

## BIULETYN BIBLISTYCZNY (11)

### I. Present-day Targum Studies in Poland. Polish Translations of the Targums<sup>1</sup>

The Targum studies in Poland of the last decade resulted in two major projects related to the process of translation of the Targums into Polish. Both were initiated and are still carried out in two academic centres, namely in the cities of Warsaw and Lublin. Before presenting the current situation of these projects, the circumstances that directly contributed to both undertakings should be discussed. It primarily needs be noted that from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century up till now, Polish biblical scholarship has been witnessing a remarkable development (see Chrostowski – Adamczewski 2021). In fact, especially in the last two decades Polish biblical scholars showed increasing interest in ancient versions of the Holy Scripture, mostly in the Targums and the Septuagint.

#### The Beginning and Development of Targum Studies in Poland

The discovery of the Targum Neofiti 1, and its subsequent edition and rendering to modern languages, has brought about an apparent animation in the field of Targum studies. From then on, a remarkably greater importance to these Aramaic translations has been attached by most biblical scholars, including those associated with the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. Since the sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, among graduates of the Biblicum there were also a number of Polish catholic priests who, upon their returning to the country, were appointed as the university lecturers in the departments of catholic theology in Warsaw and Lublin. The first articles on the Targums that were published in Polish scholarly journals and magazines were of a strictly informative and introductory character (e.g., *Targums*

---

<sup>1</sup> Paper presented during the International Organization for Targumic Studies meeting in Salzburg, 7/20/2022.

to *Pentateuch in the Light of the Latest Research*: Mędała 1969). Such issues as the ancient Jewish exegesis and the significance of the Targums for the New Testament studies have been reflected on and discussed only from the late eighties (Chrostowski 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993). In this context, a growing interest in the dialogue between Christianity and Judaism in Poland should also be mentioned. Also, the documents of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, primarily *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (1993) and *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (2001), played an important role in the subsequent development of Targum studies in Poland. Both documents were profoundly analysed and expounded in many articles, papers, and lectures, and they prompted further research on the ancient Aramaic translations (Chrostowski 1991). One of the first Polish introductions to the intertestamental literature (Mędała 1994) includes a chapter dedicated to the Targums. It gives examples of how to translate various Targumic forms (e.g., the poem of *The Four Nights* in Tg. Neof. Exod 12:42 and parts of Tg. 2 Chr 28:3).

Both above-mentioned scholars, Stanisław Mędała and Waldemar Chrostowski, were research fellows at the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw, which in 1999 was transformed into Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. There, at the beginning of the new millennium, studies were carried out, among others, on the Targumic allegorical interpretation of the Book of Song of Songs (Bardski 2000, 2001a, 2001b).

One should also mention the nationwide biblical scholarship conferences that were held in the years 2007–2019 under the name of *The Interpretation of the Holy Scripture*. The Faculty of Theology at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw organized 13 conferences dedicated to various books of the Hebrew Bible. During these conferences, I had the honour to present main principles of the Aramaic renderings of the biblical books under discussion (part of them pertaining to the Targum Jonathan to the Prophets: Kuśmirek 2007, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). The conferences' materials and presentations have been published in the *Collectanea Theologica* journal. One of the results of my research on the ancient Aramaic versions of the Hebrew Bible was the monograph entitled *Balaam and His Oracles (Num 22–24) in the Targumic Tradition*, which was presented as a habilitation dissertation at the Faculty of Theology at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw (Kuśmirek 2011).

At the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Targumic studies were undertaken and pursued by Antoni Tronina (1999, 2012) and Mirosław Wróbel. The latter has primarily dealt with the Gospel of John and its links with the Targum Neofiti 1 (Wróbel 2015), as well as with the issue

of the relationships between the Church and the Synagogue in the first millennium. Professor Wróbel is at the same time the head of *The Aramaic Bible* project that I will address in the next part of my analysis. Several years ago, at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin the first Polish doctoral dissertation on the Targums was prepared and defended (Kot [2007], published 2010).

At this point, the detailed study carried out by Marek Baraniak (e.g., 2012), especially that entitled *The Phenomenon of Targumization Based on the Targum to the Song of Songs – a Critical Edition of Manuscript M 1106 (Wrocław, 13th century) with Exegetical and Hermeneutical Analysis and Translation*, needs to be mentioned. The work was presented as a habilitation dissertation at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, in the Department of Hebrew Language at the University of Warsaw (Baraniak 2013). It is worth stressing that the aforementioned work is the first critical edition of the 13th-century manuscript M 1106 preserved in the library of the University of Wrocław. In the Polish literature, this monograph should be assessed as innovative because it traces the evolution of the Targumic tradition within Judaism as testified by the manuscripts containing the Aramaic version of the same book.

Furthermore, Polish biblical scholars provided essays and elaborations on the Targums, which were published in English (e.g., Kuśmirek 2018, 2020, 2021; Wróbel 2017c, 2017d), also in international scholarly journals (Niedźwiecki 2016).

The above cursory survey demonstrates that Targum analyses have become an important subject of the studies of Polish biblical scholars. It is also worth noting that the group of Targum researchers and professionals consists of a growing number of laywomen and laymen. Making source texts available and accessible to a wide audience is one of the crucial elements that facilitate and promote further development of Polish biblical studies. In this context, two big projects of translating the Targums into the Polish language were launched and developed. The first one is called *The Aramaic Bible Project*, and the second one: *The Targum Jonathan Project*.

### **The Aramaic Bible Project**

*The Aramaic Bible Project* was inaugurated in 2014. It was presented to biblical scholars during the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature that was held in Berlin in August 2017 (Wróbel 2017c). Within this project, four volumes appeared so far, which contain a translation and redaction of the Targum Neofiti 1. The first volume is dedicated

to the Book of Genesis (Wróbel 2014), the second one to the Book of Exodus (Wróbel 2017), the third one to the Book of Leviticus (Tronina 2019), and the fourth one to the Book of Deuteronomy (Parchem 2021). The fifth volume that includes the Book of Numbers is currently being prepared for printing (Kuśmirek forthcoming). Also, the so-called *zero volume* has been published, which deals with introductory issues to the Aramaic Bible (Wróbel 2017). All the volumes make use of the Aramaic text that is accepted as the *editio princeps* published by Alejandro Diez Macho. They also contain the critical apparatus from the *editio princeps* and its Polish rendering with footnotes. Apart from the Polish critical edition, texts intended for a wider public have been published, which only include Polish translations of the Targums to the above-listed books, without any scholarly remarks or explanations.

It is worth pointing out that both the redaction and the scientific committees of *The Aramaic Bible Project* are made up of representatives of a broad spectrum of Polish and foreign academic institutions, members of the Jewish community and various Christian denominations.

The premises provided by the Director of the Project are that subsequent volumes will include the Targum Jonathan, and the next ones the Targum Onqelos – the latter shall be translated by Jewish scholars.

### **The Targum Jonathan Project**

At Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, the project called *Targum Jonathan: Edition of the Aramaic, Translation into Polish with Introduction and Notes* has been launched. This is the first case of rendering the Targum Jonathan to Polish. The project is being pursued thanks to a grant from the National Programme for the Development of Humanities, in the module Uniwersalia. As specified by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the aim of the Programme is, among others, to popularize the most remarkable works of the world's literature and to put them into circulation of the Polish humanities. I have the honour to be the director of this project, and Marek Parchem is the associate of mine. Both of us are research fellows in the Department of Philology, Biblical History and Intertestamental Literature at the Faculty of Theology of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw.

Our work presents a literal translation of the Targum Jonathan. In the process of rendering, we make use of the base text of Sperber's edition, taking account of corrections in the main text. Our translation is an attempt to convey the nature and syntax of the Aramaic text into Polish.

The work is divided into two volumes. The first volume includes the Former Prophets: Joshua (Parchem), Judges (Kuśmirek), 1–2 Samuel (Kuśmirek) and 1–2 Kings (Parchem). The second volume comprises the Latter Prophets: Isaiah (Kuśmirek), Jeremiah (Parchem), Ezekiel (Parchem) and 12 Minor Prophets (Kuśmirek).

Both volumes are arranged in the same way. The analyses are preceded by a short and concise introduction, in which the name of the book and its structure are expounded, main strategies and translation techniques exploited in the Targum are discussed, and the relevant basic literature is cited. Thereupon, the Aramaic text of the Targum is included, accompanied by remarks on textual variants from the critical apparatus of Sperber's edition. Next to the Aramaic original, there is a translation into Polish with notes clarifying, among others, the issue of the relationship between the Targum Jonathan and the Masoretic Text. In the Polish rendering, a uniform font is used, and the additional material with the expansions of the Targumic text is not distinguished – only the Aramaic measurement and weight terms are written in italics. In the translation, we use Polish equivalents of such specific notions as *Memra*, *Shechinah* and *Yekara*. However, in the footnotes we point out what terms are used in the original text.

The authors of the rendering decided to put proper names (of characters, nations, and geographical terms) in the form of a simplified transliteration, unlike in the Hebrew text, due to the different vocalization of Aramaic terms, whose spelling has often been influenced by the Latin language. This method of presentation makes it possible for a reader to become acquainted with a transcript which sometimes differ from the names that are almost universally used in Polish biblical translations.

The volume containing the Targum to the Former Prophets is currently being prepared for printing. The second volume, i.e., with the Latter Prophets, has already been translated and submitted to the editor for review and correction.

We hope that, as is the case with the Polish translations of the Targums to the Torah, our undertaking will also contribute to increasing the interest in the Targums in our society. Even though our renderings are intended for the Polish-speaking public, they can be referred to and quoted in international discussions. The work that was initiated by Polish biblical scholars in the nineties of the last century is continuing, among others, within the Targumic projects that are successfully being carried out at present and will hopefully be accomplished in the coming years.

**Select Bibliography**

- Baraniak, M. 2012. Targumy rabiniczne a chrześcijaństwo, *Estetyka i Krytyka* 3/22, pp. 105–124.
- Baraniak, M. 2013. *Zjawisko targumizacji na podstawie Targumu do Pieśni nad Pieśniami, krytyczna edycja z manuskryptu M 1106 z analizą egzegetyczno-hermeneutyczną i tłumaczeniem*, Warszawa: Elipsa.
- Bardski, K. 2000. Świątynia Salomona w Targumie do Pieśni nad Pieśniami 3,7–5,1, *Collectanea Theologica* 70/2, pp. 79–92.
- Bardski, K. 2001a. Niewola babilońska w interpretacji Targumu do Pieśni nad Pieśniami 5,2–6,17, *Studia Lovicensia* 3, pp. 25–39.
- Bardski, K. 2001b. Eschatologia mesjańska w Targumie do Pieśni nad Pieśniami 7,12–8,14, in: *Duch i Oblubienica mówią: „Przyjdź”*. Księga Pamiątkowa dla Ojca Profesora Augustyna Jankowskiego OSB w 85. rocznicę urodzin, ed. W. Chrostowski, Warszawa, pp. 47–58.
- Chrostowski, W. 1987. Narodziny egzegezy biblijnej – midrasz, *Przegląd Powszechny* 4, pp. 62–65.
- Chrostowski, W. 1988. Natura i geneza zjawiska targumizmu, *Przegląd Powszechny* 4, pp. 82–90.
- Chrostowski, W. 1989. Najstarsze zapisy Biblii aramejskiej (targumy), *Przegląd Powszechny* 3, pp. 403–405.
- Chrostowski, W. 1990. Targumiczne reguły i techniki przekładu Pisma Świętego, *Przegląd Powszechny* 2, pp. 249–262.
- Chrostowski, W. 1991a. Palestyńskie Targumy Pięcioksięgu, *Collectanea Theologica* 61/2, pp. 33–46.
- Chrostowski, W. 1991b. Ewolucja sensu tekstu świętego na przykładzie targumicznej wersji Ez 16, *Collectanea Theologica* 61/1, pp. 63–80.
- Chrostowski, W. 1993. Literatura targumiczna a Septuaginta, *Collectanea Theologica* 63/3, pp. 49–68.
- Chrostowski, W. – Adamczewski, B. 2021. Polish Catholic Biblical Scholarship: Development and Perspectives, *Scriptura* 120 (1), pp. 1–15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7833/120-1-2000>. <https://scriptura.journals.ac.za/pub/article/view/2000>.
- Kot, P. 2010. *Targumy a Pierwszy List św. Jana. Literacko-teologiczne związki tradycji targumicznej o Kainie i Ablu (TNRdz 4,1–17) z Pierwszym Listem św. Jana*, Rozprawy i Studia Biblijne 38, Warszawa: Vocatio.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2007. Targum do Księgi Ezechiela, *Collectanea Theologica* 77/4, pp. 139–155.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2009. Aramejska wersja Księgi Jonasza, *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia* 2, pp. 87–97.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2010. Księga Nahuma w tradycji targumicznej, *Collectanea Theologica* 80/4, pp. 101–120.

- Kuśmirek, A. 2011. *Balaam i jego wyrocznie (Lb 22–24) w tradycji targumicznej*, *Rozprawy i Studia Biblijne* 42, Warszawa: Vocatio.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2012. Aramejska wersja Księgi Aggeusza, *Collectanea Theologica* 82/4, pp. 113–128.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2014. Księga Jozuego w tradycji targumicznej, *Collectanea Theologica* 84/4, pp. 175–196. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21697/ct.2014.84.4.08>.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2015. Aramejska wersja Księgi Amosa w Targumie Jonatana, *Collectanea Theologica* 85/4, pp. 177–194. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21697/ct.2015.85.4.08>.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2016. Aramejska wersja Księgi Ozeasza, *Collectanea Theologica* 86/4, pp. 173–192. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21697/ct.2016.86.4.08>.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2017. Aramejska wersja Księgi Sofoniasza, *Collectanea Theologica* 87/4, pp. 151–172. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21697/ct.2017.87.4.07>.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2018. The Role of Jerusalem in Targumic Tradition, in: *Jerusalem as the Text of Culture*, ed. D. Muszytowska, J. Kręcidło, A. Szczepan-Wojnarowska, pp. 115–130, Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Warszawa: Peter Lang.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2020. Jacob's Blessing (Gen 49:1–28) in Targumic Interpretation, *Collectanea Theologica* 90/5, pp. 95–122. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21697/ct.2020.90.5.06>.
- Kuśmirek, A. 2021. The Phenomenon of Targumism in the Aramaic Version of the First and Second Books of Chronicles, *Collectanea Theologica* 91/5, pp. 5–30. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21697/ct.2021.91.5.01>.
- Mędała, S. 1969. Targumy do Pięcioksięgu w świetle najnowszych badań, *Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny* 22, pp. 319–327.
- Mędała, S. 1994. *Wprowadzenie do literatury międzytestamentalnej*, Kraków: Enigma.
- Niedźwiecki, T. 2016. Joseph's Two Garments: Reception of Joseph in Targum Neofiti, *Aramaic Studies* 14, pp. 147–183.
- Parchem, M. 2021. *Targum Neofiti 1 – Księga Powtórzonego Prawa. Tekst aramejski – przekład, aparat krytyczny – przypisy*, Lublin: Gaudium.
- Tronina, A. 1999. Najstarsze tłumaczenia Pięcioksięgu, *Collectanea Theologica* 69/1, pp. 47–62.
- Tronina, A. 2012. *Wokół Biblii w Qumran. Od Targumu (11Q10) do midraszu (1Q20)*, Kraków – Mogilany: Enigma.
- Tronina, A. 2019. *Targum Neofiti 1 – Księga Rodzaju. Tekst aramejski – przekład, aparat krytyczny – przypisy*, Lublin: Gaudium.
- Wróbel, M. 2014. *Targum Neofiti 1 – Księga Rodzaju. Tekst aramejski – przekład, aparat krytyczny – przypisy*, Lublin: Gaudium.
- Wróbel, M. 2015. Ewangelia według św. Jana w świetle Targumu Neofiti 1 do Księgi Rodzaju, *Zeszyty Naukowe Stowarzyszenia Biblistów Polskich* 12, pp. 439–452.

- Wróbel, M. 2017a. *Targum Neofiti I: Księga Wyjścia. Tekst aramejski – przekład, aparat krytyczny – przypisy*, Lublin: Gaudium.
- Wróbel, M. 2017b. *Wprowadzenie do Biblii Aramejskiej*, Lublin: Gaudium.
- Wróbel, M. 2017c. The Aramaic Bible Project, *The Biblical Annals* 9/4, pp. 801–803.
- Wróbel, M. 2017d. The Aramaic Bible as a Translation of the Word of God in the Synagogal Liturgy”, in: *Ways to Religion*, ed. A.R. Knapik, K. Buczek *et al.*, Wrocław – Washington, D.C.: Wyższa Szkoła Filologiczna, Polska Akademia Nauk & International Communicology Institute, pp. 211–226.

*Anna Kuśmirek*