

Leeor Gottlieb, *Targum Chronicles and Its Place Among the Late Targums*, Supplement to Aramaic Studies 16, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2020, pp. 581.

In the last several decades, the ancient versions of the Hebrew Bible have become the subject of the extensive research. Examining the ancient translations of the Scripture paved the way for the creation of the separate fields of the biblical studies, especially those of the Septuagint and Targums. The main results of these efforts comprise the critical editions of the LXX and of the Targums, their translations into contemporary languages, and numerous detailed elaborations. Much attention has also been given to the specificity of the translation techniques that the ancient writers used in their rendering of the biblical text from the Hebrew into the Greek (LXX) and the Aramaic (Targums).

The monograph of Leeor Gottlieb, published as the 16th volume of the “Supplement to Aramaic Studies” series, falls into this kind of the research trends in the area of the Aramaic translations of the Bible. The book is all the more noteworthy, because no monograph on the Targum Chronicles has been written so far. Although the Aramaic version of the Book of Chronicles has been translated into the modern languages (English, French), and some general publications are available as well, there was a lack of a thorough analysis, which would throw a new light on the significance of this Targum. This state of affairs might have resulted from the fact that both the biblical Books of Chronicles (*dibrê hayyāmîm*) and their Targums were not very popular as the focus of interest through the ages.

As the Books of Chronicles (1–2 Chr), belonging to the third part of the Hebrew Bible (“Writings”), offer an interpretation of the events that were previously presented in the Bible, so does the Targum Chronicles. In the existing publications, it is widely accepted that this Aramaic work dates back to the 7th–8th century A.D. However, basing on his strict and stringent scrutiny of the extant materials, Leeor Gottlieb moves the date of its composition backward by a few hundreds of years. The precise identification of the literary sources is the crucial element of his study,

which contributes to a better understanding of this Targum, its *Sitz im Leben*, and its position in the history of the biblical exegesis.

Gottlieb starts his study with the introduction, in which he portrays the current state of research on Tg. Chr. (pp. 1–28). First, he outlines the place of the Book of Chronicles in the Jewish tradition, then he reviews the extant manuscripts and editions of the Targum Chronicles and discusses the available publications on this version. The author expounds the structure of his work, as well as the methods he employs in his analysis.

The primary research material was ordered and divided by Gottlieb into seven chapters. They involve the textual analysis, linguistic studies, exegetical considerations and intertextual comparisons. The monograph ends with chapter 9 that summarizes the results of the study. It also includes the bibliography (pp. 503–24), the index of the ancient sources (pp. 525–78), and the index of the modern scholars and sources (pp. 579–81).

Chapter 2, entitled “Principal Translation Techniques of Targum Chronicles”, contains a detailed analysis of the translation techniques and tendencies that were used by the Aramaic writer (pp. 29–107). In the subsequent paragraphs Gottlieb addresses the additional material that is present in the Aramaic text. The author discusses the consequences and the integrity of the phrases and expressions employed by the targumist, the rendering and exposition of the proper names, and the phenomenon of harmonisation in the versions, which reflects the attempts of not only determining the very text of the biblical books, but also of taking an extrabiblical tradition into account. Gottlieb indicates the relationship between Tg. Chr. and the earlier targumic tradition, and points to the presence of various rabbinic traditions in it. Referring to selected terms and phrases from the Targum Chronicles, he proves that the targumist was perfectly familiar with the translation techniques and characteristic ways of expressing religious and theological thoughts and notions that had been developed by previous targumists and became a part of the rabbinic heritage. These primarily encompass the manner, in which God and His activity should be mentioned with an utmost honor and respect (pp. 79–95). Gottlieb stresses that the targumist incorporated much of the haggadic material of the rabbinic literature to his rendering, among others, institutions and concepts that originated in this milieu, and a number of the biblical characters who he portrayed bear striking resemblance to Jewish sages.

In chapters 3–6, Gottlieb analyses the relation of Tg. Chr. to the Aramaic translations of the biblical books that contain the material parallel to this of 1–2 Chr. In chapter 3, he juxtaposes the Targum Chronicles with the Aramaic versions of 1–2 Sam and 1–2 Kgs, as presented in Targum Jonathan (pp.

108–41). All the examples listed confirm that there is a direct connection between both Targums in the parallel fragments of these books. The biblical scholar demonstrates that the author of the Targum Chronicles utilized the Targum Jonathan to a various extent, but generally saying, he treated it as his basic text, but adjusted it to his own needs and purposes. The targumist customised the dialect of Tg. J. to match it with the Aramaic parlance of the other part of his translation. Where the Hebrew text of Chr departs from 1–2 Sm or 1–2 Kgs, the author of Tg. Chr. introduced modifications into Tg. J. to make it fit the Hebrew original of Chr or retained the version of Tg. J. in spite of its overt discrepancy with the scriptural version of Chr.

In chapter 4, similarities between the genealogies of Tg. Chr. and those of the Aramaic versions of the Book of Genesis are enumerated and elucidated (pp. 142–74). In this case, the targumist made use of several targumic traditions, but mainly of Tg. Ps.-J. that reveals the greatest resemblance to Tg. Chr., also with regard to a material going beyond Gen. A broader analysis of the correlation between the Targum Chronicles and the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is carried out by the author of the monography in chapter 5 (pp. 175–220). Gottlieb argues that both renderings employ similar terminology, and in the dialect in which they were written one can distinguish many elements of eastern and western vernaculars. The author examines the vocabulary of both translations and claims that in some cases Tg. Chr. is directly dependant literary on Tg. Ps.-J. In his opinion, this observation plays an important role in dating Tg. Chr., given that in light of the latest discoveries Tg. Ps.-J. is supposed to originate from the 12th-century Italy. In his scholarship, Gottlieb reaches for the comparisons with the extrabiblical literature and shows that the dialect of Tg. Chr. exhibits some degree of similarity to the Aramaic, in which the *pikutim* of Ashkenazi Jews were composed in the Middle Ages.

In chapter 6, the author of the monograph addresses the literary features that are shared by Tg. Chr. and Tg. Ps. (pp. 223–44). The comparison of the parallel materials of these books from the perspective of philology confirms a broad linguistic congruence between both works. However, Gottlieb states that in the process of their composition, none of these translations based on the other. In his considerations, he pays special attention to the rendering of the Hebrew noun הַגְרִי – “Hagrites” that is used once in the Book of Psalms (Ps 83:7) and a few times in the First Book of Chronicles (1 Chr 5:10.19.20; 27:31). In all these usages, excluding 1 Chr 27:31, the term refers to the people descending from the biblical heroine Hagar. Both Targums render this word as הוֹנְגָרַי – “Hungarites”. In this context, the scholar reflects upon the possibility of relating the term to the name “Hungarian” that appeared in

the European literature during the mid-10th century A.D. Gottlieb draws the conclusion that if this is the case and the Aramaic *הונגריאי* can be identified with Hungarians, one can assume that the date of composition or redaction of both Targums is relatively late, and that the translator of Tg. Chr. lived in Europe.

In chapter 7, Gottlieb discusses forty-one expansions offered by the Targum Chronicles on the background of the traditions transmitted by the Babylonian Talmud (pp. 245–385). He conducts the close analysis of the issue and demonstrates that the haggadic and halachic traditions belonging to all of the tractates of Bavli are undoubtedly the source of thirty-three text additions of Tg. Chr., and in case of the remaining eight usages its literary and linguistic dependence is highly probable. According to the author of the monograph, the targumist must not only have been perfectly acquainted with the Talmud, but he also made use of this work more than of any other rabbinic text.

Chapter 8 is likewise dedicated to comparing the expansions introduced by Tg. Chr. with other literary collections (pp. 386–490). It appears that in five usages the targumist derived his additions from the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan directly, and in several other cases he just alluded to this rendering. Four fragments with the additional material of Tg. Chr. are strictly connected with the tradition known from the Tosefta Targum in the *Codex Reuchlinianus*. Gottlieb shows that an early version of the Targum Jonathan was the source text for some modifications of the Targum Chronicles, for instance, the characteristics of the King David (pp. 336–37). In some cases, the Targum was influenced by *midrashim*, such as *Tanḥuma* (pp. 461–63). Concluding the comparative analyses that he conducts in chapters 7–8, Gottlieb states that merely twelve out of seventy-six additions of Tg. Chr. constitute an independent exegesis of the targumist, and the remaining sixty-four come from the rabbinic writings.

In the final part of his monograph, Leeor Gottlieb summarises the results of his research over the Targum Chronicles (pp. 491–503). Based on the text analyses, linguistic studies, exegetical considerations, and intertextual comparisons the author poses fundamental questions of the date and the place, and the circumstances of origin of this version. He propounds a thesis that it dates back to the time much latter than it was commonly acknowledged before – in his opinion, there are many premises to assume that the Targum Chronicles was composed not earlier than in the 12th century (pp. 494–95). This conviction is first and foremost testified by the dialect, in which the Targum was written, and by its explicit dependence on the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and other literary sources. Gottlieb asserts

that a number of specific terms and phrases also advocates for the late time of origin of Tg. Chr. He gives special significance to the mention of Hungarians and to a detailed catalogue of calendrical terms (Tg. 1 Chr 4:23; 12:33), both of which correspond to the stage of history when debates over the calendar (9th–11th century) were put to an end. It is also striking that the Targum Chronicles was not very much known to the commentators of the Middle Ages, and apart from a few manuscripts of this work (the earliest one from the year 1294), it left no literary traces until its first printed edition in the late 17th century. Gottlieb believes that the most probable time of origin of Tg. Chr. spans from the end of the 12th century to the end of the 13th century. Such a late date of composition of this Targum prompts the question on the command of the Aramaic language in the Jewish diaspora and on its *Sitz im Leben*.

According to Gottlieb, the Targum Chronicles was written by a rabbinic scholar who was to a various extent influenced by the literary heritage of both Jewish academic centres: the Palestinian and the Babylonian. This translation belongs to a wide group of Targums that were drawn up in the late Jewish literary Aramaic, i.e., in the language that reveals a strong resemblance with the language of the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and of *pijutim* associated with Ashkenazi Jews. Gottlieb comes to believe that Tg. Chr. most likely originates from the area of Europe: it might have emerged first in Italy, and from there it reached Germany. *Beth midrash*, not a synagogue, seems to have been the most probable place of its composition, because it was designated to serve as a helpful device in studying the Bible.

However, this theory raises further doubts: would not it create a serious difficulty for students of *beth midrash*, if this work was composed in the Aramaic that had stopped to be a spoken language long time before? Gottlieb submits a plausible answer and clarifies, why this condition should have been in fact no obstacle. The author reminds that a great deal of Jewish works, e.g., *pijutim*, mystic poems and talmudic commentaries, was written in various forms of the artificial or literary Aramaic, even though the language went out of the everyday use in the communities that produced these works. In his opinion, the Targum Chronicles was drawn up in the Aramaic for the reason that it was exactly the language, in which most of this kind of literary devices for the Bible study was traditionally composed.

Leeor Gottlieb's monograph on the Targum Chronicles testifies to a profound knowledge of the subject by the author and of his great erudition. The work merits particular attention of not only targumic researchers or Hebrew and Aramaic linguists, but biblical scholars and those who deal with the Jewish history and religion as well. Gottlieb throws new light on

the process of composition and the origin of the Targum Chronicles. The scholar offers fresh look at a broader reality of Aramaic translations and correlations between them, with particular emphasis on the late Targums of the Hagiographa.

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