

This pdf is a digital offprint of your contribution in F. Wilk & P. Gemeinhardt (eds), *Transmission and Interpretation of the Book of Isaiah in the Context of Intra- and Interreligious Debates*, ISBN 978-90-429-3308-8

The copyright on this publication belongs to Peeters Publishers.

As author you are licensed to make printed copies of the pdf or to send the unaltered pdf file to up to 50 relations. You may not publish this pdf on the World Wide Web – including websites such as academia.edu and open-access repositories – until three years after publication. Please ensure that anyone receiving an offprint from you observes these rules as well.

If you wish to publish your article immediately on open-access sites, please contact the publisher with regard to the payment of the article processing fee.

For queries about offprints, copyright and republication of your article, please contact the publisher via [peeters@peeters-leuven.be](mailto:peeters@peeters-leuven.be)

BIBLIOTHECA EPHEMERIDUM THEOLOGICARUM LOVANIENSIVM

CCLXXX

TRANSMISSION AND INTERPRETATION  
OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH  
IN THE CONTEXT OF INTRA- AND  
INTERRELIGIOUS DEBATES

EDITED BY

FLORIAN WILK – PETER GEMEINHARDT

PEETERS  
LEUVEN – PARIS – BRISTOL, CT  
2016

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	VII
Florian WILK – Peter GEMEINHARDT (Göttingen)	
Introduction .....	1
TEXTUAL TRANSMISSION OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH IN HEBREW	
Reinhard G. KRATZ (Göttingen)	
Die Komposition des hebräischen Jesajabuches .....	11
Noam MIZRAHI (Tel Aviv)	
Writing as Reading. Aspects of the Interpretive Transmission of Isaiah in Qumran: 4QIsa <sup>c</sup> (4Q57) for Isa 24,2.7.15 as a Case Study .....	29
ANCIENT TRANSLATIONS OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH	
J. ROSS WAGNER (Durham, NC)	
Translation and Interpretation in Old Greek Isaiah .....	63
Alberdina HOUTMAN (Amsterdam)	
Torah Study in Targum Isaiah .....	85
Arie VAN DER KOOIJ (Warmond)	
Isaiah in the Greek Bible of Symmachus and Second Century Judaism in Palestine .....	99
Francesco PIERI (Bologna)	
Die Jesaja-Kommentierung und -Übersetzung des Hieronymus	113
COMMENTARIES AND HOMILIES ON THE BOOK OF ISAIAH	
Shani TZOREF (Potsdam)	
Textuality and Identity in the Qumran Pesharim on Isaiah ....	133
Christian HENGSTERMANN (Essen)	
Metaphysik des Trishagion – Die Jesajahomilien des Origenes	167

Michael J. HOLLERICH (St. Paul, MN)	
Eusebius of Caesarea and His <i>Commentary on Isaiah: Isaiah as Evangelist and Apostle</i> . . . . .	185
Rivka ULMER (Lewisburg, PA)	
Isaiah in <i>Pesiqta de Rav Kahana</i> and <i>Pesiqta Rabbati</i> . . . . .	215

WRITINGS CONTAINING EXPLICIT CITATIONS FROM  
THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

George J. BROOKE (Manchester)	
Isaiah in Some of the Non-Scriptural Dead Sea Scrolls . . . . .	243
Maarten J. J. MENKEN†	
Quotations from the Book of Isaiah in the Gospel of Matthew .	261
Anke JOISTEN-PRUSCHKE (Mainz)	
Der Prophet Jesaja im Werk des persischen Kirchenlehrers Aphrahat – Verwendung und Interpretation . . . . .	283
Gerhard LANGER (Wien)	
Frieden, Gerechtigkeit und Tora: Ausgewählte Jesajazitate in der rabbinischen Literatur . . . . .	293
Martin TAMCKE (Göttingen)	
Die Verwendung des Jesajabuches im Dialog des Katholikos Timotheos mit dem Kalifen al-Mahdi . . . . .	315

IMITATIONS OF ISAIANIC PROPHECY

Martin KARRER (Wuppertal)	
Die Rezeption des Jesajabuches in der Johannesoffenbarung . .	331
Jan DOCHHORN (Durham)	
Die Ascensio Isaiae und das Jesajabuch . . . . .	359
Angelika NEUWIRTH (Berlin)	
Zur Jesaja-Rezeption im Koran . . . . .	373
Sebastian GÜNTHER (Göttingen)	
„Wehe dieser sündigen Gemeinde, die nicht weiß, ob ihr Gutes oder Böses widerfährt“: Jesaja, ein alttestamentlicher Prophet und seine Botschaft in der islamischen Tradition . . . . .	393
Peter GEMEINHARDT – Florian WILK (Göttingen)	
Concluding Remarks . . . . .	433

## INDEXES

ABBREVIATIONS .....	447
INDEX OF BIBLICAL REFERENCES .....	451
INDEX OF QUR'AN CITATIONS .....	461
INDEX OF ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL AUTHORS AND WRITINGS .....	463
INDEX OF MODERN AUTHORS .....	469
INDEX OF SUBJECTS, NAMES, AND PLACES .....	479

## ISAIAH IN THE GREEK BIBLE OF SYMMACHUS AND SECOND CENTURY JUDAISM IN PALESTINE

### I. INTRODUCTION

At the end of the second century (CE) a scholar named Symmachus produced a new translation of the Hebrew Bible in Greek. It was not the only version made in this century because at its beginning the literalistic version of Aquila came out, whereas the Aramaic version of Targum Onkelos to the Law and of Targum Jonathan to the Prophets also go back, basically at least, to this century, presumably to the first half of it<sup>1</sup>. These Jewish translations all originated in Palestine<sup>2</sup>.

How do these translations relate to each other? What do they tell us about the reception and interpretation of a book such as Isaiah in Jewish circles in second century Palestine? The choice of the languages involved – Greek and Aramaic – suggests that the authorities responsible for the versions of Aquila (Aq) and Symmachus (Sym) were in favour of Greek, whereas the (official) Targums obviously reflect a strong preference for Aramaic. The difference of language may also be due to a different target readership – the Aramaic speaking Eastern diaspora, on the one hand<sup>3</sup>, and the Greek speaking Western diaspora, on the other. Another difference to be noted is that, while Aq and Sym both represent versions of the Hebrew Bible as a whole, Targ Onk and Targ Jon comprise the Law and Prophets only. Moreover, the divergencies are not only a matter of language and number of books but, as I shall argue below, have also to do with matters of interpretation and theology.

The focus of this contribution is on the book of Isaiah in the version of Symmachus in comparison with the Targum to this book (Tg Isaiah). Special attention will be paid to passages where both versions share a specific interpretation as well as remarkable differences. It will be argued that these features not only reflect different concepts, but also point to different social backgrounds (*milieus*) in second-century Judaism in Palestine.

1. As for this dating, see n. 23 below.

2. The Old Syriac version, called the Peshitta, was the first translation of the Hebrew Bible that was made outside Palestine. Parts of this version go also back to the second century.

3. Compare Josephus who sent an Aramaic account of the Jewish War to “his countrymen beyond the Euphrates” (Bell. I,6).

## II. THE VERSION OF SYMMACHUS

Before dealing with some interesting passages in Sym Isaiah, a few general comments on the following two questions seem to be in order: Who was Symmachus? And what about the Greek Bible he made?

In the past the testimonies of Eusebius and Jerome were taken at face value, the result being that Symmachus was regarded as belonging to the Ebionites, one of the Jewish-Christian communities of that time. Studies by Barthélemy, Salvesen and myself<sup>4</sup>, however, have demonstrated that, in line with the account of Epiphanius and that of Palladius, Symmachus should be regarded a Jewish translator, living in Galilee, presumably in the time of emperor Severus (193-211). It is likely that, as is recorded by Epiphanius, Symmachus was a Samaritan scholar who converted to Judaism, and hence was circumcized a second time.

As is well-known, the version of Symmachus like those of Theodotion/*Kaige*-Recension (Theod/KR) and of Aquila, has been preserved very fragmentary. The evidence we have is mainly based on quotations in the margin of Greek manuscripts as well as in patristic commentaries. Interestingly enough, also a few fragments containing parts of the book of Psalms have been discovered in Egypt<sup>5</sup>. These fragments clearly indicate that the work of Sym was known among Jews in Egypt, in the third and fourth centuries CE. It is to be observed that these fragments were marked by a feature which according to Origen was also typical of the manuscripts containing the versions of Theod and Aq: the name of God being written in paleo-Hebrew script.

The version of Symmachus is praised by modern scholars for its clarity and for its good Koine usage. B. de Montfaucon, in 1713: "Interpretatio Symmachi clarissima et elegantissima omnium est"<sup>6</sup>. Studies of a more recent date offer similar statements, particularly as far as the style of the work is concerned. For example, González Luis, in his work on Sym's

4. D. BARTHÉLEMY, *Qui est Symmaque?*, in *CBQ* 36 (1974) 451-465; reprinted in Id., *Études d'histoire du texte de l'Ancient Testament* (OBO, 21), Fribourg, Universitätsverlag; Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978; A. VAN DER KOOLJ, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches: Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments* (OBO, 35), Fribourg, Universitätsverlag; Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981, pp. 221-236; Id., *Symmachus, 'de vertaler der Joden'*, in *NTT* 42 (1988) 1-20; A. SALVESEN, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (JSS MS, 15), Manchester, University of Manchester, 1991, pp. 283-297.

5. For more information, and for the text of the fragments, see J.R. BUSTO SAIZ, *La traducción de Simaco en el libro de los Salmos* (Textos y Estudios 'Cardenal Cisneros', 22), Madrid, Instituto Arias Montano, 1985.

6. B. DE MONTFAUCON, *Hexaplorum Origenis quae supersunt*, Paris, 1713, p. 90; reprinted in Migne PG 15 (1857).

version of the major prophets: “un griego claro y fluido”<sup>7</sup>. At the same time, this version is also characterized by interpretative renderings. Salvesen on Sym Pentateuch: “The translation combined the best Biblical Greek style, remarkable clarity, a high degree of accuracy regarding the Hebrew text, and the rabbinic exegesis of his day”<sup>8</sup>.

Sym however is not only praised by the moderns, but also by the ancients, that is to say, by the Fathers, in particular so by Eusebius of Caesarea and Jerome. As for the former, this is clear from his Commentary on the Old Greek of Isaiah<sup>9</sup>: first, Sym is cited far more frequently than Theod or Aq, and secondly, at a number of instances it is explicitly said to be *σαφέστερον*. Later on, Jerome too appreciated the version of Symmachus because of its translation style (close to the Hebrew but not that literal as Aq). In his article, entitled “Die jüngeren griechischen Übersetzungen als Vorlagen der Vulgata in den prophetischen Schriften”, Ziegler notes: “Am liebsten schliesst sich Hieronymus Symmachus an”<sup>10</sup>. Sym, more so than Theod and Aq, greatly influenced his Latin version<sup>11</sup>.

### III. SYMMACHUS ISAIAH AND TARGUM ISAIAH

In what follows I would like to deal with a few passages in Sym Isaiah which are of an exegetical nature. I shall start with two passages where this version shares a specific rendering with Tg Isaiah.

Isa 25,7a<sup>12</sup>

Sym	MT
καὶ καταποντιεῖ ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ πρόσωπον τοῦ ἐξουσιαστοῦ τοῦ ἐξουσιάζοντος πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν	And he (God) will destroy on this mountain the covering (טל) that is cast over all peoples

7. J. GONZÁLEZ LUIS, *La versión de Símaco a los Profetas Mayores*, Unpublished Diss., Madrid, 1981, p. 367.

8. SALVESEN, *Symmachus* (n. 4), p. 297.

9. Edition: J. ZIEGLER (ed.), *Eusebius Werke*. Bd. IX: *Der Jesajakommentar* (GCS), Berlin, Akademie-Verlag, 1975.

10. J. ZIEGLER, in ID., *Sylloge: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Septuaginta* (MSU, 10), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971, 139-228, p. 155. This article focuses on the books of the Prophets (Isa, Jer, Ezek, the Twelve) and Daniel.

11. As to the Pentateuch, see SALVESEN, *Symmachus* (n. 4), pp. 265-279.

12. For a discussion of this passage in Sym Isaiah, see also A. VAN DER KOOIJ, *The Teacher Messiah and World-wide Peace: Some Comments on Symmachus' Version of Isaiah 25:7-8*, in *JNSL* 24 (1998) 75-82.



In MT this verse is part of a passage which presents itself as a prophecy about a feast on Mount Zion (v. 6). The “covering” (and the “veil” in the second part of the verse) is best understood as a symbol of sorrow. Sym differs greatly from MT because it is not about a covering cast over all peoples but has it that God will annihilate “the face of the ruler who has power over all the nations”. The choice of ἐξουσιαστής and of the verb ἐξουσιάζω for Hebrew לֹוֹט strikes the eye, the more so since Theod and Aq, precursors of Sym, both offer another equivalent (σκοτία). The rendering of Sym likely is based on the association of the Hebrew לֹוֹט with the root שָׁלַט.

It is interesting to note that Tg Isaiah testifies to the same interpretation of the first half of v. 7: “On this mountain the face of the great one who is master over all peoples will be annihilated”. Who is the one referred to in both versions? Having quoted this passage of Sym in his commentary on Isaiah, Eusebius of Caesarea states that the expression “the ruler of all peoples” refers to the power of death. The same exegesis is to be found in Jerome’s commentary on Isaiah. This however represents a Christian exegesis (compare Rom 5,14 and 1 Cor 15,26), and not a Jewish one. Since Sym is a Jewish document it is more likely to interpret v. 7 as referring to the ruler of the world, more specifically the Roman emperor of the time. The same seems to apply to the text of Tg Isa 25,7<sup>13</sup>.

## Isa 32,15

## Sym

ἀνάψυξις ἐξ ὕψους

## MT

until is poured out on us the spirit (רוח) from on high

V. 15 marks the beginning of an announcement of salvation in ch. 32 (vv. 15-19), after the call for a mourning ritual in vv. 9-14. MT has it that the “spirit from on high” will be poured out, but instead of “spirit” Sym reads ἀνάψυξις, “respite”, “relief”. This rendering presupposes a different vocalization: רוּחַ (compare also רוּחָה) instead of רוּחַ. Thus, the period of salvation is marked here by the idea of relief, an idea that reminds one of the NT, Acts 3,20: “times of relief (καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως) may come from the presence of the Lord”. Notably, the same interpretation is also found in Tg Isaiah. According to the edition of Sperber the Aramaic version of Isa 32,15 reads “spirit”, but there is reason to believe that the Aramaic

13. Cf. B.D. CHILTON, *The Isaiah Targum* (The Aramaic Bible, 17), Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1987, p. 49. For a recent discussion of the identification, see W.D. BARKER, *The Condemned Rulers in Targum Isaiah’s Eschatological Banquet*, in G. KHAN – D. LIPTON (eds.), *Studies on the Text and Versions of the Hebrew Bible in Honour of Robert Gordon* (SupplVT, 149), Leiden – New York, Brill, 2012, 315-324.

word involved should be read (vocalized) differently, namely, as  $\eta\eta$ , “relief”: “until relief comes to us from him whose *shekhinah* is in the heavens of the height”<sup>14</sup>. This seems to be the intended reading because the same expression is found in Tg Isa 38,14 where according to the edition of Sperber the word concerned is vocalized as  $\eta\eta$ : “I lift my eyes that relief might come to me from him whose *shekhinah* is in the heavens of the height”.

By the way, it is interesting to note that the phrase in Acts 3,20 – “from the presence ( $\acute{\alpha}\pi\delta$  προσώπου) of the Lord” – strongly resembles the following expression in both passages of Tg Isaiah: “from him whose *shekhinah* is in the heavens of height”.

I now turn to yet another passage which also displays an interesting concurrence with the Aramaic version as well as interesting differences – Isa 9,5-6. As to the agreements and the differences I shall deal with them from the wider perspective of the questions concerning the conceptual world of both versions and the issue of their social background.

## Isa 9,5-6

**Sym**

νεανίας γὰρ ἐγεννήθη ἡμῖν  
 υἱὸς ἐδόθη ἡμῖν  
 καὶ ἔσται ἡ παιδεία αὐτοῦ  
 ἐπὶ τοῦ ὤμου αὐτοῦ  
 καὶ κληθήσεται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ  
 παραδοξασμός, βουλευτικός  
 καὶ ἰσχυρὸς δυνατὸς πατὴρ αἰῶνος  
 ἄρχων εἰρήνης  
 ἐπληθύνθη (var. ἐπλησθη) [γὰρ]  
 ἡ παιδεία αὐτοῦ  
 καὶ τῆς εἰρήνης αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν πέρασ  
 (var. οριον) [...]

**MT**

For to us a child is born to us,  
 a son has been given,  
 and the government (משרה) was  
 on his shoulder  
 [...]  
 Of the increase  
 of his government (משרה)  
 and of peace there will be no end  
 (קק) [...]

The Hebrew text contains twice the term משרה which conveys the notion of government, an interpretation also attested by the Septuagint, Peshitta, and Vulgate. Sym however offers ἡ παιδεία αὐτοῦ, in both instances. This rendering is based on מוסר = משרה + suffix (“his”). This interpretation is not new since it is also found in Theod/KR (παιδεία), dating to the beginning of the first century CE, whereas the version of Aquila

14. As far as one can tell on the basis of Sperber’s edition this reading is not attested by any manuscript employed by him, but it seems to have been in line with the way Kimchi interpreted our passage (cf. A. SPERBER, *The Bible in Aramaic. III: The Latter Prophets according to Targum Jonathan*, Leiden, Brill, 1962, p. 64).

(ca. 130 CE) offers μέτρον. The lexical choice of Aq is best understood as a reference to the rabbinic concept of *middah*, “measure”<sup>15</sup>. It would mean that the text of Aquila evokes the picture of a teacher-messiah who is an authority being familiar with the halachic interpretation of the Law<sup>16</sup>. The reading of Theod and Sym too seems to reflect a reading of Isa 9,5-6 according to which the royal figure to be expected is a teacher. In v. 6, the “teaching” of the messiah is related to “his peace”, which appears to be world-wide peace because, as it is stated, the peace will have no “end” (or “border”, so the variant reading).

It is interesting to note that Tg Isa offers a similar interpretation of Hebrew מְשֵׁרָה in Isa 9,5-6; it reads:

[...] he has taken *the law* upon himself to keep it;  
and his name was called before the wonderful counsellor, the mighty God,  
existing forever: ‘The messiah in whose days peace will increase upon us’.  
Great pride will belong to those who perform *the law*,  
and for those who keep peace there will be no end.

Tg introduces the notion of “keeping the law” by the messiah, in v. 6, whereas v. 7 refers to others who will do so (“those who perform the law”). The latter are presumably those who are referred to in Tg Isa 11,5: “The righteous shall be all around him (i.e., the messiah)” (cf. Tg Onk Gen 49,10). Unlike Sym, the focus here is on the keeping of the law, and not on the teaching of it. There is however another passage in Tg Isaiah where the messiah is presented as teacher. In Tg Isa 53,5b we read, “and by his teaching (אֶלְפִּינָא) his (i.e., the messiah) peace will increase upon us”. The word used here for teaching (אֶלְפִּינָא) refers to the oral teaching of the law. It is to be observed that the clause as a whole in 53,5 is quite the same as the name of the messiah in Tg Isa 9,6 (“The messiah in whose days peace will increase upon us”). Different from Sym (and Theod and Aq), in Tg the designation of the messiah is based on the Hebrew phrase שֵׁרָה-שְׁלוֹמִים only.

Sym and Tg share the idea of “teaching” (of the Law) by the messiah, which in both versions is related, in one way or another, to peace. Both versions thus have an important feature in common, as far as the messiah is concerned. It may be asked, however, whether from a conceptual or ideological point of view Sym and Tg do reflect the same ideas concerning the ‘messiah’.

15. Via Latin *mesura*? Thus Jerome in his commentary on Isaiah.

16. For *middah* in the sense of halachic exegesis, see W. BACHER, *Die exegetische Terminologie der jüdischen Traditionsliteratur*, Erster Teil, Leipzig, 1899; reprinted Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965, p. 102.

## IV. THE MESSIAH

The image of the messiah conveyed in Tg Isaiah, and in Tg Jonathan to the Prophets (Tg Prophets) as a whole, can be summarized as follows: the messiah is a royal figure, a king from the house of David, who is not only the supreme judge and teacher of the Law but also a warrior who will be successful and victorious<sup>17</sup>. As to the aspect of being a judge, see e.g. Tg Isa 28,6 (on which see below). As for his role as victorious warrior, interesting passages in Tg Isaiah are:

- 10,27: [...] and the nations will be shattered before the Messiah  
 53,8: From bonds and retribution he (i.e., the Messiah) will bring our exiles near, [...].  
 For he will take away the rule of the nations from the land of Israel  
 53,11: from the slavery of the nations he shall deliver their soul [...]

Furthermore, he is seen as a world-wide ruler because “to him shall kingdoms be obedient” (Isa 11,10). This idea is also found in Tg Zech 4,7: “And he shall reveal his messiah whose name is told from of old, and he shall rule over all kingdoms”. As has been argued by Chilton, Tg Isaiah reflects a portrait that presumably has its origin in the 70-135 period, in Palestine<sup>18</sup>. It has been suggested by scholars that this concept is best understood as part of an interpretative strategy which would have served the interests of a movement such as the Bar Kochba (Kosiba) revolt<sup>19</sup>.

It is often taken for granted that Tg Onk and Tg Jon Prophets are to be seen as documents originating in rabbinic circles. Recently, however, Alexander has advanced another view by stating that “[t]he Targum is not in origin a rabbinic institution”<sup>20</sup>. One of the issues involved is the

17. On the (royal) messiah in Tg Prophets, see B.D. CHILTON, *The Glory of Israel: The Theology and Provenience of the Isaiah Targum* (SupplJSOT, 23), Sheffield, University of Sheffield, 1983, pp. 86-96.112-117; E. LEVINE, *The Aramaic Version of the Bible: Contents and Context* (BZAW, 174), Berlin, de Gruyter, 1988, pp. 199-215; R.P. GORDON, *Messianism in Ancient Bible Translations in Aramaic and Syriac*, in M. BOCKMUEHL – J.C. PAGET (eds.), *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity*, London – New York, T&T Clark, 2007, 262-273.

18. CHILTON, *Glory* (n. 17), pp. 95-96.

19. This applies in particular to the messianic interpretation of Isa 53. See P. CHURGIN, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1927; reprinted 1980, p. 26; S.H. LEVEY, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation. The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum*, New York, Hebrew Union College, 1974, p. 67; CHILTON, *Glory* (n. 17), p. 95; CHILTON, *Isaiah Targum* (n. 13), p. 107. For a relationship between Tg Isaiah / Tg Prophets and the Bar Kochba movement, see also VAN DER KOOLJ, *Textzeugen* (n. 4), pp. 192-197.

20. P.S. ALEXANDER, *What Happened to the Jewish Priesthood after 70?*, in Z. RODGERS, with M. DALY-DENTON – A. FITZPATRICK MCKINLEY (eds.), *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne* (SupplJSJ, 132), Leiden – Boston, MA, Brill, 2009, 5-33, p. 17.

fact that targum messianism differs from rabbinic messianism (on which see below). As I have argued elsewhere there are clear indications that Tg Prophets was produced by leading priests<sup>21</sup>. Hence I agree with those scholars, including Alexander, who believe that the targums, at least the earlier ones, represent priestly documents<sup>22</sup>. In view of the type of messianism outlined above, it can be said that the leading priests responsible for the Aramaic version apparently belonged to a party that subscribed to the idea that monarchy should be seen as the ideal leadership of the Jewish nation<sup>23</sup>.

But what about the conceptual world and social background of Sym? As I have argued elsewhere, there are reasons to believe that this version represents a translation that originated in rabbinic circles<sup>24</sup>. First of all, the choice of Greek fits in with the language-policy of a particular rabbinic milieu, namely, that of leading authorities belonging to Patriarchal circles. The following references are important in this regard. R. Simeon ben Gamaliel II said: “The (biblical) books too, they have only permitted to be written in Greek” (mMeg. 1,8). According to BT Sota 49b, Rabbi

21. VAN DER KOIJ, *Textzeugen* (n. 4), pp. 197-203; ID., *Josephus, Onkelos, and Jonathan: On the Agreements between Josephus' Works and Targumic Sources*, in KHAN – LIPTON (eds.), *Studies on the Text and Versions* (n. 13), 253-267, pp. 261-265.

22. See E. KATSUMATA, *Priests and Priesthood in the Aramaic Bible*, in JAB 3 (2001) 139-160, and P.V.M. FLESHER, *The Literary Legacy of the Priests? The Pentateuchal Targums of Israel in Their Social and Linguistic Context*, in B. OLSSON – M. ZETTERHOLM (eds.), *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins until 200 C.E.*, Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell, 2003, 467-509.

23. There is a growing tendency to date Tg Prophets to the second century CE. As far as the language is concerned scholars tend to date this Targum, at least the body of it, in the first half of this century. For a recent discussion, see R.J. KUTY, *Studies in the Syntax of Targum Jonathan to Samuel* (ANES SS, 30), Leuven, Peeters, 2010. Moreover, a significant number of historical allusions to be found in Tg Isaiah in particular support this dating. Passages as Tg Isa 8,2; 29,1-2; 32,14 refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70, whereas Tg Isa 25,2 (“the temple of the nations shall never be built in Jerusalem”) alludes to plans of the Roman emperor Hadrian, in 130 CE, to build a temple for Jupiter Capitolinus in Jerusalem. Other passages such as Tg Jer 31,38-40 and Tg Zech 14,10 announce the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem as a city marked by Herodian buildings, in this way reflecting ideas which fit the 70-135 period. On the assumption that Tg Prophets emerged from rabbinic Judaism, Chilton has argued that beside an early, Tannaitic stratum Tg Isaiah also embodies later, Amoraic elements (CHILTON, *Isaiah Targum* [n. 13], pp. xxii-xxiv). However, if as has been pointed out by ALEXANDER (*Jewish Priesthood* [n. 20], pp. 16-18) the milieu from which the early Targum tradition originated is to be distinguished from rabbinic Judaism, this two strata theory is questionable.

24. VAN DER KOIJ, *Textzeugen* (n. 4), pp. 236-252. For a most recent discussion of this issue, see A. SALVESEN, *Did Aquila and Symmachus Shelter under the Rabbinic Umbrella?*, in T.M. LAW – A. SALVESEN (eds.), *Greek Scripture and the Rabbis* (CBET, 66), Leuven, Peeters, 2012, 107-125. On the basis of a careful re-reading of external sources and of a scrutiny of passages in Sym Pentateuch, she draws the conclusion that it is possible, though not certain, that the version of Symmachus was produced in a rabbinic milieu.

Judah, the Prince (son of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel II), too was in favour of Greek beside Hebrew in Palestine, and not of Aramaic<sup>25</sup>. It is also to be noted that in PT the (Greek) version of Aquila is related to rabbinic authorities (to R. Eliezer and R. Joshua, PT Meg. 71c, 8; to R. Aqiba, PT Qid. 59a)<sup>26</sup>.

A second point concerns the concept of (rabbinic) messianism<sup>27</sup>. True, given its character the version of Symmachus is not that clear and explicit regarding this topic as is the case with Tg Isaiah which abounds in paraphrastic renderings. Yet, the idea of a teacher-messiah, noted above, would make perfect sense if the version was produced in Patriarchal circles at the time of R. Judah, the Prince, in Galilee. We know from Origen that there were Jews who explained the prophecy of Gen 49,10 “as referring to the patriarch or ethnarch, who claimed descent from Judah, asserting that this line would never fail until the advent of the Messiah”<sup>28</sup>. There are traces of this idea in rabbinic sources, too. GenR 98,8 contains a story, the point of which is to establish the patriarch’s descent from Judah (the story is about a genealogical scroll, discovered in Jerusalem, in which it was written: “Hillel is descended from David”). So the patriarch (“ethnarch” [Origen]) was considered to be a leader of Davidic descent, and hence a patriarch like R. Judah, the Prince could be regarded a messianic figure. Interestingly, there is some evidence in rabbinic sources that R. Judah, the Prince was highly venerated and regarded a messianic figure<sup>29</sup>.

In this connexion I would like to draw the attention to another passage in Sym Isaiah, namely, 53,4.

**Sym**

ὄντως τὰς νόσους ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνέλαβεν  
καὶ τοὺς πόνους ἡμῶν ὑπέμεινεν  
ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐλογισάμεθα αὐτὸν ἐν ἀφῆ ὄντα  
πεπληγῶτα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τεταπεινωμένον

**MT**

Surely he has borne our sicknesses  
and carried our pains  
yet we esteemed him stricken (כַּרְסָא)  
smitten by God, and afflicted

25. On rabbis who were in favour of Greek language and Greek culture, see S. LIEBERMAN, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, New York, Feldheim, 1965, pp. 20-22. Compare also the saying of B. Kappara, pupil of R. Judah: “Let the words of the Torah be uttered in the language of Japheth (i.e., in Greek) in the tents of Shem” (GenR 36,8).

26. On this tradition, see A. VAN DER KOOIJ, *The Origin and Purpose of Bible Translations in Ancient Judaism: Some Comments*, in ARG 1 (1999) 204-214, pp. 209-210; SALVESEN, *Aquila and Symmachus* (n. 24), p. 111.

27. On this topic, see P.S. ALEXANDER, *The Rabbis and Messianism*, in BOCKMUEHL – PAGET (eds.), *Redemption and Resistance* (n. 17), 227-244, pp. 234-240.

28. N. DE LANGE, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish Christian Relations in Third-century Palestine*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 97. See Origen, Princ. IV 1,3.

29. See M. AVI-YONAH, *The Jews of Palestine: A Political History from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab Conquest*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1976, p. 58.

The interesting thing here is the rendering ἐν ἀφῆ ὄντα for Hebrew נגוע. The way Theod and Aq have translated the Hebrew is different: μεμαστιγωμένον and ἀφημένον (var. τετραυματισμένον) respectively<sup>30</sup>. How to understand the expression in Sym? Greek ἀφή carries the meaning of “infection”, or “plague” (for the latter, see e.g. Sym Ex 11,1). In the Septuagint (LXX), the word is well-known from Lev 13, the chapter on leprosy. The phrase ἐν ἀφῆ ὄντα reminds one of LXX Deut 24,8 (ἐν τῇ ἀφῆ τῆς λέπρας), a passage about someone who is a leper (see also LXX Lev 13,2). Hence it is plausible to assume that the “infection” in the text of Sym is meant to refer to the infection of leprosy. I therefore agree with Jerome who interprets the text of Sym as *hoc est in lepra*<sup>31</sup>.

It has been argued that this rendering may reflect an allusion to R. Judah, the Prince. This idea is based on the tradition found in BT Sanh. 98b where in reference to R. Judah it is said that the name of the messiah is “the leper of the house of Rabbi (= R. Judah, the Prince)” followed by the quotation of our text, Isa 53,4 (up to and including נגוע)<sup>32</sup>. This tradition attests a reading of our text which has taken the Hebrew word for “stricken” as someone who was thought having leprosy.

The agreement between this tradition and Sym Isa 53,4 might be accidental, but in light of the broader picture outlined above the agreement would fit in with the idea that the version of Symmachus originated in a rabbinic milieu closely related to R. Judah, the Prince.

## V. (ANTI-)MILITARISM

In addition to the issue of language and that of messianism the following feature of Sym Isaiah may strengthen the idea of a rabbinic background. Rabbinic doctrine of the time is characterized by an anti-militaristic stance<sup>33</sup>.

30. On the two readings assigned to Aq, see J. ZIEGLER, *Textkritische Notizen zu den jüngeren griechischen Übersetzungen des Buches Isaias*, in Id., *Sylloge* (n. 10), 43-70, pp. 65-66.

31. According to Jerome the rendering of Aq (ἀφημένον) conveys the same meaning. If so, one could say that compared to Theod and Aq, Sym made for one reason or another the same lexical choice as did Aq in this case, a choice being based on the Hebrew verb נגע in the sense of “to afflict with leprosy” (see M. JASTROW, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, 2 vols., New York, Pardes, 1950, s.v. [pi’el]).

32. See H.J. SCHOEPS, *Symmachus und der Midrasch*, in *Biblica* 29 (1948) 31-51, pp. 38-39; VAN DER KOIJ, *Textzeugen* (n. 4), p. 237. On the rabbinic tradition, see also H.L. STRACK – P. BILLERBECK, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch. I: Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*. München, Beck, 1956, pp. 66.481; LEVINE, *Aramaic Version* (n. 17), p. 209. For critical remarks on the link between Sym and this tradition, see H. HEGERMANN, *Jesaja 53 in Hexapla, Targum und Peschitta* (BFChTh.M, 56), Gütersloh, Bertelsmann, 1954, p. 58.

33. See ALEXANDER, *Rabbis* (n. 27), p. 238.

People should not rebel against the nations (Romans). In this respect it contains an element which is different from the ideology to be found in Tg Isaiah, and in Tg Prophets as a whole, because as we have seen this tradition reflects a militaristic attitude (the messiah being someone who is also a warrior). Regarding this issue I would like to deal with the following passage in Sym Isaiah, in comparison with the same passage in Tg Isaiah:

## Isa 28,6

Sym	MT	Tg
		(V. 5: In that time the Messiah of the Lord of hosts will be a diadem of joy and a crown of praise, to the remnant of his people;)
καὶ εἰς πνεῦμα κρίσεως	and a spirit of (right) judgement	and a command of true judgment
τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῆς κρίσεως	to the one who sits in judgement	to those who sit in the house of judgment, to judge true judgment
καὶ εἰς δύναμιν ἀποστρέφουσιν	and valour to those who turn back (משיבֵי)	and to give the victory to those who go forth
ἀπὸ πολέμου	the battle at the gate <sup>34</sup>	in the battle, to return them in peace to their houses.

According to MT God will be “valour” to those who turn back the battle at the gate, that is to say, the remnant will be successful in their defence of the city. The renderings of Sym and that of Tg evoke a different picture, however. The latter testifies to a militaristic view because the Messiah will be, in the end of days, the one who gives the victory to those who go forth in battle. This obviously is fully in line with the messianism of Tg Prophets. Sym on the other hand has it that God will be “a power to those who turn away (themselves, or others) from war”. Sym clearly is in favour of people that are not involved in war, in the end time, or let people not be involved in fighting, thus reflecting a pacific attitude<sup>35</sup>.

As I have argued elsewhere, there is another characteristic of Sym which fits the same ideology. It concerns a verb, and a noun as well, that is not attested in Theod and Aq (as far as one can tell), nor in the Septuagint

34. Translation according to W.A.M. BEUKEN, *Isaiah*. Part II, Volume 2: *Isaiah Chapters 28–39* (HCOT), Leuven, Peeters, 2000.

35. Reading the version of Sym from a Christian point of view, Eusebius of Caesarea interprets the latter part of the verse as referring to those people who will turn away from war “to the gate of the church” (*Jesajakommentar* [n. 9], p. 180).



(except for 1 and 2 Macc and SapSal), but which is typical of the Greek Bible of Symmachus: ὑπερμάχω, as well as the noun ὑπερμάχησις<sup>36</sup>. Sym Isa 51,22 (ὁ θεός σου ὑπερμαχήσει τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ) and 63,1 (ἐγὼ λαλῶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ὑπερμαχῶν εἰς τὸ σῶσαι) are important passages in this regard, both conveying the idea that God will “fight for” his people<sup>37</sup>. The preference for this verb fits the idea that God is the one who is going to act as the champion of his people, the implication being that they themselves should not take up arms, in the end time (i.e., against the Romans). If so, this element too would be in line with the policy of a patriarch like R. Judah, the Prince<sup>38</sup>.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In sum, although Sym Isa shares exegetical elements with Tg Isaiah, seen from a broader perspective both versions apparently did not originate in the same Jewish milieu, in second century Palestine. Important points are the language chosen – Greek or Aramaic – as well as divergent views on the messiah and related issues such as the lack or presence of a “pacific” attitude against Rome.

Tg Isaiah, and Tg Prophets as a whole, reflects a monarchist and militarist position. The Aramaic version, produced by leading priests, testifies to a political view, according to which one should attempt to initiate the messianic kingdom by force of arms, i.e., by revolting against Rome.

Sym Isaiah on the other hand, being part of the Greek Bible of Symmachus, can be regarded as the product of rabbinic circles, in Galilee, and more in particular of the milieu of R. Judah, the Prince, being the Patriarch at the time of emperor Severus (193-211) when Sym presumably was made. The preference for the Greek language fits in with the ideas of this Patriarch, as well as the type of messianism and the anti-militaristic stance<sup>39</sup>.

As noted above, the new version is marked by elegant Greek, and this feature too fits the Patriarchal circles as the milieu in which Sym originated because this milieu was strongly hellenized<sup>40</sup>. The difference between Sym and Aq as far as the Greek is concerned may reflect different shades

36. VAN DER KOIJ, *Textzeugen* (n. 4), pp. 240-241.

37. See also Sym Gen 15,1, and for the noun, see Sym Exod 12,11. On both passages, see SALVESEN, *Symmachus* (n. 4), pp. 39.84.

38. On this policy, see AVI-YONAH, *Jews* (n. 29), p. 68.

39. For the idea that Sym Isa 8,16 contains a reference to the Mishnah of R. Judah, see VAN DER KOIJ, *Textzeugen* (n. 4), pp. 238-239.

40. On this matter, see S.R. SHIMOV, *Hellenization among the Rabbis: Some Evidence from Early Aggadot concerning David and Solomon*, in *JSJ* 18 (1987) 168-187.

of Hellenization among rabbis. If so one can imagine that those rabbis who did not subscribe to the extent of Hellenization in Patriarchal circles in the late second century and who objected to the wealth of the Patriarch were not in favour of Sym, but rather of the Greek Bible of Aquila. As we know from Origen the latter eventually was the preferred one as it was considered the most accurate one<sup>41</sup>.

Sym Isaiah and Tg Isaiah thus may be seen as reflecting two milieus within second century Judaism, providing in this way some evidence for a “multifaceted” Judaism of the time. To both groups the book of Isaiah was one of the books that were considered authoritative and of great, foundational significance. However, passages in this book have been read and understood differently, testifying to a particular ideology that served specific interests of each milieu or group. The interpretation involved is to be seen in a context of defining and constituting the own religious and political identity of a given milieu. At the same time, it was also important for polemical purposes in order to strengthen one’s position vis-à-vis of other views within Judaism of the time.

Finally, since “interpretation of books that were considered authoritative required authoritative [...] persons to bring the ideas into effect”<sup>42</sup>, one may assume that not a translator like Symmachus but leading people like R. Judah, the Prince, actually were responsible for a project such as the version of Sym as well as for specific points of interpretation embedded in this version. Hence, it seems plausible to assume that Sym Isaiah being part of a new translation of the Hebrew Scriptures was carried out on the authority of the Patriarch<sup>43</sup>.

Oranje Nassaulaan 21A  
NL-2361 LA Warmond  
The Netherlands  
a.vdkooij@planet.nl

Arie VAN DER KOOIJ

41. For this assessment of Aquila by Jews of his time, see Origen, *Ad Africanum*, § 4.

42. A. VAN DER KOOIJ, *Authoritative Scriptures and Scribal Culture*, in M. POPOVIĆ (ed.), *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism* (SupplJJS, 141), Leiden, Brill, 2010, 55-71, p. 70.

43. I am not sure whether Sym was produced in Caesarea in Palestine as A. Salvesen assumes (SALVESEN, *Aquila and Symmachus* [n. 24], p. 124), but one can imagine that this version was used by Greek speaking Jews in that city. On the use of Greek by Jews in Caesarea, see L.I. LEVINE, *Caesarea under Roman Rule* (SJLA, 7), Leiden, Brill, 1975, pp. 70-74. According to Palladius citing an ex-libris of Origen (*Lausiaca History*, § 64), the latter says that when hiding himself in the house of a lady called Juliana in Caesarea (presumably, in Palestine; see VAN DER KOOIJ, *Textzeugen* [n. 4], p. 224; SALVESEN, *Aquila and Symmachus* [n. 24], p. 124, n. 63) he found a book which she, as she told him, had received from Symmachus, the translator of the Jews.