

Studies on the Text and Versions of the Hebrew Bible in Honour of Robert Gordon

Edited by

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JOSEPHUS, ONKELOS, AND JONATHAN:
ON THE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN JOSEPHUS' WORKS
AND TARGUMIC SOURCES

Arie van der Kooij

I

The purpose of this contribution is to discuss the issue of concurrences between Josephus' works (Ant. in particular), on the one hand, and Targum Onkelos (Law) and Targum Jonathan (Prophets), on the other.¹ Scholars like Thackeray, Rappaport, and Marcus have listed a number of agreements between Josephus' Ant. and Tg Jon. The agreements do raise of course the question of how to evaluate the evidence. It has been suggested by several scholars that Josephus made use of an Aramaic version which, as stated by Marcus, was 'practically identical with the traditional Targum of Jonathan'.² Others, however, doubt whether the evidence is strong enough for such an assumption. According to Attridge 'the evidence... for the use of *targum* is slender at best' (Attridge 1984: 211).³ In this contribution to the Festschrift in honour of Robert Gordon I would like to investigate this issue a little further, especially since this is in line with one of his own comments on the whole matter: 'the full extent of Josephus' acquaintance with Aramaic and, in particular, Targumic sources is a subject worthy of further investigation' (Gordon 1994: 22).⁴

First of all I will present examples of agreements between Josephus and the targumic sources, Tg Jon in particular, examples which in my

¹ This contribution is the revised version of a paper presented at the Vth Congress of the International Organization for Targumic Studies, held on 12–13 July 2007 in Lubljana.

² Marcus (1966: x). See also Thackeray (1929: 82); Rappaport (1930: xx); Brownlee (1956: 182); Schalit (1967: xxxi); Piovanelli (1992: 32). Feldman (1988: 458) seems to refer to the oral targum in the synagogue.

³ In his dissertation (Attridge 1976: 31f.) he states that in 'only a few passages he may have had a written Aramaic source'.

⁴ As indicated I will concentrate on Tg Onk and Tg Jon, leaving out of consideration the issue of agreements between Josephus and other targumic versions (on this matter, see Feldman 1988: 459–460).

view are the most significant ones. Then the question will be dealt with whether these agreements point to the use of an Aramaic version, or not. Finally, I will add some comments on the milieu of both Josephus and the authors of the Aramaic version, ascribed to Onkelos and Jonathan, examining whether they may share a common background.

II

A. *First, Examples of Specific Terms in Aramaic*

1. According to Exod. 28.39–40, the ‘girdle’ (אַבְנֵי־טַבַּיִט) is part of the vestments for Aaron and his sons. Josephus: ‘Moses gave it the name of abaneth (ἄβανήθ), but we have learnt from the Babylonians to call it hemian (ἡμίαν)’ (Ant. 3.156). The latter word is the equivalent found in Tg Onk (הַמִּיָּן).⁵
2. Other examples are the well-known cases of ‘chaanaeae’ (χααναίας) in Ant. 3.151, meaning ‘the priests’, a Hellenized form of Aramaic כַּהֲנַיִם, and ‘anarabaches’ (ἀναραβάχης), *ibid.*, signifying ‘the high priest’ (Aramaic כַּהֲנַן רַבָּא).
3. There is yet another term, to be found in Ant. 8.95 (and see B.J. 5.226, 228), which has not been discussed in this connection so far: γείσιον or γείσον. It refers to a parapet surrounding the temple, having a height of three cubits. It was built in order to keep the multitude from entering the court of the priests. Josephus tells us that it was called *geision* ‘in the native tongue’ (Ant. 8.95; ‘and θριγκός by the Greeks’). The latter carries the meaning ‘fence of any sort’. According to Maier the term *geision* is to be understood as being derived from the root חצה ‘to divide’ (Maier 1997: 153, 155). It seems to me more plausible, however, to regard *geision* as a Hellenized form of the Aramaic גִּוִּיתָא, which is part of the expression גִּוִּיתָא דְרַתָּא in Tg Ezek. 44.17, ‘the inner court’, i.e. the court of the priests.
4. In Ant. 3.252 it is stated that the Hebrews call the fiftieth day after the period of the forty-nine days of the ‘Weeks’, asartha (ἄσαρθά).

⁵ The same is true for Tg Neof, but not for Tg PsJon.

Josephus then explains that this term, which is to be considered Aramaic, denotes 'fiftieth'. At first sight this may seem strange, but his remark is fully understandable because the word refers to the fiftieth day after Pesach, i.e. the concluding feast of the Pesach festival. This term, used this way, is also found in Tg Onk Num. 28.26. It reads 'On the day of the first fruits, when you present a new offering before the Lord at your *festive gathering* (עֲצֵרְתָּא; MT: 'feast of weeks'); it should be a sacred occasion for you'. It here denotes a specific day, the day after having completed seven weeks (cf. PsJon). Notably, the equivalent in Hebrew (עֲצֵרָת) can have the same meaning as is for example clear from a passage in the Mishnah (Hag. 2.4).

5. 1 Kgs. 4.7

In the section dealing with the provincial governors of Solomon (cf. 1 Kgs. 4.7), Josephus uses the Greek στρατηγός (Ant. 8.35). The same word, being borrowed from the Greek,⁶ is employed in Tg 1 Kgs. 4.7: Solomon had twelve 'officers' put in charge of all Israel. The same term (אֲסִטְרֵיגִי) also occurs at other places (e.g. verse 5; 5.7, 30; 9.23; 22.48).

B. *The Following Examples Are of an Exegetical Nature*

6. Josh. 2.1

Ant. 5.7–8: The spies went to Jericho, and retired to 'the inn' of Rahab;

Tg: the spies went to Rahab, 'the innkeeper' (MT: Rahab, 'the harlot').

Both share the same interpretation, based on the view that hostesses, keepers of public houses, were at the same time 'harlots'. However, in the case of the two harlots in 1 Kgs. 3.16 Josephus, speaking of 'harlots' like in MT, does not agree with the Tg ('innkeepers').

7. 1 Sam. 1.15

Ant. 5.345: 'But, on her replying that she had drunk but water and that it was for grief at lack of children that she was *making supplication* to God'.

Tg: 'Hannah: ... I have not drunk. And I have told the sorrow of my soul *in prayer*' (MT: 'And I poured out my soul').

⁶ Cf. Tal (1975: 178).

8. 1 Sam. 2.22

Ant. 5.339: 'the women who came for worship';

Tg: 'the women who came to pray (at the gate of the tent of meeting)' (MT: 'the women who were serving').

The same interpretation is found in Tg Onk Exod. 38.8.

9. 1 Kgs. 21.27

Ant. 8.362: Ahab went 'with bare feet';

Tg: 'And Ahab... was going about barefoot' (MT: 'softly').

10. 2 Kgs. 9.20

Ant. 9.117: 'Jehu was going along rather slowly and in good order';

Tg: 'Jehu... he is driving with gentleness' (MT: 'in madness').

11. 2 Kgs. 11.14

Ant. 9.151: the king (Joash) 'standing on the platform (ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς)';

Tg: 'the king was standing upon the balcony' (MT: 'by the pillar').

The 'pillar' of MT presumably 'is imagined as supporting a balcony either in the Temple or the King's palace' (Harrington and Saldarini 1987: 310 n. 5). The Aramaic is similar to words used for the Temple portico found in Babylonian Talmud, Pes. 13b. According to Smolar and Aberbach (1983: 107) Tg 2 Kgs. 11.14 (and 23.3) refer to the royal portico in the Herodian temple (see e.g. Ant. 15.411).

The same interpretation is also found in Tg 2 Kgs. 23.3 ('And the king [Josiah] stood upon the balcony'). Cf. Josephus, Ant. 10.63: 'standing on the tribune', though the term used here is different from that in Ant. 9.151 (βῆμα cf. Ant. 4.209).

12. 2 Kgs. 25.18 (par. Jer. 52.24)

Ant. 10.149: 'the officers who guarded the temple';

Tg: 'the three temple-officers/trustees' (MT: 'the three keepers of the threshold').

It is to be noted that the Aramaic used here (pl. of אַמְרַכְל) is also the equivalent of the Hebrew phrase at other places in Tg Jon. (see Smolar and Aberbach 1983: 104).

13. Jer. 34.3

Tg: 'and you [Zedekiah] shall be carried to Babylon' (MT: 'you shall come'). The rendering may represent an attempt to harmonize the text

with Ezek. 12.13: MT 'I will bring him to Babylon...; he shall not see it'. The king could not see Babylon because he was blinded (see 2 Kgs. 25.7); hence, the rendering 'carried' in Jer. 34.3 (which, by the way, is not the same verb as in Tg Ezek. 12.13). The contradiction was also recognised by Josephus (Ant. 10.106–107, 141).⁷

14. Jer 31.38–40

The final part of Jer 31 is a prophecy in which the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem is proclaimed. As has been noted by scholars the Aramaic version of this passage contains two elements which were prominent features of the Herodian city:⁸

Tg v. 38: 'Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when the city Jerusalem shall be rebuilt before the Lord, from the tower of *Piqqus* (MT: 'of Hananel')...'

Tg v. 40: 'And every valley...to the Wadi of Kidron, as far as the corner gate, the place of *the king's race-course* (MT: 'up to the corner gate of the horses') eastward, shall be holy for the Lord'

The tower of *Piqqus* (see also Tg Zech. 14.10) is called *Hippicus* in Greek. It is one of the towers built by Herod the Great, as we know from Josephus (*War* 2.440; 5.161–165). The second element, the race-course of the king, the hippodrome, is also mentioned by Josephus (B.J. 2.44; Ant. 17.255; see also Tg Onk Gen. 14.17).

There is yet another element in this passage that agrees with information given by Josephus, which seems not to have been noted so far. Tg v. 40 contains the following clause: 'And the whole valley, the place where the corpses of the armies of the Assyrian fell' (MT: 'And the whole valley of the corpses and the ashes'). The location referred to in the Tg is best understood as the place called by Josephus 'the Camp of the Assyrians' (*War* 5.303, 504), the place which was considered to be the site where the forces of Sennacherib were decimated (2 Kgs. 19.35).

15. Jer. 38.7

Ant. 10.122: 'in honour';

Tg: 'a mighty man' (MT: 'eunuch').

⁷ See Hayward (1987: 143 note).

⁸ See e.g. Hayward (1987: 35, 135).

16. Nah. 2.9–14

Informing the reader about the prophet Nahum, Josephus offers a paraphrase of a particular passage from the book of this prophet (Ant. 9.239–241), a paraphrase which is fairly close to the wording of the Hebrew text (Nah. 2.9–14). Scholars have noted that his reading of this passage contains two elements which are in line with the interpretation as found in the Targum.⁹

(a) Nah. 2.9 (final clause): ‘but none turns back’ (MT)

Ant. 9.239: ‘But there will be no one willing’ (that is to say, to stop and remain in order to seize gold and silver);

Tg: ‘But there is no one who turns back and halts’.

Both share the same interpretation of the underlying Hebrew text, Tg being closer to it. For the plus ‘and halts’ in Tg, see Tg Jer. 46.5.¹⁰

(b) Nah. 2.11 (final clause): ‘all faces grow pale’ (MT)

Ant. 9.240: ‘and their faces will be darkened with fear’;

Tg: ‘and all their faces are covered with a coating of black like a pot’.

Both have the idea of darkness, blackness of faces in common, based on the interpretation of Hebrew פֶּאֶרֶוֹר equals פְּרוֹר ‘pot’. Notably, the expression in Tg also occurs in other places (Jer. 8.21; 14.2; Joel 2.6), partly based on the root (קדר) in Jer. 8.21 and 14.2), partly on a Hebrew reading as in Nah. 2.11 (Joel 2.6).¹¹

(c) Interestingly, there seems to be a third instance where Josephus and Tg go together, namely in v. 14 (MT: ‘and the sword shall devour your young lions’):

Ant. 9.240: ‘and no more shall lions go forth from thee to rule the world’;

Tg: ‘and the sword shall slay your princes’.

The (young) lions are understood as a metaphor for princes (Tg), as rulers of the world (Josephus), the difference being that Tg, as usual, renders the image word for word by its meaning, whereas Josephus makes the meaning explicit by adding the phrase ‘to rule the world’.

⁹ See Begg (1995: 5–22, and the literature cited there).

¹⁰ As noted by Cathcart and Gordon (1989: 137).

¹¹ As noted by Cathcart and Gordon (1989: 137).

17. Hab. 1.16

MT: 'Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his seine';

Tg: 'Therefore they sacrifice to their weapons and burn incense to their standards'.

Tg refers here to the Roman practice of *signa*-worship (Cathcart and Gordon 1989: 148). Although we do not know the way this text was understood by Josephus, there is clear evidence that this Roman practice was known to him. In B.J. 6.316 he tells about an event when, having captured the Jerusalem temple, the Romans 'carried their standards into the temple court and, setting them opposite the eastern gate, they sacrificed to them'.¹² Interestingly, the word used for 'standards' in both sources is the same since the Aramaic term (𐤏𐤍𐤃) has been borrowed from the Greek (σημαία).¹³

In addition it may be noted that, as has been observed by scholars, 1QpHab. 6.3–5 offers an interpretation which is very much the same: 'they offer sacrifices to their standards and their weapons are the object of their worship'. There is a difference though, since in the Qumran pesher the choice of 'standards' represents an explanation of 'net' in the first part of the sentence, whereas in Tg the second part of the verse has been interpreted that way ('standards' for 'seine'). It is an interesting case of agreement between this writing of Qumran and Tg, but it does not seem to require the idea of Tg being dependent here on this text of Qumran, or the other way around.¹⁴

III

It should now to be asked whether the agreements presented above¹⁵ do point to the use of a written Aramaic version by Josephus, as has been argued by scholars. To cite Brownlee, '[t]he evidence drawn from Josephus, well distributed through the historical books of the Prophetic canon, proves the existence of a targum in Josephus' day which

¹² Cf. Cathcart and Gordon (1989: 148).

¹³ Cf. Hayward (1987: 19).

¹⁴ See Cathcart and Gordon (1989: 149), and more in particular, Gordon (1994: 90–95). For the Semitic background of the Roman practice, see Dirven (2005).

¹⁵ Scholars like Rappaport and Brownlee have noted other examples as well but most of them are less significant.

is organically related to the extant Targum of Jonathan' (Brownlee 1956: 182). This is, however, hardly plausible. First, the knowledge of specific words in Aramaic, such as the ones related to the temple, is best understood as being due to the fact that Josephus was familiar with Aramaic.¹⁶ Second, the remaining cases are more easily explained as due to common exegesis since the evidence is very limited indeed and does not require the assumption of a written Tg. Furthermore, Josephus' version of Nah. 2.9–14 displays agreement with Tg at a few points only, whereas as a whole it is different from Tg.¹⁷

Moreover, if Josephus was making use of a written Aramaic version this would imply that in case of Tg Onk and Tg Jon these sources would already have been available to him. This too is difficult to accept as it is likely that both targums in written form were produced in the second century AD, and not in the first century AD. True, the dating issue is a complicated one, being based on one's assumptions regarding the type of Aramaic, on the one hand, and the historical allusions, on the other. It is interesting to note, however, that there is a growing consensus for dating these targumim before 200 AD, and that, as far as the language is concerned, scholars tend to date Tg Onk and Tg Jon—at least the body of them—in the first half of the second century (before 135 AD), with Palestine as the place of origin.¹⁸

IV

As to the idea that the agreements might have been due to common exegetical traditions rather than the use of a written Targumic source, I would finally like to raise the question of whether Josephus and the authors of our Targumic sources shared a particular milieu of Jewish scholarship.¹⁹ If so, this would strengthen the hypothesis formulated above.

¹⁶ See Rajak (1983: 174–184, 230–232); Gussmann (2008: 221–223).

¹⁷ Cf. Begg 1995: 13–14.

¹⁸ For an excellent discussion of this issue, see now Kutty 2010.

¹⁹ It has been suggested that Josephus got the exegetical ideas by the oral targum in synagogal services (Feldman 1988: 458). The difficulty with this theory is the underlying idea that Tg Onk and Jon, as written targumim, were based on the practice of the oral targum. For a critical assessment of this view, see Smelik (1995: 35), and Van der Kooij (1999: 207).

The cases presented above, however, are mostly minor elements which do not provide any evidence for this idea. Yet there is a topic of a more general and fundamental significance shared by both Josephus and our Aramaic sources which favours the assumption of a common milieu of expertise and authority—the interpretation of prophecies by applying them to events in their own time.

A telling example concerns the view that the destruction of the city and the temple by the Romans in 70 AD was foretold by the ancient prophets: as to Josephus, see B.J. 6.109–110; Ant. 10.79 and 10.276, and as to Tg Jon, see e.g. Isa. 8.2; 29.1–2, and 32.14.²⁰ In the passages of Ant. 10 Josephus refers to Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel respectively. The passage in B.J. however contains a reference which is held to be uncertain (see e.g. Thackeray 1968: 406 n. b). At the end of his speech to John and the Jews, in August 70 AD, when the Romans were going to take the temple area, Josephus in trying to persuade his countrymen to surrender in order to prevent a pending disaster, argues as follows, ‘Who knows not the records of the ancient prophets and that oracle which threatens this poor city and is even now coming true’ (109). ‘For’, he continues, ‘they foretold that it would then be taken whensoever one should begin to slaughter his own countrymen. And is not the city, aye and the whole temple, filled with your corpses?’ (110). One wonders which ‘records’ and ‘oracle’ Josephus might have had in mind. I would suggest that he is referring here to 2 Kgs. 21. As to the ‘records’ one might think of v. 16 (‘Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another’), and as to the ‘oracle’, it would make sense if one assumes that he thought of vv. 12–13 of the same chapter, which contain a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem.

As to the suggestion of a common milieu, it is interesting to note that our sources—Josephus’ works and Tg Jon—clearly indicate that this type of reading prophecies was the privilege of particular persons in early Judaism.

As is well known, for Josephus there is a strong relationship between prophets, prophecy and priesthood.²¹ In Ant. 10.80 it is said, with some emphasis, that the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel were priests. As has been pointed out by scholars, Josephus being a member of an

²⁰ See Van der Kooij (1981: 170–173); Chilton (1987: 57, 63).

²¹ See e.g. Mason (1991: 267–272); Gussmann (2008: 240–249, 297–304).

illustrious priestly family, saw himself as a prophet, in line with the ancient prophets, and in particular with Jeremiah.²² 'As a priest', so he tells us in B.J.3.352, he was familiar with the interpretation of dreams and prophecies. In this connection he presents himself as follows: 'a priest himself and of priestly descent, he was not ignorant of the prophecies in the sacred books'.²³ The distinction made here, between being 'a priest' and being of priestly descent, is of great interest. This distinction is also found in the passage on Jeremiah and Ezekiel, referred to above (Ant. 10.80). Both prophets are said to be 'priests by birth', but unlike Ezekiel, Jeremiah had something extra as he 'lived in Jerusalem'. This seems to add to the authority of this prophet. This sheds light on the statement of Josephus: he was not only priest by birth, but also 'a priest', that is to say, 'a priest from Jerusalem' (*War* 1.3; cf. *Life* 1–8). In dealing with the issue of this distinction made by Josephus, Schwartz came to the conclusion that to be a priest from Jerusalem for Josephus 'was a matter of potential'.²⁴ This is true, but in my view it is possible to be more specific. To be a priest from Jerusalem was a matter of prestige and authority. The priests who were living in Jerusalem are likely to be seen as members of the priestly aristocracy, the milieu of the 'chief priests' (ἀρχιερεῖς) who held a most prominent position in the temple hierarchy. In distinction to other priests officiating in the temple, the chief priests had a *permanent* position,²⁵ and it, therefore, is understandable that they and their families were living in the city. Although we do not know whether Josephus himself ever was a member of the ruling body of chief priests, it seems clear that he belonged to the priestly nobility in Jerusalem.²⁶

But what about the scholars who were responsible for Tg Onk and Tg Jon? Tg Jon in particular contains evidence that points to a close relationship between the type of interpretation referred to above and priesthood. To begin with, it is important to note that just as with Josephus, Jeremiah is presented in Tg Proph as a priest living in Jerusalem. Tg Jer. 1.1. reads thus:

²² See e.g. Mason (1991: 271); Gussmann (2008: 295–296).

²³ See e.g. Mason (1991: 270). As to 'dreams and prophecies' compare Dan. 1.17 ('dreams and visions').

²⁴ Schwartz (1981: 135).

²⁵ See Jeremias (1976: 178–179).

²⁶ See Gussmann (2008: 203–205).

The words of the prophecy of Jeremiah the son of Hilqiah, one of the heads of the service of the priests, of the temple officers who were in Jerusalem (...)

According to this text, the prophet Jeremiah belonged to the body of the ‘chiefs of the service of the priests, the temple-officers’ (pl. of אַמְרֵכֹל). Interestingly, the phrase ‘the priests’ in MT has been interpreted here as a reference to the leading priests in the temple. The designation ‘the chiefs of the service of the priests’ is to be equated with the phrase ‘the chiefs of the priests’ as attested in writings from Qumran (see e.g. 1QM 2.1). These leading priests are also called, in our text, ‘the temple-officers’. As I have argued elsewhere these ‘officers’ are best understood as the priests who in sources of the time are designated as ἀρχιερεῖς ‘chief priests’.²⁷ Thus, unlike MT, Jeremiah is seen here as belonging to the leading priests of the temple (see above). Presumably, this is based on the view that Hilqiah was considered to be the same as the high priest at the time of king Josiah (2 Kgs. 22.8). In the light of our discussion about Josephus being a priest from Jerusalem, the final clause in the Aramaic version, ‘who were in Jerusalem’, is significant. Tg attests the idea that the leading priests were the ones who lived in the city. In comparison to Josephus, it seems that Tg is slightly more specific since it says that Jeremiah was not only a priest living in Jerusalem, but also someone who belonged to the body of the chief priests of the temple. Be this as it may, the view of Jeremiah as a most important priest is just another case of agreement between Josephus and Tg Jon. Both try to enhance the authority of Jeremiah by claiming that he belonged to the priestly aristocracy of Jerusalem.

The term ‘prophet’ is, however, not only used for a prophet in the past, like Jeremiah. It is also used for someone who is able to ‘interpret’ prophecies as is clear from Tg Isa. 21.11b:

He calls upon me from the heavens:
 Prophet, interpret for them the prophecy;
 Prophet, interpret for them what is about to come

The prophet is the one who by interpreting prophecies can tell what is ‘about to come’. Both Aramaic versions, Onk and Jon, are marked by this type of interpretation. Examples are to be found in Gen. 49; Judg. 5; 1 Sam. 2, and 2 Sam. 23, and of course in the books of the ancient

²⁷ Van der Kooij (1981: 201–202).

prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve). By telling what is about to come he announces, among other things, the ‘consolations’ to the people, more in particular to the righteous (see e.g. Tg Isa. 8.2; 18.4; 40.1; 62.12). The good news to be told by the prophet/interpreter is that Jerusalem ‘is about to be filled with people of her exiles’ (Isa. 40.2), or as Tg Isa. 54.1 put it:

Sing, O Jerusalem who was a barren woman who did not bear; shout in singing and exult, [you who were] as a woman who did not become pregnant! For the children of desolate Jerusalem will be more than the children of inhabited Rome, says the Lord.²⁸

Since the Targumic versions testify to this type of interpretation, it is reasonable to assume that their authors were ‘prophets’.

This leads to the question of who are these ‘prophets’. This is a complex issue as far as our Targumic sources are concerned, but the following brief discussion may suffice for the sake of argument. To begin with, it is important to note that in Tg Jon the prophets are clearly distinguished from the ‘scribes’. So for instance in Tg Isa. 29.10:

the prophets, the scribes, and the teachers

This listing of authorities reflects a hierarchy of scholars. The ‘prophet’ is the one who has the ability and authority of the interpretation of prophecies, something which as far as Tg Jon is concerned does not apply to the ‘scribe’, the latter being the teacher of the written Law (cf. e.g. Tg Judg. 5.9). Of the ‘teachers’ it is said in our text that they ‘were teaching you the teaching (אִוְלָפִן) of the Law’, that is to say, it was their task to teach the oral Law.²⁹

The ‘prophets’ apparently are to be regarded as the highest rank of scholars, thus carrying the highest authority. As Tg Jer. 1.1 suggests there is reason to believe that the ‘prophets’ are to be equated with the chief priests, the ‘temple officers’ in the terminology of the targum.³⁰ This is actually the way they are presented in the Didache (13.3): ‘the prophets, for they are your chief priests’. This sheds light on the fact that in all instances where MT refers to ‘priests and prophets’ in the

²⁸ See also Tg 1 Sam. 2.5b!

²⁹ See Van der Kooij (1981: 199). For a comparable listing of authorities from a rabbinic perspective, see m.Sot. 9.15. This passage distinguishes, in descending order, between ‘sages’, ‘scribes/teachers’, and ‘pupils’ (variant: ‘synagogue-servants’).

³⁰ See Van der Kooij (1981: 197–200).

temple, Tg Jon always offers the rendering ‘priests and scribes’ (see e.g. 2 Kgs. 23.2; Jer. 6.13; 14.18; 18.18). The term ‘priest’ here is parallel to the term ‘prophet’ in the list appearing in Tg Isa. 29.10 quoted above, yielding the following correspondences:

‘priests’	and	‘scribes’
‘prophets’	and	‘scribes’.

It thus seems that ‘priest’ and ‘prophet’ were taken as persons of the same rank, namely, as the ones making up the body of the leading priests of the temple. Notably, this is in line with the expression ‘the chief priests and the scribes’ to be found in the New Testament (see e.g. Mt. 20.18; 21.15; Mk 10.33). This picture explains, in my view, why the term ‘prophet’ as found in the expression ‘priests and prophets’ in MT has been translated ‘priests and scribes’ in Tg Jon.³¹ Several suggestions have been made as to the rendering ‘scribe’ for ‘prophet’ in a number of passages in Tg Jon,³² but without taking into account the issue of the hierarchy involved.

All in all, Josephus and the authors responsible for Tg Jon—and Tg Onk as well, in my view—belonged to the milieu of the leading priests, scholars who were able and authorized to interpret prophecies by applying them to their own time. They were considered the appropriate authorities for this way of reading the ancient prophecies, very much so as with another figure of great authority—the priest designated as Teacher of Righteousness in the writings of Qumran. This common milieu may help explain the common features—Aramaic terminology, exegetical ideas—between both sources discussed in this paper.

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³¹ Cf. Hayward (1987: 36–37).

³² See Van Staaldoune-Sulman (2002: 150 and the literature cited there).

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