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The Qumran Pesharim and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets

Rethinking Their Relationship

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Abstract

This article argues that the Qumran pesharim and TgJon originate from a common, though internally varied, elite intellectual tradition with a priestly character. This tradition developed particular interests, e.g. messianism and eschatology, and transmitted individual textual and interpretative traditions. As it appears, this tradition has pre-70 CE roots, but continued after the destruction of the temple. Both the Qumran commentaries and TgJon reflect the interests of this priestly tradition and incorporate some of its textual and exegetical traditions, though not through literary dependence.

Keywords

ancient Jewish textual scholarship – Qumran pesher – Targum Jonathan – eschatology – messianism – priests

Parallels between Pesher Habakkuk (1QpHab) and TgJon to the Twelve attracted scholarly attention soon after the discovery of the Qumran commentary in 1947. Most elaborate in their treatments of these parallels, were Zeitlin, Wieder, and Brownlee.[1] Even if they drew opposing implications from their analyses,

1 S. Zeitlin, 'The Hebrew Scrolls and the Status of Biblical Scholarship', *JQR* 42 (1951), pp. 133–192; S. Zeitlin, 'The Hebron Pogrom and the Hebrew Scrolls', *JQR* 43 (1952), pp. 140–152; S. Zeitlin, 'The Antiquity of the Hebrew Scrolls and the Piltdown Hoax: A Parallel', *JQR* 45 (1954), pp. 1–29; N. Wieder, 'The Habakkuk Scroll and the Targum', *JJS* 4 (1953), pp. 14–18; W. Brownlee, 'The Habakkuk Midrash and the Targum of Jonathan', *JJS* 7 (1956), pp. 169–186.

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all three authors agreed that Pesher Habakkuk depended directly on the Targum or the targumic tradition. In 1994 Gordon subjected this position to thorough criticism, showing that 'the dependence of 1QpHab upon Tg Habakkuk, in whatever form' remains 'a very doubtful hypothesis'.[2] In the wake of Gordon's work, the scholarly debates on 'pesher and targum' were largely laid to rest.[3]

After 25 years there are, I submit, good grounds to re-address the issue. Most importantly, the parameters of the debate have changed significantly since Zeitlin, Wieder, and Brownlee. Zeitlin's and Brownlee's contributions in particular must be understood in light of early debates on the date of the Qumran scrolls. For Zeitlin, parallels between 1QpHab and TgJon demonstrated beyond doubt that the Qumran finds constituted 'a concoction of the Middle Ages'.[4] Brownlee, in contrast, pointed out the ancient origins and longevity of the targumic tradition, 'so that in present knowledge there is no fixed date of the Targum from which inferences may be drawn as to the *terminus a quo* of our midrash [= 1QpHab]'.[5] On palaeographical grounds, Brownlee continues, 1QpHab can be dated quite securely; its dependence on TgJon therefore bolsters the antiquity of the targumic tradition rather than the lateness of the Qumran finds.

Seeing the stakes of their dispute, both Zeitlin and Brownlee were eager to detect direct links between the Pesher and a more or less fixed targumic text. Yet the current agreement on the general dating of the pesharim (2nd century BCE–1st century CE)[6] and that of TgJon (which probably took written form in the land of Israel at some point between 70 and 200 CE)[7] has redirected the focus from direct dependency to the exploration of broader historical issues and the development of more nuanced understandings of the relationship between the pesharim and TgJon.[8]

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2 R.P. Gordon, *Studies in the Targum to the Twelve Prophets: From Nahum to Malachi* (VTSup, 51, Leiden: Brill, 1994) p. 95 (full discussion at pp. 83–95).

3 An exception is M. Wood, 'Pesher Habakkuk and the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel', *JSP* 19 (1999), pp. 129–146. Whereas Gordon would allow for more indirect connections between 1QpHab and TgJon, Wood argues that what seem to be similar interpretations in 1QpHab and TgJon resulted from the contextual demands of the individual works and do not constitute an exegetical tradition. In my view Wood overstates his case; I will return to his work below.

4 Zeitlin, 'Hebron Pogrom', p. 150.

5 Brownlee, 'Habakkuk Midrash', p. 180.

6 A. Steudel, 'Dating Exegetical Texts from Qumran', in D. Dimant and R.G. Kratz (eds.), *The Dynamics of Language and Exegesis at Qumran* (FAT, 35, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) pp. 39–53.

7 W.F. Smelik, *The Targum of Judges* (Leiden: Brill, 1995) pp. 41–75; P.V.M. Flesher and B. Chilton, *The Targums: A Critical Introduction* (SAIS, 12, Leiden: Brill, 2011) pp. 169–198.

8 While Gordon put an end to the idea of a direct historical relationship between 1QpHab and

For the argument I propose here, three developments in the study of ancient Judaism are especially noteworthy. First, Qumran scholars have become increasingly sensitive to the variety of the contents of the Qumran collections—not just in terms of sectarian vs. non-sectarian writings, but also between the writings attributed to these categories. The corpus of approximately fifteen pesharim, for instance, exhibits a substantial diversity in structure,[9] hermeneutical approaches, and contents.[10] While some pesharim (e.g. 1QpHab, 4QpNah, 4QpPs^{a}) seem to propound a 'sectarian' perspective—employing terms found in other 'sectarian' compositions—others (e.g. 4QpHos^{a}) lack such terminology and make a much less sectarian impression. This internal variety of the corpus shows that the sole focus in previous studies on 1QpHab can provide only partial insight into the potential connections between Qumran pesher and TgJon. The theme of messianism, for one, is absent from 1QpHab (and hence from previous studies on pesher and targum), but features prominently in 4QpIsa^{a}. What is more, the emphasis in much pesher scholarship on 1QpHab, 4QpNah, and 4QpPs^{a} has inhibited studies on the pesharim within their ancient Jewish context beyond Qumran.

Second, both the pesharim and the targumim are increasingly valued as works of scholarship. In the case of the TgJon, the debate on its origins in either the synagogue or the school testifies to this change in perspective: The targum is no longer seen as merely a translation for the masses unable to understand Hebrew, but equally, especially in its written form, as a text to be studied.[11] This classifies the targumim as the work of ancient scholars directed—at least in

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TgJon, he did not develop an alternative understanding of their connection. Nor did Wood, who denied the existence of such a connection altogether. Smelik (*Targum of Judges*, p. 47) explains the parallels between 1QpHab and TgJon with reference to 'nothing more than a common stock of exegetical tradition'.

9 G.J. Brooke, 'Thematic Commentaries on Prophetic Scriptures', in M. Henze (ed.), *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) pp. 134–157; M.J. Bernstein, 'Introductory Formulas for Citation and Re-Citation of Biblical Verses in the Qumran Pesharim: Observations on a Pesher Technique', in his *Reading and Re-Reading Scripture at Qumran* (STDJ, 107, Leiden: Brill, 2013) pp. 635–673.

10 P.B. Hartog, 'Pesher as Commentary', in P.B. Hartog, A. Schofield, and S.I. Thomas (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Study of the Humanities: Method, Theory, Meaning: Proceedings of the Eighth Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies* (*Munich, 4–7 August, 2013*) (STDJ, 125, Leiden: Brill, 2018) pp. 92–116.

11 See A.D. York, 'The Targum in the Synagogue and the School', *JSJ* 10 (1979), pp. 74–86; P.S. Alexander, 'Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures', in M.J. Mulder and H. Sysling (eds.), *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (CRINT, 2/1, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988) pp. 217–254 (esp. 238–241).

part—to students and fellow scholars.[12] The pesharim, too, are increasingly seen as the work of ancient scholars/intellectuals who exhibited ties with their peers across the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.[13] This development situates both pesher and targum within the intellectual elite of ancient Judaism—which, as we shall see, was rather restricted in size—and, by implication, is suggestive of a shared intellectual background between both types of writing.

Last, scholars have increasingly called attention to the transformative effects that the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE had on various Jewish groups.[14] Rather than coming to an end with the temple, pre-70 groups such as the Sadducees and the Essenes found new ways of expressing themselves in the wake of the temple's demolition.[15] So too, many scholars propose, did the priests who had served in the temple.[16] The role of these priests in post-

12 On the different audiences to which the targumim may have catered, see P.V.M. Flesher, 'Targum as Scripture', in P.V.M. Flesher (ed.), *Targum and Scripture: Studies in Aramaic Translations and Interpretation in Memory of Ernest G. Clarke* (SAIS, 2, Leiden: Brill, 2002) pp. 61–75. On targum as scholarly and educational literature, see S.D. Fraade, 'Locating Targum in the Textual Polysystem of Rabbinic Pedagogy', *BIOSCS* 39 (2006), pp. 69–91; R. Hayward, 'The Aramaic Targum and Its Ancient Jewish Scholarly Environment', in G.J. Brooke and R. Smithuis (eds.), *Jewish Education from Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Studies in Honour of Philip S. Alexander* (AJECT, 100, Leiden: Brill, 2017) pp. 128–146.

13 P.B. Hartog, *Pesher and Hypomnema: A Comparison of Two Commentary Traditions from the Hellenistic-Roman World* (STDJ, 121, Leiden: Brill, 2017).

14 For a particularly insightful contextualisation of this line of research, see J. Klawans, 'Imagining Judaism after 70 CE', in N. Koltun-Fromm and G. Kessler (eds.), *A Companion to Late Ancient Jews and Judaism: Third Century BCE to Seventh Century CE* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2020) pp. 201–215.

15 M. Goodman, 'Sadducees and Essenes after 70 CE', in *Judaism in the Roman World: Collected Essays* (AJEC 66; Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 153–162; J.E. Burns, 'Essene Sectarianism and Social Differentiation in Judaea after 70 CE', *HTR* 99 (2006), pp. 247–274; J. Magness, 'Sectarianism Before and After 70 CE', in D.R. Schwartz, Z. Weiss, and R.E. Clements (eds.), *Was 70 CE a Watershed in Jewish History? On Jews and Judaism Before and After the Destruction of the Second Temple* (AJEC, 78, Leiden: Brill, 2012) pp. 69–89.

16 See S. Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics* (Leiden: Brill, 1990) pp. 58–109; P.S. Alexander, 'What Happened to the Jewish Priesthood after 70?', in Z. Rodgers, M. Daly-Denton, and A. Fitzpatrick McKinley (eds.), *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne* (JSJSup, 132, Brill, Leiden, 2009) pp. 5–33. Others, in contrast, still assume that priests had lost much of their power after 70 CE. See G.E. Lier, 'Another Look at the Role of Priests and Rabbis After the Destruction of the Second Temple', *Journal for Semitics* 16 (2007), pp. 87–112; P. Schäfer, 'Rabbis and Priests, or: How to Do Away with the Glorious Past of the Sons of Aaron', in G. Gardner and K.L. Osterloh (eds.), *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World* (TSAJ, 123, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) pp. 155–172; Z. Weiss, 'Were Priests Communal Leaders in Late Antique Palestine? The Archaeological Evidence', in Schwartz, Weiss, and Clements (eds.), *Was 70 CE a Watershed?*, pp. 91–111.

70 Palestinian society remains disputed; they may have exerted power in synagogues,[17] probably continued to produce literature,[18] and may have served as teachers.[19] If Flesher is correct, the targumim on the Pentateuch—including the earliest stages of TgOnq—are priestly products from Palestine.[20] Thus, even if the debates on post-70 priesthood are bound to continue, there seems already to be sufficient cumulative ground to assume that the priestly class constituted a noteworthy faction within ancient Jewish leadership and the Jewish intellectual elite, both before and after 70 CE.[21]

I will argue that the pesharim and TgJon serve a similar purpose and originate from a common intellectual milieu. Both types of writing seek to make ancient prophetic words relevant for the times of their readers and in so doing develop a pronounced eschatological perspective. To account for this similarity, it makes sense to conceive of both the pesharim and TgJon as the works of the ancient Jewish priestly intellectual elite. Both the pesharim and TgJon reflect the interests of this elite and incorporate individual exegetical traditions that were current amongst its members. Differences between these two types of writing may echo the existence of different priestly groups within this elite and/or reflect changes that took place within this elite after 70 CE.

17 As argued by, e.g., J. Magness, 'Heaven on Earth: Helios and the Zodiac Cycle in Ancient Palestinian Synagogues', *DOP* 59 (2007), pp. 1–52. For criticism of Magness, see Weiss, 'Communal Leaders'.

18 Think, for instance, of the works of Josephus, who portrays himself as a priest (*Life* 1–6, 28). Priestly origins have also been proposed for mystical literature; see especially R. Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004); also Alexander, 'What Happened', pp. 18–20, with pushback from P. Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011 [2009]) pp. 13–17; R. Boustan, 'Rabbinization and the Making of Early Jewish Mysticism', *JQR* 101 (2011), pp. 482–501.

19 Alexander, 'What Happened', p. 18.

20 P.V.M. Flesher, 'The Literary Legacy of the Priests? The Pentateuchal Targums of Israel in Their Social and Linguistic Context', in B. Olsson and M. Zetterholm (eds.), *The Ancient Synagogue From Its Origins until 200 CE: Papers Presented at an International Conference at Lund University, October 14–17, 2001* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2003) pp. 467–508; see also B. Mortensen, *The Priesthood in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Renewing the Profession* (2 vols., SAIS, 4, Leiden: Brill, 2006); Alexander, 'What Happened', pp. 16–18.

21 On the importance of cumulative evidence for the activities of post-70 priests, see M.J. Grey, 'Jewish Priests and the Social History of Post-70 Palestine' (PhD diss., University of North Caroline at Chapel Hill, 2001), https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/dissertations/np193b18d.

1 Parallels between the Pesharim and TgJon

As a first step in my argument, let me discuss some of the more striking parallels between the Qumran commentaries and TgJon. As I aim to show, the commonalities between these types of writing reach beyond the individual exegetical parallels discussed in previous scholarship. In addition to exegetical parallels pertaining to Hos. 2:10–12 and Hab. 1:16–17, I will therefore adduce a common text-tradition in Nah 3:6 and point to the issues of messianism and eschatology, which feature prominently in both TgJon and some of the pesharim. Taken together, these parallels demonstrate that pesher exegesis and the targumic tradition did not develop in isolation from each other, but reflect a common intellectual milieu.

1.1 *A Shared Textual Tradition*

Textual overlaps between TgJon and ancient Jewish manuscripts such as the Qumran Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIs^{a}) support the antiquity of some of the Targum's readings.[22] A noteworthy case occurs in Nah 3:6, where TgJon shares a reading with Pesher Nahum (4Q169) against all other witnesses.

Nah 3:6 MT contains the enigmatic construction ושמתיך כראי, which is most commonly translated: 'and I will make you a gazingstock'.[23] In the Pesher (4Q169 3–4 iii 2), כראי appears as כאורה, a passive participle of the post-biblical Hebrew root כא״ר (or כע״ר), 'to be repulsive'.[24] The same root features in the interpretation of this verse, as the Pesher foretells that all Israel shall repulse (כארום) the Seekers after Smooth Things (4Q169 3–4 iii 4). TgJon to Nah. 3:6 uses the same root as the Pesher, this time spelt with *ayin*: 'and I shall make you repulsive (מכערא) in the eyes of everybody that sees you'. In contrast to the Pesher, TgJon offers a double reading of the verse, suggesting its familiarity with both the Masoretic reading and the variant.[25] Even so, the semantic

22 Gordon, *Studies*, pp. 62–67, with references in n. 3. Unsurprisingly, these shared readings also played a role in Zeitlin's arguments for a late dating of the Scrolls (which, in his view, depended on the Targum); see S. Zeitlin, 'The Hebrew Scrolls: Once More and Finally', *JQR* 41 (1950), pp. 1–58 (20–32).

23 Deriving ראי from ראה״. For alternative etymologies, see P.B. Hartog, 'Scribe or Scribbler? An Inquiry into Variant Readings between the Nahum *Pesher* from Qumran (4QpNah) and the Massoretic Text of the book of Nahum' (MA Thesis, Leiden University, 2011) p. 51, https://www.academia.edu/1090890/Scribe_or_Scribbler_An_Inquiry_into_Variant_Readings_between_the_Nahum_Pesher_from_Qumran_4QpNah_and_the_Massoretic_Text_of_the_book_of_Nahum.

24 See Hartog, 'Scribe or Scribbler?', pp. 51–52.

25 A. Gelston, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (BHQ, 13, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2010) p. 113*; Hartog, 'Scribe or Scribbler?', pp. 52–53.

overlap and the use of the same root in the Pesher and the Targum (and not in any other witnesses) constitutes a common textual tradition in the Pesher and Targum to Nah 3:6.

1.2 *Exegetical Parallels*

The existence of common traditions in the pesharim and TgJon finds further support from exegetical parallels between these writings. Brownlee offers the most elaborate list of such parallels,[26] but not all his cases are equally persuasive. I will restrict myself to mentioning three correspondences between the pesharim and TgJon. These correspondences set the Qumran commentaries and TgJon apart from other ancient witnesses, from which these traditions are absent. Taken together they therefore point to the presence of a shared exegetical stock into which both the pesharim and TgJon tap.

In Hos. 2:12, the Lord proclaims, 'I shall uncover her shamelessness to the eyes of her lovers'. In light of this verse's co-text, the 'lovers' stand metaphorically for the Baalim mentioned in Hos. 2:10, 15, and 19: The entire speech in Hos. 2:4–25 paints how Israel shall leave its idols and turn to God, its 'first husband' (2:9).[27] In Pesher Hosea A and TgJon, however, the lovers in Hos. 2:12 are not taken as a reference to idols, but to strange nations. 4Q166 2:12–14 comment:

> Its interpretation: that he has stricken them with famine and nakedness, to be a sham[e] and a scorn in the eyes of the peoples on which they have leaned—and they shall not be able to rescue them from their distress.

TgJon differs from the Pesher in offering a double reading of מאהביה, but implies the same equation with nations as the Pesher: 'And now I will reveal her nakedness to the eyes the nations, her lovers'. This interpretation may be inspired by other passages in Hosea, which condemn Israel for turning to Assyria rather than God for help (Hos. 5:13–15) and speak of this move towards Assyria as 'hiring lovers' (Hos. 8:9–10). Even so, this shared deviation from the co-text of Hos. 2:12—which is absent from the other ancient witnesses to this verse—is remarkable and suggests that 4QpHos and TgJon share here a common exegetical tradition.

26 Brownlee, 'Habakkuk Midrash'.

27 On the equation of 'lovers' with 'idols' in Hos. 2:12, see Hartog, *Pesher and Hypomnema*, pp. 261–262 (with references).

A second exegetical tradition shared between the pesharim and TgJon concerns Hab. 2:20b.[28] The MT of this verse reads:

וה׳ בהיכל קדשו הס מפניו כל הארץ

The Lord is in his holy temple. Be silent before him, all the earth!

As S. Noll has shown, the interjection הס can have connotations of reverence and fear, and both connotations feature in the ancient witnesses.[29] Yet 1QpHab and TgJon stand out for connecting this verse with the end of idols and their worshipers. The Pesher comments on this verse (1QpHab 13:1–4): 'Its interpretation concerns all the people who serve stone and wood, and on the day of judgement God shall finish all who serve idols and all the wicked from the earth'.

References to the day of judgement and the destruction of the wicked are absent from TgJon to Hab. 2:20b—which simply reads 'all the idols of the earth shall perish before his face'—but they do occur in TgJon to Zeph. 1:7 and Zech.2:17(13). These verses and Hab. 2:20 exhibit thematic similarities (i.e., a reference to the Lord in his temple) and the MT of each verse contains the phrase הס מפני. In Zephaniah and Zechariah, TgJon renders this formula as 'all the wicked shall come to an end before the Lord'. Moreover, Zeph. 1:7—both in Hebrew and in Aramaic—mentions the 'day of the Lord', which presumably informed the judgement theme in the Pesher's interpretation of Hab. 2:20 and a targumic tosefta to Zech.2:17(13).[30] These intricate connections between 1QpHab, TgJon to these three verses, and the targumic tosefta to Zech.2:17(13) speak against a direct literary dependence of TgJon to Hab. 2:20 on 1QpHab. At the same time, the correspondences between the Targum and the Pesher to Hab. 2:20—particularly their joint focus on idol worship—suggest the existence of a shared interpretative tradition in which both writings participate.[31]

28 On this parallel, see Zeitlin, 'Hebron Pogrom', p. 150; Brownlee, 'Habakkuk Midrash', pp. 175–176; Gordon, *Studies*, pp. 89–90.

29 S. Noll, *The Semantics of Silence in Biblical Hebrew* (SSLL, 100, Leiden: Brill, 2020) pp. 241–244. Cf. Noll's table of ancient witnesses to Hab. 2:20, Zeph. 1:7, and Zech. 2:17 (13) on p. 243.

30 Noll, *Semantics*, p. 241, states that 'all [passages] suggest a judgement context', but that seems an overstatement. Of the three verses, only the reference to the day of the Lord in Zeph. 1:7 implies a judgement context. This verse, either in Hebrew or Aramaic, may have affected the readings of the other two versions. Hab. 2:20, taken on its own, rather denotes the incomparability of the Lord to the idols described in verses 2:18–19. I am more inclined, therefore, to agree with Noll's assessment that '[t]hese three verses all seem to associate silence with reverential worship' (*Semantics*, p. 244).

31 Of course, this emphasis on idol worship is inspired by the preceding verses. Seeing that

My final example is arguably the most famous. Wieder and Brownlee argued that the interpretation of Hab. 1:15–16 in 1QpHab and TgJon reflect Roman presence in Palestine.[32] The MT of these verses reads:

> 15 כלה בחכה העלה יגרהו בחרמו ויאספהו במכמרתו על כן ישמח ויגיל 16 על כן יזבח לחרמו ויקטר למכמרתו כי בהמה שמן חלקו ומאכלו בראה

> 15 All of it he hauls up with a fish-hook, he catches it in his net, and he gathers it in his trawl. Therefore he is happy and rejoices. 16 Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his trawl, for through them is his portion fat and his food rich.

The co-text of these verses in the book of Habakkuk defines the invading Chaldaean army (cf. Hab. 1:6) as their subject. The Chaldaeans are depicted as a fisherman who catches humans—whom Hab. 1:14 compares to fish in the sea—in his nets. Because of their revenue, the Chaldaeans are portrayed as venerating their instruments and sacrificing to them. 1QpHab and TgJon interpret the two terms in verse 16 as 'weapons' (1QpHab 6:4: כלי מלחמה; TgJon: זיניה) and 'standards' (1QpHab 6:4: אותותם; TgJon: סימוותיה).[33] The mention of weapons can be taken as an explication of metaphorical language,[34] but the more specific mention of standards most likely refers to Roman *signa* worship.[35] Evid-

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none of the other ancient witnesses thematises the issue, however, I would still maintain that 1QpHab and TgJon here share an exegetical tradition. So also Gordon, *Studies*, p. 90; Noll, *Semantics*, p. 245.

32 Wieder, 'Habakkuk Scroll and the Targum'; Brownlee, 'Habakkuk Midrash'.

33 The order of the two terms differs in 1QpHab and TgJon: The Pesher appears to identify 'net' with 'standards' and 'trawl' with 'weapons', whereas the Targum does the reverse. This shows that the relationship between the two writings is not one of direct literary dependence.

34 The references to 'net' and 'trawl' in Hab. 1:16 stand metaphorically for the tools with which the Chaldaeans catch their prey—i.e., their weapons. For this reason, I am not convinced of Wood's suggestion that כלי מלחמה does not refer to weapons but more generally to 'gear of battle'. Wood derives this terminology from K.M.T. Atkinson, 'The Historical Setting of the Habakkuk Commentary', *JSS* 4 (1959), pp. 238–263 (238 n. 2), quoted in Wood, 'Pesher Habakkuk', p. 137. Atkinson, in his turn, gives K. Elliger, *Studien zum Habakuk-Kommentar vom Toten Meer* (BHT, 15, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1953) p. 187 as the source for his translation.

35 Wood ('Pesher Habakkuk', pp. 139–140) challenges the reference to 'standards' in TgJon on two grounds. First, he posits that the form סימוותיה came about through wordplay based on the frequent appearance of *samekh* and *mem* in its co-text and, thus, that 'less importance should be attributed to … the word in question, and more to the root of the word'. Second, Wood holds that the form does not derive from סימן, 'standard', but from סימה,

ence for this practice increases in the imperial period, so 1QpHab and TgJon here reflect a joint exegetical tradition that should probably be dated to that era.

1.3 *Thematic Parallels*

In addition to shared textual and exegetical traditions, the pesharim and TgJon share several thematic interests. Two themes that are prominent in both types of writing are eschatology and messianism. The pesharim exhibit a particular interest in passages that feature the phrase אחרית הימים and apply that term to the final period of history, right before the final judgement.[36] Some pesharim connect this notion of 'the latter days' with the coming of a Messiah.[37] TgJon exhibits a similar eschatological interest, consistently rendering אחרית הימים as סוף יומיא, 'the end of days',[38] and sometimes equating this final period in history with the age of the Messiah (e.g. Hos. 3:5).[39]

'treasure'. Both arguments are problematic. It is unclear to me how the possible assonance between the *samekhs* and *mems* in סימוותיה and surrounding words implies that the meaning of the word is of little importance. As regards the derivation of סימוותיה, סימה 'treasure' is grammatically possible, but this would lead to an unintelligible text. The term מכמרת in the *Vorlage* refers metaphorically to a tool of war; hence 'standards' makes better sense as a rendering of Hab. 1:16 than 'treasure'. M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Pardes, 1950) p. 980 derives the forms סמואתא and סימוותא—morphological variants of סימוותיה—from the root סימא III, a synonym of סימן, 'sign'. CAL (http://cal.huc.edu/) gives a root סימה III, with the same meaning. Both nouns are explained as loanwords from Greek *σῆμα*. For סימא, see TgPsJ Exod 32:20; for סימה, see TgJon Jer 4:21 (rendering Hebrew נס) and TgJon Jer 6:1.

36 A. Steudel, 'אחרית הימים in the Texts from Qumran', *RevQ* 16/62 (1993), pp. 225–244. On eschatology in the pesharim, see Hartog, *Pesher and Hypomnema*, pp. 238–251 (with references); P.B. Hartog, '"The Final Priests of Jerusalem" and "The Mouth of the Priest": Eschatology and Literary History in Pesher Habakkuk', *DSD* 24 (2017), pp. 59–80.

37 On messianism in the Scrolls, see J. Zimmermann, *Messianische Texte aus Qumran: Königliche, priesterliche und prophetische Messiasvorstellungen in den Schriftfunden von Qumran* (WUNT, 2/104, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); J.J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2nd ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

38 On eschatology in TgJon, see R.P. Gordon, 'Targumists as Eschatologists', in *Congress Volume Göttingen 1977* (VTSup, 29, Leiden: Brill, 1978) pp. 113–130; L. Smolar and M. Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* (New York: Ktav, 1983) pp. 221–227; Flesher and Chilton, *Targums* pp. 196–197.

39 On messianism in TgJon, see S.H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation: The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1974) pp. 33–103; B.D. Chilton, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah Targum* (JSOTSup, 23, Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982) pp. 86–96; P. Humbert, 'Le messie dans le targum des prophètes', *RTPCPP* 44 (1911), pp. 5–46; P.S. Alexander, 'The Rabbis and Messianism',

Yet eschatology and messianism may also play a role when the phrase אחרית הימים is missing, as is evident, e.g., from Isa. 10:27–34. Both 4QpIsa[a] and TgJon read this passage as describing the advent of an eschatological enemy who is defeated by a messianic figure. The fragmentary preservation of the Pesher precludes a certain identification of this enemy, but the interpretation of Isa. 10:33–34 suggests that it concerns the Kittim—i.e., the Romans.[40] In its interpretation of 10:34, the Pesher presumably read באדיר not as 'with its grandeur', but as 'by the mighty one'. The word used in interpretation—גדולו or גדולי—can be read as either a singular or a plural, but given the singular in the lemma and the messianic interpretation of Isa. 11:1–5 the singular reading is the more probable. Thus the word refers to a messianic figure who will defeat the Kittim (4Q161 8–10 12 [Allegro 8–10 8]).[41] TgJon offers a similar reading of these verses.[42] It identifies the eschatological enemy whose advent is depicted in Isa. 10:27–32 as 'Sennacherib the king of Assyria' (verse 32), but, as many scholars have noted, the Assyrian king is here 'depicted in terms which strongly suggest that the Targumist had Titus in mind'.[43] Like the Pesher, therefore, the Targum applies these verses to the coming of the Romans and predicts the imminent destruction of this invading force by the hands of a messiah: 'And it will come to pass in that time that his stroke will pass from you, and his yoke from your neck, and the Gentiles will be shattered before the Messiah' (Isa. 10:27).[44] Hence, this eschatological-messianic reading of Isa. 10:27–34 provides another case of a shared tradition or interest in the pesharim and TgJon.[45]

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in M. Bockmuehl and J. Carleton Paget (eds.), *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (London: T&T Clark, 2007) pp. 227–244 (229–231); A. Houtman, 'He Will Reveal His Messiah: Messianism in Targum Jonathan to the Twelve', in H.-J. Fabry (ed.), *The Books of the Twelve Prophets: Minor Prophets—Major Theologies* (BETL, 295, Leuven: Peeters, 2018) pp. 243–258. Specifically on Hos. 3:5, see Humbert, 'Le messie', p. 9; Houtman, 'Messianism', pp. 247–248.

40 On the Kittim in the pesharim denoting the Romans, see P.B. Hartog, 'Kittim: II: Judaism', in C. Helmer et al. (eds)., *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (vol. 15, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017) cols. 386–387. Contrast H. Eshel, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean State* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) pp. 96–98, who suggests that these lines in 4QpIsa[a] reflect Cleopatra's campaign against Ptolemy Lathyrus in 103–102 BCE.

41 Line numbers follow M.P. Horgan's edition in PTSDSSP 6B.

42 On the various targumic renderings of these verses, see P. Grelot, 'Le targoum d'Isaïe, X, 32–34 dans ses diverses recensions', *RB* 90 (1983), pp. 202–228.

43 Smolar and Aberbach, *Studies*, p. 78. See now also S.L. Boyd, 'Sennacherib's Successor: Titus and Anti-Roman Rhetoric in TgJon to Isa. 10:32', *ArS* 17 (2019), pp. 67–86.

44 Trans. B.D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazer, 1987) p. 27.

45 So also Grelot, 'Le targoum', p, 226, who writes on the Pesher: 'Le texte est extrêmement

2 Pesher and Targum: A Shared Intellectual Context

The prominent interest in eschatology and messianism in the pesharim and TgJon points to a shared purpose between these writings: Both make the words of ancient prophets relevant for later times by reading them as predicting events in the time of their interpreters. For both the pesharim and TgJon, the Roman presence in Palestine appears to have been a particularly fruitful—though by no means the sole—impetus for such eschatological readings. As a result of this common approach towards the ancient prophets, both the pesharim and TgJon console their readers by presenting their historical experiences as being part of a larger, divine plan, which shall soon reach its zenith at the final judgement.

The common purpose of the pesharim and TgJon and the textual and exegetical traditions that these writings share suggest that the pesharim and TgJon originated in the same intellectual context.[46] A key feature of this shared context is its scholarly or intellectual nature. Both the pesharim and TgJon contain intricate readings and interpretations of their base texts, which required the expertise of scholars trained for this type of exegetical work. This expertise was not widespread, as studies on literacy rates in Hellenistic and Roman Palestine have shown, but belonged to a relatively small intellectual elite.[47] The temple in Jerusalem probably constituted a major hub of intellectual activity, but members of this scholarly elite could be found across Hellenistic and Roman Palestine and upheld contacts with scholarly groups elsewhere—most notably in Egypt.[48] It is within this intellectual elite that the traditions common to the pesharim and TgJon must be situated.

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fragmentaire, mais il est appliqué … à une perspective historique où il est question de l'invasion de Kittîm (= Romains)' (226).

46 For a similar suggestion as regard TgJon and LXX Isaiah, see L.H. Brockington, 'Septuagint and Targum', *ZAW* 66 (1954), pp. 80–86. In view of new evidence, we can move beyond Brockington's analysis to pinpoint more precisely what the common stock from which the pesharim and TgJon (and presumably also the Septuagint) tapped looked like and to make novel suggestions as to the character of the intellectual background shared by these traditions.

47 See C. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ, 81, Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001); the work of A. van der Kooij, including his 'Scholars and Officials in Early Judaism: The *Sôfer* of Jesus Ben Sira', in R.X. Gauthier, G.R. Kotze, and G.J. Steyn (eds.), *Septuagint, Sages, and Scripture: Studies in Honour of Johann Cook* (VTSup, 172, Leiden: Brill, 2016) pp. 190–204; and also A. van der Kooij and J. Cook, *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version* (CBET, 68, Leuven: Peeters, 2012) pp. 15–62.

48 See Hartog, *Pesher and Hypomnema*, pp. 41–63; P.B. Hartog, 'The Qumran Pesharim and

In Jewish literature from the 2nd century BCE through the 2nd century CE, members of this intellectual elite are variously portrayed as a 'scribe' (סופר), 'priest' (כהן), or 'sage' (חכם and other terms). Each of these individuals can be cast in the role of a leading scholar, and overlap between these classifications is common—as in the case of Ezra, whom Neh. 8:9 portrays as both priest and scribe. At the same time, the different terms suggest that within the small intellectual elite of Hellenistic and Roman Palestine different tendencies may have persisted. The rarity of 'scribe' terminology in the Qumran corpus, for instance, contrasts with the predominance of ספר/סופר terminology in other corpora, including TgJon, which may employ Aramaic ספר to render Hebrew נביא.[49] This suggests that the authors of the pesharim and TgJon did not conceive of their own scholarly activities in the same terms and, notwithstanding the similarities between their writings, may have had different aims and used different methods. The differences between both types of writing confirm this. It appears, therefore, that variety obtained within the intellectual elite of ancient Judaism, and that the pesharim and TgJon occupied different positions within that elite.

In contrast to Zeitlin's and Brownlee's suggestions, the common ancient Jewish stock into which both the pesharim and TgJon tapped did not take the form of a proto-targum.[50] Even though Aramaic translations of larger passages existed in the late Second Temple period (as evidenced by the Qumran finds),[51] the commonalities between the pesharim and TgJon seem to point rather to the circulation of individual traditions, often associated with specific scriptural

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Alexandrian Scholarship: 4Q163/Pesher Isaiah C and Hypomnemata on the Iliad', *JAJ* 8 (2018), pp. 344–364 (360–363).

49 R. Hayward, 'Some Notes on Scribes and Priests in the Targum of the Prophets', *JJS* 36 (1985), pp. 210–221; D. Orton, *The Understanding Scribe: Matthew and the Apocalyptic Ideal* (London: T&T Clark, 1989) pp. 55–58; A.J. Saldarini, '"Is Saul also among the Scribes?" Scribes and Prophets in *Targum Jonathan*', in C.A. Evans (ed.), *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition* (London: T&T Clark, 2000) pp. 375–389.

50 Wieder's and Brownlee's views should be understood in light of a more general tendency in their times to reckon with an early proto-Targum. Cf., e.g., Delekat's suggestions that LXX Isaiah reflects a translation of Isaiah into Aramaic: L. Delekat, 'Ein Septuagintatargum', *VT* 8 (1958), pp. 225–252.

51 The Qumran collection has yielded translations into Aramaic of Job (4QtgJob; 11QtgJob) and Leviticus (4QtgLev). Although both translations are commonly referred to as targums ('tg'), they are no direct forerunners of the later targumim. See D. Shepherd, *Targum and Translation: A Reconsideration of the Qumran Aramaic Version of Job* (SSN, 45, Assen: Van Gorcum, 2004). The book of Tobit was preserved in both Hebrew and Aramaic, which further demonstrates the practice of translations between these languages. See J.A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit* (CEJL, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2003) pp. 18–28.

passages. Apart from the evidence provided by the pesharim, TgJon, and possibly the Septuagint,[52] 4Q583 1 1–2 offers a clue as to what these traditions may have looked like. As Kottsieper points out in his description of pre-targumic renderings of scriptural passages into Aramaic, these lines contain an Aramaic translation of Isa. 14:31–32 as part of a larger prophetic work palaeographically dated to the 1st century BCE.[53] Such translations and interpretations, in both Hebrew and Aramaic, presumably circulated amongst the members of this elite and were taken up by the authors of the pesharim and TgJon as they composed their exegetical works.

If we attempt to locate the tradition to which both the pesharim and TgJon belonged on the map of ancient Judaism, it may be worthwhile to note that the early rabbinic movement rejected the type of eschatological readings represented in these writings. Smelik has shown that the early rabbinic movement in Palestine did not accept the targumim as authoritative and only later, after they had reached such a status in Babylonia, embraced these Aramaic translations.[54] For Flesher, this initial rejection of TgJon by the rabbis is indicative of TgJon's priestly origins;[55] other indications include its dialect, for which the Jerusalem priests would have served as 'a support structure, both educational and financial',[56] and the possibility of priestly leadership in the synagogues, where TgJon originated.[57] In like vein, Mandel has shown that the rabbis rejected the type of eschatologically-oriented readings encountered in the pesharim. For Mandel, the rabbinic technique of *petihah* exegesis is a response to pesher-type interpretation, which directed the reference of prophetic passages away from extra-biblical events (as in the pesher) to events nar-

52 Correspondences between the Septuagint and TgJon might reflect the circulation of individual exegetical traditions. See Brockington, 'Septuagint and Targum'. On parallels between the Septuagint and TgJon, see J. Joosten, 'Des targumismes dans la Septante?', in T. Legrand and J. Joosten (eds.), *The Targums in the Light of Traditions of the Second Temple Period* (JSJSup, 167, Leiden: Brill, 2014) pp. 54–71; D.J. Shepherd, J. Joosten, and M. van der Meer (eds.), *Septuagint, Targum and Beyond: Comparing Aramaic and Greek Versions from Jewish Antiquity* (JSJSup, 193, Leiden: Brill, 2019).

53 I. Kottsieper, 'Das Aramäische als Schriftsprache und die Entwicklung der Targume', in Legrand and Joosten (eds.), *The Targums in the Light of Traditions of the Second Temple Period*, pp. 17–53 (18). For the edition, see É. Puech, *Qumrân grotte 4: XXVII: Textes araméens deuxième partie: 4Q550–4Q575a, 4Q580–4Q587 et appendices* (DJD, 37, Oxford: Clarendon, 2009) pp. 447–452.

54 W.F. Smelik, 'Language, Locus, and Translation between the Talmudim', *JAB* 3 (2001), pp. 199–224.

55 Flesher, 'Literary Legacy', p. 469.

56 Flesher, 'Literary Legacy', p. 478.

57 Flesher, 'Literary Legacy', pp. 482–486. Cf. the works cited in nn. 18–19 above.

rated in the Pentateuch.[58] Mandel does not ascribe this rabbinic rejection of pesher exegesis to the latter's priestly background; yet the interest of the Qumran scrolls in things priestly has regularly been noted and probably points to a priestly provenance for most of the Scrolls.[59] With respect to the pesharim it is worth nothing that the Teacher of Righteousness—the implied commentator in (some of) the Qumran commentaries—is portrayed as a priestly figure (4QpPs^{a} iii 13; probably also ii 18–19; cf. 1QpHab 2:5–10, where the portrayal of 'the Priest' is built on the priestly image of the Teacher).[60] This would define the pesharim—at least those in which the Teacher features—as priestly writings.[61]

It seems warranted, therefore, to attribute shared traditions between TgJon and the pesharim to their participation in an elite priestly tradition. This tradition was not internally homogeneous, but it did develop and transmit exegetical traditions, regularly of an eschatological and messianic tenor, which found their way into both the Qumran commentaries and TgJon. As it appears, certain strands of this tradition continued after 70 CE. Hence, parallels or alleged points of contact between the Scrolls and post-70 traditions—think, e.g., of similarities between Karaism and pesher exegesis,[62] or the appearance of the Damascus

58 P. Mandel, 'Midrashic Exegesis and its Precedents in the Dead Sea Scrolls', *DSD* 8 (2001), 149–168 (esp. 163).

59 On priests as authoritative interpreters in the Qumran scrolls, see S.D. Fraade, 'Interpretive Authority in the Studying Community at Qumran', in his *Legal Fictions: Studies of Law and Narrative in the Discursive Worlds of Ancient Jewish Sectarians and Sages* (JSJSup, 147, Leiden: Brill, 2011) pp. 37–67; M. Grossman, 'Priesthood as Authority: Interpretive Competition in First-Century Judaism and Christianity', in J.R. Davila (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (STDJ, 46, Leiden: Brill, 2003) pp. 117–131. Cf. also M. Goodman, 'The Qumran Sectarians and The Temple In Jerusalem', in C. Hempel (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Texts and Context* (STDJ, 90, Leiden: Brill, 2010) pp. 263–273, who argues that the inhabitants of Qumran retained ties with the Jerusalem temple.

60 See Hartog, '"The Final Priests of Jerusalem"'.

61 I leave aside references to prophets in the pesharim and TgJon, as they do not do much to map these writings onto ancient Judaism. Both works, however, present the exegetes whose insights they contain as continuing the activities of the ancient prophets. Chilton, *Glory of Israel*, pp. 52–56; Flesher and Chilton (*Targums*, pp. 175–178) call attention to the formula 'the prophet said', which the Targum may add without a peg in the base text and may, according to Chilton, stress the prophetic character of the targumist's or *meturgeman*'s activity. For an alternative view, see Gordon, *Studies*, p. 81. The pesharim, most famously in 1QpHab 6:12–7:14, portray the Teacher as receiving the same kind of revelation as the ancient prophets, albeit in a later period in history.

62 Such similarities were noted already by N. Wieder, *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism* (London: East and West Library, 1962), but their import is contested. Some, such as Erder, would argue for a direct dependence of Karaite exegetes on the Scrolls—presumably through medieval manuscript finds in the Dead Sea area—whereas others, such as Polliack, paint

Document in the Cairo Genizah—need not reflect the continuous appeal of Essenism, but rather reflect the ongoing workings of a broader priestly tradition in which the pesharim took part.[63]

3 Conclusion

The Qumran pesharim and TgJon originated from a common—though not uniform—intellectual tradition in which the eschatological reading of the ancient prophecies was a central concern. This tradition did not take the form of a clearly defined proto-targum, but consisted of individual textual and interpretative traditions, often attached to smaller scriptural passages, which found their way into the pesharim and TgJon. The scholarly character of both types of writing situates this tradition within the intellectual elite of ancient Judaism. More specifically, the rabbinic rejection of both pesher exegesis and the early targumim, combined with the prominent position that priests occupy in both writings, suggest a priestly background for both the Qumran commentaries and the Targum.

a more nuanced picture. See Y. Erder, 'The Karaites and the Second Temple Sects', in M. Polliack (ed.), *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) pp. 119–143; Y. Erder, 'Understanding the Qumran Sect in View of Early Karaite Halakhah from the Geonic Period', *RevQ* 26.3(103) (2014), pp. 403–423, DOI: 10.2143/RQ.26.3.3178220; M. Polliack, 'Wherein Lies the Pesher? Re-Questioning the Connection between Medieval Karaite and Qumran Modes of Interpretation', *JSIJ* 4 (2005), pp. 151–200.

63 Schechter already posited a connection between the Cairo Genizah manuscripts of the Damascus Document (CD) and earlier sects, presumably those of the Zadokites. See S. Schechter *Documents of Jewish Sectaries*, Vol. 1. *Fragments of a Zadokite Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910). On Schechter's work and the reactions it evoked see, S.C. Reif, 'The Damascus Document from the Cairo Genizah: Its Discovery, Early Study and Historical Significance', in J.M. Baumgarten, E.G. Chazon, and A. Pinnick (eds.), *The Damascus Document: A Centennial of Discovery: Proceedings of the Third International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 4–8 February, 1998* (STDJ, 34, Leiden: Brill, 2000) pp. 109–131. Cf. L.H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), who argued that some traditions and writings known from the Scrolls remained in circulation post-70.