

of the daily life, the culture and worship of those ordinary people who heard Him gladly. This is just what is so difficult to do. We can understand Josephus, Philo, Pilate or Herod, but of the ordinary man we know very little, and of his spiritual life, less.

We cannot be confident that we know a great deal even of the religious leaders of New Testament times. We have a great deal of rabbinic literature written after AD 135, but this literature must be handled very cautiously when it refers to earlier events. Still less are we entitled to equate this pattern of reorganized Judaism, even that of the Mishnah, with Judaism of the first century. The Catholicism of Luther's day cannot be judged by the Council of Trent, nor the moral lives of the priests before the Reformation by the lives of the Jesuits after it. Although the Talmuds do record some disreputable acts by individual rabbis, yet, if the Pharisees of the first century were like the rabbis of the later centuries, then the Gospels sadly malign them. However, Judaism had not only its Counter-Reformation but also the trauma of the destruction of the Temple and of the Judaean state, leading to a radical reorganization of religion under some rather autocratic leaders.

What could be more exciting then, than the announcement that we now have literature which represents 'the general religious culture of the time', which 'nourished the piety of Mary, Joseph, John the Baptist and his parents' (R. Le Déaut)? We are told that knowledge of the Palestinian targum will be 'indispensable' for the exegesis of the New Testament. P. Kahle said (*The Cairo Geniza*<sup>2</sup> Oxford, 1959, p. 208): 'In the Palestinian Targum of the Pentateuch we have in the main material coming down from pre-Christian times which must be studied by everyone who wishes to understand the state of Judaism at the time of the birth of Christianity. And we possess this material in a language of which we can say that it was similar to that spoken by the earliest Christians. It is material the importance of which can scarcely be exaggerated.'

Unfortunately, as E. Y. Kutscher remarked ('Das zur Zeit Jesu gesprochene Aramäische' in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 51, 1960, p. 53), all this is *vollkommen unbewiesen*, completely unproved. More than that, it does not appear to be true.

#### THE TARGUMS

The term 'targum' is generally restric-

ted in its application to those Aramaic translations of the Scriptures which were made for and used by Jewish communities, and to the Samaritan Aramaic version of the Pentateuch. Christian versions (in Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic) are excluded.

Three Jewish targums of the Pentateuch are known: the Babylonian, the Palestinian and Pseudo-Jonathan.

*The Babylonian targum.* This targum was the standard version of fifth-century Babylon, and became the authoritative version of Judaism. It is usually known as *Targum Onkelos*, although this ascription to Onkelos is not made before the ninth century and is almost certainly false. The translation is pedantically literal, although there is some paraphrase and (occasionally) explanatory additions. Many manuscripts are known, but all are late. The textual variants are not significant, although they are far more numerous than has been generally recognized. Its origin is still quite obscure.

*The Palestinian targum.* The paucity of manuscripts and the large number of variants make it difficult to establish the text of this version. Before 1930 it was known only by citations (from the twelfth century onwards) and by a series of extracts (thirteenth century onwards). These extracts, collectively known as the *Fragment Targum, Jerusalem Targum* or *Targum Jerushalmi II*, are found in five manuscripts (Vatican 440, Leipzig 1, Nuremberg Solger 2°, ms Sassoon 264, Paris 110), and a scrap in the British Museum. The text of the Nuremberg manuscript (= the Sassoon manuscript) was printed in the first Rabbinic Bible of 1517. Only Paris 110 has any really significant variants.

In 1930 P. Kahle published fragments from five manuscripts of this targum, which he labelled Manuscripts A to E. These manuscripts, which were found in the Geniza (lumber room) of an old synagogue in Cairo, may be dated from AD 700 to 900. Considerable variation is found between the texts.

In 1956 A. Diez Macho recognized that Codex Neofiti I (Vatican Library) was not — as it was catalogued — 'Onkelos', but our only complete manuscript of the Palestinian targum. Many alternative readings are noted in the margin and between the lines of this manuscript, which greatly increases its value. Some preliminary work has been done, the most valuable by Dr Shirley Lund.

The Palestinian targum is (in the main) very literal, occasionally more so

## New Light on the New Testament? The significance of the Palestinian Targum

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Testament. We twentieth-century Gentiles are alien born. The words do not raise the same echoes in our minds, the actions do not have the same significance, the drama does not take place against the same background for us as for the first witnesses. If we are to enter their world it must be by an act of controlled imagination and sympathy.

For this we need to know something

CHRISTIANS THOUGH we be, we are not native sons in the world of the New

than Onkelos. The additional matter characteristic of this version is usually interpolated between the verses or half-verses of the translation. These interpolations are either imaginative expansions of the narrative or (in later manuscripts) commentaries on the wording or significance of the text.

*Pseudo-Jonathan*. There is only one manuscript of this version known. It is a sixteenth-century manuscript in the British Museum. An almost identical text was printed in Venice in 1591.

The manuscript and edition are entitled 'The Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Law.' As this is also certainly false, it is generally known as 'Pseudo-Jonathan'. During the last century, when it was mistakenly thought to be another form of the 'Jerusalem Targum', it was known as *Targum Jerushalmi I*. Its origin is obscure, and is unlikely to be clarified until the better documented Palestinian targum is understood.

#### THE PALESTINIAN TARGUM

Despite the achievements of great scholars in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, targumic studies are still in their infancy. Work on the Palestinian targum has scarcely begun.

Hence it is with regret that I view the spate of books and articles now appearing, which interpret the New Testament in the light of this targum (even for such basic matters as the meaning of Christ's death), which call in question the standard works of the previous generation — Schürer, Dalman, Billerbeck, Moore — on the basis of this targum, and which from it describe the culture and religious institutions of the first century: all before the text has been established, the language investigated or the date of composition settled. There is the danger (as has happened over the Dead Sea Scrolls) that men will so firmly commit themselves to a position, that it will be difficult to retreat gracefully if the facts prove contrary.

This is not to put a premium on timidity. No view is sacrosanct, even though it be backed by the authority of G. Dalman. It does not matter who holds a view: are his data sufficient and his arguments rigorous? When a reconstruction has been subjected to every possible attempt to disprove it and survives, then we are justified in placing confidence in it. Then, and not before.

A hostile critic (be he yourself or a colleague) is the most valuable ally a man can have. Charles Darwin, conscious of the bias to neglect all evidence

that went against his thesis, meticulously noted down all objections that were raised.

It is thus unfortunate that those writers who hold to an early date of composition seem unaware of the arguments that have been raised against this view, or have dismissed them too lightly. This is true even of the otherwise amply documented *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum* by Martin McNamara, (Rome, 1966). Yet this is by far the most satisfactory book on the topic that has appeared.

McNamara knows that 'the origin, transmission and nature of the P(alestinian) T(argum) texts must be examined before we can profitably compare the work with the NT' (p. 36). He has done 'a considerable amount of work' on this. However, because of 'exigencies of space' and because a 'certain amount of the work has already been done . . . we have devoted only one chapter to the PT as such'. This would not matter so much, if so many of his conclusions did not depend on these previous considerations. One is grateful for the information afforded, but cannot accept the conclusions.

McNamara assumes, (following P. Kahle), that in first-century synagogues:

(a) the Law was read in Hebrew and translated orally;

(b) this translation was in Aramaic;

(c) this was the common language of the people;

(d) the dialect of Aramaic spoken was more or less identical to that spoken in Galilee in the fourth century AD;

(e) this translation was amplified by homiletic material (and/or was paraphrastic; the two are consistently confused);

(f) the translation was relatively fixed in form and content (not extempore), and handed down from one generation to the next.

It is from these assumptions that many of the arguments for the early date of the Palestinian targum begin. They aim to prove that our present manuscripts contain the same text as was in common use in the first century, the one to which Paul 'must (!) have regularly listened . . . as it was expounded by the Meturgeman in the synagogues', (McNamara, *op. cit.*, p. 254). McNamara says bluntly, 'One thing is certain: these Aramaic renderings had a long history behind them by NT times and are probably as old as the Scripture readings in the synagogues' (p. 48).

This is by no means certain. (He gives absolutely no evidence. He merely

cites a secondary source — which gives no evidence either.) Every one of the above assumptions may be questioned, and all but (c) are probably untrue.

(a) The earliest mention of a translator is found in the Mishnah. This was composed by R. Judah the Prince — on the basis of older collections of laws — around AD 200. Earlier opinions are quoted in the name of earlier rabbis, or, if they come from earlier sources, anonymously, introduced by some such phrase as 'it is taught'. The section in which the translator is mentioned (Mishnah Megillah 4) gives no hint of an earlier source, and for want of any evidence to the contrary, we must assume that it was drawn up entirely by R. Judah himself. Although the casual introduction of 'the translator' suggests that the office was not unfamiliar, nothing even suggests that the custom antedates AD 135.

There were written translations previous to this date. Greek versions were quite common. M. Megillah 2: 1 forbids the reading of the book of Esther from a 'translation in any language'. The concession that follows is difficult to interpret. It may mean that an oral translation is permitted if the Hebrew is read, or it may mean that a Greek translation (but no other) was permitted, for those who spoke Greek only. The Talmud (fourth century) interprets it in the latter manner. In any case, it was better to read it in Hebrew, says the Mishnah, even if that language was not understood.

(b) R. Judah was noted for his opposition to Aramaic. If he permitted that language, it would be very much as a concession. Greek, on the other hand, he approved strongly, and the rabbis seem to have used Greek translations solely, at least until the fourth century. However, *the people* do seem to have used Aramaic — though the evidence is not unambiguous. This translation seems to have been *ad hoc*.

If there was an oral translation in New Testament times, there is an *a priori* probability that it was in Aramaic, in most synagogues of Galilee. This is the furthest we can go, which is not very far.

(c) This seems to have been true, at least in Galilee. The dispute still rages, but the New Testament evidence, as collected for example by Dalman (and more recently by Professor J. Emerton) seems decisive. We must not underestimate the role of Greek in Galilee or of Hebrew in Judaea: Mark seems to imply that Jesus normally spoke Greek in the

Decapolis and in Bethsaida.

(d) This is highly doubtful, almost to the point of impossibility. The analogy is clearly being drawn with modern Arabic, where the spoken tongue has developed considerably over the centuries, while the written language has been kept much more stable by the influence of the Qu'ran. We cannot say absolutely that this did not happen to Palestinian Aramaic. There is certainly no evidence that it did. What evidence we do have points to development of the language (from Imperial Aramaic, *cf.* Ezra) up to AD 135, at which point there are hints of the Galilean dialect. Basically the language is still Imperial Aramaic. Then an apparent disuse of the language, and in the fourth to sixth centuries the fully developed Galilean dialect. This is found in inscriptions as well as in the Talmud and in commentaries. The spoken language, on analogy, may have developed ahead of the written to some extent (but not initially by hundreds of years) and then remained practically stable until the written language caught up. When Principal M. Black says, 'It is true that it belongs to a period fourth to sixth century, and that between then and the first century changes were bound to have taken place in the spoken and written languages, but they can hardly have been far reaching' (*An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*<sup>3</sup> Oxford, 1967, p. 25), he is running counter to the facts. The documents from Wadi Murabba'at (AD 135) are in a different dialect altogether from that of fourth to sixth century Galilee. This is not surprising, as the time separation is equivalent to that between Elizabethan and modern English. Some authors seem to want to push the language back into the second century BC, which is getting close to Chaucer!

This assumes, too, an isolation of Palestinian Aramaic greater than the evidence warrants. Black asserts that 'Syriac' (a dialect of Northern Mesopotamia) was the 'standard Aramaic' written and spoken as far west as Antioch in the first century AD. The Jews alone spoke their own dialect 'quite different from Syriac, the dialect of East Aramaic which was in regular use as the standard Aramaic language', (*op. cit.* p. 46). This is not true, as any work on Aramaic dialects will show. For example, J. A. Fitzmyer (*The Genesis Apocryphon of Qumran Cave I*, Rome, 1966, p. 20) lists the known dialects up until AD 200: 'Nabataean, Qumran, Murabba'at, the inscriptions of the Palestinian ostuaries . . . the Palmyra

and Hatra dialects.' All these, as Albright points out, are 'various stages of the standard literary Aramaic of the Persian Empire' (*The Archaeology of Palestine*, Harmondsworth, 1960, p. 201). Syriac may have been the dialect of Northern Mesopotamia (especially Edessa) before the second century AD, but it only spread with the impact of Christianity. It became the literary dialect of Eastern Christians but I know of no evidence that, outside of its original area, it was ever used by non-Christians. Principal Black seems to have misunderstood the Greek word *suristi* — which means Aramaic in general.

(e) There is no evidence for this assertion either, although of the older writers, G. F. Moore also accepted this view. It can be defended only by an appeal to antecedent probabilities. The translation was for the people, hence it must be paraphrastic. It is always illegitimate to argue to a reconstruction of history from an antecedent situation. We cannot say, e.g., that deprived of temple-sacrifices in Babylon, the people 'must have' developed the synagogue in which to read the Scriptures. In fact they do not seem to have done so. We may speculate on all the possibilities, and then eliminate as many as we can on the grounds not of *a priori* probabilities but of actual data. 'Must have' and 'would have' (except as an hypothetical), have no place in historical writing. Not even 'would probably have'.

The constant confusion between paraphrase and supplementation (interpolation) does not help the discussion either. J. A. Fitzmyer (*op. cit.*) clearly shows the difference between the largely paraphrastic 1Q Genesis Apocryphon and the later targums. As Kahle rightly says (*op. cit.* p. 20) 'the Palestinian Targum contains, besides the *exact translation* of the Hebrew text of the Bible, a very full exposition from the Midrash . . .' (italics mine). Most of the Palestinian targum (in the best texts) is a hyper-literal translation: there is little paraphrase, and a moderate amount of interpolated material. The later manuscripts add a great deal more. This later material can be detected by comparing the early and late manuscripts, and where this is not possible, by inconsistencies and difference of language. Some of it is to be found in the Talmuds (fourth to fifth centuries) and some seems later still.

The view that the postulated oral translation of the first century was 'paraphrastic' is attractive because our extant sources (New Testament, Josephus,

Philo) mention a *sermon*, but no translator. It is assumed that both translator and preacher were merged. If Jesus in Luke 4: 18-30 was reader, translator, and preacher — then clearly the Mishnah regulations are utterly irrelevant to the first century. The translation is a gratuitous assumption, however.

(f) There is no evidence, even in the fourth century, that there was any one accepted Aramaic translation. The inference from M. Megillah 4: 8 and Tosephta Megillah 4: 41 is that second-century translations were *ad hoc* productions, or at least that considerable variety was possible. Bereshith Rabba 70 shows that this was still true in the third century. The unacceptable translations are attacked on the grounds of inadequacy, not because they differed from the 'standard' text. This is in sharp contrast to the attitude in legal matters. There is the story of how Hillel laboured to convince his hearers that a given ruling was 'according to the Scriptures'. They would not accept it. As soon as he said 'So my teachers taught me' it was accepted.

McNamara in support of his view appeals to one third-century incident only. He completely misses the point of the story, which actually proves the opposite of his contention.

In the fifth century, in Babylon, it was still possible to dispute where a man could use an *ad hoc* rendering, or must use the accepted translation. The Palestinian Talmud shows evidence of current translations, but not of one authoritative version.

#### EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

I think it is clear that any case for a pre-Christian date for this targum will have to make its way on its own merits. There is no 'antecedent probability' that such a targum existed, or, if it did exist, survived.

McNamara rightly points out that we must look first of all to external evidence. In the eleventh century there was a tradition among the communities of Palestinian origin in Africa, that the targum was first recited in the early fourth century or possibly a little later. This evidence is so late that one is tempted to disregard it. However, there is no attempt made (as with pure legends) to project the targum back into the days of the Second Temple, or to Ezra. The date may be only a guess from the language of the targum, but we have no real reason to doubt the accuracy of the tradition.

McNamara gives a number of quotations, dated from AD 170 to 350, which he claims are citations of the Palestinian Targum. Two of these are wrongly dated in the third century instead of the fourth. The remaining citations are not from an Aramaic version, but from a Greek one. For example, the commentary on Genesis (*Bereshith Rabba*) cites R. Nathan (AD 170) for a version of Genesis 6: 14. The citation consists of two words in Aramaic, and one word of transliterated Greek. This precise mode of citation is given elsewhere in the commentary for the indisputably Greek translation of Aquila. The actual version cited by R. Nathan is known (*cf.* F. Field *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*), and is found in a Latin (ex-Greek) work of the same general period.

The evidence from the fourth century is not completely clear, but seems to show that at that time the readings of the Palestinian targum were known, at least as one oral version. There may have been others. This all tends to confirm the tradition mentioned above, that the targum was first current in the fourth century.

#### INTERNAL EVIDENCE

From this we turn to internal evidence. The linguistic arguments have been consistently ignored by most writers on this targum. The recognized authorities on Aramaic (e.g. Kutschler, Fitzmyer, Grelot, Baars, Milik — *cf.* also Albright) have implicitly or explicitly ruled out a date before AD 135, at least for the targum in the language in which we now have it. The language does not seem as developed, particularly in orthography, as that in the Palestinian Talmud or *Bereshith Rabba*. This may mean it is somewhat earlier: though the contrast of the language of Targum Onkelos and the Babylonian Exegetical texts with that of the Babylonian Talmud must make us cautious here. I have found an idiom from an inscription dated in the late third century which seems to be found only in this targum. On linguistic grounds we might date it somewhere between AD 135 and the fourth century, with the late third century as the most probable date.

A. Diez Macho laid considerable stress on his 'text critical' argument for the pre-Christian date for the Palestinian targum. He examined Neofiti 1 for evidence that it had been translated from a Hebrew original different from our present text. (That this was at all possible shows how foolish it is to call

even this sixteenth-century text 'paraphrastic'.) He listed a number of differences between the reconstructed Hebrew text and the Masoretic text, hence the targum was translated before AD 70.

This argument begs a number of questions and was subjected to devastating criticism by P. Wernberg-Møller. He showed that the majority of these readings are quite irrelevant, being the normal kind of errors made in transmission of a text. Many are found in mediaeval Hebrew manuscripts. To use M. Goshen-Gottstein's terminology, they are not real variants, but examples of the 'law of scribes'. However, one or two readings remain. These agree with the Septuagint (LXX), but do not prove a pre-Christian date of composition for the Aramaic text.

#### EVIDENCE THAT THE TRANSLATION WAS MADE FROM A GREEK ORIGINAL

They do raise the question whether the translation was in fact made from the Hebrew. There has been a great deal of conformation to the Hebrew text — a process with which we are quite familiar in the later manuscripts of Onkelos. Yet, as we trace the text back to the earliest manuscripts, we have no indication that the version is any less literal; although we find many features which seem inexplicable on the theory that it was translated from the Hebrew text. Some of these features are found in the translation Aramaic of the Christian Palestinian lectionaries, but not in any other Aramaic texts. These are:

(a) The complete absence of the pronominal object affixed to a finite verb. The object is affixed in every other form of Aramaic (even the transliterated Aramaic of the New Testament), except Christian Palestinian Aramaic. This is one of the most striking features of this form of translation Aramaic. It is inexplicable if the Hebrew text was used, either orally or in written form. It is not surprising that in later manuscripts isolated examples of the affixed forms are found — or that they should translate a Hebrew affixed form, invariably in Onkelos and regularly in Pseudo-Jonathan.

(b) The use of the relative. In the translation the targum follows Greek usage, as does Christian Palestinian Aramaic: in interpolated material or paraphrases the targum follows normal Aramaic usage. This is most striking

before prepositions. The targum, when translating a relative followed by a preposition always adds a finite verb or its equivalent. This is characteristic of Christian Palestinian Aramaic *only* when the Septuagint has the relative (plus finite verb). Our targum also avoids a relative before a participle; even though this is normal Aramaic usage and occurs in the Hebrew and in other targums. Where the relative does occur before a participle, it represents the article (in both Greek and Hebrew), and *takes a different orthographic form*.

(c) Greek words are used in the translation which are not integrated into the language. The possessive pronouns are not affixed to these words (as in normal Aramaic, and in the Hebrew original). They are added in a form usually reserved for the independent possessives — this is bad Aramaic, but good Greek. This phenomenon (Greek words giving 'the impression of being a foreign body in the language') has been noted elsewhere by Saul Lieberman. It is inexplicable if the original text was in Hebrew. Why were not the perfectly good Aramaic equivalents used? Or the original Hebrew?

(d) The agreements with Greek versions. This has been noted above. The most striking are of course those that give Greek words in transliteration.

(e) In Hebrew and Aramaic the word for 'bread' is used for 'food' in general. This is not true of Greek. The New Testament does use 'bread' for 'food' (showing the Semitic background). Our targum (best manuscripts) differentiates between 'bread' and 'food' as do the Greek versions, and unlike the Hebrew or any other targum. As the Aramaic and Hebrew words are identical, it is inexplicable why a translator seeing (or hearing) the Hebrew word should search around for *another* Aramaic word which does not precisely translate the Hebrew.

The only explanation that seems, on present evidence, to fit the facts is that the Palestinian targum was translated from a Greek version. This version seems to have been a revision of the Septuagint, which brought it more in line with the Hebrew text. That such revisions were current in Palestine is quite clear. (See Dominique Barthélemy, *Les Devanciers d'Aquila*.) This one may tentatively be identified with the version Barthélemy ascribes to Jonathan ben Uzziel, and related to the version of 'Theodotion' that Origen knew.

*Non-Official Interpretations.* The

argument on which P. Kahle depended most strongly is indeed the strongest argument for a pre-Christian date. He argued that certain passages in the translation were translated in a manner contrary to the interpretation of the passage found in the Mishnah. 'That is only possible', he claimed, 'if the translation is much older than the Mishnah.' This conclusion is not absolutely compelling. However the (Greek) translation is 'much older than the Mishnah'.

### INTERPOLATIONS

It is usually claimed that these interpolations, additional to the text of Scripture (the best known feature of the Palestinian targum), are integral to that targum. Indeed, several scholars have argued, from a deduced pre-Christian date of certain passages, to a pre-Christian date for the whole work. Yet at the turn of the century G. Dalman had already pointed out that a pre-Christian fragment could be interpolated in a later work. We cannot argue from an interpolated passage to the date of the whole work. (Interpolated the passages are, even if they were interpolated at the time of the composition of the translation itself.) In fact, it may be shown that these passages were added some time after the translation was made, and that many (at least) of them were composed in the fourth to sixth centuries.

The textual evidence is clear. The earlier the manuscript, the fewer the interpolated passages. These passages differ from manuscript to manuscript, and differ as to the point at which they are interpolated. Our best manuscript (E of the Cairo Geniza, c. AD 750-800) omits many of the passages found in the later manuscripts, as does the margin of Neofiti.

Our manuscript evidence is pitifully small, and it is possible to escape the strength of these facts by assuming that the Cairo Geniza fragments are unrepresentative (*i.e.* have been 'censored'), or that (!) each manuscript represents an independent line of tradition back to the first century. These are, however, clearly *ad hoc* arguments. We could only be justified in appealing to them if we had strong independent evidence that the targum, with interpolations, had been transmitted faithfully from the first century to the twelfth. This we do not have — to say the least.

Even without knowing that the targum stems from a Greek version, it is fairly

clear that all the manuscripts belong to one tradition. In the earlier manuscripts there are isolated examples of the kind of alteration which we find in the later texts (particularly adaptation to the Hebrew, *e.g.* substitution of 'bread' for 'food', where the Hebrew has 'bread'). The later texts also have sporadic agreements with the earlier texts, although most of the verses have been altered. The agreement of E (of the Geniza) with parts of, *e.g.*, Vatican 440, and with the margin of Neofiti, show that this text is *not* unrepresentative. We are not proof against (statistically) 'outrageous events', yet, remembering the Greek origin of the targum, the textual evidence shows quite unambiguously that the interpolations (especially the 'commentaries') are much later than the text. This is confirmed by linguistic evidence.

It is argued that the Messianic prophecies could not have been added to the text after Christian times. This merely betrays ignorance of the literature. Diez Macho actually claimed that Numbers 24: 17 could not have been interpreted messianically after the rise of Christianity. Yet Ben Koseba (c. AD 135) was nicknamed Bar Kokhba (Son of the Star), because R. Aquila acclaimed him Messiah with this verse.

In fact, in the fourth century, most Jewish contact was with Byzantine Christianity. The conflict over the *Messiah* was pretty much a dead letter. But *Messianism* certainly was not. 'Sur les bords du Tigre comme en Galilée les espérances messianiques demeuraient vivaces et Israël y attendait d'un jour à l'autre le moment d'être rassemblé par le libérateur promis' (F. M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine* II, Paris 1952, p. 273).

The Talmud and later works have many messianic stories. R. Judan ben Aybo (fourth century) speaks of the birth of the Messiah: 'In the king's fortress, Bethlehem Judah.' M. Black says (*op. cit.* p. 237) 'It seems to me unlikely, however, that the Jewish association of 15th Nisan with the inauguration of the Messianic age can be later than Christianity; Christian associations with that historic date would certainly make it difficult for Jews of a later time to centre their Messianic hopes on a day and a month which had become so prominent in the Christian calendar.' In fact, the commentary on *Exodus* (*Shemoth Rabba*, a late work) says plainly that the Messiah and Elijah would 'be made great' (i. appear?) on that date. Indeed, it claims that God said unless the Messiah appeared on that

date, 'then do not believe'.

There may have been a decline in Messianic activity between AD 135 and the fourth century, so that any composition must be before the first date or after the second. Seeing that so many parallels are found in the sayings of the fourth century (and later) rabbis, then the latter period is strongly indicated. Any attempt to interpret a New Testament passage in terms of a targumic passage must be entirely ruled out as inadmissible. The New Testament may show, in some cases, that the same ideas were *also* current in the first century, as well as in the fourth.

### NEW TESTAMENT PARALLELS

McNamara claimed that 'If we can show that there is a manifold relation between the PT and the NT we have established a strong argument for the pre-Christian date of the PT as *such*' (*op. cit.* p. 35). This is only true if we have established literary dependence, and the priority of the Palestinian Targum has been proved beyond reasonable doubt. Grelot, in general agreement with McNamara, yet says of some examples 'Il faut reconnaître qu'il y a effectivement des contacts entre les deux texts. L'antiquité du TP étant établie par ailleurs, il est plausible que Paul en dépende latéralement. Peut-être est-il difficile, à mon avis, de prouver davantage' (Italics added). However, as the 'antiquity' of the Palestinian targum has been disproved — or at the very least rendered extremely doubtful — we must look for other explanations for the 'contacts' between the two texts.

E. Earle Ellis' words are worth weighing. 'The limited number of extant contemporary documents has sometimes resulted in an exaggeration of their importance and an underestimation of the general currency of a particular phrase or concept. Too often, also, the investigator has uncritically assumed that the biblical writer must have a source but that the apocryphal literature can be taken as pure spring water.' These words, *mutatis mutandis*, apply with full force here. We must also allow for independent interpretations of the Old Testament coming to the same conclusion.

*Deuteronomy 30: 12-14.* In Romans 10: 6-8 Paul writes 'But the righteousness which is of faith says, "Do not say to yourself, 'Who will go up to heaven' (that is to bring Christ down), or 'Who will go down to the abyss?' (to bring Christ up from the dead)'".' The Pales-

tinian targum reads (passages bracketed are additional to the text; those words shown in italics differ from the Masoretic text):

'(The Law) is not in heaven, saying (O that we had one like Moses) *that* would go up to heaven and bring it to us and make us hear (the commandments) and we would do *them*.

'Neither is (the Law) beyond the (great) sea, saying (O that we had one like Jonah the prophet) *that* would descend to the depths of the (great) sea and bring it to us and make us hear (the commandments) and we would do *them*.'

It is clearly erroneous to compare the interpolated material with Paul's interpretation. McNamara (*op. cit.* p. 77) speaks of 'Christ the New Moses, who had taken the New Law from heaven'. Nothing is further from Paul's mind at this point. It is Christ Himself (not the Law) whom it is futile to seek in heaven. It is not Christ (as the New Moses) who is to ascend to heaven, but someone in search of Christ. There is no contact between the interpretations at all.

Yet there is a striking resemblance between the two translations. We are indebted to McNamara for drawing attention to this passage. The resemblance between 'descend to the abyss' and 'descend to the depths' may not be accidental, though the interpretation of the two is totally unrelated. It is just possible that the two were developed in isolation: Paul's reading of Christ's death in symmetry to Christ's exaltation; the targum citing the only prophet to have had much to do with the sea, and his submarine adventures the best-known. Yet neither Paul nor the targum seem to be forming an *ad hoc* version. The targum translation is as well attested as our manuscripts allow (the only alternative reading seems secondary), and the 'markers' show it to be original, translated from Greek.

The conclusion seems inevitable that Paul (as the later rabbis) was using a Greek version. This version was the same as that from which the Palestinian targum was translated. This, as we have seen, is related to that of 'Theodotion'. Paul indeed cites this version in 1 Corinthians 15: 54 (*verbatim*) and, probably, in 1 Corinthians 3: 19. Peter (or Luke?) also cites it in Acts 2: 18. We do not have much material from this version extant.

#### CONCLUSION

The Palestinian targum is a translation of a Greek version, made at the earliest

in the second half of the third century. The large claims made for it are unwarranted. However, it is not altogether useless. The text sometimes witnesses to the (or a) Greek text current in first-century Palestine. The interpolated matter sometimes preserves interpretations and sayings from the first century. Some of these may even have come from Christian sources. It is, of course, not a contemporary source even of these sayings, and we can only be sure that an interpretation is first century, if first-century material confirms the existence of that interpretation. The language is that of Galilee some 300 years after the New Testament, and is therefore not without value.

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