Targum Lamentations’ Reading of the Book of Lamentations

A thesis submitted to the Oriental Studies Faculty
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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 מדרש כנער מדבר 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

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<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>before the common era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>common era</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HB</td>
<td>Hebrew Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS(S)</td>
<td>manuscript(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Masoretic Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRSV</td>
<td>New Revised Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>New Testament</td>
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<td>p(p).</td>
<td>page(s)</td>
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<td>P</td>
<td>Peshitta</td>
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<tr>
<td>WT</td>
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<tr>
<td>YT</td>
<td>Yemenite Text (TgLam)</td>
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<td>V</td>
<td>Vulgate</td>
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### Rabbinc Texts

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<td>CantR</td>
<td>Song of Songs (Canticles) Rabbah</td>
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<td>EsthR</td>
<td>Esther Rabah</td>
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<tr>
<td>FrgTg</td>
<td>Fragmentary Targum</td>
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<td>GenR</td>
<td>Genesis Rabbah</td>
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<td>LamR</td>
<td>Lamentations Rabbah</td>
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<td>LevR</td>
<td>Leviticus Rabbah</td>
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<td>Pesikta deRav Kahana</td>
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<td>TgEsth</td>
<td>Targum Esther</td>
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<tr>
<td>TgIsa</td>
<td>Targum of Isaiah</td>
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<tr>
<td>TgJon</td>
<td>Targum Jonathan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TgLam</td>
<td>Targum Lamentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TgOnk</td>
<td>Targum Onkelos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TgNeof</td>
<td>Targum Neofiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TgPsJ</td>
<td>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</td>
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## Journals, Book Series, and Reference Works

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<td>Bib</td>
<td>Biblica</td>
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<tr>
<td>BJRL</td>
<td>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur ZAW</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUCA</td>
<td>Hebrew Union College Annual</td>
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<td>Journal for the Study of Judaism</td>
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<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>JSS</td>
<td>Journal of Semitic Studies</td>
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<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ScrHier</td>
<td>Scripta hierosolymitana</td>
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<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTSup</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum, Supplements</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZAW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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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.” 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, 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

---

2 2 Macc. 6.1, 2.
Hebrew text word for word and in proper order 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. 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. Van der Heide offers an excellent study of the Yemenite textual tradition, but provides no commentary on the content of the targum. 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. 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

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2Throughout this work I will follow the style of many English Bibles by representing כהה as “the LORD,” that is, in small-caps.

3Etan 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).

4For discussion of the Western and Yemenite textual traditions of TgLam see §3, “Textual Traditions.”

5See 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.
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; 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. 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. On the other hand, there is the invaluable

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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.

work of Klein, 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 MT

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. 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

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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.

13All biblical quotations in English are from the New Revised Standard Version (Oxford: OUP, 1989) unless otherwise noted.

14This 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. 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. 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. The

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14 See §3.2.22.

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

16 As 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. 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, it is also common to find an element of the
Hebrew represented by more than one word or phrase. 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, אָכֶּה, is represented in the targum not
once, but three times. In the first instance אָכֶּה is translated in its operative sense by the
Aramaic אָכֶּה. “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, אָכֶּה. By the rabbinic period אָכֶּה had come to
mean “lamentations,” thus Jeremiah declared that Jerusalem “should be mourned with
אָכֶּה” just as God mourned over Adam and Eve “with אָכֶּה.” So, which occurrence of

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17 See §3 for an explanation of the principles governing the translation found in this thesis.
18 Throughout 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.)
19 See, for example, TgLam 1.10 and 2.22.
20 See LamR 1.1 and §3.1.1.
should be identified as corresponding to MT’s ḥēqā? 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. 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. 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 ḥēqā 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 ḥēqā of the biblical text. The other instances are nouns, but ḥēqā is an interrogative and therefore is considered the equivalent of MT’s ḥēqā.

Similarly, elsewhere in 1.1 we are confronted with two phrases which might be considered as corresponding to ḥēqā הבדל.
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, יִבְּאָה בּּלוּרְדוֹתֶא, 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, דְּבַרְדוֹתֶא יִוְּכֵב, 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” (בֶּנֶפֶל). Our targum renders this phrase, “her people fell into the hands of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar.” The basis for this translation is the occurrence of the letters ז and ר at the end of Nebuchadnezzar’s name and it is clear that these letters do indeed represent the Hebrew ר ז 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 ר ז of these letters are not italicized and the name therefore appears in this translation as “Nebuchadnezzar.”

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.

23 See 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 בת, “daughter,” with אֱלֹהָיָם, “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. 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.

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

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²⁴ See §4.5.
²⁵ Medieval 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 rabbinc Judaism or the ingenuity of the targumist. 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. 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.

1) Converse translation. 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,” or he may resolve a

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26 Determining whether unparalleled material is unique to the targumim or if it is from the broad context of rabbinc 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.


28 The 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.

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

Methodology

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rhetorical question with a declarative statement.³² 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?” (מְפֹן אֹתוֹלֵל לא תצא הַרְעָע וְהַטוֹב). 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” (גָּלְבֹּן עָלָיו קֶלֶל הַרְוָע בְּנֵי חֹתֶפֶן אֲדָבּוֹתֵי הַשֵּׁם וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי יְהוָה וּאֱלֹהֵי עָדָי הַגָּלֶפֶן מִפְּסִיק לִשְׁמַר אָדָם מִפּוֹנָה).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 אֲרָא ויְהוָה מַסְתַּכֵּל וּעֵיי ראֹא אֲרָא, but the targum translates it with אֲרָא וָיְהוָה אֵאָי וּאֱלֹהֵי אֲרָא מַסְתַּכֵּל אֲרָא. The addition of the verb מַסְתַּכֵּל is, in fact, due to the targumist bringing verse 9 into line with 1.11c which reads אֲרָא ויְהוָה מַסְתַּכֵּל ראֹא. 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

³²For further discussion see §3.3.37.
³⁴Klein, Genizah Manuscripts, p. xxxi.
We have already noted the example in 1.1 of the multiple rendering of the Hebrew word 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, “she that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal.” The phrase is represented in the targum by both “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” and “She who was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal.” Although is an hapax legomenon the targumist’s double rendering is not an effort to “bring out the wealth of the Hebrew text.” Instead it is used as an exegetical device in order to heighten the contrast between Jerusalem’s condition before and after her destruction.

4) Prosaic Expansion. 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-עם אותם מבקשישים), while the targum renders this as “All the people of Jerusalem groan from hunger and search for bread to eat” (כל עמו ירושלם א骛ים ממפשאו חטבנה למכים ומכים). The meaning of the text has not been altered; the targumist has simply identified the pronominal suffix of 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.

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36 McNamara, *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.
37 For further discussion see §3.1.1.
38 This 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. 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. 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). 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.” While this practice of “softening” the language of the biblical text is common in targumic literature, TgLam demonstrates that it is not without exception.

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39 See 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.

40 See Klein, “Converse Translation,” passim.

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

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,” 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 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.

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.

44See §3.1.15.
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

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\(^{45}\)See §4.2.3.  
\(^{46}\)See also §5.  
\(^{47}\)See 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, 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. Only Wiesmann has attempted to defend Jeremianic authorship and his position has not been taken up by others. 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 chapters 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

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49 See §3.

50 The 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).

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

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.  

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

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53 2 Chron. 35.23-5.


55 This 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).

56 Westermann, 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 as 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.” 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.” 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.” While it is beyond the scope if 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

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57 See Westermann, pp. 98-100.
58 Westermann, p. 100.
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.

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61 Westermann, p. 102.

62 This 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. But as Cooper has pointed out, the author of

63 Passages 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. 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. 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.” 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.

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.

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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.

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. 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. TgLam is attested in two distinct textual traditions, the western text (WT) and the Yemenite text (YT), 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. 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. The MSS which lie behind this text are

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

69 For 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).

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


72 As 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
Exegetical Commentary

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

ואכרנ על ורшло רל עעמע אָיָה אָיָה בְּחיֶרֶנֶה מַתִּירֶנֶה לְמַסְפִּיָּה עָליָהוּ אַכְּחָה הָוהִ כְּמָה דַּאְדְּמָה אָדָם הוּה

אָסְרֵכֵר מַטִּינְאַ עָדוֹנָה מַסְפֵּר עָלָיָהוּ בְּרִיךְ הָוהַ אַיָּא

Alexander points out that in YT “we run straight into a grammatical problem: Where is the verb in the אֱכַדָּי 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 יהכمحا יכمحا must be the original here, and the Yem. readings corruptions of it. Perhaps ההיה הוה כמא was deliberately read by a scribe desperately searching for a verb.”75

In WT the clause is governed by the verb אוֹשָׁהוּ:

ואֵמְרִי הָיוֹהֵךְ בְּנִי יִמְרִי רֶבֶם אֵכֵדָי אֵתָהּ עוֹרָה וְלַעֲמַהְוַהַ אֶסְּרֵרֵנְא מַמִּיְרֶנְהוּ לְמַסְפִּיָּיֹ הָאָלֹהִים

אַכְּהָה הָמִיְרֶנְא דַּאְדָּמֶה אָדָם הָוהִ דַּאְדָּמָה מַטִּינְאַ עָדוֹנָה מַסְפִּיָּה מַרְיָי הָיָה יִלָּוְהִי אַיְָא...76

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

73 Following Van der Heide’s text.
75 Alexander, “Textual Tradition,” p. 13
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.\textsuperscript{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 מַעְרֵיָּם and WT has מַעְרֵיָּן, but YT has the etymologically related מַעְרֵיָּן.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 (אַתּוּתַד עֵלָיו מֵמוֹנָה וּבְעַד צְרֵר חָיוֹת הַשֵּׁמוֹם שַׁעֲרוֹנָה), YT removes the reference to Nebuchadnezzar. In so doing YT has difficulties with the verb אַתּוּתַד (“to take position, stand ready”) and so the majority of the YT MSS use the Af. form: אַתּוּתַד יִדְיָהוּ קְפַעְפִּיק, “He positioned his hand as an oppressor.” This is not a very satisfactory reading and is again best viewed as a simplification of WT.\textsuperscript{80} There are also verses which are omitted by YT MSS.\textsuperscript{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 מַעְרֵיָּן.\textsuperscript{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.”\textsuperscript{83}

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

\textsuperscript{77}Van der Heide, pp. 23-36.

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

\textsuperscript{79}Van der Heide, p. 29-30.

\textsuperscript{80}Van der Heide, pp. 30-2.

\textsuperscript{81}Van 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.

\textsuperscript{82}Our 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.

\textsuperscript{83}Van 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. 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. Our discussion of the language of TgLam will focus on WT as found in Urb. 1.

Principles of Translation

Finally, we have already discussed the way in which italics will be employed in this thesis, 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. 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 throughout 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

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84 I 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 ו for נ (see §3.1.14).

85 S. Landauer, “Zum Targum der Klagelieder,” Orientalische Studien Theoldor 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.

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

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

88 As 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,\textsuperscript{89} but this will only be done in order to understand how Levine and Greenup have interpreted the targumic text.\textsuperscript{90} Where appropriate, the commentary will provide justification for the translation adopted.

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

\footnote{This 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 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 ēkah. Just as when Adam and Eve were punished and expelled from the Garden of Eden and the Master of the Universe mourned them with ēkah.

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. LXX offers a substantial introduction that provides the reader with the Sitz im Leben of the text, καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὸ α’ ἱμαλαστισθῆναι τὸν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ Ἰερουσαλήμ ἐρημωθῆναι ἑκάστης Ἰερεμίας κλάισι καὶ ἐβρήνησεν τὸν θρήνον τοῦτον ἐπὶ Ἰερουσαλήμ καὶ ἔπε τοὺς. The Peshitta (P) is brief but nonetheless certain about Jeremiah’s authorship, ידעלת書いてמיא שער. 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 Lamentaciones Jeremiae Prophetae.

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91 The 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.

92 YT, as presented by Van der Heide, does not include the attributive phrase of WT and begins with ...אכדי על ריש. 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 (אֲמַה) 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 (הֵנָּקָע).

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” (כהן גדול).

Although Jer. 1.1 begins “The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, 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 כַּהֵן גָּדוֹל is “merely an honorific title and is perhaps the result of comparisons with Moses and Phineas”96 and refers to piska thirteen (דברי ירמיה) 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

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93 PR 29.5.
94b B. Bat. 15a, But it is important to note that in this passage כַּהֵן דָּגָד clearly refers to a compilation of texts as well as the actual act of writing.
95 This title is attributed to Jeremiah both in 1.1 and 1.2.
96 Pinkas Churgin, (New York, 1945), p. 156. His reference is to פרדס סודות פרנסת פסוקא, 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]. 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). 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, Hilkiah, with the High Priest of the same name from the time of Josiah. The earliest source of this tradition is Clement of Alexandria, 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. A key element of this tradition is the equation of Phineas with Elijah. Since we have just seen that Jeremiah is also compared with

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

101 See §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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Phineas} &= \text{Grandson of Aaron (Num. 25.10) } \Rightarrow \text{High Priest} \\
\text{Phineas} &= \text{Elijah (PRE 47)}^{102} \Rightarrow \text{Elijah = High Priest} \\
\text{Phineas} &= \text{Jeremiah (PRK 105)} \Rightarrow \text{Jeremiah = High Priest}
\end{align*}
\]

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. שיר השירים יד אמם שלמה נתי מלך ושראל ויהי כסם ויהי כסם. 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 a 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.\(^ {104}\)

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\(^{102}\) Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer.


\(^{104}\) For 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 ‘ekah 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 ‘ekah.” While this last phrase may simply be interpreted as “they should be mourned with laments,” it is probable that this is a reference to the scroll known as ‘ekah, 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 ‘ekah 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.

The first major aggadic addition to our targum is based upon the consonantal similarity between אֲאָכְאָה of Gen. 3.9 (“Where are you?”) and אֲאָכְאָה 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 (אדם) 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

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105By the rabbinic period אֲאָכְאָה, 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’ (וַיֹּאמֶר).” 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 נָאֹנָא 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 נָאֹנָא (‘Where art thou?’) (Gen. 3.9). נָאֹנָא, usually spelled נָאֹא, is here spelled with the letter הַה 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 נאוה].” 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. 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.

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107 See, 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 אָמַר 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

In the next phrase the targumist introduces מַדָּד דְיֵא, 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 (מדָדָּד רַפְּשָׁם) are frequently encountered within the midrashim and in our Analysis we will study the role of מַדָּד דְיֵא within the targumim in greater detail.110 At this point, however, a brief summary of the

108 This 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).
109 See §4.1.
110 See §4.3.

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 אֶלְוָהָ was equated with the Attribute of Mercy while אֱלֹהִים was equated with the Attribute of Justice. As Sifre to Deut. 3.23 states:

\textit{The Lord}: Whenever Scripture say \textit{the Lord} (יהוה), it refers to His quality of mercy, as in the verse, \textit{The Lord, the Lord, God merciful and gracious} (Ex. 34.6). Whenever it says God (אֱלֹהִים), it refers to His quality of justice, as in the verses, \textit{The cause of both parties shall come before God} (Ex. 22.8), and \textit{Thou shalt not revile God} (Ex. 22.27).\footnote{Sifre Deut. 3.23 (§26); trans. Reuven Hammer, \textit{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.}

Very quickly, however, the Attributes became hypostases, independent entities whom God consults in his heavenly court.\footnote{Hayward, however, has demonstrated that the targumim were “unaware” of the rabbinic rule that אֶלְוָהָ is equated with mercy and אֱלֹהִים 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, \textit{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.}

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.\footnote{See, 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, \textit{Let us make man}. ‘What shall his character be?’ asked they. ‘Righteous men shall spring from him,’ He answered, as it is written, \textit{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; \textit{But the way of the wicked shall perish:} He destroyed [hid] it from them. He revealed to them that the righteous would rise 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.} It is therefore as the agent of God’s...
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. 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.

For this reason did the Attribute of Justice seek to attack Moses, as it says: And God (אלהים) spake 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).

The midrashim also describe מדת דינה as having been active in Jerusalem’s destruction. For example, in commenting on Lamentations 1.13, “He spread a net for my feet” (וירדנָה פֶּרֶשׁ, רשת ירדן), “R. Bebai of Sergunieh said: וירדנָה indicates, ‘He saw that the Attribute of Justice overtook her.’” מדת דינה is thus explained as a compound of “he saw” (וירדה) and “justice” (דינו).

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that our targumist has introduced the Attribute of Justice into TgLam. Unlike like the role of מדת דינה in the midrashim, in TgLam מדת דינה 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 דינה 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).”

115 The 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.

116 Ex. 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.’”

117 The 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.

118 מ・・ית ד・・ת ה・・י 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 בלאדיה נתיב represented by יושב בגד. 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, ἀκακός εἰς ἡμᾶς δῦν ἔκαθεν. Leqach Tob (LT)¹²³ also offers several explanations of ἐκαθά, 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.


¹²⁴Of additional interest, and perhaps at the back of our targumist’s mind as well, is LT’s use of gematria. Since שור 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.

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 rebellion\(^{127}\) 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 (יִהְיֶה יְשֵׁב בָּדַד) 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.

Although the remaining eleven words of Hebrew are rendered in just two lines of the targum, the use of both the Greek loanwords ὑπερτρίχησαι and ἐπιθυμήσαι and the Arabic loanword نَزَّل 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

\(^{126}\)See Lev. 26, especially verses 27-39.


\(^{128}\)See §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 ... 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” (אטרורקית ממות) does not in any way effect either the story or the message, it simply makes explicit the poetic statement of 1.1αβ. The effect is similar to that of modern, paraphrastic renderings of the Bible such as *The Living Bible*. 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: יהודית немשך. This phrase is rendered with the Aramaic, מסכין לה מתים ירושלים למים ומסכין כמו ładננו. Rather than merely expanding the Hebrew poetry the final phrase of TgLam 1.1, والمוהים של המתים ומסכין, is a second reading of MT’s יהודית немשך. Although it is difficult to determine precisely which Aramaic terms represent the Hebrew text, I have suggested in my translation that the Aramaic וסוכין and יהודית немשך 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 מסכין | מacakן. Thus, instead of Jerusalem becoming a vassal (the simple meaning of יהודית немשך), the nations bring her tribute. The final phrase, however, describes the reversal of Jerusalem’s fortunes so that Jerusalem is

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130 Urb. 1’s reading of יהודית немשך should be emended to לוחות 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.\footnote{For further discussion of these terms and the discussion of the origin and linguistic nature of this text see §5.1.} While this is possible, the two interpretations work well together. The converse translation of מִשְׁלָשׁ מָלְאִים may 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

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
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people. 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. As we shall see in Chapters 4 and 5, this introduction helps to establish the way in which the audience will receive the targum, 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.

Our targumist builds upon the similarity between the Hebrew phrase here and 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. 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, by the rivers of Babylon, we wept over us…”

132 TgLam 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.

133 See §3.1.3.

134 See 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.

135 For 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.

136 See 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.”
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: \textit{And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried} (Num. 14.1).\footnote{LamR to 1.1.}

The fundamental basis for both of these interpretations is the use of the root *בכה twice in the Hebrew text. 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.”\footnote{Other examples include Gen. 37.33, Num. 15.35, and Jer. 22.10 (which is quite similar to our verse: בכה נפשו כל הקהל). See Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, \textit{An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax}, (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), pp. 580ff.} 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.\footnote{See also PR 29. The same method of exegesis is used, but Num. 14.1 is not.} 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
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.”

Unlike LamR which makes no reference to the destruction of the second Temple, b San. imbues the Hebrew בֵּין תַּבְּשֵׁם 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 בֵּין תַּבְּשֵׁם 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 NumR 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.

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

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140 b San. 104b.

141 This 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.)

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.\footnote{E.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, \textit{And it came to pass at midnight} (Exod. 12.29).” H. Freedman, \textit{Midrash Rabbah: Genesis}, (London: Soncino, 1951), pp. 353-4. All translations of GenR are from this edition. See Levine, p. 83.} 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.’”\footnote{הא בּלָלָה עִדְּבָא כֹּלָא בּוֹא הַיָּהָא אֵפִּי יָהָה אַבִּי בּוֹיָה בּוֹחֵי הָּאָמַר וָּאָני אָקֵבֵם לָם לְדַרוּר.} 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
judgement is the direct result of Israel’s sin. The report from the spies is described as 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 בת ירושלים in the Palestinian targumim appears to indicate the presence of an audience and that may also be the case here. 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.

The exegetical basis of this insertion and the allusion to Num. 14.1 (that is, the similarity between ימכרה והעב לביה והיה in Lam. 1.2 and ימכרה והעב לביה 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 כحماية) 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 כحماية in order to emphasize the communal experience; see §3.1.6.

See also Chilton’s discussion of the use of כحماية 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. Considering, however, that the exegesis is the same in all the sources (particularly with reference to San. 104b) no definite conclusions can be drawn.

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 לֵךְ 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, 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 (וַיֶּהֱוֶה בְּרִית יְהוָה אֲלֵיהֶם לָשׁוּם) to Jeremiah the High Priest….Ó This phrase is similar to that found in TgJon when the MT introduces a prophetic pronouncement. For example, in Isa. 38.4 TgJon renders MT וַיֶּהֱוֶה בְּרִית יְהוָה אֲלֵיהֶם לָשׁוּם as וַיֶּהֱוֶה בְּרִית יְהוָה אֲלֵיהֶם לָשׁוּם לָפֵם. 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.

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

148 See §3.1.1.

149 Alexander 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 לֵךְ occurs in any context other than the introductory formula it is translated simply as לֵךְ. 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 (מֵּאָלָיוֹת וְאֶשֶּׁר יִשָּׂאֵם בְּעָרָא), but the people refuse to listen to the word of the Lord spoken by the prophet (סְרִירֵנוּ לְכָלָא). Lagarde and YT add יַעֲבֹדִים, 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 יַעֲבֹדִים 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 (וְהָיָה נְתַנִּי דֵבְרִי בָּפֶסֶד, verse 9) to proclaim the fate of a rebellious people (וַיֹּאמֶר מָשָׁמְךָ הָרַע הָעָתִים וַיָּשָׁר יָשָׁר, 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: חַדָּה לְטַלְמַד הָנֵבִיא בְּלֵי כָּלִים וּמִלָּהוֹ: "זֶהָא יְרוּשָלָם עַל דְּיַר נָבוֹכָד נֶגֶר רְשִׁיעָה אֵין לָא טִיוּמִי בְּתָנְחָה.

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

150 Although Jeremiah is the most immediate antecedent, within the broader context of targumic literature the third person masculine suffix of יַעֲבֹדִים 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 מַסְרֵךְ. See §4.4 and Hayward, passim. See, however, §3.3.54.

151 See, e.g., §3.1.3.

152 See §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.

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 *בכללא and בכר 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 (נשל התנה וכסה עם יバック) in the pre-translation addition. In these last lines the targumist returns to MT and represents *בכר twice, resulting in a total of three instances where the targumist has used the verb *בכר. A similar pattern is evident in verse 1 where the targumist uses the first word (אכתי) 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 *בכר 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 ז. 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”). Each time Israel rejects God’s offer and both episodes conclude with the adverb בכר followed by a declaration of Jerusalem’s destruction.

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

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153 LamR 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.\textsuperscript{154}

It will soon become apparent that the preceding additions are also central to the targumist’s overall structure of the targum.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{154}Num. 14.18.

\textsuperscript{155}See also §4.1.
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. The function of the preposition יִמְנָן in 1.3a 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 1.3a as being causal and therefore renders 1.3a “Judah went into exile because they oppressed the orphans (עליה מונף ימין עזירם) … and because of the hard labor which they levied upon their brothers (ועזל סימות פלחהיה דריהם מפרשים באתיווה).” Such a reading is influenced more by theological than grammatical considerations.
We also find, however, that our targumist explains Jerusalem’s punishment in line with the rabbinic principle of מָדָה כֶּנֶר מַדָּה, that one’s punishment should match one’s sins. 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.” 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). 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. 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.

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161 Levine, p. 84.
162 LamR and L’T to 1.3.
163 See, 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). 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. 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).

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

166 This 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 (רָאָה יָשָׁבָה נֵבְיָה לְאָכָל מְזָאָה מְנוֹחָה) is rendered more or less literally and in order with two exceptions. (1) יָשָׁבָה is identified as יַסִּירָה דְבַרְתָּה וּרוֹדָה, and (2) the “Congregation” finds no rest “from the hard labor with which they subject her” (מַפְלָחָה וְלְצָאִים וְתַהְוָה). 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 יָשָׁבָה in 3b, but we shall see later that by using these terms of community (בְּית כְּנִיסָתָה and בְּית כְּנִיסָתָא) the targumist is ensuring that his audience recognizes themselves in the text.\(^{169}\) The explanatory clause מַפְלָחָה וְלְצָאִים וְתַה 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 מַפְלָחָה further serves to create a parallel with her crime of subjecting her brothers to “great servitude” (1.3a).

\(^{167}\) LamR to 1.3.

\(^{168}\) See §5.2.

\(^{169}\) See §3.1.6 and §4.5.
The first portion of 3c (וכל דריה רדך היה אדברה ידה) 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 רדפה אדברה ידה מפריאתיה). 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 פּוּרֵיס. As Levine has pointed out, the targum’s מַיֶּי מַתְמוּטָה בִּין תָּחוֹתָם אֵלֶּה is based upon a double translation. The Hebrew is the rare מֶּּרֶץ 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.” The targum, however, makes both the locale and condition explicit by offering two translations. In the first instance מֶּּרֶץ is read as a plural noun indicating a physical place and is rendered מַיֶּי מַתְמוּטָה “border regions.” This reading is predicated by the Mishnaic interpretation of מֶּּרֶץ as being equivalent to the technical term “boundaries” and is shared with LamR. 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 מַיֶּי מַתְמוּטָה, “and they persecuted her.” Thus, rather than Judah being “in the midst of distress” she is brought to distress through persecution by her pursuers.

170 For discussion of the Western and Yemenite traditions and the decision to follow the WT see §3, “Textual Tradition.”
171 Levine, p. 84.
174 M. 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

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 1.4b, “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” (האל הדתיל קדמים). 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.Ó176 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

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176M. Ta’an. 4.8.
177b 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.
178b 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

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 1.5a שֵׁלָה תַּלְמִידֵיהֶם כְּרֵי לֹא הָעָבָדָה וּבְנֵי בֶּשֶׁלָה אָדָם יִבְרָכֶּהוּ וּבְנֵי בֶּשֶׁלָה אָדָם יִבְרָכֶּהוּ לְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם וְלְעֹלָם W מְאֹדָה רְבִּיהֶם אֵלֶּה בְּשֵׁי מְעִיןָה.

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.

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\(^{181}\) 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 רָע so that it reflects the (potential) ambiguity of the Hebrew. Therefore, the original “foes” or “adversaries” become “oppressors” (מַעָּיִיקוֹת). 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 שָׁלֹוה in 1.5a as a noun and adds the verb דִּבָּר, 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.” In 1.5b the Hebrew נַחֲר is rendered idiomatically with נָחַר, perhaps intended to emphasize the complete physical devastation of Jerusalem. And finally, the targumist specifies Jerusalem’s “great transgressions” by translating מַעָּיִיקוֹת with מַעָּיִיקוֹת, “her rebelliousness.”

3.1.6. Verse 6

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 מַעָּיִיקוֹת, “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 מַעָּיִיקוֹת. Considering the following two stanzas with their emphasis on the wandering of Zion’s nobles in the

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185 Although the Hebrew רָע 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.

186 Levine, 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 יִשְׂרֶאֵל for the Hebrew בֵית נַעֲשֵׂה. The Hebrew יִשְׂרֶאֵל occurs 21 times in Lamentations and of those 21 times it is translated 14 times as יִשְׂרֶאֵל, 3 times as בֵית, יִשְׂרֶאֵל, 3 times as כְּשֵׂעַת, twice as כְּשֵׂעַת, once as כְּשֵׂעַת כְּשֶׂעַת, and only once as meaning “daughter” (2.18c). The one instance where the targum reads “daughter” is part of a phrase referring to crying (MT אֶל-חֶרְמוֹת בֵּית-עִבְרִי and presumably בֵית is retained because it is an idiomatic expression. יִשְׂרֶאֵל 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 בֵית in MT יִשְׂרֶאֵל is used in the targum, twice in construct with בֵית (2.2 and 2.5). The actual phrase reads יִשְׂרֶאֵל בֵּית יִשְׂרֶאֵל, which suggest that “the House of Judah” was understood by our targumist as an idiom and as such could not be translated simply as יִשְׂרֶאֵל יִשְׂרֶאֵל, but required בֵּית in the formula. 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 בֵית in Lamentations and the corresponding term found in TgLam.

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188 יִשְׂרֶאֵל, “daughters” occurs once in 3.51 and is translated with בֵּית נַעֲשֵׂה. Apparently where the plural form occurs it is retained by the targumim. See the discussion of TgJon below.

189 Urb. 1 and YT read בֵּית, יִשְׂרֶאֵל, but Lagarde’s text simply omits it from the targum entirely.

190 In translating יִשְׂרֶאֵל in 1.3 (where it is not in construct) the targumist added בֵּית which might further support this suggestion.
All of this might suggest that this is an unusual and unexpected translation of אשת, but that is not the case. A brief survey of TgJon’s translation of אשת reveals that TgLam’s אשת is, in fact, the most common translational equivalent found in the targumim. In TgIsa, for example, in five instances אשת is translated four times with אשה and once with אשת. Interestingly, in the four instances where אשת occurs TgJon has אשת three times and אשת only once (in 3.51 TgLam has אשת for אשת). All sixteen occurrences of אשת in Jeremiah are rendered with אשת. The same is true for every instance of אשת used in construct in Micah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah. Clearly the occurrence of אשת as the translational equivalent of the Hebrew אשת in TgLam is not unique.

So why do the targumim translate אשת with אשת אשת? In the biblical text these expressions “make explicit the personification of the people or city as a woman.” The “daughter of Zion” refers to the city as a social unit, a community. אשת 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 אשת 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.”

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191 My search has been limited to the translation of אשת in construct with עמי, ירושד, או, או, או, ירושד. These phrases only occur in the Prophets, therefore all targumic references are from TgJon.
192 Hillers, p. 31.
193 Hillers, p. 31.
may also indicate the context within which the targumim were used.\(^{194}\) We have already noted that עמי בית ישראל in the Palestinian targumim probably indicates a synagogal context and it is likely that כנסאת ישראל 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 כנסאת ישראל than the poetic “daughter of Zion.”\(^{196}\) The fact that our targumist also employs the term כנסאת ישראל 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 היה שרי היה מעי מים ל-מזרת מראה 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 יכול-הוא and describing their inability to flee to safety due to their lack of strength.\(^{198}\)

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\(^{194}\) For discussion of the \textit{Sitz im Leben} of TgLam see §5.2.


\(^{196}\) The same would of course be true for TgJon.

\(^{197}\) They are 1.2, 3, 10, 16; 2.5, and 19.

\(^{198}\) Levine’s suggestion (p. 88) that הלא א-כז [sic] is in reference to the animals rather than the nobles is untenable.
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,\(^\text{199}\) omitting the third stich,\(^\text{200}\) or allowing both to remain assuming that they existed as two separate traditions.\(^\text{201}\) 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., המַרְבָּעָה) 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.”\(^\text{202}\) 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.

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\(^{199}\) E.g., Löhr, p. 15.

\(^{200}\) E.g., Rudolph, p. 206.

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

\(^{202}\) This 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 ענייה and אֲוֹלָיו עֲמֵנָה, “the days of her affliction,” is represented by the Aramaic אֲוֹלָיו עֲמֵנָה. Levine suggests that the targum is rendered, “as though the text read אֲוֹלָיו עֲמֵנָה, i.e., the days of her girlhood.” While this is possible, it is more likely that the targumist is reading this phrase in light of 1.7b. That Jerusalem is described as having been surrounded רָמָדֵי כּוֹדֵס (רָמָדֵי כּוֹדֵס) by “walled cities and strong open towns” is explained by the targumist’s multiple rendering of the problematic Hebrew מְרֹדֶה. 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: *רָד, “homelessness, restlessness;”*204 *רָדָד, “oppression;” or *מרֶד, “rebelliousness.” To this may be added *רָדָה, “to rule.” Levine suggests that the targum “contains a double tradition, based upon the words מֶרֶד and מְרֶד (i.e., ‘to dwell’ and ‘to revolt’),” yet he translates the verse as follows: “Jerusalem recalled the days of old, when she was surrounded by walled cities and by strong unwalled towns, ruling and reigning over all the world…. Levine is correct in deriving מְרֹד from *רָד, “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 מְרֹד as being derived from the root מְרֶד, “to rebel, revolt,” yet his translation suggests that he derived the word from the root מְרֶד, “to subjugate, rule.” It is, in fact, very difficult to determine which root lies behind this word, particularly since they both hold a common etymology.

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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, מְרֶד, מְרֶד, and מְרֶד are from biblical Hebrew.
The solution may be that our targumist actually presents three interpretations of the Hebrew מרדיה. In the first instance, the Hebrew מרדיה may be represented with the Aramaic מרדיה, 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 מרדיה and מרדיה 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 מרדיה, 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 ר ז with נבוכד נצר is based upon the fact that the last two letters of Nebuchadnezzar’s name are ז and ר. Nebuchadnezzar’s name appears eight times in TgLam, each time with the epithet נבוכד נצר, and in half of all the occurrences of ר ז in MT נבוכד נצר is used.213 The targumist also offers the additional interpretation of ר ז as “distress,” since we are told that “her people fell into the hands of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar and he oppressed them….”

212 See 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.

213 ר ז occurs twice in 1.5, 1.7, and once in 1.10 and 4.12. The targumist uses נבוכד נצר רishiye 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* מֵשָׁבַתָה of MT (normally translated as “her destruction” or “her downfall/collapse”) is interpreted as being derived from the root *שָׁבַת*, “to cease.” 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

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. The Hebrew **לַיִיְדָה**, a *hapax legomenon*, has been variously understood as meaning “the object of head nodding” or “to wander, move to and fro.”

Many ancient versions including Aquila, Symmachus, and P read it as merely a variant of **נֹדַע**, “impurity.” Our targumist has read it as being from the root *נֹדַע, “to move to and fro, wander,” using the Aramaic **טַלְשָׁל, “to move, migrate.”**

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214 See Hillers, p. 70, and Albrektson, pp. 61-2.
215 From 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).
216 Both interpretations derive MT’s מֵשָׁבַתָה from the root *שָׁבַת* (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.”
218 BDB, p. 626b.
219 Jastrow, p. 536a.
It may be, as Levine has pointed out,220 that our targumist has in mind the midrash which re-interprets דַּלְקַלְוָלְو
alludes to some greater tragedy 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 (and the verb * can be used to describe a variety of ritual impurities, when used in reference to women the noun 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 alludes to Jerusalem being a menstruous 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” (דס ראותה). The Hebrew is rendered with the Aramaic . Levine argues that in Aramaic “means extremity, lower abdomen, bottom; it is virtually unattested as ‘skirt.’” He goes on to suggest that the targumist is alluding to the midrash which interprets as referring to the “outskirts” of Jerusalem where child sacrifices were offered to Molech. 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. Where the targumist has expanded the meaning of , 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

226 For example, this verse and 1.15.
227 Levine, p. 95, n. 2; See Jastrow, p. 1566.
228 LamR 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 אבום הללאמר דבר יוחנן) which is normally interpreted as “[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.
229 It is interesting to note that regardless of his notes, Levine translates as “her skirts,” p. 64.
implication is that Jerusalem has not offered the appropriate sacrifices for her cleansing. This, coupled with the expansion of the biblical phrase לא ויחריהña 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 mikweh.

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 (התקווה) of Israel (Jer. 17.13); — as the mikveh cleanses the unclean so does the Holy, blessed be he, cleanse Israel. 

In order for a mikweh 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.” Lühr has a similar opinion, however Hillers is more cautious, suggesting that “it would be hazardous to restore the

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230 See, Lev. 15:19ff., M. Niddah, passim, and M. Mikwaah, passim.
232 Hillers, p. 71, and further discussion on the waw-consecutive on pp. 67-8.
233 Lühr, p. 42.
missing word, but it may have been something like ‘she has fallen.’

It is thus interesting to note that TgLam reads rather than MT’s. 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 and translates with. This is a reflection of Lam. 1.11 where MT reads and TgLam renders the phrase as . The targumist thus brings 1.9 in line with 1.11 through associative translation. Western MSS do not represent the Hebrew and therefore should be emended to following YT.

3.1.10. Verse 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.

We again find that the Hebrew is translated and identified with the name Nebuchadnezzar, 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 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

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234 Hillers, p. 71.

235 The 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.

236 See Van der Heide, p. 7*.

237 See §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 mentioned are Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, but the text of Lamentations is speaking figuratively. By describing the as 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 \textbf{LORD}. Even to the tenth generation, none of their descendants shall be admitted to the assembly of the \textbf{LORD}, 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 \textbf{LORD} your God refused to heed Balaam; the \textbf{LORD} your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the \textbf{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

\(^{238}\)Hillers 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.

\(^{239}\)Deut. 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 \textbf{LORD}’s house.” See, for example, Thenius, p. 133, and Löhr, p. 42.

\(^{240}\)See Neh. 13.1-3 where the commandment is extended to exclude intermarriage with any non-Israelite.

\(^{241}\)Hillers, 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. 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.

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 לא refers to the LORD rather than to Israel.

3.1.11. Verse 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.

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

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242 A 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.

243 LamR 1.10.

244 See, 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,\textsuperscript{245} which serves to localize the event to Jerusalem. The remaining additions are primarily concerned with converting the Hebrew into prose. The Hebrew יֹהָלָל is usually translated into English as “worthless” or “abject,” but clearly means “glutton” in the two other instances in which this root occurs.\textsuperscript{246} The targumist translates יֹהָלָל with עַדָּבָד, which means “glutton” and amplifies the theme of hunger already established in this verse and elsewhere in TgLam.\textsuperscript{247}

3.1.12. Verse 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?

Prosaic Expansion. As they stand, the first two words of MT are practically meaningless and have been generally accepted as corrupt.\textsuperscript{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!”\textsuperscript{249} Our targumist’s rendering of אֱמוֹת לְךָלָּא אַלּוֹכָמָה כְּרֹאֶה מַהְתָּמָנֶל with יִשְׁתַּחַמָּה clearly fits within this interpretative tradition. It is possible, as Levine suggests,\textsuperscript{250} that the addition of the verb יִשְׁתַּחַמָּה is a second interpretation of אֱמוֹת לְךָלָּא אַלּוֹכָמָה similar to the emendation כְּרֹאֶה suggested by Praetorius.\textsuperscript{251} The remainder of the verse has simply been rendered into prose form with no substantive changes.

\textsuperscript{245}Lagarde’s text reads כל עמהה ירשותל as does YT, but the majority of the MSS read כל עמהה ירשותל. See Van der Heide, p. 8*.

\textsuperscript{246}Deut. 21.20 and Prov. 28.7. See, Levine, p. 98.

\textsuperscript{247}E.g., 1.6, 19, and 20; 2.12 and 20; 4.4 and 5; 5.6 and 9.

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

\textsuperscript{249}LamR 1.12 הָבֵית אִמּוֹת לְךָלָּא אַלּוֹכָמָה כְּרֹאֶה מַהְתָּמָנֶל. See b San. 104b where Lam. 1.12 is used by Rabbah (in R. Johanan’s name) as a biblical justification for saying כְּרֹאֶה within a charm or prayer.

\textsuperscript{250}Levine, p. 99.

3.1.13. Verse 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.

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 אֵשׁ כָּלָה as אֵשׁ בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּמָה. 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. So why should our targumist balk at describing Jerusalem’s “bones” being destroyed?

It appears that our targumist is interpreting אֵשׁ כָּלָה 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. That these fortifications are described as having been “conquered” (or “crushed” כָּבָשׁ) is the targumist’s attempt to deal with the difficult אֵשׁ כָּלָה.

The midrash provides several interpretations אֵשׁ כָּלָה reading as “to scrape,” “to conquer,” “to rule,” and (from the Aramaic רָדַּא) “to plough.” Aside from the final

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252 There are, of course, many other such occurrences throughout the text.
253 See 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* (ירדנה) *into his hands* (Judg. 14. 9),” LamR 1.13. *רָדַּא BDB*, p. 922a, II.
255 “He conquered them, as the word is used in, *May he have dominion* (ירדנה also from sea to sea* (Ps. 72.8);” LamR 1.13. *רָדַּא BDB*, p. 922a, I.
256 Another interpretation of ירדנה: he bore sway over them, as the word is used in, *For he had dominion* (ירדנה over all the region of this side the River (1 Kgs 5.4);” LamR 1.13. *רָדַּא BDB*, p. 922a, I.
reference to M. Ta’an. 4.6, the midrash understands the root to be רודר 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 רודר, “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 רודר, “to beat, fig. to beat down, subdue.”262

The targum interprets MT’s יאכט אמר, “he caused me to shrink back,” as “he caused me to shrink back (ארתע לי קדמ) before my enemies.” The addition 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

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257 “Another interpretation of רודר: he ploughed it, as it has been taught: ‘Tineius Rufus ploughed the Temple’ (y Ta’an. 69b);” LamR 1.13. See Jastrow, p. 1452a.
259 קאتباعאโน אינני אינני אינני. “The י 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.
260 Levine, p. 100.
261 Jastrow, pp. 610-1.
262 BDB, p. 921. See 1 Kgs. 6.32.
263 The term יאכט occurs in 6 different verses in MT (1.5, 7, 10, 20; 2.17; and 4.12) as does יאכט (1.9, 16; 2.3, 7, 17; and 4.12).
264 This occurs in several places as additions, but in 1.7, 1.10, and 4.12 it represents the Hebrew יאכט. See § 3.1.7.
265 1.10.
266 1.19. 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 הרות. Levine is correct to point out that the use of יֹרְדָה to describe the state of Jerusalem brings to mind the image of an unclean woman.\footnote{Levine, p. 100. See also §3.1.9.} 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 (ירושלים יהודיה לאנתגה מרחק בינווה).”

3.1.14. Verse 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.

The first phrase of this verse is very difficult in the Hebrew. As it stands, the word נְשָׁף נוּנֶה is a hapax legomenon whose root is unattested, however the root *שָׁפֵד (“to keep watch, be wakeful”)\footnote{BDB, p. 1052a.} is known and LXX reads the text as as שֵׁפֶד על נוּנֶה. Various solutions have been offered by the ancient versions and modern scholars, but our targum has a unique rendering which, although reinterpreting נְשָׁף as נְשָׁף, does preserve the noun על as it stands in MT.\footnote{Praetorius 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 נוּנֶה, 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.} In other respects, however, our targumist has taken quite a few liberties with the text.

Beginning with the Hebrew נוּנֶה, 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 *

\footnote{See BHS: יֹרְדָה יָפֵר וְיָפֵר.}
intertwined,” is translated with Ith. of *משפנש, “to be entangled, confound,” but whose Pael means “to send forth shoots.”

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,” is governed by the first verb and אינישרנן becomes the beginning of a new clause, “intertwined like the tendrils of a vine, they climbed upon my neck.” The phrase which, which is found in all other MSS, further embellishes the image and is thus preferable to the reading of Urb. 1 (כפשׁנש). The Hebrew phrase 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” (סלקם על ציד). 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 אדריה with יי. These readings are also attested in multiple biblical MSS which suggests that our targumist was using one of these variants.

3.1.15. Verse 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.

The first two stichs of this verse are rendered into Aramaic without any substantive changes. The targumist chooses the common כפשׁנ (as does P הים) to translate the rare Hebrew כפשׁנ, 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,

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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” (מגלה הזאת א בארץ). 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 TgLam\textsuperscript{276} and literally translates as “utterance” or “word.” When it is used in reference to God, however, the definition of מכרה becomes problematic.

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

God’s מכרה 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.\textsuperscript{280}

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


\textsuperscript{278}See 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.”


\textsuperscript{280}Moore, “Intermediaries,” pp. 52-3.
In 1956 the Codex Neofiti I was discovered and provided additional data for the study of Memra. More recently Hayward has argued that in its origin Memra is “God’s  יהוה Name for Himself expounded in terms of His past and future presence in Creation and Redemption.” This position has been challenged, but all agree that the use of Memra 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 נא deut clearly indicates that it is an edict from the LORD, but the use of Memra 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. נזרת 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

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281 Hayward, p. 147.
282 See 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

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, “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. LamR contains several midrashim along this same theme, 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. While LXX, P, and V all read simply עיני, the majority of the MSS of TgLam read some variation of ועהרי עיני, “and my two eyes.” Urb. 1 omits והעריר, but there remains

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283 See 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.

284 LamR 1.16.

285 See, for example, Albrektson, p. 77; Budde, p. 83; Hillers, p. 75 (who points out that 4QLam² reads simply עין); and Löhr, p. 7.
an expanded form of the compact Hebrew.

Whether the additions of דמים and מופע מיום עד 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 described 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

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.

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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 Jeremiah 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;” 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;” 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.” 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.” 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

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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 יָחֵי הָיוֹת לִיאָשַׁב 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 L ORD 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 מִמְרָא in construct with פָנָיו. 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 צַוַּה within the verse allowed the targumist to introduce the noun, מַסֵּר, 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 L ORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the L ORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his Commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the L ORD 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

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292 As 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.

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

294 Deut. 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 פְּרָדְיוֹת, “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 מְטֻנָּה, “like an unclean woman amongst them.”

3.1.18. Verse 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.

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 Neco 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

295 Lagarde adds מְטֻנָּה.
296 Pharaoh’s appellation “the Lame,” reflects the word play between the Hebrew מְטֻנָּה, “to be stricken,” (BDB, p. 646b) and the Pharaoh’s name נֹכֶו. 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? 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” (אַלִּפְדִּיתָ בָּעָלָה) and 2 Chron. 35.22 tells us that Josiah “did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God (וַלֻּא שָׁמַע כְּלִבְדִּיר כִּי מִפְּתִיא אֲלָに戓).”

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

297 2 Chron. 35.20-24.

298 Lev. 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?’”
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, מֶמְרוּא is not an addition to the text and represents the Hebrew מפרת. The use of Memra to translate מפרת 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.”

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

“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..
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חָסֵרָתָה, 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.

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 (רְשַׁמְיָה).

The remainder of the verse is an example of prosaic expansion. The Hebrew בֵּיתָר is directly represented in the targum (בּוֹן קְרַדְתָא), but Levine’s suggestion that the addition of מֵרָעָב מַכְסָא is another reading of בֵּיתָר (being reinterpreted as מֵרָעָב) 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.

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300Jer. 2.17-9.
301See §4.1.2.
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.

The beginning of this verse is a straightforward prosaic rendering of the biblical text. Unlike LXX and P, the targumist’s interpretation presupposes a reading of the Hebrew as מָרָה, “to rebel.”302 The targumist does not concern himself with a literal translation of מָרָה מַרְאָה, rather he provides a paraphrase which describes Jerusalem’s rebellion as disobedience of “the Memra of the Lord.”303 The use of וַיִּגְוֹט מִמְרוֹאתָי an parallels its use in TgLam 1.15 and 1.17.304 In this instance the nature of the decree is not specified which maintains the general ambiguity found in MT.

The Hebrew נַמְצָא has caused translators and commentators some difficulty.305 The LXX and P seem to represent MT306 and it is certain that our targumist has this text in front of him. Hillers would prefer to remove נַמְצָא entirely in favor of מָשְׁמַת זה. This conjecture is based upon parallels with other biblical (and extra-biblical) passages which use similar imagery, such as Ezek. 7.15. It is interesting that our targumist should offer a similar interpretation of this phrase while still retaining a reading of נַמְצָא. The text, as represented by Urb. 1, presents a problem at this point. מָשְׁמַת זה is meaningless and it seems likely that it should be read as מָשְׁמַת רַחֲצֵה סֵפֶר אָבִּית. This reading is found in YT and is followed in my

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302 LXX and P (παραπτώσασα παραπτώκρασα and μετάμισθήσα μετὰμισθάσα) interpret the text as being from מָרָה מַרְאָה, “to be bitter.” See Albrektson, p. 80.

303 The insertion of מַרְאָה מַרְאָה may be due to the consonantal similarities between מַרְאָה מַרְאָה and מַרְאָה מַרְאָה, but because the Aramaic מַרְאָה מַרְאָה more closely matches the grammatical form of מַרְאָה מַרְאָה I have indicated that “surely transgressed” is the translational equivalent of the מַרְאָה מַרְאָה.

304 See §3.1.15 and §3.1.17.

305 See, for example, Rudolph, p. 208; Albrektson, pp. 81-2; and Hillers, p. 77.

306 See Albrektson, p. 81. For MT’s בֵּית נַמְצָא LXX reads θύσσερ θυσσάτως; עֶז וּלְיֵקַט and P reads בֵּית נַמְצָא.
translation, thus “outside the sword consumes and inside the agony of starvation.” The remainder of the verse is a free rendering of the Hebrew וַתְּחִלַּץ.

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).

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.

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307 See Van der Heide’s notes on pp. 84-5 and his critical apparatus on p. 128. 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.

308 NumR to 6.26.
3.1.21. Verse 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.

Most commentators have, in some way, read the first word of 1.21 in a fashion other than that presented by MT. LXX has ἀκούστε δή as if MT read שמע and P has the imperative singular יָשָׁה, 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 יָשָׁה with שמע since, as

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309 See, for example, Albrektson, p. 83; Hillers, pp. 77-8; Rudolph, p. 208.
310 Levine, p. 106.
Albrektson has pointed out, “it is a priori likely that יִשְׂרָאֵל 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. 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 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

 טבאת כל-ثقة יתלב למלע
 כְּאָשֶׁר-זָעָלַת לֹא על כל-מְשֵׁשֶׁה
 כֶּרֶבֶת אָנְחִית יָכְלָל גָּזִים.

“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.

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\(^{311}\) Albrektson, p. 84.

\(^{312}\) See verses 5, 8, 9, 14, 18, 20, and 21.
3.2. TgLam Chapter 2

3.2.1. Verse 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.

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* **יַעֲבֹר**. This is most frequently interpreted as “to becloud,” from **עָבָר**, “cloud,”313 while others derive the word from the Arabic “*aba*, “to blame, revile.”314 Our targum represents a different tack, translating **יַעֲבֹר** with **וָהָשָׁם**, “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 **יַעֲבֹר**.

Other additions to this text include the standard translation of **כָּנָשָׁה** בֶּן-צִיּוֹן with **כָּנָשָׁה** and the identification of **כָּנָשָׁה** with the Temple. The addition of **כָּנָשָׁה** to modify **זֶה** is consistent in this verse and a similar rendering is found in both P (מְסַכָּמֶה) and in most Greek MSS (ὀργήνποι ἀντικρύ).316 This may be a reflection of 1.12, where the Hebrew reads **זֶה כָּנָשָׁה** and the targum has **כָּנָשָׁה בֶּן-צִיּוֹן**, but it is likely, as Levine suggests, that this is merely a colloquial expression indicating that whenever God is angry it is “fierce.”317

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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 **יַעֲבֹרָא**, which “would be equal in sense to **יָעָבֵר** as in Ps. 106.40: ‘And the anger of Yahweh was aroused at his people, and he treated with contempt (רֵיעוּשׁ) his inheritance.’”

315See §3.1.6 for a full discussion.

316Albrektson, p. 87.

3.2.2. Verse 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.

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 ÒornamentsÓ319 or ÒcelebritiesÓ320 helps to give the impression that the targumist has interpreted the Hebrew נשים as people, however there is little reason to offer such translations.321 The translation of רוח with מת is well established within TgLam,322 but we have already noted that when רוח is in construct with כמות the targumist achieves consonantal similarity with MT by translating the phrase with חכמה 전. In this verse and 2.5 חכמה 전 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

321See Jastrow, p. 1067b, and, for example, Tosef. B. Kam. 1.2.
322See §3.1.6. 전-רוח is the most common phrase, but 전-רוח occurs here, 1.15, and 2.5.
323See §3.1.6, where I suggested that the targumist retains the phrase חכמה 전 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.
“strongholds,” is not represented in our targum (unless we identify it with כנסתא, but YT reads אסה מלכתיו דוד ורבינא ומ דוד. כנסתא כרבו בתי הוהו incorrect and we should follow Lagarde which readsԾ324.

3.2.3. Verse 3

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 קרר 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 קרר is intended to suggest such a broad interpretation of יקרא. The only addition to this verse is the phrase heרקפ 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 רנ is attested in most MSS, but it is not necessary to represent MT. Urb. 1 reads רנ where the biblical text has יקראל. 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 קרר.
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 유ֶּ֥֥֬קֶּב in line three instead of יְ֖שֶׁרָ֑ל.

3.2.4. Verse 4

1. רָּ֔דִר קָפָ֖שְׁתָּה כַּאֲוָ֣יד בּ֣בֶּ֣ב יָ֖שֶׁנָּה
2. רָּ֔דִר יְ֖הָ֥ר הַמַּ֣לְתַּיל יְ֖שֶׁנָּה
3. יַֽֽֽ֖אֲוָ֣י בְּהֵר—יִזְיִזְיוּ שַֽֽֽפָּרリスト הַמַּ֣לְתַּיל

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.” Similarly, the targumist apparently understands the difficult Hebrew וּ֥֝ב כַּאֲוָ֣י, “to take one’s stand,” 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 כַּאֲוָ֣י 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,”

328 YT reads וּ֥֝ב כַּאֲוָ֣י, Van der Heide, p. 14*.
329 See Albrektson, pp. 91-2, who has a similar reading, but does not cite our targum.
even the וֹסֵכָּה itself, the very residence of God’s glory, is laid bare to destruction.

3.2.5. Verse 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.

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 תֵּרָמוּ אָרָה, “another troublesome translation.” A gap has been left in the MS here with מָשְׂרוֹתָא added in smaller letters with dots above them followed by מָשְׂרוֹתָא (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 שָׁחַת מְבֶרְרִים. Lagarde does not have this phrase (but it is likely, whatever his sources, that his text is a corrected copy) and YT also omits the phrase, but has קֵרָו פִּסְרָה וּבְּרִיהֶיהוֹנָה מְסָרָה in place of WT’s מְסָרָה מְסָרָה. 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 מְסָרָה to match the feminine suffix of מְסָרָה. In any case it has no effect on our text.

The second error is rather straightforward and minor. In translating הבֵּית-יוֹרֵדה the targum begins with the established pattern of ובֵּית יְהוֹדָע. However, in our MS the phrase begins ובֵּית יְהוֹדָע (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 ובֵּית יְהוֹדָע. We should therefore disregard ובֵּית יְהוֹדָע. As we mentioned earlier, the translation of ובֵּית יְהוֹדָע strongly suggests a
Exegetical Commentary

3.2.6. Verse 6

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. Our targumist reads MT as closely as possible, elucidating the more cryptic references as he sees fit. As in many modern commentaries is interpreted as referring to the Temple and is read literally as “garden.” The verb “to treat violently,” is replaced with the agricultural verb “to uproot.” The result is a very accessible reading where God is “uprooting” or “ploughing” his Temple like a garden.

occurs twice in this verse. In the first instance most commentators agree that refers to “his appointed place of meeting” and not an appointed time for a festival (as we have in 6b). 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 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

332 See §5.2 and b Ta’an. 30a.
333 See Albrektson, pp. 94-7, for a full discussion and reference to earlier discussions.
334 See Albrektson, pp. 95-6; Hillers, p. 99; and Westermann, pp. 151-2.
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 מִלֶּךָ 'וכֹּה, 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 כֹּה 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 הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמָּסָּא. LamR and LT both identify the king as Zedekiah and the High Priest as Seraiah.

3.2.7. Verse 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.

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 כֹּה מַעְטֵר 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

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336 Lagarde has אִישׁ מַעְטֵר.

337 LamR 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. This interpretation of ãòåî íåéë 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

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 סאם משקיפתיו, “he swung the plummet,” from his translation which is necessary in order to represent the Hebrew וִיהָ כֶּנָּ הָ֣וֶן כֶּּנָּ הָ֥וֶן and he also omits the verb סאם סאם כֶּנָּ from his transcription. Although the orthographic evidence of our sources varies slightly, the YT MSS read סאם and Lagarde reads סאם סאם, the meaning still remains and represents the Hebrew וִיהָ כֶּּנָּ. Finally, we should follow all other MSS in reading the final verb as וִיהָ rather than Urb. 1’s וִיהָ כֶּּנָּ.

3.2.9. Verse 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.

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

339 See 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.\footnote{Levine, p. 114.} 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.”\footnote{1 Macc. 1.54-64.} This passage is helpful in understanding the targumist’s rendering of the Hebrew מַזְוְעַתָּה אֲשֶׁר בֶּרֶהֶז.

The Hebrew, בֶּרֶהֶז, “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 בֶּרֶהֶז, “bar, bolt.”\footnote{See Jastrow, p. 1040a, and TgJer 49.31 and 51.30.} It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that our targumist had specific reasons for choosing מַזְוְעַתָּה in this instance.

By the time of the Mishnah, the term מַזְוְעַתָּה 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.\footnote{Danby, p. 795.} 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 (מַזְוְעַתָּה) 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 house\footnote{See b Ber. 47b where the ḍem ‏מְעָזְעָה are identified with those who do not have a mezuzah on their} and the destruction of the

\footnote{1 Macc. 1.54-64.}
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 worshiping 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” (אֲנַן תָּרָה) 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 2.9α 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.”

\(^{345}\)This follows the same pattern found in connection with TgLam 1.2 and Num. 14.1; see §3.1.2.
3.2.10. Verse 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.

TgLam is unique among all targumim in translating the Hebrew אפר (עפר) where it occurs in the Bible in reference to mourning with the addition of אפר เมקלה. This has led Grossfeld to argue that the phrase אפר เมקלה makes a “direct association between the ‘Sacrifice of Isaac,’ the so-called Akedah, and the destruction of the Temple.” This phrase, אפר เมקלה, 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 เมקלה) 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 เมקלה (as opposed to ordinary ashes) is “that [God] may remember for our sake the ashes of Isaac.” 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 เมקלה 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 מפתי אפר התעון of מפתי התעון 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

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347a Ta’an. 16a.
We have already seen why our targumist modified the Hebrew אפר מתנהו with the addition of מקהל but why is it rendered אפר rather than אפר? Grossfeld comments that “the translation of אפר by אפר does not by itself present any particular problem” and he is correct on both linguistic and talmudic grounds. 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) ‘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).

On the one hand the use of אפר brings the text in line with M. Ta’an. 2.1 which reads אפר McKenzie. On the other hand, Gen. 18.27 provides the basis for interpreting the verse in terms of both “ashes” (אפר) and “dust” (אפר). 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.
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 ספק. Urb. 1 reads ספק תבש, and Lagarde has ספק, "have had enough," while the MSS of YT have ספק, "have ceased." Albrektson suggests that ספק may be an error of matathesis for ספק, "have ceased." 

In the last stich, the verb and nouns which are singular in MT, have been changed to the plural. But what is less clear is why our targumist has rendered the Hebrew וכות, "to faint," with כות, "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 כות resolves this problem and provides a transition from verse 11 to 12.

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351 See Jastrow, p. 1016.
352 See Van der Heide, p. 16*. See also Landauer, p. 510.
353 Albrektson, p. 105.
354 As does the Syriac. See Albrektson, p. 106.
3.2.12. Verse 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.

The unidentified subject of the Hebrew אֵמוֹרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל is identified in the targum as אֵמוֹרָה. 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 אֵמוֹרָה דָּם יָם to דָּם יָם under the assumption that small children would not drink wine. Our targumist did not find this problematic and rendered the Hebrew directly as אֵמוֹרָה. 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 עָשַׁךְ עֵשֶׁר literally, but instead chooses an alternate reading. In this case, the children thirst “as one wounded 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. 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. This reading fits in with the broader

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356 Urb. 1 reads כִּישֵׁד, however the כִּישָׁד, which is attested in Lagarde and YT, is to be preferred.
357 So Levine, p. 115.
358 Today 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 TgLam. 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

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 יִיהְוָיָ֛ו כִּי מָדְרָמָּ֛י 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 כָּ֣י יָרָ֣פֵאּ-לָּ֔ךְ is rendered prosaically as, “and who is the doctor who can heal you of your affliction?”

The targumist’s rendering of מָהּ אָשָָּ֖ה-לָּךְ is worth noting. BHS suggests emending the text to follow LXX, ῥίς σώσει σε καὶ παρασκαλέσει σε which is translated into מִי יָשִׁיעָךְ כל הנופך. Albrektson argues that this is not due to a different Vorlage, but rather is a result of a change within the Greek textual tradition. TgLam does not represent a literal rendering of MT, but it also does not represent a different Vorlage. The Aramaic מָהּ אָשָָּ֖ה-לָּךְ אַּנִּּ֣חֲמָךְ, “How shall I befriend/join you,” suggests that the targumist read the text as מָהּ אָשָָּ֖ה-לָּךְ אַּ֥נִּֽחֲמָךְ, “[how] shall I be like you,” rather than MT’s מָהּ אָשָָּ֖ה-לָּךְ אַ֣­ּנִּֽחֲמָךְ, “[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.

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

3.2.14. Verse 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.

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, שאר תפסל, is rendered by the targumist “there is no substance to their prophecies.” The Hebrew doublet of שאר תפסל is not represented with an Aramaic doublet. If we look at 14c we find that the targumist has translated the Hebrew יראו לך מספרות שקר ומדחזרות, “they have seen oracles for you that are false and misleading,” as יראו לך מברך מילים שקרות, “they prophesied to you vain prophecies and erring words.” In this instance the targumist is reading מברך מילים as being in construct with שאר תפסל שאר and interprets the hapax legomenon מדריחים as “misleading;” clarifying the text by adding that they are “misleading words” מילים שקרות. This suggests that in translating 14a the targumist interpreted the Hebrew שאר as a modifier for תפסל שאר and only represents שאר in the phrase יראו לך מברך מילים שקרות, since שאר 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

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

362 Similarly יראתי מברך מילים שקרות.
declares that Jerusalem will fall to the Babylonians. 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.

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.

3.2.15. Verse 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?”

Prosaic Expansion. The addition of בְּשָׁפְתָּתוֹם and the contextualization of the speech in 15c has no effect on the meaning of the verse. The targumist has provided בְּשָׁפְתָּתוֹם in order to parallel the Hebrew text’s רְאוּשָׁם. 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” (כִּים, דִּיוִים, MT) and the singular רְאוּשָׁם of MT has been made plural רְאוּשָׁתָן. Both of these changes are also found in P.

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

363 Jer. 25.
364 Jer. 23.16.
365 It is unlikely that any specific Jewish-Christian “disputation” has motivated our targumist’s interpretation of this text, contra Levine, p. 117.
366 כִּים and דִּיוִים, respectively.
Peshitta limits the addition to אפרים, whereas the targum adds אפרים אמדיו. 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 ב’re יאתו, 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.

3.2.16. Verse 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.”

Prosaic Expansion. Unlike P, our targum follows the MT in placing ב before ו. The only substantial (yet inconsequential) addition to this verse is מ’ מוספתים. Verses 15 and 16 form a unit, which Westermann refers to as a “complaint about the enemies,” 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, ב’re ב’re in MT. Our targumist merely supplies the appropriate object, “their lips.”

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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

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 אמרותיה, “his word,” as מפורשים, “the Memra of his mouth.” The use of מפורשים in this verse corresponds to its use elsewhere in TgLaM (1.15, 17, 18, and 20), but in this instance it is a direct rendering of the etymologically related אמרותיה. Each occurrence of מפורשים 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 אין היה לייעקב 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 אמרותיה אשר זוהי מפורשים 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

371 In TgLaM 3.57 מפורשים 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 זרי and ראו.\(^{374}\)

3.2.18. Verse 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.

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

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\(^{373}\) LamR 2.17.

\(^{374}\) See Albrektson, pp. 115-6.

\(^{375}\) See, 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 אול-תאני becomes “give no comfort to your sorrows.”

We have already discussed the targumic method of rendering א- with א, but this verse contains two of the exceptions discussed earlier. 377 In the second half of 18a is not translated as כו as we have come to expect. Instead the phrase is rendered. 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 א in this verse is in construct with א, a phrase which only occurs here and in Ps. 17.8 where it is part of the phrase א- א- א, “the pupil/apple of his eye.” 378 Our targum does not follow the established pattern of א = א, but instead reflects Zech. 2.12 by rendering the text with א. 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 א 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 א refers to the community of Jerusalem/Zion/Israel and so the targumist brings them “up to date” for his audience by translating א with א.
the term by which the current Jewish community would identify. In 2.18c the phrase -כז עֵינִי 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

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 כוֹה 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 לְרָאוּ אֱשֶר הָיָה as the parallel toאוֹלַי as (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-homer, 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

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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 discussions speak of David’s awaking in the night to contemplate God’s laws and promises 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.

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 שפרך ת🤔לכ), they are also to “pray in the House of the Congregation.” This is the only instance in TgLam where the phrase בית כנסת occurs and it is clear that it is the locus, the place where the community congregates, that is being referred to in this instance.

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.

Ps. 119.62 and Ps. 119.148.

These 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.

LT 2.19.

See §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. As usual our targumist follows MT and, aside from
the curious choice of ("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

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
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” (פָּרִים (Parim) are
described as the “fruit of their womb” (פָּרִים (Parim) The Daughters of Israel resort to

386See, for example, Hillers, p. 101.
cannibalism due to starvation (בכמסה) and their young (and the *hapax legomenon* ספרותים) are poignantly described as “lovely children wrapped in fine linen.”

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?” 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. 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 מדרה חנ עד 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!”

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

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387 The *hapax legomenon* ספרותים and the *hapax legomenon* ספרותים 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 *שָׁפַח, wrap* (Jastrow, p. 715b).

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

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

390 2 Chron. 24.20-2.
The point of contact between Lam. 2.20 and 2 Chron. 24.22 is the call for the LORD to “see” (رؤية and ראות 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


392 Lam. 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”).

393 Within 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.

394 All 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. 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.

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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

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 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, (ושכבים על-מיטות בюр)  
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 *שכבים*, Lam. 2.21 with שכבר and Amos 6.4 with ושכבים. 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 מיטות 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, “you killed,” “softens the directness of the charge” is curious since the targum renders the text literally with \(\text{גְּלָל} \text{הָנָּה} \text{בִּימּוֹן} \text{אֶלֶף} \text{הלָּה} \text{פָּלוֹס} \text{שְׁרוֹד} \text{אָסָר-סְפָּה} \text{רֵבֶּית} \text{אֲרָבִי} \text{כָּלֵם}.\)\(^{399}\) Even the rather harsh sounding, “you slaughtered,” is translated literally with \(\text{גְּלָל} \text{הָנָּה} \text{בִּימּוֹן} \text{אֶלֶף} \text{בּוֹשֶׁת} \text{סְבָדָה} \text{כָּלֵם}.\) 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

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

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398 NumR 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).”

399 Levine, p. 121.

400 This 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.” 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. The past tense of the Hebrew Òmy enemies,Ó has been made future and, before our targumist represents the Hebrew Òmy enemies,Ó he inserts a new theme, one of future hope and deliverance.

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 in the targum is equivalent to in MT, although note that we now have a temporal as the preposition (the comparative כ has already been rendered with ). 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).

Levine, p. 121.

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

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

We 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 מִּצְצָע? 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 מִצְצָע appears to have disappeared.

Lagarde and YT do not have this addition, but instead read simply על די נפש האורר בים ולסאה. 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 מִצְצָע and therefore opted for a simpler text which still conveyed the intent of the “original” targum.

The Hebrew phrase כִּ֥ם מִצְצָע 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” (כִּ֥ם מִצְצָע). In rendering this verse our targumist did not translate the text literally, but instead identified the festival as Passover. In verse 22, although the word פֶּסַח does not occur, our targumist has again equated כִּ֥ם מִצְצָע with “Passover.” Passover commemorates the day when God brought Israel up from Egypt, thus the Hebrew כִּ֥ם מִצְצָע is represented with the phrase בֵּיתָם דָּבָרְקֶנָה, יִתֵּרָאלוֹ מִמְּצָרִים. 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 כִּ֥ם מִצְצָע our targumist continues the process of transforming this traumatic verse into a positive outlook for the future. This term is

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405 See §3.2.7 above.
probably derived from מָנָעַר, “terrors,” which is found several times in Jeremiah.\(^{407}\) The phrase וַיֵּעָדְוֻנְשָׁא 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 קָשַׁע 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 נָפְדָה is interpreted as one “wrapped in fine linen” (כְּפָדָה). Those whom “I reared” (ךְָכִית) have become “those whom I have raised in royal comfort” (רְכִית נִהלְמֵךְ מַלְכָּ). These additions serve to emphasize the fine stature of Jerusalem’s inhabitants and the depths of their downfall.\(^{409}\)

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

\(^{408}\)My 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.

\(^{409}\)See §3.2.21 and §4.2.3.
3.3. TgLam Chapter 3

3.3.1. Verses 1-3

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 ה, verses 25-7 begin with ע, and verses 37-9 begin with צ. In verses 31-3 the targumist does not begin each line with ב (as in MT), however he does begin each verse with its Aramaic equivalent בرب. 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.” 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. On the other hand, it may be that our targumist is so certain of Jeremiah’s identity that he did not feel the

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410 See 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.”

411 See §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 על ירושלים 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., לע in verse 1 and the addition of the preposition - ל in verse 2, הלשכה). In verse 1 the
“rod of God’s wrath” (דריד [side]) is modified by the addition of הדיר 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”
(שקימת) which is prefaced with the preposition and first person suffix י found so that God is
“heaping upon me his blows all day.”

3.3.4. Verses 4-6

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” (מכמהטי)
that his skin is worn out and, in the second phrase, his skin is worn from “the blow.”

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 (ኤርት) is missing and by providing direct objects for both ያቅ and ወዳ the metaphorical attack has become the literal siege of the city Jerusalem.

The Hebrew የ’an, “bitterness,” is interpreted as the “heads of the people” (ërṣ ከማ) who were sent into exile by the conquering forces. Finally, the Hebrew noun የተለቀለ, “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 መተከር 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.” The Hebrew phrase የቁማን ከረታወር, “like the dead of long ago,” has been expanded with the addition of የአማራት ከወር and የእይወት. Thus, he dwells “in a dark prison like the dead ones who have gone to the other world.” The targumist has interpreted ከወር as “world” rather than “antiquity, long ago.” Urb. 1 reads ከወር, but the

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415 The 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).

416 See the general discussion concerning Chapter Three in §3.3.1 above.

417 See 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 የወር ማህይወት 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 ἐκκύκλωσε κεφαλήν μου.

419 LamR 3.7.
Exegetical Commentary

3.3.7. Verses 7-9

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 mines let alone Babylon (as one might reasonably expect). The remaining additions are similarly benign from an exegetical perspective. The “fetters” (צרשות) are described more fully (and in plural form) as כבלים תועשא and are made heavy “upon my feet” (على الرجلين).

The Hebrew שותם in verse 8 is a hapax legomenon and has been understood by

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420 See Lagarde and Van der Heide, p. 21*.

421 Levine, p. 126.

422 See LamR 3.7.
modern scholars as either “stop, block” or “disappointed, frustrated.” Our targum, as with many Hebrew MSS, has read מָשַׁת as being a variant of מָזַר, “to block, stop.” The idea that a penitent’s prayers could be “stopped” has been resolved by our targumist through the addition of כֶּם. It is not the prayers which were halted, rather the place of prayer which was inaccessible. 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 (בית תפילה) for all peoples.

The phrase “house of prayer” occurs in the Hebrew Bible only in this verse, once in the form בית תפילה and then בֵּית תִּפְלָה. Within the context of Isaiah the “house of prayer” clearly refers to the Temple. 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 where forbidden from worshiping.

The only addition to verse 9 is the word מְכֶמֶרִים. Levine suggests that we have a

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424 See Albrektson, p. 132.
425 See BHS.
426 See Levine, p. 127. “The prayer itself was not blocked; rather, it was not accepted: the ‘destination,’ i.e., בית, 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.
427 Isa. 56.6-7.
428 See 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?”
429 See 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 פסלי is “apparently an explanation of the first term, [adding] that the white marble is that of ‘idols.’”\(^430\) While פסלי can mean “hewn image,”\(^431\) it is better translated as “hewn stones” which would correspond to the Hebrew ניב more accurately than מפרמר. 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 מפרמר 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 סרי should be emended to סרב. This would bring it in line with the majority of the MSS\(^432\) and match the third person singular form of the Hebrew.\(^433\)

3.3.10. Verses 10-12

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 סמר סרפ to complete the prose.

\(^430\)Levine, p. 128.

\(^431\)Jastrow, p. 1195a. The noun and the verb (Jastrow, p. 1197) are both derived from the Hebrew of the same root מפרמר which means “to hew, cut.”

\(^432\)See Lagarde and Van der Heide, p. 21*.

\(^433\)Levine’s notes are confused at this point. He argues that סמר סרפ appears preferable, in view of its use *infra*, verse 11,” p. 128. סמר סרפ is not used in verse 11 of TgLam, but סרפ סרינ (אזרחי סרינ) is preferable.

\(^434\)This should be emended to read.*YT reads פסלי following Lagarde. See comments below and Van der Heide, p. 22*. יתי and יתי following Lagarde.
sentence. כבשה is most commonly translated as “path” and Levine points out that this image is also found in Hos. 13.7, “like a leopard I will lurk beside the way.” However, “recess” or “hollow” is a less common use of כבשה which is more appropriate for translating the Hebrew משטרים, “secret place.”

Verse 11 repeats the sense and structure of the Hebrew text. יเกษרי is a hapax legomenon which has troubled translators both modern and ancient. Our targum has interpreted it in the same way as P who renders it (without representing the ו) as פרש. 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 יכפות כליסה is meaningless and should be read הי כליסה. 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

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 בכור rather than the poetic כותרת. Verse 14, however, has two additions to the text. The people who would mock the mourner are identified as the “bold” or “dissolute” and their mocking is directed as “against me.” The addition of

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435 Jastrow, p. 611.
436 Levine, p. 129.
437 BDB, p. 172.
438 See Albrektson and his discussion, p. 135.
439 So Lagarde. See Van der Heide, p. 22*. YT reads בין כלאים. 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 “rather than
our targumist does not opt for this reading and the potential for interpreting the text as a
reference to neighboring nations.  

The meaning of verse 15 has not been greatly altered in the targum. The targumist has
modified מֶרְאִית חָיוֹת by adding that it was the “gall of snakes,” מֶרְאִית חָיוֹת מָלָא כֶּנֶּשׁ. This is probably an
element of associative translation where the text of Job 20.14, which refers to the “venom
of asps” מֶרְאִית פּוֹטַס, has influenced our targumist’s translation. The text of Urb. 1
again requires emendation as the phrase אָרוֹѳִּים נֶגְרִים should be read אָרוֹѳִּים נֶגְרִים.

3.3.16. Verses 16-18

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. The MS actually reads בְּכֵן נַחֲנוּ, 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 opinion. Notice that the targumist has reproduced the form of MT by
beginning each line with ב, but whereas the Hebrew text has the waw-conversive the

See, for example, 1.3, 1.10, and 2.15 where the “nations” are depicted as withholding aid from
Jerusalem or mocking Jerusalem.

See §1.2.2.4 and §3.3.19 for the influence of Job 20.16 on the targumist’s translation of מֶרְאִית חָיוֹת.

See Lagarde and Van der Heide, p. 22*.

The text should be emended to בְּכֵן נַחֲנוּ following Lagarde.

See 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. 543f.).
targum has the conjunctive چ plus the perfect. The use of the conjunctive چ 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. It has been interpreted as either second person masculine or third person feminine. Some, like Hillers, have emended the text, viewing the מ in ממלשא as an enclitic which would be attached to the verb, which results in the translation, “I despaired of having peace.” The targum has interpreted the verb as third person feminine singular with ממלשא as the subject. The Hebrew ìåìùá has become ממלשא and has led to various translations by modern scholars. In Levine’s “Critical Commentary” the phrase is translated “from greeting,” but in his “Translation” the phrase is rendered “I ceased wanting to live.” Greenup translated the passage as “and my soul is turned away from seeking peace,” presumably interpreting ממלשא as a participle of א. Levine’s comments are on the mark when he says that “the targumist simply paraphrases ‘from greeting.’” 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. ìåìùá has been understood by our targumist as referring to “strength,” thus “my strength is destroyed.” ìåìùá has become דוֹויָיָי אָוְדָרֶךָ and in rendering the noun into a verbal form the targumist has provided the subject. As in 2.9 has been expanded to 2.18 (Hebrew: אָל אָדָני) and 3.40 (Hebrew: מַה הָיָה), but this is merely a translational equivalent rather than an example of anti-anthropomorphism.

446 See Albrektson, pp. 138-9, and his notes.
448 Levine, p. 133.
449 Levine, p. 69. This is, presumably, a paraphrase of the targumist’s paraphrase.
450 Greenup, p. 29.
“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 noun\(^\text{453}\) or, occasionally, as an infinitive,\(^\text{454}\) but P and our targum read it as an imperative.\(^\text{455}\) “My affliction” has been expanded so that it is the “affliction of my soul” which is to be remembered. The Hebrew מרד הרוחשלי is normally understood as “restlessness, homelessness” and also occurs in 1.7. The MT of verse 19 and 1.7 (הרה ורמשיה ימי występ מרדיה) are, in fact, very similar. The targum to 1.7 has interpreted מרד as “rebellion” (*מרד\(^\text{456}\)), but in 3.19 the targumist uses the Af. of *מרד, “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 לפה רחש *, מרד, “wormwood and gall,” which are bitter herbs or poison.\(^\text{457}\) Thus, the foes “embitter” the speaker by causing him to drink “wormwood and the poison of snakes.”
The Aramaic phrase ëëùëë as a translation for the Hebrew ëëë is probably influenced by Job 20.16 where the phrase ëëë, “the poison of asps,” occurs.\(^\text{458}\)

The targumist has thus embellished the Hebrew text, adding that the “foes” are active

\(^\text{451}\)Levine, p. 69.
\(^\text{453}\)See Albrektson, p. 139, and NRSV, “The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall!”
\(^\text{454}\)So Rudolph, p. 231 and Westermann, p. 165. Others (e.g., NIV and Hillers, p. 114) reconstruct a different Hebrew Vorlage, רוחש *, based upon LXX γινομενος.
\(^\text{455}\)See §3.1.7 above and BDB, p. 597b.
\(^\text{456}\)See §3.1.7 above and BDB, p. 597b.
\(^\text{457}\)is used exclusively in a figurative sense within the Bible, see BDB, p. 542a.
\(^\text{458}\)See 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 רָאָשׁ 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.”

Verse 20 has posed several problems to interpreters. Our targumist, however, has
fairly straightforward reading of MT, including its ambiguities, but has followed the qere
rather than the ketiv. is translated with יִלָּדְיֵי which carries the connotation
of both “to bow” and “to pray.” The only addition to this verse is the phrase עֲלָ שְׁמוֹאַ which explains why the speaker’s soul is bowed down.

Regardless of how one understands the reference of עֵלֶּךָ, 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 אָסָא telling the audience that, “this consolation I
call to mind” (אָסָא נָהֲמָא אָתָב עִלֵּב). The next phrase, עֵלֶּךָ, 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,

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Job 20.16 and 19.

For a summary discussions see Albrektson, pp. 141-3, and Hillers, pp. 114-5. Albrektson follows the ketiv of מַעְרְשֵׁי and reverts the בָּשִׁית from מַעְרְשֵׁי to בָּשִׁית (see Hillers for a critique of this reading, p. 114, and BHS). The result is a translation which interprets מַעְרְשֵׁי 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).

Jastrow, p. 1283b. Presumably our targumist could have chosen יִלָּדְיֵי, an Aramaic root derived from
the Hebrew root found in the qere (see Jastrow, p. 1530b), but instead prefers the ambiguity of יִלָּדְיֵי.

Levine, p. 136. “The targum paraphrases אָסָא ‘this consolation’ or ‘this comfort’ in keeping with the
philological principle that אָסָא requires a direct object.”

See §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 (בנין כ ארירך), thus the ambiguity remains.

3.3.22. Verses 22-24

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 פסכה clearly reflects a reading of תְמוּנָה rather than תַּכַּפְרוּ. 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 שֵׁם and the משש בֵּרֶשׁ. 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

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 אַלְכָּךְ. 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 אַלְכָּךְ, “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” (יִמָּשֶׂךָ). 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. The rabbis referred to the second passage (Deut. 11.13-21) as “the Acceptance of the Yoke of the Commandments.”

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.

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).

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469 M. 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).

470 Deut. 11.13-5.
3.3.28. Verses 28-30

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, 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.” 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.

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.’” CantR has an even more interesting parallel for our passage.

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471 NRSV. See Albrektson, p. 149.

472 It 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.

473 See 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* (תשוקה) *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 *תשוקה* as a combination of חסן, “weak,” and חסד, “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,”^{474} 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.”^{475} 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 2.5^{478} the rabbis discuss why Mordecai is called a “Jew” (יהודי) when he was, in fact, a Benjaminit. 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,

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^{474} The phrase also occurs in CantR 2.16.

^{475} See §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.

^{477} Urbach, 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 Benjaminit.”
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 י؜יیرי/וּדָרִי 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. 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

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479 The 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). This highly developed presentation of the doctrine of repentance and forgiveness places TgLam well within the rabbinic milieu. 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.

3.3.31. Verses 31-33

The targum to these three verses echoes the form of MT by beginning each verse with אַרְוָא, the Aramaic equivalent of כִּי. Like LXX and P, the targumist has ignored the word order of verse 31 and placed the subject (כִּי) immediately following the verb (אַל). The Hebrew text of verse 31 is shorter than most other verses in this section and our targumist

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480 See the verses cited for detailed discussion of each passage.
482 From 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.
483 εἰς τὸν σκότος ἀπὸ τιθαι and הולך לעם. See Albrektson, p. 150.
supplies a second clause. In doing so he has explained the nature of God’s “neglect.”

Throughout TgLam the targumist describes God as either actively handing Jerusalem over to the enemy or withdrawing his hand of protection from his people. 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.

The targum to verse 32 replaces the abstract וגרת, “he causes grief,” with the concrete image of חרב, “he breaks.” As we might expect, *חרב is used repeatedly in TgLam to represent the Hebrew *חרב, but in the four instances where *גרת is used the targumist also uses *חרב. 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 (חרב) to come among

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484 Or “he will not forget,” *גרת, Jastrow, p. 1582. See §3.2.7.
485 E.g., 1.2, 1.3, and 1.14.
486 E.g., 2.3. This, of course, does not include the many references to God as “an enemy,” etc., which are also recurrent in TgLam.
487 See §3.3.40 and, e.g., LamR Proem 25.
488 There are a total of seven occurrences of *חרב in Lamentations: 2.9, 11, 13; 3.4, 47, 48; and 4.10. The Aramaic *חרב is used in each case.
489 The 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

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 וּ and an infinitive form, but because the infinitives are dependent upon the finite verb which is found at the end of verse 36. 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. In Aramaic the infinitive is normally formed with a prefixed יְ rather than the prefixed יְ of Hebrew. There are exceptions, however, and Golomb has cited several instances where the יְ rather than יְ has been used in TgNeof, most often in imitation of the Hebrew form. 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 יְ to form the infinitives of גָּעוּ and רָכְבּ. In addition, the infinitive form of יָרֵד has the prefixed יְ and retains the

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490 Hillers (and Budde, p. 95) objects that יְלַיְלָה יַלְמִדָּה cannot be the governing verb since יְרָדֵה is not followed by the infinitive. Instead Hillers views the infinitives as “dependent on the parallel verbs in the preceding verse,” pp. 116-7.

491 See 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.

492 This is true for the Peal/Pael in Late Aramaic. In Onkelos-Jonathan type Aramaic the prefixed יְ 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.


494 The first word of verse 36, סְבַבֶּה, has a correcting dot above it in Urb. 1 and should be corrected to סְבָבָה. This brings it in line with the majority of MSS which read סְבָבָה; see Lagarde and Van der
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. 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 לסהמ 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. As Hillers has pointed out, verses 34-6 contain the traditional description of the behaviour of an unjust ruler. 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. 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 רלמה refers to the ruler who will not give the poor man a fair hearing. Finally, the targum ensures that MT’s רלמה לא ראה is read rhetorically (“does the LORD not see?”) by addingasily and using the Ith. of *למה, “is it possible that this will not be revealed before the LORD?”

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Heide, p. 25*.

495 See §3.3.1.

496 Contra Greenup (p. 30), “To crush and subdue under His feet all the prisoners of the earth.”

497 Hillers, p. 130.

498 Levine, p. 144. Exodus 23.1-8 contains God’s command to Moses that all shall be given a fair trial.

499 See BHS and §3.1.14 above.
3.3.37. Verses 37-39

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, 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 אֱלֹהִית is “a man” and that the evil done occurs because they disobeyed the LORD, the targumist thus places the responsibility of evil deeds with those who commit the acts and not God. 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 מָפֵי עַלֹהִי as a simple

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500 E.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.

501 The change in number can be explained if הן is understood as referring to humanity in general.

502 Most 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. 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. The good which occurs in the world, we are reassured, emanated from “the holy mouth.”

Verse 39 begins with the rare Hebrew verb תוסעי, from * иметь, “to complain.” Our targumist has translated it with *multip, “to profit,” and Levine suggests that the targumist understood the Hebrew to be from ורות, “wealth.” 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].” 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 את רח so that it no longer modifies את ורח, but is now a noun ורח. 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 L ORD.

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503 The 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.
505 BDB, p. 59. Elsewhere it is found only in Num. 11.1.
506 See Levine, p. 146, and BDB, p. 223.
507 Deut. 1.41.
508 See BHS and Rudolph, p. 232.
3.3.40. Verses 40-42

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 נבש תחנה 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, but with the addition of specifically rabbinic language. 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.

It appears that our targumist either did not understand or was not comfortable with the use of the preposition מ in the phrase נבש תחנה. Modern scholars have also wrestled with this passage and have made various suggestions including emending the text to read מ or מ. The targum presents a different translation, rendering the Hebrew with מ, “from,” instead of “to” or “with, along with.” Instead of “lifting up” their hands along

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510 See Urbach, pp. 462-71, and Schechter, pp. 313ff. As Urbach points out, “The term נבש תחנה 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.

511 See 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.

512 See Rudolph, p. 232; Albrektson, pp. 154-5; and Hillers, p. 117.
with their hearts, they are cleansing them of theft and robbery. This pair, רוחף ורעל, represents general lawlessness and disobedience which must be put aside before the people can return to God. 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, אֲלָלֲא בִּשְׁמַיָּה, 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. 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 sources 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].

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.

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513 The term רוחף also occurs in 3.38, but in that context I have translated it with the broader English term “violence.” See Jastrow, p. 450a.


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.

515 See discussion above §3.1.1 and, for example, LamR Proem 24, PRK 13.11, and b Rosh. Shan. 31a.

516 LamR Proem 25.
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 סכחה). 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.

God’s “glory” (קדש) is used extensively in the Bible as a sign of God’s presence with his people, 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.” 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

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517 Most 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 serving for both verbs,” p. 117.

518 See Chilton, pp. 75-7, for a discussion of the use of “glory” in TgIsa.

519 In 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.

520 I 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. 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).

3.3.46. Verses 46-48

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.” 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 הַרְיּוֹ בָּלַי, the targumist has translated MT verbatim with the addition of the comparative הַרְיּוֹ בָּלַי and the translation of

521 The 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).”

522 See Albrektson, pp. 157-8. P has a similar (but distinct) reading מַעְקֹדָה בַּנָּה הָלָה מַשָּׁאָה־הַשָּׁרוֹן.

523 The text should be emended to read הַרְיּוֹ בָּלַי following Lagarde.

524 Levine, p. 150.

525 So Lagarde. YT MSS read simply הַרְיּו, Van der Heide, p. 27*. 
Although the use of מרחצאות to render בָּט 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

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 scholars\(^ {528}\) and our targumist has not constrained himself with a literal representation of the verse. The

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\(^{526}\) See §3.1.6.

\(^{527}\) See §3.1.2, §3.1.17, and §3.1.21. The targumist has also introduced the phrase הלת יסילל תなるומל ח ל in 1.9, 1.16, and 2.18.

\(^{528}\) So 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

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 אפֵתֵא in verse 53 has been translated with עבד. Levine believes that the text was originally עבד, 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 עבד 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 עבד 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 עבד, p. 28*

533Jastrow, p. 1039b. This would require repointing the text from עבד to עבד, 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, “in my word.” This is a rare and an unusual occurrence of the term מָמֶרֶא 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. As we have already seen our targumist uses מָמֶרֶא to represent God’s decrees 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 מָמֶרֶא 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

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 Three 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

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534 Levine, p. 154. The occurrence of מָמֶרֶא 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.
536 See Albrektson, pp. 163-4, and Hillers, p. 118. The last word מָמֶרֶא is normally interpreted as a gloss added to explain the rare לָשׁוֹתִי. 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, the addition 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 . 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.

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. is the vehicle of God’s comfort as the speaker calls out to God from his imprisonment and the responds to his plea. As with other occurrences of in 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 . The addition in verse 56 and the statement (already found in ) 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.

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537 In his moment of despair God hears the speaker’s cry and offers comfort. Or, following Hillers (p. 118), the verbs are preceptive perfect: “Hear my voice—do not close your ears!”

538 For further discussion see §5.2.2.

539 See §3.1.15, §3.1.18, and 3.2.17. See also §4.4.
3.3.58. Verses 58-60

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 יריבים of יי) is translated “those who contend,” has been interpreted as a plural noun (“those who contend”) and personified in the targum through the addition of openly, 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 ראשה, “you redeemed” is translated with שעת, “you delivered,” since the two terms are clearly considered equivalent by the targumim.

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 *מעך 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 *מעך is beyond this work, but a few examples from different sources should suffice. Aside from the technical term *מעך (which is translated with *ימח, see Num. 35) TgOnk to Num. 25 consistently translates *מעך with *מעך. TgJer 31.11 and the FrgTg to Exod. 6.6 and 15.13 also use *מעך (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 *מעך “may reflect the eschatological sensitivity of the word לוח, and its centrality in Jewish-Christian polemics,” p. 157.
3.3.61. Verses 61-63

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 השמיע for שמע and in verse 62 the targumist has added a second שמע 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

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 כְּשָׁא. Therefore it is “evil” or “shameful”544 recompense by which they will be repaid. Modern scholars are unsure what כְּשָׁא in verse 65 means545 and our targumist (and the rabbis) were similarly uncertain. Most derive it from either יָרֵח, “fence, defend” and therefore a covering, or יָרֵחֵה, "shine, Ws".

543 Albrektson, p. 168.
544 Greenup, p. 34.
545 See Albrektson, p. 170, and Hillers, p. 119.
“insolence,” 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* (יְתַחֲדָה) *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* (יְתַחֲדָה) *of thy help* (Deut. 33.29).

Our targumist clearly chose the former interpretation and therefore translated the passage “May you give them brokenness of heart.” The rendering of שִׁמֶן with שָׁגֵנָה indicates that the targumist, like LXX misread the Hebrew as שִׁמֶן, “your weariness.” 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 שִׁמֶן so that the text reads “may your weariness wear them out!” The only addition to verse 66 is שִׁמֶן which modifies שְׁאוֹר. In this final triplet of Chapter Three our targumist retains the same call for divine retribution which is found in MT.

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546 BDB, p. 171. BDB cites Lam. 3.65 under the root שָׁגֵנָה, “[כָּנָה] n.f. covering.” KBL, p. 546, II. “shamelessness.”

547 LamR 3.65.

548 Albrektson, p. 171. LXX reads μόχθον σου σύντοις .
3.4. TgLam Chapter 4

3.4.1. Verse 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.

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 אرزך נחישת לכל עולם, which identifies the gold of the first clause as the gold that was in the Temple. The less common הדרן has been translated with the Greek loanword πεταλοι (petalois).\(^{549}\)

3.4.2. Verse 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 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...

\(^{549}\)The normal Aramaic form is פיטסלוק. 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.

\(^{550}\)Found in Lagarde and YT and necessary in order to represent all of MT.
Jerusalem’s residents with those from the nations. 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.

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.

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.” 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

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551 See LamR 1.1 where the midrash is commenting on the phrase רבי יושב עין י鬻. 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,” Daedalus 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.
“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.\textsuperscript{555}

It is clear that our targumist has this practice in mind and is attributing it to Jerusalem’s conquerors. \textit{b} Git. 58a has an interesting parallel which begins by citing Lam. 4.2:

\begin{quote}
\textit{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.
\end{quote}

The gemara concludes the discussion by stating that the term “comparable” (מְסֵלָיָם, a \textit{hapax legomenon})\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{557}

\textsuperscript{555}GenR 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.

\textsuperscript{556}Most scholars assume that מְסֵלָיָם is a variant of מֵסִי, see Job 28.16, and is interpreted as “to weigh,” BDB, p. 698.

\textsuperscript{557}I 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 כִּי. 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

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” who has become cruel. The targumist has once again dramatically altered this verse. The targum begins by describing the Daughters of Israel as “pampered” (ממשיכאותה), 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 מלקה, “jackals,” has been translated with זאחא, “basilisk,” and is now used to describe the nations. Although the verb מלקה remains in Pael the implication is that the Daughters of Israel have been forced into exposing themselves.

WT does not represent בתי-עמי, but YT reads בתי-עמי rather than the subject of מלקה, as we have come to expect, but rather than the people of Israel becoming cruel the targumist tells us that the Congregation was handed over to cruel men.

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This is often emended to בתי-עמי on the basis of LXX, βασιλακτας (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.

YT simply repeats MT with זאחא. It may be that WT has read it as זאחא, “dragon, sea monster,” (BDB, p. 1072b) as has LXX, δρακοντες.

See §3.1.6 and §4.5.
The ostrich\textsuperscript{561} 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 (אימל כבמות עידת).” 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.\textsuperscript{562}

3.4.4. Verse 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.

\textit{Verbatim.} The targumist does not add or subtract from this verse.

3.4.5. Verse 5

Those who used to eat delicacies were desolate in the markets. Those who were reared in the color crimson embrace dunghills.

\textit{Prosaic Expansion.} The targumist has made two insignificant changes to the text. The participle האכילים has been replaced with the prosaic עצים and אפוד as well as מפלים is represented with בנין והוררים. In all other respects the text remains unaltered.

\textsuperscript{561}The targum follows the qere, ייעל.

\textsuperscript{562}See Levine, pp. 165-6.
3.4.6. Verse 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.

The first three clauses of the verse are rendered quite literally, but the Hebrew of the last clause is difficult. The verb הָלַל, “to turn, turn against,” but our targumist appears to have represented the term twice. In the first instance הָלַל has been interpreted as the Hiph. of קָלָל, “to begin,” and translated it with מָנָא. The Aramaic פָּרַשׁ also contains the concept of turning, but it is the people returning to God in repentance and not a “hand” turned in punishment. The verb יְרָם is also difficult to interpret in MT and some have suggested emending the text to read יִרְמוּ. Levine suggests that the “hands” were interpreted by the targumist as referring to the prophets which is possible, 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 יִרְמוּ. 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.”

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563 See Albrektson, pp. 179-80, for a concise survey of the most common interpretations.
564 BDB, pp. 296b-7a.
565 BDB, p. 320a.
566 See BHS.
567 Levine, p. 167.
568 It 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.
569 TgLam 2.19. See §3.1.2, §3.2.19, and §3.3.40.
3.4.7. Verse 7

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 ניריה as the technical term “one consecrated.” The compact Hebrew has been expanded with the addition of ירי before both instances of the comparative מ. The specific Hebrew עאים, which can mean “bone” or “substance” and here means “body,” has been loosely rendered with מראה, “appearance.”

3.4.8. Verse 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.

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. When Israel sinned God,

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570 BDB, p. 634. νοῦς ραπαί and פנים.
571 BDB, pp. 782b-3a.
572 LevR 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.\footnote{See §3.3.41.} Perhaps this is the “blackness of the exile” to which our targum refers.

3.4.9. Verse 9

חובחרי חללי חרב recall_hotelsıklar çok
شعر هو المجيء المجيء
מפעל וחי הקטול סימיה תקנית כמ ודידה סימיה דיבר כانون מבוך יכסיים מי מה דאלא

Better were those who were slain by the sword than those who were slain by hunger, \textit{for those slain by the sword perished}\footnote{Lit. “flowed.”} when pierced in \textit{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.\footnote{For similar examples of dramatic heightening in TgLam see §3.1.9, §3.1.15, and §3.1.16.} The first line of this verse is rendered nearly \textit{verbatim} by our targumist, but the second line is difficult in both MT and the targum. The Hebrew יבר means literally “flow” and our targumist has repeated the verb with the Aramaic cognate ייבה. In both MT and TgLam the verb refers to the life of a victim flowing from them, therefore I have translated \textit{for those slain by the sword perished.}\footnote{See 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.”} 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 מתקימי as from the root *ָּד vz, to pierce,\footnote{BDB, p. 201. See Albrektson, p. 184, and Jer. 51.4.} translating it with מ쑤ע. The final clause of verse 9 is rendered rather directly with משלל המקול, “the gleanings of the field,”\footnote{This translation is based upon reading משלל המקול (which normally means “deed,” Jastrow, p. 817b) as a noun based upon ילאל and its secondary meaning of “to harvest, glean,” (Jastrow, p. 1084a).} but it is diluted within a confusing addition. Levine’s translation of the text serves to demonstrate the difficulty of the text.
Better off where those slain by the sword that 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.  

The key to understanding the targum is determining whether the מַמְלֵא (literally “from what”) clause modifies that which precedes or follows. Levine understands מַמְלֵא as introducing a new group, those who died from hunger. As evident in my translation, I have interpreted מַמְלֵא 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.” 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. There remains the difficulty of the concluding words of the targum, מַמְלֵא מַמְלֵא. 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.

Levine does not justify his translation of מַמְלֵא מַמְלֵא 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.

The 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.”

See 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.”

In 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

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, 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. 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

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 תכפוח to modify
is an idiomatic rendering found elsewhere in TgLam$^{585}$ 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

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” (מלכתי),$^{589}$ the effect is the same. The entire world believed that Jerusalem was impregnable. The insertion of

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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 רָע, “enemy,” and is found throughout TgLam. Nebuzaradan is added since, unlike elsewhere in our text where רָע occurs alone, this verse contains the doublet רָע סֵדֶר. Thus Nebuchadnezzar is equated with רָע and Nebuzaradan with סֵדֶר. 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

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 prophesies 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. 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.” However, since the Hebrew text does not have any prepositions whatsoever the most likely reading is that stated above (NRSV).

Considering the context it is not surprising that our targumist proceeds to specify

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590 See §3.1.7 for a discussion רָע. The appellation “the wicked” is also consistently applied to Nebuchadnezzar, with only one exception (2.4).

591 2 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.

592 See §3.1.1, §3.2.20, and §4.3.

593 Levine, p. 170.

594 Levine’s reading would require פֶּרֶשָׁה. 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.\footnote{See §3.2.14.} 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

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.”\footnote{Hillers, p. 142. See also Albrektson’s discussion, pp. 186-8.} 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,”\footnote{NRSV, see Löhr, p. 90, and Westermann, p. 195.} but Hillers, for example, emends the text. His unique translation reads “by exertion they are spent and exhausted; their clothing is tattered.”\footnote{Hillers, p. 142.} Although the text is problematic our targumist seeks to retain it, faithfully
representing each word of the Hebrew while adding легмен.

3.4.15. Verse 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]."

Prosaic Expansion. The speaker of this verse is usually interpreted as being the enemies of Israel and our targumist has identified the speaker as "the peoples." The hapax legomenon has been interpreted as "to struggle" and translated with *כָשֵׁת, "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.

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600 BDB, p. 663b. See Albrektson, p. 188-90, for a full discussion of possible readings of this verb.
3.4.16. Verse 16

The biblical phrase is read by our targumist as “the face of God” and he therefore translates with מָצָא אֵל כְּפָר. Whereas MT has pointed וַיּוֹסֵף הַלֻּכּוֹת 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 פָּלְח (“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 אֵמוֹת רְשִׁיעָה.

3.4.17. Verse 17

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 (רְשִׁיעָה) and translate the text “we still wore out our eyes.”603 Our targumist has a similar

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601 See BHS. P transposes the two verses.

602 See 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).

603 See Rudolph, p. 249. P and LXX follow the qere (אֲדָמָא דַּאֲמָא דַּלְּ וּפָרְקָא). Hillers emends the text, assuming that the ג has been misread for a ג, and translates it as “we kept awake and wore out our eyes,” pp. 136 and 143-4.
understanding and inserts אֲנַחְיָא 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. 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 לָאָזְרוֹפָּא.

The Walton Polyglot and Lagarde both read לָאָזְרוֹפָּא 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), but it is unlikely that a copiest would go from לָאָזְרוֹפָּא to לָאָזְרוֹפָּא. Such a change would require the addition of an א and the reading of the ר for כ. The confusion of ר for כ is not uncommon, but it is rare for a letter to be added to a text. Had the majority of texts read לָאָזְרוֹפָּא 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 Rome 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.

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604 The 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.

605 See, e.g., §3.1.3; §3.2.2, 3, 8; §3.3.15, 36; and §3.5.1.


607 On the other hand, as Ginzberg points out, this equation is well attested within rabbinic literature and
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 *כָּשֵׁר, “to hunt,” and *כָּרָה, “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 *כָּשֵׁר. The Hebrew כָּשֵׁר, “our steps,” is more loosely translated with כָּשֵׁר. Levine translates כָּשֵׁר 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 לְדוֹחַ 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 כָּשֵׁר. 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 כָּשֵׁר occurs in Lamentations the targumist has used מַשָּׂא.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 מַשָּׂא. 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.

608 Albrektson, p. 192. See also Hillers, p. 144, and BHS which notes that some MSS read כָּשֵׁר.

609 Levine, p. 73.

610 TgLam 2.11, 12. For discussion of the loanwords in TgLam see §5.1..

611 See Rudolph, p. 249, who suggests reading the first verb as כָּשֵׁר from כָּרָה, “to be narrow, cramped in,” which creates a similar scenario. See also Hillers, p. 144.
3.4.19. Verse 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.

Prosaic Expansion. The contrast between the pursuers and the eagles is heightened with the addition of וַיִּצְרְךָ and the suffix of the verb דִּלַּקְנָה has been represented with the particle וַיִּלְגֶּשׁ. In all other respects the targumist has not added or subtracted from this verse in any significant way.

3.4.20. Verse 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.”

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.

612 It 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: וַיִּלְגֶּשׁ). The targum uses the same root (דִּלַּקְנָה) as MT, but this does not necessarily indicate an allusion to the midrash found in LamR which makes use of the fact that דִּלַּקְנָה can mean either “to pursue hotly” or “to burn” (see Jastrow, p. 311b, and Levine, p. 174).

613 2 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. 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. 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, but in the targum the text has become he “was locked up in Egypt’s snare 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 Egypt and the “snare of corruption” is perhaps a reference to the political ties with Egypt that are censured by the prophets. 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

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614 It seems that the writer stood fairly close to King Zedekiah, and was much grieved by his capture (v. 20).” Hillers, p. 151.

615 See 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.

616 2 Kgs. 25.7 and Jer. 39.7, 52.11.

617 Note that the Aramaic term is singular as is P’s .

618 2 Kgs. 22.28-30 and 2 Chron. 20ff.

619 In 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.”

3.4.21. Verses 21-22

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 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. As we have already noted, however, “Edom” was used by the rabbis as a circumlocution for Rome and our targumist makes use of its presence in this verse to update his message. 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

620 2 Chron. 34.8ff.
621 This translation follows Lagarde and the Walton Polyglot which both read אֱלַיָּה. YT does not contain these additions.
622 See 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.
623 See §3.4.17.
624 See §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.”

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 Parkevi, the “Parkevi,” in verse 21. Jastrow identifies Parkevi as the “name of a country in Northern Ariana,” but Levey states simply “identity of land uncertain.”

Alexander, apparently following Jastrow, has argued that this term refers to the Parthians and the region southeast of the Caspian Sea. Alexander begins his discussion of Parkevi with TgNeof’s translation of the term “Riphat” in Gen. 10.3. “N’s should be emended to or even to Parkevi” This reading is based upon an uncertain marginal note and its similarity to the text of Tg. 1 Chron. 1.6 and TgLam

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628 “Parkevi is strictly the area to the south-east of the Caspian Sea called in Old Persian Varkan, Pahlavi and New Persian Gurgan; Greek Hurkania; and Latin Hyrcania. Besides the Hurkanoi/Hurkanoi, Greek writers speak of the Barkanoi and the Parkanoi 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 Parkevi. 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.


4.21. It must be remembered that in each occurrence of the term in these three targumim the textual traditions are far from unanimous. In TgLM Lam Lagarde and Bomberg II read פְּרָכָאָא while Landauer cites the Complutensian Polyglot which reads פְּרָכָא אא 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 פְּרָכָא אא is therefore far from certain.

The simplest explanation of פְּרָכָא אא is that it is the result of a scribal error for פְּרָכָא אא, “the Persians.” A א could have been misread as a כ and a א next to one another (כ א א א א א), but if we assume that פְּרָכָא אא 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.” If “Persian” can mean “Parthian” it is possible that there developed a transitive relationship so that, assuming פְּרָכָא אא means “Parthians,” פְּרָכָא אא 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 פְּרָכָא אא of verse 22. Unfortunately, without further evidence it is impossible to identify פְּרָכָא אא 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 יִשְׁכַּב בֵּית אַדָּם. LamR equates Uz with Persia and elsewhere it is identified by rabbinic texts with both Edom and Armenia. Geographically Constantinople falls with the bounds of both Persia and Armenia.

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631 See above for variants in TgNeof Gen. 10.3 and Tg. 1 Chron. 1.6.
632 Landauer, p. 512.
633 See 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.” 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. 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. 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

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635 Toponymy, p. 111.

636 Komlosh, p. 90. This reading, of course, partially based upon the tentative reading of יפרת כא פרתיא, but in all other respects it is a simple reading. In contrast Alexander (p. 112), as a result of his interpretation of יפרת כא פרתיא 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 (העם האשאש ההראם [v. 21] מפרשאם [v. 22]); there are other elements, however, which allude to the conflict between Rome and Parthia over Armenia (העם האשאש ההראם [v. 22] מפרשאם [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 יפרת כא פרתיא יפרת כא פרתיא יפרת כא פרתיא, but Lagarde and the Walton Polyglot both read יפרת כא פרתיא יפרת כא פרתיא יפרת כא פרתיא. 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. 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.

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639 The 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. IA, pp. 43-6.

640 See §5.
3.5. TgLam Chapter 5

3.5.1. Verse 1

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 וַיִּקְרָא, 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 וַיִּקְרָא 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

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 only כְּפָרִים, so that “foreigners” become “foreign peoples.” This has no effect on the meaning of the text.

641 Found in Lagarde and all YT MSS.
642 See Levine, p. 179.
3.5.3. Verse 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.

The targumist has built upon the imagery inherent within MT, adding as a parallel to the comparative כ of the second stich. 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 מודית ים, “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. 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. 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. 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.

643 Gordis 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.

644 See M Git 1.1-2, b Git 8a, and Danby, p. 307, n. 2.

645 See verse 5 (§3.5.5) which describes the Israelites going into exile to Babylon.

646 For 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

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

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 emendוּ to בַּרְדִּפֵּנוּ 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 בַּרְדִּפֵּנוּ. Instead he translates the Hebrew רַדְרַפְנוּ with the unrelated אֵשֶׁנָּנוּ 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

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647 See Albrektson, p. 197, and the works cited therein.

648 NRSV. Symmachus reads צְרֵפֵנוּ for בַּרְדִּפֵּנוּ. See BHS and Hillers, p. 157.

649 One might argue that it is אַרְדָּפֲנוּ which corresponds to the Hebrew רַדְרַפְנוּ, but this would be ignoring the fact that both אַרְדָּפֲנוּ and רַדְרַפְנוּ are passive forms whereas אֵשֶׁנָּנוּ is in the simple active form.

650 Notice that our targumist apparently follows the qere אַלָּה. 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

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 \(\text{נְתִּנִי} \) with the prosaic \(\text{לְאָסָרָה} \) \(\text{לְמִשְׁמַר מַצְוָה} \). The allusion to political alliances which ultimately failed to preserve Judah remains,\(^{653}\) but is not expanded by the targum.

\(^{651}\)William 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.

\(^{652}\)Yalqut 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.

\(^{653}\)See §3.4.17. See also Hos. 7.11, 12.1, and Jer. 2.18, 36.
3.5.7. Verse 7

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 י before both יאש and יאש. 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 כמות והיינו בעלם ופייתינו ובראנו.656 The ms. copyist has omitted (inadvertently, since it includes a direct translation of Heb. Lev. the phrase which appears in most mss. as כמות והיינו בעלם ופייתינו ובראנו.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

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

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654Levine, p. 184. See, e.g., Jer. 31.29.
655Levine, p. 21.
656Levine, pp. 58 and 184.
657Levine, p. 184. The WT also read כמות והיינו בעלם ופייתינו ובראנו, 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

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 בנסכת נפשنا ייתי להמ פיריסותנא מ קדם קוטול דהרבה דאתי מ ספי מדברא: 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

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. נמרר has been interpreted as “to grow dark, turn black”662 and is translated משבインターハ אטקדרר מ קדם מפח כנו: and is translated משבインターハ אטקדרר מ קדם מפח כנו: with משבインターハ אטקדרר מ קדם מפח כנו: Other ancient versions, and some modern commentators, have preferred to read it as “to shrink, be wrinkled.”663

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660 See §3.4.9 for similar imagery.
661 See Hillers, p. 157-8, where the term is identified with “bedouins.”
662 BDB, p. 485a. It can also mean “to grow hot.”
3.5.11. Verse 11

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/בתולות is interpreted by our targumist as representing two distinct groups, wherein the בתולות 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).

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

Princes were hung up by their hands and they did not show respect to the elders.

Verbatim. The Hebrew singular גデザイン has been made plural and the targumist has chosen ישלבל, “to hang, impale,” in order to translate נחלל rather than the cognate קלות. 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.

664 LamR to 5.11.
665 Jastrow, p. 1671b.
666 Levine comments that “the targum renders אֹיֶק [sic, MT is אֹטָא] as pl.: סביי, 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

The young men carried millstones; and the boys staggered under crosses.

The Hebrew of the first clause is difficult due to the *hapax legomenon* which probably means “grinding-mill.” Thus the text is often rendered “young men carried the mill,” but others read *שָׁזוּן* as an infinitive without the prefixed ב. 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.” Our targumist appears to follow the former reading while preferring a plural reading of “millstones,” presumably in order to provide agreement with the plural *ובורוים* which is interpreted by *עֲלָלָי בְּכָלֶבֶת חִסֵּד* as a kind of haplography. In light of verse 12 our targumist has added that the youths “staggered under *crosses.*” Thus the “wood” of *מִצ* becomes *וכֶלֶבֶת* and *חִסֵּד* becomes *כְּלָמָה* “the tree of crucifixion.” 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.

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667 BDB, 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 שון ‘grind’ is probably correct.”

668 Hillers, p. 158. NRSV has a similar translation, “young men are compelled to grind.”

669 The midrash (and the Vulgate) interpret this passage in sexual terms. “Another interpretation of the young men have borne the mill (tethon) 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.

670 See Hillers who assumes a textual error and reads כָּלֶבֶת, assuming that the כ has dropped out due to the “similarity to the subsequent כ, a kind of haplography,” p. 159.
3.5.14. Verse 14

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

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

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

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  זָדוֹן and  אָלָל as the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the people, respectively, 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.*

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.

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672See Hillers, p. 159, for a discussion of the grammatical issues involved with MT.

673LamR to 5.17.
3.5.18. Verse 18

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

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 is interpreted as “your dwelling place,“ **בית מתיבות,” and it is located by the targumist in the “heavenly heights.”**\(^{675}\) This serves to remind the audience of both God’s eternality 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

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.

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\(^{674}\)See Hillers, p. 159-60, and Levine, p. 192, for discussion of these issues.

\(^{675}\)See §3.3.41 and §3.5.1.
3.5.21. Verse 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.

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, נויהכ בתייהכ שפלמה. 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.’

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. Following rabbinic tradition, 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.

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676 LamR to 5.21.
677 See §3.1.4.
678 See Sof. 40b and y Meg. 75a.
3.5.22. Verse 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.*

*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 as a question, “Or have you utterly rejected us?” (RSV), but the use of to introduce a question is unattested.\(^{680}\) The most probable reading is that is used as an adversative, “But instead you have utterly rejected us.”\(^{681}\) Our targumist has followed the Hebrew text closely, translating with . 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.\(^{682}\)

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\(^{679}\)See Hillers, pp. 160-1, for a full discussion of the various interpretations.

\(^{680}\)NRSV reads “Unless you have utterly rejected us.”

\(^{681}\)Hillers, p. 156.

\(^{682}\)See §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 מדם כנוד מודה), the use of specific terms (such as כנדס and מדה דינה). 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. 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

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683 For 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.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>MT</th>
<th>TT</th>
<th>Diff.</th>
<th>Ratio TT/MT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
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.\textsuperscript{685} In verse 1, the targumist uses the consonantal similarities between אֶלְהָה of Lam. 1.1 and אִמְךָ ("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 כִּיָּכְבָּד and כִּיָּכְבָּד of Lam. 1.2 and יִכְּכְּבָּד 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

\textsuperscript{685}For 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 מָדוּרָה כִּנְדֶר מָדוּרָה as the targumist interprets Jerusalem’s punishment in light of her sin. While the biblical text states that “Judah has gone into exile with suffering and hard servitude,” 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.”

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 (סרובה) 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

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686 See §3.1.3, §4.2.1, and b Sot. 8b.
687 For discussion of the difficulties of interpreting the Hebrew see §3.1.3 and works cited therein.
688 Jer. 18.21.
throughout the text our targumist sustains the argument that the tragic events described were the direct result of Israel’s sin. 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, 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. 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). 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.

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. There are three primary techniques which are employed in TgLam: (1) the interpretation of a passage with the rabbinic principle of הרד מדרקון, (2) the description of Jerusalem’s reversal of fortune,

689 See, for example, TgLam 1.7, 9, 18; 2.9, 14, 20; and 3.13.
690 See §2.4.
691 We 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.
692 This 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.
694 We 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. 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. מָדְחָה כָּנֶדֶד מָדְחָה

The principle of מָדְחָה כָּנֶדֶד מָדְחָה, 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.” 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.

In rabbinic literature we find מָדְחָה כָּנֶדֶד מָדְחָה used quite frequently. M. Sot. 1.7 applies this principle to the punishment of an adulterous woman:

> 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 מָדְחָה כָּנֶדֶד מָדְחָה in order to assert that the four modes of execution 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. Hyya: 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

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695 See also the discussion of dramatic heightening in §1.2.2.b.
696 See §3.1.3 and Urbach, pp. 371-3 and 438-9.
697 Job 4.8.
698 Ezek. 16.59. See also Hos. 12.3 and Obad. 15.
699 See Num. 5.11-31.
700 See 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 מידה מידה is employed in rabbinic literature are too great to enumerate here, 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 מידה מידה 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.

The biblical text of 1.3 describes the nature of Judah’s expulsion. “Judah has gone into exile with suffering and hard servitude” (לטאת הורדא פטעו ומכרב עבדה). This description

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701 A 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.

702 The 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.

703 For discussion of this verse, especially the difficulties in interpreting the Hebrew מほぼ, see §3.1.3.
of Judah’s punishment enables the targumist to identify her sin following the rabbinic principle of **מַדְּרָה מַדְרָה**. 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.\textsuperscript{704} The principle of **מַדְּרָה מַדְרָה** 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 **מַדְּרָה מַדְרָה** 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.

\begin{quote}
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?
\end{quote}

The targumist presents the first portion of this verse in a fairly direct manner as the speaker

\textsuperscript{704}The 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 מרד כנצר מרד 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 Lamentations 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 מרד כנזר. In the first instance, the targumist expands the

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705 One 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 הatron למס 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.”

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. 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

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706 We will discuss the use of dramatic heightening in the next section.
707 See §3.2.20.
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 fortunes and there are many instances in which

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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).
709 See §4.2.2.
the targumist has made minor changes or additions to similar effect. 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. 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, 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

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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 (יָדָא תַּרְבּ כָּפַט). 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 מָדוֹת דָּוִין

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,

but at this point in our analysis it is important that we address the use of מָדוֹת דָּוִין 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, מָדוֹת דָּוִין 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 מָדוֹת רֶפֶסִים and is only attested in one MS. As we shall see, it is likely that מָדוֹת דָּוִין 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.

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. 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. TgLam seeks

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714 See especially §3.1.1.
715 The corpus of targumic literature is, of course, vast and there remains the possibility that an instance of the Attributes has escaped my notice.
716 They are TgLam 1.1, 2.20, and 4.13.
717 See §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 מרדת דינה is described as appealing for God to punish the sinner or is carrying out that punishment. In TgLam 1.1 מרדת דינה 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. 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.

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718 See, 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.

719 We 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. 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.

4.3.3. Targum Esther

אֶלֶּה יָפִיא 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 (אֶלֶּה יָפִיא רַחֲמִים וְכִסְפֵּר): “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.”

Only one MS, Paris Heb. 110 of the Bibliothèque Nationale, includes the Attribute of Justice in this verse and reads אֶלֶּה יָפִיא רַחֲמִים וְכִסְפֵּר. 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 אֶלֶּה יָפִיא, is probably correct. The first TgEsth to 6.1 does, therefore present us with an example of the אֶלֶּה יָפִיא within the targumim, but it is an example which presents a major challenge to the targumist. 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).

It 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.”


Grossfeld, p. 2.
isolated appearance.

The occurrence of מָדוּתָו 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: “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.”  

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 מָדוּתָו 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 מָדוּתָו 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 מָדוּתָו 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.

Grossfeld, 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 (ל NAFTA דרוי דיכא affiliation): “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.”

In verse 6 God enables the Edomites 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 מrita דיכא 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 מrita דיכא, 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 מrita דיכא 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 מrita דיכא explains why God has allowed Jerusalem/Israel to be defeated and the answer is always that Israel has sinned.


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 מָדוֹת זְרָא 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 מָדוֹת רַדּוּמִים). Furthermore, the Attribute of Justice rarely speaks in the midrashim. 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 מָדוֹת זְרָא 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. מִמְּכָרָא

There is perhaps no single Aramaic term which has received more attention in recent scholarship than מִמְּכָרָא.728 מִמְּכָרָא occurs seven times in TgLam729 and in six of those cases מִמְּכָרָא 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 מִמְּכָרָא refers to God מִמְּכָרָא is

727 For a rare example see b Meg. 15b. See §3.1.1 for a review of מָדוֹת זְרָא in the midrashic sources.
728 See our previous discussion introducing the problem of Memra in §3.1.15.
729 They are 1.15, 17, 18, 20; 2.17; and 3.57. The term מִמְּכָרָא occurs once, in 3.54, and is uttered by a man. It will be discussed below.
found in construct with מָר מִר 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 מָר מִר not only distances God from the actual act of harming the virgins (MT reads: מָר רֹדֶר אֶדְיוֹןָב לְבָתֵלָת בּ-יִהוֹוָה), 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. In this instance, therefore, מָר מִר is a edict from God allowing others to serve as the means of his punishing Jerusalem.

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. 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.

TgLam 2.17 equates מָר מִר with God’s warning to Israel that “if the Children of Israel
did not keep the Commandments of the LORD he was going to punish them.” 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.

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 מִמְרָא being used in reference to anything other than God’s divine pronouncement. It is unclear why the targumist has chosen this term. 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 מִמְרָא 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 an unusual instance of מִמְרָא being attributed to someone other than God.

Finally, in 3.57 מִמְרָא 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 מִמְרָא is clearly an utterance of God. In this instance, however, God is comforting his people.

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734 See §3.2.17 and Lev. 26.14ff.
736 See §3.3.54 for discussion of the possibility of an orthographic error.
through his Memra. 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 Memra being attributed to someone other than God, in all other instances Memra is a declaration from God, either as the medium of its expression or as the edict itself. In the majority of instances Memra 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 Memra 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. Congregational and Community

In our Commentary to TgLam 1.6 we observed that of the 21 times that the Hebrew נפות occurs in Lamentations the targumist translated the term 14 times as נפות. We also found that the term נפות is added to the biblical material in six other instances. Although it is also clear from our survey of TgJon that נפות is the standard translational equivalent for the Hebrew נפות when it is used in construct with יומא, וזרא, and זמר, the recurrent use of נפות throughout TgLam (especially the fact that it is frequently added to the text even when it is not translating נפות) suggests that the targumist is employing the term in order to include his audience in the text which they are hearing.

Nפות 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 נפות in

737 In the remaining instance נפות was translated 3 times as נפות (1.15, 2.2, and 2.5), twice as נפות (2.18a and 4.21), once as נפות (4.22b), and once as meaning “daughter” (2.18c).

738 They 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), 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”), 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 ÿëûë 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

739 For the sake of identification the “Congregation” found in the text of TgLam will be capitalized while the tagumist’s “congregation” (the audience) will not.

740 This text is an addition to the biblical text.
additions to the base text. This verse, perhaps more than any other, indicates the presence of an audience and demonstrates the use of נשים 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 כנאם מדה is widely

741 See, e.g., Deut. 30.15-8.
742 See §3.3.25 and M. Ber. 2.2.
743 See §4.2.1.
attested in rabbinic literature and is found most prominently in TgLam 1.3, 4, and 2.20.  

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 מַדְת דִּינָם 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 מַדְת דִּינָם 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.  

In verses 40 and 41 the audience is called to “turn in repentance” (כִּתְבַּכְתָּב) and to “repent before God the dwelling of whose Shekinah is in heaven above.” The terms שְׁכֻנְתָּא וּרְבֻltא and שָׁכָּנָה are extremely important rabbinic terms and concepts, as we have seen. 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

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744 For 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.

745 See §3.3.25, §3.3.28, §3.3.31, and §3.3.40.

746 See §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. 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. 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.

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747 M. Ber. 2.2.
748 See §3.3.28 and, for example, M. San. 10.1, M. Aboth. 4.17, and b Ber. 4a.
749 For 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, 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. This pattern would thus be comparable to that exhibit by the Palestinian targumim which are more expansive at the beginning of sedarim.

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. 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

750 See §4.1.
753 LamR to 3.37.
both LamR and GenR to the fifth century CE. 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 ול التنفيذ of Gen. 3.19 and ולتنفيذ of Lam. 1.1. 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. 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. 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

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755 See §§3.1.1-3.1.4 for detailed discussion of these verses.
757 See §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, אכזרו לי אפר אדם, ‘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. 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 targumim 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. 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. 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

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758 In 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.

759 See §5.1.

760 The 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.

761 See §3.1.17.
upon either date or content. Furthermore, our targumist uses specific rabbinic terms and phrases such as מַדָּת דִּינָא, חֲנַנָּא, and the figure of מַדָּת דִּינָא. 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 begins somewhere, and the most fundamental element of a text is the text itself. We have already discussed the textual tradition of TgLam, 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.

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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, 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.” 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.” 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. It is

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763 Smelik’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 Gießmer, *Einleitung in die Targume zum Pentateuch*, (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1995).


765 P. Kahle, “Das palästinische Pentateuchtargum und das zur Zeit Jesu gesprochene Aramäisch,” *ZNW* XLIIX (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).

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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.”\textsuperscript{769} Cook admits that there is much work to be done in order to demonstrate fully the validity of his model.\textsuperscript{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


\textsuperscript{770}See Smelik, pp. 19-20.
masculine suffixes רוח ורוח and interchangeably and we also find the relative pronoun represented by both the western form מ and the eastern form -ן. There is also inconsistency in the use of final נ and final ר. Both are present, but נ is most common. Similarly, *אץ occurs 19 times in TgLam while *אץ occurs only four times. Van der Heide interprets this as a western contamination, but this conclusion is impossible to substantiate. 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 ὀχλος (1.1 and 4.21), ἐπαρχία (1.1), χάρακωμα (1.19), πέταλον (4.1), and πλατεία (4.18). There is also the Arabic loanword kharj (כֶּרֶן, 1.1) and the Latin lectica (לֶקְטִיָּה, 2.1). There is also the occurrence of the place-names אַרְפֶּרֶיָה and אַרְפֶּרֶיָּה (4.21-2). The presence of Greek and Latin loanwords suggests a western origin of the targum. The term אַרְפֶּרֶיָּה, which occurs twice (1.1 and 4.21), occurs eight times in the Palestinian Talmud, but never in the Babylonian Talmud. It also occurs four times in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (TgPsJ) and yet it appears that it is completely absent from TgOnk and TgJon. 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. Furthermore, in the first instance (1.1) the term is followed immediately by the phrase וְאַרְפֶּרֶיָּה, which could be construed as an Aramaic translation of the Greek loanword, suggesting that this portion of

772 For further examples of textual features of Urb. 1 see Levine, pp. 21-2.
773 Van der Heide, p. 97.
774 Jastrow, p. 246a.
775 y Ber. 63a and 63b; Dem. 17b (two occurrences); San. 52b; Mak. 6b; and Hor. 7a (two occurrences).
776 Exod. 34.10; Num. 21.6, 34; and 24.24.
777 I 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.
778 TgPss 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 אכלהשמ in 4.21 nor for אפרים in 1.1. On the other hand, the term כרמא (1.1) is found in only Babylonian Aramaic and does not appear to be present in any Palestinian Rabbinic sources. 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 (וֹלִשַׁת הַכֵּרָמָא בִּית דָּוִד) is not found in any of YT’s MSS, suggesting that it was a later addition.

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.

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

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780 We 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.

781 These 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.\textsuperscript{782} Most recently, Alexander has argued that “the original Sitz im Leben of the Targum was the Bet Sefer, and that is was only subsequently taken over from there as part of the reading of Torah in synagogue.”\textsuperscript{783} Scholars agree that there were three main contexts within which the targumim were used: (1) the synagogue (\textit{y} Meg. 74d, \textit{b} Meg. 23a-b, and \textit{y} Meg. 75a); (2) private devotion (\textit{b} Ber. 8a); and (3) within the Bet Sefer (Sifre Deut. 17.19; Aboth de Rabbi Nathan, B Text, 12; \textit{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.\textsuperscript{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. \textit{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


\textsuperscript{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, \textit{op. cit.}

\textsuperscript{784}Alexander 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 Sarezer 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 (הסודנים) 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 (תנאים), 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

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\(^{785}\)“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 prophetical lesson. R. Jose says: Invariably three persons read the Law and the last one of these also reads the prophetical 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

787b 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].

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].

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.

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.

Although the order of the service (including whether Lamentations is read on the evening of the ninth or on the morning of the tenth) is allowed to vary, the reading of the Book of Lamentations is considered an obligation which must be met by both men and women.

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788 Sof. 42b.
789 Sof. 42a.
790 Sof. 42b. Note that the reader can also be the translator, contrary to normal practice (see *y Meg. 74d* and *b Meg. 21b*).
791 Rabbinic 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.
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, 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. 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.” Little is known about this group, but the earliest reference to them in rabbinic texts occurs in PR 34. 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.” 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

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793 See 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.”

795 By 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.

796 See also M. Teh. 137.6 and b B. B. 60b.

797 PR 34.
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

\[798\] Alexander, 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 untargumic”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.

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799 See the discussion at the end of this section and §3.4.21-2.
In the Bet Sefer, the primary school, 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. 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.”

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

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801 Specifically, 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 Kashar, 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.

802 Alexander, “How Did the Rabbis,” passim.

803 Sebastian Brock, “Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity,” Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 20 (1979), p. 73. See also Kashar, “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 text\(^{804}\) 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

\(^{804}\) _y Meg._ 74d, _b Meg._ 32a, _b Soṭ 39b_, and _M. Meg._ 4.4. See Alexander, “The Targumim,” pp. 23-5.

\(^{805}\) Shinan, _The Aggadah_, pp. 30-8. See Kasher, p. 76.

\(^{806}\) E.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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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.\textsuperscript{808} In order to facilitate such an assessment we will follow a general chronological order in analyzing the midrashic sources.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{807}This 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.


\textsuperscript{809}I have followed the majority view on the dating of the rabbinic sources as found in Stemberger.

\textsuperscript{810}See \textsection 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 יאכ in Lam. 1.1 and יאכ in 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.” 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”) and would conclude their night of remembrance with a Torah reading the following morning.

812 See above §5.2.1.
813 b Ta’an. 30a.
814 I 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 L ORD; it is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young; let him sit alone in silence for the L ORD 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” (ypassarví). Alexander has identify this last group with the Parthians and argues against emending the text to passarív.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 נַשְׂפָּה 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. The Book of Lamentations has many passages which describe the horrors of war in vivid terms. Rather

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817 See, 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)\textsuperscript{818} suggests a date of redaction sometime within the seventh century CE and this is supported by the rabbinic evidence.\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{818}See §3.1.1 and §3.4.21.

\textsuperscript{819}One 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. See Deut. 30.15-8.

\[820\] See 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 וְדַּעַת דְּרִיָּה, and (4) קָנְשֵׁת אֶחָד.

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. 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.

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 מַדּ הַמָּדַע 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

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821 See §5.2.3.
822 See §4.1 for discussion of the structure of TgLam.
widows and had pressed their brothers into labor.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 \textit{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

\textsuperscript{823}See §4.2.1 for further examples.
The third device used by our targumist in conveying his message is the figure of מַדְתָּן. This figure is found throughout rabbinic literature and appears three times in TgLam, but is otherwise rarely encountered in targumic literature. 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 מַדְתָּן 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 כְּשַׁתָּא. Our survey of TgJon demonstrated that כְּשַׁתָּא is the standard translational equivalent for קַשָּׁתא when in construct with עַמִּי, זֶרֶם, and כְּשַׁתָּא כְּשַׁתָּא, but our targumist has also inserted כְּשַׁתָּא 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.

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824 See §3.1.1, §3.2.20, §3.4.13, and 4.3.
825 See §4.5.
such as מדת היום, and the use of כנני מרחש, and the use of מדות היום. 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 מדת היום מרחש, and the figure of מדות היום. 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. 1

App. 1.1. Chapter 1

This 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 א in 1.3, and I have expanded the ligature formed at the end of א by the combination of א א. 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.

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Appendix 1 - The Text of Urb. 1

5. The text begins with "He who seizes the occasion is not a thief, but he who seizes a thief is a robber, and he who seizes the robber is a thief." The text continues on this theme, discussing the nature of justice and the consequences of actions.

6. "He who says that he is not in command of the situation is not a king, but he who is not in command of his own life is not a man." The following text elaborates on the concept of leadership and the responsibility of those in power.

7. "When the king issues orders, the people obey him. The king, who is the supreme authority, gives instructions, and the people follow, as a matter of course." The text goes on to discuss the relationship between rulers and their subjects.

8. "The king who conquers by force is not a warrior, but he who conquers by his word is a king." The text emphasizes the importance of persuasive leadership over brute force.

9. "The king who conquers by his word is not a speaker, but he who conquers by his actions is a king." The text elaborates on the importance of deeds over words in establishing authority.

10. "The king who conquers by his actions is not a conqueror, but he who conquers by his presence is a king." The text continues to explore the nature of kingship and leadership.

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982 End of line, but no abbreviation.
Appendix 1 - The Text of Urb. 1

19.

 Amitot és kormányozók életében derült ki, hogy kik ismerték, milyen kínálat felállt az egyházak és a kormányzók között. Ezért újra ismételtek a témákat, hogy meghozzák az ügyfél供电能 öngyűjteményét.

20.

 Az újra ismételt kormányzók összetartozását a járványban kívánták megközelíteni újra és újra.

21.

 Az újra ismételt kormányzók összetartozását a járványban kívánták megközelíteni újra és újra, de a járvány hosszú idő alatt változott.

22.

 Az újra ismételt kormányzók összetartozását a járványban kívánták megközelíteni újra és újra, de a járvány hosszú idő alatt változott.

App. 1.2. Chapter 2

1.

 Az újra ismételt kormányzók összetartozását a járványban kívánták megközelíteni újra és újra, de a járvány hosszú idő alatt változott.

2.

 Az újra ismételt kormányzók összetartozását a járványban kívánták megközelíteni újra és újra, de a járvány hosszú idő alatt változott.

3.

 Az újra ismételt kormányzók összetartozását a járványban kívánták megközelíteni újra és újra, de a járvány hosszú idő alatt változott.

4.

 Az újra ismételt kormányzók összetartozását a járványban kívánták megközelíteni újra és újra, de a járvány hosszú idő alatt változott.

5.

 Az újra ismételt kormányzók összetartozását a járványban kívánták megközelíteni újra és újra, de a járvány hosszú idő alatt változott.

6.

 Az újra ismételt kormányzók összetartozását a járványban kívánták megközelíteni újra és újra, de a járvány hosszú idő alatt változott.

7.

 Az újra ismételt kormányzók összetartozását a járványban kívánták megközelíteni újra és újra, de a járvány hosszú idő alatt változott.

829Omitted by Urb. 1, found in most MSS.
Appendix 1 - The Text of Urb. 1

8. This is the place where the crowds assembled to receive the prophets and they walked among the people.

9. The people began to hear and to form the oracles and fulfill the nations and the nations heard and it was heard and they walked among the people.

10. The soothsayers and the priests spoke to the people and they received the word and they spoke to the people.

11. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.

12. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.

13. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.

14. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.

15. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.

16. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.

17. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.

18. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.

19. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.

20. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.

21. The people of the land gathered and they walked among the people.
Appendix 1 - The Text of Urb. 1

22. The city of Urah at the mouth of the Jordan River, which was designed to be the capital of the kingdom of Judah.

However, it was not to be a city of peace, but rather a place of contest and division.

App. 1.3. Chapter 3

1. And he gathered together the great multitudes of people.

2. To build a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel.

3. But he did not consult the people, nor do they wish to come.

4. And they brought offerings and sacrifices to their lord, and he gave them to the Lord, the God of Israel.

5. But he did not consult the people, nor do they wish to come.

6. And he built a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel.

7. And he gave them to the Lord, the God of Israel.

8. And he gathered together the great multitudes of people.

9. To build a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel.

10. But he did not consult the people, nor do they wish to come.

11. And he built a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel.

12. And he gave them to the Lord, the God of Israel.

13. And he gathered together the great multitudes of people.

14. To build a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel.

15. But he did not consult the people, nor do they wish to come.

16. And he built a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel.

17. And he gathered together the great multitudes of people.

18. To build a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel.

19. But he did not consult the people, nor do they wish to come.

20. And he built a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel.

21. And he gathered together the great multitudes of people.

22. To build a temple for the Lord, the God of Israel.
Appendix 1 - The Text of Urb. 1

23. Неся телетов Маршем батарей стигая сего множества.

24. Некий из сообщающих бойных не пригоже.

25. Себ обоин субъектину фаргоине допобь волности.

26. Се лаорача лосшаетут ад сего допобь перкант дижъ.

27. Се лаоба аорат обон фарга волности на пниковай бултим.

28. Что мань бататоды идут кособы асторин дататин уложи, бинь мань драпама дин дамшаларин латпареу.

29. Можи ул убше клалаг даб уплема тих ад сего дий улод астелон илтмун медь ик илбь алома улама.

30. Датель:

31. Щит убфаре аттона косом робини матои айт сабъ.

32. Щити ноктари лиде волности саина дататин дий сбобь дател.

33. Арор але шилъ ил обододориуу аулель ломсинтор боов датанор.

34. Вират алоар бришар убна ку бдон илхам латпиким бстаниай баптишы.

35. Вират алоар алоар бришар убна ку вират илхам латпиким бстаниай баптишы.

36. Вират алоар алоар бришар убна ку вират илхам латпиким бстаниай баптишы.

37. Вират алоар бришар убна ку вират илхам латпиким бстаниай баптишы.

38. Мофос алаар алоар алоар бришар убна ку вират илхам латпиким бстаниай баптишы.

39. Дубо илмогор тобауу аулель мафо ворштун.

40. Мнок монна шица аеш дий кобо уйои дабра решилу аулебз.

41. Нокл улебе брири норни тунпи илтлн ку динь вобон кобо алаар допобь сечнатин башм морзната.

42. Нокл улебе брири норни тунпи илтлн ку динь вобон кобо алаар допобь сечнатин башм морзната.

43. Селатина але брони илдапана келтлана келтлана але статна.

44. Селатина але брони илдапана келтлана келтлана але статна.

45. Селатина але брони илдапана келтлана келтлана але статна.

46. Матха але аломна да булъ даббану ломор алуна норн буси.

47. Аиматна бую оут ало аломма ататн убеа уттима ийте уттима дабрана.
Appendix 1 - The Text of Urb. 1

App. 1.4. Chapter 4
App. 1.5. Chapter 5

1. How dear [E] when we get together to show them what we have to say,

2. the scientific community in the unifying of the framework. The individual differences in the expression of the overall principle in the conceptual framework of the elements

3. we aim to achieve:

4. In summary, we present the following conclusions:

5. Everything that is not united can be divided into two groups of two significant groups and studied separately, and each is studied in isolation from the other. It is possible to study one group in isolation and the other in isolation, and the two groups can be studied together.

6. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

7. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

8. We study the two groups in isolation, and the two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

9. We study the two groups in isolation, and the two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

10. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

11. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

12. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

13. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

14. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

15. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

16. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

17. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

18. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

19. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

20. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

21. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:

22. The two groups are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow them:
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 ʿekah. Just as when Adam and Eve were punished and expelled from the Garden of Eden and the Master of the Universe mourned them with ʿekah.

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] 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 comfortably to her. Look, O Lord and see [my affliction] for my enemies have exalted themselves over me.

830 Found 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

831 Urb. 1 reads ידיעקב, but Lagarde and YT have דושארא which is to be preferred (MT יראלא).
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 L ORD 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 L ORD 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 L ORD, 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 L ORD 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 L ORD. 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 L ORD, 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 L ORD, as when you killed Zechariah son of Iddo, the High Priest and faithful prophet in the Temple of the L ORD on the Day of Atonement because he told you not to do evil before the L ORD?”

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] 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.

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832 Found 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 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 prophesies 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

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833 Lit. “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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