>BZAW</i>	<i>Beihefte zur ZAW</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>ScrHier</i>	<i>Scripta hierosolymitana</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum, Supplements</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

When first encountering Targum Lamentations (TgLam) one is struck by the extensive amount of aggadic material which the targumist has accumulated in the first four verses of Chapter One. As a result, TgLam has often been described as being extremely paraphrastic, to such an extent that Sperber was led to claim that the targumim to the Megillot “are not Targum-texts but Midrash-texts in the disguise of Targum.”¹ This is somewhat of an overstatement, although at first sight TgLam does appear to be “top heavy” with liberal additions of aggadot in the first chapter and relatively few in the last four. This is, in fact, only partially true. On closer examination it becomes clear that TgLam actually sustains rather vigorous, although often subtle, exegetical activity throughout the text.

In “translating” the Book of Lamentations our targumist not only provides an Aramaic version of the biblical text, he also seeks to explain the event that precipitated its composition. Although the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE was a catastrophe unprecedented in Israelite history, it was not to remain a unique event within Jewish history. In 167 BCE the Temple was desecrated when Antiochus IV established the cult of Olympian Zeus in its precincts,² and then in 70 CE the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans. By the time of our targumist the Temple had been destroyed twice, and although the Jews were not exiled as they had been after the first destruction, the Land of Israel was no longer under Jewish control. The constraints of a targum (which, although allowing for certain additions to the text, must represent the

¹A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic Vol. IV A, The Hagiographa*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), p. viii.

²Macc. 6.1, 2.

Hebrew text word for word and in proper order)³ still allowed our targumist plenty of opportunities for exploring the theological difficulties which arose from the ashes of the twice destroyed Temple of the LORD.⁴ It is the purpose of this thesis to examine TgLam in order to determine the targumist's exegetical activity. Phrased in the form of a question, "What is the message of TgLam and how has the targumist altered the biblical text in order to convey that message?"

In targumic studies TgLam has been somewhat neglected, being overshadowed by larger or more varied targumim (such as Neofiti 1 or the targumim of Esther). Only two books have been dedicated solely to the study of TgLam.⁵ Van der Heide offers an excellent study of the Yemenite textual tradition, but provides no commentary on the content of the targum.⁶ Levine has published a text of TgLam based upon the Western text of Codex Urbanates Ebr. 1 (Urb. 1), but the critical apparatus which he provides is notoriously poor.⁷ Levine does provide a "Critical Commentary" which attempts to address the alterations made to the base text by the targumist and makes frequent references to rabbinic sources. His analysis is incomplete, however, consisting primarily of summaries of views held by other scholars and exegetes.

Insofar as this thesis is primarily an Exegetical Commentary on TgLam and includes (in the Appendices) the text and my translation of Urb. 1, its form and presentation are similar to Levine's. This is, however, a completely new study. In the following section I have presented a general methodology for analyzing a targum with respect to its exegetical

³See P. S. Alexander, "The Targumim and the Rabbinic Rules for the Delivery of the Targum," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* vol. XXXVI (1985), pp. 14-28, and the discussion below §1.2.2.

⁴Throughout this work I will follow the style of many English Bibles by representing יהוה as "the LORD," that is, in small-caps.

⁵Étan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations*, (New York: Hermon Press, 1981; this will be referred to simply as "Levine" throughout this work) and Albert Van der Heide, *The Yemenite Tradition of the Targum of Lamentations*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981). Sperber's edition is a pointed text based upon the Yemenite text of British Museum Or. 2375, but "no attempt has been made in this volume to offer the texts published here in a critical edition" (p. viii).

⁶For discussion of the Western and Yemenite textual traditions of TgLam see §3, "Textual Traditions."

⁷See Van der Heide, p. 58, where he explains that Levine's siglum "S" is not "Salonika, University 1 (1532 CE)" as stated in Levine's introduction (p. 10), but is, in fact, Sperber's edition including the errors.

intent and, following that methodology, I have included a survey of the biblical text (MT). As the title of Chapter 3 (“Exegetical Commentary”) suggests, the focus of this study is the exegetical intent and methods used by the targumist in transforming the Book of Lamentations into the Targum of Lamentations. As a result, many questions of translation and textual recension have not been addressed fully, except where the targumist’s word choice or variants among the extant texts have a bearing upon the meaning of the text. This is not a great omission since Albrektson has already provided an excellent study of the versional history of Lamentations,⁸ the value of Van der Heide’s work on the recensional history of TgLam has already been noted. Chapter 4 is an analysis and synthesis of the evidence presented in the Exegetical Commentary and Chapter 5 addresses the questions pertaining to the date, provenance, and *Sitz im Leben* of TgLam.

1.2. The Exegetical Method

Although targumic literature has been studied extensively over the last several decades, there has yet to be a systematic presentation of a critical methodology for the reading and interpretation of targumic texts. There are critical studies of the targumim, but they have tended to focus upon textual and recensional issues and relied upon relatively self-evident methods of analysis.⁹ Several scholars have focused upon the literary and theological aspects of the targumim, but they tend to articulate the method with which they will approach the particular text at hand rather than argue for a more general method that would be usable in the study of other targumim.¹⁰ On the other hand, there is the invaluable

⁸B. Albrektson, *Studies in the Text and Theology of the Book of Lamentations with a Critical Edition of the Peshitta Text*, Vol. 21, *Studia Theologica Ludensia*, (Lund: CwK Gleerup, 1963).

⁹E.g., Moses Aberbach and Bernard Grossfeld (*Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis with an English Translation of the Text*, [New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1982]) whose stated “methodology” includes “a straightforward, idiomatic modern English translation” and “critical notes”. Their list is more a description of their presentation than a true methodology. See, however, the work of A. Samely on speech in the targumim. *The Interpretation of Speech in the Pentateuch Targums*, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991) and “The Background of Speech: Some Observations on the Representation of Targumic Exegesis,” *JJS* 39 (1988), pp. 252-60.

¹⁰E.g., Bruce D. Chilton, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah Targum*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983).

work of Klein,¹¹ who examines many different targumim in order to reveal patterns in the translational method of the targumist.

It would appear that the field of targumic studies is lacking what biblical studies has taken for granted for the last 100 years: an armory of articulated critical methodologies from which we might choose that which best applies to a given text and approach. In this section I will present a general critical methodology that can be applied to targumic texts in order to determine their exegetical, or theological, perspective. This proposed method for discerning the exegetical perspective of a targum, which I will refer to as the “Exegetical Method,” involves three main steps.

1.2.1. Survey of MT¹²

The basic textual reading and theological message of MT must be determined so that it is possible to see where the targumist follows or departs from what we might hesitantly refer to as the “simple meaning” of MT.¹³ For example, the biblical text of 2.22 reads:

You invited my enemies from all around
as if for a day of festival;
and on the day of the anger of the LORD
no one escaped or survived;
those whom I bore and reared
my enemy has destroyed.

Clearly the Hebrew text is a description of the destruction of Jerusalem and the massacre of her people. The targum, however, transforms the verse so that it now reads:

May you declare freedom to your people, the House of Israel, by the King Messiah just as you

¹¹See below §1.3.2.

¹²The biblical text represented in this thesis is from the *Soncino Classics Collection* CD-ROM, (Chicago: Davka Corporation, 1996). “The text of the Tanach is based upon the 1895 Warsaw edition of the Mikraot Gedolot which has been carefully compared with other versions such as the Jerusalem Koren Tanach. In some instances the text has been modified to conform to the Koren edition,” (Users Manual, p. 61). I have omitted the *qere* supplied with the text.

All biblical quotations in English are from the *New Revised Standard Version* (Oxford: OUP, 1989) unless otherwise noted.

¹³This is not to be confused with the rabbinic notion of *peshat*, which has come to mean the plain or literal meaning of a text (often in contrast with *derash*), but probably originally referred to the accepted or authoritative interpretation (which was not necessarily “literal”). See *b Eruv. 23b*, *b Kidd. 80b*, and *b Ket. 111b*. For a survey of this topic see David Halivni, *Peshat and Derash*, (Oxford: OUP, 1991).

did by Moses and Aaron on the day when you brought Israel up from Egypt, My children were gathered all around, from every place to which they had scattered in the day of your fierce anger, O LORD, and there was no escape for them nor any survivors of those whom I had wrapped in fine linen. And my enemies destroyed those whom I had raised in royal comfort.

In the targum the verse has been completely altered so that the verse has become a day of *liberation* for Israel, rather than a day of mourning.¹⁴ The nature of the targumic additions cannot be fully appreciated until they are compared with the base text of MT.

It is therefore important that we survey MT before we begin our study of the targum so that we will be able to perceive any changes which the targumist may have made to the text in the process of creating the targum to Lamentations. In so doing we will also summarize current biblical scholarship on the Book of Lamentations. This is necessary because modern scholarship has revealed much about Lamentations, particularly through linguistic analysis, which will provide us with a better understanding of the targumist's source text. Our reliance upon this scholarship will, however, be limited because the concerns of the targumist were often very different than those of the modern biblical scholar.¹⁵ A general survey of the Book of Lamentations will follow this chapter, but each verse must be examined individually, therefore frequent references will be made to relevant scholarship throughout the Commentary (Chapter 3). Our next step in the methodology is the Exegetical Commentary which involves an examination of the individual verses of both MT and the targum.

1.2.2. Exegetical Commentary

The second step requires two phases:

1.2.2.a. *Quantitative Analysis* Before we begin to analyze how the targumist has come to a particular reading of the Hebrew text we must first determine the basis of the targumic text. Thus the first step is to decide which MS or edition of the targum will be used.¹⁶ The

¹⁴See §3.2.22.

¹⁵See §2 for further discussion of the difference between the targumic approach and that of modern biblical scholarship.

¹⁶As mentioned above, the purpose of this chapter is to present a *general* methodology. For the

targum should then be translated into English (or another modern language). This translation will serve as an aid to the reader and an indication of our interpretation of the targum.¹⁷ Part of this translation process is determining which Aramaic terms correspond to the Hebrew found in the biblical text. Observing where the targum goes beyond a simple one-to-one correspondence with the Hebrew will help to reveal how the targumist has interpreted the biblical text.

Such a task would appear on the surface to be a simple one. Merely compare MT with the targum and italicize the portions in the Aramaic text which are “left over.” Often, however, it is not such a straight forward matter. While the targumist will frequently provide a *verbatim* rendering of the Hebrew,¹⁸ it is also common to find an element of the Hebrew represented by more than one word or phrase.¹⁹ So while it is easy to see in 1.1, for example, where the targumist has added a lengthy preface to the targum which identifies Jeremiah as the author of the Book of Lamentations, even in this first verse we encounter difficulties in determining exactly what portion of the Aramaic corresponds to the Hebrew text.

The first word of the Book of Lamentations, איכה, is represented in the targum not once, but three times. In the first instance איכה is translated in its operative sense by the Aramaic אִיכְדִי. “Jeremiah the Prophet and High Priest told *how* it was decreed that Jerusalem and her people should be punished with banishment.” In the other two instances the term is retained in its original form, איכה. By the rabbinic period איכה had come to mean “lamentations,”²⁰ thus Jeremiah declared that Jerusalem “should be mourned with *ʿekah*” just as God mourned over Adam and Eve “with *ʿekah*.” So, which occurrence of

specifics concerning the MSS and textual tradition of TgLam see §3.

¹⁷See §3 for an explanation of the principles governing the translation found in this thesis.

¹⁸Throughout this work the term “*verbatim*” is used to indicate passages where the targumist has provided a translation in which each Hebrew word is often represented by an etymologically related Aramaic word without any further additions or glosses to the text. (This will not always result in an equal number of words in each version since the targum often uses independent direct object markers rather than the pronominal suffixes more commonly found in biblical Hebrew. See, for example, §3.5.15.)

¹⁹See, for example, TgLam 1.10 and 2.22.

²⁰See LamR 1.1 and §3.1.1.

איכה/איכדין should be identified as corresponding to MT's איכה? Or, to phrase the question in more general terms, how do we determine if an Aramaic term corresponds to the Hebrew?

It is surprising to note that there are, to the best of my knowledge, no publications or comments written by modern targum scholars outlining the method of analysis used in order to determine which portions of the text are targumic expansions and therefore should be italicized.²¹ I shall therefore endeavor to set forth some general guidelines to indicate the method employed in this thesis. The principle followed in this thesis and translation is that if the Aramaic term in question occurs in the same order as the Hebrew and functions in the same manner as the Hebrew word it shall be considered as equivalent.²² In this work we will follow the convention found in *The Aramaic Bible* series which indicates all other material in the translation by the use of italics. This definition of correspondence must remain broad since not all of the criteria listed will be determinative in every instance. Returning to our example, in 1.1 all three Aramaic terms which might correspond to איכה are in the proper order; that is, they occur before the targumist has translated the subsequent words of the biblical text. Thus, the criterion of word order is inconclusive. However, it is only the first instance which functions in the same manner as the original איכה of the biblical text. The other instances are nouns, but איכדין is an interrogative and therefore is considered the equivalent of MT's איכה.

Similarly, elsewhere in 1.1 we are confronted with two phrases which might be considered as corresponding to ישיבה בודד.

²¹The "Editor's Forward" to *The Aramaic Bible* series merely states, "Targumic deviations from the Hebrew text, whether by interpretation or paraphrase are indicated by italics," found on p. viii of most volumes, *The Aramaic Bible*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987-). In their introduction to TgJon of the Former Prophets Daniel Harrington and Anthony Saldarini state, "The substantive deviations from the Masoretic Text are printed in italic type," *The Aramaic Bible Vol. 10: Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987), p. 14. Hayward has a similar note, *The Aramaic Bible: Vol. 12: The Targum of Jeremiah*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987), p. 39; as do D. R. G. Beattie (p. 12) and J. Stanley McIvor (p. 34). *The Aramaic Bible Vol. 19: The Targums of Ruth and Chronicles*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994).

²²It must be stressed that this is a *general* principle. The targumim are notoriously varied in their methods of translations (see the next section) and TgLam is no exception.

ענת מדת דינא וכן אמרת על סגיאות חובהא אשתדר ומה דבגוהא בגין תהא יתבא בלחודהא כגבר דמכתש סגירו על בסריה
 דבלחודהי יתיב

The Attribute of Justice spoke and said, “Because of the greatness of her rebellious sin which was within her, thus she will dwell alone as a man plagued with leprosy upon his skin who sits alone.”

The first instance, יתבא בלחודהא, most closely represents the Hebrew text since Jerusalem is the subject (as in MT) and the word order matches MT. The subject of the second phrase, דבלחודהי יתיב, is not Jerusalem and the word order is reversed, therefore it should not be considered as corresponding directly to the Hebrew text.

Finally, in 1.7c the Hebrew text reads “her people fell into the hand of the foe” (בנפל) (עמה ביד-צר). Our targum renders this phrase, “her people fell into the hands of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar” (נפלו עמהא בידוי דנבוכד נצר רשיעא). The basis for this translation is the occurrence of the letters צ and ר at the end of Nebuchadnezzar’s name and it is clear that נצר נבוכד does indeed represent the Hebrew צר since it occurs in the same order and functions in the same manner as the biblical text. Since the basis of this similarity is the ending צר of נצר נבוכד these letters are not italicized and the name therefore appears in this translation as “*Nebuchadnezzar.*”²³

As stated earlier, these guidelines are broadly defined and each verse must be dealt with individually. The use of italics is intended merely as a device to aid us in the study of the targumist’s reading of MT. There will, of course, be differences of opinion as to whether or not the Hebrew is represented in a given Aramaic rendering, but where TgLam offers multiple or less obvious readings of MT my decision to identify a given Aramaic term as corresponding to the Hebrew will be explained within the commentary. It should also be remembered, that while we are attempting at this phase of the analysis to identify which Aramaic term most *closely* corresponds to MT, when a Hebrew term is represented by more than one Aramaic term, each occurrence is (obviously) related to the original text. The relationship and function these multiple, or divergent readings, within the targum is the goal of the next stage of analysis.

²³See also 1.10 and 4.12.

1.2.2.b. *Qualitative Analysis* In this phase the content of the targum is studied in detail. This will include not only the study of targumic additions, but also the examination of the targumist's translation technique. It is commonplace to say that "all translation is interpretation" and it is no less true for the targumim. Thus even where there appears to be a word-for-word equivalence with MT or where there is little additional material added, the targumist's word choice, syntax, and other subtle traits of the targum must be analyzed. For example, with few exceptions, TgLam represents the Hebrew בַּת, "daughter," with כְּנִשְׁתָּא, "congregation." The targumist has represented the Hebrew word with a single Aramaic word, but it is by no means a literal translation. We shall see that the use of this term has a dramatic effect on the meaning of the text and is used as a rhetorical device to increase the impact of Lamentations on the audience.²⁴ Our analysis of the targum must therefore involve the careful study of the targumist's translation as well as the additions to the biblical text.

The examination of targumic expansions will involve determining if the addition contradicts, supports, or transforms the aforementioned "simple meaning" of the biblical verse in question. (This can occur in a variety of ways including direct contradiction of MT and sustained argument bolstered by the placement of additions.) Furthermore, an attempt must be made to determine if the exegetical tradition represented in the addition is attested in other rabbinic texts. Considering the vast corpus of rabbinic material this represents a significant challenge, but it is vital that such an investigation be a part of this analysis. The primary texts examined in this study include the major midrashim, especially LamR, the targumim, the Mishnah, and the talmudim.²⁵

If the tradition is not found in other rabbinic sources, we may attribute the additions

²⁴See §4.5.

²⁵Medieval material is less relevant to this study since TgLam, although difficult to date (see §5) clearly dates to the talmudic period or earlier. This sort of investigation has been greatly enhanced with the development of electronic texts. In this study I have made use of the *Soncino Classics Collection* CD-ROM (Chicago: Davka Corporation, 1996) and *The Judaic Classics: Deluxe Edition* CD-ROM, (Chicago: Davka, 1995). Unfortunately not all of the targumic texts were available to me in such format and any searches are limited by the users input. This, of course, does not preclude more traditional methods of research. Some parallels may have been overlooked.

to the broader context of rabbinic tradition or the ingenuity of the targumist.²⁶ Often the targum to a given verse does not have additional material, there may be a one-to-one correspondence between the Hebrew and the Aramaic, but the way in which the targumist has translated the verse is equally important. In this case the targumist's word choice must be considered in order to determine if he has chosen specific terms or phrases which might carry theological overtones.

Over the last twenty-five years great advances have been made in our understanding of the targumic method of translation. This is due largely, but not exclusively, to the work of Michael Klein and his analysis of the translation techniques of the targumim.²⁷ Klein has isolated and described a variety of patterns by which the targumim transform the biblical text. These exegetical rules range from the direct and obvious addition of a negative particle to the more subtle translation of one passage in light of another. TgLam exhibits several of the more well known methods of exegesis as well as two less common interpretive techniques.²⁸

1) Converse translation.²⁹ This method of translation entails direct contradiction of the biblical base text and Klein identifies three major ways in which the targumist accomplishes this. The targumist may add or delete a negative particle, "he may replace the original biblical verb with another verb of opposite meaning,"³⁰ or he may resolve a

²⁶Determining whether unparalleled material is unique to the targumim or if it is from the broad context of rabbinic Judaism is extremely difficult since the text may be "unparalleled" because other sources have simply been lost. There are, however, certain criteria which can be used in order to help discern if a text is more likely to arise in the Aramaic/Targumic setting or that of the Hebrew midrashim. For discussion of these criteria see §5.2.2.

²⁷See Michael L. Klein, "Converse Translation: A Targum Technique," *Biblica* 57 (1976), pp. 515-37; "The Preposition *QDM* ('Before'), A Pseudo-Anti-Anthropomorphism in the Targums." *JTS N. S.* 30 (1979), pp. 506-7; "The Translation of Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopathisms in the Targumim." *VTSupp*, 32 (1981), pp. 162-77; "Associative and Complementary Translation in the Targumim." *Eretz-israel*, 16 (1982), pp. 134*-140*; and "Not to be Translated in Public—בציבור לא מתרגם." *JJS* 39 (1988), pp. 80-91. See also P. S. Alexander, "The Targumim and Rabbinic Rules;" M. McNamara, *Targum and Testament*, (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972); and J. Heinemann, *אגדות ותולדותיהן*, (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974).

²⁸The following is merely a brief summary of those techniques which are relevant to our investigation of TgLam. See the commentary below for detailed discussion of relevant passages.

²⁹See Klein, "Converse Translation.," pp. 515-37. Where appropriate I will use the terms which are most widely known, primarily those coined by Klein.

³⁰Klein, "Converse Translation," pp. 529-30.

rhetorical question with a declarative statement.³¹ TgLam 3.38 provides an excellent example of the last category. MT reads “Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?” (מפי עליון לא תצא הרעות והטוב:). The targum, however, renders the verse “From the mouth of God Most High there does not issue evil, rather by the hint of a whisper, because of the violence with which the land is filled. But when he desires to decree good in the world it issues from the holy mouth” (מפום אלהא עלאה לא תפוק בשתא) אלהן על ברת קלא רמיזא בגין חטופין דאתמליאת ארעא ועדן דבעי למגזר טובא בעלמא מן פום קודשיה (נפקא).³² The rhetorical question of the biblical text has been replaced with the declaration that evil does *not* issue from the mouth of God. The targumist also goes on to add that, in fact, it is *only* good which is decreed “from the holy mouth.”

2) Associative and Complementary Translations.³³ Most prevalent in TgPsJ, Klein identifies this technique as the result of the targumist “translating one passage while under the influence of another.”³⁴ An example of this is found in TgLam 1.9c. The biblical text reads ראה את-עניי, but the targum translates it with חזי יי ותהא מסתכל ית עניי, apparently providing a double translation of the Hebrew ראה. The addition of the verb מסתכל is, in fact, due to the targumist bringing verse 9 into line with 1.11c which reads ראה יהוה והביטה. The targum renders this phrase with חזי יי ותהי מסתכל. The same Hebrew phrase and its Aramaic counterpart are also found in 2.20a. The Aramaic version of 1.9c is, therefore, the result of the targumist translating the phrase in light of 1.11 and 2.20.

3) Multiple readings. McNamara defines “multiple sense” in relation to the Palestinian targumim as a method of translation which occurs when the Hebrew words have more than one meaning. “Which of the meanings suits a given context can be a matter of opinion. The Pal. Tgs. often translate by retaining two or more senses for a Hebrew

³¹Klein, “Converse Translation,” p. 533.

³²For further discussion see §3.3.37.

³³See Klein, “Associative and Complementary Translation,” passim, and *Genizah Manuscripts of the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch Vol. 1*, (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1986), p. xxxi; and McNamara, *The Aramaic Bible Vol. 1A: Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 31.

³⁴Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts*, p. xxxi.

word.”³⁵ We have already noted the example in 1.1 of the multiple rendering of the Hebrew איכה since the term had developed the meaning of both “how” and “lament.”

I refer here to “multiple readings” since our targumist will also provide more than one interpretation of a Hebrew term for purely exegetical reasons which are not necessarily based upon multiple meanings of the Hebrew. For example, the last stich of 1.1 reads שרתי למס במדינות היתה למס, “she that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal.” The phrase היתה למס is represented in the targum by both והוון מסקין לה מסין and ולמתן לה כרגא. “She who was great among the nations and a ruler over provinces which brought her tribute has become lowly again and gives head tax to them from thereafter” (ושליטא). Although למס is an *hapax legomenon* the targumist’s double rendering is not an effort to “bring out the wealth of the Hebrew text.”³⁶ Instead it is used as an exegetical device in order to heighten the contrast between Jerusalem’s condition before and after her destruction.³⁷

4) Prosaic Expansion.³⁸ This method of translation is common to all targumim of poetic texts and is defined by the consistent rendering of poetic texts as prose. Passages which are translated in this manner are defined as non-literal translations that may contain minor additions that do not effect either the textual or theological message. Since this method is quite common in TgLam we will present only one example here. In 1.11 the Hebrew text reads, “All her people groan as they search for bread” (כל-עמה נאנחים מבקשים לחם), while the targum renders this as “All the people of Jerusalem groan from hunger and search for bread to eat” (כל עמא דירושלם אניחן מכפנא ותבען לחמא למיכול). The meaning of the text has not been altered; the targumist has simply identified the pronominal suffix of עמה as “Jerusalem” and added the explanatory that they search for bread “to eat.” The terse language of the poetic text has been replaced with a fuller prose style.

³⁵McNamara, *The Aramaic Bible Vol. 1A*, p. 30.

³⁶McNamara, *The Aramaic Bible, Vol. 1A*, p. 30. McNamara is correct, however, in suggesting that this may be the intention of the targumists in rendering Hebrew words which have more than one meaning.

³⁷For further discussion see §3.1.1.

³⁸This method of translation has been noted by Bernstein (“Translation Technique in the Targum to Psalms,” *SBL 1994 Seminar Papers*, pp. 326-45), but the term “prosaic expansion” is mine.

The purpose of this method of translation may be understood in terms of the relationship between a targum and Scripture. The Mishnaic passages which prescribe how the meturgeman was to present the targum within the service are well known.³⁹ The principle which guides these prescriptions is that the congregation should not be given the impression that the targum is Mikra. Therefore while the one who read Scripture had to read from the Torah scroll, the meturgeman was *never* allowed to read from a written text. Prosaic expansion may well have operated in a similar fashion. By rendering the laconic Hebrew into flowing Aramaic prose the targumist provided yet another indication that what was being presented was *not* Mikra.

5) Dramatic Heightening. Finally, TgLam presents us with a method of translation which appears to be unique among the targumim. It is not uncommon to find that the targumim (and rabbinic literature in general) alter the language of a biblical text where it *appears* to present views which were contrary to contemporary notions. These changes frequently occur through the use of converse translation.⁴⁰ We find, therefore, in Gen. 4.14 when Cain declares, “today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face,” that the targumim reject the notion that someone can hide from God. TgOnk, TgNeof, and TgJon all alter the text so that they either state “it is *impossible* for me to hide from before you” (TgOnk and TgNeof) or ask rhetorically “*is it possible* for me to be hidden from before you?” (TgJon).⁴¹ Similarly, the targumim often distance God from the anthropomorphic statements of the Bible. Thus, the description in Gen. 11.5, “the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built,” in TgNeof becomes “The Glory of the Shekinah of the Lord was revealed to see the city and the tower.”⁴² While this practice of “softening” the language of the biblical text is common in targumic literature, TgLam demonstrates that it is not without exception.

³⁹See y Meg. 74d-75a and b Meg. 23a-b. See also Alexander, “The Targumim,” pp. 23-6 and the discussion of the *Sitz im Leben* of TgLam in §5.2.

⁴⁰See Klein, “Converse Translation,” *passim*.

⁴¹For further examples see Klein, “Converse Translation,” pp. 516-18.

⁴²See Klein, “The Translation of Anthropomorphisms,” and Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations,” p. 226.

The Book of Lamentations is often extremely graphic in describing the horrors of a city under siege and frequently speaks of God as the author and agent of Jerusalem's destruction. It would be reasonable to expect TgLam to interpret these passages in such a way that they would no longer be offensive or challenging to the commonly held rabbinic views. It is therefore quite surprising to find that not only does our targumist retain references to God "as an enemy,"⁴³ but he even introduces vivid and graphic imagery to passages which were otherwise relatively banal. The most startling example of this is 1.15. The biblical text describes God as proclaiming a time when both the young men and women of Judah would be destroyed.

The LORD has rejected
all my warriors in the midst of me;
he proclaimed a time against me
to crush my young men;
the Lord has trodden as in a wine press
the virgin daughter Judah.

The language of this verse is quite strong, it is the Lord himself who has "trodden" the "virgin daughter Judah," but the language of the targum is much more dramatic.

The LORD has crushed all my mighty ones within me; he has established a time against me to shatter the strength of my young men. The nations entered by decree of the Memra of the LORD and defiled the virgins of the House of Judah until their blood of their virginity was caused to flow like wine from a wine press when a man is treading grapes and grape-wine flows.⁴⁴

While the biblical text describes the LORD as *rejecting* the warriors of Judah, the targumist intensifies the image by describing the LORD as *crushing* them. God no longer treads on the virgin daughter Judah, but instead the targum tells us that it is "the nations" who act by "the decree of the Memra of the LORD." The most startling change to this verse, however, is the nature of the calamity which befalls Judah. In the biblical verse Jerusalem is personified as "the virgin daughter Judah" and she has been laid low, "trodden," by the Lord. In the targum, however, the metaphorical "virgin daughter Judah" becomes the "virgins of the House of Judah" who are raped by the invading nations so viciously that the "blood of their virginity" flows freely.

⁴³See, for example, §3.2.4.

⁴⁴כבש כל תקיפיי יי בניי אראע עלי זמן לתברא חיל עולימיי ועלו עממי על גזירת מימרא דיי וסאיבו בתולתא דבית
See §3.1.15. יהודה על די הוה דמהון דבתולתהון מתשד היך כחמר מן מעצרתא בעדן דגבר מבעט ית ענבין חמר ענבויה שדיין:

In this verse, the targumist does not distance God from actions against Judah, he *intensifies* the horrors described. God no longer rejects the warriors, he crushes them. Jerusalem is not razed, her virgins are brutally raped. What is the purpose of such changes to the text? As we shall see,⁴⁵ the dramatic heightening of passages which describe Jerusalem's punishment serve a rhetorical and theological purpose. By embellishing the (already graphic) references to Jerusalem's suffering the targumist emphasizes the punishment meted out to those who sin. This, presumably, was intended to discourage the audience from any future disobedience. Such fiery rhetoric might have been best suited to the synagogal context.⁴⁶

1.2.3. Analysis

Finally, we must analyze the targum in order to determine how the targumist has modified the biblical text in order to convey or emphasize his message and address the questions of the date, provenance, and *Sitz im Leben* of our text. The analysis presented in Chapter 4 will attempt to determine the exegetical agenda of TgLam. This analysis involves an examination of the methods employed by the targumist in translating the Book of Lamentations, including the targumist's use of language (i.e., does the targumist use specific, theologically charged terms or phrases where other, simpler Aramaic terms would have sufficed), translation technique,⁴⁷ and midrashic additions. In Chapter 5 we will attempt to determine the provenience and purpose of TgLam. We will begin with an examination of the language of the text, review rabbinic statements concerning the Book of Lamentations and its targum, and look for any references within the targum itself which might shed light on its origins and use within the community. This holistic analysis presupposes treating the targum as a single literary unit rather than as a mosaic of accreted

⁴⁵See §4.2.3.

⁴⁶See also §5.

⁴⁷See the discussion above under §1.2.2.

traditions. This is not to ignore the evolutionary nature of targumic literature, rather it is a recognition that most of the texts which have been preserved took their form at the hands of a final redactor.⁴⁸

⁴⁸See §3 for further discussion of the text used and the merits of viewing the targum as a single literary unit.

Chapter 2. A Survey of the Book of Lamentations

2.1. The Targumic Perspective

We can only understand the nature and character of the targumist's interpretation when it is viewed in contrast with the biblical text. The details of each verse will be discussed in the body of the commentary,⁴⁹ however a survey of the form and nature of the Book of Lamentations is appropriate at this point. This survey will focus on three major areas: (1) Authorship and Date, (2) Form, and (3) Theology.

2.2. Authorship and Date

The only consensus that modern biblical scholarship has been able to reach concerning the authorship of Lamentations is that Jeremiah did *not* write what now exists as MT.⁵⁰ Only Wiesmann has attempted to defend Jeremianic authorship and his position has not been taken up by others.⁵¹ The debate now centers upon the question of how many authors there may have been. While a few argue for a single author for all five chapters⁵² most find at least two if not three or even five different authors at work.

Unlike modern scholars our targumist had no doubts that Jeremiah wrote Lamentations. Being thoroughly a part of Jewish culture our targumist accepted

⁴⁹See §3.

⁵⁰The best review of modern biblical scholarship concerning Lamentations to date is Claus Westermann's *Lamentations: Issues and Interpretation*, trans. by Charles Muenchow (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1994).

⁵¹Hermann Wiesmann, *Die Klagelieder übersetzt und erklärt*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1954).

⁵²Wilhelm Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth • Das Hohe Lied • Die Klagelieder*, vol. 17 of *Kommentar zum Alten Testament* (Gütersloher: Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1962); Artur Weiser, *Klagelieder*, vol. 16 of *Das Alte Testament Deutsch* (Göttingen, 1958); and Norman Gottwald, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations*, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954) are the main proponents of this view.

Lamentations as tradition had handed it down to him. The question of authorship was determined largely by the reference in 2 Chron. 35.25 to Jeremiah uttering a lament for Josiah after he had been killed in battle with Neco of Egypt.

The archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am badly wounded." So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. There he died, and was buried in the tombs of his ancestors. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. *Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josiah*, and all the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josiah in their laments to this day. They made these a custom in Israel; they are recorded in the Laments.⁵³

Scholars of the last century have agreed in general with the traditional view that Lamentations dates from the period immediately following the conquest of 586 BCE with the *terminus ante quem* of 538 BCE (the Edict of Cyrus). In 1893 Fries argued for dating Chapters Four and Five to the Maccabean period, but aside from Lachs no one in this century has accepted his theory.⁵⁴ As a consequence of this consensus the debate has focused upon the relative order in which the five poems were composed. In general, Chapters Two and Four are considered closest to the event described due to the vivid and emotive language employed. On the other end of the spectrum, opinion is divided over whether Chapter One or Chapter Three was the last to be composed. Chapter One might be considered the latest since it does not mention the actual destruction of the temple.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Chapter Three attempts to inject a vein of hope (3.21-39), which seems incongruous with the sense of magnitude and immediacy of the destruction that we might expect from an eyewitness. The only conclusion that seems certain is that the exact order of composition will never be satisfactorily determined. As Westermann has pointed out, "a dating of all five songs in their proper chronological sequence is something that can never be determined with any degree of certainty."⁵⁶

⁵³2 Chron. 35.23-5.

⁵⁴S. A. Fries, "Parallele zwischen den Klageliedern Cap. IV, V und der Maccabäerzeit," ZAW 14 (1893), pp. 110-24 and Samuel T. Lachs, "The Date of Lamentations V," JQR 62 (1966-7), pp. 45-56.

⁵⁵This same fact, however, has been used by Rudolph to argue that Chapter One must have been written following the events of 597 BCE (p. 193).

⁵⁶Westermann, p. 56.

2.3. Form

The Book of Lamentations consists of five separate poems that employ poetic devices typical of biblical poetry. The first four poems are in an acrostic form with each stanza beginning with a letter of the alphabet. The fifth poem has twenty two lines which correspond to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. There has been great debate within scholarship concerning the purpose of writing in such a form. Some have suggested that it was used a mnemonic device to aid in memorization of the text, while others have argued that it is used to denote “completeness.” In other words, the acrostic form may have been used to demonstrate that the work encompasses all emotions or reflections on the destruction of the Temple, from “A to Z.”⁵⁷ The simplest explanation is that the acrostic device has been employed for purely stylistic reasons.

The acrostic form presupposes a written text, since it would have more meaning for one reading the text than for those hearing it read aloud. It is also a very mechanical form which requires detailed work in order to begin each stanza with the appropriate letter while at the same time maintaining the meaning of the poem as a whole. In spite of all of the evidence of such literary attributes, Westermann assumes a lengthy oral period prior to recording and thus argues that “the acrostic form was imposed on the text at a later stage of its development.”⁵⁸ The basis of his argument lies in his assumption that the formation of Lamentations should be seen as analogous to that of the Psalms which “had arisen orally as cultic songs.”⁵⁹ While it is beyond the scope of this survey to discuss the legitimacy of this analogy, it must be remembered that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple was a unique and catastrophic event in Israelite history. The cultic setting that served as an incubator for the creation of many psalms was no longer present. One might also wonder how articulate and given to memorization a grieving nation might be at such a time. Mourning and laments were made, but were they of the sort to be memorized, or were they

⁵⁷See Westermann, pp. 98-100.

⁵⁸Westermann, p. 100.

⁵⁹Westermann, p. 101.

the utterances and wailings of a desolate people? There is clearly an immediacy to most of Lamentations that argues for an eyewitness account, but perhaps one of some reflection.

As Westermann argues, there are phrases in Lamentations that reflect oral forms, and there can be no denying that the people of Jerusalem would have followed the established customs of communal laments, evidence of which we find in both the biblical and ancient Near Eastern sources.⁶⁰ We must also assume that some people would have been articulate enough, even in their deep grief, to have provided our author(s) with source material. Yet Westermann seems to go too far in arguing that “the one who did the actual writing down of the songs by no means played the major role in the creation of Lamentations.”⁶¹ The acrostic form is a detailed and laborious stylistic device which necessitates a high degree of interactivity between the “compiler” (to use Westermann’s term) and his sources. Even if we were to assume an earlier phase of oral transmission, such as Westermann describes, once the sources had been molded into the acrostic form the end product, with the possible exception of Chapter 5, must be considered the work of the compiler(s).

It is perhaps surprising to realize that the targumist has made no effort to represent the acrostic form in his translation and, perhaps even more importantly, neither does he attempt to render the poetic form of the Hebrew into Aramaic. We have already discussed how this method of translation is intended to further distance the targum from the sacred text,⁶² but it is important to note at this point that our targumist does not seem to be concerned with reproducing the *form* of MT. His interests lie elsewhere.

⁶⁰See Thomas F. McDaniel, “The Alleged Sumerian Influence Upon Lamentations,” *VT* 18 (1968), pp. 198-209; and Piotr Michalowski, *The Lament Over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur: Mesopotamian Civilizations I*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1989).

⁶¹Westermann, p. 102.

⁶²This is true whenever a passage of Hebrew poetry was transformed into a targum. See §1.2.2.b. and §3.1.1.

2.4. Theology

The most important aspect of the biblical text for our targumist was the theological content. For modern scholars, five separate poems and possibly as many as five different authors mean that there is the potential for five different theologies. This is not so for our targumist, for whom the biblical text was God's holy word; it was a unified work and detailed study of it could reveal truths about God and his relationship with his chosen nation Israel. Thus, regardless of its content, the targumist had to deal with the biblical text that he found and, in the case of Lamentations, this required our targumist to wrestle with some very difficult statements.

The Book of Lamentations is an open expression of grief and loss. When the Temple of the LORD was destroyed the people were faced with the problem of theodicy. If the LORD is just and righteous how could he have allowed this evil to befall his people? Lamentations makes no effort to answer this question, instead the problem becomes all the more acute. The people are overwhelmed with anger and disbelief, feeling that they have been utterly destroyed and abandoned. Lamentations provides vivid descriptions of the starvation of a besieged people ("the tongue of the infant sticks to the roof of its mouth for thirst; the children beg for food, but no one gives them anything" [4.4]) and their attempts to survive by eating their own young ("the hands of compassionate women have boiled their own children; they became their food in the destruction of my people" [4.10]). The author describes the slaughter as "my young women and my young men have fallen by the sword" (2.21) and his despair as being so great that his "bile is poured out on the ground" (2.11).

So who is to blame for this horror? From the earliest of times Lamentations was interpreted as representing the recognition that Jerusalem deserved her fate because she had rebelled against the LORD and that through confession and contrition God would forgive her and restore his order once again.⁶³ But as Cooper has pointed out, the author of

⁶³Passages such as 3.25 and 3.26 are often evoked, "the LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him; it is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD."

Lamentations is not so contrite.⁶⁴ “Of course the speaker acknowledges guilt, and recognizes that s/he is suffering on account of divine wrath. But those are merely the existential facts of the situation — part of its ‘background,’ is it were.”⁶⁵ Cooper goes on to explain that Lamentations stands outside the cyclical prophetic model of sin, punishment, repentance, and forgiveness. “The confessions are neither derived from nor integrated into a ‘prophetic’ theological scheme of sin, punishment, repentance, and forgiveness. Not only are they vague and perfunctory, but in each case the poet dodges personal accountability.”⁶⁶ There are moments, such as in 1.8 and 1.18, where the biblical author speaks of Jerusalem’s punishment as warranted by her sin and in 3.31-2 we are told that “the LORD will not reject forever.” But these are sporadic moments and Lamentations does not present a unified, sustained argument such as we find in the Prophets.⁶⁷

Perhaps the most difficult aspect for our targumist was the biblical author’s forthright description of God’s acting against his people and Temple. “The LORD has scorned his altar, disowned his sanctuary” (2.7) and “he has cut down in fierce anger all the might of Israel; he has withdrawn his right hand from them in the face of the enemy; he has burned like a flaming fire in Jacob, consuming all around” (2.3). It is this type of bald emotive statement that our targumist must decide whether simply to translate *verbatim* or to interpret for his people.

⁶⁴ Alan Cooper, “The Message of Lamentations,” to appear in Jacob Lassner and Peter Machinist (eds.), *The Hebrew Bible: Sacred Text and Literature*, especially pp. 13ff. (section 3). I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Prof. Cooper for his willingness to discuss these issues with me and allow me to use this article prior to its publication.

⁶⁵ Cooper, p. 21.

⁶⁶ Cooper, p. 21.

⁶⁷ See Patrick D. Miller, Jr., *Sin and Judgment in the Prophets: A Stylistic and Theological Analysis*, (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982).

Chapter 3. Exegetical Commentary

In order to elucidate the content and meaning of the targumic text we must analyze both the method of translation and the interpretation used by the targumist.⁶⁸ Before we can begin the analysis of our targum, however, we must determine which text of TgLam will be the basis for our study.

Textual Tradition

The textual tradition of TgLam is a complex one and I shall merely outline the current state of affairs and present justification for assuming the primacy of our chosen text.⁶⁹ TgLam is attested in two distinct textual traditions, the western text (WT) and the Yemenite text (YT),⁷⁰ which are identified by their provenance rather than by linguistic characteristics. WT exists in European and North African MSS such as the beautiful Urb. 1, which was copied in 1294 CE by Yitzak ben Shimeon ha-Levi.⁷¹ To my knowledge, this is the earliest MS of TgLam regardless of textual tradition. To date, the best printed edition representing WT is the *editio princeps* of TgLam in the Rabbinic Bible, prepared by Felix Pratensis and printed in 1517 by Daniel Bomberg and reprinted without Tiberian pointing (and other minor alterations) by Lagarde in 1872.⁷² The MSS which lie behind this text are

⁶⁸See §1.2.2 for an outline of the methodology used in the analysis of TgLam.

⁶⁹For a more detailed study of the recensional history of TgLam see P. S. Alexander, "The Textual Tradition of Targum Lamentations," *Abr-Nahrain*, Vol. XXIV (1986), pp. 1-26; and Albert Van der Heide's exhaustive study of the Yemenite tradition of TgLam (especially pp. 23-36).

⁷⁰When quoting other scholars I will follow their method of abbreviation. The texts referred to will be self-evident.

⁷¹See the facsimile introduced and translated by Étan Levine, *The Targum of the Five Megillot: Codex Vatican Urbanati 1* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1977).

⁷²As mentioned earlier, the only modern editions of TgLam are Levine, based upon Urb. 1, Sperber, which is based upon YT of British Library Or. 2375 with additions from the WT, and Van der Heide, based

not known. YT is attested by a number of MSS from Yemen. These have been studied and collated into a critical edition by Van der Heide and differ in many ways from WT. It is currently maintained by the majority of scholars that WT represents the older text and so it must be examined if we are interested in the exegetical nature of TgLam.

Alexander and Van der Heide both provide a comparison of the textual traditions of WT and YT. Alexander examined 1.1-3 in great detail, demonstrating that YT presents a truncated form of WT. For example, in YT Chapter 1.1 begins as follows:⁷³

איכדין על ירושלם ועל עמה לאיתדנא בתירוכין ולמספד עליהון איכה הוה כמא דאתדנו אדם וחווה
דאתרכו מגינתא דעדן ואספד עליהון קדשא בריך הוא איכה...

Alexander points out that in YT “we run straight into a grammatical problem: Where is the verb in the איכדין clause?”⁷⁴ The most likely candidate is הוה at the end of the clause, but this is awkward and is likely to be a corruption of WT’s היכמה. “היכמה must be the original here, and the Yem. readings corruptions of it. Perhaps הוה כמא was deliberately read by a scribe desperately searching for a verb.”⁷⁵

In WT the clause is governed by the verb אתגזר:

אמר ירמיהו נבייא וכהנא רבא איכדין אתגזר על ירושלם ועל עמה לאתדנא בתירוכין ולמספד עלויהון
איכה היכמה דאתדני אדם וחווה דאיתרכו מגינתא דעדן ואספיד מרי עלמא עילויהון איכה...

The impression given is that YT has merely shortened WT, removing the reference to Jeremiah and the governing verb with it. Alexander then examines verses 2 and 3 of Chapter One with similar results. He concludes, “there can be no doubt, however, that if we are concerned with the aggadic content of the Targum, then our starting-point must be the western recension. Of the two recensions of TgLam, West. is the older and Yem. the younger, in that West. takes us further back into the tradition.”⁷⁶

In a similar treatment Van der Heide summarizes a comparison of the two traditions of the entire targum. Breaking his study into four sections, Van der Heide examines the
upon British Library Or. 1476.

⁷³Following Van der Heide’s text.

⁷⁴Alexander, “Textual Tradition,” p. 13.

⁷⁵Alexander, “Textual Tradition,” p. 13

⁷⁶Alexander, “Textual Tradition,” p. 10.

one-word variants, instances where WT is substantially longer than YT, occurrences of texts which are shorter in WT, and the way in which the two traditions are mutually related.⁷⁷ The translation technique of YT is to provide a simpler text, which is often closer to that of MT. WT, on the other hand, often uses a variety of terms which would have required a greater knowledge of Aramaic from the reader. For example, in 1.3, MT has מצרים and WT has תחומיא, but YT has the etymologically related מצרינא.⁷⁸ In the many instances where WT is longer than YT it is due to aggadic additions by WT and a more literal rendering by YT.⁷⁹

Van der Heide also takes note of several instances where YT is a shorter, but not necessarily better, text. For example, in 2.4, where WT introduces Nebuchadnezzar as God's agent of retribution (אתעתד על יד ימיניה דנבוכד נצר וסייעיה כאילו הוה מעיק לעממיה בית), YT removes the reference to Nebuchadnezzar. In so doing YT has difficulties with the verb אתעתד ("to take position, stand ready") and so the majority of the YT MSS use the Af. form: אעתד יד ימינה כמעיק, "He positioned his hand as an oppressor." This is not a very satisfactory reading and is again best viewed as a simplification of WT.⁸⁰ There are also verses which are omitted by YT MSS.⁸¹ The instances where YT is longer than WT are few and insignificant with the exception of 1.9 where WT fails to represent MT את עניי.⁸² Van der Heide concludes that while the two traditions share many readings, "**Yem** offers a text which in textual respect [sic] is less interesting than **WT**." Furthermore, "the text of **Yem** is in all probability a text revised on the basis of **WT** (or some version very similar to **WT**) with the aim of achieving a closer resemblance to MT."⁸³

Thus both Alexander and Van der Heide, whose main interest was in YT, have come

⁷⁷Van der Heide, pp. 23-36.

⁷⁸For a full list of one-word variants see Van der Heide, pp. 27-8.

⁷⁹Van der Heide, p. 29-30.

⁸⁰Van der Heide, pp. 30-2.

⁸¹Van der Heide, p. 77. "A striking phenomenon is the omission of complete verses: 4.17 is omitted by all our manuscripts (but extant in all the representatives of WT known to me)." Other verses omitted by various MSS are 3.5, 3.53, 3.61, and 4.7.

⁸²Our chosen manuscript, Urb. 1, does have an additional omission at the end of 1.3, but this error is not found in other western MSS.

⁸³Van der Heide, p. 35.

to the same conclusion: WT is to be preferred as the older text and the most interesting from an exegetical perspective. Since this study is concerned with the exegetical intent of TgLam and given the aggadic superiority of WT it is this text which we shall be using, turning to YT only in those cases where it provides a reading lacking in WT (e.g., 1.9). The text presented in this thesis is that of Urb. 1, which I have chosen primarily because it is the earliest WT MS extant.⁸⁴ It is not without errors, however, and I have emended and corrected the text where necessary with reference to other WT MSS, including the printed addition of Lagarde and the readings collected by Landauer.⁸⁵ Our discussion of the language of TgLam will focus on WT as found in Urb. 1.⁸⁶

Principles of Translation

Finally, we have already discussed the way in which italics will be employed in this thesis,⁸⁷ but it is appropriate that we take a moment to discuss the principles followed in preparing this new translation of TgLam. The translation included in the commentary is a literal rendering of the Aramaic text into modern English.⁸⁸ I have attempted to represent the character and style of the targum without sacrificing the readability of the English. In keeping with this goal, Aramaic terms which recur through out the targum are consistently translated with the same English word or phrase and, rather than attempt to approximate their meaning in English, I have transliterated the terms “Shekinah” and “Memra.” Their meaning and function are discussed within the commentary. Reference will occasionally be

⁸⁴I have used Levine’s facsimile (*The Targum of the Five Megillot*) the quality of which is excellent. For details concerning the MS see *The Targum of the Five Megillot*, pp. 12-4, and *The Aramaic Version*, pp. 21-2. The MS alternates the biblical text and the targum. The biblical text follows MT closely, however there are certain differences most of which are differences in *plena* or *defectiva* orthography (see, *The Targum of the Five Megillot*, pp. 98-101). A notable exception, however, is the use of ײ for ײדא (see §3.1.14).

⁸⁵S. Landauer, “Zum Targum der Klagelieder,” *Orientalische Studien Theodor Nöldeke I*, [Giessen: 1906], pp. 505-12. This article contains variant readings from MSS Parma 3218, 3231, 2867, 3235, 3189; Kennicott 198; the Complutensian Polyglot (1514-7); and quotations from the Arukh.

⁸⁶For detailed analysis of the language of YT of TgLam see Van der Heide, pp. 73ff.

⁸⁷See §1.2.2. Deviations from the Hebrew text will be indicated with italics.

⁸⁸As discussed in the preceding section, this translation is based upon the MS Urb. 1 with only occasional corrections as noted.

made to previous translations of TgLam,⁸⁹ but this will only be done in order to understand how Levine and Greenup have interpreted the targumic text.⁹⁰ Where appropriate, the commentary will provide justification for the translation adopted.

⁸⁹There are only two published English translations of TgLam; Levine, *The Aramaic Version*, and A. W. Greenup, *The Targum on the Book of Lamentations*, (Sheffield, 1893).

⁹⁰This is particularly important in reference to Greenup since no commentary (and few explanatory notes) accompanies the translation. Although Levine provides a commentary, the rendering offered in his notes does not always agree with translation. See, e.g., §3.3.16.

3.1. TgLam Chapter 1

3.1.1. Verse I⁹¹

אִיכָה יִשְׁבֶּה בְּדָד הָעִיר רַבְתִּי עִם
הַיְתָה כְּאַלְמָנָה רַבְתִּי בְּגוֹיִם
שָׂרְתִי בַמְּדִינוֹת הַיְתָה לְמָס:

אמר ירמיהו נביא וכהנא רבא איכדין אתגזר על ירושלם ועל עמהא לאתדנא בתירוכין ולמספד עליהון איכה היכמה דאתדנן אדם וחיה דאתרכו מגנתא דעדן ואספד עלויהון מרי עלמא איכה ענת מדת דינא וכן אמרת על סגיאנות חובהא אשתדר ומה דבגוהא בגין תהא יתבא בלחודהא כגבר דמכתש סגירו על בסריה דבלחודוהי יתיב וקרתא דהוה מליא אוכלוסין ועממין סגיאין אתרוקנת מנהון והות דמיא כארמלא ודמתרברבא בעמיא ושליטא באפרכיא והוון מסקין לה מסין הדרת למהוי מכיכא ולמתן לה כרגא בתר דנא:

Jeremiah the Prophet and High Priest told how it was decreed that Jerusalem and her people should be punished with banishment and that they should be mourned with 'ekah. Just as when Adam and Eve were punished and expelled from the Garden of Eden and the Master of the Universe mourned them with 'ekah.

The Attribute of Justice spoke and said, "Because of the greatness of her rebellious sin which was within her, thus she will dwell alone as a man plagued with leprosy upon his skin who sits alone."

And the city which was full of crowds and many peoples has been emptied of them and she has become like a widow. She who was great among the nations and a ruler over provinces which had brought her tribute has become lowly again and gives head tax to them from thereafter.

Although MT does not attribute anyone as the author of Lamentations, most of the ancient versions had little doubt that it was the prophet Jeremiah who wrote these five grief-filled poems.⁹² LXX offers a substantial introduction that provides the reader with the *Sitz im Leben* of the text. καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὸ αἰχμαλωτισθῆναι τὸν Ἰσραηὴλ καὶ Ἰερουσαλημ ἔρημωθῆναι ἐκάθισεν Ἰερεμίας κλαίων καὶ ἐθρήνησεν τὸν θρῆνον τοῦτον ἐπὶ Ἰερουσαλημ καὶ εἶπεν. The Peshitta (P) is brief but nonetheless certain about Jeremiah's authorship, **ܕܝܫܝܘܿܬܝܢ ܕܝܫܝܘܿܬܝܢ ܕܝܫܝܘܿܬܝܢ**. The Church Fathers were also certain that Jeremiah was the author and this belief was later expressed in the placement of Lamentations after Jeremiah in the Christian canon as well as in the Vulgate's (V) subtitle to Lamentations, *Id est Lamentationes Jeremiae Prophetae*.

⁹¹The section number represents the chapter of this thesis, followed the chapter of TgLam, and the verse of that chapter. E.g., section 3.1.1 is Chapter 3 - "Exegetical Commentary," Chapter 1, and verse 1 of TgLam.

⁹²YT, as presented by Van der Heide, does not include the attributive phrase of WT and begins with ...איכדין על ירש... It is clearly a truncated form of WT and is not to be preferred.

It is not surprising that Lamentations should have been attributed to Jeremiah given the creativity with which the ancient interpreters drew upon all of the Bible in order to glean information not supplied within the text. This attribution of authorship can be traced back to the reference in 2 Chron. 35.25 that Jeremiah mourned Josiah in song.

And Jeremiah sang laments (יִיקוֹן) over Josiah. And all the male and female singers spoke of Josiah in their laments unto this day. And they made them a fixed observance for Israel and they were written in the [Book of] Laments (הַקִּינֹת).

While most modern scholars find no reason to connect this episode with the collection of five laments written over Jerusalem, this reference was reason enough for the early Christians and Rabbis to link Jeremiah with the biblical Book of Lamentations. Rabbinic sources also assume that Jeremiah was the author, with one midrash describing how the Scroll of Lamentations chose Jeremiah.⁹³ The Talmud attributes three books to Jeremiah, “Jeremiah wrote the book which bears his name, the Book of Kings, and Lamentations.”⁹⁴ The targum, however, appears to be unique in attributing to Jeremiah the title of “High Priest” (כהנא רבא).⁹⁵

Although Jer. 1.1 begins “The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests who are in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,” there is no mention in the Bible of Jeremiah being of the high priestly family. Churgin suggests that כהנא רבא is “merely an honorific title and is perhaps the result of comparisons with Moses and Phineas”⁹⁶ and refers to piska thirteen (דברי ירמיהו) 6 and 12 of Pesikta de Rav Kahana (PRK) which compare Jeremiah to Moses (13.6) and to Phineas, Uriah, and Ezekiel (13.12). In the first instance (13.6) the opening verse is Deut. 18.18 “I will raise up for them a prophet from among their own brethren” and R. Judah b. Simon tells us that “you will find that whatever is written about

⁹³PR 29.5.

⁹⁴b B. Bat. 15a, But it is important to note that in this passage כתב clearly refers to a compilation of texts as well as the actual act of writing.

⁹⁵This title is attributed to Jeremiah both in 1.1 and 1.2.

⁹⁶Pinkas Churgin, תרגום כתובים, (New York, 1945), p. 156. His reference is to קו לו, דברי ירמיהו, but it is unclear to what edition he is referring. The texts referred to, however, are clearly PRK 13.6 and 13.12 according to the Mandelbaum edition (Bernard Mandelbaum, *Pesikta de Rav Kahana According to an Oxford Manuscript*, [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1987], pp. 229 and 236). Levine suggests that this reference reflects “the tradition of an exemplaristic triad of Moses, Phineas, and Jeremiah, as functioning members of the High Priesthood” (p. 77). Unfortunately, his reference to Pesikta Rabbati is erroneous and there does not seem to be any evidence to support this position.

this one [Moses] is written about that one [Jeremiah].”⁹⁷ Jeremiah is demonstrated to be Moses’ successor in rebuking and calling Israel and Judah to repentance. The second midrash (13.12) begins “R. Samuel b. Nahman said, ‘There are four who come from blighted families, these are they: Phineas, Uriah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah.’” According to R. Samuel b. Nahman each of the four figures was held in disrepute by the people and therefore it was “necessary” for Scripture to provide them with a genealogy. More importantly, these genealogies emphasized that each was a valid priest, but no higher merit is accorded to them.

It has been suggested that Jeremiah’s family is descended from Abiathar, David’s priest who was expelled from Jerusalem to Anathoth by Solomon (1 Kings 2.26-7).⁹⁸ It might be that an assumption of this proud lineage by our targumist led him to provide Jeremiah with such an exalted title. On the other hand, we might also consider the tradition that identifies Jeremiah’s father, Hilkiyah, with the High Priest of the same name from the time of Josiah.⁹⁹ The earliest source of this tradition is Clement of Alexandria,¹⁰⁰ but it is not taken up by Jewish commentators until Kimhi’s commentary to Jer. 1.1 (12th century CE). This does not mean that this tradition was unknown to earlier Jewish authorities, and we might speculate that in referring to Jeremiah as the High Priest the targumist assumed that he inherited his father’s title.

In this context it is also appropriate to mention that there is a strong tradition which elevates Elijah to the status of High Priest.¹⁰¹ A key element of this tradition is the equation of Phineas with Elijah. Since we have just seen that Jeremiah is also compared with

⁹⁷Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from PRK are from William G. Braude and Israel J. Kapstein, *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana: R. Kahana’s Compilation of Discourses for Sabbaths and Festal Days*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

⁹⁸John Bright, *The Anchor Bible: Jeremiah*, (New York: Doubleday, 1965), pp. lxxxvii-lxxxviii.

⁹⁹Louis Ginzberg, *The Legend of the Jews, Vol. VI*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 1968), pp. 384.

¹⁰⁰*Stromateis*, 1.29. See also Hippolytus, *On Susanna* 1.1.

¹⁰¹See §3.4.21. Landauer mentions this tradition and the reference to Jeremiah as High Priest within the context of arguing for dating TgLam to the Islamic period. The major sources for the tradition of Elijah as High Priest are found in TgPsJ (Exod. 6.18, 40.10 and Num. 30.4) whose final redaction can be no earlier than the seventh century CE. See Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations,” p. 219.

Phineas, it may well be that the rabbinic reasoning extended the equations as follows:

Phineas = Grandson of Aaron (Num. 25.10) \Rightarrow High Priest

Phineas = Elijah (PRE 47)¹⁰² \Rightarrow Elijah = High Priest

Phineas \approx Jeremiah (PRK 105) \Rightarrow Jeremiah = High Priest

We will examine the tradition of Elijah as High Priest in greater detail below, as well as the tradition of Zechariah as High Priest (2.20), but we should note there is no more biblical basis for such an attribution to either of them than there is for Jeremiah. Regardless of the rabbinic justification of these attributions, it is clear this elevation of office is intended to increase the authority of these figures. A similar attribution of authority is found in TgCant 1.1 where Solomon is given the title of prophet. שירין ותושבחן די אמר שלמה. נביא מלכא דישראל ברוח נבואה קדם ריבון כל עלמא יהוה. There is no biblical reason to consider that Solomon was a prophet, but the targumist emphasizes his authority not only by referring to him as “a prophet,” but also by stating that he spoke “through prophecy from before the LORD, Master of the Universe.” Although there are very clear differences between the two texts, the reference to Jeremiah’s prophetic office and the attribution of the High Priesthood to Jeremiah in TgLam serves a similar function to the elevation of Solomon to prophet in TgCant.

The erotic nature of the Song of Songs and debates regarding its place within Scripture required the targumist to demonstrate the divine inspiration of his text,¹⁰³ but this was not an issue with the Book of Lamentations. We have already seen that there is no debate within rabbinic texts about the authorship and authority of Lamentations; it is universally attributed to Jeremiah. Furthermore, Jeremiah’s prophetic status was not disputed. The role of Lamentations within the liturgy, however, was unclear during the rabbinic period and may suggest the reason for calling Jeremiah a High Priest.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer.

¹⁰³See, for example, Otto Eisfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. Peter R. Ackroyd, (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 485; Max Margolis, “How the Song of Songs Entered the Canon,” *The Song of Songs: A Symposium*, ed. Wilfred H. Schoff, (Philadelphia: The Commercial Museum, 1924), pp. 9-17; and Wilhelm Rudolph, “Das Hohe Lied im Kanon,” *ZAW* 59 (1942-3), pp. 189-99.

¹⁰⁴For a complete discussion of the liturgical use of TgLam see §5.2.1.

In the opening phrase of TgLam our targumist not only provides the historical context for the first destruction of the Temple, he also declares the institution of the recitation of *ʿekah* as a means of mourning Jerusalem. “Jeremiah the Prophet and High Priest told how it was decreed that Jerusalem and her people should be punished with banishments and that they should be mourned with *ʿekah*.” While this last phrase may simply be interpreted as “they should be mourned with laments,”¹⁰⁵ it is probable that this is a reference to the scroll known as *ʿekah*, the Book of Lamentations. Thus, our targum begins by asserting that Jeremiah not only foretold Jerusalem’s destruction, but he also instituted the liturgical reading of the Book of Lamentations as a means of commemorating the ninth of Ab. The emphasis upon Jeremiah’s role as prophet provides authority to this tradition and, while it is not certain that our targumist is indicating anything other than Jeremiah’s inherited rank, the title “High Priest” may have been employed in order to lend further weight to the tradition of reciting *ʿekah* on the ninth of Ab. Ultimately the authority our targumist is appealing to is divine revelation, since, as a prophet and High Priest, Jeremiah was a conduit for God’s proclamations to his people.

היכמה דאתדנן אדם וחווה דאתרכו מגנתא דעדן ואספד עילויהון מרי עלמא איכה

The first major aggadic addition to our targum is based upon the consonantal similarity between אַיְכָה of Gen. 3.9 (“Where are you?”) and אַיְכָה of Lam. 1.1. The manner and method of Jerusalem’s punishment is compared with that of Adam and Eve when they were expelled from Eden as a result of their refusal to obey the single command that God had placed upon them. This midrash is found in several sources including PRK 15, GenR 19.9, and LamR Proem 4. In each of these texts the base verse is Hos. 6.7, “But like man (כאדם) they have transgressed the covenant, there they dealt faithlessly with me.” While the midrash presented in GenR 19.9 is simply a commentary on Gen. 3.9, PRK 15 is an

¹⁰⁵By the rabbinic period איכה, literally, “how,” had come to have the additional meaning of “lament” as we can see from LamR 1.1: “R. Nehemiah said, “The word ‘how’ means precisely ‘lament,’ as it is said, ‘The Lord God called to the man, and said to him ‘Where are you?’ meaning ‘Woe unto you’ (אי לך).” As a result our targumist provides a double translation, once in its original meaning of “how” and twice as a noun meaning “lament.”

extended discussion of the destruction and lament of Jerusalem. According to PRK 15.1:

R. Abbahu, citing R. Jose bar Hanina, began his discourse with the verse, *But they like man have transgressed the covenant; there they have dealt treacherously against me* (Hos. 6.7). *They like man*—that is, the children of Israel are like the first man of whom the Holy One said: The first man—I brought him into the Garden of Eden, I gave him a command, but he transgressed My command. Thereupon I condemned him to separation, condemned him to banishment, and cried out אֵיכָה in lament over him. I had brought him into the Garden of Eden: *The Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden* (Gen. 2.15). And I had commanded him: *The Lord God commanded the man*, etc. (Gen. 2.16). But he transgressed my command: *Has thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?* (Gen 3.11). And so I condemned him to separation: *So he separated the man*, etc. (Gen. 3.24). And condemned him to banishment: *Therefore the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden* (Gen. 2.23). And uttered a lament over him, as indicated by the verse *The Lord God called unto the man, and said unto him אַיְיָהּ* ('Where art thou?') (Gen. 3.9). אַיְיָהּ, usually spelled אֵיכָה, is here spelled with the letter *heh* added at the end, so that the word has the further significance of "How."

The targum alludes to this midrash in a single line, "Just as when Adam and Eve were punished and expelled from the Garden of Eden the Master of the Universe mourned them [with *ʿekah*]." Such a brief allusion is dependent upon the preexistence of the midrash in order to provide the justification and the exegetical basis for the midrash. The targumist makes no attempt to express the connection between Lam. 1.1 and Gen. 3.9, but instead assumes that his audience would be well aware of the midrash to which he was alluding. That the basis of the midrash is the similarity of consonants which is effective only in Hebrew is further indication that this is a midrashic element which has been brought into our targum from an external source.¹⁰⁶ In this case we have several sources whose dates of redaction, although still debated, are viewed by the majority of scholars to have been in the fifth century CE. The traditions contained within these sources are therefore older than the date of redaction and may, in fact, be significantly older. It is reasonable, therefore, to suggest that the exegetical tradition presented in this verse of TgLam dates to at least the fifth century CE and possibly earlier.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶Avigdor Shinan, "The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Rabbinic Aggadah: Some Methodological Considerations," in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), pp. 211-12.

¹⁰⁷See, Braude and Kapstein, pp. xlv-xlvi; Jacob Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah: An Analytical Translation*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), p. xi, and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. M. Bockmuehl, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), pp. 276-87. This does not necessarily indicate that our targum dates from this period, but it is a data point which must be kept in mind as we discuss the question of the date of TgLam. See below, §5.

As a result of adding this midrash the targumist makes two important points concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. First, by transferring the subject (God) of the second occurrence of the verb *ספד* back onto the impersonal verb of the first phrase, it is implied that God mourned over Jerusalem's rebellion just as he had over the rebellion of Adam and Eve. God thus becomes involved in grieving over Jerusalem and is shown to be an unwilling participant in its destruction, forced to allow the destruction of Jerusalem because of Judah's continued refusal to repent.¹⁰⁸

Secondly, by comparing these two events the targumist is placing the destruction of Jerusalem within a history of God's punishing those he loves, as a father might reprimand his wayward child. It is an act of love rather than of hatred. (One might even conjecture that the targumist had Prov. 3.11-2 in the back of his mind: "My son do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.") This theme will be built upon throughout TgLam, particularly in the following three verses as the targumist takes us from Creation (verse 1) through the time of Moses (verse 2) and up to the days immediately preceding the destruction of the Temple (verses 3-4). In so doing, our targumist uses these first four verses in order to provide the targum with a theological prologue.¹⁰⁹

ענת מדת דינא וכן אמרת על סגיאנות חובאה אשתדר ומה דבגוהא בגין תהי יתבא בלחודהא כגבר דמכתש
סגירו על בסריה דבלחודהי יתיב

In the next phrase the targumist introduces מדת דינא, the Attribute of Justice, who proclaims that it is as a result of Jerusalem's sin that she has been allowed to be destroyed and made desolate. The Attributes of Justice and Mercy (מדת רחמים) are frequently encountered within the midrashim and in our Analysis we will study the role of מדת דינא within the targumim in greater detail.¹¹⁰ At this point, however, a brief summary of the

¹⁰⁸This aspect of God's mourning is highly developed within midrashic literature. See, e.g., LamR Proem 24, PRK 15, and Ginzberg, *Legends*, Vol. VI, pp. 305-6. For a detailed survey see P. Kuhn, *Gottes Trauer und Klage in der rabbinischen Überlieferung*, (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

¹⁰⁹See §4.1.

¹¹⁰See §4.3.

origins and role of the Attributes of Justice and Mercy within rabbinic literature is appropriate.¹¹¹

Initially the Attributes of Justice and Mercy merely represented alternate expressions of God's traits as judge and these traits were in turn equated with the names of God. Thus יהוה was equated with the Attribute of Mercy while אלהים was equated with the Attribute of Justice. As Sifre to Deut. 3.23 states:

The LORD: Whenever Scripture say *the LORD* (יהוה), it refers to His quality of mercy, as in the verse, *The LORD, the LORD, God merciful and gracious* (Ex. 34.6). Whenever it says *God* (אלהים), it refers to His quality of justice, as in the verses, *The cause of both parties shall come before God* (אלהים; Ex. 22.8), and *Thou shalt not revile God* (אלהים; Ex. 22.27).¹¹²

Very quickly, however, the Attributes became hypostases, independent entities whom God consults in his heavenly court.¹¹³ As the Attribute of Justice took on the role of “prosecuting attorney” the Attribute of Mercy, in the role of advocate appealing for clemency, became equated with God himself.¹¹⁴ It is therefore as the agent of God's

¹¹¹For a general survey see Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995 [reprint of Magnes Press, 1975]), pp. 448-61; G. F. Moore, *Judaism in First Centuries of the Christian Era, Vol. 1*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1927), pp. 386-400; and P. Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975). For discussion of Memra and the Attribute of Mercy see Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence: The Memra*, (Totowa, NJ: Allanheld, Osmun & Co., 1984), pp. 39-56. The summary presented here follows Urbach's outline of the development of the Attribute of Justice within rabbinic literature.

¹¹²Sifre Deut. 3.23 (§26); trans. Reuven Hammer, *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 49. See also *b* Ber. 60b; ExodR to 3.6; GenR to 12.15, 33, and 21.7.

Hayward, however, has demonstrated that the targumim were “unaware” of the rabbinic rule that יהוה is equated with mercy and אלהים is equated with justice. “Nowhere in the Targumim, so far as we are aware, is this element of justice ever attributed to the title *’elohim*; the Targumim seem completely unaware of any distinction in theological sense between YHWH and *’elohim*,” (Hayward, *Divine Name*, p. 45). It is important to remember that Hayward's study focuses upon the *acts* of justice and mercy attributed to YHWH/*’elohim* rather than upon the figures of the Attributes of Justice and Mercy.

¹¹³See, for example, GenR to 1.26. “R. Hanina did not say thus, but [he said that] when He came to create Adam He took counsel with the ministering angels, saying to them, *Let us make man*. ‘What shall his character be?’ asked they. ‘Righteous men shall spring from him,’ He answered, as it is written, *For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous* (Ps. 1.6), which means that the Lord made known the way of the righteous to the ministering angels; *But the way of the wicked shall perish*: He destroyed [hid] it from them. He revealed to them that the righteous would arise from him, but He did not reveal to them that the wicked would spring from him, for had He revealed to them that the wicked would spring from him; the Attribute of Justice would not have permitted him to be created.” See also, for example, *b* Shab. 55a, Meg. 15b, San. 94a and 97b.

¹¹⁴See Urbach, pp. 460-1. In *b* Meg. 15b, for example, during an exposition of Isa. 28.5-8 a dialogue is established directly between the Attribute of Justice and God; “Said the Attribute of Justice before the Holy One, blessed be He: Why this difference between these [Israel] and the others [the nations]? The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: Israel busy themselves with the Torah, the other nations do not busy themselves

righteous punishment that we most often find the Attribute of Justice. Thus LevR to 4.2 speaks of the Attribute of Justice as “acting against” the generation of the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and those who worshipped the Golden Calf.¹¹⁵ In a similar vein, ExodR to 6.2 describes how the Attribute of Justice wanted to smite Moses for his insolence at doubting that God would deliver Israel.¹¹⁶

For this reason did the Attribute of Justice seek to attack Moses, as it says: *And God* (אלהים) *spoke unto Moses* (6.2). But when God reflected that Moses only spoke thus because of Israel’s suffering, He retracted and dealt with him according to the Attribute of Mercy, as it says: *And he said unto him: I am the LORD* (יהוה, 6.2).¹¹⁷

The midrashim also describe מדת דינא as having been active in Jerusalem’s destruction. For example, in commenting on Lamentations 1.13, “He spread a net for my feet” (וירדנה פרש), “R. Bebai of Sergunieh said: וַיִּרְדְּנָה indicates, ‘*He saw* that the Attribute of *Justice* overtook her.’” וַיִּרְדְּנָה is thus explained as a compound of “he saw” (ויראה) and “justice” (דין).¹¹⁸

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that our targumist has introduced the Attribute of Justice into TgLam. Unlike like the role of מדת דינא in the midrashim, in TgLam מדת דינא is *not* the agent of Jerusalem’s destruction. Instead it merely announces the reasons for her downfall, stating that it was “*because* of the greatness of her rebellious sin which was within her.” מדת דינא proclaims Jerusalem’s guilt and the justice of her punishment, but does not execute it.

We should also note the nature of sin that our targumist ascribes to Jerusalem.

Rebelliousness is not a passive sin or a sin of omission. Jerusalem and her people have

with the Torah — He replied to Him, *But these also reel through wine, and stagger through strong drink ... they totter in judgment* (Isa. 28.7-8).”

¹¹⁵The intersecting verse is Eccl. 3.16, “Moreover I saw under the sun that *in the place of justice*, wickedness was there, and in the place of righteousness, wickedness was there as well.” See also ExodR to 32.11.

¹¹⁶Ex. 5.22-3, “Then Moses turned again to the LORD and said, ‘O LORD, why have you mistreated this people? Why did you ever send me? Since I first came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has mistreated this people, and you have done nothing at all to deliver your people.’”

¹¹⁷The two halves of Ex. 6.2 are interpreted based upon the use first of אלהים and then of יהוה. All quotes from ExodR are from the *Soncino Classics Collection* CD-ROM, which is a digital version of the print edition, trans. S. M. Lehrman.

¹¹⁸מדת דינא also occurs earlier in LamR to 1.13 and again in LamR to 2.4; see §4.3.

actively rebelled against the Lord, refusing to heed the prophets or to follow the law. Mekilta refers to Lamentations when stating that it is rebelliousness that causes the otherwise merciful God to exact punishment from his people.¹¹⁹ “When Israel fail to do the will of God they make the Merciful One cruel, as it is said, ‘The Lord has become like an enemy (Lam. 2.5).’”¹²⁰

This last quotation is important since it underlines the responsibility of the people in bringing about their own destruction (“*they* make the Merciful One cruel”). As Hayward has clearly shown, this concept of God’s Justice and Mercy working in harmony was widespread and there is every reason to believe that our targumist was aware of this. By specifying rebellion as the Israelite’s sin, the targumist emphasizes that their destruction was the direct result of the Israelites’ own actions. It is not the act of a capricious God, rather it is a merciful God who has been driven by an unrepentant people to exact punishment.

After proclaiming Jerusalem’s guilt the Attribute of Justice then compares her with a leper who, as a result of being unclean,¹²¹ is forced to live outside of his community. The textual basis for this expansion is not apparent until the end of the phrase where we have the Hebrew *ישבה בודד* represented by *בלחודיה יתיב*. This comparison is an allusion to Lev. 13.46.

[The person who has the leprous disease] shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

In spite of his enforced separation from the camp, the leprous man is nonetheless a member of the community. When he has been cleansed of his leprosy and offered the appropriate sacrifices, he may return to the community. By alluding to this passage the targumist manages to mitigate the severity of exile by reminding his audience that though Jerusalem

¹¹⁹See Hayward, pp. 46 and 49. His discussion focuses on the role of *Memra* as an agent of mercy which only occasionally acts as an agent of justice. “This [TgNeof to Ex. 34.6, 7] agrees with the way in which the *Memra* is an agent of punishment: it is only the rebellious who are tried.”

¹²⁰Mekilta Shirta 5.67. Unless noted otherwise all translations of Mekilta are from Jacob Z. Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933).

¹²¹For further examples and discussion of Jerusalem as “unclean” see §3.1.8 and §3.1.9.

sits alone and “outside the camp” she can return when she has been cleansed of her “disease.” Furthermore, as Levine has pointed out, the use of such an obvious simile emphasizes that the biblical reference to Jerusalem “as a widow” is also to be understood symbolically.¹²²

Like the first aggadah we examined, there are midrashic traditions which parallel that found in our targum. LamR Proem 21 provides a detailed midrash based upon Lev. 13.45-6 and opened by R. Alexandri. The midrash interprets each portion of verses 45-6 in light of the destruction of Jerusalem. “‘The person with the leprous disease,’ this refers to the house of the sanctuary. ‘With the leprous disease,’ this refers to idolatry which imparts uncleanness as do leprous infections,” etc. The midrash concludes by returning to Lam. 1.1, *איכה ישבה בדד*. Leqach Tob (LT)¹²³ also offers several explanations of *ישבה בדד*, one of which is a reiteration of Lev. 13.46.¹²⁴

The midrashic parallel found in LamR Proem 21 concludes:

And it shall come to pass that ye shall say, “Wherefore hath the Lord our God done [all these things to us?]” then shalt thou answer them, “Like ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours” (Jer. 5.19). R. Johanan and R. Simeon b. Lakish both made a statement on this point. R. Johanan said: “[This lesson may be derived from] Because, even because (Lev. 26.43), indicating measure for measure.” R. Simeon b. Lakish said: “[It may be derived from] Your land, strangers devour it in your presence (Isa. 1.7): i.e. as against what you have done, strangers devour it.” R. Alexandri derived it from this verse, All the days wherein the plague is in him he shall be unclean (Lev. 13.46). Ekah!¹²⁵

In Jer. 5.19 the LORD tells Judah that they are to explain to others that their fate of serving strangers in a strange land is the direct result of their having served strange gods while still living in Judah. The theme which connects each of these verses in the midrash (Lev.

¹²²Levine, pp. 77-9. See also LamR Proem 21 where a similar use of Lev. 13.45 identifies the Temple with the leper.

¹²³Firmly dated to the end of the eleventh, beginning of the twelfth century CE. See Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden historisch entwickelt*, (2nd. ed. Frankfurt am Main, 1892; reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966), pp. 306-8.

¹²⁴Of additional interest, and perhaps at the back of our targumist’s mind as well, is LT’s use of gematria. Since *דד* has the numerical value of ten the author is able to make the connection with the Ten Commandments, identifying specifically the way in which Israel had sinned. As a result of disobeying these first and most basic Commandments Zion must sit alone.

¹²⁵All quotes from LamR are from *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, trans. A. Cohen, (London: Soncino, 1951).

13.45-6, Jer. 5.19, Lev. 26.43, and Isa. 1.7) is the equation of “uncleanness” with idolatry and the expulsion from the land which was promised as punishment for disobeying God’s commandments.¹²⁶ Although our targum does not specify what the “rebellious sin” was in verse 1, the description of Jerusalem as an unclean man placed within the broader rabbinic context which interprets uncleanness as idolatry is highly suggestive. All sin, however, can also be understood as rebellion¹²⁷ and it may be that our targumist is using this broadest category of sin in order to introduce the more specific litany which follows in verses 2-4.

It is important to bear in mind that this section of the targum to verse 1 was based upon only the first three words of MT (איכה ישה בדד) and contains the bulk of the additional material found in 1.1. That such a large text should emerge from only three words is not necessarily surprising, but it does show a disregard for the poetic nature of the Hebrew text. This extreme dissolution of the Hebrew text into aggadic additions is atypical for our targum, but it is a pattern which will be followed throughout the next three verses. The concluding portion of verse 1, however, is more typical of the method of translation found in the remainder of TgLam.

וקרתא דהוה מליא אוכלוסין ועממין סגיאין אתרוקינת מנהון והות דמיא כארמלא ודמתרברבא בעמיא
ושליטא באפרכיא והוון מסקין לה מסין הדרת למהוי מכיכא ולמתן לה כרגא בתר דנא:

Although the remaining eleven words of Hebrew are rendered in just two lines of the targum, the use of both the Greek loanwords ὄχλος and ἐπαρχία and the Arabic loanword כרגא are of textual interest. The implications of these loanwords for the origins of TgLam will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5, but a few additional comments are appropriate here. The majority of the last two stiches of verse 1 are represented in a fairly straightforward manner and is an example of prosaic expansion.¹²⁸

The remainder of the verse (with the exception noted below) contains some

¹²⁶See Lev. 26, especially verses 27-39.

¹²⁷See Solomon Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, (New York: Schocken, 1961), pp. 219-41.

¹²⁸See §1.2.2.b.

expansions, such as the additional information that Jerusalem received tribute from the provinces over which she ruled, but they are the result of the consistent targumic method of translating poetic texts as prose and include non-literal translations (such as the reduplicated rendering of עם העיר רבתי עם with ועממין סגיאין וכלוסין מליא אוכלוסין דהוה דהוה מליא אוכלוסין) and other additions that do not effect either the textual or theological message. For example, the additional information that Jerusalem, which had been full of people, “had been emptied of them” (אתרוקינת מנהון) does not in any way effect either the story or the message, it simply makes explicit the poetic statement of 1.1aβ. The effect is similar to that of modern, paraphrastic renderings of the Bible such as *The Living Bible*.¹²⁹ In contrast, we have already seen how the addition of the midrash concerning Adam and Eve is intended to convey a message not present in MT.

The exception to this prosaic expansion is found in the targumist’s multiple reading of the last two Hebrew words: היתה למס. This phrase is rendered with the Aramaic, והוון מסקין לה מסין הדרת למהוי מכיכא ולמתן לה כרגא בתר דנא. Rather than merely expanding the Hebrew poetry the final phrase of TgLam 1.1, למתן לה כרגא בתר דנא, is a second reading of MT’s היתה למס.¹³⁰ Although it is difficult to determine precisely which Aramaic terms represent the Hebrew text, I have suggested in my translation that the Aramaic והוון and מסין לה should be considered closest to the Hebrew. This decision is based upon the order (this rendering occurs first in the verse) and these Aramaic terms are etymologically more closely related to the Hebrew. Against this decision it should be noted that the meaning of this phrase in the targum is converse to the Hebrew.

In the targumist’s first rendering he provides a positive interpretation. This converse translation is achieved by changing the verb from the third person feminine singular to the third person masculine plural pronoun and the participle מסקין. Thus, instead of Jerusalem becoming a vassal (the simple meaning of היתה למס), the nations bring her tribute. The final phrase, however, describes the reversal of Jerusalem’s fortunes so that Jerusalem is

¹²⁹Kenneth N. Taylor, *The Living Bible*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1971).

¹³⁰Urb. 1’s reading of והוון מסקין לה מסין should be emended to והוון מסקין לה as found in most other MSS, see Levine, p. 25.

forced to bring tribute to the nations which she had formerly ruled. This, added to the fact that this final phrase includes the only Arabic loanword found in TgLam, may indicate a later redaction during which the positive ending was deemed inappropriate.¹³¹ While this is possible, the two interpretations work well together. The converse translation of *היתה למס* further embellishes MT's brief description of Jerusalem as a "princess among the provinces" and shows a direct inverse relationship between her former state, as one who received tribute, and her fallen state, as one who must pay taxes.

3.1.2. Verse 2

כִּכּוּ תִבְכֶּה בַּלַּיְלָה וְדַמְעָתָה עַל לַחַיִּיהָ
 אֵין-לָהּ מִנְחָם מִכָּל-אֱהָבָיָהּ
 כָּל-רַעֲיָהּ בְּגָדוּ בָהּ הָיוּ לָהּ לְאֵבִים:

כד שלח משה נביא עזגדין לאללא ית ארעא תבו עזגדיא ואסיקו טיב ביש על ארעא דישראל וההוא ליליא תשעא יומין באב הוה וכד שמעו עמא בית ישראל ית בשורתא בישתא הדא דאתבשרו על ארעא דישראל נטלו עמא ית קלהון ובכו עמא בית ישראל בליליא ההוא מן יד תקיף רוגזא דיי עלויהון וגזר למהוי בכך בליליא הדא לדריהון על חורבן בית מוקדשא וכדו אתאמר בנבואה לירמיהו כהנא רבא למהוי חריבא ירושלם על ידוי דנבוכד נצר רשיעא אין לא תייבין בתתובא מן יד עאל אוכח לעמא בית ישראל וסריבו לקבלא בכך עאל נבוכד נצר רשיעא וצדא ית ירושלם ובית מוקדשא אוקיד בנורא בתשע יומין בירחא דאב וביה בליליא בכיאת כנשתא דישראל בכותא ודמעא זליג על לסתהא לית די ימלל תנחומין על לבהא מן כל טעוותא די רחימת למיזל בתריהון ובגין כך כל חברהא ארשיעו בהא אתהפכו למהוי לה לבעיל דבבין:

When Moses the Prophet sent messengers to spy out the land the messengers returned and gave forth a bad report concerning the land of Israel. This was the night of the ninth of Ab. When the people of the House of Israel heard this bad report which they had received concerning the land of Israel, the people lifted their voice and the people of the House of Israel wept during that night. Immediately the anger of the LORD was kindled against them and he decreed that it should be thus in that night throughout their generations over the destruction of the Temple.

When it was told through prophecy to Jeremiah the High Priest that Jerusalem would be destroyed at the hand of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar unless they repented, he immediately entered and rebuked the people of the House of Israel, but they refused to accept it. Therefore the wicked Nebuchadnezzar entered and razed Jerusalem and set fire to the Temple on the ninth day in the month of Ab. On that night, the Congregation of Israel wept bitterly and her tears flowed down her cheeks. There was no one to speak comfortingly to her heart from among all her idols which she loved to follow after. As a result, all her friends were wicked to her; they turned against her and became her enemies.

As in TgLam 1.1 the targumist does not begin his rendering of this verse with a translation of the biblical material. Instead he embarks on an extended retelling of Num. 13-4. This is the second stage in our targumist's four part introduction to Lamentations as the first three verses of the targum outline the historical process of the rebellion of God's

¹³¹For further discussion of these terms and the discussion of the origin and linguistic nature of this text see §5.1.

people.¹³² TgLam 1.1 derives parallels between the banishment of Adam and Eve and the destruction of Jerusalem, verse two traces the origins of God's decree that Jerusalem should be destroyed to Israel's refusal to believe that God would deliver Canaan to them, and verse three brings the audience to the exile itself citing specific reasons for Judah's expulsion from Jerusalem.¹³³ As we shall see in Chapters 4 and 5, this introduction helps to establish the way in which the audience will receive the targum,¹³⁴ but the same is true on the level of the verse itself. The statement of the biblical text that "she weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks" is clearly a statement of mourning after the destruction of the Temple, but by prefacing his translation of MT with the story from Num. 14 our targumist provides another, parallel context within which to interpret this passage.¹³⁵

Our targumist builds upon the similarity between the Hebrew phrase *בכו תבכה בלילה* here and *ויבכו העם בלילה ההוא* in Num. 14.1 and inserts the midrash to Num. 14.1 at the beginning of verse 2. This tradition is also found in midrashic and talmudic sources.¹³⁶ There are three references to Num. 14.1 in LamR. The first is in Proem 33 and can be excluded from our current discussion since it is merely stated as a supporting verse for a separate midrash. The second and third occurrences, however, bear directly upon our current enquiry.

Said R. Simeon b. Yohai, "Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to the Israelites, 'Now you are weeping frivolously, but in the end there will be a real weeping for a good cause.' Where was it frivolous? *And Moses heard the people weeping, family by family* (Num. 11.10). *And all the congregation lifted up their voice...* (Num. 14.1). ... And where was it with good cause? ... R. Judah b. R. Simon said, "Once in Judah and once in Babylon. Once in Judah: *She weeps bitterly in the night* (Lam. 1.2). Once in Babylon: *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,*

¹³²TgLam 1.4 completes the theological prologue with a catalogue of Israel's sins, stating that while the Temple stood the people still refused to go and "be seen before the LORD three times a year." This final stage in the introduction does not, however, follow the historical progression established in verses 1-3. See §4.1.

¹³³See §3.1.3.

¹³⁴See A. Shinan, *The Aggadah in the Aramaic Targums to the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1979), pp. 30-8 (in Hebrew). Shinan demonstrates that the Pentateuchal targumim are often more expansive at the beginning or end of a sedarim and TgLam may be exhibiting a similar trait. See §5.2.3 and §4.1.

¹³⁵For discussion of how the addition of co-textual material transforms the meaning of MT within a targum see Samely, *Interpretation of Speech*, pp. 30ff; and "Writing in an (Almost) Classical Vein," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, Vol. 75 (1993), pp. 246-56.

¹³⁶See NumR, 16.20; LamR Proem 33 and ad. loc.; Laqach Tob to 1.1, *b* San. 104b, and *b* Ta'an. 29a. The Mishnah (Ta'an. 4.6) also mentions this incident as one of the five tragedies which occurred to "our ancestors." בתשעה באב נגזר על אבותינו שלא יכנסו לארץ:

yes, we wept (Ps. 137.1).”

Another interpretation of “She weeps bitterly in the night:” She weeps and makes others weep too. ... She weeps and makes the congregation of Israel weep too: *And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried* (Num. 14.1).¹³⁷

The fundamental basis for both of these interpretations is the use of the root *בכה twice in the Hebrew text, בכו תבכה בלילה. The use of the infinitive absolute plus the finite verb in biblical Hebrew serves to intensify the verb, therefore most English translations render the passage: “she *weeps bitterly* in the night.”¹³⁸ The rabbis see each occurrence of the verb as an opportunity to provide separate interpretations. In the first instance the darshan is reminded of other instances in the Bible when Israel wept, but for “frivolous” reasons. The result of his exegesis is an extension of the Hebrew doublet. There are two types of weeping (“frivolous” and “worthy”) and there are two proof texts provided for each type. In a similar, but more direct manner, the darshan then interprets the two occurrences of the verb *בכה as indicating two separate subjects.¹³⁹ The initial subject is always Zion and the other subject is identified variously with God, the ministering angels, heaven and earth (as one unit), mountains and hills (as one unit), the seventy nations, and the congregation of Israel.

It is important to note that neither of these midrashim explicitly identify the event of Num 14.1 as the moment when God decided that the Temple should be destroyed. In our first example God is reported as telling the Israelites that “in the end there will be a real weeping for a good cause,” but the emphasis is placed upon when and where Israel “really wept” (i.e., once in Judah and once in Babylon). In our second example Num 14.1 is used simply as a proof text in order to demonstrate that the congregation of Israel also wept; there is no attempt to place Num 14.1 within a larger historical or exegetical context. Num 14.1 therefore remains remarkably distant from Lam. 1.2, used purely as a proof text, and the darshan does not seek to directly link Israel’s rebellion at Kadesh-barnea with the

¹³⁷LamR to 1.1.

¹³⁸Other examples include Gen. 37.33, Num. 15.35, and Jer. 22.10 (which is quite similar to our verse: בכו בכו להלך). See Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), pp. 580ff.

¹³⁹See also PR 29. The same method of exegesis is used, but Num. 14.1 is not.

destruction of the Temple.

The Talmud is much more explicit than LamR and draws together the various strands relating Lam. 1.2 with Num. 14.1 into a complete unit.

She weepeth, yea, She weepeth in the night (Lam. 1.2). Why this double weeping?—Rabbah said in R. Johanan’s name: Once for the first Temple, and once for the second. “In the Night”—on account of what happened at night. For it is written, *And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried, and the people wept that night* (Num. 14.1). Rabbah observed in R. Jochanan’s name: It was the ninth of Ab, and the Almighty said to Israel, “Ye have wept without cause: therefore will I appoint a weeping to your future generations.”¹⁴⁰

Unlike LamR which makes no reference to the destruction of the second Temple, *b San.* imbues the Hebrew בכי תבכה with a prophetic element. In this interpretation, therefore, the author not only describes that generation’s loss, but also prefigures the mourning that would be experienced by his descendants six centuries later. Rabbah’s exposition of בלילה is a straightforward expression of the midrash found in LamR. The main difference is the presence of all three elements: (1) the citation of Lam. 1.2; (2) the identification of “that night” as the ninth of Ab, and (3) the citation of Num. 14.1.

Although NumR¹⁴¹ identifies “that night” of Num 14.1 as the ninth of Ab and the moment when God decreed that the Temple should be destroyed, the aggadah is actually based upon an exposition of Isa. 17.11 and contains no reference to Lamentations.

... and of desperate pain (Isa. 17.11). This alludes to the punishment which you received as a heritage for future generations. For Israel had wept on the night of the ninth of Ab, and the Holy One, blessed be He, had said to them: “You have wept a causeless weeping before Me. I shall therefore fix for you a permanent weeping for future generations.” At that hour it was decreed that the Temple should be destroyed and that Israel should be exiled among the nations.¹⁴²

Since Num 14.1 specifies that Israel wept “that night” (בלילה ההוא) the rabbis use this as an opportunity to identify exactly which night it was. The ninth of Ab was chosen since both

¹⁴⁰*b San.* 104b.

¹⁴¹This portion of NumR (sections 15-23) is often referred to as “Numbers Rabbah II” covers Num. 8-36 and was probably based upon Tanḥuma. M. D. Herr (*EJ*, Vol. 12, pp. 1261-3) dates NumR II to the ninth century, but considering the relationship of NumR II to Tanḥuma an earlier date is likely. See Strack, p. 310 and Judah Slotki, *Midrash Rabbah: Numbers II*, Vol. 6, (London: Soncino, 1951), p. vii-viii. (In contrast, “Numbers Rabbah I” (sections 1-14, Num. 1-7), comprises more than two-thirds of the whole work and is dated to the twelfth century CE.)

¹⁴²All quotes from NumR are from *Midrash Rabbah: Numbers*, trans. Judah Slotki, (London: Soncino, 1951).

that night at Kadesh-barnea and the destruction of the Temple were occasions of weeping, both events resulted in exclusion from the land of Israel, and both events were precipitated by Israel's rebellion. This attribution of a divinely appointed time for a religiously important date is also found in relation to other festivals.¹⁴³ In this way the aggadah not only validates the traditional festival date, but it also serves to strengthen the conviction that all of history is worked out by the Lord and that there is a reason for all subsequent actions. NumR has drawn together the various elements already found in LamR into a more coherent narrative whole. More importantly, even though there is no reference to Lam. 1.2, NumR has created a direct link between "that night" in Kadesh-barnea and the destruction of the Temple.

LT contains the same midrash in its commentary to both Num. 14.1 and Lam. 1.2; both are quite brief. The commentary on Lam. 1.2 is particularly terse and is clearly dependent upon earlier sources. After providing the intersecting verse of Num. 14.1 the night on which "all the congregation raised a loud cry and the people wept" is identified as the ninth of Ab. Furthermore, when God heard this "the Lord said to them, 'You have wept without cause. Therefore I appoint for you [a permanent weeping] for future generations.'" ¹⁴⁴ It seems certain that LT is based upon the earlier work of NumR and has nothing more to add to our investigation.

Thus the traditions which we find in our targum to verse 2 are well attested in rabbinic literature. But before it can be determined whether the targumic version is based upon the midrash or vice versa we must examine the targumic text itself. The targumist wastes no time in setting the context for his exegesis, "When Moses the Prophet sent messengers to spy out the land..." Num. 13-14 is clearly in mind and, in a manner similar to that which we saw in verse 1, the targumist makes it absolutely clear that God's harsh

¹⁴³E.g., GenR 43.3, where Gen. 14.15 is linked with the establishment of Passover. Abraham's actions in saving Lot are rewarded by God's declaring "'Abraham has laboured with Me at midnight; therefore I too will act for his sons at midnight.' And when did that happen? In Egypt, as it says, *And it came to pass at midnight* (Exod. 12.29)." H. Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, (London: Soncino, 1951), pp. 353-4. All translations of GenR are from this edition. See Levine, p. 83.

¹⁴⁴הוא בלילה ערב ט' באב היתה אמי' השי' אתם בכיתם בכות חנם אני אקבע לכם לדורות:

judgement is the direct result of Israel's sin. The report from the spies is described as טיב ביש, a "bad report" or "evil rumor," and the people's faithless response elicits an immediate reaction from God. Like NumR, *b* San. 104b, and LT our targumist identifies the date of this event as the ninth of Ab. It is important to note that LamR, although it connects these two verses exegetically, does *not* identify the event of Num. 14.1 with the date of the destruction of the Temple.

Furthermore, the targumist refers to "the *people* of the House of Israel" three times in this verse. The use of עמי בית ישראל in the Palestinian targumim appears to indicate the presence of an audience and that may also be the case here.¹⁴⁵ However, the repeated reference to "the people of the House of Israel" who hear the report and weep, who were rebuked by Jeremiah, and who refused to repent also serves to emphasize the communal nature of their rebellion. While the targumist is intent on demonstrating that Israel deserved her fate because of her sin, he is also keen to show that the punishment has befallen *all* of Israel because the entire community has refused to heed God's patient calls for repentance.¹⁴⁶

The exegetical basis of this insertion and the allusion to Num. 14.1 (that is, the similarity between בכו תבכה בלילה in Lam. 1.2 and ויבכו העם בלילה ההוא in Num. 14.1) has been discussed above. That the targum is reliant upon the audience's knowledge of Num. 14.1 is beyond doubt, but it is not clear that it is dependent upon the audience's knowledge of the midrashic tradition of Num. 14.1. The aggadah of verse 2a is a discrete unit, clearly written with all the elements for comprehension of the exegesis supplied within the targum. Furthermore, the basis of the exegesis (the use of *בכה) functions both in Hebrew and in Aramaic. There are, therefore, no elements which are specifically "un-targumic" and thus it

¹⁴⁵See Shinan, "The Aggadah," pp. 185-202; and Kasher, "The Aramaic Targum," p. 76. As in the last portion of this verse, our targumist will also make frequent use of כנסתא in order to emphasize the communal experience; see §3.1.6.

See also Chilton's discussion of the use of בית ישראל in TgIsa as "a collective for God's chosen, whether obedient to God or not" (*The Glory of Israel*, pp. 33-7).

¹⁴⁶See §3.1.6 where "all the glory of the Congregation of Zion has gone out from her."

is quite possible that this tradition is original to our targum.¹⁴⁷ Considering, however, that the exegesis is the same in all the sources (particularly with reference to *b* San. 104b) no definite conclusions can be drawn.

וכדו אתאמר בנבואה לירמיהו כהנא רבא למהוי חריבא ירושלם על ידוי דנבוכד נצר רשיעא אין לא תייבין
בתתובא מן יד עאל אוכח לעמא בית ישראל וסריבו לקבלא בכך עאל נבוכד נצר רשיעא וצדא ית ירושלם
ובית מקדשא אוקיד בנורא בתשע יומין בירחא דאב וביה בליליא בכיאת כנשתא דישראל בכותא ודמעא
זליג על לסתהא

Our targumist moves adroitly from Israel's rebellion at Kadesh-barnea to the congregation's rejection of Jeremiah's appeal for repentance. The use of כד to introduce both the aggadah on Num 14.1 and the addition of Jeremiah's appeal to Israel helps to create a parallelism between the two accounts which is further strengthened by presenting Jeremiah in a role similar to that of Joshua and Caleb in Num. 14.6-9. As in the previous section the targumist goes to great lengths to demonstrate the justice of God's great punishment.

Jeremiah is again identified as High Priest,¹⁴⁸ but more importantly, the targumist tells us that Jeremiah's declaration of Israel's impending doom is a direct revelation from God. "When it was told *through prophecy* (אתאמר בנבואה) to Jeremiah the High Priest...." This phrase is similar to that found in TgJon when the MT introduces a prophetic pronouncement. For example, in Isa. 38.4 (ויהי דבר-יהוה אל-ישעיהו לאמר) TgJon renders MT as יהוה פתגם נבואה מן קדם יהי עם ישעיה למימר.¹⁴⁹ The expansive rendering used to introduce a new prophetic word thus emphasizes that the source of the utterance is the Lord and not the prophet himself. Although the form we have in our targum is slightly different than that found in TgJon, the effect is the same.

¹⁴⁷Theoretically one could also argue that it simply developed independently of the midrashic sources, but considering the confluence of the rabbinic community that seems unlikely.

¹⁴⁸See §3.1.1.

¹⁴⁹Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic, Vol. III: The Latter Prophets According to Targum Jonathan*, (Leiden: Brill, 1962), p. 134. This pattern is consistent throughout TgJon. Other examples include Jer. 1.2, 4, 11, 13; 14.1, 18.5; Ezek. 1.3; and 3.16. On the other hand, when the דבר-יהוה occurs in any context other than the introductory formula it is translated simply as פתגמא דיי. See for example Isa. 39.5; Jer. 2.4, 7.2; and Ezek. 13.2.

This addition also serves to emphasize God's patience and justice towards his people. God informed them of the consequences of their rebellion and offered them the opportunity to repent. Jeremiah responds faithfully and immediately (מן יד עאל ואוכח ית עמא בית ישראל), but the people refuse to listen to the word of the Lord spoken by the prophet (וסריבו לקבלא). Lagarde and YT add לַבְּמִימְרֵיהָ, indicating that Israel rejected not only Jeremiah, but the very Word of the Lord.¹⁵⁰ When we consider the other omissions found in Urb. 1¹⁵¹ and the fact that the addition of מימריה is included in YT and Lagarde, it seems likely that this is, if not an original reading, at least one that was widely known. Finally, the reference to Nebuchadnezzar in this section serves two purposes: (1) it places the text firmly within the historical context of the First Temple and (2) demonstrates that God controls the fate of Jerusalem and even the actions of the foreign king.¹⁵²

There are many such episodes within the Bible where Jeremiah calls the nation to repentance, but the targumist is not referring to a single incident. Rather, one sentence summarizes Jeremiah's entire career. From the beginning of Jeremiah Chapter One the Lord tells the prophet that he will be God's spokesman (הנה נתתי דברי בפיך, verse 9) to proclaim the fate of a rebellious people (מצפון תפתח הרעה על כל-ישבי הארץ, verse 14). This is the theme which runs throughout the fifty two chapters of the Book of Jeremiah and which is summarized in one phrase by our targumist: וכדו אתאמר בנבואה לירמיהו כהנא רבא למהוי חריבא ירושלם על ידוי דנבוכד נצר רשיעא אין לא תייבין בתובא

בכן עאל נבוכד נצר רשיעא וצדא ית ירושלם ובית מקדשא אוקיד בנורא בתשע יומין בירחא דאב

The conjunction בכן makes the targumist's interpretation of events clear: The House of Israel refused to repent and *therefore* the wicked Nebuchadnezzar attacked and

¹⁵⁰Although Jeremiah is the most immediate antecedent, within the broader context of targumic literature the third person masculine suffix of מימריה should be interpreted as referring to God. The use of this term within targumic literature is common, but complicated. What can be said with assurance is that this term is rarely ever used in reference to a human speaker. God is often the origin of מימרא. See §4.4 and Hayward, *passim*. See, however, §3.3.54.

¹⁵¹See, e.g., §3.1.3.

¹⁵²See §3.1.7.

destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. This is further enforced by the parallel created between Jeremiah who “entered and rebuked the people of the House of Israel” and Nebuchadnezzar who “entered and razed Jerusalem.” Thus the targumist’s argument that Israel deserves her fate due to her actions is further strengthened. God offered them the opportunity to repent and their refusal led to their destruction. From this point on the targumist proceeds to incorporate the remainder of the biblical text into the targum.

וביה בליליא בכיאת כנשתא דישראל בכותא ודמעא זליג על לסתהא ולית די ימלל תנחומין על לבהא מן כל טעוותא די רחימת למיזל בתריחון ובגין כן כל חברהא ארשיעו בהא אתהפכו למהוי לה לבעיל דבבין:

This section of the targum represents Lam. 1.2 in its entirety. As we noted earlier, the insertion of the aggadah to Num. 14.1 is based upon the presence of both *בכה and בלילה in Num. 14.1 and Lam. 1.2. Accordingly we find that the targumist employs both of these terms in reporting Israel’s response to the spy’s report (נטלו עתא ית קליהון ובכו עמא בית) (ישראל בליליא ההוא) in the pre-translation addition. In these last lines the targumist returns to MT and represents *בכה twice, resulting in a total of three instances where the targumist has used the verb *בכה. A similar pattern is evident in verse 1 where the targumist uses the first word (איכה) three times in the course of the representing Lam. 1.1a.

Considering the fact that every word from verse 2 is represented in this section, including the double form of *בכה it is possible that at one time this last section stood alone, as a (relatively) simple rendering of verse 2. However it is impossible to determine with any certainty that this was the case and the text works extremely well as it stands. The introductory additions parallel one another structurally. Both 1.2a and 1.2b begin with the adverb כד. They each present a situation which calls for an act of faith by Israel (identified by the rabbinic sources as the two times when Israel wept, “once frivolously” and once “with good cause”).¹⁵³ Each time Israel rejects God’s offer and both episodes conclude with the adverb בכך followed by a declaration of Jerusalem’s destruction.

As we noted earlier, these additions contribute to the theological meaning of the text

¹⁵³LamR to 1.2. See above for a more detailed discussion of the rabbinic sources.

in much the same fashion as the additions found in verse 1. The targumist appeals to biblical history to show not only that the destruction of Jerusalem was in keeping with God's method of dealing with his people, but that it was a result of Israel's own rebellion, a rebellion which stretched back prior to their entrance into Canaan. These points are strengthened and deepened by this rendering of the verse in two ways. First, the midrash to Num 14.1 shows that the destruction of the Temple was *preordained* as a result of Israel's previous lack of faith that God would deliver Canaan over to them. Secondly, the pluses serve to further emphasize the targumist's conviction that God is not guilty of being callous or capricious, rather Israel has brought this upon herself.

The use of Num. 14 by the targumist is thus similar to the way in which the darshan would use an intersecting verse in developing a midrash. By referring to a specific verse, the targumist also brings to mind the entire episode. Thus, while explicitly referring to the punishment for disobeying the Lord, the targumist is also reminding his audience of God's forgiveness.

The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.¹⁵⁴

It will soon become apparent that the preceding additions are also central to the targumist's overall structure of the targum.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴Num. 14.18.

¹⁵⁵See also §4.1.

3.1.3. Verse 3

גְּלַתָּהּ יְהוּדָה מֵעֲנֵי וּמֵרַב עֲבָדָה
 הִיא יִשְׁבֶּה בְּגוֹיִם לֹא מִצָּאָה מְנוּחַ
 כָּל-רִדְפֶיהָ הַשִּׁיגוּהָ בֵּין הַמְּצָרִים:

אזלו בית יהודה בגלותא על דהוו מענן יתמין וארמלן ועל סגיאות פולחנא דהוו מפלחין באחיהון בני ישראל דאזדבנו להון ולא קרו חירותא לעבדיהון ולאמהתהון דהוו מזרעית ישראל ובגין כן אף אנון אתמסרו ביד עממיא וכנשתא דבית יהודה יתבא בגו עממיא ולא אשכחא נייח מפולחנא קשיא דשעבידו יתה [וכל דהוה רדיף יתה אדביקו יתה]¹⁵⁶ כד היא מתחבאה בין תחומיא ואעיקו לה:

The House of Judah went into exile because they were oppressing the orphans and the widows and because of the great servitude to which they were subjecting their brothers, the sons of Israel, who had been sold to them. And they did not declare freedom to their servants and handmaids who were of the seed of Israel. As a result they themselves were delivered into the hand of the nations. And the Congregation of the House of Judah dwells among the nations and finds no rest from the hard labor to which they subject her. [All who pursued her overtook her] as she was hiding in the border regions and they persecuted her.

The targumist has taken a different approach in translating this verse. Unlike the preceding two verses where the targumist incorporates an extensive addition prior to rendering the biblical text, verse 3 has the Aramaic equivalents of MT scattered throughout the expanded version. The additional material is cleverly woven into the base text, rather than being appended to it.

The biblical text of 1.3a has long been discussed owing to the unusual form מעני. The function of the preposition מן is variously explained as causal (“because of affliction”),¹⁵⁷ as locative (“from affliction”),¹⁵⁸ and as “a temporal shade of meaning combined with the local” (“immediately after”).¹⁵⁹ Gordis suggests that the form should be read as a “mem of condition,” yielding “Judah went into exile *in a condition* of poverty,” and he cites parallels from Rabbinic Hebrew.¹⁶⁰ Contrary to most modern scholars, the targumist interpreted the mem in עבדה ומרבי as being causal and therefore renders 1.3a “Judah went into exile *because* they oppressed the orphans (על דהוו מענין יתמין וארמלן) ... and *because* of the hard labor which they levied upon their brothers (ועל סגיות פולחנא דהוו מפלחין באחיהון).” Such a reading is influenced more by theological than grammatical considerations.

¹⁵⁶Found in Lagarde and necessary in order to represent all of MT.

¹⁵⁷Gottwald, p. 7.

¹⁵⁸Wilhelm Rudolph, “Die Klagelieder,” p. 212.

¹⁵⁹Albrektson, p. 57.

¹⁶⁰Robert Gordis, “A Commentary on the Text of Lamentations,” *The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary*

We also find, however, that our targumist explains Jerusalem's punishment in line with the rabbinic principle of *מדה כנגד מדה*, that one's punishment should match one's sins.¹⁶¹ In commenting on this verse Levine points out that "the targum reconstructs the sin according to the consequence: using the punishments mentioned in the Hebrew text as indications of the transgressions which caused them."¹⁶² The midrashim also take an approach similar to that of our targum, but it is reduced merely to listing various transgressions by which Judah had brought upon herself the extreme punishment of going into exile "because of affliction and hard servitude." Among the sins listed are eating leaven on Passover (Deut. 16.3), withholding wages of a hired worker (Deut. 24.14), and not releasing a Hebrew slave after seven years (Jer. 34.14).¹⁶³ Of these reasons only the last is held in common with our targum and will be dealt with below.

As we have seen in the previous two verses, the targumist demonstrates that Judah's punishment is based upon her own sin by alluding to biblical episodes. Since the targumist reads the biblical text of verse 3a as "Judah went into exile *because of affliction*," the question then arises, what "affliction" had Judah caused which would result in her being exiled? The sin chosen by the targumist is the oppression of the orphan and the widow, the epitome of helplessness, and those to whom charity was always to be given by the righteous.¹⁶⁴ Although there are several biblical passages which our targumist might have had in mind, Exod. 22.22-4, the first time that the widow and the orphan are mentioned in a legal context within the Bible, shows a remarkable parallelism with Jerusalem's condition.

Volume of the Jewish Quarterly Review, ed. A. A. Neuman and S. Zeitlin, (Philadelphia: Jewish Quarterly Review, 1967), p. 18. Rabbinic references are to Abot 4.9 and *b* Shab. 113b.

¹⁶¹For discussion of the principle of *מדה כנגד מדה*, "measure for measure," see §4.2.1. The concept is frequently found within rabbinic literature. See, for example, *M. Sot.* 1.7, "With what measure a man metes it shall be measured to him again: she bedecked herself for transgression — the Almighty brought her to shame," and *b* Sotah 8b: "It has been taught Rabbi used to say: When is it that the measure with which a man measures it is meted out to him? As it is said: *By measure in sending her away thou dost contend with her* (Isa. 27.8)." See also GenR to 1.31, *b* San. 100a-b, and Urbach, pp. 371-3 and 438-9. As we shall see, *מדה כנגד מדה* will be a guiding principle for much of our targumist's exegesis and his explanation of Jerusalem's fate.

¹⁶²Levine, p. 84.

¹⁶³LamR and LT to 1.3.

¹⁶⁴See, for example, Isa. 1.17, 23 where the one who is repentant will "learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan and plead for the widow," but Judah's princes "are rebels and companions with thieves. ... They do not defend the orphan and the widow's cause does not come before them." This theme is carried through the prophets (e.g., Jer. 7.6, 22.3; Ezek. 22.7, 7.10; and Mal. 3.5) and was

You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry; my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows, and your children orphans.

The effect of this particular image is furthered intensified when we consider the targumist's assumption that Jeremiah was the author of Lamentations. In the Book of Jeremiah Judah is called to repentance twice with the condition that "you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow" (7.6, 22.3), but when they refused Jeremiah pleaded to the Lord, "therefore give their children over to famine, hurl them out to the power of the sword, let their wives become childless and widowed" (18.21).¹⁶⁵ As a result of Judah having oppressed the widow and the orphan Jerusalem herself has become "like a widow," her wives are being made widows, and her children fatherless.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, not only had Jerusalem been punished, but the prophet of the Lord had been vindicated as his plea was heard and fulfilled.

According to our targum, the House of Judah was also sent into exile, "because of the great servitude to which they were subjecting their brothers, the sons of Israel, who had been sold to them." This was further compounded when they refused to declare their freedom in the year of Jubilee. The biblical texts alluded to are quite clear. 1 Kgs. 12.4 tells of Solomon's oppression of the northern tribes and Rehoboam's insistence that he would do the same. Deut. 15.12 declares that a Hebrew slave must be freed in the seventh year. In Jer. 34.8ff. King Zedekiah declared the release of all slaves, but the people later changed their minds and took back their slaves. This last passage is the most important since it is not only set in the context of the destruction of the First Temple, but it also includes a specific reason for Jerusalem's fall.

Therefore, thus says the Lord: you have not obeyed me by granting a release to your neighbors and friends; I am going to grant a release to you, says the Lord—a release to sword, to pestilence, and to famine. I will make you a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. ... I am going to command, says the Lord, and will bring [the Babylonians] back to the city; and they will fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire. The towns of Judah I will make a desolation without inhabitant.

common among other ancient Near Eastern cultures as a sign of a righteous king (See *EJ* vol. 16, pp. 487-95).

¹⁶⁵This last passage may possibly have been read on the ninth of Ab for the Haftarah (*b* Meg. 31b). See §5.2.

¹⁶⁶This theme recurs throughout TgLam. See Lam. 1.1, 2.4, and 5.3.

The targum makes this cause and effect relationship explicit by paraphrasing the passage, “And they did not declare freedom for their male and female slaves which were from the seed of Israel, therefore they themselves were given over into the hand of the nations.” The connection between the sin of Judah and her subsequent suffering is made explicit through this reference to Jer. 38.17. This connection is also made in LamR by R. Aha: “Because they kept in servitude the Hebrew slave: ‘At the end of the seven years....’”¹⁶⁷ Considering that the midrash does not develop the text more fully there is little reason to give either text primacy, but the use of the Book of Jeremiah in this manner has already been established within the targum. Clearly the targumist intended his audience to bear in mind the text of Jeremiah and the prophet’s admonitions to his people. Within the synagogal context this relationship would be all the more intimate since, as we will later suggest, portions of Jeremiah were read along with Lamentations on the Ninth of Ab.¹⁶⁸ The targumist uses portions of Jeremiah as the exegetical framework for his interpretation of verse 3, just as he had used Num 14 as the predominant interpretive passage in 1.2.

Each word of verse 3b (היא ישובה בגוים לא מצאה מנוח) is rendered more or less literally and in order with two exceptions. (1) היא is identified as כנישתא דבית יהודה, and (2) the “Congregation” finds no rest “from the hard labor with which they subject her” (מפולחנא תה קשיא דשעבידו יתה). Considering that “Judah” was the subject of the verb in the 3a, it is not surprising that the targumist should seek to clarify the identity of היא in 3b, but we shall see later that by using these terms of community (בית and כנישתא) the targumist is ensuring that his audience recognizes themselves in the text.¹⁶⁹ The explanatory clause מפולחנא קשיא דשעבידו יתה serves not only to explain why Judah is in need of rest, but also to underscore that her form of punishment was dictated by her sin. The use of the term פולחנא further serves to create a parallel with her crime of subjecting her brothers to “great servitude” (1.3a).

¹⁶⁷LamR to 1.3.

¹⁶⁸See §5.2.

¹⁶⁹See §3.1.6 and §4.5.

The first portion of 3c (וכל דהוה רדיף יתה אדביקו יתה) is not found in Urb. 1, but it is found in Lagarde and is necessary in order to represent all of MT. YT provides a literal rendering of MT (כל רדפהא אדבוקהא ביני מצריאניא).¹⁷⁰ As we have already stated, this study is based upon the WT and I have therefore included the text as found in Lagarde in brackets. The main variance in representing 3c in the WT is the targumist's rendering of MT's בין המצרים. As Levine has pointed out, the targum's בין תחומיא ואעיקו לה is based upon a double translation.¹⁷¹ The Hebrew is the rare מֶצָר which is found only here and twice in the Pss. (116.3 and 188.5) and maintains the same ambiguity of place and condition which is associated with the English "straits."¹⁷² The targum, however, makes both the locale and condition explicit by offering two translations. In the first instance המצרים is read as a plural noun indicating a physical place and is rendered "border regions."¹⁷³ This reading is predicated by the Mishnaic interpretation of מצר as being equivalent to the technical term "boundaries" and is shared with LamR.¹⁷⁴ In the second instance the targum understands the Hebrew as referring to the condition of Judah when she was overtaken and conveys that condition with the verb clause ואעיקו לה, "and they persecuted her." Thus, rather than Judah being "in the midst of distress" she is brought to distress through persecution by her pursuers.

¹⁷⁰For discussion of the Western and Yemenite traditions and the decision to follow the WT see §3, "Textual Tradition."

¹⁷¹Levine, p. 84.

¹⁷²BDB, 865a and "straits" in *The Oxford English Dictionary on CD-ROM* 2nd ed., (Oxford: OUP, 1996).

¹⁷³M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, (New York: Judaica Press, 1992 [reprint of the 1903 edition]), p. 1660b.

¹⁷⁴M. B. B. 7.3; b B. B. 105a and 106a. See also Cohen, *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, p. 98, n. 1.

3.1.4. Verse 4

דְּרָכַי צִיּוֹן אֲבֵלוֹת מִבְּלִי בָּאֵי מוֹעֵד
 כָּל-שָׁעֲרֶיהָ שׁוֹמְמִין כִּהְנִיחָהּ נְאֻחִים
 בְּתוֹלְתֶיהָ נוֹגְוֹת וְהָיָא מֶר-לָהּ:

כל זמן דהות ירושלם מתבניא סריבו בני ישראל למסק לאתחזאה קדם יי תלת זמנין בשתא ועל חוביהון דישראל אתצדיאת ירושלם ואתעבידו שבילי ציון אבילן מדלית עאיל בה בזמן מועדיא כל תרעהא צדיין וכהנתא אניחן על דבטילו קורבניא בתולתא ספדן על דפסקו למפק בחמשא עשר יומא באב וביומא דכפור דהוא בעשרא יומין בתשרי לחנגא בחנגין אף איהיא מריר לבא לחדא:

All the while that Jerusalem was built, the sons of Israel refused to go up to be seen before the LORD three times a year. Because of Israel's sins Jerusalem was destroyed and the roads to Zion are made mournful, for there is no one entering her at the time of the festivals. All the gates are desolate and her priests groan because the sacrifices have ceased. Her virgins mourn because they have stopped going out on the fifteenth of Ab and on the Day of Atonement (which is on the tenth day of Tishri) to dance the dances. Therefore she too is very bitter in her heart.

The expansions within this verse complete the catalogue of Jerusalem's sins. It is again a matter of the targum "putting flesh" on the bones of MT by reading the type of punishment described in MT as a direct result of the nature of Israel's sins. Therefore when MT says that the "roads to Zion mourn because there is no one to come to her festivals" the targumist interprets this as meaning that even when the Temple *was* standing the people refused to keep the three pilgrimage festivals (Ex. 23.14-9).

Interestingly the targum does not interpret 1.4bβ, "the priests groaned," as meaning that, for example, the priests had not performed the sacrifices as they ought, but rather the priests groaned because "the sacrifices *have* ceased" (על דבטילו קורבניא). This is also the case with regard to the maidens. They grieve, so the targumist tells us, because they can no longer go forth to dance at the festivals of the fifteenth of Ab and Yom Kippur. The fact that the references in MT to both the priests and the maidens are not used to describe a sinful act serves to underline that Israel's sin was committed by the community as a whole, with its national indifference to keeping the feasts, rather than by the few.¹⁷⁵

In striking contrast to the targum's description are the words of Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel, "There were no happier days for Israel than the fifteenth of Ab and the day of Atonement, for on them the daughters of Jerusalem used to go forth in white raiments ...

¹⁷⁵See §4.5 for further discussion of the targum's intended audience as the "Congregation."

and the daughters of Jerusalem went forth to dance in the vineyard.”¹⁷⁶ These times are now gone, according to our targum, as a result of Israel’s refusal to go up “to be seen before the LORD.” Although it is pure conjecture, it is possible that this passage of Mishnah was studied on the ninth of Ab as one of the “parts of Mishnah which [one] usually does not study.”¹⁷⁷ If that were the case, then this addition would serve to contrast Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel’s message of hope and to focus the audience’s attention on mourning and repentance.

While there is no direct connection with midrashic literature, there is reason to believe that our targumist was aware of the Babylonian Talmud’s comments in reference to *M. Ta’an.*, so that this verse is best understood in light of *b Ta’an.* 30b-31a. Furthermore, both verses 3 and 4 should be read against the backdrop of 1 Kgs. 12. In reference to Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel’s comments the Talmud asks, “what happened on the fifteenth of Ab?” ^{Ulla} answers, “It is the day on which Hosea the son of Elah removed the guards which Jeroboam the son of Nebat had placed on the roads to prevent Israel from going [to Jerusalem] on pilgrimage.”¹⁷⁸ The Bible makes no mention of Jeroboam establishing guards to keep people from going up to Jerusalem and neither does it tell of Hosea son of Elah removing these guards, but it does report that Jeroboam created two new altars, at Dan and Bethel, so that the people would not need to go to Jerusalem in order to offer sacrifices.¹⁷⁹

We have already discussed the biblical background for the “great servitude” of verse 3 to which the House of Judah subjected “their brothers, the sons of Israel” and how Rehoboam refused to reduce the work load placed upon the northern tribes by Solomon. The envoy from the Israelites to Rehoboam was, in fact, led by Jeroboam.¹⁸⁰ It was in response to this refusal that Jeroboam established his kingdom of Israel, ruling it from

¹⁷⁶*M. Ta’an.* 4.8.

¹⁷⁷*b Ta’an.* 30a. All quotes from the Talmud are from *The Babylonian Talmud*, ed. I. Epstein with various translators, (London: Soncino Press, 1938-52), unless otherwise indicated. For further discussion of the liturgy of the ninth of Ab see §5.2.1.

¹⁷⁸*b Ta’an.* 30b. See also *b Git.* 88a.

¹⁷⁹1 Kgs. 12.25ff, 2 Kgs. 15.30 and 17.1ff.

¹⁸⁰1 Kgs. 12.3.

Shechem, and set up altars at Bethel and Dan. “This thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one at Bethel and before the other as far as Dan.”¹⁸¹ This conflict between the two nations and their quest for political control through the cult resulted in Israel’s refusal to go up to Jerusalem for the festivals and for this reason, says the targumist, Jerusalem was made desolate.¹⁸² Furthermore, now that Jerusalem has been completely destroyed even the dances of the fifteenth of Ab, celebrating the lifting of the guards by Hosea, have lost their meaning.

3.1.5. Verse 5

הֵיוּ צָרִיָּה לְרֹאשׁ אֲיֻבֵיהָ שְׁלוֹ
כִּי-יְהִיָּה הוֹגָה עַל רֵב-פְּשָׁעֶיהָ
עוֹלָלֶיהָ הִלְכוּ שָׁבִי לִפְנֵי-צָר:

הוּוּ מַעִיקָהּ מִתְמַנֵּן עִלְהָ לְרִישֵׁין וּבַעֲלֵי דַבְּבָהּ הוּוּ יִתְבִּין בְּשִׁלוּהּ אַרוּם יִי תַבְרֵי יִתָּה עַל סְגִי[אוֹת] מְרוּדָהּ
רַבִּיָּהּ אֲזָלוּ בְּשַׁבִּיָּתָא קַדָּם מַעִיקָא:

Those who oppress her were appointed over her as leaders and her enemies *were dwelling in* security since the LORD has broken her due to her great rebelliousness. Her children go before the oppressor into captivity.

In the first four verses the targumist catalogues the sins of God’s people. Verse 5 marks a shift back towards the biblical text which recounts the details of their punishment and provides an excellent example of prosaic expansion.¹⁸³ The targumist has represented all of the Hebrew text, but has added only enough additional material to transform the biblical poetry into Aramaic prose. These additions, while they rarely change the overall meaning and intent of the original text, can often provide a subtle redirection. (LamR 1.5, in contrast, is extremely rich in traditions concerning R. Yohanan b. Zakkai, Vespasian, and the identity of the foes, but none of this material has found its way into TgLam).¹⁸⁴ The compact form of the biblical text in 1.5אָ רֹאשׁ לְרִישֵׁי, “her foes have become the masters,” has been expanded with the addition of the verb *מִנִּי, “to appoint” and a re-

¹⁸¹ 1 Kgs. 12.30.

¹⁸² Also note the use of the proper nouns “Judah” and “Israel” within these two verses. There is no consistent use within the targum as a whole, but in these two verses the references to “the House of Judah” oppressing “the sons of Israel” and “Israel” refusing to come up to Jerusalem seem to reflect the positions of the two kingdoms as described in 1 Kgs. 12.

¹⁸³ See §1.2.2.b.

¹⁸⁴ See §4.6 on the relationship between LamR and TgLam.

reading of צר so that it reflects the (potential) ambiguity of the Hebrew.¹⁸⁵ Therefore, the original “foes” or “adversaries” become “oppressors” (מעיקהא). As a result, the audience is left with the firm impression that the persecutors now reign over Jerusalem by design; they have been *appointed* over her as leaders by the Lord, as a result “of her great rebelliousness.” All of this occurs with the addition of a single verb.

In a similar manner, the targumist renders the verb שלו in 1.5aβ as a noun and adds the verb *יתב, so that the text now reads “her enemies *dwell in security.*” Although it is a minor change and does not dramatically alter the original meaning of the biblical text, it does contrast the condition of her enemies with that of Jerusalem herself who, in verse 8, “has become a wanderer.”¹⁸⁶ In 1.5b the Hebrew הוגה is rendered idiomatically with תבר יתה, perhaps intended to emphasize the complete physical devastation of Jerusalem. And finally, the targumist specifies Jerusalem’s “great transgressions” by translating פשעיה with מרודהא, “her rebelliousness.”

3.1.6. Verse 6

וּצְאָא מִן-בֵּית-צִיּוֹן כָּל-הַדְרָה
 הָיָה שְׂרִיָּה פְּאִילִים לֹא-מְצָאוּ מְרֻעָה
 וַיִּלְכוּ בְּלֹא-כֹחַ לְפָנֵי רוֹדֵף:

ונפק מן כנשתא דציון כל זיוהא הוו רבנהא מסתחרן על מיכלא היכמה דמסחרן איילא במדברא ולא אשכחו אתר כשר למרעיהון ואזלו בתשות כוחא ולא להום חילא למערק לאשתזבא קדם רדיף:

All the glory of the Congregation of Zion has gone out from her. Her nobles *were wandering for food*, like stags who *were wandering in the desert and find no suitable place for their pasture*. They went out *in great weakness and they had no strength to flee to safety (from)* before the pursuer.

Verse 6 continues the description of Israel’s punishment focusing upon their expulsion from Jerusalem. In the midrash הדרה, “her glory,” is variously equated with “the Holy One,” the Sanhedrin, the disciples, and the priestly watches. Our targum makes no explicit identification, but merely translates it with the Aramaic equivalent זיו. Considering the following two stanzas with their emphasis on the wandering of Zion’s nobles in the

¹⁸⁵Although the Hebrew צר can mean either “distress” or “foe” the context almost always makes clear which meaning is intended. See §3.1.20 and BDB, p. 865. Our targumist, however, uses this opportunity to stress the state of Israel’s condition.

¹⁸⁶Levine, p. 87.

desert, it seems likely that the targumist views the expulsion of Jerusalem's youths and princes from the city as the "glory ... which has gone out from her."

The first notable feature about this verse is the use of כנישתא for the Hebrew בת.¹⁸⁷ The Hebrew בת occurs 21 times in Lamentations and of those 21 times it is translated 14 times as כנישתא, 3 times as בית, twice as קרתא, once as בני, and only once as meaning "daughter" (2.18c).¹⁸⁸ The one instance where the targum reads "daughter" is part of a phrase referring to crying (MT אל-תדום בת-עינך) and presumably בת is retained because it is an idiomatic expression.¹⁸⁹ כנישתא is used exclusively in reference to Jerusalem and her people (6 times in construct with "Zion," 5 times with "my people," twice with "Jerusalem"). Of the three times "Judah" appears in construct with בת in MT בית is used in the targum, twice in construct with כנישתא (2.2 and 2.5). The actual phrase reads כנישתא דבית יהודא, which suggest that "the House of Judah" was understood by our targumist as an idiom and as such could not be translated simply as כנישתא די יהודא, but required בית in the formula.¹⁹⁰ This may be an attempt by the targumist to indicate for his audience that the "Judah" of the text should be understood as the tribe/nation and not its eponymous ancestor. The following chart lists the occurrences of בת in Lamentations and the corresponding term found in TgLam.

¹⁸⁷See D. Hillers, *Lamentations*, 2 ed., in *The Anchor Bible Vol. 7A*. Edited by D. N. Freedman and W. F. Albright (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), pp. 30-1, for a discussion of the use of x-בת in Lamentations. כנישתא ישראל is a standard term of reference for the Jewish people within rabbinic literature. Robert Seltzer, "The Jewish People" in *Judaism: A People and its History*, ed. Robert Seltzer (selections from *Encyclopedia of Religion* Vol. 16), (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 121. A (very) few examples include Gen R 11.8; NumR 23.10, 33.3; CantR 1.25; EsthR 3.3; and PRK 12.22.

¹⁸⁸בנות, "daughters" occurs once in 3.51 and is translated with בנתא. Apparently where the plural form occurs it is retained by the targumim. See the discussion of TgJon below.

¹⁸⁹Urb. 1 and YT read בבת, but Lagarde's text simply omits it from the targum entirely.

¹⁹⁰In translating יהודא in 1.3 (where it is *not* in construct) the targumist added בית which might further support this suggestion.

בת “daughter”

Chapter 1	v. 6 כנשתא; v. 15 בית
Chapter 2	v. 2 כנשתא דבית יהודא; v. 4 כנשתא; v. 5 כנשתא דבית יהודא; v. 8 כנשתא; v. 10 כנשתא; v. 11 כנשתא; v. 13a כנשתא; v. 13b כנשתא; v. 15 כנשתא; v. 18a קרתא; v. 18c בבת
Chapter 3	v. 48 כנשתא; [v. 51 בנתא, Hebrew: בנות]
Chapter 4	v. 3 כנשתא; v. 6 כנשתא; v. 10 כנשתא; v. 21 קרתא דאדום; v. 22a כנשתא; v. 22b בני אדום

All of this might suggest that this is an unusual and unexpected translation of בת, but that is not the case. A brief survey of TgJon’s translation of עמי-בת/בת-יהודה/בת-ציון reveals that TgLam’s -בת = כנשתא ד is, in fact, the most common translational equivalent found in the targumim.¹⁹¹ In TgIsa, for example, in five instances בת-ציון is translated four times with כנשתא and once with עמא. Interestingly, in the four instances where בנות-ציון occurs TgJon has בנת ציון three times and כנשתא only once (in 3.51 TgLam has בנתא for בנות). All sixteen occurrences of עמי-בת/בת-ציון in Jeremiah are rendered with כנשתא. The same is true for every instance of בת used in construct in Micah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah. Clearly the occurrence of כנשתא ד as the translational equivalent of the Hebrew -בת in TgLam is *not* unique.

So why do the targumim translate x-בת with כנשתא דא? In the biblical text these expressions “make explicit the personification of the people or city as a woman.”¹⁹² The “daughter of Zion” refers to the city as a social unit, a community. כנשתא is therefore an obvious translation for the targumists. It is interpretative and communicates to the audience that the entire city, including people and structures, was effected by the events described. Hillers’ translation, for example, reflects this same principle when he translates the phrase בת-ציון as simply “Zion,” since it is “potentially misleading ... the Hebrew phrases refer to the people or city as a whole, and not to a part of it.”¹⁹³

¹⁹¹My search has been limited to the translation of בת in construct with יהודה, ציון, עמי, or עמי. These phrases only occur in the Prophets, therefore all targumic references are from TgJon

¹⁹²Hillers, p. 31.

¹⁹³Hillers, p. 31.

כַּנְשָׁתָא may also indicate the context within which the targumim were used.¹⁹⁴ We have already noted that עַמֵּי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל in the Palestinian targumim probably indicates a synagogal context and it is likely that כַּנְשָׁתָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל should be understood in the same way.¹⁹⁵ It seems reasonable to assume that within the context of the synagogue, hearing of “the destruction of the Congregation of my people” (3.48) would have a much stronger impact on a group that identifies *itself* as a כַּנְשָׁתָא than the poetic “daughter of Zion.”¹⁹⁶ The fact that our targumist also employs the term כַּנְשָׁתָא six times as additions to the biblical material suggests that the targumist is employing the term in order to include his audience in the text which they are hearing, thus heightening the experience of communal mourning and communal repentance.¹⁹⁷

The remainder of the verse contains quite a few additions whose primary purpose is to render the text into prose, but there are some points worth noting. The tight and concise simile of the Hebrew הֵיוּ שְׂרִיָּה כְּאֵילִים לֹא-מִצְאוּ מְרַעָה is expanded to describe the nobles as “wandering for food” in the desert. Although there is no explicit reference, this may be an allusion to Israel’s forty years of wandering in the desert and a further development of the parallel begun in 1.2. In the same way in which Israel’s sin led to her exclusion from the Promised Land for a generation so too has her rebelliousness led to the dispersal of her people throughout the world. The complete helplessness of the nobles is also emphasized by offering a double rendering of בְּלֹא-כֹחַ and describing their inability to flee to safety due to their lack of strength.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴For discussion of the *Sitz im Leben* of TgLam see §5.2.

¹⁹⁵See §3.1.2; Shinan, “The Aggadah,” pp. 185-202, and Kasher, “The Aramaic Targum,” p. 76.

¹⁹⁶The same would of course be true for TgJon.

¹⁹⁷They are 1.2, 3, 10, 16; 2.5, and 19.

¹⁹⁸Levine’s suggestion (p. 88) that לְהוֹם [sic] is in reference to the animals rather than the nobles is untenable.

3.1.7. Verse 7

זָכְרָה יְרוּשָׁלַם יְמֵי עֶנְיָהּ וּמְרוֹדֶיהָ
 כָּל מַחְמָדֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ מִיַּמֵי קֶדֶם
 בְּנִפְלַע עֲמָהּ בְּיַד-צָר וְאֵין עֹזֵר לָהּ
 רְאוּהָ צָרִים שָׂחָקוּ עַל מְשִׁבְתָּהּ:

הות דכירא ירושלם יומין קדמאין דהות מדורה בכריא ובפצחין תקיפין ומרדא ושלטה בכל עלמא וכל רגוגה דהוּו לה מלקדמין ועל חובהא נפלו עמהא בידוי דנבוכד נצר רשיעא ואעיק להון ולית די יסייע לה חוזהא מעיקיא דאזלא בשביתא חייכו על טובהא דפסק מבינהא:

Jerusalem remembered the days of old, *when she was surrounded by walled cities and strong open towns, rebelling and reigning over all the earth, and all her lovely things which she had in earlier times. But because of her sins, her people fell into the hands of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar and he oppressed them and there was no one to save her. The persecutors watched her go into captivity and they laughed because her good fortune had ceased from her.*

The MT of this verse has been the subject of much debate and emendation within biblical scholarship. Unlike all other verses in Chapter 1, verse 7 has four stichs rather than the normal three. Modern commentators have employed various solutions, ranging from omitting the second stich,¹⁹⁹ omitting the third stich,²⁰⁰ or allowing both to remain assuming that they existed as two separate traditions.²⁰¹ Our targumist is not bothered with such considerations and clearly had a text in front of him which was very similar (if not identical) to our MT.

While there are no aggadot added to this verse, the additions are too great to warrant identification as prosaic expansion. The additions contribute to the theological intent of 1.7 (e.g., ועל חובהא) and the targumist expands upon the biblical imagery extensively, increasing the drama of the text by creating a vivid picture of both pre-destruction Jerusalem and her fate at the hands of “her enemies.”²⁰² In the first stich our targumist reinterprets the text so that rather than Jerusalem remembering “in the days of her affliction and wandering,” she remembers her “days of old” when she as the capital of a mighty nation.

¹⁹⁹E.g., Löhr, p. 15.

²⁰⁰E.g., Rudolph, p. 206.

²⁰¹Meek, p. 9, and followed by Hillers, p. 7, but see Albrektson’s critique of this position, pp. 62-3.

²⁰²This use of dramatic heightening will be seen more clearly in 1.9, 15, and 16. See §1.2.2.b for a full discussion of this translation technique.

The Hebrew ימי עניה, “the days of her affliction,” is represented by the Aramaic יומין קדמאין. Levine suggests that the targum is rendered, “as though the text read עונתה, i.e., the days of her girlhood.”²⁰³ While this is possible, it is more likely that the targumist is reading this phrase in light of 1.7בβ היו מימי קדם. That Jerusalem is described as having been surrounded (מדורה) by “walled cities and strong open towns” is explained by the targumist’s multiple rendering of the problematic Hebrew מרודיה. This word is found in the Hebrew Bible only three times: Lam. 1.7, 3.19, and Isa. 58.7. There are three possibilities normally identified as roots upon which this word may be based: *רוד, “homelessness, restlessness;”²⁰⁴ *רדד, “oppression;”²⁰⁵ or *מרד “rebelliousness.”²⁰⁶ To this may be added *רדה, “to rule.”²⁰⁷

Levine suggests that the targum “contains a double tradition, based upon the words מדר and מרד (i.e., ‘to dwell’ and ‘to revolt’),”²⁰⁸ yet he translates the verse as follows: “Jerusalem recalled the days of old, when she was *surrounded* by walled cities and by strong unwallied towns, *ruling* and reigning over all the world...”²⁰⁹ Levine is correct in deriving מדורה from *דור, “to dwell,” but his suggestion that this implies doubt in the mind of the targumist as to the correct consonantal text does not necessarily follow. There are further difficulties with Levine’s reading of this verse. Judging from his notes, Levine appears to interpret מרדא as being derived from the root *מרד, “to rebel, revolt,” yet his translation suggests that he derived the word from the root *רדה, “to subjugate, rule.”²¹⁰ It is, in fact, very difficult to determine which root lies behind this word, particularly since they both hold a common etymology.²¹¹

²⁰³Levine, p. 89.

²⁰⁴BDB, p. 923b-24a.

²⁰⁵BDB, p. 921b.

²⁰⁶BDB, p. 597b.

²⁰⁷BDB, p. 921b-22a.

²⁰⁸Levine, p. 90.

²⁰⁹Levine, p. 64.

²¹⁰Jastrow, p. 1451b.

²¹¹See Jastrow, pp. 594a, 836a-b, and 1451b. All three roots, *מרד, *רוד, and *רד are from biblical Hebrew.

The solution may be that our targumist actually presents *three* interpretations of the Hebrew מרודיה. In the first instance, the Hebrew מרודיה may be represented with the Aramaic מדורה, as Levine has suggested. If so, the targumist has used the consonantal similarities of the two words in order to further enhance the image of Jerusalem in “the days of old” by describing the great cities and towns which surrounded Jerusalem and made up her domain. It seems clear, however, that מרדא and שלטה represent *מרד and *רדה respectively. This serves to place Jerusalem’s glorious past in contrast with her greatest rebellion. Many of Judah’s kings were politically successful and expanded their borders to cover “all the earth” while at the same time they rebelled against the LORD.²¹² Our targumist has thus represented the full range of possible interpretations of מרודיה, each of which serves to emphasize the glorious past of mighty Jerusalem and thereby making her downfall that much more dramatic.

The language of the third stich of MT is straightforward and represents few linguistic or theological difficulties. The targumist continues to expand the text, however, in order to remind his audience that it is “because of her sins” that Jerusalem fell and to further increase the poignancy of the moment. The first and most noticeable change is the identification of Nebuchadnezzar as the enemy. Aside from the obvious historical allusion to the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE, the representation of the Hebrew צר with נצר רשיעא is based upon the fact that the last two letters of Nebuchadnezzar’s name are צ and ר. Nebuchadnezzar’s name appears eight times in TgLam, each time with the epithet of רשיעא, and in half of all the occurrences of צר in MT נצר רשיעא is used.²¹³ The targumist also offers the additional interpretation of צר as “distress,” since we are told that “her people fell into the hands of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar and he oppressed them (ואעיק להון).”

²¹²See 2 Kgs. 14.23ff. “In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash King of Judah, Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel became king in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD.... He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Sea of Arabah, in accordance with the word of the LORD.” Clearly he was politically successful, even fulfilling God’s decrees, but nonetheless he was regarded as wicked and his 41 years of reign are given only a few lines in the sacred history.

²¹³צר occurs twice in 1.5, 1.7, and once in 1.10 and 4.12. The targumist uses נצר רשיעא in 1.7 (once), 1.10, and 4.12.

The final stich is represented with minor prosaic expansions. What the enemies saw is identified as the sight of Jerusalem going into captivity and the *hapax legomenon* מִשְׁבֵּתָה of MT (normally translated as “her destruction” or “her downfall/collapse”) is interpreted as being derived from the root שבת* “to cease.”²¹⁴ Therefore, her enemies laughed “because her good fortune had ceased from her.” The targum to 1.7 thus highlights the dramatic difference between Jerusalem’s former state of glory and her complete destruction and subjugation. She who once ruled the whole earth has now been oppressed and sent into exile because of her rebellion and sin.

3.1.8. Verse 8

חָטְאָה חֲטָאָה יְרוּשָׁלַם עַל-כֵּן לְגִידָה הָיְתָה
כָּל-מְכַבְּדֶיהָ הִזְלִיחָה כִּי-רָאוּ עֲרוֹתֶיהָ
גַּם-הִיא נִאֲנָחָה וַתִּשָּׁב אַחֲוָר:

חובא רבא חבת ירושלם בגין כן לטלטיל הות כל עממיא דהוו מיקרין לה מלקדמין נהגו בה זילתא ארום
חזו בדקהא ברם היא מתאנחא ורעתת לאחורא:

Jerusalem sinned a great sin, therefore she has become a wanderer. All the nations which had honored her in earlier times treat her with contempt for they have seen her nakedness. But she groans and shrinks back.

Prosaic Expansion.²¹⁵ The Hebrew לנידה, a *hapax legomenon*, has been variously understood as meaning “the object of head nodding” or “to wander, move to and fro.”²¹⁶ Many ancient versions including Aquila, Symmachus, and P read it as merely a variant of נדה, “impurity.”²¹⁷ Our targumist has read it as being from the root נוד*, “to move to and fro, wander,”²¹⁸ using the Aramaic טלטול, “to move, migrate.”²¹⁹

²¹⁴See Hillers, p. 70, and Albrektson, pp. 61-2.

²¹⁵From this point onwards we will encounter many verses whose translation falls into the rubric of prosaic expansion (see 1.2.2.b). For convenience these will be identified as such with the phrase “Prosaic Expansion” at the beginning of that verse’s commentary. On the rare occasion when a verse has been rendered *verbatim* they will also be labeled as such (e.g., 5.2).

²¹⁶Both interpretations derive MT’s לנידה from the root נוד* (BDB, p. 626b). See, Hillers, p. 70, for a full discussion of the positions held. Ibn Ezra understood it to mean that Jerusalem was the “object of head-nodding/mockery.” Rudolph (“Gespött,” p. 206 and accompanying notes) and Hillers have similar interpretations. On the other hand LXX and Rashi saw her as a “wanderer.”

²¹⁷BDB, p. 622. See Budde, p. 81, and Gottwald, p. 8.

²¹⁸BDB, p. 626b.

²¹⁹Jastrow, p. 536a.

It may be, as Levine has pointed out,²²⁰ that our targumist has in mind the midrash which re-interprets לנידה as לטלטול, “‘Therefore she became filthy;’ condemned to wander” (על כן לנידה היתה לטלטול היתה).²²¹ The fact that our targum and this midrash use the same verb is highly suggestive, but considering that LXX has a similar reading (εἰς σάλον ἐγένετο) it would seem that such a rendering was an ancient solution to the *hapax legomenon* and does not necessitate a direct relationship between LamR and TgLam.²²² Exegetically the targum offers little change from the intent of the biblical text. Although the description of Jerusalem as a wanderer serves to highlight her condition as an exile, it is not an unreasonable rendering of לנידה. The other additions to the verse offer very little in terms of content. The targumist identifies the כל in MT as “all the nations” and that it was in “earlier times” that she was held in honor. The addition of מלקדמין fills in the terse Hebrew and continues the contextualization begun in 1.7.

3.1.9. Verse 9

טמאתה בשוליה לא זכרה אחריתה
 ותרד פלאים אין מנחם לה
 ראה יהוה את-עניי כי הגדיל אויב:

סואבות דם ריחוקהא בשיפולהא לא אדכיאת מניה ולא תהת על חובהא ולא דכירת מה דעתיד למיתי עליה בסוף יומיא ונחתת ונפלת והות פרישן ולית די ימליל תנחומין לה חזי יי ותהא מסתכל [ית עניי]²²³ ארום אתרברבו עלי בעלי דבבא:

The impurity of the menstrual blood in her skirts has not been cleansed from her. And she did not regret her sins, nor did she think of what would befall her in the end of days. And she went down and fell and was set aside. And there was no one to speak comfortingly to her. Look, O LORD and see [my affliction] for my enemies have exalted themselves over me.

We have already seen in 1.7 how the targumist expands upon and extends the biblical imagery in order to increase the dramatic tension.²²⁴ Verse 9 is the first of several instances in TgLam where our targumist has taken a passage which is either innocuous²²⁵ or merely

²²⁰Levine, pp. 92-3.

²²¹LamR 1.8.

²²²This view is further supported by TgOnk to Gen. 4.12 and 16 which also translates *נוד with *טלטל.

²²³Found in YT and necessary in order to represent all of MT.

²²⁴§3.1.7. See §1.2.2.b for discussion of the translation technique of “dramatic heightening.”

²²⁵See 1.16 where the biblical text reads “for these things I weep,” but the targum reads “because of the babies who were smashed and the pregnant mothers whose wombs were ripped open, the Congregation of Israel said, ‘I weep....’”

alludes to some greater tragedy²²⁶ and has expanded it with direct and graphic imagery. In this verse, the biblical text states that Jerusalem's "uncleanness was in her skirts." Although טמאה (and the verb *טמא) can be used to describe a variety of ritual impurities, when used in reference to women the noun טמאה always indicates a sexual impurity. That is to say, the impurity results either from illicit intercourse (e.g., Num. 5.19) or, primarily, as a result of a flow of blood such as in menstruation (e.g., Lev. 15.19ff.). Thus MT alludes to Jerusalem being a menstrous women by informing the reader that her uncleanness was "in her skirts." The targumist, however, makes the biblical image explicit and further emphasizes this point by identifying her uncleanness as the "blood of her menstruation" (דם ריחוקהא).

The Hebrew בשוליה is rendered with the Aramaic בשיפולהא. Levine argues that שפולא in Aramaic "means extremity, lower abdomen, bottom; it is virtually unattested as 'skirt.'" ²²⁷ He goes on to suggest that the targumist is alluding to the midrash which interprets שוליה as referring to the "outskirts" of Jerusalem where child sacrifices were offered to Molech.²²⁸ If this was the targumist's intent, however, he did a poor job of making his point. Unlike 1.1 where the targumist directly alludes to the midrash of Gen. 3.9, here the targumist has not provided his audience with even the slightest hint which might bring to mind the midrash suggested by Levine.²²⁹ Where the targumist has expanded the meaning of MT, it is in identifying Jerusalem's uncleanness with her menstrual blood and not with child sacrifice. Thus, it is probable that our targumist simply chose the most common Aramaic equivalent which also had the benefit of consonance.

While Jerusalem is characterized as a unclean woman, the targumist also goes further to state that "the menstrual blood in her skirts *has not been cleansed from her.*" The

²²⁶For example, this verse and 1.15.

²²⁷Levine, p. 95, n. 2; See Jastrow, p. 1566.

²²⁸LamR 1.9 and LT to Lam. 1.9. At first glance, this would appear to be supported by the midrashic statement of R. Yose (רבי יוסי אומר חליתא דבר הינום) which is normally interpreted as "R. Yose said, '[The targum translates it] the valley of Bar Hinnon.'" There is no evidence, however, in any remaining examples of the targumim to Lamentations which include such a direct reference.

²²⁹It is interesting to note that regardless of his notes, Levine translates בשיפולהא as "her skirts," p. 64.

implication is that Jerusalem has not offered the appropriate sacrifices for her cleansing.²³⁰ This, coupled with the expansion of the biblical phrase לא זכרא אחריתה to include Jerusalem's lack of repentance for her sins, continues the targumist's argument that Jerusalem and her people have willfully disobeyed God. Although a menstruating woman may be unclean for a time, after the issue of blood ceases and the set time has passed she may then offer sacrifices, bathe, and be declared clean, but Jerusalem has "bled" through her sin and had no regrets.

This interpretation may be compared with M. *Yoma* 9 where R. Akiba compares God's forgiveness to a *mikveh*.

R. Akiva said: Blessed are ye, O Israel. Before whom are ye made clean and who makes you clean? Your Father in heaven; as it is written, *And I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean* (Ezek. 36.25). And again it says, *O Lord the hope* (מקוה) *of Israel* (Jer. 17.13); — as the *mikveh* cleanses the unclean so does the Holy, blessed be he, cleanse Israel.²³¹

In order for a *mikveh* to be efficacious one must immerse themselves in it or, in the case of God's cleansing Israel, they must first repent of their sins in order to receive his forgiveness. Jerusalem did not seek forgiveness. In fact, the targumist says that she did not even regret her sins. The strong and direct language of this passage emphasizes the condition of Israel and advances our targumist's argument that God's punishment of Jerusalem and her people was just not only because they sinned, but because once they had sinned they did not repent and seek God's forgiveness.

Biblical scholars have often noted that the second stich of 1.9 seems to be rather short in comparison with the general form of the Book of Lamentations. After considering the use of the *waw*-consecutive within Lamentations, Hillers concludes that "a verb has been lost at the beginning of the line, and that *wattered* was originally the second verb in the kind of coordinate construction common in the book."²³² Löhr has a similar opinion,²³³ however Hillers is more cautious, suggesting that "it would be hazardous to restore the

²³⁰See, Lev. 15:19ff., M. *Niddah*, passim, and M. *Mikwa'oth*, passim.

²³¹Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 173. All translations of the Mishnah are from Danby unless otherwise noted.

²³²Hillers, p. 71, and further discussion on the *waw*-consecutive on pp. 67-8.

²³³Löhr, p. 42.

missing word, but it may have been something like ‘she has fallen.’²³⁴ It is thus interesting to note that TgLam reads ונחתת ונפלת for MT’s ותרד. Considering the targum also begins with an unnecessary *waw*-consecutive, this is probably the result of a double translation rather than evidence for a different Hebrew *Vorlage*. In an instance of associative translation the targum provides a double translation of ראה and translates את-עניי ראה יהוה with ראה יהוה והביטה. This is a reflection of Lam. 1.11 where MT reads ראה יהוה והביטה and TgLam renders the phrase as חזי יי ותהי מסתייכל.²³⁵ The targumist thus brings 1.9 in line with 1.11 through associative translation. Western MSS do not represent the Hebrew את-עניי and therefore should be emended to ית-עניי, following YT.²³⁶

3.1.10. Verse 10

ידו פֶּרַשׁ צָרַעַל כָּל-מִתְמַדְיָהּ
כִּי-רָאָתָהּ גּוֹיִם בָּאוּ מִקְדְּשָׁהּ
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָהּ לֹא-בָאוּ בְקִהְלָל לְךָ:

ידיה אושיט נבוכד נצר רשיעא ושלף סייפא וקטע כל רגוגהא אף כנשתא דישראל שריאת ליללא ארום חזת
עממין נוכראין עלו לבית מוקדשהא די פקדתה על ידוי דמשה נביא על עמון ומואב דלא ידכון למיעל
בקהלא די לך:

The wicked Nebuchadnezzar stretched out his hand and drew forth his sword and cut off all her lovely things. Even the Congregation of Israel began to howl for she saw foreign nations go into her Temple; those about whom you commanded by Moses the prophet concerning Ammon and Moab, that they were not worthy to enter your assembly.

We again find that the Hebrew צר is translated and identified with the name Nebuchadnezzar,²³⁷ continuing to identify the historical moment as the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE. Most of the remaining additions are embellishments which add to the drama of the event described. In the first instance, the oppositional sense of the Hebrew על is taken to a vivid extreme by our targumist who depicts Nebuchadnezzar as personally and physically cutting off “all her lovely things” with his sword. We then hear the cries of the people as “the Congregation of Israel began to howl.” The concluding addition, that

²³⁴Hillers, p. 71.

²³⁵The same phrase and translation occur in 1.12 where the subject is “all who pass by” and in 2.20 where the LORD is the subject.

²³⁶See Van der Heide, p. 7*.

²³⁷See §3.1.7.

Ammon and Moab were the nations which were seen entering the assembly, requires some comment.

While all of verse 10 describes the sacking of Jerusalem, the last two stichs speak directly of the desecration of the Temple by foreigners, “those whom you forbade to enter your congregation.” Within the historical context, the גוים mentioned are Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, but the text of Lamentations is speaking figuratively. By describing the גוים as *לך בקהל לא-יבאו* the biblical author alludes to Deut. 23.4 [Eng. 23.3] where God declares that the descendants of the Ammonites or Moabites should never be allowed within the inner circle of Israel.²³⁸

No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted to the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of their descendants shall be admitted to the assembly of the LORD (לא-יבאו) (עמוני ומואבי בקהל יהוה גם דור עשירי לא-יבאו להם בקהל יהוה עד-עולם), because they did not meet you with food and water on your journey out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam son of Beor, from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. (Yet the LORD your God refused to heed Balaam; the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loved you.) You shall never promote their welfare or their prosperity as long as you live.²³⁹

Within the context of Deuteronomy the command is that the Ammonites and the Moabites are not to be accepted as proselytes or spouses within the *community* of Israel.²⁴⁰ The author of Lamentations, however, declares that not only are they within the community, they have entered the very sanctuary itself. As Hillers has observed, “the reference to the commandment is made with ironic intention: no heathen was to enter, even piously and peaceably, into the sacred assembly, but now they break in violently and rob the holy place.”²⁴¹

Needless to say, our targumist and the rabbis were quick to note the connection which

²³⁸Hillers points out “the command referred to in [1.10c] is obviously Deut. 23.4, in view of the close verbal agreement,” p. 87. See also Rudolph, p. 213; and Thenius, p. 133 (“Es ist klar, dass der Verf. Deuter. 23, 4. vor Augen hatte”). Westermann refers to Deut. 23.3, but only in passing: “the hearer is meant to understand that trespassing upon the temple precinct already effects its defilement (cf. Deut. 23.3; 2 Chron. 36.17-9),” p. 131.

²³⁹Deut. 23.4. It is also been noted that the language is similar to that found in Jer. 51.51, “We are put to shame, for we have heard insults; dishonor has covered our face, for aliens have come into the holy places of the LORD’s house.” See, for example, Thenius, p. 133, and Löhr, p. 42.

²⁴⁰See Neh. 13.1-3 where the commandment is extended to exclude intermarriage with any non-Israelite.

²⁴¹Hillers, p. 87.

the author of Lamentation had established with Deut. 23.4. LamR Proem 9 and LamR 1.10 both contain midrashim which draw upon Deut. 23.4, Proem 9 beginning with the exposition of Jer. 51.51.²⁴² In both of these midrashim the Ammonites and the Moabites join with the Babylonians in sacking Jerusalem. Proem 9 has them carry out the cherubim from the Temple and display them as evidence of idolatry, but in LamR 1.10 they seek out the Torah scroll in order to remove their condemnation.

You find that when the enemies entered the Temple, Ammonites and Moabites entered among them; and while all the others ran to plunder the silver and gold, the Ammonites and Moabites ran to plunder the Torah for the purpose of expunging, *An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord* (Deut. 23.4).²⁴³

In contrast to these midrashim, our targum is content to merely characterize the גוים as “foreign” and identify them as “those about whom you commanded by Moses the prophet concerning Ammon and Moab.” The targumist thus makes explicit the biblical author’s allusion to Deut. 23.4. Since the reference can be deduced from the biblical text of Lamentations itself there is no need to assume that the targumist is relying upon a preexistent rabbinic tradition. Finally, the targumist translates the final phrase of 1.10 as an indirect quotation, where לך in לך בקהל לך refers to the LORD rather than to Israel.²⁴⁴

3.1.11. Verse 11

כָּל-עַמָּה נִאֲנָחִים מִבְּקָשִׁים לֶחֶם
נִתְּנוּ מִחַמּוּדֵיהֶם בְּאֶכָּל לֶחֶשׁ יִבְנֶפֶשׁ
רְאֵה יְהוָה וְתַבִּיטָה כִּי הִיִּיתִי זוּלָלָה:

כל עמא דירושלם אניחן מכפנא ותבען לחמא למיכול יהבו רגוגיהום בסעיד לחמא לקיימא נפש חזי יי ותהי מסתכל ארום הויתי גרגרניתא:

All the people of Jerusalem groan from hunger and search for bread to eat. They gave their precious things for sustenance in order to stay alive. Look O LORD and see for I have become voracious.

Prosaic Expansion. Our targumist has added little to this verse which effect its overall intent. The most substantive addition is the identification of Jerusalem as the subject of

²⁴²A much abbreviated form of the midrash of LamR 1.10 is also found in LT to 1.10, but see GenR 41.3 for a complete parallel.

²⁴³LamR 1.10.

²⁴⁴See, Albrektson, pp. 65-6, for a full discussion of the grammatical and versional issues. Many modern translations such as the NIV and NRSV render the Hebrew in a similar manner.

MT's כָּל עֵמָה,²⁴⁵ which serves to localize the event to Jerusalem. The remaining additions are primarily concerned with converting the Hebrew into prose. The Hebrew זוללה is usually translated into English as “worthless” or “abject,” but clearly means “glutton” in the two other instances in which this root occurs.²⁴⁶ The targumist translates זוללה with גרגרניתא, which means “glutton” and amplifies the theme of hunger already established in this verse and elsewhere in TgLam.²⁴⁷

3.1.12. Verse 12

לוא אֲלִיכֶם כָּל-עֲבָרֵי דְרָךְ הַבֵּיטוּ וּרְאוּ
אִם-יֵשׁ מִקְאוֹב פְּמִקְאֵי אֲשֶׁר עוֹלַל לִי
אֲשֶׁר הוֹנֶה יְהוָה בְּיוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ:

אשבעית לכון כל דעברין באורחא זורו הכא איסתכלו וחזו אין אית כיבא ככיבי דאסתקף לי דיתבר יי יתי
ביום תקוף רוגזיה:

I adjure you, all who pass by on the road, *turn around here*. Look and see. Is there any pain like my pain, that which has been visited upon me because the LORD shattered me in the day of his great anger?

Prosaic Expansion. As they stand, the first two words of MT are practically meaningless and have been generally accepted as corrupt.²⁴⁸ LamR interprets the difficult phrase as an exhortation by Israel to the world, “May what has come upon me not come upon you! May it not happen to you what has happened to me!”²⁴⁹ Our targumist’s rendering of לוא אליכם with לכון אשבעית clearly fits within this interpretative tradition. It is possible, as Levine suggests,²⁵⁰ that the addition of the verb זורו is a second interpretation of לוא אליכם similar to the emendation לכו suggested by Praetorius.²⁵¹ The remainder of the verse has simply been rendered into prose form with no substantive changes.

²⁴⁵Lagarde’s text reads כל עמהא דירושלם as does YT, but the majority of the MSS read כל עמה ירושלם. See Van der Heide, p. 8*.

²⁴⁶Deut. 21.20 and Prov. 28.7. See, Levine, p. 98.

²⁴⁷E.g., 1.6, 19, and 20; 2.12 and 20; 4.4 and 5; 5.6 and 9.

²⁴⁸See Albrektson, pp. 66-8; Hillers, pp. 71-2; and Löhr, p. 43.

²⁴⁹LamR 1.12 עלִי דמטא עלי לא ימטי עליכון דאתא עלי לא ייתי עליכון העולם לא אומרת לאומות העולם לא ייתי עליכון דאתא עלי לא ימטי עליכון דמטא עלי 104b where Lam. 1.12 is used by Rabbah (in R. Johanan’s name) as a biblical justification for saying קובלנא within a charm or prayer.

²⁵⁰Levine, p. 99.

²⁵¹F. Praetorius, “Threni I, 12. 13. II, 6. 13,” ZAW 15 (1895), p. 143.

3.1.13. Verse 13

מְרוֹם שְׁלַח-אֵשׁ בְּעִצְמֹתַי וַיִּרְדְּנָה
פָּרַשׁ רְשֵׁת לְרַגְלֵי הַשִּׁבְנֵי אַחֲזֹר
נְתַנְנִי שִׁמְמָה כָּל-הַיּוֹם דָּוָה:

מן שמיא שלח אשתא בכרכיי תקיפין וכבש יתהון פרש מצדתא לרגלי ארתעני קדל קדם בעלי דבבי יהבני למהוי צדיא כל יומא מרחקא וחלישא:

From heaven he sent fire into my strong cities and conquered them. He spread a net for my feet. He caused me to shrink back *before my enemies*. He caused me to be desolate all day, *abominable and weak*.

The targumist has identified the “high place” from which God sent the fire as heaven itself, but what is perhaps most interesting in verse 13 is the interpretation of עִצְמֹתַי as כרכיי. This is particularly curious since throughout the text our targumist has little trouble with anthropomorphizing Jerusalem. She is variously described as “like a widow” (1.1), being “bitter in her heart” (1.4), remembering her “days of old” (1.7), and in 1.8-9 she is described as an unclean woman.²⁵² So why should our targumist balk at describing Jerusalem’s “bones” being destroyed?

It appears that our targumist is interpreting עִצְמֹתַי analogically. Since bones provide the structural defense of a person’s body, the fortified towns and walls which surrounded Jerusalem are considered the “bones” of the city. In this way the targumist also alludes to the historical reality of the destruction of Jerusalem (in both 586 BCE and 70 CE) when those laying siege slowly destroyed one line of defense after another.²⁵³ That these fortifications are described as having been “conquered” (or “crushed” כבש) is the targumist’s attempt to deal with the difficult וירדנה.

The midrash provides several interpretations of וירדנה reading as “to scrape,”²⁵⁴ “to conquer,”²⁵⁵ “to rule,”²⁵⁶ and (from the Aramaic *רדא) “to plough.”²⁵⁷ Aside from the final

²⁵²There are, of course, many other such occurrences throughout the text.

²⁵³See 2 Kgs. 25 and Josephus, *The Jewish War* 5, particularly chapters seven and eight.

²⁵⁴“He removed [i.e. banished] them, as the word is used in that sense in, *And he scraped it out* (וירדהו) *into his hands* (Judg. 14. 9),” LamR 1.13. *רדה BDB, p. 922a, II.

²⁵⁵“He conquered them, as the word is used in, *May he have dominion* (וירד) *also from sea to sea* (Ps. 72.8),” LamR 1.13. *רדה BDB, p. 922a, I.

²⁵⁶“Another interpretation of וירדנה: he bore sway over them, as the word is used in, *For he had dominion* (רדה) *over all the region of this side the River* (1 Kgs 5.4),” LamR 1.13. *רדה BDB, p. 922a, I.

reference to M. *Ta'an*. 4.6, the midrash understands the root to be *רדה whose primary meaning is “to have dominion, rule.” The Massoretes and several modern scholars hold a similar view,²⁵⁸ but both LXX and P have interpreted the verb as a Hiphil from *ירד, “to descend.”²⁵⁹ While Levine²⁶⁰ suggests that our targumist has followed the midrashic and Masoretic interpretation, considering the primary meaning of the Aramaic *כבש is “to press, squeeze”²⁶¹ it seems more likely that the targumist has read the Hebrew as a Hiphil of *רדד, “to beat, *fig.* to beat down, subdue.”²⁶²

The targum interprets MT’s השיבני אחור, “he turned me back,” as “he caused me to *shrink* back (ארתעני קדל) before my enemies.” The addition of קדם בעלי דבבי is in response to the unspoken question, “from *what* did he cause Jerusalem to turn back?” The addition of “the enemies” also builds upon the theme of Jerusalem as an embattled city. Already present within MT²⁶³ the targum expands upon this by identifying the enemies as Nebuchadnezzar,²⁶⁴ Nebuzaradan,²⁶⁵ the Ammonites and the Moabites,²⁶⁶ and even Titus and Vespasian.²⁶⁷ Although the rendering of this verse is perhaps too subtle to be described as “dramatic heightening,” the translation continues to enhance the image of Jerusalem as a crippled city, completely lacking the strength with which to defend herself, thus she has no

²⁵⁷“Another interpretation of וירדנה: he ploughed it, as it has been taught: ‘Tineius Rufus ploughed the Temple’ (y *Ta’an*. 69b);” LamR 1.13. See Jastrow, p. 1452a.

²⁵⁸See G. R. Driver, “Hebrew Notes on ‘Song of Songs’ and ‘Lamentations,’” in *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet*, ed. A. Baumgartner, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950, p. 137; and Albrektson, p. 72.

²⁵⁹κατήγαγεν αὐτό and א-ג-א-נ-ה. “The ו in MT is not rendered in LXX, and P has altered the suffix from 3rd to 1st person. As the Syriac translator treated suffixes with a certain freedom, no inference to a different Hebrew text is possible,” Albrektson, p. 72.

²⁶⁰Levine, p. 100.

²⁶¹Jastrow, pp. 610-1.

²⁶²BDB, p. 921. See 1 Kgs. 6.32.

²⁶³The term צר occurs in 6 different verses in MT (1.5, 7, 10, 20; 2.17; and 4.12) as does אייב (1.9, 16; 2.3, 7, 17; and 4.12).

²⁶⁴This occurs in several places as additions, but in 1.7, 1.10, and 4.12 it represents the Hebrew צר. See § 3.1.7.

²⁶⁵4.12.

²⁶⁶1.10.

²⁶⁷1.19. TgLam 5.11 also offers the broader categories of “Romans” and “Chaldeans” as enemies who rape wives and virgins.

recourse but to cower before her conquerors. This is further emphasized by the double representation of the Hebrew דוה. Levine is correct to point out that the use of מרחקא to describe the state of Jerusalem brings to mind the image of an unclean woman.²⁶⁸ We find the same word being used again in a similar context in 1.17, where “oppressors completely encircle Jacob” and “Jerusalem has become like an unclean woman amongst them (ות הות).” (ירושלם דמיא לאתתא מרחקא ביניהון).

3.1.14. Verse 14

נשקד על פשעי בידו ישתרגו
 עלו על-צנארי הקשיל כחי
 נתנני אדני בידו לא-אוכל קום:

אתיקר ניר מרודי בידיה אשתבשו בשובשין דגופנא סלקו על צורי אתקל חילי מסר יי יתי בידא מאן דלית
 אנה יכיל למקם:

The yoke of my rebellion was *heavy* in his hand. Intertwined *like the tendrils of a vine*, they climbed upon my neck. My strength is weakened. The LORD has given me into the hands of one whom I cannot withstand.

The first phrase of this verse is very difficult in the Hebrew. As it stands, the word נשקד is a *hapax legomenon* whose root is unattested, however the root *שקד (“to keep watch, be wakeful”)²⁶⁹ is known and LXX reads the text as על נשקד.²⁷⁰ Various solutions have been offered by the ancient versions and modern scholars, but our targum has a unique rendering which, although reinterpreting נשקד as איתיקר, does preserve the noun על as it stands in MT.²⁷¹ In other respects, however, our targumist has taken quite a few liberties with the text.

Beginning with the Hebrew ישתרגו, our targumist has created a detailed picture which informs the way in which he interprets the second stich of 1.14. MT’s Hith. of שרג, “to be

²⁶⁸Levine, p. 100. See also §3.1.9.

²⁶⁹BDB, p. 1052a.

²⁷⁰See BHS; ἐγχορηγήθη ἐπί.

²⁷¹Praetorius also suggests emending the text to read “schwer gemacht ist das Joch meiner Sünden,” pp. 143-4. See Albrektson, pp. 73-4, for a full discussion. He concludes, “it is difficult to explain why a simple and intelligible text (such as the proposed emendations) should be corrupted into the problematic על נשקד, and this is a strong argument for the view that the Massoretes have in fact preserved the original reading and that the versions are different simplifying attempts to explain a word which was no longer understood,” p. 74. Hillers provides a different reading entirely (“His yoke is on my neck, He has brought my strength low”), pp. 62 and 73.

intertwined,” is translated with Ith. of *שבש* “to be entangled, confound,” but whose Pael means “to send forth shoots.”²⁷² It is this agricultural metaphor which our targumist finds to be the perfect vehicle for his interpretation. Thus, rather than “by his hand they are fastened together,”²⁷³ בידו is governed by the first verb and ישתרו becomes the beginning of a new clause, “intertwined like the tendrils of a vine, they climbed upon my neck.” The phrase כשובשין דגופנא, which is found in all other MSS, further embellishes the image and is thus preferable to the reading of Urb. 1 (בשובשין). The Hebrew phrase עלו על which, as Albrektson has pointed out, is the technical term for a yoke that is put on, now refers to the vines which “climb upon my neck” (סלקו על צורי). While the remainder of the targum follows MT it should be noted verse 14 provides us with the first of fourteen instances where the targum renders MT’s אדני with יי. These readings are also attested in multiple biblical MSS which suggests that our targumist was using one of these variants.²⁷⁴

3.1.15. Verse 15

סְלָה כָּל-אַפְּרֵי אֲדָנִי בְּקֶרְבִּי
 קָרָא עָלַי מוֹעֵד לְשֹׁבֵר בְּחוּרַי
 גַּת דְּרֹךְ אֲדָנִי לְבִתּוּלַת בֵּת-יְהוּדָה:

כבש כל תקיפיי יי בניי אראע עלי זמן לתברא חיל עולימיי ועלו עממי על גזירת מימרא דיי וסאיבו בתולתא דבית יהודה על די הוה דמהון דבתולתהן מתשד היך כחמר מן מעצרתא בעדן דגבר מבעט ית ענבין חמר ענבוהי שדיין:

The LORD has crushed all my mighty ones within me; he has established a time against me to shatter *the strength of my young men. The nations entered by the decree of the Memra of the LORD and defiled the virgins of the House of Judah until their blood of their virginity was caused to flow like wine from a wine press when a man is treading grapes and grape-wine flows.*

The first two stichs of this verse are rendered into Aramaic without any substantive changes. The targumist chooses the common כבש (as does P **כבש**) to translate the rare Hebrew סלה,²⁷⁵ but the only addition made to the text is that it is the “strength” of the young men which the Lord shattered rather than the young men themselves. Thus, the majority of the first stich is merely a prosaic rendering of the Hebrew. The last stich of the verse,

²⁷²Jastrow, p. 1518b.

²⁷³NRSV. See Hillers, “They are entangled by his hand,” p. 62.

²⁷⁴See BHS. The fourteen instances are 1.14, 15 (twice); 2.1, 2, 5, 7, 18, 19, 20; 3.31, 36, 37, and 58.

²⁷⁵See Albrektson, p. 76.

however, is more complicated and demonstrates the extreme language which our targumist is willing to employ in order to impress upon his audience the horror of Jerusalem's fate.

The image conjured by MT is a gruesome one; although it is clearly intended as a metaphor, MT describes the Lord trampling the "virgin daughter of Judah" (גַּת דֶּרֶךְ אֲדָנִי) (לבתולת בת-יהודה). As we have seen before, our targumist has little problem with speaking of God in anthropomorphic terms, but clearly this verse is too much for his sensibilities. Rather than the Lord treading upon the virgin, the LORD decrees by his Memra that the nations should enter Jerusalem. The term "Memra" is used in reference to God six times in TgLam²⁷⁶ and literally translates as "utterance" or "word." When it is used in reference to God, however, the definition of מִמְרָא becomes problematic.

During the past century many scholars, particularly in the field of New Testament studies, have argued that מִמְרָא was a type of hypostatic figure which existed independent, but alongside God.²⁷⁷ This view, however, is no longer maintained by most scholars.²⁷⁸ Early in this century Moore engaged in a detailed analysis of the material then available.²⁷⁹

God's *memra* has sometimes the connotation of command ... sometimes it might best be translated "oracle," the revelation of his will or purpose (not, however, a specific word of prophecy); sometimes it is the resolution of a metaphor for God's power ... [and] in many instances it is clearly introduced as a verbal buffer ..., but it is always a buffer-word, not a buffer-idea; still less a buffer-person.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶They are 1.15, 17, 18, 20; 2.17; and 3.57. The term מִמְרֵי occurs in 3.54 with a man as the subject. See §3.3.54.

²⁷⁷See F. Weber, *System der Altsynagogalen Palästinischen Theologie aus Targum, Midrasch, und Talmud*, (Leipzig, 1886), p. 180. The most recent full length survey of the issues involved is Hayward, *Divine Name and Presence: the Memra*. His first chapter, "The Problem of Memra," has an excellent summary of the history of scholarship on מִמְרָא up to 1981. As noted earlier, our attention will be focused upon the use of the term within TgLam, but it is appropriate to note a few of the secondary sources which are most relevant to this study. Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*, see especially his section on the use of מִמְרָא within TgIsa, pp. 56-69. V. Hamp, *Der Begriff "Wort" in den aramäischen Bibelübersetzungen*, (München, 1938); Klein, "Anthropomorphisms," pp. 172-6; G. F. Moore, *Judaism in First Centuries of the Christian Era*, vol. 1, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1927); D. Muñoz Leon, *Dios-Palabra. Memrá en los Targumim del Pentateuco*, Institución San Jerónimo 4 (Granada, 1974); and W. E. Aufrecht, "Surrogates for the Divine Names in the Palestinian Targums to the Exodus," Ph.D. thesis, U. of Toronto, 1979, pp. 66-110.

²⁷⁸See Moore (*Judaism*, vol. 1, p. 419) who states categorically that "nowhere in the Targums is *memra* a 'being' of any kind or in any sense, much less a personal being."

²⁷⁹G. F. Moore, "Intermediaries in Jewish Theology: Memra, Shekinah, Metatron," *HTR* 15 (1922), pp. 41-85.

²⁸⁰Moore, "Intermediaries," pp. 52-3.

In 1956 the Codex Neofiti I was discovered and provided additional data for the study of מִמְרָא. More recently Hayward has argued that in its origin מִמְרָא is “God’s ִּיְהוָה, His Name for Himself expounded in terms of His past and future presence in Creation and Redemption.”²⁸¹ This position has been challenged,²⁸² but all agree that the use of מִמְרָא within the targumic texts as we have them is diverse and cannot be reduced to a single equivalence. We will examine the different uses of Memra within TgLam as we continue through the text, but in 1.15 the term has a dual function. The fact that the term is in construct with גַּרְ clearly indicates that it is an edict from the LORD, but the use of מִמְרָא also serves to distance God from the actual act of treading upon the virgin daughter Judah.

At this point, however, our targumist embellishes the text and turns an already graphic image into something truly horrific. Once within the city, the nations raped the virgins so viciously that “their blood of their virginity was caused to flow like wine from a wine press.” The image is vivid and shocking and although it removes God from the role of active abuser, the biblical image has been taken to an extreme. God issues the initial decree allowing the enemy to enter the Holy City (since no harm can assail Jerusalem without God’s approval), but it is the nations who actually defile the innocent.

In reinterpreting this stich the targumist ignores the word order presented in MT. אֲדָנִי is still the first word represented in the targum, but the reference to grapes being trod in a wine press is relegated to the final clause of the verse. Thus instead of the parallelism of “warriors/young men/virgin daughter” found at the end of each stich in the Hebrew, the targumist balances the destruction of the youths with the repetitious references to the flowing blood/wine. Although the MT is theologically problematic it did not necessitate the graphic interpretation which the targumist has provided. This depiction of the desecration of virgins heightens the audience’s sense of dismay and brings the true nature of the siege into relief. More importantly, however, the fate of Jerusalem is the result of her sin. Such a graphic depiction of their punishment would serve to deter the audience from committing

²⁸¹Hayward, p. 147.

²⁸²See Klein, “Anthropomorphisms,” p. 175, and works cited therein.

similar acts of disobedience. The targumist's rendering of verse 16 continues the dramatic heightening of the biblical text.

3.1.16. Verse 16

על-אלה אני בוכיה עיני עיני ירדה מים
 כי-רחק ממני מנחם משיב נפשי
 היו בני שוממים כי גבר אויב:

על טפליא דאתרעישו ועל נשיא מעבריא אתא דאתבקעו כריסיהום אמרת כנשתא דישר' אנא בכיא ועל עיניי זלגן דמען מבועא דמיא ארום יתרחק מני מנחם מקים יתי וממלל תנחומין על נפשי הוּו בניי צדיין ארום יתגבר עליהון בעיל דבבא:

Because of the babies who were smashed and the pregnant mothers whose wombs were ripped open, the Congregation of Israel said, "I weep and my eyes flow with tears, a spring of water, for far from me is any comforter to revive me and speak words of comfort for my soul. My sons are desolate for the enemy has become master over them."

The biblical text of verse 16 begins על-אלה אני בוכיה, "For these things I weep." This raises two obvious questions: what are "these things" and who is weeping. Our targumist uses this opportunity to further embellish his depiction of the destruction of Jerusalem. While identifying the Congregation of Israel as the speaker and the subject of the verb the targumist explains that it is the violent murder of children and expectant mothers that precipitates the Congregation's mourning. Although the biblical text of 1.16 does not mention the slaughtering of babies and pregnant women, such imagery, including cannibalism by mothers of their own children, is stated as a reality of war and famine in the Bible and other ancient Near Eastern texts.²⁸³ LamR contains several midrashim along this same theme,²⁸⁴ but considering the general nature of the additions to verse 16 it seems unlikely that our targumist is dependent upon any specific tradition.

As most commentators have noted, the repetition of עיני is most likely the result of dittography.²⁸⁵ While LXX, P, and V all read simply עיני the majority of the MSS of TgLam read some variation of עיני ותרין, "and my two eyes." Urb. 1 omits ותרין, but there remains

²⁸³See Lam. 2.20, 4.10; Isa. 13.16 (an oracle against Babylon); and Nah. 3.10 (an oracle against Nineveh). See also Hillers, p. 88, and additional texts cited there.

²⁸⁴LamR 1.16.

²⁸⁵See, for example, Albrektson, p. 77; Budde, p. 83; Hillers, p. 75 (who points out that 4QLam^a reads simply עיני); and Löhr, p. 7.

an expanded form of the compact Hebrew *עייני ירדה מים*. Whether the additions of *דמען* and *מבועא* represent the double *עייני* or are merely the result of the targumist's prosaic activity is not clear. The result, however, is that the final two stichs have been transformed into prose without altering the meaning of the original text.

Through the additions made to verses 15 and 16 the targumist has created a graphic image of the realities of war. There are no heroes or acts of valor here, nor are there blessed martyrs. Furthermore, it is the noncombatants who are described as receiving particularly brutal treatment. But the targumist is not just providing his audience with a gruesome account. In verse 12 Jerusalem cries out, "I adjure you, all who pass by on the road, turn around here. Look and see. Is there any pain like my pain?" The succeeding verses, including verses 15 and 16, catalogue Jerusalem's punishment making it clear that her pain was truly great. More poignant, however, than all the horrific acts visited upon Jerusalem by her victors is the fact God has given his people over to the enemy and he no longer offers her comfort. The identification of the speaker as the "Congregation of Israel" in verse 16 invites the synagogal audience to identify themselves with the tragedy being described²⁸⁶ and, as we noted earlier, the graphic descriptions of the consequences of Jerusalem's sins would serve as a deterrent to the audience, warning them of the penalties which await those who disobey the LORD.

3.1.17. Verse 17

פֶּרְשָׁה צִיּוֹן בְּיָדֶיהָ אֵין מְנַחֵם לָהּ
צָוָה יְהוָה לְיַעֲקֹב סִבִּיבֵיו צָרָיו
הִיטָה יְרוּשָׁלַם לְגַדְהָ בִּינֵיהֶם:

פרשת ציון ידהא מן עקתא היכמה דמפרשא אתתא על מתברא פגנת ולית די ימלל תנחומין על לבבהא פקד
יי לבית יעקב פקודיא ואוריתא למנטר והנון עברו על גזירת מימריה בגין כן אסתחרו חזור חזור ליעקב
מעיקוהי הות ירושלם דמיא לאתתא מרחקא ביניהון:

Zion spreads out her hands from anguish like a woman spread upon the birth stool. She screams but there is no one to speak comfortingly to her heart. The LORD commanded the House of Jacob to keep the Commandments and Torah, but they transgressed the decree of his Memra. Therefore his oppressors completely encircle Jacob. Jerusalem is like an unclean woman amongst them.

²⁸⁶See §3.1.6.

The image of a woman in agony, already present within the Hebrew text, is developed by the targumist and likened to the pain and expression of a woman in labor. This also continues the imagery begun in verse 15 with the defilement of virgins and extended in verse 16 to the slaughter of infants and pregnant women. Within the Bible, the cries of a woman in labor are synonymous with great calamity and God's judgement descending upon the wicked.

This motif is employed most frequently by Isaiah and Jeremiah²⁸⁷ and conveys not only the extreme pain which a woman in labor experiences, but also the complete helplessness. For example, in Jeremiah's prophecies against the nations (Jer. 46-51) "the hearts of the warriors of Moab, on that day, shall be like the heart of a woman in labor;"²⁸⁸ Damascus "has become feeble, she turned to flee, and panic seized her; anguish and sorrows have taken hold of her; as of a woman in labor;"²⁸⁹ and "the king of Babylon heard news of them, and his hands fell helpless; anguish seized him, pain like that of a woman in labor."²⁹⁰ This last passage echoes an earlier prophecy against Jerusalem where she too is incapacitated by her pain and suffering. "We have heard news of them, our hands fall helpless; anguish has taken hold of us, pain as of a woman in labor."²⁹¹ The targumist is thus building upon an extensive prophetic tradition.

It is a curious fact that the midrash to this phrase ("Zion spread her hands") does not include any reference to the prophecies of Jeremiah which employ the imagery of a woman in labor. Instead the reference to women giving birth is related to the second half of 1.17a, "there is no one to comfort her."

R Levi said: Wherever it is stated "there is none" it indicates that there would be in the future. For example, *And Sarai was barren; she had no child* (Gen. 11.30). But she did later have

²⁸⁷ See, for example, Isa. 13.8, 21.3; and (inclusive of all references) Jer. 4.31, 6.24, 13.21, 22.23, 48.41, 49.22, 49.24, and 50.43. It is of interest to note that real (rather than metaphorical) childbirth is only described explicitly twice in the Hebrew Bible, Gen. 35.16-21 and 1 Sam. 4.19. In both instances the mothers, Rachel and the wife of Phineas, die in childbirth.

²⁸⁸ Jer. 48.41.

²⁸⁹ Jer. 49.24.

²⁹⁰ Jer. 50.43.

²⁹¹ Jer. 6.24.

one, as it is said, *And the Lord remembered Sarah* (Gen. 21.1). Similarly, *But Hannah had no children* (1 Sam. 1.2), but she did later have them, as it is said, *So the Lord remembered Hannah* (1 Sam. 2.21). Similarly, *She is Zion, there is none that careth for her* (Jer. 30.17); but she will later have one, as it is said, *And a redeemer will come to Zion* (Isa. 59.20). And so here *there is none to comfort her* (Lam. 1.17), but she will have later, as it is said, *I, even I, am He that comforteth you* (Isa. 51.12).

This demonstrates the different tendencies found in these two works. LamR generally presents a positive interpretation of Lamentations, remembering Israel's sins, but always returning to God's mercy for his people. The targum, on the other hand, does little to diminish the pathos of the Book of Lamentations and often makes additions which add to its drama. In fact, it is not until we get to the pivotal (but difficult) verse 21 of Chapter Three that we find the targumist injecting any hope into TgLam.

In the second stich our targumist reads the *lamed* of MT's *צוה יהוה ליעקב* as a simple directive "to Jacob" rather than "concerning" or "against," as is indicated in the biblical context.²⁹² The result is that we are once again told why Jerusalem was able to be destroyed: "The LORD commanded the House of Jacob to keep the Commandments and the Torah, *but they transgressed the decree of his Memra.*" Once again we find the targumist employing the term *מימרא* in construct with *גזר*. In this instance the "decree of his Memra" is the command that Israel obey "the Commandments and the Torah."²⁹³

The exegetical progression is obvious. The occurrence of the verb *צוה** within the verse allowed the targumist to introduce the noun, *המצוה*, and to bring to mind the fundamental basis of God's covenant with his people.

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the Commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, *and observing his Commandments*, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.²⁹⁴

Clearly the people have not kept God's Commandments or they would not have been over

²⁹²As Hillers points out, "a literal rendering [of MT] would be 'Yahweh gave command concerning Jacob,' with the following clause supplying the content of the command: 'his enemies (should be) around him,'" p. 75.

²⁹³See §3.1.15, §3.2.17 and §5 for further discussion of the use of Memra within TgLam.

²⁹⁴Deut. 30.15-8.

come and destroyed.

The remainder of the verse is straightforward and requires little from our targumist to further emphasize his message. The occurrence of לנידה, “unclean” or “menstruous,” further supports the imagery which our targumist has been employing of women who are ritually impure or otherwise defiled. This is made explicit with the addition of דמיא לאתתא, “like an unclean woman amongst them.”

3.1.18. Verse 18

צדיק הוא יהוה כי פיהו קריתי
שמועו-נא כל-עמים וראו מקאבי
בתולתי ובחורי הקלו בשבי:

אמר יי²⁹⁵ לעמא בית ישראל דלא יעבר קטלין בחרבא בארעהון אזל יאשיהו מלכא שלף סייפא על פרעה חגירא בבקעת מגדו מה דלא אתפקד ולא תבע אולפן מן קדם יי בגין כן רגימו רגומיא גירין למלכא יאשיהו ומית תמן ועד דלא נפקת נשמתיה הוה רחיש בשפוטיו וכן אמר זכאי הוא יי ארום על מימריה עברית שמעו כען כל עממא הספידין דאספיד ירמיהו על יאשיהו והזו כיבי דערעני בתר מותיה בתולותיי וריביי אזלו בשבייתא:

The LORD told the people of the House of Israel that they should not allow those who kill by the sword to pass through their land. Josiah the king went forth and drew his sword against Pharaoh the Lame on the plain of Megiddo, which he had not been commanded (to do) and he had not sought instruction from before the LORD. Therefore archers shot arrows at King Josiah and he died there. Before his spirit left him he moved his lips and said, “The LORD is blameless for I have transgressed his Memra.” Hear now all peoples, the lamentations which Jeremiah made over Josiah and see my affliction which has come upon me after his death. My maidens and young men have gone into exile.

With the beginning of verse 18 the Hebrew text shifts from the third person of the previous verse to the first person and the targum presents a pre-translational addition providing not only the identity of the speaker, but also the context for the speech. Both 2 Kgs. 23.28-30 and 2 Chron. 35.20-7 describe how King Josiah went out to meet Pharaoh Neco²⁹⁶ in battle and was killed, but the passage in Chronicles is much more detailed and provides the context for this passage.

After all this, when Josiah had set the temple in order, King Neco of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out against him. But Neco sent envoys to him, saying, “What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I am not coming against you today, but against the house with which I am at war; and God has commanded me to hurry. Cease

²⁹⁵Lagarde adds במימריה.

²⁹⁶Pharaoh’s appellation חגירא, “the Lame,” reflects the word play between the Hebrew נכה, “to be stricken,” (BDB, p. 646b) and the Pharaoh’s name נכו. This interpretation is found throughout the targumim. See Tg. 2 Kgs. 23.29, 33, 34, 35; TgZech 12.11; Tg. 2 Chron. 35.20, 22 and 36.4.

opposing God, who is with me, so that he will not destroy you.” But Josiah would not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but joined battle in the plain of Megiddo. The archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, “Take me away, for I am badly wounded.” So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem.²⁹⁷

We have already noted the ancient tradition which connects Jeremiah with the creation of laments (and the Book of Lamentations) based upon this passage, so it is not surprising that the rabbinic exegetes should look here for the identity of the one who declared, “The LORD is in the right, for I have rebelled against his word.”

TgLam and LamR were aware that God had decreed that Israel was *not* to allow aggressive nations to pass through their land, so why should a righteous king be punished with death for obeying the Law?²⁹⁸ Chronicles tells us that there was no need for Josiah to go out to battle Pharaoh. Not only was Pharaoh not posing a threat to Judah, but God himself was working and speaking through Neco. Josiah, however, paid no heed to his words. The connection between Lam. 1.18 and 2 Chron. 35.20-4 is based, therefore, not only on the broad question of who might have said “The LORD is in the right,” but also on the textual similarities. In Lam. 1.18 the speaker confesses to having rebelled against “his word” (כי פיהו מריתי) and 2 Chron. 35.22 tells us that Josiah “did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God (ולא שמע אל-דברי נכו מפי אלהים).

The majority of TgLam 1.18 is therefore concerned with providing the historical context for this speech. The targumist begins by reminding his audience that God had, in fact, decreed that they should not let a hostile people cross over their country. However, when Josiah went forth to do battle with Pharaoh Neco he was not obeying the Law of Leviticus. He was, in fact, disobeying God’s command as revealed to him by Pharaoh Neco himself. The targumist also tells us that Josiah “had not sought instruction from before the LORD” when he went out to oppose Neco. Therefore Josiah, the righteous king, was

²⁹⁷2 Chron. 35.20-24.

²⁹⁸Lev. 26.6. LamR 1.18 contains an extensive version of this tradition with a dialogue between Jeremiah and Josiah. “Jeremiah ... said to Josiah, ‘I have this tradition from my teacher, Isaiah, *And I will spur Egypt against Egypt*’ (Isa. 19.2); but he would not listen to him. Josiah replied to him, ‘Has not your teacher’s teacher, Moses, declared, *Neither shall the sword go through your land* (Lev. 26.6)? Then shall the sword of this wicked person pass through my land and borders?’”

mortally wounded by Neco's archers.

In an extremely dramatic fashion we are told that, as the king lay dying, “he moved his lips” and confessed his sin, “the LORD is blameless for I have transgressed his Memra.” Unlike the use of Memra in 1.15 and 1.17, מימרא is not an addition to the text and represents the Hebrew פיהו. The use of Memra to translate פי is common in the targumim. As Moore points out, “When men disobey the command (literally ‘mouth’) of God (*pi Yahweh*), or refuse obedience to it, the Targum renders it by *memra*.”²⁹⁹

The quoted speech begins the translation of the biblical text itself and the remainder of the verse is represented with only modest changes. Once again the voice changes so that it is now Jerusalem who speaks (Josiah having died). Jerusalem will remain the speaker for the rest of Chapter One. The connection with 2 Chron. 35 is further strengthened by exhorting “all the peoples” to hear the lamentations which Jeremiah had written for Josiah. Josiah's death as seen as the beginning of Jerusalem's troubles, since, the targumist tells us, it is after his untimely death that affliction came upon Jerusalem.

3.1.19. Verse 19

קראתי למאֹהְבֵי הַמָּה רְמוּנֵי
כְּהֵנִי וְזִקְנֵי בְּעִיר גְּזָעוּ
כִּי-בִקְשׁוּ אֶכֶל לָמוּ וְיָשִׁיבוּ אֶת-נַפְשָׁם:

אמרת ירושלם כד אתמסרית בידוי דנבוכד נצר קריתי למרחמי בני עממיא דקיימית עמהון קיים יסייעוני ואנון חכימו מני ואתהפכו לחבלא יתי הנון רומאי דעלו עם טיטוס ואספסינוס רשיעא ובנו כרכומין על ירושלם וכהניי וסביי בגו קרתא מן כפנא אתנגידו ארום תבעו סעיד לחמא הוה למיכל ויקימון ית נפשהון:

“When I was delivered into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar,” Jerusalem said, “I called to my friends, sons of the nations, with whom I had made treaties, to come to my aid. But they deceived me and turned to destroy me. (These are the Romans who came up with Titus and the wicked Vespasian and they built siegeworks against Jerusalem.) My priests and my elders within the city perish from hunger, because they searched for sustenance for themselves to eat, in order to preserve their lives.

Once again we find the targumist providing a specific context for Jerusalem's speech. In this instance, the logical moment for Jerusalem to call to her allies is when Nebuchadnezzar besieges the holy city. Thus it was “when [she] was delivered into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar” that Jerusalem called out to her allies. The passive Ithp.,

²⁹⁹Moore, “Intermediaries,” p. 47. Examples in TgOnk include Deut. 1.26 and Num. 14.41.

אתמסרית, emphasizes that Nebuchadnezzar could not have succeeded in his attack had Jerusalem not been given over to the enemy by God. Furthermore, Jerusalem's earthly allies not only refuse to aid her, they take advantage of her condition and seek to destroy her.

Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem her allies were Egypt and Assyria. In prophesying against Judah, Jeremiah declares

Have you not brought this upon yourself by forsaking the LORD your God, while he led you in the way? What then do you gain by going to Egypt, to drink the waters of the Nile? Or what do you gain by going to Assyria, to drink the waters of the Euphrates? Your wickedness will punish you, and your apostasies will convict you. Know and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the LORD your God; the fear of me is not in you, says the Lord GOD of hosts.³⁰⁰

The implication of this and of 1.2, where her friends “were wicked to her, they turned against her and became her enemies,” is that Jerusalem placed her faith in treaties made with other nations rather than in upholding the covenant they had with the LORD.

The WT tells us that the friends were “Romans who came up with Titus and the wicked Vespasian.” It is interesting to note that the Romans are not being identified with Nebuchadnezzar, as one might expect, rather they are equated with the treacherous friends of Jerusalem. Presumably, this is in reference to the various allegiances formed between Jewish leaders and the Romans, from the Maccabean period down to the installment of Herod the Great as “king” in 37 BCE. Note also the use of the Greek loanword *χαράκωμα* (כרכומין).³⁰¹

The remainder of the verse is an example of prosaic expansion. The Hebrew *בעיר* is directly represented in the targum (בגו קרתא), but Levine's suggestion that the addition of *מן כפנא* is another reading of *בעיר* (being reinterpreted as ברעב) is weak. There is no evidence of such a reading among the other ancient versions and the addition is best understood as part of the targumist's effort to provide a suitable transition from those perishing in the streets to the explanation of their having been searching for food. The interpolation rises naturally from the biblical context.

³⁰⁰Jer. 2.17-9.

³⁰¹See §4.1.2.

translation, thus “outside the sword consumes and inside the agony of starvation.”³⁰⁷ The remainder of the verse is a free rendering of the Hebrew כמות.

The agony of starvation is then compared with the Destroying Angel who is appointed over death. Although there are no midrashic parallels which have direct bearing on this verse of Lamentations the allusion is likely be to the belief that upon death one was tormented by “destroying angels.”

Great is peace, for the Holy One, blessed be He, has created no attribute so fair as peace, and has withheld it from the wicked. For in the hour when one of them departs from the world three groups of destroying demons confront him. The first says, *There is no peace* (Isa. 48.22). The second says, *Saith the Lord concerning the wicked* (Isa. 48.22). The third says, *Ye shall lie down in sorrow* (Isa. 50.11). It is not sufficient penalty for the wicked that their death is in the hands of destroyers—as it says, *Yea, his soul draweth near unto the pit, and his life to the destroyers* (Job 33.22), and as it says, *He shall be driven from light into darkness* (Job 18.18), and as it says, *Let their way be dark and slippery, the angel of the Lord pursuing them* (Ps. 35.6)—but the demons vex them and say to them: “There is no peace,” etc., “Ye shall lie down in sorrow.” Great is peace, for it was given as a reward for devotion to Torah and good deeds; as it says, *And I will give peace in the land* (Lev. 26.6).³⁰⁸

This particular passage from NumR is particularly enlightening considering the strong emphasis on the wicked being tormented at death. We are told that peace is rewarded to those who are devoted to the Law. The proof text provided is Lev. 26.6 where God promises Israel that, “if you follow my statutes and keep my Commandments and observe them faithfully ... I will grant peace to the land, and you shall lie down and no one shall make you afraid.” Earlier in this verse of our targum we are told that Jerusalem’s sin was her transgression of God’s decreed Law and that her current condition is due to this disobedience. Therefore, when the “agony of starvation” is likened to that of the “Destroying Angel who is appointed over death” our targumist is providing further evidence of Jerusalem’s sin. The righteous who obey God’s Law will “lie down in peace,” but a peaceful death is withheld from the wicked.

³⁰⁷See Van der Heide’s notes on pp. 84-5 and his critical apparatus on p. 12*. Although it is difficult to be certain from the facsimile, there is a small smudge on the foot of the *tav* which may be an attempt at correcting the letter to a *het*.

³⁰⁸NumR to 6.26.

3.1.21. Verse 21

שָׁמְעוּ כִּי נִאֲנָחָה אָנִי אֵין מְנַחֵם לִי
 כָּל-אֹיְבֵי שָׁמְעוּ רְעָתִי שָׁשׂוּ כִּי אֶתָּה עָשִׂיתָ
 הַיְבֵאתָ יוֹם-קְרָאתָ וַיְהִי כְמוֹנִי:

שמעו אומיא ארום מתאנחה אנא ולית די ינחם לי כל בעלי דבביי שמעו בישתא דמטת עלי בדחו ארום את
 הוא יי דעבדתא איתיהן עלי יום-פורענותא ערעתא עלי מערע לצדאותני כדין תערע עלויהן ויהון צדיין
 כוותי:

Hear *O nations!* For I am groaning and there is no one to comfort me. All my enemies heard of the evil *which overcame me and were glad.* For you *LORD are the one who has done it.* You have *caused them to bring upon me a day of retribution.* *You have summoned against me, a coalition to destroy me.* *May you summon against them that they may be made desolate like me.*

Most commentators have, in some way, read the first word of 1.21 in a fashion other than that presented by MT. LXX has ἀκούσατε δὴ as if MT read שָׁמְעוּ and P has the imperative singular **צַחַב**, which most modern commentators cite as their reason for emending the Hebrew text so that the LORD is the addressee of the imperative “Listen!”³⁰⁹ In this instance our targum is in agreement with LXX, but this is probably the result of the targumist’s exegetical activity rather than due to a different Hebrew *Vorlage*. With the imperative plural our targumist also supplies the subject and identifies the nations as the addressee.

Our targumist follows the next line, 1.21b, without altering the text other than to acknowledge that it was the LORD who has been the active agent in Jerusalem’s tragedy. This is an additional reminder to the audience that Jerusalem’s destruction did not come about through an opponent’s might, but by God’s delivering his city up to the enemies. The last line of verse 21 is then distilled into a description of how God used Jerusalem’s enemies to bring about her punishment. The Hebrew הבאת is interpreted twice. Once in the past, describing how God brought about Jerusalem’s “day of retribution” and once in the future in hopes that God might bring to her enemies the fate which she herself now suffers.³¹⁰

In my translation I have identified the Hebrew יום-קראת with יום-פורענותא since, as

³⁰⁹See, for example, Albrektson, p. 83; Hillers, pp. 77-8; Rudolph, p. 208.

³¹⁰Levine, p. 106.

Albrektson has pointed out, “it is *a priori* likely that יום-קראת in v. 21 refers to the judgement upon Israel, not to that upon her enemies.”³¹¹ That having been said, our targumist does appear to have used the occurrence of קראת as the starting point for his insertion ערעתא עלי מערע לצדאותני. While describing Jerusalem’s fate, this also serves to diminish the role of the conquering nations by once again asserting that it was God who ordained the destruction of his city. Finally, the terse Hebrew ויהו כמוני is made explicit by the targumist, describing both Jerusalem’s condition and the fate which she prays God will bring upon her enemies.

3.1.22. Verse 22

תבא כל-רעתם לפניך ועולל למו
 באשר עוללת לי על כל-פשעי
 כי-רבות אנהתי ולבי דוי:

תיעול ליום דינא רבא כל בשותהום דאבישו לי קדמך ותסתקף להום היכמה דאסתקפתא עלי על סגיאות
 מרודי ארום סגיאוא אנהתי ולבי חלש:

“May there enter before you *on the great Judgement Day* all their evil deeds *which they have done to me*.
 May you turn against them as you have turned against me because of my great rebellion. For my groanings
 are great and my heart is weak.”

The additions to this last verse of Chapter One are small. We are told that it is the final Day of Judgement which Jerusalem envisions when she entreats God to punish her enemies for their actions. Furthermore, “their evil doing” (NRSV) is identified with their actions against Jerusalem. These additions serve merely to highlight the intent already in the biblical text. Repeatedly in Chapter One the biblical author tells us that Jerusalem deserves her fate,³¹² but there is also the expectation that at some point in the future there will be divine retribution for her enemies.

³¹¹Albrektson, p. 84.

³¹²See verses 5, 8, 9, 14, 18, 20, and 21.

3.2. TgLam Chapter 2

3.2.1. Verse 1

אֵיכָה יַעִיב בְּאַפּוֹ אֲדֹנָי אֶת-בֵּית-צִיּוֹן
הַשְּׁלִיךְ מִשָּׁמַיִם אֶרְצָן תַּפְאֲרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְלֹא-זָכַר הָדָם-רַגְלָיו בְּיוֹם אַפּוֹ:

איכדין יקוץ יי בתקוף רוגזיה ית כנשתא דציון טלק מן שמיא לארעא תושבחת דישראל ולא דכר בית מקדשיה דהוה גלוגדקא דרגלוהי ולא חס עלוהי ביום תקוף רוגזיה:

How the LORD has detested the Congregation of Zion in his *fierce* anger. He threw down from the heavens to the earth the glory of Israel and he did not remember *the Temple which was his footstool nor did he spare it* in the day of his *fierce* anger.

Prosaic Expansion. Although LamR finds this verse very fruitful for exegesis, our targumist is content to supply only a few details to his rendering of the biblical text. The Hebrew text of 2.1 presents us with the *hapax legomenon* יַעִיב. This is most frequently interpreted as “to becloud,” from עב, “cloud,”³¹³ while others derive the word from the Arabic *‘aba*, “to blame, revile.”³¹⁴ Our targum represents a different tack, translating יַעִיב with יקוץ, “he detested.” It is probable that this translation is the targumist’s attempt at translating the *sense* of the verse and does not represent a specific reading of יַעִיב.

Other additions to this text include the standard translation of בת-ציון with כנשתא דציון³¹⁵ and the identification of הדם-רגליו with the Temple. The addition of תקוף to modify רוגזיה is consistent in this verse and a similar rendering is found in both P (בַּמְבֹרָא הַמְבֹרָא הַדְּרִיבִּי) and in most Greek MSS (ὀργῆς θυμοῦ αὐτοῦ).³¹⁶ This may be a reflection of 1.12, where the Hebrew reads ביום חרון אפו and the targum has ביום תקוף רוגזיה, but it is likely, as Levine suggests, that this is merely a colloquial expression indicating that whenever God is angry it is “fierce.”³¹⁷

³¹³See, for example, Albrektson and the commentaries cited in n. 1, p. 86.

³¹⁴For example, Rudolph, p. 218. See Hillers, p. 96-7, for a third option which involves emending the text to read יַעֲבֵב, which “would be equal in sense to תַּעֲבֵב, as in Ps. 106.40: ‘And the anger of Yahweh was aroused at his people, and he treated with contempt (ויתעב) his inheritance.’”

³¹⁵See §3.1.6 for a full discussion.

³¹⁶Albrektson, p. 87.

³¹⁷Levine, p. 109.

3.2.2. Verse 2

בִּלְעַד אֲדֹנָי לֹא חָמַל אֶת כָּל-נְאוֹת יַעֲקֹב
 חָרַס בְּעֵבְרָתוֹ מִבְּצֵרֵי בֵּת-יְהוּדָה
 הִגְיַע לְאָרֶץ חֶלֶל מִמְּלָכָה וְשָׂרֵיהָ:

שיצי יי ולא חס ית כל עידיית בית יעקב פגר ברוגזיה כנשתא דבית יהודא אמטי לארעא אפיס מלכותא דהם רברבנהא:

The LORD destroyed and did not spare any of the choice dwellings of *the House of Jacob*. In his anger he destroyed the Congregation of the House of Judah and brought them to the ground. He broke the kingdom, crushed her leaders.

Prosaic Expansion. The meaning of the biblical text is not effected as our targumist follows his established patterns in transforming the poetry into prose. Levine's comment that "the targum follows the midrash tradition in interpreting the objects of God's wrath as persons, rather than places," is without foundation.³¹⁸ His rendering of עידיית as "ornaments"³¹⁹ or "celebrities"³²⁰ helps to give the impression that the targumist has interpreted the Hebrew נאות as people, however there is little reason to offer such translations.³²¹ The translation of בת with כנשתא is well established within TgLam,³²² but we have already noted that when בת is in construct with יהודה the targumist achieves consonantal similarity with MT by translating the phrase with בית-יהודא. In this verse and 2.5 כנשתא is added to this construct phrase and suggests a synagogal context for the targum.³²³ In such a setting the text would become more pertinent as the worshipping congregation heard the targum speak of God destroying "the Congregation" in his anger. The reference to God destroying the kingdom and its rulers is already within the biblical text.

This verse of the targum does have some textual problems worth noting. The Hebrew

³¹⁸Levine, p. 109.

³¹⁹Levine, "English Translation," p. 66.

³²⁰Levine, "Critical Commentary," p. 109.

³²¹See Jastrow, p. 1067b, and, for example, Tosef. B. Kam. 1.2.

³²²See §3.1.6. בת-ציון is the most common phrase, but בת-יהודה occurs here, 1.15, and 2.5.

³²³See §3.1.6, where I suggested that the targumist retains the phrase בית יהודא due perhaps to a desire for the audience to equate this with the nation of Judah rather than its eponymous ancestor. For discussion of the *Sitz im Leben* of TgLam see §5.2.

מבצרי, “strongholds,” is not represented in our targum (unless we identify it with כנשתא), but YT reads אפיס מלכותא דהם רברבנהא in דהם. כנשתא כרכי בית יהודה while omitting דחס. ³²⁴ incorrect and we should follow Lagarde which reads דחס.

3.2.3. Verse 3

גַּדַע בְּחַר־יָאֵף כָּל קָרְן יִשְׂרָאֵל
 הָשִׁיב אַחֲזֹר יָמִינוּ מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב
 וַיִּבְעַר בְּיַעֲקֹב כְּאֵשׁ לְהִבָּה אֶקְלָה סָבִיב:

קצץ בתקוף רגז ית כל יקרא דיעקב ארתע לאחורא [יד] ³²⁵ ימיניה ולא סייע לעמיה מן קדם בעיל דבבא
 ואדלק בבית יעקב כאשתא דמלהבא אכלת חזור חזור:

In fierce anger he cut off all the glory of Israel. He drew back his right [hand] *and did not help his people* from before the enemy and he burned in the House of Jacob like a searing fire which consumes on all sides.

Prosaic Expansion. As Levine has suggested that the translation of קרן with יקרא conveys both the intent of the biblical text and alludes to the broader nature of Israel’s glory as depicted in rabbinic literature.³²⁶ According to the midrashim the “horn” of Israel included not just the physical strength of the nation. “There are ten horns: of Abraham, of Isaac, of Joseph, of Moses, of the Torah, of the priesthood, of the Levites, of prophecy, of the Temple, and of Israel. There are some who add: the horn of the Messiah.”³²⁷ There is clearly no direct connection between our targum and this midrashic tradition, but it is possible that the use of יקרא is intended to suggest such a broad interpretation of קרן ישראל. The only addition to this verse is the phrase ולא סייע לעמיה which merely expresses in prosaic form that which is latent within the laconic Hebrew. By withdrawing his right hand God removed his special protection from them and therefore offered them no help in their time of need.

As indicated in my transcription, the addition of יד is attested in most MSS, but it is not necessary to represent MT. Urb. 1 reads דיעקב where the biblical text has ישראל. I have corrected the text in line with MT following Lagarde and YT to read “the glory of *Israel*.” It

³²⁴YT has a similar reading with דרס.

³²⁵Omitted by Urb. 1, but found in most MSS.

³²⁶Levine, p. 110.

³²⁷LamR 2.3.

is interesting to note that in the previous verse, where the MT and our targum read “all the [choice] dwellings [of the House] of Jacob” YT reads “the choice dwellings of Israel,” the scribe perhaps reading ahead to verse 3. Our scribe’s error in this verse is probably the result of his having read יעקב in line three instead of ישראל.

3.2.4. Verse 4

דָּרַךְ קִשְׁתּוֹ כְּאוֹיֵב נָצַב יְמִינוֹ
 קָצַר וַיִּהְרַג כָּל מְחֻמְדֵי-עֵינַן
 בְּאֵהָל בֵּית-צִיּוֹן שָׁפַךְ כְּאֵשׁ הַמָּתוֹ:

מתח קשתיה וגרם עלי גירין כבעיל דבבא אתעתד על ימיניה דנבוכד נצר וסייעיה כאילו הוה מעיק לעממיה בית ישראל וקטל כל עולם וכל דמרגגין לחיזו עינא במשכן כנשתא דציון שדא כבעור אשתא רוגזיה:

He drew his bow *and shot arrows at me* like an enemy. He stood ready at the right of *Nebuchadnezzar and aided him* as if *he himself were oppressing his people, the House of Israel*. And he killed *every young man and everything* which was beautiful to see. In the Sanctuary of the Congregation of Zion he poured out *his wrath* like a burning fire.

Although our targumist has added quite a bit of material to verse 4 it does not greatly alter the sense of MT. In this instance our targumist seeks to embellish some details and clarify others. Thus in the first line God not only draws his bow he also “shot arrows at me.”³²⁸ Similarly, the targumist apparently understands the difficult Hebrew נצב as the Niph. of *נצב, “to take one’s stand,”³²⁹ and creates a vivid image of God standing by Nebuchadnezzar, “as if he himself were oppressing his people.” This passage underscores several basic theological tenets of our targumist.

First, the only reason that Jerusalem’s enemies are able to conquer her is because God, having lifted his divine protection from his people, is *allowing* them to destroy Jerusalem. Secondly, God’s behaviour is *like* that of an enemy, but he is not truly an enemy of Israel. This notion is already present in the biblical text, but it is strengthened in the targum by the addition of *כאילו הוה מעיק* and the subtle reminder that they are still “his people, the House of Israel.” Finally, once God has removed his special protection nothing in Israel is safe or sacred. All her young men, “everything which was beautiful to see,”

³²⁸YT reads וורק and ורזין, Van der Heide, p. 14*.

³²⁹See Albrektson, pp. 91-2, who has a similar reading, but does not cite our targum.

even the משכן itself, the very residence of God's glory, is laid bare to destruction.

3.2.5. Verse 5

הָיָה אֲדֹנָי כְּאוֹיֵב בְּלַע יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּלַע כָּל-אֲרָמְנוֹתֶיהָ שַׁחַת מִבְּצָרֶיהָ
וַיִּרְבַּב בְּבֵת-יְהוּדָה תְּאֲנִיָּה וְאֲנִיָּה:

הוּוה יי דמי לבעיל דבבא שיצי ישראל שיצי כל בירנייתיה [תרגום אחר] מטורחא: חביל כל קרוי פצחהא ואסגי בכנשתא דישר' דבית יהודא אבילותא ואנינותא:

The LORD has become like an enemy. He destroyed Israel. He destroyed all her forts and razed all her open cities. He has increased in *the Congregation of* the House of Judah mourning and grief.

Prosaic Expansion. The most notable feature about this verse are the errors in the MS of Urb. 1 which I have not included in my translation. The first case is the phrase תרגום אחר מטורחא, “another troublesome translation.” A gap has been left in the MS here with תרגום אחר added in smaller letters with dots above them followed by מטורחא: (including the *silluq*) in normal sized lettering. It is clear that an error has been made and there is no need to include this phrase in our translation since there “another translation” is not being offered. What follows is merely the translation of שחת מבצריה. Lagarde does not have this phrase (but it is likely, whatever his sources, that his text is a corrected copy)³³⁰ and YT also omits the phrase, but has פלטורהא and כרכהא in place of WT's בירנייתיה and פצחהא, respectively. It may be that our copyist was concerned with the fact that his *Vorlage* (as preserved in Urb. 1) had altered the masculine suffix of MT's מבצריה to match the feminine suffix of ארמנותיה. In any case it has no effect on our text.

The second error is rather straightforward and minor. In translating בבת-יהודה the targum begins with the established pattern of כנשתא דבית יהודא. However, in our MS the phrase begins דישר' (for “the Congregation of Israel”), but at this point our copyist reached the end of his line. When he began the new line he apparently realized his mistaken reference to Israel and wrote דבית יהודא. We should therefore disregard דישר'. As we mentioned earlier,³³¹ the translation of בבת-יהודה with כנשתא דבית יהודא strongly suggests a

³³⁰See Alexander, “Textual Tradition,” pp. 4-5.

³³¹See §3.1.6 and §3.2.2.

synagogal context and this verse (“he has increased in the Congregation of the House of Judah mourning and grief”) is particularly suited to the somber tone which is to be maintained during the ninth of Ab service.³³²

3.2.6. Verse 6

וַיִּחַמַּס בְּגֵן שָׂכּוֹ שְׁחַת מוֹעֵדוֹ
שִׁפְחַ יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן מוֹעֵד וְשַׁבָּת
וַיִּנְאֵץ בְּזַעַם-אָפוֹ מֶלֶךְ וַיִּכְהֵן:

ושרש כגנתא בית מקדשיה חביל אתר מזומן לכפרא על עמיה אנשי יי בציון חדות יומא טבא ושבתא ושנא בתקוף רוגזיה מלכא וכהנא רבא:

He uprooted his Temple like a garden. He destroyed the place appointed *for the atonement of his people*. The LORD has caused *the joy of the festival and the Sabbath* to be forgotten and in his fierce anger he hates the king and *high priest*.

The biblical verse is quite difficult and most modern commentators conclude that emendation is useless.³³³ Our targumist reads MT as closely as possible, elucidating the more cryptic references as he sees fit. As in many modern commentaries שכו is interpreted as referring to the Temple³³⁴ and גן is read literally as “garden.” The verb חמס, “to treat violently,” is replaced with the agricultural verb שרש, “to uproot.” The result is a very accessible reading where God is “uprooting” or “ploughing” his Temple like a garden.

מועד occurs twice in this verse. In the first instance most commentators agree that מועדו refers to “his appointed place of meeting” and not an appointed time for a festival (as we have in 6b).³³⁵ Our targumist makes this connection explicit by stating that God destroyed “the place appointed for the atonement of his people.” By referring to the Temple in this manner the targumist reminds his audience that not only was “God’s footstool” razed, but the ability to offer expiatory sacrifices was also destroyed.

In the second instance of מועד in our verse the reference is clearly to general festivals and is found in parallel with the Sabbath. While the biblical text says simply that “the LORD

³³²See §5.2 and *b Ta’an.* 30a.

³³³See Albrektson, pp. 94-7, for a full discussion and reference to earlier discussions.

³³⁴See Albrektson, pp. 95-6; Hillers, p. 99; and Westermann, pp. 151-2.

³³⁵See Albrektson, p. 97, and M. Jastrow, “Threni 2:6^a,” ZAW 15, p. 287.

has abolished in Zion festival and sabbath” the targumist softens the message by telling his audience that it is the *joy* of the festival and the Sabbath which have ceased, not the festivals themselves. The purpose of the targumist’s careful wording is to encourage a community which has lost its central place of worship and declare that, though there is not the same joy, the observance of the festivals shall continue.

Finally, whereas MT reads simply מלך וכהן, the targumist specifies that it is the “king and *high* priest” whom God hates. This addition is intended to maintain the singular form of the Hebrew כהן and to provide the appropriate parallel to the king. P interprets the text as referring to the priesthood as a whole and therefore renders the text **מלכא וממנא**.³³⁶ LamR and LT both identify the king as Zedekiah and the High Priest as Seraiah.³³⁷

3.2.7. Verse 7

זבח אדני מזבחו נאד מקדשו
הסגיר ביד-אויב חומת ארמנותיה
קול נתנו בבית-יהוה כיום מועד:

אשלי יי בית מדבחיה בעט מקדשיה מסר ביד בעיל דבא שורי בירנייתהא קלא יהבו בבית מוקדשא דיי
כקל עמא בית ישראל דמצליין בגויה ביומא דפסחא:

The LORD has abandoned his altar. He has trampled his Temple. He has handed over the walls of the forts to the enemy. They raised a shout in the Temple of the LORD like *the shout of the people of the House of Israel praying in it on the day of Passover*.

The additions to this verse are minimal, but go beyond the limited changes of prosaic expansion. The sense of verse 7 is retained as God is depicted as actively taking part in the destruction of his altar and Temple, but our targumist uses the ambiguity of the final stich of this verse to introduce a note of irony. The Hebrew כיום מועד is identified as Passover. This festival is, of course, a celebration of God’s deliverance of Israel from the destruction of the Angel of Death and the bondage of Egypt. But now, instead of their voices being lifted in prayer, the House of Israel cries out in anguish as God himself brings about their

³³⁶Lagarde has וכהניא רבא.

³³⁷LamR and LT to Lam. 2.6. LamR reads “‘king’ refers to Zedekiah, and ‘the priest’ to Seraiah, son of Mahseiah.” Seraiah son of Mahseiah was a quarter master (Jer. 51.59) and not a priest, however Jer. 52.24 does speak of Seraiah the High Priest. Presumably “son of Mahseiah” was incorrectly inserted into the text.

destruction.³³⁸ This interpretation of כיום מועד will influence the targumist's translation of 2.22 where the same phrase is rendered, "May you declare freedom to your people...just as you did by Moses and Aaron on the day when you brought Israel up from Egypt."

3.2.8. Verse 8

חָשַׁב יְהוָה לְהַשְׁחִית חוֹמַת בֵּית-צִיּוֹן
נָטָה קֶוֹ לֹא-הִשְׁיב יָדוֹ מִבְּלֹעַ
וַיֵּאבֵל-חֵל וְחוֹמָה יִתְדוּ אִמְלָלוּ:

חשיב יי לחבלא שור כנשתא דציון סאט משקליתיא ולא אתיב ידיה מלשיצאה ואביל מקפנא ושורא כחדא אתפרו:

The LORD resolved to destroy the wall of the Congregation of Zion. He swung the plummet and did not turn back his hand from destroying it. He caused the rampart and the wall to mourn; they were destroyed together.

Prosaic Expansion. The targum to this verse actually represents a one-to-one correspondence with MT. Levine's rendering of this verse is problematic. He omits the phrase משקליתיא, "he swung the plummet," from his translation which is necessary in order to represent the Hebrew קו נטה and he also omits the verb סאט from his transcription. Although the orthographic evidence of our sources varies slightly, the YT MSS read סט³³⁹ and Lagarde reads סאט, the meaning still remains and represents the Hebrew נטה. Finally, we should follow all other MSS in reading the final verb as אתפרו rather than Urb. 1's אתפרו.

3.2.9. Verse 9

טָבְעוּ בְּאֶרֶץ שְׁעָרֶיהָ אֶבֶד וְשֹׁפֵר בְּרִיחֶיהָ
מִלְּקַח וְשָׂרִיָּה בְּגוֹיִם אֵין תּוֹרָה
גַּם-נְבִיאֶיהָ לֹא-מִצְאוּ תּוֹזֶן מִיְהוָה:

טמעו בארע' תרעהא על די מן נכסו חזירא ואובילו דמיה עלויהון הובד ותבר מזוזתהא מלכה ורברבנהא גלו ביני עממא על דלא נטרו פתגמי אוריתא כאילו לא קבילו יתה בטורא דסיני אף נביהא אתמנע מנהון רוח נבואת קודשא ולא אתאמר להום פתגם נבואה מן קדם יי:

Her gates have sunk into the earth *because they slaughtered a pig and brought its blood over them*. He has destroyed and shattered her doorposts. Her king and rulers were exiled among the nations *because they did not keep the decrees of Torah, as if they had not received it on Mount Sinai*. Even her prophets *had the spirit of holy prophecy withheld from them and they were not told a word of prophecy from before the LORD*.

³³⁸See M. Pes. 5.7. The corresponding text of LamR takes a very different tack and does not approach our targumist's interpretation.

³³⁹See Van der Heide, p. 15*.

The biblical text of verse 9 provides our targumist with several “hooks” upon which our targumist is able to “hang” his interpretive additions. The first addition, as is so often the case, is an explanation of the biblical text. “Her gates have sunk into the earth *because* they slaughtered a pig....” The targumist is probably alluding to the defilement of the Temple which occurred under Antiochus IV in 163 BCE.³⁴⁰ 1 Macc. 1.59 states that on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev apostate Jews began offering improper sacrifices on the pagan altar which was “on top of the altar of burnt offering” and “offering incense at the doors of the houses.”³⁴¹ This passage is helpful in understanding the targumist’s rendering of the Hebrew בריחיה as מזוזה.

The Hebrew בריח, “bar,” is not an uncommon word, occurring over 50 times in the Bible. It occurs most frequently in the Book of Exodus (16 times) in reference to the construction of the Tabernacle and in TgOnk it is consistently rendered with עברא, “bar, bolt.”³⁴² It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that our targumist had specific reasons for choosing מזוזה in this instance.

By the time of the Mishnah, the term מזוזה had already come to identify not only a “doorpost,” the literal meaning of the term, but also the small portions of Scripture (Deut. 6.4-9 and 11.13-21) which were enclosed in a cylinder and fastened to the right-hand doorpost.³⁴³ This well-known practice is derived from Deut. 6.4-9, “Keep these words that I am commanding you this day in your heart ... and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” When the targum speaks of God destroying and shattering Jerusalem’s doorposts (מזוזהא) it suggests more than the biblical imagery of the city’s gates being razed to the ground.

The *mezuzah* was to be present in every Jew’s house³⁴⁴ and the destruction of the

³⁴⁰Levine, p. 114. See 1 Macc. 1.41-50 where the sacrifice of swine on the altar is mentioned specifically and 2 Macc. 6.1-6 where a general reference is made to “sacrifices which were unfit.”

³⁴¹1 Macc. 1.54-64.

³⁴²See Jastrow, p. 1040a, and TgJer 49.31 and 51.30.

³⁴³Danby, p. 795.

³⁴⁴See *b* Ber. 47b where the *ʿam ha-ʿaretz* are identified with those who do not have a *mezuzah* on their

mezuzot (as opposed to the destruction of the bars which strengthened the gates of Jerusalem) was the removal of a symbol of God's presence with his people. To our targumist's audience the loss of such a fundamental element of their daily life would be felt keenly, perhaps more so than the distant destruction of the Temple. It should also be remembered that a portion of the text found within *mezuzot* is from Deut. 11.16-7: "Take care, or you will be seduced into turning away, serving other gods and worshipping them; for then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you ... then you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you."

As we read in 1 Macc. 1.59, one of the sins of the Jews during the time of Antiochus IV was "offering incense at the doors of the houses." Where they should have placed the *mezuzah* containing God's covenant the apostate Jews were instead worshipping other gods, in direct violation of Deut. 11.16-7. Thus, the *mezuzah* itself testifies to the righteousness of God's destructive action in the face of Israel's rebellion. Through the reference to the slaughtered pig and the shattered *mezuzah*, our targumist brings to mind the rebellion described in 1 Macc. 1.59 and provides further historical justification for the Temple to be destroyed.³⁴⁵

In the second stich of 2.9 the targumist has taken the biblical author's lament that, since the kings and princes are now in exile, "Torah is no more" (איך תורה) and made the lack of Torah the *cause* of their exile. Furthermore, we are told their disregard for the Law was so great that they behaved as if they had not even received the Torah on Mount Sinai. Finally, the targumist expands MT's succinct statement of 2.9γ that "her prophets obtain no vision from the LORD" by adding that the "spirit of holy prophecy was withheld from them." This slight modification of the text once again makes God the active agent. They did not receive visions because God no longer permitted them to receive prophetic utterances. The emphasis is thus placed upon God providing visions rather than prophets obtaining them.

doorpost and *b* Shab. 32b where the death of children is attributed, among other things, to the "sin of the neglect of the *mezuzah*."

³⁴⁵This follows the same pattern found in connection with TgLam 1.2 and Num. 14.1; see §3.1.2.

3.2.10. Verse 10

יִשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ יִדְמוּ זָקְנֵי בֵת-צִיּוֹן
הֵעִלוּ עָפָר עַל-רֵאשֵׁם תְּגִירוֹ שָׂקִים
הוֹרִידוּ לָאָרֶץ רֵאשֵׁן בְּתוֹלֵת יְרוּשָׁלַם:

יתבין לארעא ושתקין סבי כנשתא דציון אסיקו אפר מקלה על רישיהון קמארו סקין על בשריהון אחיתו
לעפרא דארעא רישיהון בתולתא דירושלם:

The Elders of the Congregation of Zion sit on the ground in silence. They throw *wood* ashes upon their heads. They gird sackcloth *upon their bodies*. The virgins of Jerusalem bow their heads to *the dust* of the earth.

TgLam is unique among all targumim in translating the Hebrew אפר (or עפר) where it occurs in the Bible in reference to mourning with the addition of מקלה. This has led Grossfeld to argue that the phrase אפר מקלה makes a “direct association between the ‘Sacrifice of Isaac,’ the so-called *Akedah*, and the destruction of the Temple.”³⁴⁶ This phrase, אפר מקלה, also occurs in M. *Ta’an*. 2.1 which reads: “What is the order [of service] for fast days? The ark is taken out to the open space of the city, wood ashes (אפר מקלה) are placed on the ark, on the head of the Nasi and on the head of the Ab-Beth-Din. Everyone else puts ashes on his own head....”

In the gemara to this passage, Grossfeld points out, R. Hanina explains that the use of אפר מקלה (as opposed to ordinary ashes) is “that [God] may remember for our sake the ashes of Isaac.”³⁴⁷ Thus “wood ashes” represent the ashes from the sacrifice made in Isaac’s place and recalls the merit of Isaac. Grossfeld cites other texts which demonstrate that within the broad context of rabbinic literature there is indeed a connection between the technical term אפר מקלה and the *Akedah*. He does not, however, prove that our targumist had such a connection in mind. It is more likely that the Hebrew phrase יִשְׁבוּ לָאָרֶץ יִדְמוּ זָקְנֵי בֵת-צִיּוֹן הֵעִלוּ עָפָר עַל-רֵאשֵׁם would bring to mind M. *Ta’an*. 2.1 and that Lam. 2.10 was translated in light of that tradition. Our targumist equated the “Elders of daughter Zion” with the “Nasi” and “Ab-Beth-Din” and specified that it was “wood ashes” rather than simple “dust” which they sprinkled upon their heads. (Our targumist, like P, renders the

³⁴⁶Bernard Grossfeld, “The Targum to Lamentations 2:10,” *JJS* 28/1 (1977), pp. 60-4.

³⁴⁷*b* Ta’an. 16a.

curious (על רישיהון על-ראשם)³⁴⁸ as the plural

We have already seen why our targumist modified the Hebrew עפר with the addition of מקלה, but why is it rendered אפר rather than עפר? Grossfeld comments that “the translation of עפר by אפר does not by itself present any particular problem” and he is correct on both linguistic and talmudic grounds.³⁴⁹ But there is, in fact, an exegetical reason for this translation and it is perhaps best understood in light of LamR: “‘They sit upon the ground, and keep silence, the Elders of the daughter of Zion. They have cast up dust upon their heads,’ i.e. they began to recount the merit of Abraham of whom it is written, ‘I am but dust and ashes’ (Gen. 18.27, ואנכי עפר ואפר) ‘they have girded themselves with sackcloth,’ i.e. they began to recount the merit of Jacob of whom it is written, ‘He put sackcloth upon his loins’ (Gen. 37.34).”³⁵⁰

On the one hand the use of אפר brings the text in line with M. *Ta’an*. 2.1 which reads אפר מקלה. On the other hand, Gen. 18.27 provides the basis for interpreting the verse in terms of both “ashes” (אפר) and “dust” (עפר). Thus when MT tells us that the virgins of Jerusalem “bowed their heads to the ground” the targumist completes the image of mourning and the doublet of “ashes and dust” by informing his audience that they bowed their heads to the dust of the earth. Abraham described himself as “dust and ashes” as he humbled himself before the LORD in seeking pardon for the righteous who remained in Sodom. Now, our targumist tells us, the Elders and the virgins of Zion humble themselves before God in mourning and repentance. This is perhaps the closest connection we find between our targum and LamR on any single verse. It is likely that our targumist had this specific tradition in mind when he translated this passage and, aside from common tradition, there is no reason to suspect another source.

³⁴⁸ בְּרֵאשִׁית.

³⁴⁹Grossfeld, p. 60.

³⁵⁰LamR 2.10.

3.2.11. Verse 11

כָּלוּ בְדַמְעוֹת עֵינַי תְּמַרְמְרוּ
 מְעֵי נִשְׁפָּךְ לְאֶרֶץ כְּבִדֵי עַל-שֶׁכֶר בַּת-עַמִּי
 בְּעֵטָף עוֹלָל וַיּוֹנֵק בְּרַחֲבוֹת קְרִיָּה:

ספק בדמעין עיניי אדגראן מעיי אתשד לארעא כבדי על תבר כנשתא דעמי כד צווחו עולימא וינקא
 בפתאוות קרייאתא:

My eyes are spent with tears, my bowels are piled up, my liver is spilt onto the ground because of the destruction of the Congregation of my people as youths and infants cried out in the open places of the cities.

Prosaic Expansion. There are a few changes which the targumist has incorporated into his version of verse 11, but the meaning of the text remains unaltered from the original. The MSS vary in their rendering of the Hebrew כָּלוּ. Urb. 1 reads ספק and Lagarde has ספקו, “have had enough,”³⁵¹ while the MSS of YT have ספו, “have ceased.”³⁵² Albrektson suggests that ספקו may be an error of matathesis for פסקו, “have ceased.”³⁵³

In the last stich, the verb and nouns which are singular in MT, have been changed to the plural.³⁵⁴ But what is less clear is why our targumist has rendered the Hebrew *עטף, “to faint,” with *צווח, “to cry out.” This change alters the mood of the text. Whereas in MT the author has depicted a scene of deathly calm as the streets are littered with bodies of motionless infants, in the targum the broad open places are filled with the wailings of babes. It is probable that the targumist is attempting to harmonize the apparent conflict between the description in 11c that “the infants and babes faint in the streets of the city” and the statement in 12a that “they cry to their mothers.” If the children have fainted how can they cry out? The use of צווחו resolves this problem and provides a transition from verse 11 to 12.

³⁵¹See Jastrow, p. 1016.

³⁵²See Van der Heide, p. 16*. See also Landauer, p. 510.

³⁵³Albrektson, p. 105.

³⁵⁴As does the Syriac. See Albrektson, p. 106.

3.2.12. Verse 12

לְאִמָּתָם יֹאמְרוּ אִי־הוּא דֶגֶן וַיַּיִן
 בְּהִתְעַטְּפָם בְּחֶלֶל בְּרַחֲבוֹת עִיר
 בְּהִשְׁתַּפֵּךְ בְּפֶשֶׁם אֶל-חֵיק אִמָּתָם:

לאמיהון אמרין רוביא דישראל אן עיבור וחמר כד הוו צחיין בקטיל חרבא מן צחותא בפתאוות קרייאתא
 כד אתשד נפשהון מן כפנא לגו עטיף אמהון:

The youth of Israel ask their mother, “Where is the bread and wine?” as they thirst *in the same way* as one wounded *by the sword [suffers] from thirst* in the open places of the cities, as their life is poured out *from hunger* into their mother’s bosom.

The unidentified subject of the Hebrew יאמרו is identified in the targum as רוביא דישראל. This, of course, is the intention of the Hebrew and so the meaning of the text is not altered. Many modern commentators emend the Hebrew דגן ואין to דגן ויין under the assumption that small children would not drink wine.³⁵⁵ Our targumist did not find this problematic and rendered the Hebrew directly as עיבור וחמר. Note that the Aramaic is singular, “their mother,” suggesting that the mother referred to is Zion rather than human mothers.

As in verse 11, our targumist does not translate the Hebrew *עטף* literally, but instead chooses an alternate reading. In this case, the children thirst (צחיין) “as one wounded³⁵⁶ by the sword [suffers] from thirst.” It may be that our targumist found the biblical text problematic since it implies that the unconscious children paradox call out for food and drink; an apparent paradox.³⁵⁷ It is more likely, however, that the analogy with “those pierced” has led the targumist to extend the comparison of the youth’s thirst to that of a one who has suffered excessive bleeding. Such an injury causes the victim to develop a strong thirst in order to replace the fluids that are being lost.³⁵⁸ This reading fits in with the broader

³⁵⁵See Albrektson, p. 106. Those who emend the text include Gottwald, p. 11, and A. B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel. Textkritisches, Sprachliches und Sachliches*, (Leipzig, 1908), p. 37.

³⁵⁶Urb. 1 reads בקטיל, however the כקטיל, which is attested in Lagarde and YT, is to be preferred.

³⁵⁷So Levine, p. 115.

³⁵⁸Today it is commonly known that excessive blood loss leads to thirst and the well known example of Jesus asking for a drink while on the cross (John 19.28) suggests that this observation had already been made in antiquity. A definition of “thirst” from a modern medical dictionary reads, “Thirst: 1. Desire for fluid, esp. for water. It may occur in fevers and certain other maladies, or it may be entirely lacking in some conditions. ... It also results from general dehydration as may occur following *hemorrhage*.” (C. W. Taber, *Taber’s Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary*, 16th. ed., [Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company, 1989], p. 1853-4).

context of the destruction of Jerusalem and TgLam³⁵⁹ The targumist concludes the verse by explaining that it was from hunger that the youths died in their mother's bosom.

3.2.13. Verse 13

מה-אָעידךָ מָה אַדְמָה-לָךְ תִּבֶּת יְרוּשָׁלַם
מָה אֲשׁוּהָ-לָךְ וְאֶנְחַמְךָ בְּתוֹלַת בַּת-צִיּוֹן
כִּי-גָדוֹל כְּפִים שְׂבָרְךָ מִי יִרְפֵּא-לָךְ:

מה אסהד בך ומה אהי מדמי לך כנשתא דירושלם מה אחבר לך ואיהי מנחם לך בתולתא דכנשתא דציון ארום סגא תבריך כסגיאות תבר גללי ימא רבא בעדן נחשוליהון ומאן הוא אסא די יסי יתיך מן מרעיתך:

What can I bring to bear witness to you? Or to what can I compare you, O Congregation of Jerusalem? How shall I befriend you that I may console you, O Virgin of the Congregation of Zion? For *great is* your breaking, as great as the *breaking of the waves of the Great Sea during the season of their gales*. And who is the doctor who can heal you of your affliction?

The changes to this verse are primarily embellishments which are intended to enhance the drama. The terse Hebrew כִּי-גָדוֹל כִּים שְׂבָרְךָ becomes “for great is your breaking, as great as the breaking of the waves of the Great Sea during the season of their gales.” And in a similar manner לִי יִרְפֵּא-לָךְ מִי is rendered prosaically as, “and who is the doctor who can heal you of your affliction?”

The targumist's rendering of לִי יִרְפֵּא-לָךְ מִי is worth noting. BHS suggests emending the text to follow LXX, τίς σώσει σε καὶ παρακαλέσει σε which is translated into מי יושיע לך ונחמך. Albrektson argues that this is not due to a different *Vorlage*, but rather is a result of a change within the Greek textual tradition.³⁶⁰ TgLam does not represent a literal rendering of MT, but it also does not represent a different *Vorlage*. The Aramaic מָה אֲשׁוּהָ-לָךְ, “How shall I befriend/join you,” suggests that the targumist read the text as אֲשׁוּהָ-לָךְ, “[how] shall I be like you,” rather than MT's אֲשׁוּהָ-לָךְ, “[to what] shall I liken you.” In any event, the effect on the meaning of the verse is marginal. The sense of hopelessness conveyed in the biblical text is retained and even heightened as the targum declares that there is nothing that can be done for Jerusalem in her anguish. There is no physician who can heal her.

³⁵⁹See TgLam 1.20 where we are told that due to Jerusalem's sin “outside the sword bereaves and inside the agony of starvation.”

³⁶⁰Albrektson, pp. 108-9.

3.2.14. Verse 14

נְבִיאִיךְ חֲזוּ לְךָ שׁוֹא וְתַפֵּל
 וְלֹא-גִלּוּ עַל-עֲוֹנְךָ לְהָשִׁיב שְׁבִיתְךָ
 וַיַּחֲזוּ לְךָ מִשְׂאוֹת שָׁאָ וּמְדוּחִים:

נביאי שקר' דבבינך הינון חזו לך שקרא ולית משש לנבואתהון ולא פרסימו ית פורענותא דעתיד למיתי
 עלך בגלל חובך לאהדרותיך בתיובתא אלהן נביאו לך נבואת מגן ומלי טעותא:

The false prophets within you, they have seen falsehood for you and there is no substance to their prophecies. Nor did they make known the punishment which would overtake you as a result of your sin, in order to make you turn back in repentance. Rather, they prophesied to you vain prophecies and erring words.

The targum begins by specifying that the prophets who saw “false and deceptive visions” were themselves “false prophets.” Although the targumist could have simply inserted the text, it appears that the targumist has found a textual basis for this addition. The last half of 14a, *שוא ותפל*, is rendered by the targumist “there is no substance (ולית משש) to their prophecies.” The Hebrew doublet of *שוא* and *תפל* is not represented with an Aramaic doublet. If we look at 14c we find that the targumist has translated the Hebrew *ויחזו לך משאות שוא ומדוחים* “they have seen oracles for you that are false and misleading,” as *נביאו לך נבואת מגן ומלי טעותא* “they prophesied to you vain prophecies and erring words.” In this instance the targumist is reading *משאות* as being in construct with *שוא*³⁶¹ and interprets the *hapax legomenon* *מדוחים* as “misleading;” clarifying the text by adding that they are “misleading words” (*מלי טעותא*).³⁶² This suggests that in translating 14a the targumist interpreted the Hebrew *שוא* as a modifier for *נביאיך* and only represents *תפל* in the phrase *ולית משש לנבואתהון*, since *שוא* would have already been represented in the text. Such a reading is, of course, grammatically impossible, but considering the context the targumist found such a reading imperative.

The biblical statement that “your prophets have seen for you false and deceptive visions” could be interpreted as meaning that *all* of Jerusalem’s prophets were false prophets. Within the biblical and Jewish traditions this is clearly not the case; Jeremiah is the prime example from the period of the destruction of the First Temple. It is he who

³⁶¹As we have it in MT. See Albrektson, p. 111-2, and the notes in BHS which emends the text to *מִשְׂאוֹת*. Most modern translations (including NRSV cited) follow this emendation.

³⁶²Similarly P *וּבְנֵי יְהוּדָה הָיוּ מְדַבְּרִים מִשְׂאוֹת שָׁאָ וּמְדוּחִים*.

declares that Jerusalem will fall to the Babylonians.³⁶³ It also Jeremiah who declares

Thus says the LORD of hosts: Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you; they are deluding you. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.³⁶⁴

By describing the prophets of Lam. 2.14 as “false prophets” the targumist is ensuring that his audience would not come to an erroneous interpretation of the text. The remainder of the additions operate in a similar manner, such as the interpolation that the prophets did not make Jerusalem aware of the consequences of her sin. Thus, the targumist is working within a tradition of interpreting this period of Jerusalem’s history which is already well established within the Bible itself.³⁶⁵

3.2.15. Verse 15

סִפְקוּ עֲלֵיךְ כְּפִים כָּל-עֲבָרֵי דָרְךְ
 שָׂרְקוּ וַיִּנְעוּ רֵאשִׁים עַל-בֵּית יְרוּשָׁלַם
 הַזֹּאת הָעִיר שִׁיאֲמְרוּ כְּלִילַת יָפִי מְשֹׁשׁ לְכָל-הָאָרֶץ:

שִׁפְקוּ עַלְךְ יְדִיהוֹן כָּל עֲבָרֵי אוֹרְחָא שִׁרְקוּ בִשְׁפוּתָהוּם וּטְלִטְלוּ בְרִישִׁיהוֹן עַל כְּנִשְׁתֵי דִירוּשָׁלַם אֲמַרִין בְּפּוֹמָהוֹן הַדָּא הִיא קִרְתָּא דְהוּוּ אֲמַרִין אֲבַהֲתָן וּסְבִיא דְמַלְקֻדְמִין דְהִיא גְמִירַת נוּי וּשׁוֹפְרָא חֲדוּת כָּל יַתְבֵי אֲרַעָא:

All those who passed by the way clapped their hands at you. They hissed *with their lips* and wagged their heads at the Congregation of Jerusalem. *They said with their mouths*, “Is this the city which our fathers and elders of old called the perfection of beauty and loveliness; the joy of all the earth’s inhabitants?”

Prosaic Expansion. The addition of בשְׁפוּתָהוּם and the contextualization of the speech in 15c has no effect on the meaning of the verse. The targumist has provided בשְׁפוּתָהוּם in order to parallel the Hebrew text’s ראשם. Thus rather than, “they hissed and wagged their heads” the targum reads “they hissed with their lips and wagged their heads.” Other minor additions include supplying the third person plural suffix to “hands” (ידיהון, MT כפים) and the singular ראש of MT has been made plural רישיהון. Both of these changes are also found in P.³⁶⁶

Although both P and the targum provide an introduction to the speech of 15c, the

³⁶³Jer. 25.

³⁶⁴Jer. 23.16.

³⁶⁵It is unlikely that any specific Jewish-Christian “disputation” has motivated our targumist’s interpretation of this text, *contra* Levine, p. 117.

³⁶⁶כפיהון and ברישיהון, respectively.

Peshitta limits the addition to אֲבוֹתֵינוּ whereas the targum adds אמרין בפומהון and אמרין אמרין.³⁶⁷ The actual speech of MT is thus embedded within two sets of quotations. First of all, those who pass by the way “said with their mouths, ‘Is this the city...’” While those who pass by are attributed with the phrase הֲדָא הִיא קִרְתָּא, it is their “fathers and elders of old” who are quoted as having said that Jerusalem was “the perfection of beauty and loveliness; the joy of all the earth’s inhabitants.” Thus the second portion of the biblical phrase is a retelling by the mockers of what previous generations had said. As Levine suggests, by placing the quotation in the mouths not of the mockers, but of their “fathers and elders of old” the targumist creates a sense of extended desolation. Jerusalem has lain desolate for so many years that it has been several generations since her time of beauty.³⁶⁸

3.2.16. Verse 16

פְּצוּ עַלְיֵךְ פִּיהֶם כָּל-אוֹיְבֶיךָ
שָׂרְקוּ וַיִּתְרַקְוּ-שֵׁן אֲמָרוּ בְּלִעְנֵנוּ
אֲךְ זֶה הַיּוֹם שֶׁקִּוִּיָּנְהוּ מְצָאֵנוּ רְאִינוּ:

פתחו עליך פומהון כל בעלי דבבך שרקו בשפוותהום ועסיאו שניהון אמרו שיצינא ברם דין יומא דהוינא
מתיאנן אשכחנא חזינא:

All your enemies open their mouths at you. They hissed *with their lips* and gnashed their teeth and say, “We have destroyed! Surely this is the day we have waited for. We have found it; we have seen it.”

Prosaic Expansion. Unlike P, our targum follows the MT in placing פ before ע.³⁶⁹ The only substantial (yet inconsequential) addition to this verse is בשפוותהום. Verses 15 and 16 form a unit, which Westermann refers to as a “complaint about the enemies,”³⁷⁰ and both verses clearly parallel one another in both content and form. As in verse 15 the second stich of verse 16 has a parallel structure which begins with, and omits the object of, שרקו in MT. Our targumist merely supplies the appropriate object, “their lips.”

³⁶⁷See, Albrektson, pp. 112-3, and Levine, p. 118. It should also be noted that, although some modern commentators find 15c too long and would delete a phrase, our targum represents all of the Hebrew text as found in MT. See Budde, p. 89; Hillers, p. 100; Löhr, p. 13; and Rudolph, p. 225.

³⁶⁸Levine, p. 118.

³⁶⁹See Albrektson, p. 114.

³⁷⁰Westermann, p. 148.

3.2.17. Verse 17

עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר זָמַם בְּצַע אֲמַרְתּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מִיְמֵי-קְדָם הָרִס וְלֹא תָמַל
וַיִּשְׂמַח עָלֶיךָ אוֹיֵב הָרִים קְרוֹן צָרֶיךָ:

עבר יי מה דחשיב גמר מימר פומיה די פקיד למשה נביא מן יומין קדמאין דאי לא נטרין בני ישראל ית פקודיא דיי עתיד לאתפרעא מנהון פגר ולא חס ואחדי עלך בעיל דבבא ארום יקר מעיקיד:

The LORD has done what he planned. He completed the Memra of his *mouth* which he commanded to *Moses the prophet* long ago: *that if the children of Israel did not keep the Commandments of the LORD he was going to punish them*. He destroyed and had no mercy. He has caused the enemy to rejoice over you for he has exalted your oppressors.

The first stich of verse 17 is rendered in a straightforward manner. The only notable change is the translation of אמרתו, “his word,” as מימר פומיה, “the Memra of his mouth.” The use of מימרא in this verse corresponds to its use elsewhere in TgLam (1.15, 17, 18, and 20),³⁷¹ but in this instance it is a direct rendering of the etymologically related אמרתו. Each occurrence of מימרא in Chapter One, as in this verse, indicates a decree by the LORD. In 1.15 the nations entered Jerusalem by the “decree of the Memra of the LORD.” In 1.17 the House of Jacob transgressed the “decree of his Memra.” In 1.18 we are told that King Josiah declared that “The LORD is blameless for I have transgressed his Memra.” And finally, in 1.20 Jerusalem declares, “surely I have transgressed the decree of the Memra of the LORD.” There are other parallels with this verse and 1.17 which are worth exploring.

In the middle of 1.17 the TgLam reads, “The LORD commanded the House of Jacob to keep the Commandments and Torah, but they transgressed the decree of his Memra.” As we have already seen, the Hebrew phrase צוה יהוה ליעקב is the basis of this addition and allows our targumist an opportunity to further his argument that Jerusalem was destroyed as a direct result of “the House of Jacob’s” disobedience to God. Verse 17 of Chapter Two provides the same opportunity with the phrase אמרתו אשר צוה מימי-קדם. For our targumist the allusion is obvious and he quickly identifies אמרתו as that “which [God] had commanded to Moses the prophet long ago.”

According to our targumist, the LORD declared to Israel that if they did not keep the

³⁷¹In TgLam 3.57 מימרא is an agent of comfort and will be discussed in due course.

Commandments he would punish them. The allusion is to Lev. 26.14ff., a portion of which reads:

If you continue hostile to me, and will not obey me, I will continue to plague you sevenfold for your sins. I will let loose wild animals against you, and they shall bereave you of your children and destroy your livestock; they shall make you few in number, and your roads shall be deserted. If in spite of these punishments you have not turned back to me, but continue hostile to me, then I too will continue hostile to you: I myself will strike you sevenfold for your sins. I will bring the sword against you, executing vengeance for the covenant; and if you withdraw within your cities, I will send pestilence among you, and you shall be delivered into enemy hands. When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in a single oven, and they shall dole out your bread by weight; and though you eat, you shall not be satisfied.³⁷²

It is easy to see how such a passage would be brought to the targumist's mind. The vivid descriptions of devastation, starvation, and slaughter found in Lev. 26 were lived out by the inhabitants of Jerusalem. LamR also refers to this passage, citing R. Ahaba b. R. Zeira who quotes portions of Lev. 26.18 and 24.³⁷³ The remainder of the verse is translated in a straightforward manner. Unlike P the targum does not alter the singular and plural forms of MT's אריב and צריך.³⁷⁴

3.2.18. Verse 18

צָעַק לְבָם אֶל-אֲדֹנָי חוֹמַת בֵּית-צִיּוֹן
הוֹרִידִי כַנְחָל דִּמְעָה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה
אֶל-תְּתִנִּי פוּגַת לֶךְ אֶל-תְּדַם בֵּית-עֵינַיךְ:

צווח לבהון דישראל קדם יי די ירחם עליהון שורא דקרתא דציון זלוגי כנחלא דמעין יומא וליליא לא תתני
ננחומא לצערך לפייגא צלותא דיליך ולא תשתוק בבת עיניך מלדמע:

The heart of Israel cried out before the LORD, *to have mercy on them*. O wall of the city of Zion, weep tears like a torrent day and night. Give no *comfort to your sorrows* to slacken *in the prayer that is yours*. May your eyes not cease *from weeping*.

The biblical text of 2.18 is quite difficult and has given rise to a broad range of emendations and corrections.³⁷⁵ Once again, however, our targumist has followed MT and imposed order and meaning upon the unruly text. In the first clause the targumist identifies the subject as Israel and tells us that it was for mercy that their heart cried out. This small

³⁷²Lev. 26.21-26.

³⁷³LamR 2.17.

³⁷⁴See Albrektson, pp. 115-6.

³⁷⁵See, for example, Albrektson, pp. 116-8; Hillers, p. 101; Rudolph, p. 220; and Westermann, p. 146.

addition brings into relief the theme of TgLam that there is, in fact, no comfort for Jerusalem.³⁷⁶ This is continued in the first phrase of 18c where אל-תתני becomes “give no comfort to your sorrows.”

We have already discussed the targumic method of rendering α -בת with α -ד כנשתא, but this verse contains two of the exceptions discussed earlier.³⁷⁷ In the second half of 18a α -בת ציון is not translated as α -ד ציון as we have come to expect. Instead the phrase is rendered α -ד ציון. This is no doubt due to the fact that what is being described is the “wall” of daughter Zion, the city, rather than to the community. The targumist does not, therefore, introduce the concept of communal weeping (although it would have been appropriate in this context). Instead the targumist stays remarkably close to the *sense* of the text which depicts the city as mourner.

The second occurrence of בת in this verse is in construct with עיך, a phrase which only occurs here and in Ps. 17.8 where it is part of the phrase α -בת עיך. It is often suggested that both Ps. 17.8 and Lam. 2.18 should be emended in line with Zech. 2.12, בבת, עינו, “the pupil/apple of his eye.”³⁷⁸ Our targum does not follow the established pattern of α -בת = כנשתא, but instead reflects Zech. 2.12 by rendering the text with בבת עיך. It is clear from the context that this phrase is a reference to crying and our targumist has maintained the sense of the verse. This is further established through the addition that it is “from weeping” that Israel’s eyes are not to cease. The same pattern of translation can, in fact, be found in all of the examples the targumist’s rendering of α -בת in TgLam.

In each case the targumist has provided a text which represents the *sense* of MT.³⁷⁹ In the majority of instances the phrase α -בת refers to the community of Jerusalem/Zion/Israel and so the targumist brings them “up to date” for his audience by translating בת with כנשתא,

³⁷⁶This theme was begun in Chapter One of MT which repeatedly states that there is “no one to comfort her.” See TgLam 1.2, 17, and 21. The targumist extends this theme throughout the entire work, introducing the phrase α -ד תנחומין לה in 1.9, 1.16, 2.18, and 3.49.

³⁷⁷See §3.1.6 and §4.5.

³⁷⁸See BHS; BDB, p. 93a; and Rudolph, p. 220. TgZech renders this phrase בגלגלי עינוהי and TgPss has כגילגול די במצעות עינא.

³⁷⁹See §3, “Principles of Translation.”

the term by which the current Jewish community would identify. In 2.18c the phrase -בת עינך clearly refers to something other than the community (weeping eyes) and so again the targumist provided a translation which reflects the meaning of the text (in this case, through a relatively literal translation). It is less clear why the targumist did not extend the personification of the City of Zion in 2.18a to include the Congregation of Zion (as in TgLam 1.6), but it may be that the reference to the “wall” of Zion necessitated the current rendering. The end result is that the targum to verse 18 provides a prosaic rendering of MT which conveys the sense of the original text.

3.2.19. Verse 19

קומי רני בליל לראש אשמרות
שפכי כמים לבך נכת פני אדני
שאי אליו פפוך על-נפש עולריך
העטיפים ברעב בראש כל-הוצות:

קומי כנשתא דישרי דשריא בגלותא עסוקי במשנה בליליא ארום שכנתא דיי שריא לקביליך ובפתגמי אוריתא בשירווי מטרת שפרפרא שדיאי הי כמיה עקמומית לביך והדרי בתיובתא וצליאי בבית כנשתא כל קביל אפי יי טולי לותיה בצלו ידיך על נפשת עולימיך דצחיין בכפנא בריש כל מחוויין:

Arise, O Congregation of Israel dwelling in exile. Busy yourself with Mishnah in the night, for the Shekinah of the LORD is dwelling before you, and with the words of Torah at the beginning of the morning watch. Pour out like water the crookedness of your heart and turn in repentance. And pray in the House of the Congregation before the face of the LORD. Raise your hands to him in prayer for the life of your children who thirst with hunger at the head of every open market.

Within the biblical Book of Lamentations verses 18 and 19 of Chapter Two form a petition, a “plea for God to take heed.”³⁸⁰ While our targumist has done little to alter verse 18, verse 19 has been transformed dramatically, almost beyond recognition. This verse, perhaps more than any other single verse, provides a *Sitz im Leben* for TgLam. The targum begins by identifying the subject of the imperative קומי as the Congregation of Israel. This is not too surprising, but it is the “Congregation of Israel *dwelling in exile*” to whom the targumic imperative is addressed. The targumist has made no attempt to locate this verse within its historical context of 586 BCE (or even 70 CE). Instead, this verse is aimed directly at the targumist’s own audience, the Jewish communities which no longer live in Jerusalem or Palestine, but are now scattered throughout the ancient world. It is not just the audience,

³⁸⁰Westermann, pp. 156-7.

however, which has changed.

The original sense of verse 19, that of calling the people to pray to God throughout the night in hopes that he might intercede, has now become a call to the Congregation to study Mishnah “in the night, for the Shekinah of the LORD is dwelling before you.” Furthermore, rather than reading MT’s לראש אשמרות as the parallel to בלילה (*qere*), our targumist balances the command for busying oneself at *night* with Mishnah with the command to study the “words of Torah at the beginning of the morning watch.” These alterations transform the text from a call for the people to seek divine intervention, the ultimate goal of which would have been the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple, into a command to the Diaspora to follow rabbinic Judaism. Not only do we find direct reference to the Mishnah, but the explanation that while studying Mishnah the “Shekinah of the LORD is dwelling before you” is probably a reference to Abot 3.2.

R. Hananiah b. Teradion said: [When] two sit together and there are no words of Torah [spoken] between them, lo, this [constitutes] a session of scorners, as it is said: *Nor sat he in the seat of the scornful* (Ps. 1.1); but [when] two sit together and there are words of Torah [spoken] between them, the Shekinah abides among them, as it is said: *Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name* (Mal. 3.16). — I have no [scriptural proof for the presence of the Shekinah] except [among] two, whence [is there proof that] even [when there is only] one [person]. The Holy One, blessed be he, appoints unto him a reward? — Since it is said: *Though he sit alone and [meditate] in stillness, yet he taketh [a reward] unto himself* (Lam. 3.28).

Although this mishnah speaks of the Shekinah’s presence while studying Torah, our targumist has merely extended this expectation, perhaps by *qal wa-ḥomer*, to the study of Mishnah.

Although the practice of midnight study was common within medieval Judaism, particularly among the Kabbalists, there is little attestation of such practice within the Judaism of late antiquity.³⁸¹ Our targum, furthermore, appears to be unique among the

³⁸¹ See Zohar I 82b for a description of the pattern for midnight vigils. See also Lawrence Fine, *Safed Spirituality: Rules of Mystical Piety, the Beginning of Wisdom*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), pp. 17-8. Of particular interest for our discussion are the concluding remarks of Fine’s description of this pattern. “After all of this, he should rise to study Torah, clothe himself, and ready himself to call out to God. When he rises he should study Oral Torah or Mishnah as well as the Aramaic version of the verse, ‘Arise, cry out in the night...’ (Lam. 2.19).” Unfortunately he does not cite his source for this tradition of reading TgLam 2.19 and it does not appear in the Soncino edition of the Zohar. There are two references to Lam. 2.19 in the Aramaic text of the Zohar (Zohar II 54b and *Raya Mahemna* 121b; Mantuan text on *Soncino Classics Collection*

ancient Jewish commentaries in this interpretation of the verse. LamR 2.19 has a discussion of how to divide the “watches” which were kept and is, in fact, a distilled version of the discussion found in *b* Ber. 3b-4a. Although the biblical texts cited in these discussions³⁸² speak of David’s awaking in the night to contemplate God’s laws and promises³⁸³ the rabbis’ only concern is determining how many watches there were in the night. This is a strong indication that, at least by the time of the Babylonian Talmud, there was no firm tradition of rising at midnight to study Torah or Mishnah. LT tells us that it is on the ninth of Ab that they were to busy themselves in order to remember the day on which Jerusalem was destroyed. It does not, however, say what they were to be doing throughout that night.³⁸⁴

It appears that our targum is the earliest witness to an annual (since the Book of Lamentations is read only once a year) vigil during which the congregation would study Mishnah at night and would culminate their night of remembrance with a reading from the Torah in the morning. Considering the context of the verse, the night would have been spent in remembrance and penitence. The targum makes it clear that it also would have been spent in the synagogue. The addition to 19b not only calls for the people to confess their sins (“pour out like water the crookedness of your heart” for MT’s שפכי כמים לבך), they are also to “pray in the House of the Congregation.” This is the only instance in TgLam where the phrase בית כנסתא occurs and it is clear that it is the *locus*, the place where the community congregates, that is being referred to in this instance.³⁸⁵

After calling the people to prayer in the synagogue our targumist returns to the biblical text. Since 2.19, like 1.7, has four stichs instead of the usual three most

CD-ROM, [Chicago: Davka Corporation, 1996]) and although II 54b identifies those who rise as the “Congregation of Israel in exile” there is no mention of the recitation of TgLam 2.19.

³⁸²Ps. 119.62 and Ps. 119.148.

³⁸³These verses therefore form the basis for much of the Zohar’s discussion of studying Torah and Mishnah at night. See Zohar I 82b and I 92a-b.

³⁸⁴LT 2.19.

³⁸⁵See §5.2.4. Verse 19 clearly reflects the use of the targum within the synagogue and may have had a specific liturgical role within the ninth of Ab service.

commentators remove the final stich.³⁸⁶ As usual our targumist follows MT and, aside from the curious choice of צחיין (“they thirst”) as the verb added to the verbless Hebrew clause, does not alter the original sense of the Hebrew text.

3.2.20. Verse 20

רְאֵה יְהוָה וְתִבְיֹטָה לְמִי עוֹלָלָתְ כֹּהֶ
 אִם-תֹּאכְלֶנָּה נְשִׁים פְּרִיִם עַלְלֵי טַפְחִים
 אִם-יִהְרֵג בְּמִקְדָּשׁ אֲדָנִי כִּהְיִן וְנָבִיא:

חזי יי ותהי מסתכל מן שמיא למן אסתקפתא כדן אם חזי לבנאתא דישרי למיכל בכפנא פירי בטניהון עולימיא רגיגתא דהוו מתלפפין בסדינין דמילתיך ענת מדת דינא וכן אמרת אם חזי למקטל בבית מקדשא דיי כהנא ונבייא כמה דקטלתון לזכריה בר עדוא כהנא רבא ונביא מהימן בבית מקדשי דיי ביומא דכפוריא על דאוכח יתכון דלא תעבדון דביש קדם יי:

See, O LORD, and observe *from heaven* against whom have you turned. Thus is it *right for the Daughters of Israel* to eat the fruit *of their wombs due to starvation, lovely children wrapped in fine linen? The Attribute of Justice replied, and said, “Is it right to kill priest and prophet in the Temple of the LORD, as when you killed Zechariah son of Iddo, the High Priest and faithful prophet in the Temple of the LORD on the Day of Atonement because he told you not to do evil before the LORD?”*

This verse which, in the biblical text, is a series of rhetorical questions presented to God has become a dialogue between the anonymous plaintiff and the Attribute of Justice. The targumist begins by following MT and calling the LORD to consider what he has done to his chosen people. Unlike 1.20 where God is also asked to look on his people’s misery, 2.20 calls for God to “observe from heaven.” Since 1.20 does not have such a description this insertion cannot be dismissed as a standard translational technique. Instead the phrase שמיא combined with the presence of the Attribute of Justice serves to remind the audience that God has separated himself from his sinful people.

The biblical text of verse 20 contains a direct accusation against God. The fact that women are driven to eat their children and priests and prophets are killed in the sanctuary are the direct result of God’s allowing this calamity to befall his people. The targumist represents the initial argument with a few minor changes. The women, we are told, are identified specifically as the “Daughters of Israel” and their “offspring” (פירי) are described as the “fruit of their womb” (פירי בטניהון). The Daughters of Israel resort to

³⁸⁶See, for example, Hillers, p. 101.

cannibalism due to starvation (בכפנא) and their young (and the *hapax legomenon* טפחים) are poignantly described as “lovely children wrapped in fine linen.”³⁸⁷

At this point in our targum the Attribute of Justice responds to the charges asking, “Is it right to kill priest and prophet in the Temple of the LORD?”³⁸⁸ As in 1.1 the Attribute of Justice is employed by our targumist in order to explain why these atrocities have been allowed to happen to Israel. In this instance, the targumist is recasting the biblical text (20c), transforming its meaning by changing the identity of the speaker.³⁸⁹ The Attribute of Justice goes on to specify the crimes for which Jerusalem and her people were being punished, “you killed Zechariah son of Iddo, the High Priest and faithful prophet in the Temple of the LORD on the Day of Atonement *because* he told you not to do evil before the LORD.” As in 1.3, the targumist follows the principle of מדה כנגד מדה and defines Jerusalem’s punishment by her crime.

The event referred to in our targum is found in 2 Chron. 24.20-2. Early in King Joash’s career, while under the influence of the High Priest Jehoiada, a religious reform was initiated and the Temple was repaired. When Jehoiada died Chronicles tells us that King Joash turned away from worshipping the Lord and returned to worshipping the *Asherim*.

Then the spirit of God took possession of Zechariah son of the priest Jehoiada; he stood above the people and said to them, “Thus says God: Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has also forsaken you.” But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD. King Joash did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah’s father, had shown him, but killed his son. As he was dying, he said, “May the LORD see and avenge!”³⁹⁰

Although our targum mistakenly identifies Zechariah as “son of Iddo” there can be no doubt that it is Zechariah son of Jehoiada and this passage which our targumist has in

³⁸⁷The *hapax legomenon* טפחים and the *hapax legomenon* טפחתי in 2.22 are derived from either an Arabic (Albrektson, p. 120) or Akkadian root (Hillers, p. 98) both of which refer to child birth/rearing. It is likely that our targumist was unaware of this etymology and so rendered both terms with *לפף, “to swathe, wrap” (Jastrow, p. 715b).

³⁸⁸For further discussion of the Attribute of Justice in TgLam see §3.1.1 and §4.3.

³⁸⁹In 1.1 the Attribute of Justice’s speech is not based on the biblical text.

³⁹⁰2 Chron. 24.20-2.

mind.³⁹¹ The point of contact between Lam. 2.20 and 2 Chron. 24.22 is the call for the LORD to “see” (ראה and ירא respectively) the plight of the afflicted. LamR has a version of this tradition which is very similar to TgLam except it is the Holy Spirit rather than the Attribute of Justice who responds to the plaintiff (and the Zechariah is given the correct lineage).

See, O Lord, and consider, to whom thou hast done thus! Shall the women eat their fruit, the children that are dandled in the hands? But the Holy Spirit retorted, Shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? referring to Zechariah the son of Jehoiada.³⁹²

There are, in fact, a vast number of midrashim which are based upon the murder of Zechariah, and his subsequent appeal for divine retribution, as a cause for the destruction of the First Temple.³⁹³ One of the earliest versions, and the most pertinent for our study, is found in PRK 15.7.³⁹⁴ The base verse is Isa. 1.21 “How the faithful city has become a whore! She that was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her—but now murderers!”

But now murderers (Isa. 1.21) are abroad in her, murderers who slew Uriah, who slew Zechariah. ... On that day Israel — [through the one act of slaying Zechariah] — committed seven transgressions: they slew a man who was a priest, prophet, and judge; they shed innocent blood; they profaned God’s name; they polluted the Temple Court, all of these transgressions on the Day of Atonement, a Sabbath at that. When Nebuzaradan came up [to the Temple], the blood [on the Temple rock] began to seethe, and he asked: “What sort of blood is this that seethes?” The priests replied: “The blood of bullocks, lambs, and rams which we offered upon the altar.” At once he had men fetch bullocks, rams, and lambs which he slaughtered beside Zechariah’s blood. [The animal’s blood did not seethe, but] Zechariah’s blood kept on seething. Since the priests had not disclosed the truth to Nebuzaradan he suspended them from a torturer’s scaffold. Then they said to him: Since God is determined to demand punishment from us for this blood, know that it is the blood of a priest, a prophet, and judge. It was he who predicted to us all the evil things that you are doing: nevertheless, we rose up and slew him. At once Nebuzaradan took eighty thousand young priests and slew them one by one over Zechariah’s blood until the stream of their blood reached Zechariah’s grave. ... And still Zechariah’s blood kept seething. Thereupon Nebuzaradan rebuked it saying, “What can make you stop seething? What do you want? Shall I, on your account, cause all your people to perish?” At that moment, the Holy One, filled with compassion, said: If this man, a cruel being of flesh-and-blood, here today and tomorrow no more, is filled with

³⁹¹“Zechariah son of Iddo,” or more accurately “Zechariah son of Berechiah son of Iddo” (Zech. 1.1), was the prophet to whom is attributed the biblical book of Zechariah. All of the MSS of TgLam read בר עדיא. See Van der Heide, p. 19*. See also Matt. 23.35 and Martin McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch*, 2nd ed., (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), pp. 160-3.

³⁹²Lam. 2.20. This midrash is also found in LamR Proem 5 and 23, LamR 1.15 (“For these things I weep”), 4.13 (“It was for the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests”), 4.14 (“Blindly they wandered through the streets”), and 5.18 (“Because of Mt. Zion which lies desolate”).

³⁹³Within the talmudim the midrash occurs three times, *b* Git. 57b, *b* San. 96b, and *y* Ta’an. 4. It is also found in PRK 15 and TgEsther 1.2.

³⁹⁴All of the other versions are variations on the same theme with very few details changing. In TgEsther 1.2, for example, it is Nebuchadnezzar rather than Nebuzaradan who orders the sacrifices.

compassion for My children, all the more so should I be, I, of whom it is written, *The Lord thy God is a merciful God; He will not fail thee, neither destroy thee* (Deut. 4.31). Thereupon the Holy One signaled to Zechariah's blood, and then and there it was absorbed into the earth.

When we compare our targum with 2 Chron. 24.20-2 and PRK 15.7 we find that our targum has followed the biblical text more closely than PRK. Although it is not explicit in the text, our targumist has made the reasonable assumption that Zechariah has succeeded his father as High Priest and Zechariah's credentials as a prophet are found within text, "the spirit of God took possession of Zechariah son of the priest Jehoiada." The only extra-biblical detail which our targum shares with PRK is that the murder took place on the Day of Atonement.

It is clear, therefore, that there was a strong midrashic tradition associated with the death of Zechariah and that our targum is a representative of that tradition.³⁹⁵ Our targum, however, presents a concise summary of the events described in 2 Chron. 24.20-2 whose purpose is to demonstrate that Israel deserved her punishment. That punishment, furthermore, has been determined by Israel's own crimes. Just as they killed Zechariah, who was a priest and prophet, in the Temple Courts, so too their priests and prophets had been murdered in the sanctuary. As in 1.2 where Jeremiah "rebuked the people of the House of Israel, but they refused to accept it" in 2.20 the targumist reminds us that Zechariah was killed precisely because he was calling them to repentance and they refused to return to the LORD. "You killed Zechariah ... because he told you not to do evil before the LORD." The targumist thus continues to emphasize that Israel was willful in her sin, but unwilling to repent when the opportunity was offered by God.

³⁹⁵ See also Matt. 23.35 where Jesus refers to "the righteousness blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar." Interestingly, this passage is in at the end of Jesus' accusations against the Pharisees and the Scribes and just before his lament over Jerusalem.

3.2.21. Verse 21

שָׁכְבוּ לְאָרְץ חוּצוֹת נֶעַר וְזָקֵן
 בְּתוֹלְתֵי וּבַחוּרֵי נָפְלוּ בְּתָרְבַּ
 הַרְגָתָ בַּיּוֹם אֲפָךְ טִבְחָתָ לֹא תִמְלֶתָ:

דמכו על ארעא דמחוזין עולימא וסבא דהוו רגילין למשכוב על כרין דמילת ועל ערסין דשן דפיל בתולתיי וריביי נפלו קטלין בחרבא קטלתא ביום רוגד נכסתא ולא חסתא:

The young and the old *who were accustomed to recline on pillows of fine wool and upon ivory couches* were prostrate on the earth of the open markets. My virgins and youths have fallen, *killed* by the sword. You have killed in the day of your anger; you have slaughtered and shown no pity.

The main addition to this verse is the phrase *דהוו רגילין למשכוב על כרין דמילת ועל ערסין דשן דפיל* which describes the life-style which the young and the old³⁹⁶ had prior to the siege(s) of Jerusalem. This addition creates a marked contrast between the luxury of lying on ivory couches and the ignominy of lying dead in the street, but the targumist's choice of language is specific and alludes to Amos 6.4. In this chapter the prophet Amos, who announced the Lord's punishment of Israel because of their social injustices, condemns the wealthy for their self-indulgence. "Alas for those who are at ease in Zion, and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria, the notables of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel resorts!" The prophet continues,

Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, (השִׁכְּבִים עַל-מִטּוֹת שֵׁן)
 and lounge on their couches,
 and eat lambs from the flock,
 and calves from the stall;
 who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp,
 and like David improvise on instruments of music;
 who drink wine from bowls,
 and anoint themselves with the finest oils,
 but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
 Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile,
 and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.³⁹⁷

Once again the point of contact between our base text, Lam. 2.21, and the verse alluded to in the addition is the vocabulary of the verses. Both verses begin with *שכב**, Lam. 2.21 with *שכבו* and Amos 6.4 with *השכבים*. In alluding to Amos 6 our targumist is not simply creating a contrast wherein the ease of the past is gone, he is also adding to the list

³⁹⁶Our MS appears to be unique among targum MSS and P since it does *not* change the singular forms of *נער וזקן* to plural. See Van der Heide, p. 19*, and Albrektson, p. 122.

³⁹⁷Amos 6.4-7.

of indictments against the nation. That the young and the old were “lying on beds of ivory” reminds the targumist’s audience of Amos’ prophesy against Israel for their excessive behaviour.³⁹⁸ The result of their debauchery, says Amos, is that “they shall now be the first to go into exile.” This, of course, is not the case in TgLam. Those who had enjoyed the luxury of lying on woolen pillows and ivory couches now lie dead in the dirt.

The rest of 2.21 is rendered in a direct manner. The virgins and youths who “fall by the sword” in the biblical text fall “*killed* by the sword” in TgLam. Levine’s suggestion that the targumist’s rendering of MT’s הרגת, “you killed,” “softens the directness of the charge” is curious since the targum renders the text literally with קטלתא.³⁹⁹ Even the rather harsh sounding טבחת, “you slaughtered,” is translated literally with נכסתא. It is clear from the context within MT, that in both cases the subject of the verb is God and this remains unchanged in the targum.

3.2.22. Verse 22

תקרא כיום מועד מגורי מסביב
ולא תיה ביום אף-יהנה פליט ושריד
אשר-טפחתי ורביתי איבי כלם:

תהי קרי חירותא לעמד בית ישראל על יד מלכא משיחא היכמה דעבדתא על יד משה ואהרן ביומא דאפיקת' ית ישראל ממצרים ואתכנשון עולימי חזור חזור מן כל אתר דאתבדרו תמן ביום תקוף רוגד יי ולא הוה בהום שיזבא ושאר דלפיפית בסדינין ודרביתי בתפנוקי מלכין בעלי דבבי שיציאונון:

May you declare *freedom to your people, the House of Israel, by the King Messiah just as you did by Moses and Aaron* on the day when you brought Israel up from Egypt. My children *were gathered* all around, *from every place to which they had scattered* in the day of your *fierce* anger, O LORD, and there was no escape for them nor any survivors *of those whom I had wrapped in fine linen*. And my enemies destroyed those whom I had raised *in royal comfort*.

This verse is extremely paraphrastic to such an extent that it is sometimes difficult to determine which Aramaic term is intended to represent the Hebrew text.⁴⁰⁰ Levine suggests

³⁹⁸NumR 8.7 also refers to Amos 6.4 while commenting on Num. 5.12, “If any man’s wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him....” The midrash declares that “all this [the exile] befell the ten tribes because they were steeped in debauchery with married women, this being the crime for which their doom was sealed; as it says about them, *That lie upon beds of ivory...* (Amos 6.4).”

³⁹⁹Levine, p. 121.

⁴⁰⁰This verse has traits similar to the translation method found throughout TgSS which Alexander refers to as “type B” targum. “In type B a base translation cannot be recovered: the translation is dissolved in the paraphrase.” Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations,” p. 234. (“Type A” is a targum in which a

that “the original *peshat* of the targum is interrupted by a midrashic injection, possibly a later edition.”⁴⁰¹ Unfortunately it is not clear that there was an “original *peshat*” in TgLam to this verse. Although the targum does represent the text and sense of 22b-c in a fairly straightforward manner, the first stich of the verse has been dramatically altered.

The biblical text of 2.22 continues the theme of Chapter Two, describing how God had completely destroyed his people. “You invited my enemies from all around, as if for a day of festival!” The targum, however, transforms the meaning of 2.22a and in so doing has little regard for the original text.⁴⁰² The past tense of the Hebrew תקרא has been made future and, before our targumist represents the Hebrew מגורי “my enemies,”⁴⁰³ he inserts a new theme, one of future hope and deliverance.⁴⁰⁴

Rather than the biblical text’s description of God having invited Israel’s enemies to destroy Jerusalem, the targumist looks forward to a time when God will “declare freedom to your people, the House of Israel.” A dramatic contrast is thus made between the sinful activities of Israel, clearly stated throughout the targum as the reason for the destruction of Jerusalem and the laments themselves, and God’s holy character which demands justice and yet will forgive his people and ultimately release them from their bondage. This freedom, we are told, will be declared through the agent of the “King Messiah.”

The targumist does not expand or elaborate on the role of the King Messiah other than to equate his role with that of Moses and Aaron “on the day when [God] brought Israel up from Egypt.” At this point in the verse we return to the Hebrew text. It is easy to see that ביום in the targum is equivalent to כיום in MT, although note that we now have a temporal ב as the preposition (the comparative כ has already been rendered with היכמה). But what of one-to-one rendering of the original text can be recovered by bracketing out the additional material, “Jewish Aramaic Translations,” p. 231).

⁴⁰¹Levine, p. 121.

⁴⁰²We shall see, however, that the targum returns to the text and theme with the last two stichs of verse 22.

⁴⁰³For discussion of this difficult Hebrew see Albrektson, pp. 124-5, and Hillers, p. 102.

⁴⁰⁴We might classify this verse as “converse translation,” but the activity of the targumist is much broader than, for example, simply altering a negative particle (which would not be appropriate for this verse). See §1.2.2.b.

MT's מועד? In the biblical text God has called together the speaker's enemies "as if for a day of festival." Our targum reads "you will declare freedom ... just as you did by Moses and Aaron *on the day when you brought Israel up from Egypt.*" The term מועד appears to have disappeared.

Lagarde and YT do not have this addition, but instead read simply על די משה ואהרן ביומא דפסחא. It is impossible to say which reading is more original. The majority of witnesses would seem to suggest that our MS is an embellishment. It seems more likely to me, however, that other scribes were concerned with the lack of direct representation of מועד and therefore opted for a simpler text which still conveyed the intent of the "original" targum.

The Hebrew phrase כיום מועד also occurs in 2.7 where the text is describing the cries of the people as the Temple was being destroyed. "He has delivered into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; a clamor was raised in the house of the LORD *as on a day of festival*" (כיום מועד). In rendering this verse our targumist did not translate the text literally, but instead identified the festival as Passover.⁴⁰⁵ In verse 22, although the word פסחא does not occur, our targumist has again equated כיום מועד with "Passover."⁴⁰⁶ Passover commemorates the day when God brought Israel up from Egypt, thus the Hebrew כיום מועד is represented with the phrase ביומא דאפיקתא ית ישראל ממצרים. In this instance, however, the targumist is referring to the historical act of the first Passover rather than to the festival which commemorates it. This reading encourages the audience not simply by holding out future redemption as something to hope for, but it also reminds the reader of how God saved his people in the past. This continuous view of God's working in history, looking forward and backward at the same time, also encompasses the present, suggesting that God is continuing to work to deliver his people from their current "Egypt."

In rendering the difficult Hebrew מגורי our targumist continues the process of transforming this traumatic verse into a positive outlook for the future. This term is

⁴⁰⁵See §3.2.7 above.

⁴⁰⁶Exod. 12.43-9.

probably derived from מאור, “terrors,” which is found several times in Jeremiah.⁴⁰⁷ The phrase מאורי מסביב is probably best rendered in this context as “[you invited] my enemies from all around.” The targumist, however, has made no attempt to incorporate the sense or meaning of the term into his text. Instead it is “my children” who were gathered and although the verb ואתכנסון is in the perfect form, it should perhaps be understood as a type of “prophetic perfect.”⁴⁰⁸ Within the context of this verse it is clear that the targumist envisions a future, messianic event when all the Diaspora will be gathered together “from every place to which they had scattered.” Thus the pathos of the last two stichs of verse 22 is mitigated. The anger of the LORD was great and his punishment severe, but ultimately God’s people will be gathered together when he declares his freedom for Israel.

For the remainder of the verse our targumist reverts back to his normal prosaic style. As in 2.20 the Hebrew טפחתי is interpreted as one “wrapped in fine linen” (דלפיפית בסדינין). Those whom “I reared” (רביתי) have become “those whom I have raised in royal comfort” (ודרביתי בתפנוקי מלכין). These additions serve to emphasize the fine stature of Jerusalem’s inhabitants and the depths of their downfall.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷Jer. 6.25; 20.3, 10; 46.5; 49.29. Hillers (p. 102) prefers to translate it as “men who attack” due to the context.

⁴⁰⁸My translation reflects a literal reading of the text. For discussion of the so-called “prophetic perfect” in biblical Hebrew see Waltke and O’Connor, p. 490.

⁴⁰⁹See §3.2.21 and §4.2.3..

3.3. TgLam Chapter 3

3.3.1. Verses 1-3

אָנִי הַגִּבֹּר רָאָה עָנִי בְּשִׁבְט עֲבָרְתּוֹ:
 אוֹתִי נָהַג וַיִּלְךְ חֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא-אוֹר:
 אֶךְ בִּי יָשָׁב יַהֲפֹךְ יָדוֹ כָּל-הַיּוֹם:

אנא הוא גברא דחזא ענוייה בחוטרא דרדי ברוגזיה:
 יתי דבר ואוביל לחשוכא ולא לנהורא:
 ברם בי יתוב יגלגל עלי מחתיה כל יומא:

I am *that* man who has seen affliction by the rod *which chastises in* his anger.
 He has led and brought me to darkness, and not to light.
 To me only does he turn, heaping *upon* me his blows all day.

Prosaic Expansion. The biblical text of Chapter Three has 66 verses, each a single stich, which are in an acrostic form and every three verses represent a letter of the alphabet, i.e., verses 1-3 each begin with an א. The targumist does not try and consistently replicate this stylistic feature (just as he does not represent the acrostic elsewhere in Lamentations), however there are moments when the targum reflects the biblical form. A few examples will serve to demonstrate. Verses 16-8, all begin with ו, verses 25-7 begin with ט, and verses 37-9 begin with נ. In verses 31-3 the targumist does not begin each line with כ (as in MT), however he does begin each verse with its Aramaic equivalent ארום. I have therefore presented the text three verses at a time, following the biblical pattern and allowing us to see if, where, and how the targumist represents the biblical form.

The presence of the first person in this poem has led to extensive debate concerning the identity of “the man.”⁴¹⁰ It is perhaps surprising that our targumist makes no attempt to identify “the man,” not even with Jeremiah, the likely candidate considering our targumist’s view that Jeremiah was the author of the Book of Lamentations.⁴¹¹ On the other hand, it may be that our targumist is so certain of Jeremiah’s identity that he did not feel the

⁴¹⁰See the discussion in Albrektson, pp. 126-8, where Albrektson prefers to identify “the man” as a collective “Zion,” and Hillers, pp. 120-2, who identifies “the man” as an ahistorical individual, “the Everyman.”

⁴¹¹See §3.1.1 and §3.1.18.

need to make this connection explicit. Judging by his interpretation of verse 5, where the targumist does not even represent the Hebrew עלי preferring to identify the “besieged” as Jerusalem, it might seem that the targumist has a collective interpretation in mind so that the speaker is Jerusalem. This would be a mistaken assumption, however, since verse 5 is the only instance in Chapter Three where our targumist alters the perspective of MT.⁴¹²

The changes made to these three verses are minor and consist of prosaic elements (e.g., הוא in verse 1 and the addition of the preposition ל- in verse 2, לחשוכא). In verse 1 the “rod of God’s wrath” (שבט עברתו) is modified by the addition of דרדי so that the text now reads “the rod which chastises in his anger.” This clarifies the nature of God’s punishment as temporary, intended only to bring his people back in line with his will.⁴¹³ “His hand” in the phrase “he turns his hand” (verse 3) is replaced with the concrete image of “his blows” (מחטא) which is prefaced with the preposition and first person suffix עלי so that God is “heaping upon me his blows all day.”

3.3.4. Verses 4-6

בְּלָה בְּשָׂרִי וְעוֹרִי שֶׁבֶר עֲצָמוֹתַי:
בְּנָה עָלַי וַיִּקַּף רֹאשׁ וַתִּלְאַה:
בְּמַחְשָׁפִים הוֹשִׁיבֵנִי כְּמֵתֵי עוֹלָם:

עתק בשרי ממכתשין ומשכי מן מחטא תבר גרמי:
בנה כרכומין ואקף קרתא ועקר רישי עמא ושלהיאונן:
בבית אסורין דחשוכא אותבני כמיתין דאזלו לעמא⁴¹⁴ אחרן:

My flesh is worn out *from beatings*, my skin *from the blow*. He has shattered my bones.
He has built *siegeworks* and surrounded *the city*. *He has uprooted* the heads *of the people* and wearied *them*.
He has caused me to dwell in a dark *prison* like the dead *who have gone to the other world*.

There have been quite a few additions and alterations made to these three verses. In verse 4 the targumist has added two prepositional phrases to explain why the speaker’s flesh was wasting away. In the first phrase we are told that it is “from beatings” (ממכתשין)

⁴¹²This is true even of the greatly expanded 3.28 which remains impersonal, “Let him sit alone and be silent.”

⁴¹³See §3.1.1 and Prov. 3.11-2.

⁴¹⁴Should be read as לעלמא following the majority of the MSS. See the commentary below, Lagarde, and Van der Heide, p. 21*.

that his skin is worn out and, in the second phrase, his skin is worn from “the blow.”⁴¹⁵ These additions are added on the basis of 3.1 and 3.3 where the speaker describes the “affliction by the rod” and receiving God’s “blows all day.” The targumist thus forges a thematic link between these verses. The final phrase of verse 4 is unchanged.

The additions to verse 5 redirect the focus from the personal suffering of the speaker to the plight of the city. Therefore God no longer “besieged and enveloped me,” rather “he has built siegeworks and surrounded the city.” The reference in the biblical text to the first person (עלי) is missing and by providing direct objects for both בנה and יקר the metaphorical attack has become the literal siege of the city Jerusalem.⁴¹⁶ The Hebrew ראש, “bitterness,”⁴¹⁷ is interpreted as the “heads of the people” (רישי עמא) who were sent into exile by the conquering forces.⁴¹⁸ Finally, the Hebrew noun תלאה, “weariness, hardship,” has been read as a verb with the “heads of the people” as the object.

The “darkness” of MT is made concrete with the addition of אסורין so that speaker now dwells in “a dark prison.” The choice of this addition was undoubtedly influenced by the content of verse 7, which speaks of being walled in without escape and fettered with heavy chains. Our targum does not elaborate on this motif here (or in verse 7), but while commenting on verse 7 the midrashim equate these confines to “the strongholds of the Persians” and “the mines of the Samaritans.”⁴¹⁹ The Hebrew phrase כמיתי עולם, “like the dead of long ago,” has been expanded with the addition of דאולו and אורחן. Thus, he dwells “in a dark prison like the dead ones who have gone to the other world.” The targumist has interpreted עולם as “world” rather than “antiquity, long ago.” Urb. 1 reads לעמא, but the

⁴¹⁵The midrashic sources (LamR 3.4 and LT 3.4) equate “flesh” with the community, “skin” with the Sanhedrin, and “bones” as the strong men of Israel. It is unlikely, however, that our targumist is alluding to this midrash in any way (*contra* Levine, p. 125).

⁴¹⁶See the general discussion concerning Chapter Three in §3.3.1 above.

⁴¹⁷See BDB, p. 912b.

⁴¹⁸“[Nebuchadnezzar] took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons.” 2 Chron. 36.20. LamR 3.5 also interprets ראש as “head,” but applies it to Nebuchadnezzar, “this refers to Nebuchadnezzar, ‘you are the head of gold’ (Dan. 2.38).” LXX also reads “head,” καὶ ἐκύκλωσε κεφαλῆν μου.

⁴¹⁹LamR 3.7.

majority of the MSS have לעלמא and this reading is to be preferred as being closer to the original text.⁴²⁰ Levine suggests that Urb. 1's reading be retained because "it reflects the tradition that the subject is the dark diaspora."⁴²¹ There is nothing within the text of the targum, however, which suggests that our targumist is interpreting this verse in light of that tradition and we should assume, given that all other MSS available have a different reading in common, that the ל has merely "dropped out" of our manuscript.

3.3.7. Verses 7-9

גָּדַר בְּעָדַי וְלֹא אֶצֵּא הַכְּבִיר נְחֹשְׁתַי:
גַּם כִּי אֶזְעַק וְאֶשׁוּעַ שְׁתֵּם תִּפְלְתִי:
גָּדַר דְּרָכַי בְּגִזִּית נְתִיבַתִּי עֲוֹה:

סגר בתריי בגין דלא אפוק מן טריקא יקר על רגליי כבלין דנחשא:
אף ארום אצוח ואצלי אסתתם בית צלותי:
סגר אורחי במרמרין פסילן שבילוי סראו:⁴²²

He has locked me in *so that* I cannot go out *from the prison*. He has put heavy brass *fetters on my feet*.
Even when I cry out and pray *the house of my prayer* is blocked.
He has closed my paths with hewn *marble* stones. He has confounded my paths.

Verse 7 has been expanded by the identification of the "walled" place from which the speaker cannot escape as a prison. Such an identification is logical and as pointed out in our discussion of verse 6, the targumist is providing a concrete example of what MT refers to in poetic form. There is no attempt to identify this "prison" with Persian strongholds or Samaritan mines⁴²³ let alone Babylon (as one might reasonably expect). The remaining additions are similarly benign from an exegetical perspective. The "fetters" (נחשתי) are described more fully (and in plural form) as כבלין דנחשא and are made heavy "upon my feet" (על רגליי).

The Hebrew שתם in verse 8 is a *hapax legomenon* and has been understood by

⁴²⁰See Lagarde and Van der Heide, p. 21*.

⁴²¹Levine, p. 126.

⁴²²סראו should be emended to read סרב in line with the majority of MSS. See Lagarde and Van der Heide, p. 21*.

⁴²³See LamR 3.7.

modern scholars as either “stop, block” or “disappointed, frustrated.”⁴²⁴ Our targum, as with many Hebrew MSS,⁴²⁵ has read שַׁתַּם as being a variant of *סַתַּם, “to block, stop.” The idea that a penitent’s prayers could be “stopped” has been resolved by our targumist through the addition of בַּיִת. It is not the prayers which were halted, rather the *place* of prayer which was inaccessible.⁴²⁶ Our targumist may have had Isa. 56.7 in mind. Chapter 56 of Isaiah speaks of a time of restoration, when people from all over the world will worship God on his “holy mountain” and obey his commands.

And the foreigners who join
 themselves to the Lord,
 to minister to him,
 to love the name of the Lord,
 and to be his servants,
 all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it,
 and hold fast to my covenant—
 these I will bring to my holy mountain,
 and make them joyful in my house of prayer
 their burnt offering and their sacrifices,
 will be accepted on my altar;
 for my house shall be called a house of prayer (בַּיִת-תְּפִילָה) for all peoples.⁴²⁷

The phrase “house of prayer” occurs in the Hebrew Bible only in this verse, once in the form בַּיִת תְּפִילָה and then בַּיִת-תְּפִילָה. Within the context of Isaiah the “house of prayer” clearly refers to the Temple.⁴²⁸ This use of the term would therefore be fitting for TgLam which bemoans the destruction of the Temple. It is also possible that “the house of my prayer” could refer to a synagogue, in which case the targumist may have in mind a specific incidence where the Jewish people were forbidden from worshiping.⁴²⁹

The only addition to verse 9 is the word מִרְמִין. Levine suggests that we have a

⁴²⁴See Albrektson, p. 132.

⁴²⁵See BHS.

⁴²⁶See Levine, p. 127. “The prayer itself was not blocked; rather, it was not accepted: the ‘destination,’ i.e., בַּיִת was closed.” It is not clear to me that there is a difference between the prayer being “blocked” and the prayer “not being accepted.” The effect is the same in either case.

⁴²⁷Isa. 56.6-7.

⁴²⁸See *b* Meg. 18a where this passage is incorporated into a discussion which is in response to the question, “What was their reason for mentioning the gathering of the exiles after the blessing of the years?”

⁴²⁹See also PRK 24, “As a ritual bath is open at some times and barred at other times, so the gates of prayer are open at some times and barred at other times.” The passage is a comparison of repentance and the sea (the sea is open for all, just as the gates of repentance are open for all), but prayer in a congregation is likened to a ritual bath. An abbreviated version of the story is also found in LamR 3.43.

double translation and that the term פסילן is “apparently an explanation of the first [term], [adding] that the white marble is that of ‘idols.’”⁴³⁰ While פסיל can mean “hewn image,”⁴³¹ it is better translated as “hewn stones” which would correspond to the Hebrew גזית more accurately than מרמרין. The context is also against such a reading. Why *would* our targumist describe the LORD blocking the path of his people with “marble idols”? It seems more likely that מרמרין modifies and explains what sort of stones had been “hewn” to block the speaker’s path. It remains unclear, however, why our targumist would wish to specify that the stones were marble. The final verb סראו should be emended to סרב. This would bring it in line with the majority of the MSS⁴³² and match the third person singular form of the Hebrew.⁴³³

3.3.10. Verses 10-12

לב ארב הוא לי אריה במסתרים:
 דרכי סורר ונפשחני שמיני שמים:
 דרך קשתו ונציבני כמטרא לחץ:

דיבא מכמן הוא לי אריה דמטמר בכיבשא:
 אורחי סראב ושסעיני שויאני צדו:
 מתח קשתיה ועתדני היכפל גליסא⁴³⁴ לגירא:

He is a bear, lying in wait for me; a lion *hiding* in a hollow.
 He has confounded my path and rent me. He has made me desolate.
 He draws his bow and has set me as a target for the arrow.

Prosaic Expansion. The additions to these three verses are modest and serve only to render the Hebrew poetry into Aramaic prose. Verse 10 is a prime example of this activity. The second half of this stich is a verbless clause which is governed by the verb of the preceding clause. Our targumist, however, has added the verb *טמר to complete the prose

⁴³⁰Levine, p. 128.

⁴³¹Jastrow, p. 1195a. The noun and the verb (Jastrow, p. 1197) are both derived from the Hebrew of the same root פסל which means “to hew , cut.”

⁴³²See Lagarde and Van der Heide, p. 21*.

⁴³³Levine’s notes are confused at this point. He argues that “סרא appears preferable, in view of its use *infra*, verse 11,” p. 128. סרא is not used in verse 11 of TgLam, but סרב is (אורחי סראב). Presumably he meant that סרב is preferable.

⁴³⁴This should be emended to read פלגליסא היך following Lagarde. See comments below and Van der Heide, p. 22*. YT reads כפלגליסא.

sentence. *כיבשא* is most commonly translated as “path”⁴³⁵ and Levine points out that this image is also found in Hos. 13.7, “like a leopard I will lurk beside the way.”⁴³⁶ However, “recess” or “hollow” is a less common use of *כיבשא* which is more appropriate for translating the Hebrew *מסתרים*, “secret place.”⁴³⁷

Verse 11 repeats the sense and structure of the Hebrew text. *ויפשחני* is a *hapax legomenon* which has troubled translators both modern and ancient.⁴³⁸ Our targum has interpreted it in the same way as P who renders it (without representing the *ו*) as *א.צ.א.א.* The final verse of this group has been rendered in a straightforward manner, but the text of Urb. 1 presents us with yet another error. The phrase *היכפל גליסא* is meaningless and should be read *היך פלגליסא*.⁴³⁹ Presumably at some point in transmission this term ceased to be understood by the scribe(s) and was merely transcribed in a confused fashion.

3.3.13. Verses 13-15

הביא בכליותי בְּנֵי אֲשָׁפְתוֹ:
הִיִּיתִי שְׂחָק לְכָל-עַמִּי נְגִינָתָם כָּל-הַיּוֹם:
הִשְׁבִּיעַנִי בְּמַרְוֵי הַרְוֵנִי לְעֵנָה:

אעיל בכיליתאיי גיריה תיקיה:
הויתי חוכא לכל פריצי עמי ומזמרן עלי כל יומא:
אשבעני מרירות חיוון ארווי נגיריא:⁴⁴⁰

He made the arrows of his quiver enter my vitals.
I have become a laughing stock to all *the bold* of my people; they mock me in song all day.
He has sated me with gall of snakes and made me drunk with wormwood.

Prosaic Expansion. Verse 13 is a direct word-for-word translation of the Hebrew which opts for *גיריה תיקיה* rather than the poetic *בני אשפתו*. Verse 14, however, has two additions to the text. The people who would mock the mourner are identified as the “bold” or “dissolute” (*פריצי*) and their mocking is directed *עלי*, “against me.” The addition of *עלי*

⁴³⁵Jastrow, p. 611.

⁴³⁶Levine, p. 129.

⁴³⁷BDB, p. 172.

⁴³⁸See Albrektson and his discussion, p. 135.

⁴³⁹So Lagarde. See Van der Heide, p. 22*. YT reads *כפלגליסא*.

⁴⁴⁰The text should be emended to read *ארווי נגיא*. See Lagarde and Van der Heide, p. 22*.

merely makes explicit the meaning of the laconic Hebrew, but the identification of the mockers as the “bold” among his people serves to mitigate the harsh tone of the biblical voice. It is interesting to note that although multiple biblical MSS have עמי rather than עמי our targumist does not opt for this reading and the potential for interpreting the text as a reference to neighboring nations.⁴⁴¹

The meaning of verse 15 has not been greatly altered in the targum. The targumist has modified מרמורים by adding that it was the “gall of *snakes*,” מרירות חיוון. This is probably an example of associative translation where the text of Job 20.14, which refers to the “venom of asps” (מרירת פתנים), has influenced our targumist’s translation.⁴⁴² The text of Urb. 1 again requires emendation as the phrase ארווי נגיריא should be read ארווי גידא.⁴⁴³

3.3.16. Verses 16-18

ויגרס בְּחֶצֶץ שְׁנֵי הַכְּפִישָׁנִי בְּאֶפְרַיִם
וְתִזְנַח מִשְׁלֹמֹם נַפְשִׁי נְשִׁיתִי טוֹבָה:
וְאָמַר אֲבָד נִצְחִי וְתוֹחֲלָתִי מִיְהוָה:

ורצץ בפירין שני בניעיתני⁴⁴⁴ קטמא:
וקצת מלמשאל בשלם נפשי אנשיתי טיבותא:
ואמרית הובד תוקפי וטובא דהויתי אוריך מן קדם יי:

And he crushed my teeth with gravel; he has pressed me into ashes.
And my soul shrinks from greeting; I have forgotten goodness.
And I said, “My strength is destroyed and *the goodness which* I had waited for from *before* the LORD.

Prosaic Expansion. כנע יתי in verse 16 should be emended to read כנע יתי. The MS actually reads בניעיתני, however the second ב has a line through it indicating that it should be omitted. Once again, the majority of the MSS provide a better reading and I have followed Lagarde’s כנע יתי. Notice that the targumist has reproduced the form of MT by beginning each line with ו, but whereas the Hebrew text has the *waw-conversive*⁴⁴⁵ the

⁴⁴¹See, for example, 1.3, 1.10, and 2.15 where the “nations” are depicted as withholding aid from Jerusalem or mocking Jerusalem.

⁴⁴²See §1.2.2.b and §3.3.19 for the influence of Job 20.16 on the targumist’s translation of אש.

⁴⁴³See Lagarde and Van der Heide, p. 22*.

⁴⁴⁴The text should be emended to כנע יתי following Lagarde.

⁴⁴⁵See Waltke and O’Connor, pp. 455ff., for a general discussion of this form in biblical Hebrew. They prefer the term “*waw*-relative” for the *waw* + prefix conjugation (pp. 543ff.).

targum has the conjunctive ׀ plus the perfect. The use of the conjunctive ׀ strengthens the connections between this series of verses which present a litany of God's punishing actions against the speaker.

The first phrase of verse 17 in MT is difficult. ותגנח has been interpreted as either second person masculine or third person feminine.⁴⁴⁶ Some, like Hillers, have emended the text, viewing the ׀ in משלום as an enclitic ׀ which would be attached to the verb, which results in the translation, "I despaired of having peace."⁴⁴⁷ The targum has interpreted the verb as third person feminine singular with נפשי as the subject. The Hebrew בשלום has become מלמשאל בשלום and has led to various translations by modern scholars. In Levine's "Critical Commentary" the phrase is translated "from greeting,"⁴⁴⁸ but in his "Translation" the phrase is rendered "I ceased wanting to live."⁴⁴⁹ Greenup translated the passage as "and my soul is turned away from seeking peace," presumably interpreting מלמשאל as a participle of שאל.*⁴⁵⁰ Levine's comments are on the mark when he says that "the targumist simply paraphrases 'from greeting.'"⁴⁵¹ The image is of one so wounded and battered that he retreats from all charity, "for I have forgotten goodness."

The original sense of the Hebrew remains in verse 18 in spite of some minor additions. נצחי has been understood by our targumist as referring to "strength," thus "my strength is destroyed." ותחולתי has become דהוייתי אוריך and in rendering the noun into a verbal form the targumist has provided the subject טובא. As in 2.9 מיהוה has been expanded to מן קדם יי. The same form is also found in the targum to 2.18 (Hebrew: אל אדני) and 3.40 (Hebrew: עד יהוה), but this is merely a translational equivalent rather than an example of anti-anthropomorphism.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁶See Albrektson, pp. 138-9, and his notes.

⁴⁴⁷Hillers, p. 114, and Horace Hummel, "Enclitic Mem in Early Northwest Semitic Especially Hebrew," *JBL* 76 (1957), p. 105.

⁴⁴⁸Levine, p. 133.

⁴⁴⁹Levine, p. 69. This is, presumably, a paraphrase of the targumist's paraphrase.

⁴⁵⁰Greenup, p. 29.

3.3.19. Verses 19-21

זָכֹר-עֲנִי וּמְרוּדֵי לַעֲנָה וְרֹאשׁ:
 זָכֹר תִּזְכֹּר וְתִשִּׁית עָלַי נִפְשִׁי:
 זֹאת אֲשִׁיב אֶל-לִבִּי עַל-כֵּן אוֹחִיל:

אדכר ענוי נפשי ומה דאמרירו בישנאיי ואשקיאו יתי גדין ורישי חיון:
 מדכר תדכר ותצלי עלי נפשי על סגופא:
 דא נחמתא אתיב על לבי בגין כן אוריך:

“Remember the affliction of my soul and how my foes embittered me and caused me to drink wormwood and the poison of snakes.”

My soul surely will remember and bow down within me due to affliction.

This consolation I call to mind, therefore I have hope:

The first word of MT is usually interpreted by modern commentators as a noun⁴⁵³ or, occasionally, as an infinitive,⁴⁵⁴ but P and our targum read it as an imperative.⁴⁵⁵ “My affliction” has been expanded so that it is the “affliction of my soul” which is to be remembered. The Hebrew מרוד is normally understood as “restlessness, homelessness” and also occurs in 1.7. The MT of verse 19 and 1.7 (זכרה ירושלם ימי עניה ומרידיה) are, in fact, very similar. The targum to 1.7 has interpreted מרוד as “rebellion” (*מרד),⁴⁵⁶ but in 3.19 the targumist uses the Af. of *מרר, “to embitter.” The most likely explanation for this rendering is not the presence of a different *Vorlage*, rather the targumist has been influenced by the presence of וראש לענה, “wormwood and gall,” which are bitter herbs or poison.⁴⁵⁷ Thus, the foes “embitter” the speaker by causing him to drink “wormwood and the poison of snakes.” The Aramaic phrase ורישי חיון as a translation for the Hebrew ראש is probably influenced by Job 20.16 where the phrase ראש פתנים, “the poison of asps,” occurs.⁴⁵⁸

The targumist has thus embellished the Hebrew text, adding that the “foes” are active

⁴⁵¹Levine, p. 69.

⁴⁵²See Klein, “The Preposition *QDM*,” pp. 506-7; and “The Translation of Anthropomorphisms,” p. 164.

⁴⁵³See Albrektson, p. 139, and NRSV, “The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall!”

⁴⁵⁴So Rudolph, p. 231 and Westermann, p. 165. Others (e.g., NIV and Hillers, p. 114) reconstruct a different Hebrew *Vorlage*, זכרתי, based upon LXX ἐμνησθησθε.

⁴⁵⁵זָכֹרֵי.

⁴⁵⁶See §3.1.7 above and BDB, p. 597b.

⁴⁵⁷על is used exclusively in a figurative sense within the Bible, see BDB, p. 542a.

⁴⁵⁸See also Deut. 32.33 and §3.3.15.

agents in bringing about the speaker's current pitiful state. This would seem to direct the blame for this suffering away from the speaker, yet if the translation of *שא* is intended to remind the audience of Job 20 then the targumist has also reminded his audience that there is punishment for sin. In Job 20 Zophar declares that wicked behaviour will receive retribution. "[The wicked] will suck the poison of asps; the tongue of a viper will kill them. ... For they have crushed and abandoned the poor, they have seized a house that they did not build."⁴⁵⁹

Verse 20 has posed several problems to interpreters.⁴⁶⁰ Our targumist, however, has fairly straightforward reading of MT, including its ambiguities, but has followed the *qere* *ותשוח* rather than the *ketiv* *ותשיח*. *ותשוח* is translated with *צלי** which carries the connotation of both "to bow" and "to pray."⁴⁶¹ The only addition to this verse is the phrase *על סגופא* which explains why the speaker's soul is bowed down.

Regardless of how one understands the reference of *על-כן*, verse 21 is a turning point in Chapter Three. From this point through verse 36 the poet states his confidence in God and his compassionate love. The biblical verse begins by stating "this I call to mind." Our targumist has provided a direct object for *זאת* telling the audience that, "this *consolation* I call to mind" (*דא נחמתא אתיב על לבי*).⁴⁶² The next phrase, *על-כן*, has traditionally been interpreted as referring to the verses which follow and which expound upon the unending nature of God's mercy. Albrektson has argued that this is contrary to the normal usage of the phrase in biblical Hebrew and that, following his suggested emendation of verse 20,⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁹Job 20.16 and 19.

⁴⁶⁰For a summary discussions see Albrektson, pp. 141-3, and Hillers, pp. 114-5. Albrektson follows the *ketiv* of *ותשיח* and reverts the *תקוני הסופרים* from *נפשיך* to *נפשי* (see Hillers for a critique of this reading, p. 114, and BHS). The result is a translation which interprets *על-כן* of verse 21 as referring back to verse 20 (this is the more common usage of the preposition in biblical Hebrew). Albrektson's translation of 3.19-21 reads "Remember my affliction and my homelessness, the wormwood and the gall! Yea, thou wilt surely remember, and thy soul will give heed to me. This I call to mind, therefore I have hope" (pp. 144-5).

⁴⁶¹Jastrow, p. 1283b. Presumably our targumist could have chosen *שוח**, an Aramaic root derived from the Hebrew root found in the *qere* (see Jastrow, p. 1530b), but instead prefers the ambiguity of *צלי**.

⁴⁶²Levine, p. 136. "The targum paraphrases *זאת* 'this consolation' or 'this comfort' in keeping with the philological principle that *זאת* requires a direct object."

⁴⁶³See §3.3.20 and note above.

the phrase refers back to the preceding verse. Unfortunately our targum does not provide us with any information which might untangle this knot. As in verse 20 our targumist has represented the Hebrew text directly (בגין כן אוריך), thus the ambiguity remains.

3.3.22. Verses 22-24

חֲסֵדֵי יְהוָה כִּי לֹא-תִמְנָנוּ כִּי לֹא-כָלוּ רַחֲמָיו:
 חֲדָשִׁים לְבִקְרִים רַבָּה אֲמוֹנָתְךָ:
 חֲלָקֵי יְהוָה אֲמָרָה נַפְשִׁי עַל-בֶּן אֹהֶל לוֹ:

טיבותא דיי ארום לא פסקו ארום לא אתמנעו רחמוהי:
 נסין חדתין מרחיש בצפריא סגיאה היא הימנותך:
 חולקיי יי אמרת נפשי בגין כן אוריך ליה:

The goodness of the LORD, for his mercies do not end nor have they ceased.
He brings forth new wonders in the mornings; great is your faithfulness.
 “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul; therefore I will hope in him.

Prosaic Expansion. The targum’s פסקו clearly reflects a reading of תמו rather than MT’s תמו. Assuming the targumist is working from a text very similar to the MT which we have received (and this appears to be the case), our targumist may be providing what he believes is the most sensible reading of a difficult text. However, the possibility of a different Hebrew *Vorlage* cannot be excluded. The targumist has supplied both a subject and verb for the laconic first clause of verse 23, thus the text now reads “*He brings forth new wonders* in the mornings.” Levine connects the targum of this verse to the midrashic references to the recitation of the *Shema* and the מעשה ברשית. There is nothing, however, within the targum which suggests that our targumist had any particular “wonders” in mind. Rather, he is simply expanding the terse poetry in order to provide a smooth prosaic translation.⁴⁶⁴ The targumist provides a word-for-word translation of verse 24.

⁴⁶⁴Levine, p. 138.

3.3.25. Verses 25-27

טוב יהוה לקוֹ לְנַפְשׁ תְּדַרְשׁוּנִי:
טוב וְיִחַיֵּל וְדוּמָם לְתַשׁוּעַת יְהוָה:
טוב לְגִבּוֹר כִּי-יֵשָׂא עַל בְּנֵעוּרָיו:

טב הוא יי לסברין לפורקניה לנפשא דתבע אולפניה:
טב לאורכא ולמשתק עד כדו דתמטי פורקנא דיי:
טב הוא לגברא ארום יאלף נפשיה לסוברא ניר פקודיא בטליותיה:

The LORD is good to those who hope *for his salvation*; to the soul who seeks *his instruction*.
It is good to wait and be silent until the salvation of the LORD *comes*.
It is good for a man *to train himself* to bear the yoke *of the Commandments* in his youth.

The next six verses present an exhortation to the audience to adhere to basic rabbinic principles. While the biblical text tells the reader that “the LORD is good to those who wait *for him*, to the soul that seeks *him*,” the targumist encourages his audience to “hope for his salvation” and to seek “his instruction.” The act of waiting becomes an act of faith (hoping for his salvation) and obedience (following his instruction). Verse 26 is modified so that the second clause is governed by the verb *מטי. As we have noted before, this section of the Book of Lamentations takes a positive tone, recounting God’s faithfulness. In this context, the emphasis of these two verses on the “coming salvation” of God is appropriate, particularly for a text which was used in a service commemorating such a tragedy as the destructions of Jerusalem.⁴⁶⁵

Finally, in verse 27 the targumist uses the biblical exhortation that a man should “bear the yoke in his youth” in order to encourage his audience to study Torah. Thus the targumist has inserted the verb *אלף, “to train” or “to study,”⁴⁶⁶ which modifies the way in which one is to “bear the yoke.” This call to study parallels the admonition of verse 25 that it is good for one to seek “his instruction” (אולפניה). The “yoke” is then identified as “the yoke of the Commandments.” LamR has a similar comment on this verse. “*It is good for a man that he bear the yoke of his youth*, i.e. the yoke of the Torah, of matrimony, and of an occupation.”⁴⁶⁷ Although our targum does not extend the analogy as far as the midrash, it is

⁴⁶⁵Levine, pp. 139-40.

⁴⁶⁶Jastrow, p. 72.

⁴⁶⁷LamR 3.27.

clear that the text is being used to encourage the study of and obedience to Torah.

The importance of obeying the commandments is already evident within the Bible itself and is perhaps nowhere more explicit than the *Shema*. Within the rabbinic liturgy the *Shema* was composed of Deut. 6.4-9, 11.13-21, and Num. 15.37-41 and was preceded by two blessings and followed by a third blessing.⁴⁶⁸ The rabbis referred to the second passage (Deut. 11.13-21) as “the Acceptance of the Yoke of the Commandments.”⁴⁶⁹

If you will only heed his every commandment that I am commanding you today—loving the LORD your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul— then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil; and he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat your fill.⁴⁷⁰

Our targumist is therefore exhorting his audience to hold firm to the basic tenets of rabbinic Judaism, that of obedience to Torah and, as we shall see in verse 28, the belief that “the LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deut. 6.4).

⁴⁶⁸See Reuven Kimelman, “The *Shema* and its Blessings: The Realization of God’s Kingship,” in *The Synagogue and Late Antiquity*, ed. Lee Levine, (Philadelphia: ASOR, 1987), pp. 73-86; Jakob Petuchowski, “The Liturgy of the Synagogue: History, Structure, and Contents,” in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism, Vol. IV*, ed. W. S. Green, (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), pp. 1-64, esp. pp. 18-33; and Urbach, pp. 400-2.

⁴⁶⁹M. Ber. 2.2, “R. Joshua b. Karha said: Why does the section *Hear, O Israel* precede *And it shall come to pass if ye shall hearken?*—so that a man may first take upon him the yoke of the kingdom of heaven and afterwards take upon him the yoke of the commandments.”

That the *Shema* itself was a central element of the rabbinic liturgy is clear from the beginning of the Mishnah: “From what time in the evening may the *Shema* be recited?” (M. Ber. 1.1) The *Shema* was, in fact, recited twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening, since Deut. 6.7 states, “recite [these words] to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, *when you lie down and when you rise*” (see M. Ber. 1.3).

⁴⁷⁰Deut. 11.13-5.

3.3.28. Verses 28-30

יֵשֵׁב בְּדָד וְיִדְמָם כִּי נָטַל עָלָיו:
 יִתֵּן בְּעַפְרָא פִּיהוּ אִוְלֵי יֵשׁ תְּקוּנָה:
 יִתֵּן לְמַכְהוּ לְחֵי יִשְׁבַּע בְּחֶרְפָּה:

יטיב בלחודוהי וישתיק ויסבול אסורין דאתיין עלוהי בגין יחודא דשמא דיי דמשתלחין לאתפרעא מניה על חובא קלילא דחב בעלמא הדין עד כדו די יחוס עלוהי ויטלנון מניה ויקבל אפי שלים לעלמא דאתי:
 יתן בעפרא פומיה וישתטח קדם ריבוניה מאים אית סבר:
 יושיט למחי ליה ליסתא בגין דחלתא דיי יסבע דקלנא:

Let him sit alone and be silent, bearing *the corrections which have come upon him, for the sake of the unity of the name of the LORD, which have been sent to punish him for the minor sins which he has committed in this world, until he have mercy upon him and lift them from him so that he may receive him perfected in the World to Come.*

Let him put this mouth to the dust *and prostrate himself before his master*, perhaps there is hope.

Let him turn his cheek to the one that smites; *for the sake of the fear of the LORD*, let him be filled with insult.

The targum to verse 28 begins with a close translation of the first clause, “let him sit alone and be silent.” The subject of the Hebrew נטל, however, is unclear. In MT the LORD is the implied subject and most translators read the passage in this way, “[it is good] to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it.”⁴⁷¹ Our targumist has made the suffering man the subject and we are told that it is the “corrections which have come upon him for the sake of the unity of the name of the LORD” that he bears. The reference to the “unity of the name of the LORD” is intended to encourage the audience to righteous behaviour, by both the recitation of the *Shema* and faithful witness as a Jew.⁴⁷²

The most common use of this phrase, “the unity of his name,” occurs in reference to the recitation of the *Shema*. LamR to 3.24 tells us that the soul says, “The LORD is my portion,” “because I proclaim His unity twice daily, saying, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.’”⁴⁷³ CantR has an even more interesting parallel for our passage.

⁴⁷¹NRSV. See Albrektson, p. 149.

⁴⁷²It should be noted that M. *Aboth* 3.2 interprets 3.28 as referring to the study of Torah. “Whence [do we learn] that even if one sits and occupies himself in the Law, the Holy One, blessed is he, appoints him a reward? Because it is written, *Let him sit alone and keep silence, because he hath laid it upon him* (Lam. 3.28).” Although the targum to verse 28 does not represent this tradition, it may be reflected in the targum to 3.25 and 3.27. See also §3.2.19.

⁴⁷³See also LamR 1.14 and 3.21. In each case the sense is the same, although there are periods of hardship, yet “I proclaim the unity of his name twice daily.”

Another explanation: *and his desire* (תשוקתו) *is toward me* (SS 7.10): we are fainting, but although we faint, we wait and hope for the salvation of the Holy One, blessed be He, every day, and we declare the unity of His name twice daily saying, *Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one* (Deut. 6.4).⁴⁷⁴

The key to this midrash is in the re-reading of תשוקתו as a combination of תש, “weak,” and קוה, “to hope.” In 3.25 and 3.26 the targumist has strengthened the theme, already latent within Lamentations, of hoping for God’s salvation. In this midrash, waiting and hoping for God’s salvation involves reciting the *Shema* twice daily in confirmation of the unity of his name.

We have already seen how the *Shema* contains “the yoke of the Commandments,”⁴⁷⁵ but the first section of the *Shema* (Deut. 6.4-9) which affirms the singularity of God is referred to in rabbinic literature as the “kingdom of heaven.”⁴⁷⁶ As Urbach has pointed out “acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven means to acknowledge the God who is One and Unique, and to bear witness that there is no other god.”⁴⁷⁷ In rendering verses 27 and 28 our targumist has thus affirmed the central tenets of rabbinic Judaism as found in the *Shema*. There is, however, another way in which the “unity of the name” is used within rabbinic literature.

In EsthR to Esther 2.5⁴⁷⁸ the rabbis discuss why Mordecai is called a “Jew” (יהודי) when he was, in fact, a Benjaminite. The answer given is that because Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman (and the idol which was affixed to his chest) he set a righteous example of one who not only refused to bow before idols, but he also proclaimed God’s name. As a result,

... in the days of Mordecai men acknowledged the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it says, *And many from among the peoples of the land became Jews* (Est. 8.17), and he proclaimed the unity of God’s name and sanctified it. Therefore he was called יהודי, as it says,

⁴⁷⁴The phrase also occurs in CantR 2.16.

⁴⁷⁵See §3.3.25 and M. Ber. 2.2.

⁴⁷⁶“And what part of the *Shema* is termed ‘the Kingdom of Heaven’? [The words], *The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*” DeutR to 6.4, all quotes from DeutR are from *Midrash Rabbah: Deuteronomy*, trans. J. Rabbinowitz, (London: Soncino, 1951). See M. Ber. 2.2.

⁴⁷⁷Urbach, p. 400.

⁴⁷⁸“Now there was a Jew in the citadel of Susa whose name was Mordecai son of Jair son of Shimei son of Kish, a Benjaminite.”

a Judean man; read not יהודי but יחידי (“unique”).

In light of these midrashim, we can see that the admonition of our targum that one should bear the corrections “for the sake of the unity of the name of the LORD” suggests two things. In the first instance, the reference suggests a way for bearing this burden and taking up the “yoke of the kingdom of heaven,” through the daily recitation of the *Shema*. Secondly, the allusion to Mordecai as a יחידי/יהודי serves to encourage one to remain faithful even in times of persecution since those who proclaim the unity of his name are attributed special merit.

The remainder of the verse explains what the burdens are and why the sufferer should bear them. While the sufferer is to bear his corrections “for the sake of the unity of the name” they also serve to prepare him for the World to Come. By suffering these punishments now, in this world, the targumist tells us that God will be able to receive the sufferer “perfected in the World to Come.” The principle that the righteous pay for their minor sins in this world in order to receive complete blessing in the world to come is found throughout rabbinic literature.⁴⁷⁹ In GenR to 8.1, for example, R. Akiba explains that God,

... deals strictly with both [the righteous and the wicked], even to the great deep. He deals strictly with the righteous, calling them to account for the few wrongs which they commit in this world, in order to lavish bliss upon and give them a goodly reward in the world to come; He grants ease to the wicked and rewards them for the few good deeds which they have performed in this world in order to punish them in the future world.

The overall effect of verse 28 is to encourage the community in their time of strife. The purpose and reason for this period of suffering is so that the unity of the name of the LORD might be proclaimed and that Israel might enter the World to Come perfected and purified.

Once again the additions of our targumist are not only within the rabbinic context, they urge the audience to adhere to specifically rabbinic practices (“bearing the yoke of the Commandments,” the recitation of the *Shema*) and beliefs (acceptance into the World to Come). This central portion of Chapter Three has been transformed by the targumist into a

⁴⁷⁹The references in rabbinic literature are few too numerous to recount here. See, however, LamR to 1.5 and 3.3, *b* Ber. 4a-5b, M. *San.* 10 (esp. 10.1), and M. *Aboth* 4.17, “[R. Jacob] used to say: Better is one hour of repentance and good works in this world than the whole life of the world to come; and better is one hour of bliss in the world to come than the whole life of this world.” See also Urbach, pp. 649ff.

exhortation to adhere to rabbinic values. The targumist urges the audience to hope for salvation (vv. 25, 26, 28) and turn in repentance (v. 40) before the LORD “whose Shekinah is in heaven above” (v. 41). While they seek God’s instruction (v. 25) and obey Torah (v. 27), they are also to accept the chastisement from God for the sake of his name (v. 28) and “for the sake of the fear of the LORD” (v. 30). These corrections will, in turn, result in their being accepted by God in the World to Come (v. 28) as the LORD has mercy upon his people (vv. 28, 31, and 32).⁴⁸⁰ This highly developed presentation of the doctrine of repentance and forgiveness places TgLam well within the rabbinic milieu.⁴⁸¹ In calling the audience to repent and return to God and obedience to Torah the targumist is calling them to the rabbinic traditions and understanding of redemption.⁴⁸²

3.3.31. Verses 31-33

כי לא יזנח לעולם אֲדָנִי:
כי אם-הוֹגָה וְרָחַם קָרֵב תִּסְדֹּו:
כי לא עָנָה מִלְּבָבוֹ וַיִּגָּה בְּגִי-אִישׁ:

ארום לא ישלי יי לעובדוהי לעלם לממסרנון בידא דסנאיהון:
ארום אלהן ברישא יתבר ובתר כן יתוב וירחם לצדיקיא בסגיאות טיבותיה:
ארום מן בגלל דלא עני גבר ית נפשיה ואעדדי זחוחא מלביה בגין כן גרם לאסתקפא תברא בבני אנשא:

For the LORD will not neglect *his servants* forever, *giving them over into the hand of their enemy*.
But *first* he breaks *and afterwards he repents* and has mercy on the righteous in the abundance of his goodness.
For *since man did not afflict himself nor removed arrogance* from his heart, *therefore* he caused destruction to come among humanity.

The targum to these three verses echoes the form of MT by beginning each verse with ארום, the Aramaic equivalent of כי. Like LXX and P, the targumist has ignored the word order of verse 31 and placed the subject (יי) immediately following the verb (ישלי).⁴⁸³ The Hebrew text of verse 31 is shorter than most other verses in this section and our targumist

⁴⁸⁰See the verses cited for detailed discussion of each passage.

⁴⁸¹See Urbach, pp. 436-47, 462-70, and Schechter, pp. 293ff.

⁴⁸²From elsewhere in TgLam, we may add to this list of rabbinic terms and values the call to study Mishnah at night and the Shekinah of the LORD being with them at such times (1.19). The use of these terms will be discussed fully in §4.6.

⁴⁸³εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἀπόσεται and מַלְלָה הוֹגָה מִלְּבָבוֹ וַיִּגָּה בְּגִי-אִישׁ. See Albrektson, p. 150.

supplies a second clause. In doing so he has explained the nature of God's "neglect."⁴⁸⁴ Throughout TgLam the targumist describes God as either actively handing Jerusalem over to the enemy⁴⁸⁵ or withdrawing his hand of protection from his people.⁴⁸⁶ Even in his "neglect" (which would imply a passive state) God is the active agent in giving Israel into the hand of the enemy. The assumption, of course, is that the nations are only able to assail Jerusalem and her people when God allows them, through the removal of his divine protection.⁴⁸⁷

The targum to verse 32 replaces the abstract הוּגָה, "he causes grief," with the concrete image of יִתְבַּר, "he breaks." As we might expect, *תבר is used repeatedly in TgLam to represent the Hebrew *שבר,⁴⁸⁸ but in the four instances where *יגה is used the targumist also uses *תבר.⁴⁸⁹ In each instance the targumist describes the *physical* destruction of Jerusalem as the way in which God has *caused* his people grief. While reassuring his audience that God will repent and have mercy on his people, the targumist asserts that it is the righteous who will receive the "abundance of his goodness." The LORD's mercy is therefore reserved for those who are righteous, acting according to his Commandments. This assertion is in keeping with the admonitions of the preceding section.

Our targumist has completely transformed the meaning of verse 33. According to MT the LORD (from verse 31) is the subject of the verse and "he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone." In the targum the subject is humanity, "man did not afflict himself nor removed arrogance from his heart." Rather than God being unwilling to "afflict or grieve anyone," *humanity* was unwilling to correct themselves and to cease from sinning against God. Therefore, the targumist tells us, God "caused destruction (תברא) to come among

⁴⁸⁴Or "he will not forget," שלי*, Jastrow, p. 1582. See §3.2.7.

⁴⁸⁵E.g., 1.2, 1.3, and 1.14.

⁴⁸⁶E.g., 2.3. This, of course, does not include the many references to God as "an enemy," etc., which are also recurrent in TgLam.

⁴⁸⁷See §3.3.40 and, e.g., LamR Proem 25.

⁴⁸⁸There are a total of seven occurrences of *שבר in Lamentations: 2.9, 11, 13; 3.4, 47, 48; and 4.10. The Aramaic *תבר is used in each case.

⁴⁸⁹The verses in question are 1.5, 12; 3.32, and 33.

humanity.” Through these alterations to the text the targumist reasserts that Israel’s troubles are the result of her own disobedience and that God is just in taking punitive action.

3.3.34. Verses 34-36

לְדַכָּא תַחַת רַגְלֵיוּ כֹּל אֲסִירֵי אֶרֶץ:
 לְהַטּוֹת מִשְׁפָּט-גָּבֵר נֶגְדַּ פְּנֵי עֲלִיּוֹן:
 לְעוֹת אָדָם בְּרִיבוֹ אֲדָנִי לֹא רָאָה:

למככה ולכבשא תחות רגלוי כל אסירי ארעא:
 ולמצלי דין גבר מסכן כל קבל אפי עלאה:
 לסבבא אנש מסכן במצותיה אפשר דמן קדם יי לא אתגלי:

Humbling *and subduing* all the prisoners of the earth under his feet,
 Perverting the justice of a *poor* man in the presence of the Most High,
 Confounding a *poor* man in his quarrels; *is it possible that this will not* be revealed before the LORD?

These three verses in MT form a unit, not only because they each begin with ל and an infinitive form, but because the infinitives are dependent upon the finite verb which is found at the end of verse 36.⁴⁹⁰ Our targumist has dutifully represented the Hebrew text, so closely, in fact, that the grammatical forms are not the usual infinitive forms for Late Aramaic.⁴⁹¹ In Aramaic the infinitive is normally formed with a prefixed מ rather than the prefixed ל of Hebrew.⁴⁹² There are exceptions, however, and Golomb has cited several instances where the ל rather than מ has been used in TgNeof, most often in imitation of the Hebrew form.⁴⁹³ Such is the case in verses 34 and 35. In an effort to mimic the form and structure of the Hebrew text our targumist has used a prefixed ל to form the infinitives of *מכך and *סרב.⁴⁹⁴ In addition, the infinitive form of *צלי has the prefixed ל and retains the

⁴⁹⁰Hillers (and Budde, p. 95) objects that לא ראה cannot be the governing verb since *ראה is not followed by the infinitive. Instead Hillers views the infinitives as “dependent on the parallel verbs in the preceding verse,” pp. 116-7.

⁴⁹¹See Fitzmyer’s designation of the five phases of Aramaic, *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays*, (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 60-3. Late Aramaic is defined as “roughly” 200 CE to 700 CE. While the language of TgLam is problematic (see §5.1.2) it certainly falls within this period.

⁴⁹²This is true for the Peal/Pael in Late Aramaic. In Onkelos-Jonathan type Aramaic the prefixed מ is found only in the Peal/Pael stems. See Dalman, pp. 278-9, and E. Y. Kutscher, *Studies in Galilean Aramaic*, (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1976), p. 29.

⁴⁹³David M. Golomb, *A Grammar of Targum Neofiti*, (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 127 and 129.

⁴⁹⁴The first word of verse 36, לסבבא, has a correcting dot above it in Urb. 1 and should be corrected to read לסרבא. This brings it in line with the majority of MSS which read לסרבא; see Lagarde and Van der

נ. The use of this form is clearly intended to mimic the Hebrew and we have already noted that, although the acrostic is not repeated in the targum, there are occasional efforts to reflect the Hebrew form in Chapter Three.⁴⁹⁵ The repeated infinitives, however, also operate in the targum as in MT; they are dependent upon and direct the audience's attention to the final finite verb which asserts that the injustices that are being done will be revealed before God.

The actual additions made to the text of these verses are minor. In verse 34 the targumist has provided a double translation of לדכא which serves to heighten the plight of the prisoners. It is clear from the context that the one whose foot is “subduing all the prisoners of the earth” is not God, rather it is any oppressive ruler.⁴⁹⁶ As Hillers has pointed out, verses 34-6 contain the traditional description of the behaviour of an unjust ruler.⁴⁹⁷ Verses 35 and 36 identify the man who is not given a fair trial as “a poor man.” Levine’s suggestion that the “High One” before whom the poor man has brought his case is not God, but is the “human litigant the poor man is facing” has merit.⁴⁹⁸ Since verse 35 is describing the actions of an unjust ruler and the poor man’s case is being perverted “in the presence of the Most High” (something which verse 36 suggests is not possible) it is reasonable to assume that עלאה refers to the ruler who will not give the poor man a fair hearing. Finally, the targum ensures that MT’s יהוה לא ראה⁴⁹⁹ is read rhetorically (“does the LORD not see?”) by adding מפשר and using the Ith. of גלי*, “is it possible that this will not be revealed before the LORD?”

Heide, p. 25*.

⁴⁹⁵See §3.3.1.

⁴⁹⁶*Contra* Greenup (p. 30), “To crush and subdue under His feet all the prisoners of the earth.”

⁴⁹⁷Hillers, p. 130.

⁴⁹⁸Levine, p. 144. Exodus 23.1-8 contains God’s command to Moses that all shall be given a fair trial.

⁴⁹⁹See BHS and §3.1.14 above.

3.3.37. Verses 37-39

מי זה אִמַר וְתִהְיֶה אֲדֹנָי לֹא צָוָה:
 מִפִּי עֲלִיּוֹן לֹא תֵצֵא הַרְעוֹת וְהַטּוֹב:
 מֵה-יְתֹאזְנֵן אָדָם חֵי גִבֹר עַל-חֲטָאוֹ:

מן הוא אנש דאמר והות בשתא מתעבדא בעלמא אלהן מן בגלל דעבדו מה דלא אתפקדו מן פומא דיי:
 מפום אלהא עלאה לא תפוק בשתא אלהן על ברת קלא רמיזא בגין חטופין דאתמליאת ארעא ועדן דבעי
 למגזר טובא בעלמא מן פום קודשיה נפקא:
 מה ממון ישכח אנש די יחוב כל יומי חייהי גברא רשיעא על חובהי:

Who is the man who has spoken *and an evil thing* was done in the world, unless because they did that which they were not commanded by the mouth of the LORD?

From the mouth of God Most High there does not issue evil, rather by the hint of a whisper, because of the violence with which the land is filled. But when he desires to decree good in the world it issues from the holy mouth.

What profit shall a man find who sins all the days of his life; a wicked man for his sins?

The changes to these verses are small in quantity, yet substantial in quality. In the biblical text verses 37-9 clearly assert, through a series of rhetorical questions, that God controls all of history and life and that both good and evil are from God (3.38). We have already seen in numerous instances that our targumist is willing to state categorically that the ills which have befallen Jerusalem were ordained by God,⁵⁰⁰ but it appears that he “draws the line” at a direct statement that evil can issue from the LORD.

In verse 37 the targumist specifies that the subject of אמר is “a man” and that the evil done occurs because they⁵⁰¹ disobeyed the LORD, the targumist thus places the responsibility of evil deeds with those who commit the acts and not God.⁵⁰² In verse 38 this is stated explicitly, “From the mouth of God Most High there does not issue evil.” Rather than reading all of verse 38 as a rhetorical question (“Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?”) our targumist has read מפי עליון לא תצא הרעות as a simple

⁵⁰⁰E.g., 1.1-4, 7, 8; 2.1, 3, 4; 3.6 and 12. This is, of course, our targumist’s central theme and can be found throughout the work.

⁵⁰¹The change in number can be explained if אנש is understood as referring to humanity in general.

⁵⁰²Most modern commentators also identify the subject of the first clause as a man, but Albrektson argues that this is “highly improbable” (p. 152). Instead, the first clause is read as a rhetorical question with the second clause responding with another rhetorical question. “Who spoke and it came to be? (a rhetorical question—the self evident answer is: the Lord!—See Ps. 33.9) Did not Yhwh command it?” (p. 152). Both readings convey the same sense: it is the Lord who has ultimate control. If, however, Levine’s reading of verse 35 is correct and represents a contrast between the “most high” earthly ruler and the heavenly ruler then verses 34-6 and verses 37-9 form a parallel structure all of which underscores God’s supreme authority, in spite of appearances to the contrary.

sentence (“Evil things do *not* come from the mouth of the Most High”). The presence of evil in the world is explained as entering “by the hint of a whisper,” but this too comes about as a result of human sin.⁵⁰³ This is not a complete converse translation since the targumist has divided the verse into two distinct statements, only the first of which is contrary to the simple meaning of the biblical text.⁵⁰⁴ The good which occurs in the world, we are reassured, emanated from “the holy mouth.”

Verse 39 begins with the rare Hebrew verb יתאון, from *אנ, “to complain,”⁵⁰⁵ Our targumist has translated it with *ממן, “to profit,” and Levine suggests that the targumist understood the Hebrew to be from הון, “wealth.”⁵⁰⁶ Although this root is found as a noun with this meaning in a few instances, as a verb this root is found only once in the Bible, in Hiph., meaning “to make easy/light [of going up].”⁵⁰⁷ It is impossible to say if Levine’s reconstruction is correct, but it is clear that our targumist has altered the sense of the verse so that the question is now, “what is gained by living a life of sin,” rather than the pragmatic “who are we (as living beings) to complain when we are punished.” The targum expands the oft emended חי אדם⁵⁰⁸ so that חי no longer modifies אדם, but is now a noun חיה. This triplet therefore asserts that evil enters the world by man’s own action and concludes that there is no merit or worth in sinning. Verses 40-2 build upon these statements, calling the audience to leave the sinful life behind and return to the LORD.

⁵⁰³The distancing of evil from God is found throughout rabbinic sources. See, e.g., y Ta’an. 2, 65b; b Git. 88a and Hag. 12a; and Ginzberg, *Legends*, Vol. V, p. 5, n. 9 for further references and discussion.

⁵⁰⁴See Klein, “Converse Translation,” pp. 532-5.

⁵⁰⁵BDB, p. 59. Elsewhere it is found only in Num. 11.1.

⁵⁰⁶See Levine, p. 146, and BDB, p. 223.

⁵⁰⁷Deut. 1.41.

⁵⁰⁸See BHS and Rudolph, p. 232.

3.3.40. Verses 40-42

נְחַפְּשָׁה דְרַכֵּינוּ וְנַחְקְרָה וְנִשְׁוִבָה עַד-יְהוָה:
 נָשָׂא לְבַבְנוּ אֶל-כַּפֵּימֵינוּ אֶל-אֵל בְּשָׁמַיִם:
 נַחְנוּ פָשְׁעֵנוּ וּמְרִינוּ אֶתְּהָ לֹא סָלַחְתָּ:

נבלוש אורחנא ונבקר ונתוב בתויבתא קדם יי:
 נטול לבבנא בריר ונרמי חטוף וגזילן מן ידנא ונתוב קדם אלהא דמדור שכנתיה בשמי מרומא:
 נחנא מרדנא סראבנא ומן בגלל דלא הדרנא לוותך אנת לא שבקתא:

Let us search and examine our ways; and turn *in repentance* before the LORD.

Let us lift our *cleansed* hearts *and cast away theft and robbery from* our hands. *And let us repent* before God *the dwelling of whose Shekinah is in heaven above.*

We have rebelled and been disobedient *and since we did not return to you*, you have not forgiven.

Verses 40-2 mark the transition back into the language of mourning. The first two verses call for repentance and a return to God, but verse 42 confesses that they have been rebellious and God has not forgiven them. In verse 40 *נחפּוּשָׁה* has been added to explain in what way the community was to return to the LORD. This is, of course, the sense of the biblical text,⁵⁰⁹ but with the addition of *נחפּוּשָׁה* the targumist has made this explicit using specifically rabbinic language.⁵¹⁰ The call to repentance here and in verse 41 thus continues the exhortation begun in the middle of Chapter Three that the audience (who would presumably identify with the “we” of verses 40-2) return to fundamental rabbinic principles.⁵¹¹

It appears that our targumist either did not understand or was not comfortable with the use of the preposition *אל* in the phrase *נשא לבבנו אל-כפיים*. Modern scholars have also wrestled with this passage and have made various suggestions including emending the text to read *על* or *אל*.⁵¹² The targum presents a different translation, rendering the Hebrew with *מן*, “from,” instead of “to” or “with, along with.” Instead of “lifting up” their hands along

⁵⁰⁹See Westermann, pp. 179-81, Hillers, p. 131-3, and Rudolph, p. 242.

⁵¹⁰See Urbach, pp. 462-71, and Schechter, pp. 313ff. As Urbach points out, “The term *תשובה* was coined by the Sages, but the concept it signifies is a cardinal principle of the biblical legacy,” p. 462. See, e.g., LamR Proem 25 (below), *b* San. 97b-98a, and PRE 20. (“Adam said before the Holy One, blessed be He, Sovereign of all worlds! Remove, I pray thee, my sins from me and accept my repentance, and all the generations will learn that repentance is a reality,” Gerald Friedlander, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, [London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1916], p. 147. See, however, GenR to 30.22 which states that Reuben was the first man to repent.) See also §3.1.2 and §3.2.19.

⁵¹¹See especially verses 24-30. The use of the first person plural in MT may also indicate the liturgical use of the biblical text. See Westermann, pp. 61-3, and Hillers, pp. 6-8.

⁵¹²See Rudolph, p. 232; Albrektson, pp. 154-5; and Hillers, p. 117.

with their hearts, they are cleansing them of theft and robbery. This pair, חטוף ורזילן, represents general lawlessness and disobedience which must be put aside before the people can return to God.⁵¹³ This cleansing of their hands, therefore, is to be considered an act comparable to the lifting up of hearts and a precursor to repentance.

While continuing the call to repentance our targumist expands the second half of verse 41, אל-אל בשמים, by informing us that the dwelling of God's Shekinah is in heaven. This brief comment is an allusion to the extensive rabbinic belief that the Shekinah, although originally dwelling on earth among Adam and Eve, removed itself to heaven after they had sinned.⁵¹⁴ Righteous deeds, however, could cause the Shekinah to return to earth and PRK 1.1 reports that "seven righteous men arose and brought it about that the Presence came back to earth." The Shekinah then came to dwell among Israel in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. Midrashic sources⁵¹⁵ tell us that due to Judah's sin the Shekinah gradually removed itself from the Temple, thus allowing Jerusalem and the Temple to be destroyed.

R. Jonathan said: Three and a half years the Shekinah abode upon the Mount of Olives hoping that Israel would repent, but they did not; while a Bath Kol issued announcing, *Return, O backsliding children* (Jer. 3.14), *Return unto Me, and I will return unto you* (Mal. 3.7). When they did not repent, it said, *I will go and return to My place* (Hos. 5.15) [and ascended into heaven].⁵¹⁶

Our targumist is therefore reminding his audience that because of their sins God's presence now resides in heaven rather than on earth and that it is only through their repentance and righteous acts that the Shekinah will return. In verse 42 the people's refusal to return to the Lord is listed among their sins and it is this which prevents God from forgiving them.

⁵¹³The term חטוף also occurs in 3.38, but in that context I have translated it with the broader English term "violence." See Jastrow, p. 450a.

⁵¹⁴See §3.1.1. For a general discussion of the Shekinah see Urbach, pp. 37-65, and Aufrecht, pp. 23-30. For the Shekinah and the destruction of the Temple see Goldberg, pp. 176-96, 459-62, and 490-3.

PRK 1.1 and GenR to 3.7 describe seven generations (beginning with Adam and ending with the Egyptians of Moses' generation) which caused the Shekinah to withdraw from the first through the seventh heavens as a result of their sin.

⁵¹⁵See discussion above §3.1.1 and, for example, LamR Proem 24, PRK 13.11, and *b* Rosh. Shan. 31a.

⁵¹⁶LamR Proem 25.

3.3.43. Verses 43-45

סְכַתָּה בְּאַף וַתִּרְדְּפֵנוּ הַרְגָתָ לֹא תִמְלֹתָ:
 סְכַתָּה בְּעָנָן לְךָ מֵעֵבֹר תִּפְלָה:
 סְחִי וּמְאוֹס תִּשְׁיִמֵנוּ בְּקֶרֶב הָעַמִּים:

טללתא עלנא ברגוז ורדפתנא בגלותא קטלתא ולא חסתא:
 טללתא שמיא בענני יקרא דילך מן בגלל דלא תעבר לותך צלותנא:
 טלטולין ורטישין שויתא יתנא בגו עממיא:

You have covered *us in anger* and pursued us *in exile*. You have killed and have not pitied.

You have covered *the heavens* with your clouds *of glory* so that our prayers cannot cross to you.

You have made us like wanderers and vagabonds among the nations.

The Hebrew סכחה is understood by the targumist as being transitive, therefore he supplies the object (implied in the Hebrew suffix of ותרדפנו) עלנא.⁵¹⁷ We are also told that God has pursued his people into exile. The strong charge that God has killed without pity is not altered by the targumist, but is repeated *verbatim*. In verse 44 it is the heavens which are covered by God's clouds "of glory" rather than God himself "wrapped with a cloud." While this may be an effort to avoid an anthropomorphism, the targumist is expanding the imagery present in MT while building upon the reference of verse 41 to God having removed his presence from the Temple to reside in heaven.⁵¹⁸

God's "glory" (כבוד) is used extensively in the Bible as a sign of God's presence with his people,⁵¹⁹ but it could also indicate a separation between God and the people. When Solomon built the Temple and the ark of the covenant had been brought into the holy place, "a cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD."⁵²⁰ It is in this sense that our targumist describes God's "clouds of glory" covering the heavens (where the Shekinah now resides) and forming a barrier to the speaker's prayers. Thus, as in 3.8, the destination

⁵¹⁷Most modern translations read "you have wrapped [covered] yourself" (NRSV). Hillers points out, "the verb סכחה is probably not reflexive, since elsewhere the *qal* is always transitive ... the object-pronoun on ותרדפנו serving for both verbs," p. 117.

⁵¹⁸See Chilton, pp. 75-7, for a discussion of the use of "glory" in TgIsa.

⁵¹⁹In the Pentateuch see, e.g., Exod. 16.10, 24.16-7; Ex. 40; Lev. 9.6, 23; Num. 14.10, 21, 22; 16.19, 42; 20.6; and Deut. 5.24.

⁵²⁰1 Kngs. 8.10-11. See the parallel passages in 2 Chron. 5.14 and 7.1-2.

of the speaker's prayers is closed. God has shut himself off from his people.⁵²¹ Finally, instead of "filth and rubbish" Israel has been made like "wanderers and vagabonds." The Hebrew of verse 45 is difficult and this may have precluded a literal translation, but the targumist uses this opportunity to extend the imagery of the nation going into exile pursued by God (3.43).⁵²²

3.3.46. Verses 46-48

פָּצוּ עֵלֵינוּ פִּיהֶם כָּל-אֲבֵינֵנוּ:
פָּחַד וְפַחַת הָיָה לָנוּ הַשָּׂאת וְהַשְּׁבָר:
פְּלִגִּי-מֵיָם תִּרְדַּע עֵינַי עַל-שֶׁבַר בַּת-עַמִּי:

פתחו עלנא פומהון כל בעלי דבבנא למגזר עלנא גזירן בישין:
אימתא וזיעא הות לנא מנהון אחדת יתנא רתיתא ותברא:
היכייבלין⁵²³ דמיא זלגת עיני דמען על תבירא דכנשת עמי:

All our enemies have opened their mouths against us, *to announce evil decrees against us*.
Panic and fear have come upon us *because of them*, trembling and destruction *have seized us*.
Like streams of water my eye weeps tears because of the destruction of the Congregation of my people.

Prosaic Expansion. The additions to these three verses are modest. In verse 46 the targumist tells his audience that the enemies opened their mouths in order to make evil pronouncements against Israel. Levine offers that this may be in reference to "edicts enacted within Palestine by the Roman government, or edicts in the diaspora."⁵²⁴ It is an intriguing suggestion and is reminiscent of TgLam 1.19, but without any specific historical references within the targum this must remain conjecture. The targum of the second verse of this triplet explains that the people's "panic and fear" derives from their enemy and the second clause is provided with the explanatory verb "trembling and destruction *have seized us*." While the beginning of verse 48 should be corrected to read *היך יבלין*,⁵²⁵ the targumist has translated MT *verbatim* with the addition of the comparative *היך* and the translation of

⁵²¹The midrash to 3.44 says that there are indeed sometimes which are more appropriate for prayer than others. "Jose b. Halafta said: There are times for prayer; for thus spake David before the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Lord of the universe, when I pray before Thee may my prayer be in an acceptable time;' that is what is stated, *Let my prayer be unto Thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time* (Ps. 49.14)."

⁵²²See Albrektson, pp. 157-8. P has a similar (but distinct) reading *בַּת-עַמִּי*.

⁵²³The text should be emended to read *היך יבלין* following Lagarde.

⁵²⁴Levine, p. 150.

⁵²⁵So Lagarde. YT MSS read simply *יבלין*, Van der Heide, p. 27*.

בת with כנשתא. Although the use of כנשתא to render בת is the standard translation,⁵²⁶ it still enhances the synagogal audience's experience of the text as they ("the Congregation") are now the ones destroyed.

3.3.49. Verses 49-51

עיני נגרה ולא תדמה מאין הפגות:
 עד-ישקיף וירא יהוה משמים:
 עיני עוללה לנפשי מפל בנות עירי:

עיני זלגת דמעין ולא תשתיק מלמבכי מדלית פאיג עקתי וממלל תנחומין לי:
 עד כדו דסיתכי ויחזו עולבני יי מן שמיא:
 בכותא דעייני אסתקפת למרע נפשי על חורבן פילכי עמי וניוול בנתא דירושלם קרתי:

My eye weeps *tears* and does not cease *from crying*. There is no respite *from my anguish or anyone to comfort me*;

Until the LORD looks out and sees *my humiliation* from heaven.

The weeping of my eyes is the cause of the affliction of my soul over the destruction of the districts of my people and the humiliation of the daughters of Jerusalem, my city.

The targumist has been much freer in his rendering of these verses than in the previous two triplets. Although verse 49 has several additions, the major changes to this passage occur in verse 51 which is corrupt in MT. Whereas the biblical text of verse 49 describes only the endless weeping of the speaker, the targum uses the second phrase to further specify that the speaker also lacks relief from his "anguish." The targumist also continues to emphasize that those who sin are denied even the solace of someone to comfort them.⁵²⁷ Verse 50 specifies that it is the speaker's humiliation that the LORD sees when he looks down from heaven. Our speaker is depicted as one who is mourning and yet is deprived of any comfort; he weeps and is humiliated in his sorrow. Verse 51 brings our attention back, for a moment at least, to the destruction of Jerusalem and her inhabitants.

The Hebrew text of verse 51 is normally considered corrupt by modern scholars⁵²⁸ and our targumist has not constrained himself with a literal representation of the verse. The

⁵²⁶See §3.1.6.

⁵²⁷See §3.1.2, §3.1.17, and §3.1.21. The targumist has also introduced the phrase לה ימליל תנחומין in 1.9, 1.16, and 2.18.

⁵²⁸So Hillers (p. 118) and Rudolph (pp. 232-3), but see Albrektson (pp. 161-2) who finds MT "perfectly intelligible."

Aramaic equivalents of the Hebrew terms follow the order of MT, but are dissolved within a description of the speaker weeping over the destruction of the city and the “humiliation of the daughters of Jerusalem, my city.” In spite of the generous additions to verse 51 the targum, like MT, conveys the image of one who is mourning in the face of a national catastrophe.⁵²⁹

3.3.52. Verses 52-54

צוד צדוני כצפור איבי חנם:
צמתו בבור תני וידו-אכן בי:
צפו-מים על-ראשי אמרתי נגזרתי:

כמנא כמנו לי הי כצפורה בעלי דבבי על מגן:
עברו בגובה חיי ורגמא אבנא בי:
שאתו מיא על רישי אמרית במימרי אתגזרית מן עלמא:

My enemies, without cause, laid a trap for me like a bird.
They have caused my life to pass in the pit and cast stones at me.
Waters flowed over my head. I said *in my word*, “I am cut off *from the world*.”

Prosaic Expansion. There are few additions to these verses. The rare צמתו⁵³⁰ in verse 53 has been translated with עברו. Levine believes that the text was originally עבדו,⁵³¹ but all MSS attest to the reading that we have in Urb. 1.⁵³² He further suggests that if the current reading is maintained then חיי becomes the subject, “my life has passed in the pit.” The change in subject (and subsequent emendation of the verb from third person plural to third person singular) is not necessary since the Pael of עבר* is causative.⁵³³ In either reading the sense of the verse is the same, the speaker’s enemies have trapped him (verse 52) and thrown him into a pit where his life is to expire as they hurl rocks at him.

⁵²⁹It is unlikely that the targumist’s additions are intended to recall the midrash of Num. 14.1 found in TgLam 1.2. See Levine, p. 153.

⁵³⁰BDB, p. 856, “to put an end to, exterminate.”

⁵³¹Levine, p. 154.

⁵³²The one exception noted by Van der Heide is MS “D” (Oxford, Bodleian Library Op. Add 4to 139) which he describes as having “a considerable affinity with, if not dependence on, the Western text. It also betrays a tendency to provide correct readings and to correct grammatical forms,” p. 66. This MS reads אעברו, p. 28*.

⁵³³Jastrow, p. 1039b. This would require repointing the text from עברי to עברי, but this is a minor matter considering the poor state of the vocalization of the manuscript. See Levine, pp. 21-2.

In verse 54 the targumist has added that the subject spoke במימרי, “in my word.” This is a rare and an unusual occurrence of the term מימרא being used in reference to anything other than God’s divine pronouncement. It is unclear why the targumist has chosen this term, but it is unlikely that it is the result of dittography.⁵³⁴ As we have already seen our targumist uses מימרא to represent God’s decrees⁵³⁵ and since the statement issued by the speaker is a pronouncement of his punishment (God must be understood as the active agent, as elsewhere in the targum) the targumist may have felt that the use of מימרא was appropriate for such an important declaration. Finally, where the biblical text states simply that “I am cut off” the targumist adds that the speaker is cut off “from the world.” This removes the possible interpretation that the speaker, and the community, is cut off from God.

3.3.55. Verses 55-57

קראתי שמך יהוה מבור תחתיות:
 קולי שמעת אל-תעלם אזנך לרוחתי לשועתי:
 קרבתי ביום אקראך אמרת אל-תירא:

צליתי לשמך יי מן גוב ארעיתא:
 צלותי קבילתא בזמנא ההיא וכען לא תכסי אודנך מלקבלא צלותי לארווחותני בגין בעותי:
 קריבתא מלאכא לשיבותני ביומא דצליתי לך אמרת במימרך לא תדחל:

I prayed to your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit.

You received my prayer *at that time, and now* do not cover your ears *from receiving my prayer* to give me relief *because of* my plea.

You brought *the angel* near *to save me*, in the day that I prayed to you. You said *by your Memra*, “Do not fear.”

The first verse of this triplet has been rendered *verbatim* by our targumist. Verse 56 is longer than most in Chapter Three⁵³⁶ and the targumist represents all of MT, but he has also added a number of glosses to the text. The reason for these additions is the apparent problem in the sequence of events in MT. God is asked not to cover his ears after we are told that God has heard his cry! “You heard my plea, ‘Do not close your ear to my cry for

⁵³⁴Levine, p. 154. The occurrence of במימרך in verse 57 is too far removed from verse 54 and has a different suffix. See §4.4.

⁵³⁵§3.1.15, §3.1.18, and 3.2.17. See §4.4 for further discussion of the use of Memra within TgLam.

⁵³⁶See Albrektson, pp. 163-4, and Hillers, p. 118. The last word לשועתי is normally interpreted as a gloss added to explain the rare לרוחתי. Hillers retains MT.

help.” Thus, the targumist avoids the direct statement that “you [the Lord] heard my plea.” Instead the circumlocution “you *received* my prayer” is used. While the biblical text speaks of a moment of salvation,⁵³⁷ the addition of בִּזְמַנָּא הֵיִיא by the targumist places this event in the past and at the same time calls for God to hear his prayer “now,” with the addition of כְּעַן. The additions to the final clause explain that it is the prayer which the speaker wants God to hear and that God would grant him relief *because* of his plea. Within a liturgical context the reconstructed verse would remind the audience of God’s past faithfulness while leading them in supplicating God for their current needs.⁵³⁸

The beginning of verse 57 is suggestive of an anti-anthropomorphism. The Hebrew “you came near when I called on you” has become “you brought *the angel* near to save me.” It may well be that this is indeed an example, albeit a rare one within our targum, of an anti-anthropomorphism. If so, the reference to an angel intended as a device to distance God from the actual act of visiting man.

Finally, rather than the direct Hebrew “you said, ‘Do not fear,’” in the targum it is by God’s “Memra” that the message of consolation was delivered. מִימְרָא is the vehicle of God’s comfort as the speaker calls out to God from his imprisonment and the LORD responds to his plea. As with other occurrences of מִימְרָא in TgLam the term is clearly an utterance of God, the proclamation “Do not fear.” In this instance, however, God is comforting his people rather than announcing their punishment through his מִימְרָא.⁵³⁹ The addition of בִּזְמַנָּא הֵיִיא in verse 56 and the statement (already found in MT) that God responded to his plea “in the day that I prayed to you” in verse 57 serve to remind the audience of God’s past mercies on his people while calling them to repentance (verse 40) and prayer.

⁵³⁷In his moment of despair God hears the speaker’s cry and offers comfort. Or, following Hillers (p. 118), the verbs are precativ perfect: “Hear my voice—do not close your ears!”

⁵³⁸For further discussion see §5.2.2.

⁵³⁹See §3.1.15, §3.1.18, and 3.2.17. See also §4.4.

3.3.58. Verses 58-60

רַבַּת אֲדֹנָי רִיבֵי נַפְשִׁי גְּאַלְתָּ חַיִּי:
 רְאִיתָהּ יְהוָה עֲוֹתַי שְׂפָטָה מִשְׁפָּטִי:
 רְאִיתָהּ כָּל-נַקְמָתָם כָּל-מַחְשְׁבֹתָם לִי:

נציתא יי לעבדי מצותא לנפשי פרקתא מן ידיהון חוי:
 חזית יי סרוך דסריכו לי דון דיניי:
 גלי קדמך כל נקמתהון כל מזמתהון עלי:

You have fought, O LORD, *against those who made* a quarrel with my soul. You delivered my life *from their hands*.

You have seen, O LORD, *the wrong by which* they wronged me. Judge my case.

All their vengeance has been revealed *before you*, all their evil plans against me.

Prosaic Expansion. The targumist has made very few changes to these verses and the declaration of God's justice (and the implied plea that God continue to intervene in the speaker's plight) found in the biblical text remains unchanged. The rare Hebrew plural ריבים⁵⁴⁰ of ריבי נפש, usually translated "my case," has been interpreted as a plural noun ("those who contend")⁵⁴¹ and personified in the targum through the addition of לעבדי, thus the LORD fights against "*those who made a quarrel* with my soul." The terse second clause of verse 58 is expanded to explain that his life has been delivered "from their hands." It should not be surprising that the Hebrew גאלת, "you redeemed" is translated with פרקתא, "you delivered," since the two terms are clearly considered equivalent by the targumim.⁵⁴² The only other addition of note is the change in verse 60 from "*you have seen* all their malice" to "*all their vengeance has been revealed before you*." As in previous verses, it seems unlikely that our targumist has a theological reason for this alteration of the text. He cannot be opposed to the concept of God viewing something evil since the immediately preceding verse states "you have seen, O LORD." Instead the change has probably been motivated by a desire to create prosaic diversity within the text.

⁵⁴⁰Found only here, in 2 Sam. 22.44, and Ps. 18.44. See Albrektson, p. 166.

⁵⁴¹See BDB, pp. 936-7.

⁵⁴²Klein, for example, translates פרק* as "to redeem, deliver," *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch, Vol. 2*, (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1986), p. 123. A survey of the targumim with regards to פרק* is beyond this work, but a few examples from different sources should suffice. Aside from the technical term גאל הדם (which is translated with גאל דמא, see Num. 35) TgOnk to Num. 25 consistently translates גאל* with פרק*. TgJer 31.11 and the FrdTg to Exod. 6.6 and 15.13 also use פרק* (See Klein, *Genizah Manuscripts Vol. 1*, pp. 176-7 and pp. 244-5). It therefore seems unlikely that we can accept Levine's suggestion that the use of פרק* "may reflect the eschatological sensitivity of the word גאל, and its centrality in Jewish-Christian polemics," p. 157.

3.3.61. Verses 61-63

שְׁמַעְתָּ הֲרַפְתָּם יְהוָה כָּל-מַחְשְׁבֹתָם עָלַי:
 שְׁפָתַי קָמִי וְהִגִּינָם עָלַי כָּל-הַיּוֹם:
 שְׁבָתָם וְקִימָתָם הִבִּיטָה אָנֹכִי מִנְּגִינָתָם:

שמיע קדמדך כסופיהון יי כל מזימתהון עלי:
 שפוות קיימין עלי ולהיגיונהום עלי כל יומא:
 מותבנהון וזקיפתהון אסתכל אנא זמריהון:

Their taunts were heard *before you*, O LORD, all their evil plans against me.
 The lips of the enemies *are against me* and their mutterings are against me all day.
 Look at their sitting and rising! I am [the object of] their taunt-songs.

Prosaic Expansion. The targumist has provided a nearly *verbatim* translation with only two additions. In verse 61 we again have שמיע קדמדך for שמעת and in verse 62 the targumist has added a second עלי between the two noun phrases. The meaning of the text is not changed by these additions and the targum is, in fact, closer to the Hebrew than P.⁵⁴³

3.3.64. Verses 64-66

תָּשִׁיב לָהֶם גְּמוּלַת יְהוָה כְּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם:
 תַּתֵּן לָהֶם מַגְנַת-לֵב תִּצְלַתְךָ לָהֶם:
 תִּרְדֵּף בְּאַף וְתִשְׁמַדֵּם מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִם יְהוָה:

תתיב להון גמולא בישא יי כעובדי ידיהון:
 תתן להון תבירות לבא ושלהאותך ישלהי להון:
 תדלוקנון ברוגזא ותשיצנון מתחות שמי מרומא דיי:

May you return to them *evil* recompense, O LORD, according to the works of their hands.
 May you give them brokenness of heart and may your *weariness* wear them out.
 Pursue them in anger and destroy them from under the *high* heaven of the LORD.

Prosaic Expansion. Once again the changes to these verses are minor. The recompense which the LORD is to mete out to the enemies is qualified with בישא. Therefore it is “evil” or “shameful”⁵⁴⁴ recompense by which they will be repaid. Modern scholars are unsure what מגנת-לב in verse 65 means⁵⁴⁵ and our targumist (and the rabbis) were similarly uncertain. Most derive it from either *גנ, “fence, defend” and therefore a covering, or *מן,

⁵⁴³Albrektson, p. 168.
 צַבְחוֹתָם וְעִשְׂוֹתָם נִסְרָה חַל הַכְּאוֹמְנָבָם בָּל . מִפְּרוֹעֵי הַפְּתָח הַדָּתָם בָּל בָּלָם
 אֲנִי . נִבְּאוֹתֵיכֶם הַנִּתְּבָרִים כְּאוֹתֵיכֶם נִבְּאוֹתֵיכֶם .

⁵⁴⁴Greenup, p. 34.
⁵⁴⁵See Albrektson, p. 170, and Hillers, p. 119.

“insolence,”⁵⁴⁶ but the rabbis had two different interpretations.

Two teachers [differ about the meaning of the word]. One said that it signifies breaking of heart, the other that it signifies hardness of heart. He who said that it means ‘breaking of heart’ does so because it is stated, *Who hath delivered* (מִגֵּן) *thine enemies into thy hand* (Gen. 14.20); and he who said that it means ‘hardness of heart’ does so because it is stated, *The shield* (קִנָּי) *of thy help* (Deut. 33.29).⁵⁴⁷

Our targumist clearly chose the former interpretation and therefore translated the passage “May you give them *brokenness* of heart.” The rendering of תאלתך with ושלחאותך indicates that the targumist, like LXX misread the Hebrew as תלאתך, “your weariness.”⁵⁴⁸ Such a translation makes little sense in context (verse 64 speaks of “evil recompense” and verse 66 calls for God to destroy them), but it seems that our targumist sought to add some strength to the text by adding ישלחי so that the text reads “may your weariness wear them out!” The only addition to verse 66 is מרומא which modifies שמי. In this final triplet of Chapter Three our targumist retains the same call for divine retribution which is found in MT.

⁵⁴⁶BDB, p. 171. BDB cites Lam. 3.65 under the root *גנן, “[מגנה] n.f. covering.” KBL, p. 546, II. “shamelessness.”

⁵⁴⁷LamR 3.65.

⁵⁴⁸Albrektson, p. 171. LXX reads μόχθου σου αὐτοῖς.

3.4. TgLam Chapter 4

3.4.1. Verse 1

איכה יועם זָהָב יִשְׁנָא הַכֶּתֶם הַטּוֹב
תִּשְׁתַּכְנֶנָּה אֲבָנֵי-קִדְשׁ בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל-חוּצוֹת:

היכדין עמא דהב בית מוקדשא אשתני פידלון בחיר משתדיין מרגלאוון קדישין בריש כל מחוזין:

How the gold of the Temple has dimmed, [how] the choice gold leaf has changed! The sacred jewels are scattered at the head of every street.

Prosaic Expansion. Chapter Four is an acrostic and like Chapters One and Two the first letter of each verse (rather than each stich as in Chapter Three) begins with succeeding letters of the alphabet, however, each verse has only two stichs. The only addition to this verse found in the targum is the phrase בית מוקדשא, which identifies the gold of the first clause as the gold that was in the Temple. The less common כתם has been translated with the Greek loanword פידלון (πέταλον).⁵⁴⁹

3.4.2. Verse 2

בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הִיקָרִים הַמְסֻלָּאִים בְּפִזָּה
אִיכָּה נִתְשַׁבּוּ לְנִבְלֵי-חֶרֶשׁ מֵעֲשָׂה יְדֵי יוֹצֵר:

בני ציון יקרין דמתילין איקוניהון לדהב טב היכדין הו עממין מסאבין מחתיך יתהום כל קביל ערסיהון ומסתכלין בהון בגין דילדון נשהון בנין שפיריא כשופריהון ואתחשיבו ללגינין [דחסף]⁵⁵⁰ עובדי ידי פחרא:

The precious Sons of Zion which were comparable in their appearance to that of fine gold, how the unclean people brought them down near to their beds and stared at them, so that their wives might bear sons as beautiful as they and they are considered as [clay] vessels which were made by the hands of the potter.

Verses 2 and 3 form a unit of expansion within the targum. The biblical text of verse 2 describes how the beauty of Zion's sons has gone (just as the gold of verse 1 has dimmed) so that they now are as plain as clay pots. The beauty and wisdom of the Jerusalemites is a common theme in the midrashim with much of LamR spent in comparing

⁵⁴⁹The normal Aramaic form is פִּיטְלוֹן. It is this form which is found in Lagarde and YT (Van der Heide, p. 30*). See Samuel Krauss, *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum, Teil II*, (New York: Georg Olms, 1987), p. 441 (reprint from 1899). See §5.1.2.

⁵⁵⁰Found in Lagarde and YT and necessary in order to represent all of MT.

Jerusalem's residents with those from the nations.⁵⁵¹ The targum begins its exposition by reiterating the first clause with a few embellishments, but before he translates the second clause our targumist inserts a midrash which alters the verse dramatically. According to our targum, a Jewish boy would be forced to lie near the bed of a foreign couple while they had sex, so that their offspring would possess the beauty of the Jewish boy. Behind this curious scenario is the belief that the visage of the embryo is determined by what the woman is looking at while copulating.⁵⁵²

This belief was wide-spread throughout antiquity and the earliest references to the practice of intentional parental imprinting come from Greek and Latin texts. A text attributed to the pre-Socratic poet Empedocles is quoted by Aetius.

How do offspring come to resemble others rather than their parents? He [Empedocles] says that fetuses are shaped by the imagination of the woman around the time of conception. For often women have fallen in love with statues of men and with images and have produced offspring which resembled them.⁵⁵³

Within the Jewish tradition the biblical text most often cited Gen. 30.25-43. In this passage Jacob makes a deal with his father-in-law Laban that he would take for his wages only the speckled or colored lambs from the flock. In order to ensure that he would have a profit from his labors, Jacob placed rods (which had been stripped of their bark in order to form patterns) in front of the troughs. "And since they bred when they came to drink, the flocks bred in front of the rods, and so the flocks produced young that were striped, speckled, and spotted."⁵⁵⁴ While commenting on this passage GenR relates the following tale:

It once happened that an Ethiopian, married to an Ethiopian, begot a white-skinned son by her. Thereupon the father took the child and went to Rabbi, asking him, "Perhaps he is not my

⁵⁵¹ See LamR 1.1 where the midrash is commenting on the phrase רבתי בגימ. There is an extensive section recounting the wit and sagacity of Jerusalemites in contrast with Athenians. LamR 4.2 also contains several midrashim praising the wisdom and good manners of Jerusalemites. LamR 1.16 ("for these things I weep") has several midrashim which tell of Jewish chastity (even to the point of suicide) in spite of Roman attempts to sexually exploit the captives. Note, however, the prophetic attack on the nobles and those who live in luxury. See Amos 6.1-8 and §3.2.21 above.

⁵⁵² See Wendy Doniger and Gregory Spinner, "Misconceptions: Female Imaginations and Male Fantasies in Parental Imprinting," *Dædalus* 127 (Winter 1998), pp. 97-129. I have used their term "parental imprinting."

⁵⁵³ *Doxographi Graeci* 5.12.2, ed. Herman Diels (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965), p. 432. See Doniger and Spinner for other relevant sources including Soran (*Gynecology*, second century CE) and Jerome (*Hebrew Questions*, fourth century CE).

⁵⁵⁴ Gen. 30.38.

son.” “Did you have any pictures [of men] in your house,” he asked. “Yes,” he replied. “Black or white?” “White,” he answered. “This accounts for your white-skinned son,” he assured him.⁵⁵⁵

It is clear that our targumist has this practice in mind and is attributing it to Jerusalem’s conquerors. *b* Git. 58a has an interesting parallel which begins by citing Lam. 4.2:

The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold. What is meant by ‘comparable to fine gold’? Shall I say it means that they were covered with gold? [This can hardly be] seeing that in the school of R. Shila it was stated that two state weights of fine gold came down into the world, one of which went to Rome and the other to the rest of the world! No: what it means is that they used to eclipse fine gold with their beauty. Before that the notables of the Romans used to keep an amulet set in a ring in front of them when they had sexual intercourse, but now they brought Israelites and tied them to the foot of the bed.

The gemara concludes the discussion by stating that the term “comparable” (המסלמים, a *hapax legomenon*)⁵⁵⁶ means that the sons of Zion were *more beautiful* than the finest gold. After the destruction of Jerusalem the Romans, who had used amulets of gold in order to ensure beautiful children, began looking at handsome Israelites during intercourse. The similarities to our text are strong enough to suggest a common source, if not a direct relationship. As we have seen, the belief in parental imprinting is ancient and certainly predates either of these two texts.

The effect of this addition and the subsequent translation of the final clause of 4.2 is a complete transformation of the original intent of MT. In the biblical passage, not only are the Sons of Zion “worth their weight in fine gold” they are also the subject of the final clause which describes how they are *now*, after the destruction of the city, considered “as earthen pots.” Our targumist, however, emphasizes the beauty of the Sons of Zion while introducing the lascivious foreigners who become the subject of 4.2b. Therefore it is the “unclean people” who are considered “clay vessels” rather than the nobles of Zion.⁵⁵⁷ The

⁵⁵⁵GenR to 30.37. This same principle is applied to the testing of a woman accused of adultery (Num. 5.12-31) in NumR to 5.12. A parallel passage is found in LevR 18.3.

⁵⁵⁶Most scholars assume that מסלם is a variant of הלס, see Job 28.16, and is interpreted as “to weigh,” BDB, p. 698.

⁵⁵⁷I do not apply the term “converse translation” since, as it has been defined by Klein in “Converse Translation,” the term implies a relatively simple change in the text. For example, the addition (or deletion) of a negative particle or the addition of ללד. In 4.2 and 3 the text is much more complex and the change is more subtle than a simple negation of the biblical text.

targumist continues this reinterpretation in verse 3 where it is the nations who are “cruel” rather than the Israelites.

3.4.3. Verse 3

גם-תנין תלצו שד היניקו גורייהן
בת-עמי לאכזר פי ענים במדבר:

אף בנאתא דישראל מפנקאתא לבני עממיא דדמיין לחורמנא טלען וריבי כנשתא דעמי מסירן
לאכזראין ואמהון ספדן עליהון כנעמיא במדברא:

Even the pampered Daughters of Israel untie their breasts to the nations who are like the basilisk. And the young men of the Congregation of my people are handed over to cruel men and their mothers mourn over them like ostriches in the desert.

The biblical text of verse 3 contrasts the basic caring nature found even in the jackal with the “daughter of my people”⁵⁵⁸ who has become cruel. The targumist has once again dramatically altered this verse. The targum begins by describing the Daughters of Israel as “pampered” (מפנקאתא), implying that they lived in a luxurious state of excess. As we saw in 2.21 and the comparison with Amos 6 such a statement is an indictment against Israel and a cause of their predicament. In spite of this charge, the targumist has relieved them of the stronger accusation of MT. The Hebrew תנין, “jackals,” has been translated with חורמנא, “basilisk,”⁵⁵⁹ and is now used to describe the nations. Although the verb טלען remains in Pael the implication is that the Daughters of Israel have been forced into exposing themselves.

WT does not represent היניקו, but YT reads אניקו רוביהון which would make “young men” the object of אניקו rather than the subject of מסירן. In both textual traditions בת-עמי is rendered כנשתא דעמי, as we have come to expect,⁵⁶⁰ but rather than the people of Israel becoming cruel the targumist tells us that the Congregation was handed over to *cruel men*.

⁵⁵⁸This is often emended to בנות-עמי on the basis of LXX, θυγατέρες (see BHS). Given the immediate context of nursing (both in verse 3 and 4) the feminine, singular form seems perfectly acceptable. See also 2.11; 3.48; 4.6, and 10.

⁵⁵⁹YT simply repeats MT with תנינא. It may be that WT has read it as תנין, “dragon, sea monster,” (BDB, p. 1072b) as has LXX, δράκοντες.

⁵⁶⁰See §3.1.6 and §4.5.

The ostrich⁵⁶¹ has now become a symbol representing the mourning mothers of Jerusalem's youth; no doubt an allusion to Mic. 1.8. While prophesying the destruction of the towns of Judah the prophet cries: "I will make lamentations like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches (ואבל כבנות יענה)." The result is the same as that found in verse 2; the targumist has distanced the people of Israel from the harshest of charges while not acquitting them completely.⁵⁶²

3.4.4. Verse 4

דְּבַק לְשׁוֹן יוֹנֵק אֶל-חֶכוּ בְצִמָּא
עוֹלָלִים שְׂאֵלוּ לֶחֶם פִּרְשׁ אֵין לָהֶם:

אדבק לישן עולימא למוריגיה בצחותא טליא תבעו לחמא מושיט לית להום:

The infant's tongue clings to its palate from thirst. Youngsters ask for bread, but there is no one who offers it to them.

Verbatim. The targumist does not add or subtract from this verse.

3.4.5. Verse 5

הַאֲכָלִים לְמַעַדְנִים נִשְׁמוּ בְחוּצוֹת
הָאֲמָנִים עָלֵי תוֹלַע חֲבָקוּ אֲשַׁפְּתוֹת:

דהו רגילין למיכל תפנוקין אשתוממו במחוזין דאתרביאו על צבע זהורין גפיפו קיקלאותן:

Those who *used to* eat delicacies were desolate in the markets. Those who were reared in *the color* crimson embrace dunghills.

Prosaic Expansion. The targumist has made two insignificant changes to the text. The participle האכלים has been replaced with the prosaic למיכל and דהו רגילין is represented with זהורין. In all other respects the text remains unaltered.

⁵⁶¹The targum follows the *qere*, כיענים.

⁵⁶²See Levine, pp. 165-6.

3.4.6. Verse 6

וַיִּגְדַּל עוֹן בֵּית-עַמִּי מִחַטָּאת סְדוֹם
 הַהִפּוּכָה כְּמוֹ-רְגֵעַ וְלֹא-חָלוּ בָּהּ יְדֵימִ:

וסגי חובת כנשתא דעמי מן חובת סדום דאתהפכת כשעתא ולא שריאו בה נביאיא לאתנבאה לאהדרותא
 בתיובתא:

The sin of the Congregation of my people is greater than the sin of Sodom which was overthrown in a moment. And *no prophets* were left in her *to prophesy, to turn her back in repentance*.

The first three clauses of the verse are rendered quite literally, but the Hebrew of the last clause is difficult.⁵⁶³ The verb חלו is probably from the root *חול, “to turn, turn against,”⁵⁶⁴ but our targumist appears to have represented the term twice. In the first instance חלו has been interpreted as the Hiph. of *חלל, “to begin,”⁵⁶⁵ and translated it with ולא שריאו. The Aramaic לאהדרותא also contains the concept of turning, but it is the people returning to God in repentance and not a “hand” turned in punishment. ידים is also difficult to interpret in MT and some have suggested emending the text to read ילדים.⁵⁶⁶ Levine suggests that the “hands” were interpreted by the targumist as referring to the prophets which is possible,⁵⁶⁷ however it seems more likely that the targumist did not attempt a direct translation of the troublesome phrase. The reference to “turning” led the targumist to refer to the people’s refusal to repent and he was probably content with allowing the message to stand without providing an obvious translation of ידים.⁵⁶⁸ This reading follows the additions found elsewhere in TgLam which emphasize the fact that Jerusalem did not repent when God provided the opportunity, but at the same time call the audience “turn in repentance.”⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶³See Albrektson, pp. 179-80, for a concise survey of the most common interpretations.

⁵⁶⁴BDB, pp. 296b-7a.

⁵⁶⁵BDB, p. 320a.

⁵⁶⁶See BHS.

⁵⁶⁷Levine, p. 167.

⁵⁶⁸It is, of course, somewhat curious that the targumist states that “there were no prophets left in her” since Jeremiah continued to preach repentance in Jerusalem down to the moment of its destruction. This verse, however, cannot be viewed as an attempt to absolve the people of their guilt (by blaming the lack of prophets), since the rest of the targum speaks of communal responsibility. See §4.

⁵⁶⁹TgLam 2.19. See §3.1.2, §3.2.19, and §3.3.40.

3.4.7. Verse 7

זכו נזיריה משלג צהו מחלב
אדמו עצם מפנינים ספיר גזרתם:

הו ברין נזירהא מתלגא שעעו יתיר מן חלבא סמיקו חיזו יתיר מזהורין ושבזיזא פרציפיהון:

Her Nazarites were purer than snow, smoother than milk. Their appearance was ruddier than crimson and their faces like sapphires.

Prosaic Expansion. The targumist has not altered this verse in any significant way. Like LXX and P our targum interprets נזירה as the technical term “one consecrated.”⁵⁷⁰ The compact Hebrew has been expanded with the addition of יתיר before both instances of the comparative מן. The specific Hebrew עצם, which can mean “bone” or “substance” and here means “body,”⁵⁷¹ has been loosely rendered with חיזו, “appearance.”

3.4.8. Verse 8

חשך משחור תאָרם לא נפרו בחוצות
צפד עורם על-עצמם יבש היה כעץ:

חשך מן אוכמותא דגלותא ריויהון לא אשתמודעו במחוזין אדק משכיהון על גרמיהון פריך הוה כקיסא:

Their appearance was darker than the blackness of the exile; they were not recognized in the markets. Their skin clung to their bones; brittle as a twig.

Prosaic Expansion. Once again the additions to this verse are minor and do not effect the exegetical impact of the text. The targumist does add that the blackness of their appearance is darker than “the exile.” This is a curious description of the exile and is not elaborated upon by our targum nor is it found directly attested in other rabbinic sources. We may hypothesize, however, that the “darkness” of the exile is in contrast to the “light” which the people enjoyed while Jerusalem and the Temple still stood. There are several references in LevR and NumR which refer to the brilliant light which emanated from the Shekinah and the Shekinah of God resided in the Temple.⁵⁷² When Israel sinned God,

⁵⁷⁰BDB, p. 634. *σαῖρα* and *מִנְיָה*.

⁵⁷¹BDB, pp. 782b-3a.

⁵⁷²LevR to 24.2 and NumR to 6.24 and 28.2. For further references to later medieval works which elaborate upon this theme see Ginzberg, *Legends*, Vol. VI, p. 66.

removed his Shekinah from the Temple thus allowing it to be destroyed and thereby removing the light from the midst of Israel.⁵⁷³ Perhaps this is the “blackness of the exile” to which our targum refers.

3.4.9. Verse 9

טוֹבִים הָיוּ חֲלָלֵי-חֶרֶב מִחֲלָלֵי רָעָב
שֶׁהֵם יָזוּבוּ מִדְּקָרִים מִתְּנוּבַת שָׂדֵי:

מעלי הוו קטילי סייפא יתיר מקטילי כפן דקטילי סייפא דייבן כד אנון מבוען בכריסיהון מן מה דאכלו
מעלל חקלא ונפחי כפנא פריק כריסיהון מן מיכלא:

Better were those who were slain by the sword than those who were slain by hunger, *for those slain by the sword perished*⁵⁷⁴ when pierced *in their bellies because they ate of the gleanings of the field; and those who were bloated from hunger; their bellies burst from [lack of] food.*

Verse 9 has been dramatically altered by our targumist. The changes made are not intended to alter the meaning of the text, rather they increase the drama of the event through a detailed description of the horrors of a city under siege.⁵⁷⁵ The first line of this verse is rendered nearly *verbatim* by our targumist, but the second line is difficult in both MT and the targum. The Hebrew יזוּבוּ means literally “flow” and our targumist has repeated the verb with the Aramaic cognate דייבן. In both MT and TgLam the verb refers to the life of a victim flowing from them, therefore I have translated דייבן סייפא as “for those slain by the sword perished.”⁵⁷⁶ In rendering the verse into prose the word order of 9bα is no longer retained, but our targumist follows MT and interprets the oft emended מדקרים as from the root *דקר, to pierce,⁵⁷⁷ translating it with מבוען. The final clause of verse 9 is rendered rather directly with מעלל חקלא, “the gleanings of the field,”⁵⁷⁸ but it is diluted within a confusing addition. Levine’s translation of the text serves to demonstrate the difficulty of the text.

⁵⁷³See §3.3.41.

⁵⁷⁴Lit. “flowed.”

⁵⁷⁵For similar examples of dramatic heightening in TgLam see §3.1.9, §3.1.15, and §3.1.16.

⁵⁷⁶See Albrektson, p. 183, and NRSV, “Happier are those pierced by the sword than those pierced by hunger, whose life *drains away*, deprived of the produce of the field.”

⁵⁷⁷BDB, p. 201. See Albrektson, p. 184, and Jer. 51.4.

⁵⁷⁸This translation is based upon reading מעלל (which normally means “deed,” Jastrow, p. 817b) as a noun based upon עלל and its secondary meaning of “to harvest, glean,” (Jastrow, p. 1084a).

Better off where those slain by the sword than those slain by famine, for those slain by the sword expired when they had been thrust through their bellies, whereas *these ate the corpses of the field*, and bloated with famine their bellies burst from food.⁵⁷⁹

The key to understanding the targum is determining whether the *מן מה* (literally “from what”) clause modifies that which precedes or follows. Levine understands *מן מה* as introducing a new group, those who died from hunger. As evident in my translation, I have interpreted *מן מה* as referring back to those whose bellies were pierced. The image suggested by the targumist is as follows. The famine is so great within the city that people are compelled to venture outside of the walls and risk being killed by the besieging army in order to search for food. A similar image is found in Lam. 5.9, “We get our bread at the peril of our lives, because of the sword in the wilderness.”⁵⁸⁰ So it is *because* they tried to glean the fields that they were killed by the sword. Meanwhile, within the city, people were not killed by the sword, but they continued to die of starvation.⁵⁸¹ There remains the difficulty of the concluding words of the targum, *פריק כריסיהון מן מיכלא*. Why should their bellies burst *from* food? The most likely explanation is the simplest; the audience is to understand from the context that it is the *lack of* food which causes their death.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁹Levine does not justify his translation of *מעלל* as “corpses.” Greenup’s translation is closer to the mark: “... because those slain by the sword sank down, after they had been thrust through their bellies, because they had eaten of the fruit of the land: and as for those who were inflated with hunger, their belly was rent asunder owing to (lack of) food,” p. 38.

⁵⁸⁰The targum renders the verse directly: “At the risk of our lives we gather bread to sustain us from before the slaying sword which comes from across the wilderness.”

⁵⁸¹See LamR to 1.5 where R. Johanan b. Zakkai’s nephew (and leader of the Zealot party) Ben Battiah “who was appointed in charge of the stores, all of which he burnt.” The implication is that he burned the stores in order to force people to go out and fight. See also Lam. 1.20, “In the street the sword bereaves, in the house it is like death,” and TgLam 1.6, “Her nobles wander for food, like stags who were wandering in the desert and find no suitable place for their pasture. They went out in great weakness and they had no strength to flee to safety (from) before the pursuer.”

⁵⁸²In modern times we are still all too familiar with the image of starving children whose bellies are distended due to starvation. This may lie behind the targumist’s rendering.

3.4.10. Verse 10

יְדֵי נָשִׁים רַחֲמָנִיּוֹת בְּשָׁלוֹ יִלְדִיָּהוּן
 הָיוּ לְבָרוֹת לָמוֹ בְּשֶׁקֶר בֵּת-עַמִּי:

ידי נשיא דהואן מרחמן על מסכינין בשילו עולימיהון הוו למסעד להום ביום תבר כפנא דאתברת כנשתא דעמי:

The hands of women *who were* merciful towards the poor boiled their young, they became sustenance for them when *the day of famine* broke, when the Congregation of my people was destroyed.

The biblical text presents a contrast between the caring women before the siege and their selfish actions during it. Our targumist heightens that contrast. In the first clause the targumist explains that the women's compassion was evident in earlier days by their charity towards the poor. Yet these women now cooked their own children for food. Unlike the midrash,⁵⁸³ the targum does not try to soften or remove the biblical statement in any way. "When the day of famine broke" the mothers ended their forced fast by eating their children and thereupon the Congregation was destroyed.⁵⁸⁴ As in earlier portions of the TgLam, our targumist does not remove the harsh accusations of the biblical passage. Instead he intensifies them in order to demonstrate that God was justified in punishing Israel by destroying Jerusalem.

3.4.11. Verse 11

כָּלָה יְהוָה אֶת-חֲמָתוֹ שֶׁפַךְ חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ
 וַיִּצֵּת-אֵשׁ בְּצִיּוֹן וַתֹּאכַל יְסוּדוֹתֶיהָ:

סך יי חמתיה שדא על ירושלם ית תקוף רוגזיה ואסיק בעור אשתא בציון ואכלת אושוותהא:

The LORD has finished his anger; he has poured out his *fierce* wrath upon Jerusalem and he has brought up a *raging* fire in Zion, and it consumed her foundations.

Prosaic Expansion. The additions to this verse are slight. The use of תקוף to modify

⁵⁸³LamR to 4.10. "R. Huna said in the name of R. Jose: The Holy One, Blessed be He, declared: '[The women] did not allow Me to stretch forth My hand against My world.' How was that? If one of them had a loaf of bread sufficient for the needs of herself and her husband for one day, and the son of her neighbour died, she would take it and comfort her therewith. Scripture counts it to them as if they had sodden their own children for the fulfilment of a commandment. That is what is stated, *The hands of women of compassion have sodden their own children*. For what purpose? So that *they were their food*."

⁵⁸⁴It may be that our targumist is creating a further contrast between the fast which is held to commemorate the ninth of Ab and the way in which the mothers ceased their "fast" by eating their own children.

הרוגיה is an idiomatic rendering found elsewhere in TgLam⁵⁸⁵ and the targumist identifies the indirect object of the second verb as Jerusalem. These additions serve to intensify the biblical text (“*fierce wrath*,” “*raging fire*”) and to identify the object of God’s wrath.

Levine points out that by specifying Jerusalem as the object of God’s fury it is the place rather than the people which is consumed.⁵⁸⁶ The midrash has a similar position which it argues by analogy.

It is written, *A psalm of Asaph. O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance* (Ps. 79.1). The text should have used a phrase like, “Weeping of Asaph.” “Lament of Asaph.” “Dirge of Asaph.” Why does it say, “A psalm of Asaph.” It may be likened to a king who erected a bridal-chamber for his son which he plastered, cemented, and decorated; but his son entered upon an evil course of living. The king forthwith ascended to the chamber, tore the curtains and broke the rods; but [the son’s] tutor took a piece of rod which he used as a flute and played upon it. People said to him, “The king has overthrown his son’s chamber and you sit playing a tune.” He replied to them, “I play a tune because the king overturned his son’s chamber but did not pour out his anger upon his son.” Similarly people said to Asaph, “The Holy One, blessed be He, has caused Temple and Sanctuary to be destroyed, and you sit singing a Psalm.” He replied to them, “I sing a Psalm because the Holy One, blessed be He, poured out His wrath upon wood and stone and not upon Israel. That is what is written, *and he hath kindled a fire in Zion, which hath devoured the foundations thereof*.⁵⁸⁷

3.4.12. Verse 12

לא האמינו מלכי-ארץ וכל יְשֵׁבֵי תְּבֵל
כִּי יָבֵא צָר וְאוֹיֵב בְּשַׁעֲרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם:

לא הוו מהימנין מלכות ארעא וכל דיירי תבל ארום יעול נבוכד נצר רשיעא ונבוזר אדן בעיל דבבא לנכסא
עמא בית ישראל בתרעיא דירושלם:

The kingdoms of the earth did not believe, nor did those who dwell in the world, that *the wicked Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuzaradan* the enemy would enter *to slaughter the people of the House of Israel* in the gates of Jerusalem.

The additions to this verse follow a pattern already established in TgLam and heighten the tragic nature of the destruction of Jerusalem.⁵⁸⁸ Although it is not clear why the targumist choose to translate the Hebrew “kings” with “kingdoms” (מלכות),⁵⁸⁹ the effect is the same. The entire world believed that Jerusalem was impregnable. The insertion of

⁵⁸⁵See §3.2.1 and §3.2.3. See also Levine, p. 109.

⁵⁸⁶Levine, p. 169.

⁵⁸⁷LamR to 4.11.

⁵⁸⁸For similar examples of dramatic heightening in TgLam see §3.1.9, §3.1.15, §3.1.16, and §3.4.10.

⁵⁸⁹This reading is found in all the MSS.

Nebuchadnezzar is based upon the occurrence of צר, “enemy,” and is found throughout TgLam.⁵⁹⁰ Nebuzaradan⁵⁹¹ is added since, unlike elsewhere in our text where צר occurs alone, this verse contains the doublet צר ואויב. Thus Nebuchadnezzar is equated with צר and Nebuzaradan with אויב. The final addition, “[they] would enter *to slaughter the people of the House of Israel*,” explains the purpose of the enemy in entering Jerusalem. In the next verse the targumist states explicitly why this was allowed to happen.

3.4.13. Verse 13

מחטאת נביאיָה עֲוֹנוֹת כְּהֻנָּה
הַשֹּׁפְכִים בְּקִרְבָּה דַם צַדִּיקִים:

ענת מדת דינא וכן אמרת לא הוות כל דא אלהן מחובת נביאהא דמנבאן לה נבואת שקרא ומעוויית כהנתא דאסיקו קטורת בוסמין לטעוותא ואנון גרמו לאתשד בגווה דם זכאין:

The Attribute of Justice spoke up and said, “All this would not have happened but for the sins of her prophets who prophesied to her false prophecies and the iniquity of her priests who offered up burning incense to idols. They themselves caused the blood of the innocent to be shed in her midst.”

In verse 13, as in 1.1 and 2.20, the targumist uses the Attribute of Justice in order to introduce Jerusalem’s sins.⁵⁹² In this instance the biblical text itself presents a reason for Jerusalem’s punishment, stating directly that “it was for the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests, who shed the blood of the righteous in the midst of her.” Levine states that the targumist “change[s] the apparent meaning of the biblical accusation: instead of the sins ‘against’ the prophets, which would be a collective accusation, it speaks of the sins ‘of’ the (false) prophets.”⁵⁹³ However, since the Hebrew text does not have any prepositions whatsoever the most likely reading is that stated above (NRSV).⁵⁹⁴

Considering the context it is not surprising that our targumist proceeds to specify

⁵⁹⁰See §3.1.7 for a discussion נצר = צר. The appellation “the wicked” is also consistently applied to Nebuchadnezzar, with only one exception (2.4).

⁵⁹¹2 Kgs. 24.11. Nebuzaradan was the captain of the guard and is identified as the individual who oversaw the deportation of the people to Babylon after the destruction of Jerusalem.

⁵⁹²See §3.1.1, §3.2.20, and §4.3.

⁵⁹³Levine, p. 170.

⁵⁹⁴Levine’s reading would require מחטאת על נביאיה. See §4.5 for discussion of the community’s corporate responsibility.

what “the sins of her prophets” and “the iniquities of her priests” were. The prophets, we are told, gave false prophesies and the priests offered sacrifices to idols.⁵⁹⁵ Quite simply, they did the opposite of what God had called them to do. However, it is unlikely that our targumist had a specific incident in mind. The fact that the targum specifies that “they themselves caused the blood of the innocent to be shed” emphasizes the complete abrogation of their duties by the prophets and priests. It is the responsibility of these men, perhaps more than any others, to protect the lives of the innocent and yet, not only did they allow them to be killed, “they themselves *caused*” them to be killed.

3.4.14. Verse 14

נָעוּ עֹרִים בְּחוּצוֹת נִגְאָלוּ בַדָּם
בְּלֹא יוֹכְלוּ יִגְעוּ בְּלִבְשֵׁיהֶם:

אטלטלו עוירן במחוזין אטנפו בדם קטילין דחרבא ועל דלא הוו יכילין למחמי קריבו בלבושיהון:

The blind wandered about in the markets, defiled with the blood of those slain by the sword and since they could not see they touched their clothes.

The additions made to this verse are intended to explain the difficult Hebrew text. In his commentary Hillers remarks that the Hebrew text of 4.14 is so difficult that “no interpretation so far proposed can claim to clear up all of the problems in a completely convincing way.”⁵⁹⁶ Our targumist has stayed very close to the Hebrew adding only that the blood which defiled the blind people was from those wounded in battle and he explains that the reason they touch the clothes of the dead (and thus defile themselves) is because they cannot see. This last addition seeks to obviate the odd Hebrew which has received a number of different interpretations by scholars. The most common translation of 14b is “no one was able to touch their garments,”⁵⁹⁷ but Hillers, for example, emends the text. His unique translation reads “by exertion they are spent and exhausted; their clothing is tattered.”⁵⁹⁸ Although the text is problematic our targumist seeks to retain it, faithfully

⁵⁹⁵See §3.2.14.

⁵⁹⁶Hillers, p. 142. See also Albrektson’s discussion, pp. 186-8.

⁵⁹⁷NRSV, see Löhr, p. 90, and Westermann, p. 195.

⁵⁹⁸Hillers, p. 142.

representing each word of the Hebrew while adding למחמי.

3.4.15. Verse 15

סורו טמא קראו למו סורו סורו אל-תגעו
כי נצו גם-נעו אקרו בגוים לא יסיפו לגור:

זורו ממסאבא קרו עממיא זורו זורו לא תקרבון בהום ארום אתקוטטו אף אטלטלו אמרו
במהויהום בשלוותהום דביני עממיא לא יסופון למדר:

“Turn away from the unclean!” cried *the peoples*, “Turn away, turn away! Do not touch them!” For they quarreled and wandered. They said, *when they were peacefully established* among the nations, “They shall not continue to dwell [here].”

Prosaic Expansion. The speaker of this verse is usually interpreted as being the enemies of Israel⁵⁹⁹ and our targumist has identified the speaker as “the peoples.” The *hapax legomenon* נצו⁶⁰⁰ has been interpreted as “to struggle” and translated with *קטט, “to quarrel.” The implication appears to be that due to their quarreling the Israelites are now forced to wander and live among the nations. In his addition to the last clause of verse 15 the targumist describes the Jews who have been dispersed as finally living at peace in foreign lands, but the “peoples” then declare that the Jews should no longer live among them. This may be an allusion to contemporary strife within the Diaspora of the targumist’s time. Unfortunately, such instances occurred throughout the history of the Jewish Diaspora so even an imprecise dating based upon this text is impossible. Such an addition would, however, serve to remind the Diaspora community that their current position among the nations was the result of their exile from the Land of Israel (which was, in turn, the result of their sin) and that there were still many who viewed them as interlopers.

⁵⁹⁹See Hillers, p. 143, and Rudolph, p. 246.

⁶⁰⁰BDB, p. 663b. See Albrektson, p. 188-90, for a full discussion of possible readings of this verb.

3.4.16. Verse 16

פְּנֵי יְהוָה חִלְקָם לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהַבִּיטָם
פְּנֵי כְהֻנִּים לֹא נִשְׂאוּ וְקִנְיִם לֹא תִנְנוּ:

מן קדם אפי יי אתפליגו לא יוסיף לאסתכלא בהום בגין כן אומיא רשיעיא אפי כהניא לא סברו ועלוי סביא לא חסו:

They were dispersed *from before* the face of the LORD, he no longer regarded them. *Therefore the wicked nations* did not respect the priests nor did they spare the elders.

Our targum follows the majority of biblical MSS and has the פ verse preceding ג.⁶⁰¹

The biblical phrase פני יהוה is read by our targumist as “the face of God” and he therefore translates with מן קדם אפי יי. Whereas MT has pointed חלקם as third person singular perfect Qal with the third person plural suffix (“he scattered them”) the targum renders the verb with the third person plural Ith. of פלג* (“they were dispersed”). Thus, the LORD is no longer the active agent (although still implied) and the *locus* from which the people were dispersed is identified as “before God,” indicating that they were no longer in God’s favor. The anonymous subject of the two verbs in 16b is understood by most to be “the enemies”⁶⁰² and our targumist has made this identification explicit with the addition of אומיא רשיעיא.

3.4.17. Verse 17

עוֹדֵינָה תִּכְלִינָה עֵינֵינוּ אֶל-עֲזָרְתָנוּ הַבֵּל
בְּצַפִּיתָנוּ צַפִּינוּ אֶל-גּוֹי לֹא יוֹשֵׁעַ:

עוד ספאן עייננא לאסתכלא לסיוענא דהוינא מתין לרומאי דאתהפוך לנא להבלו בסכיתנא דאסתכיתנא לאדומאי דאנון עמא דלא יפרוק:

Our eyes still fail to see our help *which we expected to come from the Romans, but which turned* to naught for us. In hope we watched for the *Edomites who were a nation which could not save*.

The first word of the Hebrew text is problematic, but most scholars follow the *qere* (עודינא) and translate the text “we still wore out our eyes.”⁶⁰³ Our targumist has a similar

⁶⁰¹See BHS. P transposes the two verses.

⁶⁰²See Hillers, pp. 143-4, who argues that the text was changed prior to the fixing of MT and that the verbs were originally in the singular, with the LORD understood as the subject (as in 16a).

⁶⁰³See Rudolph, p. 249. P and LXX follow the *qere* (ἐτι ὄντων ἡμῶν and *עודינא*). Hillers emends the text, assuming that the τ has been misread for a ρ, and translates it as “we kept awake and wore out our eyes,” pp. 136 and 143-4.

understanding and inserts לאסתכלא in order to complete the image in prose. The biblical text does not identify where this help was to come from, only stating that it was “a nation.” In the first clause the targumist tells us that they expected their help to come from the Romans. This statement clearly refers to the destruction of the Second Temple and demonstrates that our targumist is not concerned with maintaining the original setting of the Book of Lamentations.⁶⁰⁴ In translating the second clause our targumist identifies the “nation which could not save” as Edom. Although none of the YT MSS collected by Van der Heide contain 4.17 all of the WT MSS contain this verse. Urb. 1, however, appears to be unique in its reading of לאדומאי.

The Walton Polyglot and Lagarde both read לרומאי and given the fact that Urb. 1 has a number of errors it would seem reasonable to follow the other texts. There is, however, a reason for following Urb. 1, or at least for discussing the reasons behind its reading. The other errors encountered in our MS are generally orthographic (with occasional omissions),⁶⁰⁵ but it is unlikely that a copiest would go from לרומאי to לאדומאי. Such a change would require the *addition* of an א and the reading of the ר for ד. The confusion of ר for ד is not uncommon, but it is rare for a letter to be added to a text. Had the majority of texts read לארומאי then we would not hesitate to assume that the א had dropped out or that the copiest's eye had merely passed over the א and read the same word that he had found earlier in the verse. It may be that in this instance Urb. 1 preserves an older tradition. It must be said, of course, that within rabbinic literature Edom is commonly used for Rome⁶⁰⁶ and the targum maintains the same meaning regardless of the reading of this term. Finally, verses 21 and 22 of Chapter Four have considerable additions which include references to Constantinople, Edom, and Rome. It may be that the targumist has introduced this equation (Rome = Edom) in verse 17 in preparation for those verses.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁴The majority of the historical references are to the First Temple (and Josiah), however there is a parenthetical reference to Titus and Vespasian in TgLam 1.15 and there will be several more references to the Romans from this point onwards in TgLam.

⁶⁰⁵See, e.g., §3.1.3; §3.2.2, 3, 8; §3.3.15, 36; and §3.5.1.

⁶⁰⁶See Ginzberg, *Legends*, Vol. V, p. 272, for references and a discussion of the development of this identification.

⁶⁰⁷On the other hand, as Ginzberg points out, this equation is well attested within rabbinic literature and

3.4.18. Verse 18

צָדוּ צְעָדֵינוּ מְלֶכֶת בְּרַחֲבֵינוּ
 קָרַב קִצְיוֹנוּ מְלֵאוּ יְמֵינוּ כִּי-בָא קִצְיוֹנוּ:

הנון צדאן שבילנא מלמיהך לרוחצן בפלטייתנא אמרנא קריב סופנא אתמליאו יומנא ארום מטא סופנא:

They prowled our paths so that we could not walk *safely* in our open places. *We said*, “Our end is near; our days are fulfilled,” for our end had come.

Prosaic Expansion. The first Hebrew verb of 18a has been explained as *צוד, “to hunt,” and *צדה, “to lie in wait for.” As Albrektson points out, however, “it is doubtful whether it is really possible to distinguish clearly between the two roots.”⁶⁰⁸ Our targumist has followed MT using the cognate *צדא. The Hebrew צעדינו, “our steps,” is more loosely translated with שבילנא. Levine translates מלמיהך as “to worship”⁶⁰⁹ rather than simply “to walk” as I have done, yet he offers no justification for this reading. In our targumist’s typical prosaic fashion לרוחצן is added to explain that they could not walk about the city *safely*. Our targumist completes his translation of the first clause using the Greek loanword πλατεῖα, “open place,” for the Hebrew רחוב. Although there are several loanwords used in TgLam it is somewhat surprising that one should be employed here since in the two other instances in which רחוב occurs in Lamentations the targumist has used פתאה.⁶¹⁰ The changes have little effect on the meaning of the text. They do, however, create a specific image of the city *after* the siege as the Babylonians (or Romans) have entered the city and are moving about the streets to eliminate any last remnants of resistance.⁶¹¹ The targumist placed the final clause of this verse into the mouths of those present in Jerusalem with the insertion of אמרנא. The remainder of the verse is rendered *verbatim*.

in all probability the targumist’s audience would be familiar with it. As we shall see, the identity of Edom is the least confusing part of 4.21-2.

⁶⁰⁸Albrektson, p. 192. See also Hillers, p. 144, and BHS which notes that some MSS read צרו.

⁶⁰⁹Levine, p. 73.

⁶¹⁰TgLam 2.11, 12. For discussion of the loanwords in TgLam see §5.1..

⁶¹¹See Rudolph, p. 249, who suggests reading the first verb as צרו from *צרר, “to be narrow, cramped in,” which creates a similar scenario. See also Hillers, p. 144.

3.4.19. Verse 19

קָלִים הָיוּ רֹדְפֵינוּ מִנְּשָׂרַי שָׁמַיִם
עַל-הַהָרִים דִּלְקָנוּ בְּמִדְבָּר אֲרָבוּ לָנוּ:

קלילן הוו רדיפנא יתיר מנשרי שמיא על טורריא אדלקו יתנא במדברא כמאנו לנא:

Our pursuers were swifter *than* the eagles of the heavens; unto the mountains they chased us, in the desert they lay in wait for us.

Prosaic Expansion. The contrast between the pursuers and the eagles is heightened with the addition of יתיר and the suffix of the verb דלקנו has been represented with the particle יתנא.⁶¹² In all other respects the targumist has not added or subtracted from this verse in any significant way.

3.4.20. Verse 20

רוּחַ אֶפְיָנוּ מְשִׁיחַ יְהוָה נִלְפַד בְּשִׁחִיתוֹתָם
אֲשֶׁר אֶמְרָנוּ בְּצִלוֹ נְחִיָּה בְּגוֹיִם:

מלכא יאשיהו די הוה חביב לנא כנשמת רוח חיים דבאפנא והוה מתרבי במשח רבותא דיי אתחד במצד חבולהון דמצראי דהוינא אמרין עלוהי בטלל זכותיה ניחי ביני עממיא:

King Josiah, who was as dear to us as the breath of the spirit of life in our nostrils and was anointed with the anointing oil of the LORD, was locked up in Egypt's snare of corruption. It was he of whom we said, "In the shadow of his merit we will live among the nations."

The biblical text of verse 20 refers directly to the king in whom the people trusted for leadership and security. When compared with the historical accounts found in the Bible, verses 18-20 provide a poetical description of Zedekiah's flight from Jerusalem and his subsequent capture.

On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine became so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then a breach was made in the city wall; the king with all the soldiers fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. They went in the direction of the Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; all his army was scattered, deserting him. Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, who passed sentence on him. They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah; they bound him in fetters and took him to Babylon.⁶¹³

⁶¹²It should be noted that P and LXX do not represent the suffix on this verb, but they do on the final verb of the clause (which, in MT, is attached to the preposition: לנו). The targum uses the same root (*דלק) as MT, but this does not necessarily indicate an allusion to the midrash found in LamR which makes use of the fact that *דלק can mean either "to pursue hotly" or "to burn" (see Jastrow, p. 311b, and Levine, p. 174).

⁶¹³2 Kgs. 25.3-7. See Jer. 39.1-5 and 52.6-9.


The similarities are so striking that many commentators have suggested that the author of Chapter Four was among the group which fled with Zedekiah.⁶¹⁴ Our targumist, however, did not identify the anointed one with Zedekiah. It is King Josiah who receives this honor, presumably because the targumist was reluctant to identify Zedekiah as “the LORD’s anointed, the breath of our life.”

According to both 2 Kgs. and 2 Chron. Josiah was the last of the righteous kings of Judah, whereas Zedekiah not only refused to heed the word of God spoken to him by Jeremiah he also refused to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, the one whom the LORD had appointed as his servant.⁶¹⁵ As a result of this change from Zedekiah to Josiah the targumist had to alter the allusions to Zedekiah’s capture in verse 20. The description in MT of the king being “taken in their pits” is a reference to Zedekiah’s having been taken in chains to Babylon,⁶¹⁶ but in the targum the text has become he “was locked up in Egypt’s snare⁶¹⁷ of corruption.” This change is dictated by the identification of Josiah as the anointed one. The conflict of Josiah’s time which ultimately led to his death was with Egypt⁶¹⁸ and the “snare of corruption” is perhaps a reference to the political ties with Egypt that are censured by the prophets.⁶¹⁹ Finally, the targumist specifies that it is in the shadow “of his merit” which they believed they would find safety. It is a small addition and alludes to the reforms which Josiah implemented after the “Book of the Law” was discovered in the Temple and because

⁶¹⁴“It seems that the writer stood fairly close to King Zedekiah, and was much grieved by his capture (v. 20).” Hillers, p. 151.

⁶¹⁵See 2 Chron. 36.11-4 and Jer. 27. Levine, p. 174, suggests that the targumist has specified Josiah in reaction to Christian associations of this verse with Jesus. This consideration may well have played a part in the current form of the text. It is not likely, however, that “the breath of our nostrils” refers to “the leaders” as Levine suggests. This connection is made within the midrash (LamR to 4.20), but there is no evidence of such a reading in the targum.

⁶¹⁶2 Kgs. 25.7 and Jer. 39.7, 52.11.

⁶¹⁷Note that the Aramaic term is singular as is P’s .

⁶¹⁸2 Kgs. 22.28-30 and 2 Chron. 20ff.

⁶¹⁹In TgLam see 1.19, 4.17, and 5.6. The first two verses speak of the Romans, but the reference to seeking help from other nations is already found in the Book of Lamentations. Various prophets chastise both Israel and Judah for seeking allegiances with Egypt, the very nation out of which the LORD had brought them. See especially Hos. 7.11, 12.1, and Jer. 2.18. As in Lam. 5.6, Assyria is often paralleled with Egypt in these prophecies.

of which he is remembered as one who “did what was right in the sight of the LORD.”⁶²⁰

3.4.21. Verses 21-22

שִׂישִׁי וְשִׂמְחֵי בֵּת-אֲדוֹם יוֹשְׁבֵי בְּאֶרֶץ עוֹז
גַּם-עֲלֶיךָ תִּעְבֶּר-כּוֹס תִּשְׁפְּרִי וְתִתְעָרִי:

תִּם-עוֹנֵךְ בֵּת-צִיּוֹן לֹא יוֹסִיף לְהַגְלוֹתְךָ
פְּקֹד עוֹנֵךְ בֵּת-אֲדוֹם גְּלָה עַל-חַטָּאתֶיךָ:

חדאי ובדוחי קושטנטינא קרתא דאדום רשיעא דמתבניאה בארע ארמיניאה בסגיין אוכלוסין דמן עמא דאדום אף עליך עתיד למיתי פורענותא ויצדון יתך פרכוואי ותיעבר עליך כס דלווט תרווי ותתרוקני:

ובתר כן ישלים עווייתך כנשתא דציון ותתפרקון על ידוי דמלכא משיחא דאליהו כהנא רבא ולא יוסיף יי תוב לאגלותיך ובי הוא זמנא אסער עוותיך רומי רשעא דמתבניאה באיטליאה ומליאה אוכלוסין מבני אדום וייתון פרסאי ויעיקון עלך וליצדון יתך ארום אתפרסם קדם יי על חובתיך:

Rejoice and be of good cheer *Constantinople*, city of *wicked* Edom, which is built in the land of Armenia with crowds from the people of Edom. Retribution is about to come upon even you, and the Parkevi will destroy you and the accursed cup shall pass to you and you shall become drunk and exposed.

And after this your iniquity will be finished, O Congregation of Zion. But you will be freed by the hands of the King Messiah and⁶²¹ *Elijah the High Priest* and the LORD will no longer exile you. And at that time I will punish your iniquities, *wicked Rome*, built in Italy and filled with crowds of Edomites. And the Persians will come and oppress you and destroy you for your sins have been made known before the LORD.

The Hebrew of verses 21 and 22 is innocuous yet these two verses are by far the most difficult in the entire targum and so it is appropriate that we address them as a unit. Much of the difficulty stems from the biblical poet’s use of the term “Edom.” Within its biblical context the poet is telling his neighbors, who refused to help Jerusalem at the moment of their greatest need, to enjoy their freedom since they too shall soon be punished by God.⁶²² As we have already noted, however, “Edom” was used by the rabbis as a circumlocution for Rome⁶²³ and our targumist makes use of its presence in this verse to update his message.⁶²⁴ Although our targumist represents the biblical אדום in both verses, he also identifies Edom with both Constantinople (verse 21) and Rome (verse 22). There is also a

⁶²⁰2 Chron. 34.8ff.

⁶²¹This translation follows Lagarde and the Walton Polyglot which both read נְאֻלְיָהוּ. YT does not contain these additions.

⁶²²See Hillers, pp. 152-3, and Westermann, pp. 205-6. LXX does not include “Uz” in its translation and the location of the “land of Uz” which the Edomites are said to be occupying is speculative. See Rudolph, p. 255, for a discussion of this issue and his references.

⁶²³See §3.4.17.

⁶²⁴See §5.2.2 for the relevance of these verses to the dating of TgLam.

parallelism formed between the two verses in which Constantinople will be destroyed by the Parkevi in verse 21 and Rome will be destroyed by the Persians in verse 22. It would seem that all we need to do is to identify the conflicts referred to in these verses with known historical events and we can then date at least this portion of our targum. Komlosh and Levey, for example, have used these verses to date TgLam to precisely 600-14 CE, suggesting that they express a time when Jews looked to the Sassanian Persians as their “deliverers from the yoke of Byzantium, but before Jerusalem was liberated in 614.”⁶²⁵ Unfortunately, the text is far from explicit and is, in fact, very confused making any such identification tenuous at best.

The most vexing question is the identity of פרכוי, the “Parkevi,” in verse 21. Jastrow identifies פרכוי as the “name of a country in Northern Arian,”⁶²⁶ but Levey states simply “identity of land uncertain.”⁶²⁷ Alexander, apparently following Jastrow, has argued that this term refers to the Parthians and the region southeast of the Caspian Sea.⁶²⁸ Alexander begins his discussion of Parkevi with TgNeof’s translation of the term “Riphat” in Gen. 10.3. “N’s ברבוי should be emended to ברכוי or even to פרכוי.”⁶²⁹ This reading is based upon an uncertain marginal note and its similarity to the text of Tg. 1 Chron. 1.6⁶³⁰ and TgLam

⁶²⁵Komlosh, p. 90. See also S. H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation*, (Cincinnati: HUCP, 1974), p. 136; and Alexander, “Textual Tradition,” pp. 2-3.

⁶²⁶Jastrow, p. 1229. “Cmp. Pers. Varkani, Bact. Verhkana for Hyrcani, a. Βαρκάνιοι = Υρκάνιοι.” See Alexander, *The Toponymy of the Targumim* (D. Phil., Oxon. 1974), p. 110.

⁶²⁷J. Levey, *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim Vol. II*, (Darmstadt, 1996 [reprint]), p. 291.

⁶²⁸“Parkevi is strictly the area to the south-east of the Caspian Sea called in Old Persian *Varkāna*; Pahlavi and New Persian *Gurgān*; Greek *Hurkania*; and Latin *Hyrcaia*. Besides the *Hurkanoi/Hurkanioi*, Greek writers speak of the *Barkanioi* and the *Parkanioi* as living in the same area. These are not, as they supposed, different peoples, but different ways of representing the one non-Greek name for the same people.” *Toponymy*, p. 110. See also “Textual Traditions,” pp. 2-3.

There is no clear etymological connection between the terms cited above and פרכוי. In a private correspondence Elizabeth Tucker, a Persian specialist at the Oriental Institute of the University of Oxford, stated that the term as found in TgLam cannot be an Iranian name because one would expect a spirant, not a K after PR. It appears that Alexander and McIvor have followed Jastrow’s uncertain reading of an obscure and difficult term.

⁶²⁹*Toponymy*, p. 110. See also McNamara, *The Aramaic Bible Vol. 1A*, ed. by K. Cathcart, et. al. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992), p. 81. McNamara reads the text as ‘Barkewi,’ but in his note (*i*) he comments “correcting *brbwy* of Nf text; Nfmg: ‘and Barkewi’ [sic] (*wprkwwy*).”

⁶³⁰Tg. 1 Chron. 1.6 also translates ריפת with פרכוי. Cambridge manuscript, MS. Or. Ee. 5.9 reads פרסווי. See J. Stanley McIvor, “The Targum of Chronicles,” in *The Aramaic Bible Vol. 19*, ed. by K. Cathcart, et. al. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), p. 36.

4.21. It must be remembered that in each occurrence of the term in these three targumim the textual traditions are far from unanimous.⁶³¹ In TgLam Lagarde and Bomberg II read פרכואי while Landauer⁶³² cites the Complutensian Polyglot which reads פרסאי and the same reading is found as a variant in Parma, Biblioteca Palatina 3218. YT, on the other hand, has a much simpler text and omits this word entirely. The reading of פרכואי is therefore far from certain.

The simplest explanation of פרכואי is that it is the result of a scribal error for פרסאי, “the Persians.” A פ could have been misread as a כ and a ו next to one another (פ ⇒ כו), but if we assume that פרכואי is a meaningless corruption there is the problem of *lectio difficilior*; it is unlikely that an intelligible text would have been replaced with an unintelligible one. Alexander has pointed out, however, that there is rabbinic precedent for identifying “Persians” with “Parthians.”⁶³³ If “Persian” can mean “Parthian” it is possible that there developed a transitive relationship so that, assuming פרכואי means “Parthians,” פרכואי is used in this verse to refer to Persians. This might be further supported by the fact that in our text the term appears to be in parallel with פרסאי of verse 22. Unfortunately, without further evidence it is impossible to identify פרכואי with certainty.

The next challenge in interpreting these verses is the reference to both Constantinople, “city of wicked Edom,” and “wicked Rome, built in Italy and filled with crowds of Edomites.” Constantinople is described as being “built in the land of Armenia” and this is the targumist’s rendering of the Hebrew ישבתי בארץ עוץ. LamR equates Uz with Persia and elsewhere it is identified by rabbinic texts with both Edom and Armenia.⁶³⁴ Geographically Constantinople falls within the bounds of both Persia and Armenia.

⁶³¹See above for variants in TgNeof Gen. 10.3 and Tg. 1 Chron. 1.6.

⁶³²Landauer, p. 512.

⁶³³See *b* Yom. 10a and LamR to 1.13. Although one must be cautious with dating a tradition by the names of the associated rabbis, both of these texts (attributed to R. Joshua b. Levi, in the name of Rabbi, and R. Simeon b. Yohai) clearly refer to Parthians rather than Sassanian Persians. See Alexander, *Toponymy*, p. 112.

⁶³⁴“Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom:’ this is Caesarea. ‘Dweller in the land of Uz:’ this is Persia,” LamR to 4.21. “Uz” is mentioned as Job’s homeland in Job 1.1, but its precise location was and is open to speculation. The rabbis equated it with Edom. See GenR to 22.20 and NumR to 15.2.

Ideologically our targumist tells us that Constantinople is not only a “city of wicked Edom,” but she is also built up with large forces from the people of Edom. This could be a reference to Constantinople as the eastern capital of the late Roman Empire. However, as Alexander points out, we cannot simply equate Constantinople and the “Rome” of verse 22 with “east Rome” since “the Rome of verse 22 is specified as being in Italy.”⁶³⁵ Verse 22 also describes the Italian Rome as “filled with crowds of Edomites.” Since both Rome and Constantinople are described as being full of Edomites (i.e., enemies of the Jews) it may be that the Edomites of verses 21 and 22 are not just Romans; they are Christians.

We have already mentioned that Edom is frequently used within rabbinic literature to refer to Rome, but the term was later applied to Christianity in general, thus the references to Edomites could also be a circumlocution for Christians. Furthermore, the references to both the eastern and western “Rome” could be a type of hendiadys intended to designate all of Christianity. The conflict described between Rome/Constantinople and Parkevi/Persians would be referring to the Sassanian Persian victories over the Byzantine Empire. This would place the composition of these verses to a time when the targumist was able to perceive the growing power of Persia, but before the Byzantine Empire was able to re-exert its power over the levant region. This time frame, between 600 and 629 (when Jerusalem was recaptured from Sassanian Persia) is the time frame suggested by Komlosh.⁶³⁶ Regardless of the historical context it is clear that our targumist expected God to bring retribution upon Israel’s enemies and free Jerusalem. “And after this your iniquity will be finished, O Congregation of Zion. But you will be freed by the hands of the King Messiah and Elijah the High Priest and the LORD will no longer exile you.” As in 2.22 the liberation of God’s people will be accomplished by the “King Messiah,” but in this instance he is aided by Elijah the High Priest.⁶³⁷ The fact that the Messiah is listed first is probably not an indication that the targumist believed that the Messiah would arrive before his herald Elijah.⁶³⁸ Landauer views this reference to Elijah as High Priest as evidence for dating

⁶³⁵ *Toponymy*, p. 111.

⁶³⁶ Komlosh, p. 90. This reading, of course, partially based upon the tentative reading of פרכואי as פרסאי, but in all other respects it is a simple reading. In contrast Alexander (p. 112), as a result of his interpretation of פרכואי as Parthians, suggests that these verses represent a confusion of two separate interpretations. “There are elements which relate to the conflict between Byzantium and Sassanian Persia over Armenia (קונשטנטינא [v. 21]/ארמיניאה [v. 21]/פרסאי [v. 22]); there are other elements, however, which allude to the conflict between Rome and Parthia over Armenia (רומי [v. 22]/ארמיניאה [v. 21]/פרכואי [v. 21]). A reference to the earlier struggle has been redefined to apply to the latter.”

⁶³⁷ It should be noted that Urb. 1 reads ותתפרקון על ידי דמלכא משיחא דאליהו כהנא רבא, but Lagarde and the Walton Polyglot both read ואליהו. YT does not contain these additions.

⁶³⁸ Levine, p. 176. The role of Elijah in ushering in the Messianic age is well known and beyond the

TgLam to the Islamic period since the only other texts which refer to Elijah in this manner are found in TgPsJ, the final redaction of which took place no earlier than the seventh century CE.⁶³⁹ This does not militate against an earlier date, since TgPsJ contains material which is much earlier. If these verses do, in fact, refer to the conflict between Sassanian Persia and the Byzantine Empire then it may be that TgLam was redacted in the seventh century CE, possibly in the opening decades of the century. The evidence of these verses is, however, difficult to decipher and any dating based upon it must remain conjecture.⁶⁴⁰

scope of this study. For ample citations see Ginzberg, *Legends*, Vol. IV, pp. 195-235, and the accompanying notes in Vol. V.

⁶³⁹The major sources for this tradition are found in TgPsJ (Exod. 6.18, 40.10 and Num. 30.4). For the dates of TgPsJ see Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations," p. 219, and McNamara, *The Aramaic Bible, Vol. 1A*, pp. 43-6.

⁶⁴⁰See §5.

3.5. TgLam Chapter 5

3.5.1. Verse 1

זְכוֹר יְהוָה מָה-הָיָה לָנוּ הַבֵּיט וּרְאֵה אֶת-תְּרַפְתָּנוּ:

הוּי דכיר [יי]⁶⁴¹ מה דאתגזר למהוּי לנא אסתכל מן שמיא וחזי ית כסופנא:

Remember, [O LORD], what *was decreed* to befall us; look down *from heaven* and see our disgrace.

The biblical text of Chapter Five does not maintain the acrostic form that is found in the other four chapters. It does, however, have 22 lines which equal the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each line of Chapter Five is a single stich which also deviates from the normal pattern of the other four poems (although each verse of Chapter Three is only one stich there are 66 verses, three lines for each letter of the alphabet).

As noted, Urb. 1 omits יי, but this addition is necessary in order to represent MT and is in most other MSS. This verse is not labelled “prosaic expansion” since the targumist has added דאתגזר in order to emphasize that the suffering which has come upon Israel is due to God’s ordination rather than from mere chance or human will.⁶⁴² As in 2.20 and 3.50 we are told that the LORD resides in heaven, removed from the world, yet able to look down and see his people’s suffering.

3.5.2. Verse 2

נְחַלְתָּנוּ נְהַפְכָה לְזָרִים בְּתֵינוּ לְנֹכְרִים:

אחסתנא אתהפכת לחלונאין ביתנא לעמין נוכראין:

Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers; our house to foreign peoples.

Prosaic Expansion. The targumist has provided a literal rendering of the verse adding עמין, so that “foreigners” become “foreign peoples.” This has no effect on the meaning of the text.

⁶⁴¹Found in Lagarde and all YT MSS.

⁶⁴²See Levine, p. 179.

3.5.3. Verse 3

יְתוּמִים הָיִינוּ, אֵין אָב אֲמִתֵּינוּ כְּאֶלְמָנוֹת:

הוינא מתילן ליתמין דלית להון אבא אמהתנא כארמלן דאזלו גבריהום בקרוי ימא ומספקא להון אין אנון קיימין:

We have become *like* orphans who have no father, our mothers like widows *whose husbands have gone into the cities of the sea and it is uncertain if they are alive.*

The targumist has built upon the imagery inherent within MT, adding מתילן as a parallel to the comparative כ of the second stich.⁶⁴³ This is then extended with the description of the mothers as those “whose husbands have gone into the cities of the sea.” The Mishnah uses the phrase מדינת הים, “province of the sea,” to refer to any area outside of Palestine except Babylon and it seems likely that this is what our targumist has in mind.⁶⁴⁴ The targum does not explain why or how the husbands have gone to the cities, but since the targum states that it was unknown whether or not the husbands were alive, and given the context of Lamentations, it is implied that they were taken captive and carried off to foreign parts.⁶⁴⁵ Meanwhile the wives and children wait at home without knowing whether the men are dead or alive. This creates a halakhic problem since such a woman would be considered an *agunah* (“forsaken”) who could not remarry without either a *get* (a bill of divorce) or evidence of her husband’s death.⁶⁴⁶ The women in verse 3, therefore, are “like widows” because their husbands are no longer with them, but since they have no evidence of their death the women cannot remarry. This verse provides us with another interpretation which is not directly dependent upon a specific midrashic tradition and yet is specifically rabbinic.

⁶⁴³Gordis argues, based upon analogy with the first half of this verse, that the כ should be read as assertative, “are indeed widows” (“Commentary on the Text of Lamentations (Part Two),” *JQR* 58, 1967, p. 32). Levine, p. 180, follows Gordis’ reading of MT while recognizing the theological concern of the targumist. Rudolph, p. 260, like most scholars and modern translations, reads the כ as comparative, “Waisen sind wir geworden, vaterlos, unsere <Mutter eine Witwe> gleich,” p. 256.

⁶⁴⁴See *M. Git* 1.1-2, *b. Git* 8a, and Danby, p. 307, n. 2.

⁶⁴⁵See verse 5 (§3.5.5) which describes the Israelites going into exile to Babylon.

⁶⁴⁶For discussion of a *get* that has been sent from a husband who is “beyond the sea” see *M. Git.* 1 and 2. For discussion of the evidence required to determine that a husband is, in fact, dead see *M. Yeb.* 15.

3.5.4. Verse 4

מִיָּמֵינוּ בְּכֶסֶף שְׁתֵּינוּ עֲצֵינוּ בְּמַחִיר יָבֵאוּ:

מימנא בכספא שתינא וקיסנא בדמין ייתון:

We drink our water for money and our wood comes at a price.

Verbatim. The targumist provides a word for word translation.

3.5.5. Verse 5

עַל צְוֹאֲרֵנוּ נִרְדַּפְנוּ יִגְעָנוּ לֹא הוּנַח-לָנוּ:

על פריקת צוורנא אטעננא כד הוינא אזלן בשבייתא חמא נבוכד נצר רשיעא סרכיא דבני ישראל דאזלן ריקנין פקיד לחייטא ספרי אוריתא ולמעבד מנהון גואלקן ומליאו יתהום מן פרידא דעל ספר פרת וטען יתהום על צווריהום בההיא זמנא לעינא ולא הוות נייחא לנא:

Upon the bone of our necks we were laden when we went into exile. The wicked Nebuchadnezzar saw that the commanders of the Israelites were going without any load [and] he ordered that they sew Torah scrolls and make sacks out of them. And they filled them with pebbles from the edge of the Euphrates and they loaded them upon their necks. At that time we were tired and there was no rest for us.

This verse represents our last major addition to the text of Lamentations and the Hebrew upon which it is based is not without its difficulties. The text as pointed reads “upon our necks we are pursued” and while Albrektson argues that “it makes good enough sense,” most commentators emend the text in some way.⁶⁴⁷ Most commentators follow Symmachus and emend על to על so that the text reads “with a yoke on our necks we were hard driven.”⁶⁴⁸ Our targumist certainly creates a similar image with his transformation of this verse, but he does not alter the preposition על. Instead he translates the Hebrew נרדפנו with the unrelated אטעננא so that their necks were “laden” when they went into exile.⁶⁴⁹ The last stich of the verse is translated directly,⁶⁵⁰ but the intervening material takes the verse in a new direction.

The Hebrew text speaks of general oppression and weariness, but the targum

⁶⁴⁷See Albrektson, p. 197, and the works cited therein.

⁶⁴⁸NRSV. Symmachus reads ζυγός for על. See BHS and Hillers, p. 157.

⁶⁴⁹One might argue that it is אילן which corresponds to the Hebrew נרדפנו, but this would be ignoring the fact that both אטעננא and נרדפנו are passive forms whereas אילן is in the simple active form.

⁶⁵⁰Notice that our targumist apparently follows the *qere* ולא. This is not conclusive, of course, since such an addition would be natural for our targumist.

envisions specific acts of cruelty which were levied upon the Jews. A parallel to this midrash is found in PR 28.

For as the wicked Nebuchadnezzar was seated in a ship, he and all his nobles and all his princes ... all the kings of Judah, who had been put into iron chains, were walking naked along the edge of the river. The wicked Nebuchadnezzar looked and saw them. He said to his servants: Why are such as these walking without burdens? Instantly the servants brought burdens and loaded them upon the shoulders of the kings of Judah until their heads were bowed down because of the burden's weight. Thereupon the kings of Judah said of themselves, *With burdens on our necks we are pursued* (Lam. 5.5).⁶⁵¹

Our targum describes a scene very similar to that of PR, but the burdens are described bitterly as Torah scrolls which they were ordered to fill with stones from the banks of the Euphrates.⁶⁵² This addition describes the bitter plight of the Babylonian exile and places the targum once again within the historical context of the destruction of the First Temple. This aggadic addition adds to the pathos of TgLam by emphasizing not only the humiliation of the exiles, but also the desecration of the Torah scrolls.

3.5.6. Verse 6

מְצָרִים נָתַנוּ יָד אֲשׁוּר לְשִׁבְעַ לֶחֶם:

מצרים יהבנא סעד לאתפרנסא תמן ולא תור למסבע לחמא:

We gave support to Egypt *so that we might be sustained there* and to Assyria so that we might have enough bread.

Prosaic Expansion. The targumist explains MT's נתנו יד with the prosaic יהבנא סעד לאתפרנסא תמן. The allusion to political alliances which ultimately failed to preserve Judah remains,⁶⁵³ but is not expanded by the targum.

⁶⁵¹William G. Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati, Yale Judaica Series, Vol. XVIII*, (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1968), pp., 555-6. All quotes from PR are from Braude unless otherwise noted.

⁶⁵²Yalqut to Lam. 5.5 has a similar midrash which also describes the Jews being forced to use Torah scrolls as bags for the sand and stones which they were forced to carry. See Levine, pp. 183-4.

⁶⁵³See §3.4.17. See also Hos. 7.11, 12.1, and Jer. 2.18, 36.

3.5.7. Verse 7

אַבְתֵּינוּ חָטְאוּ אֵינָם אֲנַחְנוּ עֲוֹנֹתֵיהֶם סָבְלָנוּ:

אבהתנא חבו וליתיהום בעלמא ונחנא בתריהון עוייתיהום סוברנא:

Our fathers sinned and are no longer *in the world*, but we have borne their sins *after them*.

Prosaic Expansion. Once again the targumist as done little to alter this verse, but he has followed the *qere* which supplies a ו before both אינם and אנחנו. It may be, as Levine suggests, that since this verse as it stands runs counter to Jeremiah's announcement that each person is responsible for their own sins the additions to this verse are intended to suggest that the sons now bear their sins *after* rather than *because* of their father's sins.⁶⁵⁴ The text which Levine has produced, which he says is a reading of Urb. 1,⁶⁵⁵ omits a significant portion of the second half of the line, reading only אבהתנא חבו וליתיהום בעלמא ונחנא סוברנא.⁶⁵⁶ "The *ms.* copyist has omitted (inadvertently, since it includes a direct translation of Heb. (ואנחנו) the phrase which appears in most *mss.* as אבהתנא חבו וליתיהום סוברנא."⁶⁵⁷ Levine's statement is perplexing since the text is clearly visible in the facsimile of Urb. 1 which he produced. Presumably he had a different MS in front of him, but it is impossible to say which since all of the WT MSS available to me (and the YT MSS cited by Van der Heide) contain the text supposedly missing.

3.5.8. Verse 8

עֲבָדִים מְשֻׁלּוּ בְנוֹ פֶרֶק אֵין מִיָּדָם:

בנוי דחם דאתיהיבו עבדין לבנוי דשם אנון שליטו בנא פריק לית מידהום:

The sons of Ham, who were given as slaves to the sons of Shem, ruled over us and there was no one to deliver us from their hands.

The addition which is placed at the beginning of this verse has its roots in Gen. 9.25 ("Cursed be Canaan; lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers") and specifies the עבדים

⁶⁵⁴Levine, p. 184. See, e.g., Jer. 31.29.

⁶⁵⁵Levine, p. 21.

⁶⁵⁶Levine, pp. 58 and 184.

⁶⁵⁷Levine, p. 184. The WT also read ונחנא rather than ואנחנו, but this reading is found in YT.

who now rule over Israel. The midrash to Gen. 9.25 tells of how Ham saw his father naked and as a result Noah cursed Ham's son Canaan.

And Noah awoke from his wine (Gen. 9.24): he was sobered from his wine. *And knew what his youngest son had done unto him.* Here it means, his worthless son, as you read, *Because the brazen altar that was before the Lord was too little to receive the burnt-offering*, etc. (1 Kgs. 8.64). *And he said: cursed be Canaan* (Gen 9.25): Ham sinned and Canaan is cursed! R. Judah and R. Nehemiah disagreed. R. Judah said: Since it is written, *And God blessed Noah and his sons* (Gen. 9.1), while there cannot be a curse where a blessing has been given, consequently, *He said: cursed be Canaan.* R. Nehemiah explained: It was Canaan who saw it [in the first place] and informed them, therefore the curse is attached to him who did wrong. R. Berekiah said: Noah grieved very much in the Ark that he had no young son to wait on him, and declared, 'When I go out I will beget a young son to do this for me.' But when Ham acted thus to him, he exclaimed, 'You have prevented me from begetting a young son to serve me, therefore that man [your son] will be a servant to his brethren!' R. Huna said in R. Joseph's name: [Noah declared], 'You have prevented me from begetting a fourth son, therefore I curse your fourth son.' R. Huna also said in R. Joseph's name: You have prevented me from doing something in the dark [cohabitation], therefore your seed will be ugly and dark-skinned. R. Hiyya said: Ham and the dog copulated in the Ark, therefore Ham came forth black-skinned while the dog publicly exposes its copulation.⁶⁵⁸

In spite of this rich midrashic tradition the addition found in our targum requires nothing more than the biblical text itself. The curse of Canaan is that "lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers," but "blessed by the LORD my God be Shem; and let Canaan be his slave."⁶⁵⁹ This is clearly the basis for our targumist's interpretation and although Gen. 10.6 tells us that the descendants of Ham included "Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan," it is impossible to determine if he had a specific group in mind which he identified with the "sons of Ham." The targumist's point with this addition is to demonstrate the reversal of Israel's fortunes. This message is already present within MT, but by indicating that it was the sons of Ham who reigned over the sons of Shem the targumist illustrates the extent of Israel's punishment. Her sin and resulting punishment was so great that even Noah's curse/blessing had been suspended, allowing Israel's enemies to rule over her.

⁶⁵⁸GenR to 9.25.

⁶⁵⁹Gen. 9.25-6.

3.5.9. Verse 9

בַּנְּפֹשֵׁינוּ נִבְיָא לְחַמְנוּ מִפְּנֵי חֶרֶב הַמְדָּבָר:

בסכנת נפשנא נייתי לחם פרנסותנא מן קדם קטול דחרבא דאתי מן סטר מדברא:

At the risk of our lives we gather bread to sustain us from before the slaying sword which comes from across the wilderness.

The Hebrew of this verse is very compact and terse. The targumist has explained בַּנְּפֹשֵׁינוּ as בסכנת נפשנא and sword has been modified such that it is no longer “the sword of the wilderness,” but is instead the “slaying sword which comes from across the wilderness.”⁶⁶⁰ Again we find the biblical text is being amplified in order to heighten the dramatic tension. In this verse it is our targumist’s silence which is perhaps most interesting. He does not, as many modern commentators do,⁶⁶¹ attempt to identify the “sword of the wilderness” with any specific group. Instead the sword remains anonymous, as it is in MT.

3.5.10. Verse 10

עוֹרֵנוּ כְּתַנּוּר נִכְמְרוּ מִפְּנֵי זְלַצְפוֹת רָעָב:

משכנא הי כתנורא אתקדרו מן קדם מפח כפנא:

Our skin has become black like an oven from before the despair of starvation.

Verbatim. Our targum has translated the Hebrew directly with no substantive changes made to the text. נִכְמְרוּ has been interpreted as “to grow dark, turn black”⁶⁶² and is translated with אתקדרו. Other ancient versions, and some modern commentators, have preferred to read it as “to shrink, be wrinkled.”⁶⁶³

⁶⁶⁰See §3.4.9 for similar imagery.

⁶⁶¹See Hillers, p. 157-8, where the term is identified with “bedouins.”

⁶⁶²BDB, p. 485a. It can also mean “to grow hot.”

⁶⁶³See Albrektson, p. 200, and Rudolph, p. 258. Hillers reads “to turn black,” p. 158.

3.5.11. Verse 11

נָשִׁים בְּצִיּוֹן עָנוּ בְּתֵלֶת בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה:

נשיא דהוו נסיבן לגבר בציון אתעניאו מן רומאי ובתולתא בקרוי יהודה מן כסדאי:

Women who were married to men in Zion were raped by Romans. And virgins in the cities of Judah by Chaldeans.

The Hebrew parallelism of נשים/בתלת is interpreted by our targumist as representing two distinct groups, wherein the נשים specifies *married* women in contrast with the *virgins* of the Judean cities. Thus we find that the “women who were married to men in Zion were raped by Romans,” but the Chaldeans raped the virgins of Judah. Our targumist’s interpretation of verse 11 is clearly related to the midrash of LamR.

Nebuzaradan commanded his troops saying: ‘The God of this people hates lewdness; so take care not to touch any married woman.’ When the [unmarried] women heard this, they went and said to a man, ‘We will eat our own food and clothe ourselves at our own expense, only let your name be attached to us’; that is what is written, *And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying: We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name* (Isa. 4.1).⁶⁶⁴

According to our targumist, the Romans apparently did not have such qualms about raping married women. As in 1.19 the targumist refers to the destruction of both the First and Second Temples in the same verse.

3.5.12. Verse 12

שָׂרִים בְּיָדָם נָתְלוּ פְּנֵי זְקֵנִים לֹא נִתְדָּרוּ:

רברבנין בידיהון אצטליבו אפי סביא לא סברו:

Princes were hung up by their hands and they did not show respect to the elders.

Verbatim. The Hebrew singular יד has been made plural and the targumist has chosen *צלב, “to hang, impale,” in order to translate נתלו rather than the cognate *תלי.⁶⁶⁵ Thus we could also translate the text as “princes were crucified by their hands.” No doubt it is the reference to their hands which caused the targumist to be more specific in his translation.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁴LamR to 5.11.

⁶⁶⁵Jastrow, p. 1671b.

⁶⁶⁶Levine comments that “the targum renders זקן [sic, MT is זקנים] as pl.: סביא, for according to the midrash [LamR to 5.12], this second phrase is related to the first. ‘When a governor would enter a town, he

3.5.13. Verse 13

בְּחֹרִים טְחוֹן נְשָׂאוֹ וּבְעָרִים בְּעֵץ בְּשָׁלוֹ:

רובין ריחיא נטלו וטליא בצליבת קיסא תקלו:

The young men carried millstones; and the boys staggered under crosses.

The Hebrew of the first clause is difficult due to the *hapax legomenon* טחון which probably means “grinding-mill.”⁶⁶⁷ Thus the text is often rendered “young men carried the mill,” but others read טחון as an infinitive without the prefixed ל. Hillers, for example, translates the phrase “they have taken young men to grind,” and adds that the sense of the verse is that “young men had to do women’s work.”⁶⁶⁸ Our targumist appears to follow the former reading while preferring a plural reading of “millstones,” presumably in order to provide agreement with the plural רובין/רובים.⁶⁶⁹ In light of verse 12 our targumist has added that the youths “staggered under *crosses*.” Thus the “wood” of MT becomes בצליבת קיסא, “the tree of crucifixion.”⁶⁷⁰ This minor addition increases the pathos of the moment, since not only are the boys to be killed they are forced to carry the means of their own execution.

took its *leading men* and crucified them. The *elders* would go to him and try to dissuade him from doing this to them, but he would refuse to obey them. Therefore it is said....” The italics are Levine’s. This serves to highlight the difficulties presented with reading the midrashim alongside the targum. Clearly there is a relationship between these texts (see §4.6). However, often what Levine sees as related to the midrash is already present within the biblical text. In this case Levine’s interpretation is also flawed due to his apparently reading the Hebrew as singular זקן.

⁶⁶⁷BDB, p. 377b. See Albrektson, pp. 201-3, for a full discussion of the issues involved. “As *qital*-forms often denote tools and instruments, the traditional rendering ‘mill’ from טחן ‘grind’ is probably correct.”

⁶⁶⁸Hillers, p. 158. NRSV has a similar translation, “young men are compelled to grind.”

⁶⁶⁹The midrash (and the Vulgate) interpret this passage in sexual terms. “Another interpretation of *the young men have borne the mill* (tehon) is to regard it as a euphemistic expression, as in the phrase *And he did grind* (tohen) *in the prison-house* (Judg. 16.21)” (LamR to 5.13). *b* Sot. 10a says that “to grind” means sexual intercourse. “R. Johanan said: ‘Grind’ means nothing else than [sexual] transgression; and thus it is stated: *Then let my wife grind unto another* (Job 31.10). It teaches that everyone brought his wife to him to the prison that she might bear a child by him [who would be as strong as he was]. R. Papa said: That is what the proverb tells, ‘Before the wine-drinker [set] wine, before a ploughman a basket of roots.’” Our targum, however, does not even allude to this line of interpretation, rather it represents a fairly literal reading.

⁶⁷⁰See Hillers who assumes a textual error and reads עטב, assuming that the ט has dropped out due to the “similarity to the subsequent כ, a kind of haplography,” p. 159.

3.5.14. Verse 14

זְקֵנִים מִשְׁעַר שְׁבָתוֹ בְּתוֹרִים מִנְּגִינָתָם:

סביא מתרע סנהדרי' אתבטלו ורובין מן בית זמרהון:

The elders ceased from the gates of the Sanhedrin; and the young men from their houses of music.

In the targum the “gates” of MT (which referred to the elders sitting in judgement at the gates of the city) become “the gates of the Sanhedrin.” This verse is applied to the Sanhedrin in *b* Sot. 48a.

“How do we know that the text, [*They shall not drink wine with a song*] (Isa. 24.9) — applies to the time when the Sanhedrin ceased? — R. Huna, son of R. Joshua, said: Because Scripture states: *The elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music* (Lam. 5.14).

In the same manner as the targum, R. Huna equates the biblical text “the elders ceased from the gate” with the abolition of the Sanhedrin following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. In this instance, there is clearly a common tradition, if not a direct interdependence, behind this interpretation. The only change to the second half of the verse is that the young cease “from their houses of music” rather than simply “from their music.” This is probably due to the fact that the first clause identifies a place (“gates”) and the targumist seeks to create a balanced parallel.⁶⁷¹

3.5.15. Verse 15

שְׁבֵת מְשׁוֹשׁ לְבָנוּ נִהְפַךְ לְאֵבֶל מְחֻלָּנוּ:

בטל חדות לבבנא אתהפך לאבלא חינוגנא:

The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has turned into mourning.

Verbatim. The targum has provided a literal translation which does not alter the meaning of the text.

⁶⁷¹Levine, p. 189.

3.5.16. Verse 16

נִפְלָה עֲטֻרַת רֵאשֵׁנוּ אוֹי-נָא לָנוּ כִּי חָטֵאנוּ:
נפלת כליליא דרישנא ווי לנא ארום חבנא:

The crown of our head has fallen; Woe to us! for we have sinned.

Verbatim. As in verse 15, the targumist has provided a literal translation of MT which includes maintaining the singular form of “the crown of our head.”

3.5.17. Verse 17

על-זָה הָיָה דָוָה לָבְנוּ עַל-אַלְהָה חֲשָׁכוּ עֵינֵינוּ:
על דין בית מקדשנא דאתצדי הוה חליש לבבנא ועל אלין עמא בית ישארל דאזלן בגלותא מתמן הוו חשכין
עיננא:

Because of our Temple which is desolate, our heart was weak. And because of these people of the House of Israel who went into exile from there our eyes have become dim.

The targumist has identified זָה and אֱלֹהִים as the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the people, respectively,⁶⁷² and has thus provided the motivation for the nation’s grief.

LamR has a similar reading.

R. Eleazar b. R. Jose of Galilee said: Because a woman separates herself from her husband a few days, the Torah calls her ‘*dawah*,’ as it is written, *And of her that is sick (dawah) with her impurity* (Lev. 15.33); how much more should we be called ‘faint’ who are separated from the house of our life, namely the Temple, many days and many years! Therefore it is said, *for this our heart is faint, for these things our eyes are dim.*⁶⁷³

Such an interpretation arises so naturally from this text that it is impossible to say if there is any interdependence between these texts. The targum to this verse is a complete unit and does not require knowledge of the midrash in order to understand the text.

⁶⁷²See Hillers, p. 159, for a discussion of the grammatical issues involved with MT.

⁶⁷³LamR to 5.17.

3.5.18. Verse 18

על הר-ציון ששָׁמֵם שׁוֹעֲלִים הִלְכוּ-בוֹ:

על טורא דציון דהוא צדי תעלין הליכו ביה:

Because of Mount Zion which is desolate; foxes prowled on it.

Verbatim. The Hebrew has some minor difficulties, but our targumist translates it word-for-word.⁶⁷⁴

3.5.19. Verse 19

אַתָּה יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תֵּשֵׁב כְּסֵאֲךָ לְדֹר וָדוֹר:

את הוא יי לעלם בית מותבך בשמי מרומא כורסי יקרך לדרי דריא:

You, O LORD, are eternal. Your dwelling place is in the heavenly heights. Your glorious throne is from generation to generation.

The targumist has made some minor additions to this verse. The Hebrew תשב is interpreted as “your dwelling place,” בית מותבך, and it is located by the targumist in the “heavenly heights.”⁶⁷⁵ This serves to remind the audience of both God’s eternity and the fact that he is now removed from them due to their rebellion. The targumist embellishes the text by describing God’s throne as “glorious.”

3.5.20. Verse 20

לְמָה לְנִצָּחַת תִּשְׁכַּחֲנוּ תַעֲזֹבֵנוּ לְאַרְךָ יָמִים:

למה לעלמין תשליננא תשבקננא לאורכות יומין:

Will you forget us forever and forsake us for a long time?

Verbatim. This passionate plea which begins the final prayer of the Book of Lamentations has not been altered by our targumist. It remains an enduring question.

⁶⁷⁴See Hillers, p. 159-60, and Levine, p. 192, for discussion of these issues.

⁶⁷⁵See §3.3.41 and §3.5.1.

3.5.21. Verse 21

הַשִּׁיבֵנו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנָשׁוּבָה תְּחִלָּתָנוּ כְּקִדְמוֹת:

אתיב יתנא יי לותך וניתוב בתיובתא שלמתא תחדת יומנא לטב כזמן יומיא טביא דהוו מלקדמין:

Restore us, O LORD, to yourself and we will return *in complete repentance*. May you renew our days *for good* as *the festival days* of old.

This verse is a call for God to bring his people back to himself, but it also states that God is not the only active agent. Israel must also turn back to God. This tension within MT is exploited by the targumist as he emphasizes the responsibility of the nation to truly repent, וניתוב בתיובתא שלמתא. The midrash notices this characteristic of the verse and uses it to similar effect.

The Community of Israel spake before the Holy One, blessed be He: ‘Lord of the Universe, it depends upon Thee, so *turn thou us unto thee*.’ He said to them, ‘It depends upon you, as it is said, *Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts*’ (Mal. 3.7). The Community spake before Him: ‘Lord of the Universe, it depends upon Thee, as it is said, *Restore us, O God of our salvation* (Ps. 85.5), and therefore it is said, *turn thou us unto thee, o lord, and we shall be turned*.⁶⁷⁶

Thus in both TgLam and LamR verse 21 is seen as a unifying text, which demonstrates that God will draw his people back to himself, but they too must participate and repent of their sins and return to him. The “days of old” of MT are identified with the festival days that had ceased with the destruction of Jerusalem.⁶⁷⁷ Following rabbinic tradition,⁶⁷⁸ this verse was also repeated, in Hebrew, after the reading of the final verse of the targum and served as a benediction. Thus, at the end of the commemoration of the ninth of Ab the reconciliatory tone of verse 21 and its hope for the future would be the final message imparted by TgLam.

⁶⁷⁶LamR to 5.21.

⁶⁷⁷See §3.1.4.

⁶⁷⁸See Sof. 40b and y Meg. 75a.

3.5.22. Verse 22

כִּי אִם-מָאֵס מְאֹסְתֵנוּ קִצְפָּתָ עָלֵינוּ עַד-מְאֹד:

ארום אילהן מיקץ תיקוץ בנא רגזתא עלוונא עד לחדא:
השיבנו יהוה אליך ונשובה חדש ימינו כקדם

For you have utterly loathed us; you have been extremely angry with us.

Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old.

Verbatim. This verse is the anchor of the Book of Lamentations and has, as a result of its strong tone, received a wide variety of interpretations.⁶⁷⁹ Some have tried to read כִּי אִם as a question, “Or have you utterly rejected us?” (RSV), but the use of כִּי אִם to introduce a question is unattested.⁶⁸⁰ The most probable reading is that כִּי אִם is used as an adversative, “But instead you have utterly rejected us.”⁶⁸¹ Our targumist has followed the Hebrew text closely, translating כִּי אִם with ארום אילהן. We have already noted that rabbinic tradition states that the public reading of the scroll cannot end on a somber note, therefore Urb. 1 repeats verse 21 (in Hebrew) after verse 22.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁹See Hillers, pp. 160-1, for a full discussion of the various interpretations.

⁶⁸⁰NRSV reads “Unless you have utterly rejected us.”

⁶⁸¹Hillers, p. 156.

⁶⁸²See §3.5.21. Hillers points out that this tradition supports the adversative reading of verse 22, p. 161.

Chapter 4. Analysis

We have seen throughout the Commentary that TgLam has a relatively simple message: Jerusalem deserved her fate as the result of Israel's grievous sins. In this chapter we shall examine *how* the targumist has modified the biblical text in order to convey or emphasize this message. This will be accomplished through the analysis of the different literary devices employed in TgLam. These include the placement of aggadic additions, the method of translation used (such as "dramatic heightening" and interpreting a passage according to the principle of *מדה כנגד מדה*), the use of specific terms (such as *כנשתא* and *מדת דינא*).⁶⁸³ We will also examine the relationship between TgLam and the broader rabbinic context. We begin by addressing the most notable structural feature of TgLam, the major expansion of Lam. 1.1-4.

4.1. Structure

TgLam 1.1-4: A Theological Prologue

One of the most remarkable features of the targum to Lamentations is the fact that a disproportionately large amount of the aggadic material added to the biblical text occurs in the first four verses of the TgLam.⁶⁸⁴ In an attempt to quantify the additional material that the targumist has incorporated into his translation, I have employed a very simple, but useful method. First, I have counted the number of words in MT and then in the targumic text (TT) for the entire book and then examined where and in what ratios the targumist has

⁶⁸³For a similar study of "exegetical terms and phrases" see Chilton, *The Glory of Israel*. Unlike Chilton's study our analysis will go beyond the phrases used.

⁶⁸⁴See my "Targum Lamentations 1.1-4: A Theological Prologue," *Targum Studies*, vol. 3, *Ernie Clarke Memorial*, ed. Paul V. M. Flesher, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, forthcoming).

added material to MT. This simple study brings some surprising evidence to light. Table 1 lists by chapter the number of words in each text, the number of words added to MT in order to achieve TT, and the ratio of the number of words in TT to the number of words in MT.

<u>Table 1</u>				
Chapter	MT	TT	Diff.	Ratio TT/MT
1	376	932	556	2.5
2	381	648	267	1.7
3	381	607	226	1.6
4	257	438	181	1.7
5	144	250	106	1.7

As one can see Chapter One has the most significant addition with 556 words being added to TT, resulting in a ratio of 2.5. But what is perhaps more startling is that the ratio for the four subsequent chapters is very nearly the same: 1.7. This is all the more remarkable since the subsequent chapters vary substantially in length, but still maintain approximately the same ratio.

A closer look at Chapter One of our targum reveals that the vast bulk of additional material is to be found in the first four verses. If we exclude those four verses from the calculation, the ratio for Chapter One more closely matches those of the subsequent four chapters (Table 2) and the ratio of the first four verse becomes even more dramatic at 5.0 TT/MT.

<u>Table 2</u>				
Verses	MT	TT	Diff.	Ratio TT/MT
1.1-4	64	322	258	5.0
1.5-22	312	610	298	1.9

It is clear that the greatest amount of additional material is to be found in the first four verses of Chapter One. Our present concern is to determine how this peculiar structure came about and what its purpose is.

When the material added to the first four verses is examined it becomes clear that each addition serves to support the primary message of TgLam: the destruction of Jerusalem was the direct result of Israel having sinned greatly.⁶⁸⁵ In verse 1, the targumist uses the consonantal similarities between אֵיכָה of Lam. 1.1 and אֵיכָה (“Where are you?”) of Gen. 3.9 in order to compare the manner and method of Jerusalem’s punishment with that of Adam and Eve when they were expelled from the Garden of Eden. The Attribute of Justice then announces that Jerusalem is in her current state “*because* of the greatness of her rebellious sin which was within her.” As with Adam and Eve’s banishment from Eden, Jerusalem had rebelled against God and so her punishment and the banishment of her people was deserved. This is all added to the first stich of the biblical text which simply cries out, “How lonely sits the city which once was full of people!”

In verse 2 an aggadic tradition based upon Num. 14.1 (and also found in NumR to 14.1, *b* San. 104b, and *b* Ta’an. 29a) is inserted that attributes God’s decision to allow Jerusalem to be destroyed to the Israelite’s lack of faith that God would deliver Canaan into their hands. This addition is based upon the similarity between the Hebrew phrase בְּכֹן תִּבְכֶּה of Lam. 1.2 and וַיִּבְכוּ הָעָם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא of Num 14.1. In the targum, however, the blame does not rest solely upon the generation of the Exodus. The text goes on to state that God

⁶⁸⁵For detailed examination of each verse see the Commentary above, §§3.1.1-4.

had sent Jeremiah to warn “the people of the House of Israel” that unless they repented Nebuchadnezzar would destroy Jerusalem. They rejected Jeremiah’s words and the targum asserts “*therefore* the wicked Nebuchadnezzar entered and razed Jerusalem.” Once again the targumist tells the audience that the destruction of Jerusalem was directly caused by the people’s sin. In this verse, it is both the lack of faith of the Exodus generation and the unwillingness of Jeremiah’s contemporaries to repent of their sins that brought about the great calamity.

Verse 3 represents an example of *מדה כנגד מדה* as the targumist interprets Jerusalem’s punishment in light of her sin.⁶⁸⁶ While the biblical text states that “Judah has gone into exile *with* suffering and hard servitude,”⁶⁸⁷ the targum tells us that it was because Judah had *caused* widows and orphans to suffer and because they had levied excessive servitude upon their brothers that Judah went into exile. The targumist thus continues his argument. In this case the biblical verse leads to an emphasis upon the exile, the very nature of which (filled with suffering and hardship) is dictated by Judah’s own sins. The targumist does not appear to be alluding to any midrashic source, but rather relies upon the biblical text itself. By specifying that it was widows and orphans whom Judah oppressed, the targumist calls to mind verses such as Exod. 22.22-4, Jer. 7.6, 22.3, and Jeremiah’s plea to the Lord that, since they had not helped the widow and the orphan, “therefore give their children over to famine, hurl them out to the power of the sword, let their wives become childless and widowed.”⁶⁸⁸

And finally, in verse 4 MT is expanded to complete the catalogue of Judah’s sins. Once again as Judah had sinned so was she punished. Even when Jerusalem stood the Israelites *refused* (סריבו) to go up for the appointed festivals and as a result “Jerusalem was destroyed and the roads to Zion are made mournful, for there is no one entering her for the festivals.” There are other passages within TgLam which contain significant expansion and

⁶⁸⁶See §3.1.3, §4.2.1, and *b* Sot. 8b.

⁶⁸⁷For discussion of the difficulties of interpreting the Hebrew see §3.1.3 and works cited therein.

⁶⁸⁸Jer. 18.21.

throughout the text our targumist sustains the argument that the tragic events described were the direct result of Israel's sin.⁶⁸⁹ These four verses, however, form a unit.

When we consider the distribution of the additions and their effect on the meaning of the text we find that the targumist has created a theological prolegomenon to Lamentations. As we have seen,⁶⁹⁰ the biblical text of Lamentations is one of grief and pain, and elsewhere in the book God is accused of being an enemy and bringing destruction down upon Jerusalem. This picture does not sit easily with the targumist so he inserts additional material at the beginning of the targum in order to provide his audience with the proper context within which they are to interpret the text. Such a device would be particularly effective in a synagogal setting since much of the congregation would be unlearned.⁶⁹¹ The expanded first four verses would ensure that the audience did not come to erroneous conclusions (such as that God had acted capriciously in destroying Jerusalem).⁶⁹² Even if the entire scroll of Lamentations were not read in the service, it is likely that the reading would have begun with Chapter One. Accordingly we can compare this trait of TgLam with the Palestinian targumim and their habit of introducing sedarim with midrashic expansions.⁶⁹³

4.2. Translational Technique

In this section we will examine the specific methods used by our targumist in order to convey his message that Jerusalem deserved her punishment.⁶⁹⁴ There are three primary techniques which are employed in TgLam: (1) the interpretation of a passage with the rabbinic principle of מדה כנגד מדה, (2) the description of Jerusalem's reversal of fortune,

⁶⁸⁹See, for example, TgLam 1.7, 9, 18; 2.9, 14, 20; and 3.13.

⁶⁹⁰See §2.4.

⁶⁹¹We are told, for example, in Sof. 42b that a targum is to be provided so that the women and children may understand the text. See §5.

⁶⁹²This theme of Jerusalem deserving her fate is continued throughout TgLam. There are other, various ways that the targum imparts this message and these will be discussed throughout this chapter.

⁶⁹³Shinan, *The Aggadah*, pp. 30-8.

⁶⁹⁴We have already discussed some of the more common methods of translation employed in the targumim and we have noted the practice of prosaic expansion. See §1.2.2.b.

and (3) the use of dramatic heightening.⁶⁹⁵ It is important to bear in mind that these categories are fluid and more than one can be applied to a single verse. This analysis is not intended so much as a catalogue of all instances, but rather as a study of the effect of the use of these literary devices on conveying the message of TgLam.

4.2.1. מדה כנגד מדה

The principle of מדה כנגד מדה,⁶⁹⁶ that one's punishment is determined by one's sin, is extremely well attested in rabbinic literature, but it can also be found within the biblical text itself. Prov. 22.8, for example, states that “whoever sows injustice will reap calamity, and the rod of anger will fail” and as Eliphaz speaks with Job he observes, “those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.”⁶⁹⁷ In prophesying against Jerusalem Ezekiel declares, “Yes, thus says the Lord GOD: *I will deal with you as you have done*, you who have despised the oath, breaking the covenant.”⁶⁹⁸

In rabbinic literature we find מדה כנגד מדה used quite frequently. *M. Sot.* 1.7 applies this principle to the punishment of an adulterous woman:⁶⁹⁹

With what measure a man metes it shall be measure to him again: she bedecked herself for transgression—the Almighty brought her to shame; she laid herself bare for transgression—the Almighty likewise laid her bare; she began transgression with the thigh first and afterward with the belly—therefore the thigh shall suffer first and afterward the belly; neither shall aught else of the body go free.

The Gemara to this passage (*b Sot.* 8b) uses the principle of מדה כנגד מדה in order to assert that the four modes of execution⁷⁰⁰ continued to exist after the destruction of the Temple.

R. Joseph said: Although the measure has ceased, [the principle] *in the measure* has not ceased. For R. Joseph said, and similarly taught R. Hiyya: From the day the Temple was destroyed, although the Sanhedrin ceased to function, the four modes of execution did not cease. But they did cease! — [The meaning is:] The judgment of the four modes of execution did not cease. He who would have been condemned to stoning either falls from a roof [and dies] or a wild beast tramples him [to death]. He who would have been condemned to burning

⁶⁹⁵See also the discussion of dramatic heightening in §1.2.2.b.

⁶⁹⁶See §3.1.3 and Urbach, pp. 371-3 and 438-9.

⁶⁹⁷Job 4.8.

⁶⁹⁸Ezek. 16.59. See also Hos. 12.3 and Obad. 15.

⁶⁹⁹See Num. 5.11-31.

⁷⁰⁰See *M. San.* 7.

either falls into a fire or a serpent stings him. He who would have been condemned to decapitation is either handed over to the [Gentile] Government or robbers attack him. He who would have been condemned to strangulation either drowns in a river or dies of a quinsy.

Although the Sanhedrin could no longer administer punishment R. Joseph asserts that God will ensure that his justice is served by punishing the guilty in an appropriate manner.

b San. 100a provides a more direct statement of the principle:

It has been taught, R. Meir said: in the measure which one measures, so will there be [measured out] to him, as it is written, *in measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt contend with it* (Isa. 27.8).

This passage goes on to explain that God metes out the measure of reward in a similar manner, but the measure of reward is greater than that for punishment. The instances in which מדה כנגד מדה is employed in rabbinic literature are too great to enumerate here,⁷⁰¹ but we can see clearly the guiding principle that the nature of one's punishment is determined by the nature of one's crime.

This principle of מדה כנגד מדה has clearly influenced our targumist's rendering of the Book of Lamentations and its use is found explicitly in three verses: TgLam 1.3, 1.4, and 2.20. I have limited the selection to these three verses because, although the theme of divine retribution runs throughout TgLam, it is only in these three verses that the targumist has directly used the suffering described in the biblical text as the predicator of the sins attributed to the people. In other passages the sins attributed to the Israelites are not so clearly linked with the nature of her punishment. TgLam 1.1, for example, explains that it was "because of the greatness of her rebellious sin which was within her" that Jerusalem sits alone. Jerusalem still remains guilty and God's punishment is just, but there is no explicit link between her rebellion and her isolation.⁷⁰²

The biblical text of 1.3 describes the nature of Judah's expulsion. "Judah has gone into exile *with* suffering and hard servitude" (גלתא יהודה מעני ומרב עבדה).⁷⁰³ This description

⁷⁰¹A very few examples include LamR Proem 21, GenR to 1.31, and ExodR to 1.22. Within the Talmud see *b* Shab. 105b, Ned. 32a, and Sot. 9b, and Sot. 11a.

⁷⁰²The last portion of TgLam 1.1 does contain an example of the targumist emphasizing the extent of Jerusalem's fate through the description of her reversal of fortune. See §4.2.2.

⁷⁰³For discussion of this verse, especially the difficulties in interpreting the Hebrew מעני, see §3.1.3.

of Judah's punishment enables the targumist to identify her sin following the rabbinic principle of *מדה כנגד מדה*. Since they were punished "with suffering and hard servitude" they must have sinned by *causing others* to suffer and to labor. Thus the targumist renders this passage, "the House of Judah went into exile because they were oppressing the orphans and the widows and because of the great servitude to which they were subjecting their brothers." The result is that a verse which had described Judah's plight is now an indictment of her crimes.⁷⁰⁴ The principle of *מדה כנגד מדה* has been carried out and the people of Judah are being punished according to their sins.

In 1.4 the biblical author laments that "the roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to the festivals." Once again our targumist understands this statement of Jerusalem's post-destruction condition as an indication of the sinful acts which precipitated the catastrophe. "All the while that Jerusalem was built, the sons of Israel refused to go up to be seen before the LORD three times a year." The equation is clear. During their years of prosperity the Israelites refused to obey God's command that they keep the three pilgrimage festivals (Ex. 23.14-9). God, therefore, has allowed the Temple to be destroyed so that now, even if they wanted to keep the festivals, they cannot.

Our final example of the use of *מדה כנגד מדה* in TgLam is 2.20. The biblical text of this verse presents a graphic portrayal of the siege conditions in Jerusalem as the author cries out to God, demanding an answer for the horrors which have occurred. People are driven to cannibalism and even God's own sanctuary is defiled as his priest's are murdered in its midst.

Look, O LORD, and consider!
 To whom have you done this?
 Should women eat their offspring,
 the children they have borne?
 Should priest and prophet be killed
 in the sanctuary of the Lord?

The targumist presents the first portion of this verse in a fairly direct manner as the speaker

⁷⁰⁴The biblical references alluded to include Exod. 22.2-4 ("you shall not abuse any widow or orphan"), 1 Kgs. 12.4 (Solomon presses the northern tribes into forced labor), and Jer. 34.8ff (Zedekiah released the slaves [Deut. 15.12] and then later the people took them back). See §3.1.3.

asks God why women should be forced to eat their children. The last stich, however, is placed into the mouth of the Attribute of Justice as he responds to the accusations brought before God.

The Attribute of Justice replied, and said, "Is it right to kill priest and prophet in the Temple of the LORD, as when you killed Zechariah son of Iddo, the High Priest and faithful prophet in the Temple of the LORD on the Day of Atonement because he told you not to do evil before the LORD?"

The biblical text's rhetorical question has thus been restated and the targumist informs his audience that the killing of the priest and prophet in the Temple was just punishment since the people had already set the example by killing the priest Zechariah (2 Chron. 24.20-2).

Once again the targumist has reinforced his primary thesis that Jerusalem and her inhabitants had deserved their fate because of their sin. The targumist has followed the principle of *מדה כנגד מדה* by utilizing the biblical text's descriptions of the people's suffering as evidence of the nature of their sin. This further emphasizes for the audience the just nature of God's punishment since such harsh penalties as the murder of the priests would not have been levied against them had they not first committed a similar act.

4.2.2. *Reversal of Fortune*

The Book of Lamentations begins with a description of Jerusalem's dramatic reversal of fortune.

How lonely sits the city
that once was full of people!
How like a widow she has become,
she that was great among the nations!
She that was a princess among the provinces
has become a vassal.

This theme is carried throughout Lamentations⁷⁰⁵ so it is not surprising that our targumist has taken advantage of this and even introduced examples of Jerusalem's reversal of fortune elsewhere in the text. In 1.1 the targumist embellishes the text by telling the audience that the city which was full of people "is now emptied of them" and by providing two readings of the Hebrew *למס היתה*. In the first instance, the targumist expands the

⁷⁰⁵One example is 4.5: "Those who feasted on delicacies perish in the streets; those who were brought up in purple cling to ash heaps."

Hebrew image of Jerusalem as a “princess among the provinces” so that in the targum she “was great among the nations and a ruler over provinces” and then inverts the meaning of *למס היתה* by stating that these provinces brought Jerusalem tribute. The concluding lines of the verse are now placed in a dramatic contrast with Jerusalem’s prior state. Thus, she “has become lowly again and gives head tax to them from thereafter.”⁷⁰⁶

TgLam 1.7 provides us with yet another example of the targumist building upon the images already present within the biblical text in order to increase the contrast between Jerusalem’s days of glory and her catastrophic downfall. In MT Jerusalem is described as remembering “all the precious things that were hers in the days of old,” but in TgLam the targumist describes Jerusalem’s former state in more detail. Jerusalem is described as a mighty city which was surrounded by fortresses and ruled “over all the earth.” In spite of all this might, however, she was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar “because of all her sins.” The targumist has thus built up the image of a great and mighty nation in order to demonstrate that even in its strength Jerusalem could not stand because the people had rebelled against the LORD.

Unlike the other examples in this section the biblical text of 2.21 does not include a reversal of fortune, but is instead a direct description of the bodies strewn in the streets of Jerusalem. The targumist, however, seizes this opportunity to emphasize the contrast between Jerusalem’s past and her ultimate fate at the hands of her enemies.

The young and old who were accustomed to recline on pillows of fine wool and upon ivory couches were prostrate on the earth of the open markets.

We have already noted the connection between our targumist’s addition and Amos 6.⁷⁰⁷ In this instance our targumist has not simply created a contrast between the ease of the past and the horrors of Jerusalem’s destruction, he has also added to the list of indictments against the nation. That the young and the old were “lying on beds of ivory” reminds the targumist’s audience of Amos’ prophecy against Israel because of their excessive

⁷⁰⁶We will discuss the use of dramatic heightening in the next section.

⁷⁰⁷See §3.2.20.

behaviour.⁷⁰⁸

Finally, in 4.2 the targumist has transformed the biblical text's message ("the precious children of Zion, worth their weight in fine gold, ... are reckoned as earthen pots") so that it is the appearance of the sons of Zion which is like that of fine gold. As a result of their beauty their enemies use them as talismans during sexual intercourse so that "their wives might bear sons as beautiful as they." The sons who were once pampered and accustomed to royal comfort (2.20, 22) have now become nothing more than a procreative tool and a piece of property. A similar interpretation is found in 4.3 as the biblical simile comparing the people of Jerusalem with a jackal ("even jackals offer the breast and nurse their young, but my people have become cruel") is reinterpreted so that "the pampered Daughters of Israel untie their breasts to the nations." Such risque interpretations seem surprising, but are not uncommon in TgLam. The reversal of fortunes described both within the biblical text and introduced or enhanced in the targum increase the pathos by reminding the audience of Jerusalem's former glory and creating a stark contrast with her conquered state. As we shall see in the next section, the use of sexual or violent images, such as those found in 2.15 and 4.2-3, heighten the drama of the moment and serve as a warning to the audience.

4.2.3. *Dramatic Heightening*

TgLam is apparently unique among targumim in that rather than softening the sometimes harsh biblical language (or simply rendering it *verbatim*), the targumist has often intensified it. This is particularly noticeable where the verses involve violent or sexual imagery. I have referred to this translational technique as "dramatic heightening" since the main purpose of such renderings is to intensify the drama or pathos of the moment being described. We have already seen how this method has been employed while emphasizing the reversal of Jerusalem's fortunes⁷⁰⁹ and there are many instances in which

⁷⁰⁸“Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches ... they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away” (Amos 6.4, 7).

⁷⁰⁹See §4.2.2.

the targumist has made minor changes or additions to similar effect.⁷¹⁰ In this section we will examine those verses in which the targumist has either intensified the graphic images already present within the biblical text or introduced elements of a violent or sexual nature.

Chapter One provides us with the most extreme examples of dramatic heightening. The biblical text of verse 15 declares that the LORD has caused all of Jerusalem's young men to be killed and that "the LORD has trodden as in a wine press, the virgin daughter Judah." It would hardly be surprising if the targum were to soften or reinterpret the language of this verse, but the opposite is, in fact, the case.⁷¹¹ Although the image is no longer of God actively trampling a young woman, it is by God's decree that the nations enter Jerusalem. The targumist then proceeds to provide a graphic description of violent rape of the "virgins of the House of Judah." The rape is so severe that "their blood of their virginity was caused to flow like wine from a wine press." The image is truly gruesome and unpleasant yet this verse is followed by still more violent depictions.

The scene described in Lam 1.16 is one of mourning and grief as Jerusalem reflects upon the loss of her young men and women. "For these things I weep, my eyes flow with tears." At this point in the text our targumist does not build upon verse 15 (as MT does), instead he adds another set of images in order to explain what "these things" were over which Jerusalem wept. She weeps, we are told, "because of the babies who were smashed and the pregnant mothers whose wombs were ripped open." We have already noted that the Bible and other ancient sources refer to the murder of babies and pregnant women as a reality of warfare,⁷¹² but such a sanguine addition to this otherwise relatively innocuous verse is startling and is intended to shock the audience. In TgLam 4.9-10 the targumist has embellished the text in a similar manner.

In these verses the biblical text already speaks of the ravages of war as people die

⁷¹⁰We have noted throughout the Commentary many instances where a subtle change or insertion of a phrase adds to the intensity of the text. See, e.g., §3.1.7, §3.1.9, §3.2.4, §3.3.2.7, §3.3.51, §3.4.12, §3.4.20, and §3.5.3.

⁷¹¹See §3.1.15.

⁷¹²See §3.1.16, §3.4.9, and §3.4.10.

from both the sword and starvation and hunger drives mothers to eat their own young. The text is graphic enough as it stands, but the targumist makes additions which further intensify the images. The targum, for example, describes those who suffered from starvation in verse 9 of MT as “those bloated from hunger, their bellies burst from food.” The image created is a realistic depiction of the way in which a starving person’s belly will distend due to gases built up in the abdomen. The targumist has only made minor modifications to verse 10, but they increase the pathos of the event nonetheless. The compassionate women who ate their own children are characterized by their charity towards the poor and their action is made that much more pitiful as the event is referred to as the breaking of the famine (יום תבר כפנא). A contrast is thus created for the audience between the pious fast which they would be keeping to commemorate the ninth of Ab and the enforced fast of those trapped within Jerusalem that could only be broken by cannibalism.

The effect of these additions and changes is quite profound. Whereas the Book of Lamentations contains very strong language the targum has increased the tone and added to the graphic images. In each instance, whether it is increasing the global stature of Jerusalem prior to her fall or describing the details of the rape of her virgins, the targumist has heightened the drama of the moment and in so doing draws the audience into the full horror of Jerusalem’s siege and destruction. The targumist emphasizes the devastating nature of the war while reminding his audience that it was the result of the people’s sin. In TgLam 1.17, which immediately follows the horrific descriptions of rape and murder, the targumist explains that all of this occurred because although “the LORD commanded the House of Jacob to keep the Commandments and Torah ... they transgressed the decree of his Memra.” Thus dramatic heightening is a tool of admonition. Set within the synagogal context the sermonic tone of the targum would warn the congregation of the real, life-threatening dangers of disobeying God and his Commandments.⁷¹³

⁷¹³For discussion of the emphasis on the Law and Mishnah found within TgLam see §4.6.

4.3. The Role of מדת דינא

In the course of our Commentary we have already noted the origins and the role of the Attributes of Justice and Mercy within rabbinic literature in general,⁷¹⁴ but at this point in our analysis it is important that we address the use of מדת דינא within targumic literature and its role in TgLam. Considering the active role played by the Attribute of Justice as the agent of God's righteous punishment in the midrashim it might be reasonable to expect that we would find it occurring with similar frequency in the targumim. Yet, TgLam aside, the Attribute of Justice is rarely found in these texts.

4.3.1. Targumic Evidence

Neither the Attribute of Justice nor the Attribute of Mercy occurs at all in Targum Onkelos (TgOnk), Targum Neofiti (TgNeof), Targum Jonathan (TgJon), or Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (TgPsJ). In fact, outside of TgLam, מדת דינא occurs only once in Targum Qohelet (TgQoh) and twice in the first targum to Esther (3.1 and 6.1). The latter occurrence is in conjunction with the מדת רחמיך and is only attested in one MS. As we shall see, it is likely that מדת דינא was not the original reading of TgEsth 6.1, therefore it appears that the Attribute of Justice only occurs five times and the Attribute of Mercy only once in all the targumim.⁷¹⁵

4.3.2. Targum Lamentations

Of the three instances in TgLam, in each case the Attribute of Justice announces the reasons for Israel's suffering and punishment.⁷¹⁶ The Hebrew text of Lam. 1.1 is quite terse. As our analysis has already shown, the targumist has greatly expanded this first verse of Lamentations in order to set the context for the reading of the entire book.⁷¹⁷ TgLam seeks

⁷¹⁴See especially §3.1.1.

⁷¹⁵The corpus of targumic literature is, of course, vast and there remains the possibility that an instance of the Attributes has escaped my notice.

⁷¹⁶They are TgLam 1.1, 2.20, and 4.13.

⁷¹⁷See §4.1.

to ensure that the audience realizes that Jerusalem was destroyed due to Israel's sin and not because their God has forsaken them. Thus, we are told that Jeremiah declared Jerusalem's punishment by comparing it with the punishment of Adam and Eve, then "the Attribute of Justice spoke and said, 'Because of the greatness of her rebellious sin which was within her, thus she will dwell alone as a man plagued with leprosy upon his skin who sits alone.'"

The Attribute of Justice is not appealing to God to punish Jerusalem, instead it is announcing the punishment that God *has already* decided to mete out. We may contrast this with many of the midrashim where מדת דינא is described as appealing for God to punish the sinner or is carrying out that punishment.⁷¹⁸ In TgLam 1.1 דינא מדת merely states what God has already decided he would do to punish Jerusalem and why God's decision is just. This punishment parallels that of Adam and Eve. Just as the eating of the forbidden fruit was an act of rebellion punished with banishment, so too Israel's rebellion against God would result in the exile of His people from Jerusalem.

The Attribute of Justice appears again in 2.20.⁷¹⁹ The biblical author cries out horrified by what has befallen his people and he challenges God to answer for the fact that he has caused the events which drove women to eat their children and priests and prophets to be killed in the sanctuary of the LORD. Whereas in 1.1 the Attribute of Justice's speech was not based upon the biblical text in 2.20 the targumist recasts the biblical text as a dialogue between the anonymous speaker of Chapter Two and the Attribute of Justice. Once again, however, we find the Attribute of Justice is used to declare the crimes for which Jerusalem and her people were being punished. God allowed the prophets and priests to be killed in the Temple since they themselves had killed the priest Zechariah on the Day of Atonement.

Finally, in 4.13 the Attribute of Justice is again employed by our targumist as a herald who recites the sins of Jerusalem's people.

⁷¹⁸See, e.g., LevR to 4.2 and ExodR to 32.11. ExodR to 6.2 has an extended discussion of how the Attribute of Justice wanted to smite Moses for doubting God's promise to deliver the Israelites from Egypt.

⁷¹⁹We have already examined this verse in great detail in the Commentary (§3.2.20) and above in the Analysis (§4.2.1).

The Attribute of Justice spoke up and said, “All this would not have happened but for the sins of her prophets who prophesied to her false prophecies and the iniquity of her priests who offered up burning incense to idols. They themselves caused the blood of the innocent to be shed in her midst.”

What is of interest in this verse is that the Attribute of Justice explicitly tells the audience that Jerusalem’s fate was avoidable. This tragedy only occurred because of the iniquity of the people (in this instance the prophets and priests are specified). Unlike the descriptions of the Attribute of Justice in the midrashim, TgLam has used the figure as a spokesman rather than an agent of destruction.⁷²⁰ This enables the targumist to explain why these horrible events have come upon Israel and to demonstrate that they were deserved, since a fundamental element of the Attribute of Justice is that its actions are righteous, even if God may temper the punishment with his mercy.⁷²¹

4.3.3. *Targum Esther*

ענת מדת דינא occurs twice in the first TgEsth at 3.1 in all MSS and at 6.1 in one MS variant.

The targum to 6.1 begins with the cry of the women from the House of Israel being heard in heaven and God asks “What is this voice of young goats that I hear?”

Then the attribute of compassion replied, saying as follows (ענת מדת רחמין וכך אמרת): “It is not the voice of young goats that you hear but the voice of women from the house of Israel who are destined to be killed upon the decree of the wicked Haman.”⁷²²

Only one MS, Paris Heb. 110 of the Bibliothèque Nationale,⁷²³ includes the Attribute of Justice in this verse and reads ענת מדת דינא רחמין וכך אמרת. The targum goes on to tell how God has mercy upon his people and such a context is a strong indication that the majority reading, which does not include מדת דינא, is probably correct. The first TgEsth to 6.1 does, therefore present us with an example of the מדת רחמין within the targumim, but it is an

⁷²⁰As is already found in the biblical text of Lamentations it is God himself who goes forth like an enemy against his people. The targumist does not require a mediator other than the “nations” and “enemies,” e.g., Nebuchadnezzar (TgLam 1.2 and 2.4).

⁷²¹It is important to note that the Attribute of Mercy does *not* appear in TgLam. In fact, a consistent theme of the Book of Lamentations which is extended in TgLam is that for Jerusalem there is no comforter and there is no mercy (see 1.2, 9; 2.13, etc.). She is denied all solace in her mourning. God himself has no mercy in exacting his punishment. See Lam. 2.17, for example: “He destroyed and had no mercy.”

⁷²²Bernard Grossfeld, *The Aramaic Bible Vol. 18: The Two Targums of Esther*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), p. 69.

⁷²³Grossfeld, p. 2.

isolated appearance.

The occurrence of מדת דינא in 3.1 is, however, certain and plays a role similar to that found in TgLam.

After these things, the attribute of justice entered before the Master of the World and thus it said (בתר פתגמיה האיילין עלת מדת דינא קדם רבון כל עלמיה וכן אמרת): “Did not the wicked Haman descend and go up from Susa to Jerusalem to abolish the rebuilding of the Temple; and now King Xerxes has promoted Haman, son of Hammedatha, who is descendant from Agag, son of the wicked Amalek, and has appointed him chief over everything and established his throne over those of all the princes that are with him.” Replied the Master of the World and said as follows, “I do not wish to destroy him from the world as long as he is not (yet) known in the world, let go of him until he will become great and known among all nations, then will I punish him for all the oppression that he and his ancestors have done to the people of the House of Israel.”⁷²⁴

The additions found in the first TgEsth, like the midrashim found in EsthR ascribe to Haman a role in obstructing the reconstruction of the Temple. In the targum we are given a glimpse into the heavenly court where the Attribute of Justice comes before God to ask why he has not already destroyed such a wicked man. God responds that he first wants him to be made great so that all the nations might know of his downfall. It is important to note that God instructs מדת דינא to “let go of him until he will become great” implying that the Attribute of Justice was preparing to execute judgement upon Haman.

In this passage we find מדת דינא in a role similar to that of both TgLam and the midrashim. As in TgLam the Attribute of Justice declares the sins committed by the offender. He reminds God that not only did Haman try to “abolish the rebuilding of the Temple,” but he was also descended from Agag, “son of the wicked Amalek.” Unlike the role played by מדת דינא in TgLam, but similar to what we find in the rest of the rabbinic corpus, it is implied in this text that Attribute of Justice *will* be the agent of Haman’s destruction.

⁷²⁴Grossfeld, p. 51.

4.3.4. Targum Qohelet

Finally, in TgQoh 10.8 we again find the Attribute of Justice providing an explanation for Israel's suffering.

Solomon said by the spirit of prophecy, "I have seen the people who were enslaved previously to the people of Israel, growing strong and riding on horses like rulers while the people of Israel and their nobles walk like slaves on the ground." The Attribute of Justice answered and thus said (ענת מדת דינא וכין אמרת): "They caused all this themselves just as a man who digs a pit at the crossroads is liable to fall in it so a people who transgressed the decree of the Memra of the Lord and breached the fence of the world falls into the hand of the wicked king who bites them like a serpent."⁷²⁵

In verse 6 God enables the Edomites⁷²⁶ to enslave Israel this, in turn, leads to Solomon's prophetic vision of a subservient Israel. In response, the Attribute of Justice explains that God has allowed the conquest of his people due to their refusal to obey the Memra of the LORD. This usage of מדת דינא is directly parallel to that found in TgLam. The Attribute of Justice is not the agent of punishment, rather it explains why God has allowed tragedy to befall his people and how such action (or God's allowing others to act against his people) is just.

In sum, it appears that מדת דינא, a figure common in midrashic literature, is a relatively rare occurrence in the targumim. In the first TgEsth 3.1 the Attribute of Justice asks God why he has not yet punished the wicked Haman. God directs מדת דינא to "let go of him" since Haman was to grow powerful before he would be destroyed. This characterization is in keeping with that found in the midrashim as it brings an accusation against the wicked *seeking* their just punishment. Although the Book of Esther is *potentially* about the destruction of the Jews, it is, in fact, a story about God's salvation of his people, thus the role of the Attribute of Justice is confined to indicting Israel's enemy. However, in the majority of instances where the Attribute of Justice appears in the targumim, it announces the charges against *Israel*. In each case מדת דינא explains *why* God has allowed Jerusalem/Israel to be defeated and the answer is always that Israel has sinned.

⁷²⁵TgQoh 10.7-8; Peter S. Knobel, *The Aramaic Bible Vol. 15: The Targum of Qohelet*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), pp. 48.

⁷²⁶On the difficulties of identifying the Edomites in TgQoh see Knobel, p. 12. For a more general discussion see G. Cohen, "Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval thought," *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. A. Altman, (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 19-48. See §3.4.21-2.

The nature of the Attribute of Justice in TgLam and TgQoh is predicated by the biblical text. In TgLam it is because the biblical text presents a clear challenge to God's justice as the biblical author asks, "How could God allow such a catastrophe to befall his chosen people?" The targumist uses מַדַּת דִּינָא in order to answer this charge. Although TgQoh brings this challenge to the biblical text (perhaps precipitated by external events, such as contemporary persecution) the role of the Attribute of Justice is the same as that found in TgLam; it explains that Israel has deserved her fate due to her refusal to obey the Word of the LORD.

Within these targumim the Attribute of Justice is not the *agent* of destruction. This is contrary to the majority of midrashic passages which feature the Attribute of Justice. In the midrashim it is either seeking to punish transgressors, exacting that punishment, or is being restrained from such action by the Mercy of God (sometimes represented by the מַדַּת רַחֲמִים). Furthermore, the Attribute of Justice *rarely* speaks in the midrashim.⁷²⁷ The figure found in the targumim is a fully personified character who is granted speech and converses with God and the audience (Lam. 2.20). By contrast, the midrashic figure is more vague, referred to rather than heard. The figure of מַדַּת דִּינָא in the targumim has a distinct and separate identity from God. It stands beside God and converses with him and, in the majority of occurrences, the Attribute of Justice proclaims the sin of Israel and the justice of God's actions.

4.4. מִימְרָא

There is perhaps no single Aramaic term which has received more attention in recent scholarship than מִימְרָא.⁷²⁸ מִימְרָא occurs seven times in TgLam⁷²⁹ and in six of those cases מִימְרָא indicates a pronouncement or decree from the LORD. The one exception is found in 3.54 and will be dealt with below. Of those instances in which מִימְרָא refers to God מִימְרָא is

⁷²⁷For a rare example see *b* Meg. 15b. See §3.1.1 for a review of מַדַּת דִּינָא in the midrashic sources.

⁷²⁸See our previous discussion introducing the problem of Memra in §3.1.15.

⁷²⁹They are 1.15, 17, 18, 20; 2.17; and 3.57. The term מִימְרָא occurs once, in 3.54, and is uttered by a man. It will be discussed below.

found in construct with גר three times (1.15, 17, and 20), in 1.18 it is simply “his Memra,” in 2.17 it is “the Memra of his mouth,” and in 3.57 it is “your Memra.”

In our first example, 1.15, the term is used to indicate God’s decree granting permission for the nations to enter Jerusalem and “defile the virgins of the House of Judah.” This use of מימרא not only distances God from the actual act of harming the virgins (MT reads: גת דרך אדני לבתולת בת-יהודה), but it also underscores the belief that this tragedy could only occur with God’s permission. Jerusalem was only penetrated because God had ordered it.⁷³⁰ In this instance, therefore, מימרא is a edict from God allowing others to serve as the means of his punishing Jerusalem.⁷³¹

The three remaining examples in Chapter One are all statements of the people having “transgressed his Memra.” The targumist makes the guilt of the people explicit in 1.17 by stating that God had told Israel what they ought to do (“keep the Commandments and the Torah”), but they refused to obey and “transgressed the decree of his Memra.” As a result their enemies were allowed to assail them. In 1.18 Josiah loses his life because he refused to obey God’s word which came through Pharaoh.⁷³² TgLam 1.20 does not provide the specific nature of the decree, instead we are simply told once again that the destruction of Jerusalem is the result of the people having disobeyed the decree of the Memra of the LORD. In each of these instances the targumist has added direct disobedience to the catalogue of the people’s sins. God has made clear his will and intent for his people, but they have refused to obey.⁷³³

TgLam 2.17 equates מימרא with God’s warning to Israel that “if the Children of Israel

⁷³⁰See §3.3.40 and LamR Proem 25.

⁷³¹See Chilton, pp. 58-9, “ii. מימרא as an agent of punishment.” There is a key distinction which must be made between Chilton’s description of this use of מימרא in TgIsa and that of our targum. In our targum מימרא is not an *agent*, rather it is simply the decree which allows others to be the agent of God’s judgement on Jerusalem. This is in contrast with Chilton’s examples, e.g., TgIsa 41.16b, “...his memra, as the whirlwind the chaff, will scatter them.”

⁷³²2 Chron. 35.21: “But Neco sent envoys to him, saying, “What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I am not coming against you today, but against the house with which I am at war; and *God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, so that he will not destroy you.*”

⁷³³See Hayward, “Memra and the Covenant Terminology,” Chapter 5 of *Divine Name*.

did not keep the Commandments of the LORD he was going to punish them.”⁷³⁴ In this case the targumist emphasizes that God was fulfilling his portion of the covenant that he had made with Israel. The allusion is to Lev. 26 which states that God will bless Israel if they faithfully follow his statutes and commandments.

But if you will not obey me, and do not observe all these commandments, if you spurn my statutes, and abhor my ordinances, so that you will not observe all my commandments, and you break my covenant, I in turn will do this to you: I will bring terror on you.⁷³⁵

It is Israel, not God, who did not adhere to the terms of the agreement. His punishment of Israel demonstrates that God has kept the promises he had made with them. This reference places God’s judgement within the larger framework of Torah, reminding his audience that had Israel obeyed God they would have been blessed, but it had been stipulated by God at the outset that if they were disobedient he would punish them.

TgLam 3.54 provides us with a rare example of the term *מימרא* being used in reference to anything other than God’s divine pronouncement. It is unclear why the targumist has chosen this term.⁷³⁶ The speaker’s declaration (“I am cut off from the world”) is a pronouncement of the manner in which God has punished him and so the use of *מימרא* in this verse may be in line with the term’s use elsewhere as a declaration from God. The underlying assumption would be that God has allowed the nations to lay the trap and cast the speaker into the pit (vv. 52-3) and therefore his fate was in this sense decreed by God. Verse 54 is followed closely, however, by the comforting statement of verse 57 that “You [God] said by your Memra, ‘Do not fear.’” Thus the helpless cry of the speaker’s Memra may be intended to create a contrast with the efficacious decree of God. In any event, this verse remains a unusual instance of *מימרא* being attributed to someone other than God.

Finally, in 3.57 *מימרא* is the vehicle of God’s comfort as the speaker calls out to God from his imprisonment and the LORD responds to his plea: “Do not fear.” Once more *מימרא* is clearly an utterance of God. In this instance, however, God is comforting his people

⁷³⁴See §3.2.17 and Lev. 26.14ff.

⁷³⁵Lev. 26.14-5.

⁷³⁶See §3.3.54 for discussion of the possibility of an orthographic error.

through his *מימרא*. Although the first half of this verse speaks of God sending an angel to save the speaker, there is no reason to directly connect the angel with God's *Memra*. Thus, although TgLam provides us with a rare example of the term *מימרא* being attributed to someone other than God, in all other instances *מימרא* is a declaration from God, either as the medium of its expression or as the edict itself. In the majority of instances *מימרא* refers either to the "decree of the LORD" which had been transgressed by Judah or the orders given by God which allowed their enemies to destroy Jerusalem. The statements that the people have transgressed the decree of God's *מימרא* emphasizes their disobedience and thus the justice of their punishment. The fact that the enemies entered only by the decree of the LORD reminds the audience that his holy city and his people were destroyed because it was God's will and not because he had abandoned them.

4.5. *כַּנְשְׁתָּא* and Community

In our Commentary to TgLam 1.6 we observed that of the 21 times that the Hebrew *בת* occurs in Lamentations the targumist translated the term 14 times as *כַּנְשְׁתָּא*.⁷³⁷ We also found that the term *כַּנְשְׁתָּא* is added to the biblical material in six other instances.⁷³⁸ Although it is also clear from our survey of TgJon that *כַּנְשְׁתָּא* is the standard translational equivalent for the Hebrew *בת* when it is used in construct with *צִיּוֹן*, *יְהוּדָה*, *עַמִּי* or *עַמֵּי*, the recurrent use of *כַּנְשְׁתָּא* throughout TgLam (especially the fact that it is frequently added to the text even when it is not translating *בת*) suggests that the targumist is employing the term in order to include his audience in the text which they are hearing.

כַּנְשְׁתָּא therefore has the effect of updating the text. In a time when a large percentage of Jews would have lived outside of Eretz Israel, the statement that "the Congregation of the House of Judah dwells among the nations" (1.3) would resonate with an audience who were themselves far from Jerusalem. In TgLam 2.19 we find a direct reference to the targumist's audience as the "Congregation of Israel dwelling in exile." The use of *כַּנְשְׁתָּא* in

⁷³⁷In the remaining instance *בת* was translated 3 times as *בֵּית* (1.15, 2.2, and 2.5), twice as *קֶרְתָּא* (2.18a and 4.21), once as *בְּנֵי* (4.22b), and once as meaning "daughter" (2.18c).

⁷³⁸They are 1.2, 3, 10, 16; 2.5, and 2.19.

conjunction with reference to the Diaspora would encourage the targumist's audience to identify themselves with the Congregation described in TgLam.

When the congregation present during the ninth of Ab service heard that as Nebuchadnezzar entered Jerusalem “on the night of the ninth of Ab, the *Congregation* of Israel wept bitterly” (1.2),⁷³⁹ the congregation hearing the targum would identify themselves with their ancestors and the experience of communal mourning would be amplified. Similar descriptions of mourning are found in TgLam 1.10 (“the Congregation of Israel began to howl for she saw foreign nations go into her Temple”),⁷⁴⁰ 1.16 (“because of the babies who were smashed ... the Congregation of Israel said, ‘I weep and my eyes flow with tears’”), 2.10 (“the Elders of the Congregation of Zion sit on the ground in silence”), and 3.48 (“my eye weeps tears because of the destruction of the Congregation of my people”). The recitation of such texts would presumably intensify the worshipper's sense of grief and mourning as they identify with those who had endured God's wrath.

This use of כְּנִשְׁתָּא would also serve to draw the targumist's audience into repentance as they are told “the sin of the Congregation of my people is greater than the sin of Sodom” (4.6) and that as a result of their sin God “detested the Congregation of Zion” (2.1) and that he poured out his wrath “in the Sanctuary of the Congregation of Zion” (2.4). Thus confronted with the sins of the past the “Congregation of Israel dwelling in exile” is called to repent and follow the traditions of their fathers.

Arise, O Congregation of Israel dwelling in exile. Busy yourself with Mishnah in the night, for the Shekinah of the LORD is dwelling before you, and with the words of Torah at the beginning of the morning watch. Pour out like water the crookedness of your heart and turn in repentance. And pray in the House of the Congregation before the face of the LORD. Raise your hands to him in prayer for the life of your children who thirst with hunger at the head of every open market.

It is important to note that this verse has been completely reworked by the targumist and that the references to the “Congregation of Israel” and the “House of the Congregation” (and, needless to say, the reference to the study of Mishnah) are all

⁷³⁹For the sake of identification the “Congregation” found in the text of TgLam will be capitalized while the tagumist's “congregation” (the audience) will not.

⁷⁴⁰This text is an addition to the bilical text.

additions to the base text. This verse, perhaps more than any other, indicates the presence of an audience and demonstrates the use of כַּנְשַׁתָּא as a method of drawing the contemporary congregation into the text so that they are encouraged, as the Congregation of Israel, to participate in mourning and repentance. Furthermore, the call to busy themselves with Mishnah, to study the Torah, and to pray in the House of the Congregation all indicate a thoroughly rabbinic context and agenda on the part of our targumist.

4.6. Rabbinic Context

The Commentary and the preceding sections have demonstrated that TgLam is replete with specifically rabbinic practices and concepts. The study and obedience to Torah was, of course, of central importance to rabbinic Judaism and our targum reflects this in its condemnation of Jerusalem and its exhortation to her people. Thus in 1.17, 2.9, and 2.17 we find that the House of Jacob is sent into exile because they did not “keep the Commandments and Torah.” On the other hand, in 2.19, 3.25, and 3.27 the targum encourages the “Congregation of Israel dwelling in exile” (2.19) to repent, busy themselves with the study of Torah (2.19) and to take up “the yoke of the Commandments” (3.27). The penalty for disobeying Torah is already found within the biblical text⁷⁴¹ and thus provides a ready explanation for Jerusalem’s fate. Our targumist, however, uses his interpretation of Lamentations as an opportunity to encourage his audience to adhere to rabbinic traditions. Thus the exhortation in 2.19 that the people should study Torah is prefaced with the command to busy themselves with Mishnah and the phrase “yoke of the Commandments” in 3.27 is clearly related to the rabbinic understanding of the *Shema*.⁷⁴²

Although Deuteronomy 30.17-8 already speaks of exile as punishment for disobeying God’s Commandments our targumist provides detailed explanations for Israel’s punishment based upon the nature of their sin.⁷⁴³ This principle of מדה כנגד מדה is widely

⁷⁴¹See, e.g., Deut. 30.15-8.

⁷⁴²See §3.3.25 and M. Ber. 2.2.

⁷⁴³See §4.2.1.

attested in rabbinic literature and is found most prominently in TgLam 1.3, 4, and 2.20.⁷⁴⁴ We have seen, for example, how the targumist has rendered 1.3 so that the “suffering and hard servitude” which Judah endured was caused by their oppression of others. By rendering the text in this manner our targumist has followed a clearly established rabbinic pattern.

We have also seen how the targumist has used the figure of *מדת דינא* as a type of prosecuting attorney who announces the indictments against Jerusalem. Although the Attribute of Justice is found throughout midrashic literature its role is somewhat different in TgLam since it is never the agent of Jerusalem’s destruction. Instead the Attribute of Justice announces Jerusalem’s sin (“the Attribute of Justice spoke and said, ‘Because of the greatness of her rebellious sin...,’” 1.1), but it is other agents such as “the nations,” Nebuchadnezzar, and Titus who actually carry out God’s punishment. These differences in the role of *מדת דינא* in the midrashim versus its role in the targumim do not detract from the fact that our targumist is using a common rabbinic figure in conveying his interpretation of Lamentations.

The central portion of Chapter Three is perhaps the most revealing passage with regard to the relationship between this targum and other rabbinic traditions. In expanding Chapter Three our targumist has used specifically rabbinic terms and phrases in order to represent his argument.⁷⁴⁵ In verses 40 and 41 the audience is called to “turn in repentance” (*בתיובתא*) and to “repent before God the dwelling of whose Shekinah is in heaven above.” The terms *תובתא* and *שכנתא* are extremely important rabbinic terms and concepts, as we have seen.⁷⁴⁶ The reference to God’s Shekinah “in heaven above” reminds the audience of the rabbinic belief that the sin of God’s people had caused God to remove his presence from their midst, while the call to repentance provides a rare glimpse of hope in TgLam. In TgLam 1.2 God offers the people a chance to repent through the warnings of Jeremiah, but

⁷⁴⁴For other examples in rabbinic literature see LamR Proem 21, GenR to 1.31, and ExodR to 1.22. Within the Talmud see *b* Shab. 105b, Ned. 32a, and Sot. 9b, and Sot. 11a.

⁷⁴⁵See §3.3.25, §3.3.28, §3.3.31, and §3.3.40.

⁷⁴⁶See §3.3.40, Urbach, p. 462, and Goldberg, *passim*.

they refuse and therefore bring upon themselves God's judgement. The central portion of Chapter Three, however, speaks directly to the audience encouraging them to repent and change their ways, becoming obedient to God's Commandments. Thus, in TgLam 3.25-30 the audience is counseled that the righteous will wait patiently for God's salvation. In that time they are to be silent, seek God's instruction (while they "bear the yoke of the Commandments"), and endure the corrections which God has sent. The corrections are to be endured "for the sake of the unity of the name of the LORD" and by enduring their punishment in this world they will be received by God "perfected in the World to Come."

We commented earlier in this section on "the yoke of the Commandments" and the importance in rabbinic Judaism of studying Torah and obeying God's instruction. These concepts are also central to this section of TgLam. The phrase "the yoke of the Commandments" is associated by the rabbis with the second passage of the *Shema*, Deut. 11.13-21, but the first section of the *Shema*, Deut. 6.4-9, is referred to as the "kingdom of Heaven" and emphasizes the unity and uniqueness of God.⁷⁴⁷ We find both ideas present in verses 27 and 28. Verse 27 encourages the audience to be obedient to God's Commandments, while verse 28 urges them to be faithful in accepting their punishment "for the sake of the unity of the name of the LORD." The basic tenets of the *Shema* are thus presented as the ideal behaviour for the devout. The rabbinic nature of this portion of the targum is further highlighted by the reference to "the World to Come" at the end of verse 28.⁷⁴⁸ These additions to the targum are intended to encourage the audience to adhere to rabbinic beliefs. The targum calls the audience to repentance and obedience to Torah while exhorting them to be patient and accept the punishment which God metes out because through this suffering they are being prepared to be received by God into the World to Come. These sermonic admonitions present a catalogue of rabbinic values which are to be upheld by the audience and clearly indicates that the targumist espoused the rabbinic views which we find represented in the classical sources.⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁷M. Ber. 2.2.

⁷⁴⁸See §3.3.28 and, for example, M. San. 10.1, M. Aboth. 4.17, and b Ber. 4a.

⁷⁴⁹For further discussion of these terms within rabbinic literature see §3.3.25 and §3.3.28 and the works

Finally, we must address the vexing question of the relationship of TgLam and LamR. A survey of LamR is well beyond the scope of this work, however it is important that we discuss where TgLam is located in relation to the traditions of LamR. Aside from the fact that they are both rabbinical works which are commenting (in some way) upon the Book of Lamentations, it is surprising to find that they also share a general structural similarity. We have already noted that TgLam has a peculiar structure with the majority of the midrashic additions occurring in the first chapter,⁷⁵⁰ it is perhaps even more surprising to realize that LamR also exhibits the same imbalance. There are 34 Proems which open LamR and Chapter One receives a considerable amount of comment by the rabbis, but the amount of material attributed to the other chapters steadily declines to the point that all of Chapter Five is covered in approximately the same space as that devoted to 1.1-2! GenR, the other great exegetical midrash, exhibits a similar form and has been explained by Heinemann as corresponding to the sedarim of the Palestinian cycle.⁷⁵¹ This pattern would thus be comparable to that exhibit by the Palestinian targumim which are more expansive at the beginning of sedarim.⁷⁵²

It is obvious that LamR is a much larger work than TgLam and covers a vast amount of material and topics ranging from the destruction of Jerusalem to the role of Haman in commanding the destruction of the Jews.⁷⁵³ TgLam, on the other hand, remains closer to the text of Lamentations and has relatively little aggadic material incorporated into its translation. From the aggadic material which TgLam does possess, however, it is clear that our targumist was working within the broad exegetical context of the late Amoraic period. The interpretive traditions found in 1.1 and 1.2 are also found in GenR and LamR. The dates of individual traditions found in these collections of course vary and the date of their compilation is by no means certain, however the majority of scholars date the redaction of

cited therein.

⁷⁵⁰See §4.1.

⁷⁵¹J. Heinemann, "The Structure and Division of Genesis Rabbah," (Hebr.), *Bar Ilan* 9 (1971), pp. 279-89.

⁷⁵²Shinan, *The Aggadah*, pp. 30-8.

⁷⁵³LamR to 3.37.

both LamR and GenR to the fifth century CE.⁷⁵⁴ Our targumist does not represent these midrashim in full, instead he alludes to them, presumably assuming his audience would understand the reference.

In TgLam 1.1 when Jeremiah is told that Jerusalem would be destroyed the targumist simply states, “just as when Adam and Eve were punished and expelled from the Garden of Eden and the Master of the Universe mourned them with *’ekah*.” Such an allusion depends upon one knowing the midrashic connection between *הַיָּזְכָּה* of Gen. 3.19 and *הַיָּזְכָּה* of Lam. 1.1.⁷⁵⁵ Furthermore, this is a connection that is based upon the similarity of the Hebrew words and is not possible with the Aramaic terms. This would strongly suggest that the interpretation is based upon a tradition disseminated in Hebrew such as the midrash found in GenR and LamR.⁷⁵⁶ Many of the less obvious additions in TgLam also exhibit a similar contact with rabbinic exegesis. TgLam 1.10, for example, refers to Deut. 23.4 when complaining that “those about whom you commanded by Moses the prophet concerning Ammon and Moab” had entered the Temple. This same connection is made in LamR Proem 9 and LamR to 1.10. The closest contact between TgLam and LamR is found in 2.10. The references to the Elders of Zion throwing “*wood* ashes upon their heads” and “girding sackcloth *upon their bodies*” are directly linked to the interpretive tradition found in LamR to 2.10.⁷⁵⁷ There are many similar instances which are detailed in the commentary, but we must also be careful not to forget what is *not* in TgLam.

LamR comments on almost every verse of the Book of Lamentations and it often provides several interpretations for a given verse. Therefore if our targumist knew LamR we can assume that he had at his disposal midrashic material for almost every verse and yet TgLam contains very few aggadic additions. The additions that we have noted are the

⁷⁵⁴See Stemberger, pp. 279-80 and 284-7.

⁷⁵⁵See §§3.1.1-3.1.4 for detailed discussion of these verses.

⁷⁵⁶See Shinan, “The Aggadah,” p. 71.

⁷⁵⁷See §3.2.10. LamR 2.10 reads: “‘They sit upon the ground, and keep silence, the Elders of the daughter of Zion. They have cast up dust upon their heads,’ i.e. they began to recount the merit of Abraham of whom it is written, ‘I am but dust and ashes’ (Gen. 18.27, *ואני עפר ואפר*, ‘they have girded themselves with sackcloth,’ i.e. they began to recount the merit of Jacob of whom it is written, ‘He put sackcloth upon his loins’ (Gen. 37.34).”

exception and not the rule. So what can we conclude from the fact that TgLam does *not* include many of these interpretations? Unfortunately we can determine nothing from this silence. Just because the targum does not contain more of the aggadic traditions found in LamR does not mean that our targumist was not aware of them. It is more likely that they simply did not serve the targumist's exegetical purpose.

It is evident, however, that our targum can be placed firmly within the exegetical traditions surrounding Lamentations in the centuries prior to the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud.⁷⁵⁸ To try and speak more precisely about whether or not our targumist knew the LamR which we now possess is impossible. Although there is continued debate about the *Sitz im Leben* of the targumim⁷⁵⁹ it is clear that the literary documents which we possess are the products of highly skilled and trained exegetes who no doubt would have existed in the same circles as the rabbis mentioned in the midrashic and talmudic sources. It is not surprising, therefore, that our targum shares many exegetical traditions with other works of the period and we cannot say with certainty that any of the additions found in our targum are original to TgLam. We must, however, remain equally uncertain about giving primacy to the midrashic sources since so many of the additions are interbiblical in nature.⁷⁶⁰ We have also seen how these additions are often used for very different exegetical purposes in TgLam than that found in LamR. In general, LamR presents a positive interpretation of Lamentations, remembering Israel's sins, but always returning to God's mercy for his people.⁷⁶¹ TgLam, on the other hand, rarely offers reassurance, but instead focuses upon the guilt of Israel and the righteous nature of God's judgement.

In sum, LamR and TgLam developed within a common milieu and as such share certain aggadic traditions. It is impossible, however, to determine an order of priority based

⁷⁵⁸In addition to the contact with GenR and LamR the targum exhibits familiarity with traditions found in PRK, the Babylonian Talmud, and PR. Levine frequently refers to LT (as have I on occasion), but the late date of LT precludes it from our current discussion.

⁷⁵⁹See §5.1.

⁷⁶⁰The additions to 1.3, for example are based upon Jer. 34.14 and the re-working of 2.20 arises naturally from its similarity with 2 Chron. 24.22.

⁷⁶¹See §3.1.17.

upon either date or content. Furthermore, our targumist uses specific rabbinic terms and phrases such as שכנתא, תובתא, and the figure of מדת דינא. The additions to Chapter Three encourage the audience to repent and adhere to rabbinic values which include the study of Mishnah and Torah, the acceptance of the yoke of the Commandments, and the belief in the World to Come. It is therefore clear that TgLam developed within the same rabbinic culture and context that produced the Mishnah, the midrashim, and the Talmud.

Chapter 5. Date, Provenance, and *Sitz im Leben* of TgLam

The questions of the language, date, provenance, and *Sitz im Leben* of a targumic text are highly complex; TgLam is no different. Given the complexity and importance of these issues an extensive amount of space could, and perhaps should, be given over to their examination. This thesis, however, is primarily concerned with the *content* of the targum rather than with its provenance or linguistic features. While the topics addressed here are important for a complete view of TgLam, space does not permit an extensive study of these aspects of our targum. This chapter, therefore, is a summary of my conclusions.

When considering the origins of a targumic text Ezekiel's vision of wheels within wheels is likely to be called to mind. Many of the issues relating to the date of a targum are of equal importance in considering its provenance, and these issues, in turn, inform our views as to the *Sitz im Leben* of a targumic text. The date and provenance of a targumic text are, in turn, related to the recensional history of the text and its language. As complex as these relationships are we must begin somewhere, and the most fundamental element of a text is the text itself. We have already discussed the textual tradition of TgLam,⁷⁶² so we will begin by examining the language of TgLam with specific reference to its date and provenance. From there we will focus upon the question of the *Sitz im Leben* of TgLam. This will involve an investigation of the textual evidence for TgLam's origins, both internal and external.

⁷⁶²§3, "Textual Tradition."

5.1. The Language of TgLam

In this brief study of the language of TgLam, the grammar and vocabulary of the text will be analyzed to see what they reveal about its origins, both historically and geographically. The debate concerning the relationship between the language of a targum and its date and provenance continues to rage within scholarship. The arguments have primarily centered upon the major targumim. While a summary of all the various positions maintained in these debates is beyond the scope of this work,⁷⁶³ it is important to note that the targumim to the Hagiographa are rarely given more than a cursory comment. Black, in summarizing the views held by the “Kahle school of targumic and Aramaic studies” states merely that, “what held for Onkelos [TgOnk] was also true of the so-called Targum of Jonathan [TgJon] to the Prophets or the Targum to the Hagiographa.”⁷⁶⁴ York points out that in publication Kahle himself had merely stated “Von den uns bekannten Targumen scheinen nur diese zwei [TgOnk and TgJon] in Babylonien gebraucht worden zu sein.”⁷⁶⁵ Thus, in terms of general linguistic studies of targumic literature, although not completely ignored, the targumim to the Hagiographa have been marginalized.

There is good reason for excluding these texts from the usual linguistic surveys. For while it is clear that even the monolithic works such as TgOnk, TgJon, and TgNeof are linguistically diverse and contain many hands, each targum within the Megillot is equally unique and presents its own peculiarities and difficulties. As we have seen, TgLam has an extremely diverse textual testimony and the two versions of TgEsth are well known.⁷⁶⁶ It is

⁷⁶³Smelik’s first chapter of *The Targum of Judges* (Leiden: Brill, 1995; pp. 1-23) provides an excellent survey of the current state of affairs with particular reference to TgJon. See also Uwe Gleßmer, *Einleitung in die Targume zum Pentateuch*, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1995).

⁷⁶⁴“Aramaic Studies and the Language of Jesus,” in *In Memoriam Paul Kahle*, ed. M. Black and G. Fohrer, (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1968); p. 18.

⁷⁶⁵P. Kahle, “Das palästinische Pentateuchtargum und das zur Zeit Jesu gesprochene Aramäisch,” ZNW XLIX [1958], p. 100. See, A. York, “The Dating of Targumic Literature,” *JSJ* 5, vol. 1 (1975), p. 50. In Kahle’s Third Schweich Lecture he begins by stating, “if we speak of Targums, we think in the first instance of Targum Onkelos to the Torah and of Targum Jonathan to the prophets. These are the two official Jewish Targums, and there is no doubt that they were composed in Babylonia” (P. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1941, [London: OUP, 1947], p. 117).

⁷⁶⁶See Bernard Grossfeld, *The Aramaic Bible Vol. 18: The Two Targums of Esther*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991).

therefore appropriate to deal with each targum on its own terms and then to place it within the larger picture of Aramaic linguistic studies.

Although the debate formerly characterized by the views of Dalman and Kahle continues in more nuanced forms, most scholars now agree that the so-called Babylonian targumim, TgOnk and TgJon, originated in Palestine and were later brought to Babylon where they then underwent further redaction.⁷⁶⁷ The mixed form of Aramaic characteristic of these texts is thus explained as a substratum of Palestinian Aramaic that has been reworked and brought into line with the Babylonian dialect. It is, in fact, extremely difficult to separate and prioritize the different linguistic layers of these texts, and this difficulty has led Cook to posit a “Central Aramaic” model.⁷⁶⁸ In this new model, the term “Central Aramaic” refers to the geographical origin of the texts, that is the triangular region bounded by Damascus, Edessa, and Assur. “The Aramaic of Palestine, represented by Qumran Aramaic, would shade off by degrees into a dialect like Palmyrene, which in turn overlaps with Syriac, which grades off imperceptibly into Hatran and similar dialects, which are connected to the lower Mesopotamian dialects of Mandaic and Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic. ... [The] ‘Central Aramaic’ category captures the insight that there were dialects in the middle.”⁷⁶⁹ Cook admits that there is much work to be done in order to demonstrate fully the validity of his model.⁷⁷⁰

It would be very convenient if the language of TgLam fit neatly into the category of either Eastern or Western Aramaic so that we might avoid the difficulties that we find in attempting to define the language of TgOnk and TgJon. Unfortunately this is not the case. The language is clearly of a mixed type. For example, TgLam uses the third person

⁷⁶⁷Kutscher, “The Language of the ‘Genesis Apocryphon,’” *ScriHie* 4 (1958), pp. 1-35. See also Smelik, *The Targum of Judges*, pp. 14-7, and Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures,” in *Mikra: Text Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity. Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum; Section 2*, ed. S. Safrai, et. al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), pp. 42-4.

⁷⁶⁸E. M. Cook, “A New Perspective on the Language of Onkelos and Jonathan,” in D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara (eds.) *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), pp. 142-156. See also his earlier comments in “Qumran Aramaic,” pp. 15ff.

⁷⁶⁹Cook, “The Language,” pp. 148-9.

⁷⁷⁰See Smelik, pp. 19-20.

masculine suffixes הים and הון interchangeably and we also find the relative pronoun represented by both the western form די and the eastern form -ד.⁷⁷¹ There is also inconsistency in the use of final נ and final ה. Both are present, but נ is most common.⁷⁷² Similarly, *חאנ occurs 19 times in TgLam while *חמא occurs only four times. Van der Heide interprets this as a western contamination, but this conclusion is impossible to substantiate.⁷⁷³ Although this is a very small sampling, it is enough to demonstrate that the language of TgLam is ambiguous, offering no conclusive proof of either western or eastern origin.

The use of loanwords in TgLam is slightly more illuminating. Greek loanwords include ὄχλος (1.1 and 4.21), ἐπαρχία (1.1), χᾶρακωμα (1.19), πέταλον (4.1), and πλατεῖα (4.18). There is also the Arabic loanword *kharj* (כרגא, 1.1) and the Latin *lectica* (אגלוקדא, 2.1).⁷⁷⁴ There is also the occurrence of the place-names ארמיניאה and איטיליאה (4.21-2). The presence of Greek and Latin loanwords suggests a western origin of the targum. The term אובלויסין, which occurs twice (1.1 and 4.21), occurs eight times in the Palestinian Talmud,⁷⁷⁵ but never in the Babylonian Talmud. It also occurs four times in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (TgPsJ)⁷⁷⁶ and yet it appears that it is completely absent from TgOnk and TgJon.⁷⁷⁷ The term occurs four times in the TgPss, four times in TgJob, and, with a *zayin* for *samekh*, it occurs three times in Tg. 1 Chron.⁷⁷⁸ Furthermore, in the first instance (1.1) the term is followed immediately by the phrase ועממין סגיאינ, which could be construed as an Aramaic translation of the Greek loanword, suggesting that this portion of

⁷⁷¹See G. Dalman, *Grammatik des Jüdisch-Palästinischen Aramäisch*, 2nd ed., (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1905), pp. 110 and 116-7 respectively.

⁷⁷²For further examples of textual features of Urb. 1 see Levine, pp. 21-2.

⁷⁷³Van der Heide, p. 97.

⁷⁷⁴Jastrow, p. 246a.

⁷⁷⁵y Ber. 63a and 63b; Dem. 17b (two occurrences); San. 52b; Mak. 6b; and Hor. 7a (two occurrences).

⁷⁷⁶Exod. 34.10; Num. 21.6, 34; and 24.24.

⁷⁷⁷I have executed a wildcard search of the Palestinian Talmud, the Babylonian Talmud, and TgOnk with the CD-ROM *The Judaic Classics: Deluxe Edition*, (Chicago: Davka, 1995). This collection does not include TgJon, however, and my manual search may not have been exhaustive.

⁷⁷⁸TgPss 48.14, 89.7, 113.9, and 144.7; TgJob 1.16, 17, 19.12, and 25.3; and Tg. 1 Chron. 11.6, 20.1, and 12.22. I am grateful to W. F. Smelik for making me aware of these references.

the text originated in the West and was then “translated” into an eastern dialect. It should be noted, however, that there is no such “translation” provided for אִוְכְלוּסִין in 4.21 nor for אַפְרָכִיא in 1.1. On the other hand, the term כְּרָגָא (1.1) is found in only Babylonian Aramaic and does not appear to be present in any Palestinian Rabbinic sources.⁷⁷⁹ This might suggest, if not an eastern origin, then at least an eastern redaction. This theory is further supported by the fact that the final clause (וְלִמְתֵּן לֵה כְּרָגָא בְּתֵר דְנָא) is not found in any of YT’s MSS, suggesting that it was a later addition.⁷⁸⁰

A study of the language of TgLam (Urb. 1) reveals an Aramaic of mixed type, exhibiting characteristics normally associated with both western and eastern Aramaic. Similarly, the presence of both Greek and Arabic loanwords contributes little to determining the linguistic origin of TgLam. The way in which these loanwords are used may, however, suggest that our targum originated in a region where western Aramaic was the norm and was later redacted under the linguistic influence of eastern Aramaic. Unfortunately the orthographic and grammatical variants between WT and YT MSS (and even within the two textual traditions) are significant. The confused nature of the textual tradition of TgLam makes it impossible to argue with any certainty based upon the linguistic evidence.⁷⁸¹

5.2. *Sitz im Leben*

Within the last twenty years the question of the *Sitz im Leben* of the targumim has been re-opened by scholars such as Anthony York, Rimon Kasher, Philip Alexander, and

⁷⁷⁹See Alexander, “The Textual Tradition,” pp. 1-2.

⁷⁸⁰We might also note that the reference to the “Parkevi,” Constantinople, and Armenia in 4.21. See §5.1.5 and §3.4.21. A counter argument to this would be the fact that YT MSS are most closely related to the Babylonian traditions, see Van der Heide, pp. 37ff.

⁷⁸¹These variants also indicate that the text was open to correction and suggests that TgLam did not hold a particularly authoritative position. For a complete discussion of the variants found in YT see Van der Heide, pp. 73-181. In private correspondence Alexander has stated that he believes the dialect of TgLam is best characterized as “Late Jewish Literary Aramaic,” that is, “a literary form of Aramaic without a vernacular base.” Thus the mixed nature of our text is the result of its being an artificial, literary creation which indiscriminately mixed elements of two or more dialects.

Willem Smelik.⁷⁸² Most recently, Alexander has argued that “the original *Sitz im Leben* of the Targum was the *Bet Sefer*, and that it was only subsequently taken over from there as part of the reading of Torah in synagogue.”⁷⁸³ Scholars agree that there were three main contexts within which the targumim were used: (1) the synagogue (*y Meg. 74d, b Meg. 23a-b, and y Meg. 75a*); (2) private devotion (*b Ber. 8a*); and (3) within the *Bet Sefer* (*Sifre Deut. 17.19; Aboth de Rabbi Nathan, B Text, 12; b Kidd. 49a*).

In determining the *Sitz im Leben* of our targum there are two sources of evidence which must be considered: (1) rabbinic statements regarding the use of the Book of Lamentations and its targum and (2) the targum itself.⁷⁸⁴ With regards to the rabbinic sources, it is important to remember that they come from a variety of historical and geographical (not to mention ideological) perspectives and they must therefore be treated with caution when attempting to use them as historical sources. Although it is also important to remember that the rabbinic sources are often prescriptive rather than descriptive, in this specific instance it is likely to be the other way around. As we shall see, the rabbinic sources are more often describing current practices than prescribing an ideal method of commemorating the ninth of Ab, the day the Temple was destroyed.

5.2.1. Rabbinic Sources

The first question regarding the Book of Lamentations and its use in the synagogue is when was its reading institutionalized as part of the service. Was it before the Second Temple was destroyed or after? And once we have established this date, we must determine

⁷⁸²Anthony D. York, “The Targum in the Synagogue and in the Bet Midrash,” *JSJ* X (1979), pp. 74-86; Rimon Kasher, “The Aramaic Targumim and their *Sitz im Leben*,” *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies: Panel Sessions Bible Studies and Ancient Near East*, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1985); Alexander, “The Targumim;” and Smelik, pp. 24-41, 180-88, 634-8, and 656. See S. Safrai, “Education and the Study of Torah,” and “The Synagogue,” both in *The Jewish People in the First Century* vol. 2, S. Safrai and M. Stern (eds.), (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, Assen, 1976), pp. 945-70.

⁷⁸³“How Did the Rabbis Learn Hebrew?” Presented to the BAJS Annual Conference, Cambridge, 9 July, 1996. Soon to be published. For an earlier stage of Alexander’s argument see “The Targumim,” p. 23. See also Smelik, *op. cit.*

⁷⁸⁴Alexander works along the same lines (“The Targumim,” p. 14), however he does not attempt such a narrow and focused study as this.

how it was used in the service. Sources external to TgLam provide our primary evidence for answering these questions.

We can actually begin our investigation in the Bible. Zech. 7.2-7 refers to a period of mourning during the fifth month.

Now the people of Bethel had sent Sarezzer and Regem-melech and their men, to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to ask the priests of the house of the LORD of hosts and the prophets, "Should I mourn and practice abstinence in the fifth month [Ab], as I have done for so many years?"

The word of the LORD comes to Zechariah and he responds saying that it is righteousness and mercy which the Lord wants and not mourning and abstinence, which are self-gratifying. So it seems that a time of mourning for the destruction of the First Temple *was* kept during the period of the Second Temple, but it was not universally observed; moreover this passage does not provide us with any information regarding the manner in which the ninth of Ab was commemorated.

The Mishnah is surprisingly silent as regards the actual liturgy for the ninth of Ab. M. *Ta'an*. 2.10 describes the manner of fasting to be observed and M. *Ta'an*. 4.6-7 lists the five things which occurred on the ninth of Ab,⁷⁸⁵ but it is not until several centuries later with the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud that we find an explicit statement concerning the liturgy of the ninth of Ab:

It is also forbidden [on the ninth of Ab] to read the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa (בכתובים) or to study Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, Halachot, or Aggadot; he may, however, read such parts of Scripture which he does not usually read and study such parts of Mishnah which he usually does not study; and he may also read Lamentations (בקינות), Job and the sad parts of Jeremiah; and the school children are free from school for it is said, *The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart* (Ps. 19.9). R. Judah said: Even such parts of Scripture which he does not usually read he may not read, nor study parts of Mishnah which he does not usually study, but he may read Job, Lamentations and the sad parts of Jeremiah; and the Bet Midrash children are free, *The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.*⁷⁸⁶

Note the lack of form and authority with which these statements are being made. The injunctions against reading certain passages are quite clear, but there is no effort to

⁷⁸⁵“On the 9th of Ab it was decreed against our fathers that they should not enter into the Land [of Israel], and the Temple was destroyed the first and the second time, and Beth-Tor was captured and the City was ploughed up. When Ab comes in, gladness must be diminished.”

⁷⁸⁶*b* Ta'an. 30a.

prescribe precisely what *should* be read. Instead the devout student *may* read any passages of Job, Lamentations, or “the sad parts of Jeremiah.” We know from other sources and contemporary practice that these texts are not, in fact, part of the normal lectionary cycle and so fulfill the injunction to read only those passages which are not usually studied.

The only other discussion within Ta’an. concerning the form of the liturgy to be used on the ninth of Ab is found in *b* Ta’an. 29b. “Should [the ninth of Ab] fall on a Monday or on a Thursday three people read the Law, and one also reads the prophetic lesson. R. Jose says: Invariably three persons read the Law and the last one of these also reads the prophetic lesson.” There is no mention of what those lessons are to be, nor is there any mention of Lamentations. The primary focus of *b* Ta’an. with regard to the ninth of Ab is how one should observe the fast.

In *b* Meg. 31b we find a more formal liturgy listed, but one which still appears to be in flux.

On the ninth of Ab itself what is the haftarah? Rab said: *How is she become a harlot* (Isa. 1.21) What is the section taken from the Torah? It has been taught: Others say, *But if ye will not hearken unto me* (Lev. 26.14ff). R. Nathan b Joseph says, *How long will this people despise me* (Num. 14.11) and some say, *How long shall I bear with this evil congregation* (Num 14.27). Abaye said: Nowadays the custom has been adopted of reading *When thou shalt begat children* (Deut. 4.25) and for haftarah, *I will utterly consume them* (Jer. 8.13).⁷⁸⁷

Unlike *b* Ta’an. there is no mention of Lamentations. Moreover, one would assume that the readings from the Torah mentioned here would have been part of the normal lectionary cycle and would therefore contradict the ruling of *b* Ta’an. 30a. The intricacies of the relationship of these two talmudic passages is beyond the scope of this study, so it will suffice to note that while the form of worship for the ninth of Ab is clearly evolving, by the closing of the Bavli there is still no official role for the Book of Lamentations or its targum. It is not until the compilation of Soferim that mention is made of the targum to Lamentations.

Soferim 42b states that “On the ninth day of Ab [the reading consists] of four verses of Jeremiah *Hast thou utterly rejected Judah?* to *For thou hast made all these things*

⁷⁸⁷*b* Meg. 31b.

[14.19-22] and the following two psalms, *O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance* and *By the rivers of Babylon* [Pss. 79 and 137].”⁷⁸⁸ An earlier passage of Soferim states that the Torah reading for the ninth of Ab and “the last seven days in connection with droughts ... [is] the section of the blessings and curses” [Lev. 26.3-46].⁷⁸⁹ So like *b Meg.* 31b, we find here the Torah and the Haftarah readings listed for commemorating the ninth of Ab, but the texts are different than those listed in *b Meg.* and two additional readings from Psalms are prescribed by Soferim as well. Furthermore, Soferim describes how one is to read and translate the Book of Lamentations:

Some [congregations] read the Book of Lamentations in the evening while others postpone it to the [following] morning after the reading of Torah, when the reader stands, his head covered with ashes, his clothes torn, and reads it with weeping and lamentation. If he is able to translate it, well and good; but if he is unable he entrusts it to one who knows how to translate properly and [that person] does the translation, so that the rest of the people, the women and children may understand it; women being under the obligation to listen to the reading of the Book the same as men, and much more so male persons.⁷⁹⁰

So here we have a description of a mournful service of commemoration which, in addition to fasting, involved the reading of Torah (Lev. 26.3-46), Haftarah (Jer. 14.19-22), Psalms (79 and 137), and the Book of Lamentations with its translation. There is still flexibility in how the congregations ordered their service and even in the readings assigned for the day, but we now find that Lamentations is assumed to be read and that its reading *must* include a translation.⁷⁹¹ Although the order of the service (including whether Lamentations is read on the evening of the ninth or on the morning of the tenth)⁷⁹² is allowed to vary, the reading of the Book of Lamentations is considered an obligation which must be met by both men and women.

⁷⁸⁸Sof. 42b.

⁷⁸⁹Sof. 42a.

⁷⁹⁰Sof. 42b. Note that the reader can also be the translator, contrary to normal practice (see *y Meg.* 74d and *b Meg.* 21b).

⁷⁹¹Rabbinic rules would dictate that this translation would be oral and not written (*y Meg.* 74d), however Soferim appears to contradict the talmudic ruling concerning the need for a separate reader and translator (see above) so we cannot rule out the possibility of a written targum developing at this time.

⁷⁹²In Seder R. Amram Gaon 44a the Book of Lamentations is to be read in the evening. See Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. by Raymond P. Scheindlin, ed. by Joseph Heinemann, et al. (New York: JPS, 1993), p. 107.

Finally, there is the possibility that a targum of Lamentations would have been used in private study. The evidence for such individual use is difficult to discern,⁷⁹³ but there are two possibilities to consider. In *y Shab. 79a* a story is told of Rabbi, R. Hiyya the Elder, and R. Ishmael b. R. Yose studying Lamentations prior to the ninth of Ab.⁷⁹⁴ No mention is made of the targum, but it is important to note that this passage is a (relatively) early attestation of the study of Lamentations before the ninth of Ab. It would not be unreasonable to think that a targum of Lamentations might have been part of their study. It has also been suggested that TgLam might have been used in the private devotion of the “Mourners for Zion.”⁷⁹⁵ Little is known about this group, but the earliest reference to them in rabbinic texts occurs in PR 34.⁷⁹⁶ They apparently maintained a state of mourning due to the destruction of the Temple and had very strong messianic beliefs. PR 34 speaks of how they suffered distress at the hands of other Jews for their devotion, but that ultimately they would be justified. “Then at last [the Jews] will understand that it was because of the unending prayers of the Mourners for Zion that the Messiah will appear.”⁷⁹⁷ Here again we have no direct evidence which states that they studied TgLam as part of their private devotions, but it would not be beyond reason to think that a group whose sole focus was the contemplation of the destruction of the Temple might have used a targum to the Book of Lamentations. If that were the case “it is possible that TgLam was first used in the private liturgies of the ‘Mourners for Zion’ and then incorporated into the public liturgy of the

⁷⁹³See *b Ber. 8a* for reference to the general practice of one reading the targum of the weekly lection before attending services. “Rab Huna bar Judah said in the name of Rabbi Ammi: A man should always complete his *parashiyyot* with the congregation—twice in the Hebrew and once in the Targum.” See Alexander, “The Targumim,” p. 22.

⁷⁹⁴*y Shab. 79a*: “There was an incident in which Rabbi, R. Hiyya the Elder, and R. Ishmael b. R. Yose were in session and reviewing the scroll of Lamentations on the eve of the ninth of Ab which coincided with the Sabbath, doing so from the time of the afternoon offering and onward. They omitted one alphabetical chapter, saying, ‘Tomorrow we will go and complete it.’” (The translation is from J. Neusner, *The Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation and Explanation*, vol. II, [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991], p. 410). The passage then goes on to describe an accident, attributed to their having left their study incomplete, and the quotation of Lam. 4.20 as justification for their “punishment.”

⁷⁹⁵By Alexander in private communication. I am grateful for his suggestion of this intriguing possibility. For a discussion of the Mourners for Zion see J. Mann, *The Jews in Egypt and Palestine Under the Fatimid Caliphs*, Vol. 1, (London, 1920), pp. 47-8. The phrase “Mourners for Zion” is based upon Isa. 61.3.

⁷⁹⁶See also *M. Teh. 137.6* and *b B. B. 60b*.

⁷⁹⁷PR 34.

synagogue.”⁷⁹⁸ Unfortunately the evidence for the use of TgLam in personal study is inconclusive and any such assertions must remain conjecture.

So what conclusions *can* we draw from the rabbinic sources? (1) The Talmud offers a varied picture of how the ninth of Ab was to be commemorated. Furthermore the Talmud neither describes nor prescribes any definite use of Lamentations in commemorating the destruction of Jerusalem on the ninth of Ab. It is merely offered that “Lamentations, Job, or the sad parts of Jeremiah” are appropriate readings for this day. There does not appear to have been any requirement concerning Lamentations by the time of the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud and so little can be deduced concerning the role of the targum within the synagogal service prior to the sixth century. (2) Soferim presents a fluid, yet definable, service that nonetheless required the reading of the Book of Lamentations and its targum. We may be certain, therefore, that by the time of the redaction of Soferim the targum played a key role in the ninth of Ab service. And finally, (3) since the Talmud does not seem to be concerned or aware of any consistent use of the Book of Lamentations and its targum on the ninth of Ab and since Soferim presents a prescription of how Lamentations is to be read along with its translation, we may conjecture that the practice of reading the Book of Lamentations and its targum as part of the synagogal worship became institutionalized sometime between the closing of the Babylonian Talmud and the composition of Soferim, roughly the seventh century CE.

5.2.2. *Targumic Testimony*

As Soferim 42b demonstrates, by the seventh century CE the ninth of Ab was commemorated with a service in which the Book of Lamentations was read with its translation. It is important to remember, however, that this does not necessarily mean that our written targum is the same as that used in the service. The rabbinic material simply states that when the Book of Lamentations was read on the ninth of Ab it was to be followed by a translation. It does not indicate that there was an official or sanctioned

⁷⁹⁸Alexander, in private communication.

version which should be used as opposed to an *ad hoc* recitation, but rather it must be translated “properly” so that “the rest of the people, the women and children may understand it.” The question of the *Sitz im Leben* of *this* text (Urb. 1), therefore, is still unanswered. We must look to the evidence of the text itself if we are to determine its provenience.

The task of reading a targum in order to discover its *Sitz im Leben* is exceedingly difficult. First of all, we must bear in mind that we are dealing with a written text that developed over hundreds of years (the earliest MS of TgLam is only 700 years old) and no doubt underwent many changes during this period. Secondly, when historical references are made it is often very difficult to use them for the purposes of dating the targum. In some cases, such as 4.21-2 where the enigmatic “Parkevi” are referred to,⁷⁹⁹ the references are cryptic in form. But in most instances, references to known historical figures or events, such as Titus and Vespasian in 1.19, are intended to broaden the context for interpreting Lamentations. A specific methodology would be difficult to create since each text is unique, but the general approach required can be summarized in a single question: Can particular features better be understood as appropriate for the synagogue or the school? If this question is asked of every feature found in a given targum, by the end of the analysis we should have enough data to determine with reasonable confidence the context in which this targum was created.

In a manner similar to Shinan’s method of looking for what “is by its nature un-targumic”⁸⁰⁰ in determining which expansions in a targum are original or derived from the midrashim, we must look for what is most similar or dissimilar to what we would expect to find if the targum was created for the synagogue or the Bet Sefer. Our first step, therefore, must be to determine what traits we would expect the targum to exhibit that would be unique (or better suited) to these two contexts. It is important to note that these are broad generalizations and are merely intended as a starting point.

⁷⁹⁹See the discussion at the end of this section and §3.4.21-2.

⁸⁰⁰Shinan, “The Aggadah,” p. 212.

In the Bet Sefer, the primary school,⁸⁰¹ the students were learning Bible in a dynamic situation, with the knowledge of their teachers at hand for explaining difficult portions of the text. So why would such students need a targum at all? The answer lies in teaching methods. Given that the teacher did not have Hebrew grammars and lexicons at his disposal as we do today, how would he have taught his students biblical Hebrew? Although they would learn the texts through repetition, the meaning of the language is not so easily conveyed. Alexander has demonstrated quite convincingly that Jewish students probably learned biblical Hebrew in a manner similar to that of other students elsewhere in antiquity; that is, by using slavishly literal translations of the primary texts.⁸⁰² This practice is found within Greek schools where the students used literal translations of Vergil in order to learn Latin. Viewed in this light, the primary purpose of the targum within the Bet Sefer would be to provide the students with a “crib” for learning biblical Hebrew. A more literal translation would best serve that purpose; as Sebastian Brock has written, “in the *uerbum e uerbo* translation the original acts, as it were, as Aristotle’s unmoved mover, and the psychological effect is to bring the reader to the original.”⁸⁰³

At first glance the structure of TgLam would seem to support the school setting as the likely context for the origins of our targum. The vast majority of the text is remarkably literal in its rendering of the Hebrew and, as we have noted, a *verbatim* translation is ideal if the purpose of the translation is to try to teach students biblical Hebrew. There is reason to question, however, the suitability of the Book of Lamentations for teaching the student Hebrew. Much of the language of Lamentations is difficult and many of the terms are quite

⁸⁰¹Specifically, the teaching of Hebrew and the Bible would have taken place in the Bet Sefer and the study of the midrashim would occur in the Bet Midrash. In the Bet Midrash the situation would be similar to that of the synagogue. The targum would help to elucidate the difficult passages for the older students who would already have studied the biblical text. See S. Safrai, “Education and the Study of Torah,” pp. 945-70; and Kasher, pp. 80-1, where he distinguishes between *verbatim* translations, which would be used in the Bet Sefer, and targumim that contain midrashic additions and which would be more fitting in the context of the Bet Midrash or Bet Talmud.

⁸⁰²Alexander, “How Did the Rabbis,” passim.

⁸⁰³Sebastian Brock, “Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 20 (1979), p. 73. See also Kasher, “The Aramaic,” “It will not be far from the truth to argue that the *verbatim* translation—a word in Aramaic for each Hebrew word—originated with the study of the Bible in school” pp. 78-9; and Alexander, “How Did the Rabbis,” passim.

rare. It should also be remembered that some of the aggadot which are present in TgLam are extremely graphic depictions of the horrors of war and may not have been appropriate for young school boys. These same children, however, would presumably have been in attendance when the targum was read in the synagogue, so this is not conclusive.

Apparently the material was considered appropriate within some context and, as we shall see, the nature of these passages seems to indicate that it was the synagogue.

In the synagogue, the primary purpose of the targum was for comprehension. As this principle was expressed in Soferim 42b in relation to the Book of Lamentations, the text must be translated properly “so that the rest of the people, the women and children may understand it.” In this context a literal translation would be suitable, but since there were strict rules prescribing the recitation of a targum during a service which forbade looking at the Hebrew text⁸⁰⁴ some deviance from a *verbatim* translation would be expected.

Furthermore, we know that a targum is rarely so simple and often incorporates aggadic additions, the purpose of which was, most likely, to impart to an unlearned congregation the appropriate meaning and interpretation of a passage. In the case of the Palestinian targumim, Shinan has demonstrated that aggadic expansions occur more frequently at the beginning or end of sedarim, which suggests a synagogal setting.⁸⁰⁵ These sorts of additions would be particularly important in circumstances where expository sermons were not the norm. So we might expect that a targum primarily intended for use in the synagogue would incorporate many aggadic additions, particularly at the beginning of the reading or to those passages which might have been deemed problematic.

One final note concerning the dating and the nature of targumic literature is appropriate at this point. In attempting to determine the date and provenance of midrashic material it is common practice to catalogue the names and dates of the authorities cited and then make a judgement based upon such evidence.⁸⁰⁶ Since targumim rarely cite the source

⁸⁰⁴y Meg. 74d, b Meg. 32a, b Sot 39b, and M. Meg. 4.4. See Alexander, “The Targumim,” pp. 23-5.

⁸⁰⁵Shinan, *The Aggadah*, pp. 30-8. See Kasher, p. 76.

⁸⁰⁶E.g., With regard to PRK Braude writes, “Since Palestinian Rabbis are cited more frequently than Babylonian and since no Rabbis who lived later than the fifth century CE are cited, the work is believed to

of the aggadic material employed this technique is of little help and scholars of targumic literature must rely upon linguistic and textual features which, as we have seen, are often difficult to interpret.⁸⁰⁷ In this section we will not only look for explicit historical references and indications of how the targum may have been used, but we will also take into account the development of the aggadic features of the targum as well. When a parallel to an aggadah found within our targum is found within a midrashic collection, we may establish an approximate *terminus a quo* for the aggadah, if not for the targum itself, based upon the authorities cited or, at the least, based upon the probable date of redaction of the midrashic collection. This is not without difficulties, however, since the dating of rabbinic materials is often imprecise so any conclusions based upon such evidence must be considered tentative.⁸⁰⁸ In order to facilitate such an assessment we will follow a general chronological order in analyzing the midrashic sources.⁸⁰⁹

In Chapter 4 we examined the structural form of TgLam and noted that the first four verses were particularly expansive. The purpose of this exegetical activity at the beginning of the targum was to provide the audience with a theological prolegomenon to the Book of Lamentations and we have compared it to the aggadic expansions found at the beginning of sedarim in the Palestinian targumim.⁸¹⁰ The targumist prepares the audience for the content of Lamentations by presenting an abbreviated history of God's dealing with his people's rebellion. In each verse the targumist presents evidence of Israel's sins in order to demonstrate that God's harsh punishment was justified. While such a prolegomenon would be as effective for one reading the text as for a synagogal audience hearing it, such a device

have been compiled in Palestine sometime during the fifth century CE," pp. xlv-xlvi.

⁸⁰⁷This is not to imply that methods of dating midrashic works are more precise. A quick survey of the literature regarding the date of Pesikta Rabbati (PR), for example, proves that such is not the case.

⁸⁰⁸For discussion of the methodological issues faced when working with rabbinic materials see, e.g., B. J. Bamberg, "The Dating of Aggadic Materials," *JBL* 68 (1949), pp. 115-23; Morton Smith, "On the Problem of Method in the Study of Rabbinic Literature," *JBL* 92 (1973), pp. 112-3 (and Ben Zion Wacholder's, "A Reply," *JBL* 92 [1973]), pp. 114-5); A. J. Saldarini, "'Form Criticism' of Rabbinic Literature," *JBL* 96 (1977), pp. 257-74; D. W. Halivni, "Contemporary Methods of the Study of Talmud," *JJS* 30 (1979), pp. 192-201; and A. Goldberg, "Form-Analysis of Midrashic Literature as a Method of Description," *JJS* 36 (1985), pp. 159-74.

⁸⁰⁹I have followed the majority view on the dating of the rabbinic sources as found in Stemberger.

⁸¹⁰See §4.1.

would be particularly appropriate for educating the community which had gathered to commemorate the Ninth of Ab. This peculiar form of TgLam is therefore best understood as the result of its use within the synagogue.

The first two verses of TgLam also contain aggadic traditions which can be compared with other rabbinic sources. Verse 1 begins with a comparison of Judah's exile with Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden based upon the consonantal similarities between אֵיכָהּ in Lam. 1.1 and אֵיכָהּ of Gen. 3.9. This aggadah is found in several rabbinic sources including PRK 15, GenR to 19.9, and LamR Proem 4, all of which are early sources which date approximately to the fifth century CE. In verse 2 we find an aggadic addition based upon the similarities between Lam. 1.2 and Num. 14.1. This tradition can also be found in a number of rabbinic sources including NumR to 14.1, LamR Proem 33 (and ad. loc.), Laqach Tob, *b* San. 104b, and *b* Ta'an. 29a. LamR is the earliest source in this group and dates the fifth century. These two traditions can therefore be traced back to midrashic collections which were redacted in the late Amoraic period. The traditions themselves were presumably preexistent at the time of redaction, but this does provide us with a general *terminus a quo* for the aggadot, if not for the targum.

There are four other expansions, found elsewhere in the text, which are of particular relevance for the questions of date, provenance, and *Sitz im Leben*. TgLam 2.19 is particularly intriguing and suggestive of a possible reconstruction of the ninth of Ab service.⁸¹¹

Arise, O Congregation of Israel dwelling in exile. Busy yourself with Mishnah in the night, for the Shekinah of the LORD is dwelling before you, and with the words of Torah at the beginning of the morning watch. Pour out like water the crookedness of your heart and turn in repentance. And pray in the House of the Congregation before the face of the LORD. Raise your hands to him in prayer for the life of your children who thirst with hunger at the head of every open market.

TgLam 2.19 identifies the subject of "Arise!" as the "Congregation of Israel *dwelling in exile*." This indicates that the targum is aimed at Jews scattered throughout the ancient

⁸¹¹Since we do not possess clear evidence of how the Ninth of Ab was commemorated (see above §5.1.4) any suggestions made will remain speculative. For further discussion of this verse see §3.2.19 and §4.5.

world, rather than at those who live in Jerusalem or Palestine. When considering the two main possible contexts for our targum, the Bet Sefer and the synagogue, it is interesting that within this one verse we should find reference to both the study of Mishnah and Torah as well as the entreaty that they should go and pray in the synagogue. As is the case elsewhere in the targum, the audience is encouraged to repent and seek the Lord's forgiveness, but in this case the targumist also prescribes the study of Mishnah and Torah. Since the establishment of both the school and the synagogue are very early within our time frame, this information is of little use in dating the text. It does, however, provide strong evidence that the present form of our targum was intended for the synagogal context since it refers to the audience as the "Congregation" and to the place of prayer as the "House of the Congregation."

The fact that the audience is called to get up and study Mishnah at night may suggest a break in the ninth of Ab service. *Soferim* 42b states that "some [congregations] read the Book of Lamentations in the evening while others postpone it to the [following] morning."⁸¹² Or perhaps, some congregations did both. *TgLam* 2.19 may represent a liturgical device for announcing to the congregation a transition in the service from the reading of Lamentations to the study of Mishnah (presumably they would have read to the end of Chapter Two, which ends on a positive note, "may you declare freedom to your people, the House of Israel, by the King Messiah"). They would then return the following morning to finish the reading of the Book of Lamentations. While this reconstruction of the structure of the ninth of Ab service must remain purely speculative and these references to study would be appropriate in any context within rabbinic Judaism, it is not unreasonable to suggest that 2.19 reflects an annual vigil during which the congregation would study Mishnah at night ("such parts which he does not usually study")⁸¹³ and would conclude their night of remembrance with a Torah reading the following morning.⁸¹⁴

⁸¹²See above §5.2.1.

⁸¹³*b* Ta'an. 30a.

⁸¹⁴I suggest an annual vigil since Lamentations is used liturgically only once a year and, as we shall see, the targum as we now have it is clearly intended for use within the synagogue. For further discussion see §3.2.19.

It was observed earlier that, when one views the work as a whole, there is very little material added to the last four chapters of Lamentations. Chapter Three is a prime example, in that it is extremely literal throughout all sixty six of its verses with the exception of verse 28. This verse also has bearing on our current study. In MT, 3.25-30 is an encouragement to those who suffer. “It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD; it is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young; let him sit alone in silence for the LORD has laid it upon him.” The targumist takes this theme and extends it in verse 28 by identifying what the Lord has “laid upon him” as “the corrections” intended to allow his sins to be expiated in this world so that “[the Lord] may receive him perfected in the world to come.” As we have seen, this section of Chapter Three calls the audience to adhere to doctrines and practices which are in keeping with those found in the Mishnah and Talmudim.⁸¹⁵

Finally, in 4.21-2 we find an extremely complex reference to Constantinople, Edom and the Edomites, Rome and Italy, Persians, and a group referred to as the “Parkevi” (פרקווי). Alexander has identify this last group with the Parthians and argues against emending the text to פרסאי.⁸¹⁶ He goes on to suggest that the text we now have was originally two alternative readings of 4.21, which have both been incorporated into the text by a confused scribe. Alexander argues that the dates and events alluded to are likely to be the conflicts over Armenia between Rome and Parthia (third century CE) and between Byzantium and Sassanian Persia (early seventh century CE). However one interprets this difficult passage, the latest event referred to is the seventh century CE conflict between the Byzantine Empire and Sassanian Persia. Unfortunately the cryptic use of former names of nations in order to refer to current enemies is widely attested, so as promising as this passage appears, little concerning the date of the targum’s composition or its *Sitz im Leben* can be deduced with certainty. We can, however, postulate that this targum was particularly important for those Jews in the region most effected by these conflicts, that is northern Mesopotamia.

⁸¹⁵See §4.6.

⁸¹⁶Alexander, *Toponymy*, pp. 110-2. For a full discussion see §3.4.21.

5.3. The Ninth of Ab Service

A picture has slowly emerged as to when, where, and how TgLam came into use. There are many features of the text in its present form which indicate that TgLam was created for use within the synagogue to be read during the service which commemorated the destruction of the Temple on the ninth of Ab. The first four verses of TgLam provide an expansive prologue which would be most effective in a synagogal setting. The congregation would have consisted of men, women, and children and, although at least some of the men would have received training in the Bet Midrash, none of the women or children would have had the necessary theological training to enable them to understand the Book of Lamentations “properly.” In order to prevent them from coming to any erroneous conclusions concerning the nature and character of God, the targumist introduces the text with a series of aggadot, which convey the fundamental message that no matter what God did in punishing Israel, she deserved it because she had “sinned greatly.” These additions have parallels in midrashim dating from the fifth century CE.

The recurrent use of *כְּנִשְׁתָּא* also indicates a synagogal context. The most obvious example is TgLam 2.19, but the term occurs throughout TgLam and serves to modernize the text so that the targumist’s contemporaries would identify with the community described in the targum. When the “Congregation of Israel dwelling in exile” is called to repent and pray before the Lord the audience, the congregation in the synagogue, would be encouraged to participate in the mourning and repentance. Furthermore, this call to the Congregation in TgLam 2.19 may suggest an actual liturgical device which would guide the worshipping congregation in their observance of the ninth of Ab.

The targumist’s use of “dramatic heightening,” the intensification or insertion of graphic images of war and suffering into the text, has the admonishing tone of a preacher warning his congregation of the tragic consequences of disobeying God.⁸¹⁷ The Book of Lamentations has many passages which describe the horrors of war in vivid terms. Rather

⁸¹⁷See, for example, TgLam 1.15.

than soften the language of such passages TgLam accentuates the poignancy of the moment with sanguine additions to the text. This language and tone would have little benefit for teaching a student Hebrew in the Bet Sefer, but within the synagogue such rhetoric would remind the congregation of the horrific events that befell their ancestors with the implicit warning that God would still punish the Congregation of Israel for disobeying his Commandments. Thus, the evidence of TgLam seems to indicate quite strongly that the targum, in its present form, was used within the context of the synagogue as part of the ninth of Ab service.

Finally, there is very little clear evidence within TgLam which might indicate its date of composition. The references in 4.21-2 to Constantinople, Edom, Rome, Italy, Persians, and the “Parkevi” only serve to complicate the matter. The reference to Elijah as High Priest (a title found primarily in TgPsJ, which was redacted no later than the seventh century CE)⁸¹⁸ suggests a date of redaction sometime within the seventh century CE and this is supported by the rabbinic evidence.⁸¹⁹ Although the Talmud does not seem to be aware of any consistent use of a targum to Lamentations during the ninth of Ab service, Soferim 42b prescribes the reading of the Book of Lamentations and its targum as part of the commemoration of the destruction of the Temple. It is impossible to determine if the version of TgLam which we now possess is the same as that described in Soferim. However, it is clear that the practice of reading the Book of Lamentations and its targum as part of the synagogal worship on the ninth of Ab became institutionalized by the time of the composition of Soferim, roughly the seventh century CE.

⁸¹⁸See §3.1.1 and §3.4.21.

⁸¹⁹One must be cautious in employing an “argument from silence,” but it may be significant, and further justification of dating the targum to the first half of the seventh century CE, that there is *no* reference to Arabs or Muslims.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

THE EXEGETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF TGLAM

The Book of Lamentations is a collection of five grief-filled poems. As such Lamentations makes dramatic statements about God's actions and the suffering of Israel. God is described as an enemy who destroys without pity. Mothers boil their young in order to stave off starvation and the royalty are described as clinging to dung heaps. The biblical book concludes by stating that God has "utterly rejected" his people and the reader is left wondering whether God and Israel can ever be reconciled. In translating this work for the Jewish community in exile our targumist had a massive task. While representing the biblical text how or should he comment upon it? Should the language about God be softened or transformed? Who receives the blame for this horrific episode in Jewish history and how should the destruction of the Second Temple be taken into account? These are the questions addressed by the targumist in creating his version of Lamentations. This thesis also began with a question. "What is the message of TgLam and how has the targumist altered the biblical text in order to convey that message?"

The answer to the first portion of the question is quite simple and straightforward. TgLam makes it explicit that Jerusalem deserved her fate because of the sin of her people. Thus TgLam contains many statements such as Jerusalem was punished "because of the greatness of her rebellious sin which was within her" (1.1) and "the LORD commanded the House of Jacob to keep the Commandments and Torah, but they transgressed the decree of his Memra" (1.17). Furthermore, our targumist makes it clear that this punishment from God was not capricious, but was the fulfillment of the promise he made with Israel in the wilderness.⁸²⁰ "The LORD has done what he planned ... that if the children of Israel did not

⁸²⁰See Deut. 30.15-8.

keep the Commandments of the LORD he was going to punish them” (2.17). While the message of TgLam is clear, explaining *how* the targumist has conveyed that message requires more detailed explanation. In Chapter 4, “Analysis,” we looked at the various literary devices which the targumist employed in order to present his message. There are four primary ways in which the targumist has altered the text: (1) the structure of the targum, (2) translational technique, (3) the use of מדת דינא, and (4) כנשתא.

The form of TgLam is somewhat unique since there is a disproportionately large amount of aggadic material added at the beginning of Chapter One. These additions placed at the beginning of TgLam allow our targumist to provide a specific context within which his audience would receive the message of the targum.⁸²¹ These additions to 1.1-4 form a theological prologue which declares that the Congregation of Israel is to blame for the destruction of Jerusalem and the Lord’s Temple. In 1.1 God himself mourned for his children, but his justice required that he punish them since they had rebelled against him. The targumist continues to expound upon his theme in verse 2 stating that the fate of Jerusalem was preordained since the Israelites did not have faith in his promises and when confronted with their sins the people of Jerusalem refused to repent. Furthermore, they transgressed his commandments (1.3) and even when the Temple stood they refused come and worship God in Jerusalem (1.4). These additions thus provide the context within which the congregation is to understand the Book of Lamentations and the events which it describes.⁸²²

The targumist also used three principle techniques of translation in order to transform the biblical text in line with his message. Much of our targumist’s interpretation has been influenced by the rabbinic axiom מדה כנגד מדה and nowhere is this more clearly evident than in 1.3. Not only have Jerusalem and her people been punished because of their sin, but the nature of their punishment was dictated by their sins. Thus the people went into exile “*with* suffering and hard servitude” because they had inflicted suffering on the orphans and

⁸²¹See §5.2.3.

⁸²²See §4.1 for discussion of the structure of TgLam.

widows and had pressed their brothers into labor.⁸²³ The use of this interpretational method underscores the responsibility of Israel in determining their fate. God controls all events, the enemy enters Jerusalem only by God's decree (1.15), but the people could have averted the disaster by repenting and following God's Commandments (1.2 and 2.19). The responsibility for their punishment, no matter how harsh, remains upon the people.

Two related translational methods employed by the targumist are reversal of fortune and dramatic heightening. In TgLam 1.7, for example, the targumist has greatly enhanced the description of Jerusalem prior to her destruction in order to emphasize the tragedy of her downfall. The biblical text itself often contrasts Jerusalem's fallen state with her former glory (e.g., 1.1, 7, and 2.15), but our targumist expands and embellishes these images in unexpected ways and thus heightens the pathos of the moment. The most extreme example is found in TgLam 1.15 where the targumist has gone beyond the harsh language of the biblical text ("the LORD has trodden as in a wine press, the virgin daughter Judah") and depicted a sanguine image of the raping of the women in Jerusalem. The effect of these additions is to increase the contrast between Jerusalem's former state of glory and her humbled condition, while graphically depicting the consequences of war which are ultimately the consequences of Israel's sin. These passages serve as dramatic warnings to the audience of the ramifications of disobeying God.

Another startling feature of the Book of Lamentations is the way in which God is described as actively attacking Jerusalem and Israel. It would be reasonable to expect that our targumist would have softened this language and perhaps distanced God from these actions, but once again this is not the case. Although the targum identifies "the enemies" as Nebuchadnezzar (and occasionally Titus) they are invariably understood as the agents of God. For example, in 1.15 it is by the "decree of the Memra of the LORD" that the nations entered Jerusalem. TgLam 2.4 tells us that God "stood ready at the right hand of Nebuchadnezzar and aided him as if he [God] himself were an oppressor of his people, the House of Israel." The destruction of Jerusalem, therefore, only came about because God

⁸²³See §4.2.1 for further examples.

allowed the enemy to enter. In the course of creating the targum to the Book of Lamentations our targumist has not attempted to make the horrors described more palatable, but instead has enhanced them with vivid and florid language. Neither has he removed God from the warlike actions attributed to him in Lamentations. Instead our targumist expounded and expanded the text in order to demonstrate that the destruction of the Temple, though decreed and authorized by God, was the result of Israel's sins.

The third device used by our targumist in conveying his message is the figure of מדת דינא. This figure is found throughout rabbinic literature and appears three times in TgLam, but is otherwise rarely encountered in targumic literature.⁸²⁴ In each instance the Attribute of Justice serves as a herald who declares the sin of Jerusalem and her people. Rather than acting as the agent of destruction, as we find in the midrashim, the targumist uses מדת דינא as a spokesman who presents the reasons for Jerusalem's punishment so that the audience will know the justice of God's actions.

Finally, the targumist directs the text to his contemporary audience through the recurrent use of כנשתא.⁸²⁵ Our survey of TgJon demonstrated that כנשתא is the standard translational equivalent for בת when in construct with ציין, יהודה, and עמי, but our targumist has also inserted כנשתא into the text six times. The frequent use of this term served to update the text so that the congregation hearing the targum as it was read during the ninth of Ab service would identify with the Congregation of Israel depicted in TgLam. The targumist's own community would thus be directed towards repentance as the targum repeatedly speaks of the sin of "the Congregation of my people" (4.6) and calls for "the Congregation of Israel dwelling in exile ... to turn in repentance" (2.19). This last reference, TgLam 2.19, not only indicates the presence of an audience, but also attests to the thoroughly rabbinic context and agenda of our targumist. That our targumist was working within the rabbinic milieu is further supported by the presence of shared aggadic traditions (such as those found in TgLam 1.1 and 1.2) and the use of specific rabbinic terms

⁸²⁴See §3.1.1, §3.2.20, §3.4.13, and 4.3.

⁸²⁵See §4.5.

such as *שכנתא*, *תבותא*, and the use of *מדת דינא*. In addition to 2.19, the expansions found in Chapter Three also encourage the audience to adhere to rabbinic principles as they hope in God's salvation, bear his corrections "for the sake of the unity of the name of the LORD," and take up "the yoke of the Commandments" (3.25-30). Such action, however, is intended as the appropriate response to the recognition of their sins. "Let us search and examine our ways and turn in repentance before the LORD" (3.40).

The targumist thus presents his congregation with the direct message that the destruction of Jerusalem was not the act of a capricious God nor was it merely the result of simple military conquest. Jerusalem and the Temple of the LORD had been destroyed because Israel had disobeyed God's Commandments and although God provided them with ample opportunity, they refused to repent. While Israel had broken her portion of the Covenant, God was bound by his own word to punish them for their disobedience and therefore decreed that the nations should enter and destroy Jerusalem. The message of TgLam is very different from that of the biblical text. The targumist has utilized many different literary devices in order to convey his message. These include the addition of *aggadot*, the use of dramatic heightening, the principle of *מדה כנגד מדה*, and the figure of *מדת דינא*. In each instance the targumist emphasizes Israel's responsibility in bringing about the destruction of Jerusalem. As the congregation commemorated the destruction of the LORD's Temple on the ninth of Ab TgLam reminds them that the Temple was destroyed by God's decree because he punished Israel as a father chastises his disobedient child.

Appendix 1 - The Text of Urb. 1⁸²⁶

App. 1.1. Chapter 1

- 1 אמר ירמיהו נביא וכהנא רבא איכדין אתגזר על ירושלם ועל עמהא לאתדנא בתירוכין ולמספד עליהון איכה היכמה דאתדנן אדם וחווה דאתרכו מגנתא דעדן ואספד עלויהון מרי עלמא איכה ענת מדת דינא וכן אמרת על סגיאות חובהא אשתדר ומה דבגוהא בגין תהא יתבא בלחודהא כגבר דמכתש סגירו על בסריה דבלחודוהי יתיב וקרתא דהוה מליא אוכלוסין ועממין סגיאין אתרוקנת מנהון והות דמיא כארמלא ודמתרברבא בעמיא ושליטא באפרכיא והוון מסקין לה מסין הדרת למהוי מכיכא ולמתן לה כרגא בתר דנא:
- 2 כד שלח משה נביא עזגדין לאללא ית ארעא תבו עזגדיא ואסיקו טיב ביש על ארעא דישראל והוהא ליליא תשעא יומין באב הוה וכד שמעו עמא בית ישראל ית בשורתא בישתא הדא דאתבשרו על ארעא דישראל נטלו עמא ית קלהון ובכו עמא בית ישראל בליליא ההוא מן יד תקיף רוגזא דיי עלויהון וגזר למהוי בכך בליליא הדא לדריהון על חורבן בית מוקדשא וכדו אתאמר בנבואה לירמיהו כהנא רבא למהוי חריבא ירושלם על ידוי דנבוכד נצר רשיעא אין לא תייבין בתתובא מן יד עאל אוכח לעמא בית ישראל וסריבו לקבלא בכך עאל נבוכד נצר רשיעא וצדא ית ירושלם ובית מוקדשא אוקיד בנורא בתשע יומין בירחא דאב וביה בליליא בכיאת כנשתא דישראל בכותא דמעא זליג על לסתהא לית די ימלל תנחומין על לבהא מן כל טעוותא די רחימת למיזל בתריהון ובגין כן כל חברהא ארשיעו בהא אתהפכו למהוי לה לבעיל דבבין:
- 3 אזלו בית יהודה בגלותא על דהוון מענן יתמין וארמלן ועל סגיאות פולחנא דהוון מפלחין באחיהון בני ישראל דאזדבנו להון ולא קרו חירותא לעבדיהון ולאמהתהון דהוון מזרעית ישראל ובגין כן אף אנון אתמסרו ביד עממיא וכנשתא דבית יהודה יתבא בגו עממיא ולא אשכחת נייה מפולחנא קשיא דשעבידו יתה [וכל דהוה רדיף יתה אדביקו יתה]⁸²⁷ כד היא מתחבאה בין תחומיא ואעיקו לה:
- 4 כל זמן דהות ירושלם מתבניא סריבו בני ישראל למסק לאתחזאה קדם יי תלת זמנין בשתא ועל חוביהון דישראל אתצדיאת ירושלם ואתעבידו שבילי ציון אבילן מדלית עאיל בה בזמן מועדיא כל תרעהא צדיין וכהנתא אניחן על דבטילו קורבניא בתולתא ספדן על דפסקו למפק בחמשא עשר יומא באב וביומא דכפור דהוה בעשרא יומין בתשרי לחנגא בחנגין אף איהיא מריר לבא לחדא:

⁸²⁶This text is from the MS Urb. 1, represented without the vocalization. There is the occasional meaningless error in the MSS which I have omitted from this transcription, such as the additional ל in 1.3, and I have expanded the ligature formed at the end of ישראל by the combination of א ל. For more details concerning the MS see 3.1.1, and the Introduction and Notes to Étan Levine's facsimile edition, *The Targum of the Five Megillot*. It is this facsimile which I used for my readings. For specific notes on readings see the appropriate verse in §3.

⁸²⁷Found in Lagarde and necessary in order to match MT.

- 5 הוּ מעיקהא מתמןן עלהא לרישין ובעלי דבבהא הוּ יתבין בשלוה ארום יי תבר יתה על סגי[אות]⁸²⁸ מרודהא רבייהא אזלו בשבייתא קדם מעיקא:
- 6 ונפק מן כנשתא דציון כל זיוהא הוּ רבנהא מסתחרן על מיכלא היכמה דמסחרן איילא במדברא ולא אשכחו אתר כשר למרעיהון ואזלו בתשות כוחא ולא להום חילא למערק לאשתזיבא קדם רדיף:
- 7 הוּ דכירא ירושלם יומין קדמאין דהוּ מדורה בכרכיא ובפצחין תקיפין ומרדא ושלטה בכל עלמא וכל רגוגה דהוּ לה מלקדמין ועל חובהא נפלו עמהא בידי דנבוכד נצר רשיעא ואעיק להון ולית די יסייע לה חזוהא מעיקא דאזלא בשבייתא חייכו על טובהא דפסק מבינהא:
- 8 חובא רבא חבת ירושלם בגין כן לטלטיל הוּ כל עממיא דהוּ מיקרין לה מלקדמין נהגו בה זילתא ארום חזו בדקהא ברם היא מתאנחא ורעתת לאחורא:
- 9 סואבות דם ריחוקהא בשיפולהא לא אדכיא מניה ולא תהת על חובהא ולא דכירת מה דעתיד למיתי עלהא בסוף יומיא ונחתת ונפלת והוּ פרישן ולית די ימליל תנחומין לה חזי יי ותהא מסתכל ארום אתרברבו עלי בעלי דבבא:
- 10 ידיה אושיט נבוכד נצר רשיעא ושלף סייפא וקטע כל רגוגהא אף כנשתא דישראל שריאת ליללא ארום חזת עממין נוכראין עלו לבית מוקדשהא די פקדתה על ידי דמשה נביא על עמון ומואב דלא ידכון למיעל בקהלא די לך:
- 11 כל עמא דירושלם אניחן מכפנא ותבען לחמא למיכול יהבו רגוגיהום בסעיד לחמא לקיימא נפש חזי יי ותהי מסתכל ארום הוּית גרגרניתא:
- 12 אשבעית לכון כל דעברין באורחא זורו הכא איסתכלו וחזו אין אית כיבא ככיבי דאסתקף לי דיתבר יי יתי ביום תקוף רוגזיה:
- 13 מן שמיא שלח אשתא בכרכיי תקיפין וכבש יתהון פרש מצדתא לרגלי ארתעני קדל קדם בעלי דבבי יהבני למהוי צדיא כל יומא מרחקא וחלישא:
- 14 אתיקר ניר מרודי בידיה אשתבשו בשובשין דגופנא סלקו על צורי אתקל חילי מסר יי יתי בידא מאן דלית אנא יכיל למקם:
- 15 כבש כל תקיפיי יי בניי אראע עלי זמן לתברא חיל עולימיי ועלו עממי על גזירת מימרא דיי וסאיבו בתולתא דבית יהודה על די הוה דמהון דבתולתהן מתשד היך כחמר מן מעצרתא בעדן דגבר מבעט ית ענבין חמר ענבוהי שדיין:
- 16 על טפליא דאתרעישו ועל נשיא מעבריאתא דאתבקעו כריסיהום אמרת כנשתא דישר' אנא בכיא ועל עיניי זלגן דמען מבוועא דמיא ארום יתרחק מני מנחם מקים יתי וממלל תנחומין על נפשי הוּ בניי צדיין ארום יתגבר עליהון בעיל דבבא:
- 17 פרשת ציון ידהא מן עקתא היכמה דמפרשא אתתא על מתברא פגנת ולית די ימלל תנחומין על לבבהא פקד יי לבית יעקב פקודיא ואוריתא למנטר והנון עברו על גזירת מימריה בגין כן אסתחרו חזור חזור ליעקב מעיקוהי הוּת ירושלם דמיא לאתתא מרחקא ביניהון:
- 18 אמר יי לעמא בית ישראל דלא יעבר קטלין בחרבא בארעהון אזל יאשיהו מלכא שלף סייפא על

⁸²⁸End of line, but no abbreviation.

פרעה חגירא בבקעת מגדו מה דלא אתפקד ולא תבע אולפן מן קדם יי בגין כן רגימו רגומיא גירין מלמכא יאשיהו ומית תמן ועד דלא נפקת נשמתיה הוה רחיש בשפוטיוי וכן אמר זכאי הוא יי ארום על מימריה עברית שמעו כען כל עממיא הספידין דאספיד ירמיהו על יאשיהו והזו כיבי דערעני בתר מותיה בתולותיי וריביי אזלו בשבייתא:

19 אמרת ירושלם כד אתמסרית בידי דנבוכד נצר קריתי למרחמי בני עממיא דקיימית עמהון קיים יסייעוני ואנון חכימו מני ואתהפכו לחבלא יתי הנון רומאי דעלו עם טיטוס ואספסינוס רשיעא ובנו כרכומין על ירושלם וכהניי וסביי בגו קרתא מן כפנא אתנגידו ארום תבעו סעיד לחמא הוה למיכל ויקימון ית נפשהון:

20 חזי יי ארום אעיק לי בגין כן מעי אדגרו אתהפך לבי בגווי ארום מעבר עברית על גזירת מימרא דיי ומן בגלל הכי מן ברא תכלת חרבא ומלגיו תרגת כפנא כמלאכא מחבלא דממני על מותא:

21 שמעו אומיא ארום מתאנחה אנא ולית די ינחם לי כל בעלי דבביי שמעו בישתא דמטת עלי בדחו ארום את הוא יי דעבדתא איתיהן עלי יום-פורענותא ערעתא עלי מערע לצדאותני כדין תערע עלויהון ויהון צדיין כוותי:

22 תיעול ליום דינא רבא כל בשותהום דאבישו לי קדמך ותסתקף להום היכמה דאסתקפתא עלי על סגיאות מרודי ארום סגיאז אנחתיי ולבי חלש:

App. 1.2. Chapter 2

- 1 איכדין יקוץ יי בתקוף רוגזיה ית כנשתא דציון טלק מן שמיא לארעא תושבחת דישראל ולא דכר בית מקדשיה דהוה גלוגדקא דרגלוהי ולא חס עלוהי ביום תקוף רוגזיה:
- 2 שיצי יי ולא חס ית כל עידית בית יעקב פגר ברוגזיה כנשתא דבית יהודא אמטי לארעא אפיס מלכותא דהם רברבנהא:
- 3 קצץ בתקוף רגז ית כל יקרא דיעקב ארתע לאחורא [יד]⁸²⁹ ימיניה ולא סייע לעמיה מן קדם בעיל דבבא ואדלק בבית יעקב כאשתא דמלהבא אכלת חזור חזור:
- 4 מתח קשתיה וגרם עלי גירין כבעיל דבבא אתעתד על ימיניה דנבוכד נצר וסייעיה כאילו הוה מעיק לעממיה בית ישראל וקטל כל עולם וכל דמרגגין לחיזו עינא במשכן כנשתא דציון שדא כבעור אשתא רוגזיה:
- 5 הוה יי דמי לבעיל דבבא שיצי ישראל שיצי כל בירנייתה [תרגום אחר] מטורחא: חביל כל קרוי פצחהא ואסגי בכנשתא דישר' דבית יהודא אבילותא ואנינותא:
- 6 ושרש כגנתא בית מקדשיה חביל אתר מזומן לכפרא על עמיה אנשי יי בציון חדות יומא טבא ושבתא ושנא בתקוף רוגזיה מלכא וכהנא רבא:
- 7 אשלי יי בית מדבחיה בעט מקדשיה מסר ביד בעיל דבבא שורי בירנייתהא קלא יהבו בבית מוקדשא דיי קקל עמא בית ישראל דמצליין בגויה ביומא דפסחא:

⁸²⁹Omitted by Urb. 1, found in most MSS.

- 8 חשיב יי לחבלא שור כנשתא דציון סאט משקליתא ולא אתיב ידיה מלשיצאה ואביל מקפנא ושורא כחדא אתפרו:
- 9 טמעו בארע' תרעהא על די מן נכסו חזירא ואובילו דמיה עלויהון הובד ותבר מזוזתהא מלכה ורברבנהא גלו ביני עממיא על דלא נטרו פתגמי אוריתא כאילו לא קבילו יתה בטורא דסיני אף נביהא אתמנע מנהון רוח נבואת קודשא ולא אתאמר להום פתגם נבואה מן קדם יי:
- 10 יתבין לארעא ושתקין סבי כנשתא דציון אסיקו אפר מקלה על רישיהון קמארו סקין על בשריהון אחיתו לעפרא דארעא רישיהון בתולתא דירושלם:
- 11 ספק בדמעין עיניי אדגראן מעיי אתשד לארעא כבדי על תבר כנשתא דעמי כד צווחו עולימא וינקא בפתאוות קרייאתא:
- 12 לאמיהון אמרין רוביא דישראל אן עיבור וחמר כד הוו צחיין בקטיל חרבא מן צחותא בפתאוות קרייאתא כד אתשד נפשהון מן כפנא לגו עטיף אמהון:
- 13 מה אסעד בך ומה אהי מדמי לך כנשתא דירושלם מה אחבר לך ואיהי מנחם לך בתולתא דכנשתא דציון ארום סגא תבריד כסגיאות תבר גללי ימא רבא בעדן נחשוליהון ומאן הוא אסא די יסי יתיך מן מרעיתך:
- 14 נביאי שקר' דבבינד הינון חזו ליד שקרא ולית משש לנבואתהון ולא פרסימו ית פורענותא דעתיד למיתי עלך בגלל חובך לאהדרותיך בתיובתא אלהן נביאו לך נבואת מגן ומלי טעותא:
- 15 שפקו עלך ידיהון כל עברי אורחא שרקו בשפוותהום וטלטילו ברישיהון על כנשת' דירושלם אמרין בפומהון הדא היא קרתא דהוו אמרין אבהתן וסביא דמלקדמין דהיא גמירת נוי ושופרא חדות כל יתבי ארעא:
- 16 פתחו עליך פומהון כל בעלי דבביך שרקו בשפוותהום ועסיאו שניהון אמרו שיצינא ברם דין יומא דהוינא מתיאנן אשכחנא חזינא:
- 17 עבר יי מה דחשיב גמר מימר פומיה די פקיד למשה נביא מן יומין קדמאין דאי לא נטרין בני ישראל ית פקודיא דיי עתיד לאתפרעא מנהון פגר ולא חס ואחדי עלך בעיל דבבא ארום יקר מעיקיך:
- 18 צווח לבהון דישראל קדם יי די ירחם עליהון שורא דקרתא דציון זלוגי כנחלא דמעין יומא וליליא לא תתני תנחומא לצעריך לפייגא צלותא דיליך ולא תשתוק בבת עיניך מלדמע:
- 19 קומי כנשתא דישר' דשריא בגלותא עסוקי במשנה בליליא ארום שכנתא דיי שריא לקביליך ובפתגמי אוריתא בשירוי מטרת שפרפרא שדיאי הי כמיא עקמומית לביך והדרי בתיובתא וצליאי בבית כנשתא כל קביל אפי יי טולי לותיה בצלו ידיך על נפשת עולימיך דצחיין בכפנא בריש כל מחוזין:
- 20 חזי יי ותהי מסתכל מן שמיא למן אסתקפתא כדן אם חזי לבנאתא דישר' למיכל בכפנא פירי בטניהון עולימיא רגיגתא דהוו מתלפפין בסדינין דמילתינ ענת מדת דינא וכן אמרת אם חזי למקטל בבית מקדשא דיי כהנא ונבייא כמה דקטלתון לזכריה בר עדוא כהנא רבא ונביא מהימן בבית מקדש' דיי ביומא דכפוריא על דאוכח יתכון דלא תעבדון דביש קדם יי:
- 21 דמכו על ארעא דמחוזין עולימא וסבא דהוו רגילין למשכוב על כרין דמילת ועל ערסין דשן דפיל בתולתיי וריביי נפלו קטלין בחרבא קטלתא ביום רווגך נכסתא ולא חסתא:

22 תהי קרי חירותא לעמך בית ישראל על יד מלכא משיחא היכמה דעבדתא על יד משה ואהרן ביומא דאפיקת' ית ישראל ממצרים ואתכנשון עולימי חזור חזור מן כל אתר דאתבדרו תמן ביום תקוף רוגזך יי ולא הוה בהום שיזבא ושאר דלפיפית בסדינין ודרביתא בתפנוקי מלכין בעלי דבבי שיציאונון:

חצי הספר

App. 1.3. Chapter 3

- 1 אנא הוא גברא דחזא ענוייה בחוטרא דרדי ברוגזיה:
- 2 יתי דבר ואוביל לחשוכא ולא לנהורא:
- 3 ברם בי יתוב יגלגל עלי מחתיה כל יומא:
- 4 עתק בשרי ממכתשין ומשכי מן מחתא תבר גרמי:
- 5 בנה כרכומין ואקף קרתא ועקר רישי עמא ושלהיאנון:
- 6 בבית אסורין דחשוכא אותבני כמיתין דאזלו לעמא אוחרן:
- 7 סגר בתריי בגין דלא אפוק מן טריקא יקר על רגליי כבלין דנחשא:
- 8 אף ארום אצוח ואצלי אסתתם בית צלותי:
- 9 סגר אורחי במרמרין פסילן שבילוי סראו:
- 10 דיבא מכמן הוא לי אריה דמטמר בכיבשא:
- 11 אורחי סראב ושסעיני שויאני צדו:
- 12 מתח קשתיה ועתדני היכפל גליסא לגירא:
- 13 אעיל בכיליתאיי גיריה תיקיה:
- 14 הויתי חוכא לכל פריצי עמי ומזמרן עלי כל יומא:
- 15 אשבעני מרירות חיוון ארווי נגיריא:
- 16 ורצץ בפירין שניי בניעיתני קטמא:
- 17 וקצת מלמשאל בשלם נפשי אנשיתי טיבותא:
- 18 ואמרית הובד תוקפי וטובא דהויתי אוריך מן קדם יי:
- 19 אדכר ענוי נפשי ומה דאמרירו בישנאיי ואשקיאו יתי גדין ורישי חיון:
- 20 מדכר תדכר ותצלי עלי נפשי על סגופא:
- 21 דא נחמתא אתיב על לבי בגין כן אוריך:
- 22 טיבותא דיי ארום לא פסקו ארום לא אתמנעו רחמוהי:

- 23 נסין חדתינ מרחיש בצפריא סגיאה היא הימנותך:
- 24 חולקי יי אמרת נפשי בגין כן אוריך ליה:
- 25 טב הוא יי לסברין לפורקניה לנפשא דתבע אולפניה:
- 26 טב לאורכא ולמשתק עד כדו דתמטי פורקנא דיי:
- 27 טב הוא לגברא ארום יאלף נפשיה לסוברא ניר פקודיא בטליותיה:
- 28 יתיב בלחודוהי וישתיק ויסבול אסורין דאתיין עלוהי בגין יחודא דשמא דיי דמשתלחין לאתפרעא מניה על חובא קלילא דחב בעלמא הדין עד כדו די יחוס עלוהי ויטלנון מניה ויקבל אפי שלים לעלמא דאתי:
- 29 יתן בעפרא פומיה וישתטח קדם ריבוניה מאים אית סבר:
- 30 יושיט למחי ליה ליסתא בגין דחלתא דיי יסבע דקלנא:
- 31 ארום לא ישלי יי לעובדוהי לעלם לממסרנון בידא דסנאיהון:
- 32 ארום אלהן ברישא יתבר ובתר כן יתוב וירחם לצדיקיא בסגיאות טיבותיה:
- 33 ארום מן בגלל דלא עני גבר ית נפשיה ואעדי זוחוא מלביה בגין כן גרם לאסתקפא תברא בבני אנשא:
- 34 למככה ולכבשא תחות רגלוי כל אסירי ארעא:
- 35 ולמצלי דין גבר מסכן כל קבל אפי עלאה:
- 36 לסבבא אנש מסכן במצותיה אפשר דמן קדם יי לא אתגלי:
- 37 מן הוא אנש דאמר והות בשתא מתעבדא בעלמא אלהן מן בגלל דעבדו מה דלא אתפקדו מן פומא דיי:
- 38 מפום אלהא עלאה לא תפוק בשתא אלהן על ברת קלא רמיזא בגין חטופין דאתמליאת ארעא ועדן דבעי למגזר טובא בעלמא מן פום קודשיה נפקא:
- 39 מה ממון ישכח אנש די יחוב כל יומי חייה גברא רשיעא על חובה:
- 40 נבלוש אורחנא ונבקר ונתוב בתיובתא קדם יי:
- 41 נטול לבבנא בריר ונרמי חטוף וגזילן מן ידנא ונתוב קדם אלהא דמדור שכנתיה בשמי מרומא:
- 42 נחנא מרדנא סראבנא ומן בגלל דלא הדרנא לוותך אנת לא שבקתא:
- 43 טללתא עלנא ברגוז ורדפתנא בגלותא קטלתא ולא חסתא:
- 44 טללתא שמיא בענני יקרא דילך מן בגלל דלא תעבר לוותך צלותנא:
- 45 טלטולין ורטישין שויתא יתנא בגו עממיא:
- 46 פתחו עלנא פומהון כל בעלי דבבנא למגזר עלנא גזירן בישין:
- 47 אימתא וזיעא הות לנא מנהון אחדת יתנא רתיתא ותברא:

- 48 היכייבלין דמיא זלגת עיני דמען על תבירא דכנשת עמי:
 49 עיני זלגת דמעין ולא תשתיק מלמבכי מדלית פאיג עקתי וממלל תנחומין לי:
 50 עד כדו דסיתכי ויחזו עולבני יי מן שמיא:
 51 בכותא דעיניי אסתקפת למרע נפשי על חורבן פילכי עמי וניוול בנתא דירושלם קרתי:
 52 כמנא כמנו לי הי כצפורא בעלי דבביי על מגן:
 53 עברו בגובא חיי ורגמא אבנא בי:
 54 שאטו מיא על רישי אמרית במימרי אתגזרית מן עלמא:
 55 צליתי לשמך יי מן גוב ארעיתא:
 56 צלותי קבילתא בזמנא ההיא וכען לא תכסי אודנך מלקבלא צלותי לארווחותני בגין בעותי:
 57 קריבתא מלאכא לשיזבותני ביומא דצליתי לך אמרת במימרך לא תדחל:
 58 נציתא יי לעבדי מצותא לנפשי פרקתא מן ידיהון חוי:
 59 חזית יי סרוך דסריכו לי דון דיניי:
 60 גלי קדמך כל נקמתהון כל מזמתהון עלי:
 61 שמיע קדמך כסופיהון יי כל מזימתהון עלי:
 62 שפוות קיימין עלי ולהיגיונהום עלי כל יומא:
 63 מותבנהון וזקיפתהון אסתכל אנא זמריהון:
 64 תתיב להון גמולא בישא יי כעובדי ידיהון:
 65 תתן להון תבירות לבא ושלהאותך ישלהי להון:
 66 תדלוקנון ברוגזא ותשיצנון מתחות שמי מרומא די:

App. 1.4. Chapter 4

- 1 היכדין עמא דהב בית מוקדשא אשתני פידלון בחיר משתדיין מרגלאוון קדישין בריש כל מחוזין:
 2 בני ציון יקרין דמתילין איקוניהון לדהב טב היכדין הוו עממין מסאבין מחתין יתהום כל קביל
 ערסיהון ומסתכלין בהון בגין דילדון נשיהון בנין שפיריא כשופריהון ואתחשיבו לגלינן עובדי ידי פחרא:
 3 אף בנאתא דישראל מפנקאתא לבני עממיא דדמיין לחורמנא טלען תדיהום וריבי כנשתא דעמי
 מסירן לאכזראין ואמהון ספדן עליהון כנעמיא במדברא:
 4 אדבק לישן עולימא למוריגיה בצחותא טליא תבעו לחמא מושיט לית להום:
 5 דהוו רגילין למיכל תפנוקין אשתוממו במחוזין דאתרביאו על צבע זהורין גפיפו קיקלאותן:
 6 וסגי חובת כנשתא דעמי מן חובת סדום דאתהפכת כשעתא ולא שריאו בה נביאיא לאתנבאה

לאהדרותא בתיובתא:

- 7 הוּוּ ברירן נזירהא מתלגא שעעו יתיר מן חלבא סמיקו חיזו יתיר מזהורין ושבזיזא פרציפיהון:
- 8 חשך מן אוכמותא דגלותא ריויהון לא אשתמודעו במחוזין אדק משכיהון על גרמיהון פריך הוּוּ כקיסא:
- 9 מעלי הוּוּ קטילי סייפא יתיר מקטילי כפן דקטילי סייפא דייבן כד אנון מבזען בכריסיהון מן מה דאכלו מעלל חקלא ונפיחי כפנא פריק כריסיהון מן מיכלא:
- 10 ידי נשיא דהואן מרחמן על מסכינין בשילו עולימיהון הוּוּ למסעד להום ביום תבר כפנא דאתברת כנשתא דעמי:
- 11 סף יי חמתיה שדא על ירושלם ית תקוף רוגזיה ואסיק בעור אשתא בציון ואכלת אושוותהא:
- 12 לא הוּוּ מהימנין מלכות ארעא וכל דיירי תבל ארום יעול נבוכד נצר רשיעא ונבוזר אדן בעיל דבבא לנכסא עמא בית ישראל בתרעיא דירושלם:
- 13 ענת מדת דינא וכן אמרת לא הוות כל דא אלהן מחובת נביאהא דמנבאן לה נבואת שקרא ומעוויית כהנתא דאסיקו קטורת בוסמין לטעוותא ואנון גרמו לאתשד בגוה דם זכאין:
- 14 אטלטלו עוירן במחוזין אטנפו בדם קטילין דחרבא ועל דלא הוּוּ יכילין למחמי קריבו בלבושיהון:
- 15 זורו ממסאבא קרו עממיא זורו זורו לא תקרבון בהום ארום אתקוטטו אף אטלטלו אמרו במהויהום בשלוותהום דביני עממיא לא יסופון למדר:
- 16 מן קדם אפי יי אתפליגו לא יוסיף לאסתכלא בהום בגין כן אומיא רשיעא אפי כהניא לא סברו ועלוי סביא לא חסו:
- 17 עוד ספאן עייננא לאסתכלא לסיוענא דהוינא מתינן לרומאי דאתהפיך לנא להבלו בסכיתנא דאסתכיתנא לאדומאי דאנון עמא דלא יפרוק:
- 18 הנון צדאן שבילנא מלמיהך לרוחצן בפלטייתנא אמרנא קריב סופנא אתמליאו יומנא ארום מטא סופנא:
- 19 קלילן הוּוּ רדיפנא יתיר מנשרי שמיא על טווריא אדלקו יתנא במדברא כמאנו לנא:
- 20 מלכא יאשיהו די הוּוּ חביב לנא כנשמת רוח חיים דבאפנא והוּוּ מתרבי במשח רבותא דיי אתחד במצד חבולהון דמצראי דהוינא אמרין עלוהי בטלל זכותיה ניחי ביני עממיא:
- 21 חדאי ובדוחי קושטנטינא קרתא דאדום רשיעא דמתבניאה בארע ארמיניאה בסגיאיין אוכלוסין דמן עמא דאדום אף עלייך עתיד למיתי פורענותא ויצדון יתך פרכוואי ותיעבר עלייך כס דלווט תרווי ותתרוקני:
- 22 ובתר כן ישלים עווייתך כנשתא דציון ותתפרקון על ידוי דמלכא משיחא דאליהו כהנא רבא ולא יוסיף יי טוב לאגלותיך ובי הוא זמנא אסער עוותיך רומי רשעא דמתבניאה באיטליאה ומליאה אוכלוסין מבני אדום וייתון פרסאי ויעיקון עלך וליצדון יתך ארום אתפרסם קדם יי על חובתיך:

App. 1.5. Chapter 5

- 1 הוי דכיר [יי] מה דאתגזר למהוי לנא אסתכל מן שמיא וחזי ית כסופנא:
- 2 אחסתנא אתהפכת לחלונאין ביתנא לעמין נוכראין:
- 3 הוינא מתילן ליתמין דלית להון אבא אמהתנא כארמלן דאזלו גבריהום בקרוי ימא ומספקא להון אין אנון קיימין:
- 4 מימנא בכספא שתינא וקיסנא בדמין ייתון:
- 5 על פריקת צוורנא אטעננא כד הוינא אזלן בשבייתא חמא נבוכד נצר רשיעא סרכיא דבני ישראל דאזלן ריקנין פקיד לחייטא ספרי אוריתא ולמעבד מנהון גואלקן ומליאו יתהום מן פרידא דעל ספר פרת וטען יתהום על צווריהום בההיא זמנא לעינא ולא הוות נייחא לנא:
- 6 מצרים יהבנא סעד לאתפרנסא תמן ולא תור למסבע לחמא:
- 7 אבהתנא חבו וליתיהום בעלמא ונחנא בתריהון עוייתיהום סוברנא:
- 8 בנוי דחם דאתיהיבו עבדין לבנוי דשם אנון שליטו בנא פריק לית מידהום:
- 9 בסכנת נפשנא נייטי לחם פרנסותנא מן קדם קטול דחרבא דאתי מן סטר מדברא:
- 10 משכנא הי כתנורא אתקדרו מן קדם מפח כפנא:
- 11 נשיא דהוו נסיבן לגבר בציון אתעניאו מן רומאי ובתולתא בקרוי יהודה מן כסדאי:
- 12 רברבנין בידיהון אצטליבו אפי סביא לא סברו:
- 13 רובין ריחיא נטלו וטליא בצליבת קיסא תקלו:
- 14 סביא מתרע סנהדריי אתבטלו ורובין מן בית זמרהון:
- 15 בטל חדות לבבנא אתהפך לאבלא חינגנא:
- 16 נפלת כליליא דרישנא ווי לנא ארום חבנא:
- 17 על דין בית מקדשנא דאתצדי הוה חליש לבבנא ועל אלין עמא בית ישארל דאזלן בגלותא מתמן הוו חשכין עינגא:
- 18 על טורא דציון דהוא צדי תעלין הליכו ביה:
- 19 את הוא יי לעלם בית מותבך בשמי מרומא כורסי יקרך לדרי דריא:
- 20 למה לעלמין תשלינגא תשבקננא לאורכות יומין:
- 21 אתיב יתנא יי לותך וניתוב בתיובתא שלמתא תחדת יומנא לטב כזמן יומיא טביא דהוו מלקדמין:
- 22 ארום אילהן מיקץ תיקוץ בנא רגזתא עלוונא עד לחדא:

השיבנו יהוה אליך ונשובה חדש ימינו כקדם

Appendix 2 - Translation

App. 2.1. Chapter 1

- 1 *Jeremiah the Prophet and High Priest told how it was decreed that Jerusalem and her people should be punished with banishment and that they should be mourned with ʾekah. Just as when Adam and Eve were punished and expelled from the Garden of Eden and the Master of the Universe mourned them with ʾekah.*

The Attribute of Justice spoke and said, “Because of the greatness of her rebellious sin which was within her, thus she will dwell alone as a man plagued with leprosy upon his skin who sits alone.”

And the city which was full of crowds and many peoples has been emptied of them and she has become like a widow. She who was great among the nations and a ruler over provinces which had brought her tribute has become lowly again and gives head tax to them from thereafter.

- 2 *When Moses the Prophet sent messengers to spy out the land, the messengers returned and gave forth a bad report concerning the land of Israel. This was the night of the ninth of Ab. When the people of the House of Israel heard this bad report which they had received concerning the land of Israel, the people lifted up their voice and the people of the House of Israel wept during that night. Immediately the anger of the LORD was kindled against them and he decreed that it should be thus in that night throughout their generations over the destruction of the Temple.*

When it was told through prophecy to Jeremiah the High Priest that Jerusalem would be destroyed at the hand of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar unless they repented, he immediately entered and rebuked the people of the House of Israel, but they refused to accept it. Therefore the wicked Nebuchadnezzar entered and razed Jerusalem and set fire to the Temple on the ninth day in the month of Ab. On that night, the Congregation of Israel wept bitterly and her tears flowed down her cheeks. There was no one to speak comfortingly to her heart from among all her idols which she loved to follow after. As a result, all her friends were wicked to her; they turned against her and became her enemies.

- 3 *The House of Judah went into exile because they were oppressing the orphans and*

the widows and because of the great servitude to which they were subjecting their brothers, the sons of Israel, who had been sold to them. And they did not declare freedom to their servants and handmaids who were of the seed of Israel. As a result they themselves were delivered into the hand of the nations. And the Congregation of the House of Judah dwells among the nations and finds no rest from the hard labor to which they subject her. [All who pursued her overtook her]⁸³⁰ as she was hiding in the border regions and they persecuted her.

- 4 *All the while that Jerusalem was built, the sons of Israel refused to go up to be seen before the LORD three times a year. Because of Israel's sins Jerusalem was destroyed and the roads to Zion are made mournful, for there is no one entering her at the time of the festivals. All the gates are desolate and her priests groan because the sacrifices have ceased. Her virgins mourn because they have stopped going out on the fifteenth of Ab and on the Day of Atonement (which is on the tenth day of Tishri) to dance the dances. Therefore she too is very bitter in her heart.*
- 5 *Those who oppress her were appointed over her as leaders and her enemies were dwelling in security since the LORD has broken her due to her great rebelliousness. Her children go before the oppressor into captivity.*
- 6 *All the glory of the Congregation of Zion has gone out from her. Her nobles were wandering for food, like stags who wander in the desert and find no suitable place for their pasture. They went out in great weakness and they had no strength to flee to safety (from) before the pursuer.*
- 7 *Jerusalem remembered the days of old, when she was surrounded by walled cities and strong open towns, rebelling and reigning over all the earth, and all her lovely things which she had in earlier times. But because of her sins, her people fell into the hands of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar and he oppressed them and there was no one to save her. The persecutors watched her go into captivity and they laughed because her good fortune had ceased from her.*
- 8 *Jerusalem sinned a great sin, therefore she has become a wanderer. All the nations which had honored her in earlier times treat her with contempt for they have seen her nakedness. But she groans and shrinks back.*
- 9 *The impurity of the menstrual blood in her skirts has not been cleansed from her. And she did not regret her sins, nor did she think of what would befall her in the end of days. And she went down and fell and was set aside. And there was no one to speak comfortingly to her. Look, O LORD and see [my affliction] for my enemies have exalted themselves over me.*

⁸³⁰Found in Lagarde and necessary in order represent all of MT.

- 10 The wicked Nebuchadnezzar stretched out his hand and drew forth his sword and cut off all her lovely things. Even the Congregation of Israel began to howl for she saw foreign nations go into her Temple; those about whom you commanded by Moses the prophet concerning Ammon and Moab, that they were not worthy to enter your assembly.
- 11 All the people of *Jerusalem* groan *from hunger* and search for bread *to eat*. They gave their precious things for sustenance in order to stay alive. Look O LORD and see for I have become voracious.
- 12 I adjure you, all who pass by on the road, *turn around here*. Look and see. Is there any pain like my pain, that which has been visited upon me because the LORD shattered me in the day of his great anger?
- 13 From heaven he sent fire into my strong cities and conquered them. He spread a net for my feet. He caused me to shrink back *before my enemies*. He caused me to be desolate all day, *abominable and weak*.
- 14 The yoke of my rebellion *was heavy* in his hand. Intertwined *like the tendrils of a vine*, they climbed upon my neck. My strength is weakened. The LORD has given me into the hands of one whom I cannot withstand.
- 15 The LORD has crushed all my mighty ones within me; he has established a time against me to shatter *the strength of my young men*. *The nations entered by the decree of the Memra of the LORD and defiled the virgins of the House of Judah until their blood of their virginity was caused to flow like wine from a wine press when a man is treading grapes and grape-wine flows*.
- 16 Because of *the babies who were smashed and the pregnant mothers whose wombs were ripped open, the Congregation of Israel said*, "I weep and my eyes flow with tears, a spring of water, for far from me is any comforter to revive me and speak words of comfort for my soul. My sons are desolate for the enemy has become master over them."
- 17 Zion spreads out her hands *from anguish like a woman spread upon the birth stool*. She screams but there is no one to speak comfortingly to her heart. The LORD commanded *the House of Jacob to keep the Commandments and Torah, but they transgressed the decree of his Memra*. Therefore his oppressors completely encircle Jacob. Jerusalem is *like an unclean woman* amongst them.
- 18 *The LORD told the people of the House of Israel that they should not allow those who kill by the sword to pass through their land. Josiah the king went forth and drew his sword against Pharaoh the Lame on the plain of Megiddo, which he had not been commanded [to do] and he had not sought instruction from before the LORD. Therefore*

archers shot arrows at King Josiah and he died there. Before his spirit left him he moved his lips and said, “The LORD is blameless for I have transgressed his Memra.” Hear now all peoples, *the lamentations which Jeremiah made over Josiah* and see my affliction *which has come upon me after his death*. My maidens and young men have gone into exile.

- 19 “When I was delivered into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar,” Jerusalem said, “I called to my friends, *sons of the nations, with whom I had made treaties, to come to my aid*. But they deceived me *and turned to destroy me*. (*These are the Romans who came up with Titus and the wicked Vespasian and they built siegeworks against Jerusalem.*) My priests and my elders within the city *perish from hunger*, because they searched for sustenance *for themselves to eat, in order to preserve their lives*.
- 20 “Look, O LORD, for I am in anguish. Therefore my bowels are piled up and my heart turns within me, for I have surely transgressed *the decree of the Memra of the LORD*. Consequently, outside the sword bereaves and inside *the agony of starvation*, like the *Destroying Angel who is appointed over death*.
- 21 “Hear *O nations!* For I am groaning and there is no one to comfort me. All my enemies heard of the evil *which overcame me and were glad*. For you LORD *are the one who has done it*. You have *caused them to bring upon me a day of retribution*. You have *summoned against me, a coalition to destroy me*. May you summon against them that they may be *made desolate like me*.
- 22 “May there enter before you *on the great Judgement Day* all their evil deeds *which they have done to me*. May you turn against them as you have turned against me because of my great rebellion. For my groanings are great and my heart is weak.”

App. 2.2. Chapter 2

- 1 How the LORD has detested the Congregation of Zion in his *fierce* anger. He threw down from the heavens to the earth the glory of Israel and he did not remember *the Temple which was his footstool nor did he spare it* in the day of his *fierce* anger.
- 2 The LORD destroyed and did not spare any of the choice dwellings of *the House of Jacob*. In his anger he destroyed the Congregation of the House of Judah and brought them to the ground. He broke the kingdom, crushed her leaders.
- 3 In his fierce anger he cut off all the glory of Israel.⁸³¹ He drew back his right [hand] *and did not help his people* from before the enemy and he burned in the House of Jacob

⁸³¹Urb. 1 reads דיעקב, but Lagarde and YT have דישראל which is to be preferred (MT ישראל).

like a searing fire which consumes on all sides.

- 4 He drew his bow *and shot arrows at me* like an enemy. He stood ready at the right *of Nebuchadnezzar and aided him* as if *he himself were* oppressing his people, the *House of Israel*. And he killed *every young man and* everything which was beautiful to see. In the Sanctuary of the Congregation of Zion he poured out *his wrath* like a burning fire.
- 5 The LORD has become like an enemy. He destroyed Israel. He destroyed all her forts and razed all her open cities. He has increased in *the Congregation* of the House of Judah mourning and grief.
- 6 He uprooted his Temple like a garden. He razed the place appointed *for the atonement of his people*. The LORD has caused *the joy of* the festival and the Sabbath to be forgotten and in his fierce anger he hates the king and *high priest*.
- 7 The LORD has abandoned his altar. He has trampled his Temple. He has handed over the walls of the forts to the enemy. They raised a shout in the Temple of the LORD like *the shout of the people of the House of Israel praying in it on* the day of Passover.
- 8 The LORD resolved to destroy the wall of the Congregation of Zion. He swung the plummet and did not turn back his hand from destroying it. He caused the rampart and the wall to mourn; they were destroyed together.
- 9 Her gates have sunk into the earth *because they slaughtered a pig and brought its blood over them*. He has destroyed and shattered her doorposts. Her king and rulers were exiled among the nations *because they did not keep the decrees of Torah, as if they had not received it on Mount Sinai*. Even her prophets *had the spirit of holy prophecy withheld from them and they were not told a word of prophecy from before the LORD*.
- 10 The Elders of the Congregation of Zion sit on the ground in silence. They throw *wood ashes* upon their heads. They gird sackcloth *upon their bodies*. The virgins of Jerusalem bow their heads to *the dust of* the earth.
- 11 My eyes are spent with tears, my bowels are piled up, my liver is spilt onto the ground because of the destruction of the Congregation of my people as youths and infants cried out in the open places of the cities.
- 12 *The youth of Israel* ask their mother, “Where is the bread and wine?” as they thirst *in the same way* as one wounded *by the sword [suffers] from thirst* in the open places of the cities, as their life is poured out *from hunger* into their mother’s bosom.
- 13 What can I bring to bear witness to you? Or to what can I compare you, O Congregation of Jerusalem? How shall I befriend you that I may console you, O Virgin

of the Congregation of Zion? For *great is your breaking, as great as the breaking of the waves of the Great Sea during the season of their gales. And who is the doctor who can heal you of your affliction?*

- 14 *The false prophets within you, they have seen falsehood for you and there is no substance to their prophecies. Nor did they make known the punishment which would overtake you as a result of your sin, in order to make you turn back in repentance. Rather, they prophesied to you vain prophecies and erring words.*
- 15 *All those who passed by the way clapped their hands at you. They hissed with their lips and wagged their heads at the Congregation of Jerusalem. They said with their mouths, "Is this the city which our fathers and elders of old called the perfection of beauty and loveliness; the joy of all the earth's inhabitants?"*
- 16 *All your enemies open their mouths at you. They hissed with their lips and gnashed their teeth and say, "We have destroyed! Surely this is the day we have waited for. We have found it; we have seen it."*
- 17 *The LORD has done what he planned. He completed the Memra of his mouth which he commanded to Moses the prophet long ago: that if the children of Israel did not keep the Commandments of the LORD he was going to punish them. He destroyed and had no mercy. He has caused the enemy to rejoice over you for he has exalted your oppressors.*
- 18 *The heart of Israel cried out before the LORD, to have mercy on them. O wall of the city of Zion, weep tears like a torrent day and night. Give no comfort to your sorrows, to slacken in the prayer that is yours. May your eyes not cease from weeping.*
- 19 *Arise, O Congregation of Israel dwelling in exile. Busy yourself with Mishnah in the night, for the Shekinah of the LORD is dwelling before you, and with the words of Torah at the beginning of the morning watch. Pour out like water the crookedness of your heart and turn in repentance. And pray in the House of the Congregation before the face of the LORD. Raise your hands to him in prayer for the life of your children who thirst with hunger at the head of every open market.*
- 20 *See, O LORD, and observe from heaven against whom have you turned. Thus is it right for the Daughters of Israel to eat the fruit of their wombs due to starvation, lovely children wrapped in fine linen? The Attribute of Justice replied, and said, "Is it right to kill priest and prophet in the Temple of the LORD, as when you killed Zechariah son of Iddo, the High Priest and faithful prophet in the Temple of the LORD on the Day of Atonement because he told you not to do evil before the LORD?"*
- 21 *The young and the old who were accustomed to recline on pillows of fine wool and upon ivory couches were prostrate on the earth of the open markets. My virgins and youths have fallen, killed by the sword. You have killed in the day of your anger; you*

have slaughtered and shown no pity.

- 22 May you declare *freedom to your people, the House of Israel, by the King Messiah just as you did by Moses and Aaron on the day when you brought Israel up from Egypt. My children were gathered all around, from every place to which they had scattered in the day of your fierce anger, O LORD, and there was no escape for them nor any survivors of those whom I had wrapped in fine linen. And my enemies destroyed those whom I had raised in royal comfort.*

Middle of the Book

App. 2.3. Chapter 3

- 1 I am *that* man who has seen affliction by the rod *which chastises in his anger.*
- 2 He has led and brought me to darkness, and not to light.
- 3 To me only does he turn, heaping *upon* me his blows all day.
- 4 My flesh is worn out *from beatings*, my skin *from the blow*. He has shattered my bones.
- 5 He has built *siegeworks* and surrounded *the city*. *He has uprooted the heads of the people and wearied them.*
- 6 He has caused me to dwell in a dark *prison* like the dead *who have gone to the other world.*
- 7 He has locked me in *so that* I cannot go out *from the prison*. He has put heavy brass *fetters on my feet.*
- 8 Even when I cry out and pray *the house of my prayer* is blocked.
- 9 He has closed my paths with hewn *marble* stones. He has confounded my paths.
- 10 He is a bear, lying in wait for me; a lion *hiding* in a hallow.
- 11 He has confounded my path and rent me. He has made me desolate.
- 12 He draws his bow and has set me as a target for the arrow.
- 13 He made the arrows of his quiver enter my vitals.
- 14 I have become a laughing stock to all *the bold* of my people; they mock me in song all day.
- 15 He has sated me with gall *of snakes* and made me drunk with wormwood.

- 16 And He crushed my teeth with gravel; he has pressed me into ashes.
- 17 And My soul shrinks from greeting; I have forgotten goodness.
- 18 And I said, “My strength is destroyed and *the goodness which I had waited for from before the LORD.*
- 19 “Remember the affliction *of my soul and how my foes embittered me and caused me to drink wormwood and the poison of snakes.*”
- 20 My soul surely will remember and bow down within me *due to affliction.*
- 21 This *consolation* I call to mind, therefore I have hope:
- 22 The goodness of the LORD, for his mercies do not end nor have they ceased.
- 23 *He brings forth new wonders* in the mornings; great is your faithfulness.
- 24 “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul; therefore I will hope in him.
- 25 The LORD is good to those who hope *for his salvation*; to the soul who seeks his *instruction.*
- 26 It is good to wait and be silent until the salvation of the LORD *comes.*
- 27 It is good for a man *to train himself* to bear the yoke *of the Commandments* in his youth.
- 28 Let him sit alone and be silent, bearing *the corrections which have come upon him, for the sake of the unity of the name of the LORD, which have been sent to punish him for the minor sins which he has committed in this world, until he have mercy upon him and lift them from him so that he may receive him perfected in the World to Come.*
- 29 Let him put this mouth to the dust *and prostrate himself before his master*, perhaps there is hope.
- 30 Let him turn his cheek to the one that smites; *for the sake of the fear of the LORD*, let him be filled with insult.
- 31 For the LORD will not neglect *his servants* forever, *giving them over into the hand of their enemy.*
- 32 But *first he breaks and afterwards he repents and has mercy on the righteous* in the abundance of his goodness.
- 33 For *since man did not afflict himself nor removed arrogance* from his heart, *therefore he caused destruction to come* among humanity.
- 34 Humbling *and subduing* all the prisoners of the earth under his feet,
- 35 Perverting the justice of a *poor* man in the presence of the Most High,

- 36 Confounding a *poor* man in his quarrels; *is it possible that this will not* be revealed before the LORD?
- 37 Who is the man who has spoken *and an evil thing* was done in the world, *unless because they did that which they were not commanded by the mouth of the LORD?*
- 38 From the mouth of *God Most High* there does not issue evil, *rather by the hint of a whisper, because of the violence with which the land is filled. But when he desires to decree good in the world it issues from the holy mouth.*
- 39 What profit shall a man *find who sins all the days of his life; a wicked man for his sins?*
- 40 Let us search and examine our ways; and turn *in repentance* before the LORD.
- 41 Let us lift our *cleansed hearts and cast away theft and robbery* from our hands. *And let us repent* before God *the dwelling of whose Shekinah is in heaven above.*
- 42 We have rebelled and been disobedient *and since we did not return to you, you have not forgiven.*
- 43 You have covered *us in anger* and pursued us *in exile*. You have killed and have not pitied.
- 44 You have covered *the heavens* with your clouds *of glory so that our prayers cannot cross to you.*
- 45 You have made us like wanderers and vagabonds among the nations.
- 46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us, *to announce evil decrees against us.*
- 47 Panic and fear have come upon us *because of them, trembling and destruction have seized us.*
- 48 *Like* streams of water my eye weeps tears because of the destruction of the Congregation of my people.
- 49 My eye weeps *tears* and does not cease *from crying*. There is no respite *from my anguish or anyone to comfort me;*
- 50 Until the LORD looks out and sees *my humiliation* from heaven.
- 51 *The weeping of my eyes is the cause of the affliction of my soul over the destruction of the districts of my people and the humiliation of the daughters of Jerusalem, my city.*
- 52 My enemies, without cause, laid a trap for me like a bird.
- 53 They have caused my life to pass in the pit and cast stones at me.

- 54 Waters flowed over my head. I said *in my word*, “I am cut off *from the world*.”
- 55 I prayed to your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit.
- 56 You received my prayer *at that time, and now* do not cover your ears *from receiving my prayer* to give me relief *because of* my plea.
- 57 You brought *the angel* near *to save me*, in the day that I prayed to you. You said *by your Memra*, “Do not fear.”
- 58 You have fought, O LORD, *against those who made* a quarrel with my soul. You delivered my life *from their hands*.
- 59 You have seen, O LORD, *the wrong by which* they wronged me. Judge my case.
- 60 All their vengeance has been revealed *before you*, all their evil plans against me.
- 61 Their taunts were heard *before you*, O LORD, all their evil plans against me.
- 62 The lips of the enemies *are against me* and their mutterings are against me all day.
- 63 Look at their sitting and rising! I am [the object of] their taunt-songs.
- 64 May you return to them *evil* recompense, O LORD, according to the works of their hands.
- 65 May you give them brokenness of heart and may your *weariness* wear them out.
- 66 Pursue them in anger and destroy them from under the *high* heaven of the LORD.

App. 2.4. Chapter 4

- 1 How the gold *of the Temple* has dimmed, [how] the choice gold leaf has changed!
The sacred jewels are scattered at the head of every street.
- 2 The precious Sons of Zion which were comparable *in their appearance to that of fine gold, how the unclean people brought them down near to their beds and stare at them, so that their wives might bear sons as beautiful as they and they are considered as [clay]*⁸³² vessels which were made by the hands of the potter.
- 3 Even *the pampered Daughters of Israel* untie their breasts *to the nations who are like the basilisk*. And the young men of the Congregation of my people *are handed over to cruel men and their mothers mourn over them* like ostriches in the desert.
- 4 The infant’s tongue clings to its palate from thirst. Youngsters ask for bread, but there is no one who offers it to them.

⁸³²Found in Lagarde and necessary in order represent all of MT.

- 5 Those who *used to* eat delicacies were desolate in the markets. Those who were reared in *the color* crimson embrace dunghills.
- 6 The sin of the Congregation of my people is greater than the sin of Sodom which was overthrown in a moment. And no *prophets* were left in her *to prophesy, to turn her back in* repentance.
- 7 Her Nazarites were purer than snow, smoother than milk. Their appearance was ruddier than crimson and their faces like sapphires.
- 8 Their appearance was darker than the blackness *of the exile*; they were not recognized in the markets. Their skin clung to their bones; brittle as a twig.
- 9 Better were those who were slain by the sword than those who were slain by hunger, *for those slain by the sword perished*⁸³³ *when pierced in their bellies because they ate of the gleanings of the field; and those who were bloated from hunger; their bellies burst from food.*
- 10 The hands of women *who were merciful towards the poor* boiled their young, they became sustenance for them when *the day of famine* broke, *when the Congregation of my people was destroyed.*
- 11 The LORD has finished his anger; he has poured out his *fierce* wrath *upon Jerusalem* and he has brought up a *raging* fire in Zion, and it consumed her foundations.
- 12 The kingdoms of the earth did not believe, nor did those who dwell in the world, that *the wicked Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuzaradan* the enemy would enter *to slaughter the people of the House of Israel* in the gates of Jerusalem.
- 13 *The Attribute of Justice spoke up and said, "All this would not have happened but for the sins of her prophets who prophesied to her false propheties and the iniquity of her priests who offered up burning incense to idols. They themselves caused the blood of the innocent to be shed in her midst."*
- 14 The blind wandered about in the markets, defiled with the blood *of those slain by the sword and since* they could not *see* they touched their clothes.
- 15 "Turn away from the unclean!" cried *the peoples*, "Turn away, turn away! Do not touch them!" For they quarreled and wandered. They said, *when they were peacefully established* among the nations, "They shall not continue to dwell [here]."
- 16 They were dispersed *from before* the face of the LORD, he no longer regarded them. *Therefore the wicked nations* did not respect the priests nor did they spare the elders.
- 17 Our eyes still fail to see our help *which we expected to come from the Romans, but*

⁸³³Lit. "flowed."

which turned to naught for us. In hope we watched for the Edomites who were a nation which could not save.

- 18 They prowled our paths so that we could not walk *safely* in our open places. *We said, "Our end is near; our days are fulfilled,"* for our end had come.
- 19 Our pursuers were swifter *than* the eagles of the heavens; unto the mountains they chased us, in the desert they lay in wait for us.
- 20 *King Josiah, who was as dear to us as the breath of the spirit of life in our nostrils and was anointed with the anointing oil of the LORD, was locked up in Egypt's snare of corruption.* It was he of whom we said, "In the shadow of *his merit* we will live among the nations."
- 21 Rejoice and be of good cheer *Constantinople, city of wicked Edom, which is built in the land of Armenia with crowds from the people of Edom. Retribution is about to come upon even you, and the Parkevi will destroy you and the accursed cup shall pass to you and you shall become drunk and exposed.*
- 22 *And after this your iniquity will be finished, O Congregation of Zion. But you will be freed by the hands of the King Messiah and Elijah the High Priest and the LORD will no longer exile you. And at that time I will punish your iniquities, wicked Rome, built in Italy and filled with crowds of Edomites. And the Persians will come and oppress you and destroy you for your sins have been made known before the LORD.*

App. 2.5. Chapter 5

- 1 Remember, [O LORD], what *was decreed* to befall us; look down *from heaven* and see our disgrace.
- 2 Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers; our house to foreign peoples.
- 3 We have become *like* orphans who have no father, our mothers like widows *whose husbands have gone into the cities of the sea and it is uncertain if they are alive.*
- 4 We drink our water for money and our wood comes at a price.
- 5 Upon *the bone of our necks* we were laden *when we went into exile. The wicked Nebuchadnezzar saw that the commanders of the Israelites were going without any load [and] he ordered that they sew Torah scrolls and make sacks out of them. And they filled them with pebbles from the edge of the Euphrates and they loaded them upon their necks. At that time we were tired and there was no rest for us.*
- 6 We gave support to Egypt *so that we might be sustained there and to Assyria so*

that we might have enough bread.

- 7 Our fathers sinned and are no longer *in the world, but* we have borne their sins *after them*.
- 8 *The sons of Ham, who were given as slaves to the sons of Shem,* ruled over us and there was no one to deliver us from their hands.
- 9 *At the risk of our lives we gather bread to sustain us* from before the *slaying sword which comes from across* the wilderness.
- 10 Our skin has become black like an oven from before the despair of starvation.
- 11 Women *who were married to men* in Zion were raped *by Romans*. And virgins in the cities of Judah *by Chaldeans*.
- 12 Princes were hung up by their hands and they did not show respect to the elders.
- 13 The young men carried millstones; and the boys staggered under crosses.
- 14 The elders ceased from the gates *of the Sanhedrin*; and the young men from their *houses of music*.
- 15 The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has turned into mourning.
- 16 The crown of our head has fallen; Woe to us! for we have sinned.
- 17 Because of *our Temple which is desolate*, our heart was weak. And because of these *people of the House of Israel who went into exile from there* our eyes have become dim.
- 18 Because of Mount Zion which is desolate; foxes prowled on it.
- 19 You, O LORD, are eternal. Your dwelling *place is in the heavenly heights*. Your *glorious* throne is from generation to generation.
- 20 Will you forget us forever and forsake us for a long time?
- 21 Restore us, O LORD, to yourself and we will return *in complete repentance*. May you renew our days *for good as the festival days* of old.
- 22 For you have utterly loathed us; you have been extremely angry with us.

*Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored;
Renew our days as of old.*

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