

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TARGUM SONG OF
SONGS AND MIDRASH RABBAH SONG OF SONGS**

Volume I of II

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME ONE

TITLE PAGE	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
ABSTRACT	6
DECLARATION	7
COPYRIGHT STATEMENT	8
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND DEDICATION	9
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	11
1.1 The Research Question: Targum Song and Song Rabbah	11
1.2 The Traditional View of the Relationship of Targum and Midrash	11
1.2.1 Targum Depends on Midrash	11
1.2.2 Reasons for Postulating Dependency	14
1.2.2.1 Ambivalence of Rabbinic Sources Towards Bible Translation	14
1.2.2.2 The Traditional Hierarchy of Jewish Literature	16
1.2.2.3 Christian Appropriation of Targum	22
1.3 Inappropriate Literary Models	26
1.4 The Approach of the Present Dissertation	28
CHAPTER TWO: TARGUM SONG OF SONGS	33
2.1 The Text of Targum Song	33
2.1.1 Manuscripts and Editions	33
2.1.2 Recensions	37
2.2 Language	39
2.3 Provenance	41
2.4 Date	43
2.5 The Nature of Targum Song	46
2.6 Unity and Structure	51
2.7 Theology	54
2.8 <i>Sitz im Leben</i>	59
2.9 Sources	64

CHAPTER THREE: SONG OF SONGS RABBAH	67
3.1 Song of Songs Rabbah as Part of Midrash Rabbah.....	67
3.2 The Text of Song Rabbah.....	69
3.2.1 Complete Manuscripts	70
3.2.2 Genizah Fragments	70
3.2.3 Testimonia Manuscripts.....	74
3.2.4 Other Text-Witnesses	75
3.2.5 Printed Editions.....	76
3.2.6 Stemmatics and the Question of Recensions	77
3.2.7 Overview of the Textual Evidence	79
3.3 Language	81
3.4 Provenance and Date	83
3.5 Structure and Coherence	85
3.6 Genre	92
3.6.1 The Interpretative Stance of Song Rabbah	95
3.6.2 The Forms of Song Rabbah	98
3.7 Theology.....	102
3.8 Sources	105
3.9 <i>Sitz im Leben</i>	109
CHAPTER FOUR: TEXTUAL PARALLELISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS.....	111
4.1 Parallelism and Textual Dependency	111
4.2 When is a Parallel Not a Parallel?	113
4.2.1 What is a Parallel?	113
4.2.2 Sandmel's <i>Parallelomania</i>	114
4.2.3 Morton's Smith's <i>Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels</i>	116
4.2.4 Parallelism in The Manchester-Durham Typology Project.....	119
4.2.5 Parallelism and Genre.....	123
4.3 One-to-One Parallelism.....	125
4.3.1 The Case of Mishnah-Tosefta.....	126
4.3.2 The Case of the Yerushalmi-Bavli.....	128
4.4 Multiple Parallelism	130
4.4.1 The Synoptic Problem in the Gospels.....	130
4.5 Signs of Dependency	134

4.6 General Conclusions.....	140
CHAPTER FIVE: TARGUM SONG AND SONG RABBAH: ONE-TO-ONE PARALLELS	141
5.1 Introduction	141
5.2 Case Study 1: Song of Songs 1:12	142
5.3 Case Study 2: Song of Songs 2:14	152
5.4 Case Study 3: Song of Songs 3:9-10.....	160
5.5 Case Study 4: Song of Songs 4:1	168
5.6 Case Study 5: Song of Songs 5:14	175
5.7 Case Study 6: Song of Songs 8:14	181
5.8 Conclusion.....	186
CHAPTER SIX: TARGUM SONG AND SONG RABBAH: MULTIPLE PARALLELS..	187
6.1 Introduction	187
6.2 Case Study 7: Song of Songs 1:5	188
6.3 Case Study 8: Song of Songs 1:12	193
6.4 Case Study 9: Song of Songs 2:14	196
6.5 Case Study 10: Song of Songs 5:1	203
6.6 Case Study 11: Song of Songs 8:14	210
6.7 Conclusion.....	214
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION: TARGUM SONG AND SONG RABBAH	216
7.1 Language	216
7.2 Literary Form and Genre.....	217
7.3 Exegetical Method.....	220
7.4 Exegetical and Aggadic Content	224

VOLUME TWO

TITLE PAGE	232
TABLE OF CONTENTS: VOLUME TWO	233
APPENDICES	234
Note to Appendices 1 to 6	234
Appendix 1	235
Appendix 2	243
Appendix 3	255
Appendix 4	268

Appendix 5	278
Appendix 6	285
Note on Appendices 7-11	292
Appendix 7	293
Appendix 8	296
Appendix 9	301
Appendix 10	304
Appendix 11	307
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	309

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ABSTRACT

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The Relationship between Targum Song of Songs and Song of Songs Rabbah

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This dissertation investigates the relationship between Targum Song of Songs and Song of Songs Rabbah, and challenges the view that the Targum is dependent on the Midrash.

In CHAPTER ONE I set out the problem to be investigated and consider some of the reasons why scholars in the past have assumed that the Targum drew on the Midrash. Having rejected these reasons as inadequate and established the need for a fresh review of the evidence, I describe the approach I will adopt in the present thesis.

In CHAPTERS TWO and THREE I introduce the two key texts individually, discussing such background information as their manuscripts, provenance, date, genre, coherence and theology.

In CHAPTER FOUR I analyse textual parallelism and its implications, reviewing first some seminal studies of the subject, and then introducing and defending a distinction between one-to-one parallelism and multiple parallelism.

In CHAPTERS FIVE and SIX I examine in depth a number of indicative cases of both one-to-one and multiple parallelism between Targum Song and Song Rabbah, demonstrating that direct literary dependency between the one work and the other simply cannot be proved.

In CHAPTER SEVEN I set this conclusion in the context of a wider comparison between Targum Song and Song Rabbah, arguing that the hypothesis of literary dependency rests on a model of text-creation and text-transmission that is inappropriate to Rabbinic literature in late antiquity.

In a series of APPENDICES, printed for convenience as a separate volume, I provide the texts discussed in the case studies in Chapters Five and Six.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Research Question: Targum Song and Song Rabbah

This dissertation explores the relationship between Targum Song of Songs and Song of Songs Rabbah – two important exegetical works originating in the same Palestinian milieu at roughly the same time, which, at a cursory inspection, seem to offer the same distinctive readings of many verses of the biblical book. There is in the scholarly literature an often implicit (but as we shall see, occasionally explicit) belief that, where similar readings occur, the Targum must be dependent, to some degree, on the Midrash. I shall argue that this claim does not stand up to close analysis.

This dissertation is concerned not only with the specific case of Targum Song and Song Rabbah, but also with the wider methodological issue of how one can detect and prove a relationship of literary dependency not only between Targum and Midrash, but between any two texts. The problem that is explored here is repeated again and again in ancient literature, for example in the relationship of the Mishnah to the Tosefta, or the Yerushalmi to the Bavli Talmud. It is pervasive in ancient cultures because they had, as we shall see presently, a very different attitude towards intellectual property, and so were less concerned about acknowledging their sources. I offer, then, this dissertation as a worked example of an approach that could be extrapolated to many other cases.¹

1.2 The Traditional View of the Relationship of Targum and Midrash

1.2.1 Targum Depends on Midrash

Although the parallels have rarely been considered in depth, a similarity in content between a Targum and one or more other pieces of early Rabbinic

¹ See 1.4 below on the approach taken in this thesis and Chapter Four for a broader discussion of the methodological issues.

literature has routinely been perceived as indicating that the Targum is dependent on the other work(s): where parallels exist the Targum is almost invariably seen as the subordinate party. This perceived dependency is not necessarily explicitly stated, but is often implicit in the ways scholars discuss the Targum in terms of its sources, the influences that have been exerted upon it, and the texts from which it has borrowed. As far as Targum Song is concerned the tendency is endemic in literature right from John Gill's *An Exposition of the Book of Solomon*², in the 18th century, through the influential works of Pinkhos Churgin³ and Ezra Melamed⁴ in the 1940's and 1950's to an essay by Esther Menn⁵ in 2000. Starting from the principle that "all targums...[imbibe] from the Talmudic and Midrashic literature and not the other way around, as is well known",⁶ Melamed, in his articles in *Tarbiz* 40 and 41⁷, is very clear about the relationship specifically of Targum Song to the Babylonian Talmud. Based on similarities between the two works he concludes that Targum Song (which, as we shall see, is almost certainly a Palestinian work!), is dependent on the Babylonian Talmud.⁸ The types of parallel he considers include places where Targum Song presents the same ideas as those found in the Babylonian Talmud: e.g., with regard to Song 2:14, *b.Megillah* 29a, like the Targum, sees "the small sanctuary" in Ezekiel 11:15 as a reference to the Rabbinic Batei Midrash, in this case, as far as the Talmud is concerned, the schools specifically of Babylonia.⁹ He also refers to similarities of language.¹⁰ Menn likewise states: "The Targum draws heavily from these [rabbinical sources including Song Rabbah] and other traditional repositories of material."¹¹

² John Gill, *An exposition of the book of Solomon's song, commonly called Canticles* (London: William Hill Collingridge, 1854), <http://www.archive.org/details/expositionofbook00gill>.

³ Pinkhos Churgin, *The Targum to Hagiographa* (New: Horeb Press, 1945), esp. 117-39.

⁴ Ezra Z. Melamed, "Targum Canticles," *Tarbiz* 40 (1970): 201-215; Ezra Z. Melamed, "Rejoinder to Heinemann," *Tarbiz* 41 (1971): 126-29.

⁵ E. M. Menn, "Targum of the Song of Songs and the Dynamics of Historical Allegory," in *The Interpretation of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity: Studies in Language and Tradition* (Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 423-445.

⁶ Cited by Avigdor Shinan, "The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Rabbinic Aggadah: Some Methodological Considerations," in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context* (ed. D. R. G. Beattie and McNamara, M. J.; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 205.

⁷ Melamed, "Targum Canticles"; Melamed, "Rejoinder to Heinemann."

⁸ Melamed, "Targum Canticles"; Melamed, "Rejoinder to Heinemann."

⁹ Melamed, "Targum Canticles," 208.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 213-14.

¹¹ Menn, "Targum of the Song of Songs and the Dynamics of Historical Allegory," 423.

There have been dissenting voices. Avigdor Shinan¹² points out that the existence of passages in Midrash and Talmud (e.g. *y.Berachot* 5.3), which specifically state a tradition to be targumic, suggest that the perceived priority of Midrash over Targum has been much too easily accepted.¹³ Research into these Targumic “quotations” in Midrash and Talmud by M.H. Goshen-Gottstein and others has shown that these occurrences arise more frequently than much of the scholarship would imply.¹⁴ As early as the pioneering edition of *Genesis Rabbah* by Theodor and Albeck it had been argued that Targum could have been a significant source of Midrash. This makes good sense. The Rabbinic midrashim are now generally conceded to be post-Mishnaic, and to have arisen, at least in part, from the necessity of justifying the Mishnaic worldview from Scripture, a necessity magnified by the growing intensity, especially in the west, of the exegetical debate between Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. The great Rabbinic exegetical enterprise really only begins in the third century, long after there were Targums circulating in the Rabbinic milieu. It stands to reason that the Rabbinic *darshanim* would have turned gratefully to these translations as a potential source of exegesis – a hypothesis supported by the surprisingly frequent references to Targum in Rabbinic literature.¹⁵

Other scholars have also expressed scepticism about a straightforward one-way relationship between Targum and Midrash, with the former always drawing on the latter. In addition to Shinan, Philip Alexander,¹⁶ Joseph Heinemann,¹⁷ and now Timothy Edwards¹⁸ should be mentioned in this context. Joseph

¹² Shinan, “The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Rabbinic Aggadah: Some Methodological Considerations,” 204-205.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 206.

¹⁴ M. Goshen-Gottstein, *Fragments of Lost Targumim* (Hebrew). Parti. Ramat Gan (Bar Ilan University Press), 1983).

¹⁵ See the “Einleitung” to J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck, *Bereschit Rabba mit kritischen Apparat und Kommentar* (3 vols.; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1912); Jacob Neusner, *Judaism and Christianity in the Age of Constantine* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987); Jacob Neusner, *Uniting the Dual Torah: Sifra and the Problem of the Mishnah* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); David Weiss Halivni, *Midrash, Mishnah and Gemara: The Jewish Predilection for Justified Law* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

¹⁶ P. S. Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles* (vol. 17; The Aramaic Bible; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 39.

¹⁷ Joseph Heinemann, “Targum Canticles and Its Sources,” *Tarbiz* 41 (1971): 126-29.

¹⁸ Timothy Edwards, *Exegesis in the Targum of the Psalms* (Gorgias Dissertations 28, Biblical Studies 1; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007).

Heinemann, responding to the first of Melamed's articles cited above,¹⁹ argues, "Among the series of examples which are adduced [by Melamed] as evidence for the dependence of the Targum on the Babylonian Talmud, some are attested explicitly as being of Palestinian origin; some do not exhibit more than a faint similarity of motifs; others, again, in which identical details do, indeed, occur, do not provide evidence of direct, literary dependence, because those motifs were very likely part of widespread homiletic traditions."²⁰ In these few trenchant sentences, he exposes the major methodological weaknesses of the dependency hypothesis. Edwards raises the same concern when he states that "Dependence of one text upon another is perhaps the most difficult relationship to convincingly demonstrate. One must rule out all other avenues that could potentially produce the similar reading before dependence is ascertained."²¹ But these sceptical scholars are in the minority, and none of them has analysed specific parallels in sufficient depth, nor formulated a method of comparison, that would allow a definitive conclusion to be reached.

1.2.2 Reasons for Postulating Dependency

The assumption of the dependency of the Targum on the Midrash is so widespread and unchallenged in traditional scholarship, and yet at the same time so poorly supported by substantive analysis, that one is led to suspect that cultural biases lie at its root. An uncovering of some of these will help situate the approach adopted in the present dissertation. Why should there be a strong tendency to give other genres of Rabbinic literature, especially Midrash, a priority over Targum? Several possibilities should be considered.

1.2.2.1 Ambivalence of Rabbinic Sources Towards Bible Translation

The attitude of Rabbinic culture towards Bible translation certainly played a part. This was not uniformly negative. The earliest traditions seem to have allowed the

¹⁹ Heinemann, "Targum Canticles and Its Sources."

²⁰ Ibid., IX.

²¹ Edwards, *Exegesis in the Targum of the Psalms*, 28.

Torah to be written in any language, but as time went by this view was increasingly rejected. Already in the late first/early second century CE Rabban Shim^con ben Gamliel wanted to restrict Bible translation to Greek.²² The Rabbis were aware of the Old Greek translation – the Torah of King Talmai (Ptolemy) – and repeat a version of the legend, well known from the Letter of Aristeas, that it was produced in miraculous circumstances. Indeed the Rabbinic version of the story presents even greater evidence for divine providence than Aristeas: the seventy individual translators, secluded in their cells, not only produced exactly the same translation, but, for the sake of delicacy and to avoid doctrinal misunderstandings, made some deliberate changes to the Hebrew, and all independently made exactly the same changes.²³ But this liberal attitude was not widespread. According to a tradition contained in the early medieval Hebrew Scroll of Fasts, *Megillat Ta^canit Batra*, the day on which the Torah was translated into Greek was like the day on which Israel made the Golden Calf, and it was to be commemorated by fasting.²⁴ It seems clear that the Rabbis became aware, possibly through debate with Christians, that the Septuagint contained a different text of the Tanakh from the one of which they approved, and that its translations did not always accord with the Rabbinic understanding of Scripture. They sponsored two versions to replace it: the first – an excessively literal one – translated by Aquila the Proselyte,²⁵ was produced probably in the 120s CE; the other – a more readable one – is attributed to someone called Symmachus, who may have been the *meturgeman* of the Greek-speaking synagogue of Caesarea Maritima.²⁶ Their attitude hardened, however, against translations. Though it was

²² The key text is *m.Megillah* 1.8, “There is no difference between Scrolls and *tefillin* and *mezuzot*, save that Scrolls may be written in any language, whereas *tefillin* and *mezuzot* may be written only in Assyrian. Rabban Shim^con ben Gamliel says: Scrolls, too, they have permitted to be written only in Greek”. Shim^con ben Gamliel is clearly reacting to the view that Torah Scrolls may be written in any language, and so this view must be earlier. Cf. *t.Sanhedrin* 4.7; *y.Megillah* 1, 71b-72a; *b.Sanhedrin* 21b-22a; *Deuteronomy Rabba* 1.1; *Massekhet Soferim* 16.1-2.

²³ *Avot deRabbi Natan* B 37; *Massekhet Soferim* 1.7; *b.Megillah* 9b; *y.Megillah* 1, 71d; Mekhilta deRabbi Ishmael, *Bo*, *Massekhet dePisha* 14. See further: Giuseppe Veltri, *Eine Tora für den König Talmai: Untersuchungen zum Überlieferungsverständnis in der jüdisch-hellenistischen und rabbinischen Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994); Abraham Wasserstein and David J. Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to the Present Day* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

²⁴ *Megillat Ta^canit Batra*: Fast of 10th Tevet (Y. Baer, *Seder cAvodat Yisra’el* (Rodelheim, 1868), 608.)

²⁵ *y.Megillah* 1, 71c; *y.Qiddushin* 1, 59a.

²⁶ Alison Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (JSS Monographs, 15; Manchester: Journal of Semitic Studies, 1991).

never denied that properly authorised translations could serve some useful purpose, they were no substitute for the original Hebrew. The reading and hearing of the Scriptures in Hebrew was strongly urged upon the Greek-speaking synagogues of the western Diaspora, and this campaign seems to have been successful because there is evidence to suggest that by the later Byzantine period these synagogues were routinely reading the Torah lections from a Hebrew scroll.

A somewhat similar story can be told about the Aramaic Targum. Some traditions posited an exalted origin for the Targum. According to one, it went back to the time of Ezra, and specifically to his great re-promulgation of the Torah in the square before the Water Gate, described in Nehemiah 8; according to another, Targum Onqelos was approved by Rabbis Eliezer and Ishmael.²⁷ These were pedigrees which could not be ignored, and the Targum continued to be treated with respect and quoted as an authority by medieval exegetes such as Rashi. Nevertheless it remained second best. Even it could not escape the famous stricture that “whoever translates a verse of Scripture according to its form is a liar, and he who adds thereto is a blasphemer”.²⁸ The sense of this is that both literal and free translations are equally bad, and since every translation must be one or the other, translation *per se* is condemned. Translations, such as the Targum, or the paraphrases into Yiddish (the *Tze’ena u- Re’ena/Tsenerene*) and Ladino (the *Me-^cam Lo’ez*), were seen as cribs for women and children, which educated males would not have consulted openly (though probably often did!).²⁹ This attitude, arguably has “rubbed off” onto modern Jewish scholars when they come to study the Targum.

1.2.2.2 The Traditional Hierarchy of Jewish Literature

The ambivalence of Rabbinic Judaism towards Targum also arises out of a series of dichotomies which helped create the traditional hierarchy of Jewish literature.

²⁷ *y.Megillah* 4, 74d; *b.Megillah* 3a; *b.Nedarim* 37b; *Genesis Rabba* 36.8.

²⁸ *t.Megillah* 3.41; *b.Qiddushin* 49a-49b.

²⁹ Philip S. Alexander, “The Cultural History of the Ancient Bible Versions; The Case of Lamentations,” in *Jewish Reception of Greek Bible Versions: Studies in their Use in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (ed. N. R. M. de Lange, Julia G. Krivoruchko, and Cameron Boyd-Taylor; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 78-102.

In each dichotomy the Targum appears on the less prestigious side of the equation.

(1) Original v. Translation

First there is the dichotomy between Original and Translation. Targum as a genre may be broadly defined as translation (the problems with this broad definition will be discussed in Chapter Two), and any translation is, in a very obvious sense, secondary to its original (as is, indeed, any interpretation, an important component of Targum, especially in the case of Song of Songs). But it is not inevitable that this should lead to the kind of ambivalence towards or outright rejection of Bible translation discussed above. Translations can have huge merit in their own right, be it theological or exegetical. They may provide valuable insights into the meaning of the original biblical book, or into the religious thought of their time. Translations in antiquity, when there were no grammars, dictionaries or concordances to rely on, involved significant expenditure of effort, time, resources and knowledge, and clearly some regarded this expenditure as well worthwhile.

Moreover, it is not inevitable that a translation should be seen as inferior to the original. This idea may seem obvious to the modern mind, but it was not universally regarded as self-evident in antiquity. There is the case of the Septuagint, which, as we have seen, was accorded in some Jewish and Christian circles an inspired status similar or equal to that of the Hebrew original. Philo asserts that the Greek translators of the Torah, “like men inspired, prophesied, not one saying one thing and another another, but every one of them employed the self-same nouns and verbs, as if some unseen prompter had suggested all their language to them” (*De Vita Mosis* 2.7³⁰). Josephus says something similar (*Antiquities* 12.2³¹). Both are, of course, reflecting the myth classically recounted in the *Letter of Aristeas* about the miraculous origins of the Septuagint – a myth

³⁰ C. D. Yonge, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged* (5th ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 494.

³¹ William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (16th ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987).

which in some form, as we have seen, was actually known to the Rabbis.³² The Septuagint was also used as the basis for translation into other languages, e.g. into Latin (the *Vetus Italica*) and into Coptic and studied by Alexandrian scholars such as Philo with the same sort of attention to precise verbal detail as the Rabbis accorded the Hebrew.

However, the settled Rabbinic view unquestionably became that the Hebrew text had absolute priority over any translation, and this view, as is shown by Jerome's emphasis on the *Hebraica Veritas*, influenced, with momentous consequences, one strand of Christian thought. However, we have seen that it is just as possible to assert the divine inspiration and authority of a translation, as of an original, and this suggests that the Rabbinic position is ideologically motivated. It can be construed as serving two "political" ends: first, undermining Christianity and its adopted text, the Septuagint (on which it had based some crucial doctrines), initially in favour of Greek translations sponsored by the Rabbinic movement and ultimately, of a return to the Hebrew original; and second, drawing the Greek-speaking, western Diaspora into the Rabbinic fold.³³

For whatever reasons, the absolute primacy of the Hebrew took deep root in Jewish tradition, and this idea has endured to the present day when it is simply taken for granted that, although Jewish translations into modern vernacular languages exist, it is the Hebrew that is the authentic expression of God's word. This leaves Targum in a subordinate position.

(2) Hebrew v. Aramaic

This leads us to consider another dichotomy which places Targum in a subordinate position, namely the dichotomy between Hebrew and Aramaic:

³² See above. For Christian attitudes to the Septuagint, see: Mogens Møller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of its Canon* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002). Further: Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival: the Greek Bible of the ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). On Rabbinic attitudes towards the Septuagint see: Veltri, *Eine Tora für den König Talmai: Untersuchungen zum Überlieferungsverständnis in der jüdisch-hellenistischen und rabbinischen Literatur*.

³³ See Philip S. Alexander, "Did the Rabbis Lose the West? Reflections on the Fate of Greek-Speaking Judaism after 70," (Unpublished paper, 2010).

Hebrew, as the language of the Scriptures, necessarily takes precedence over Aramaic. The main point here is that Hebrew, not Aramaic, is the holy tongue which, of course, makes any works written in Aramaic of lesser value and, we may infer, of lesser holiness. This is confirmed by what we know of how the Aramaic Targums were used, for example in liturgical contexts they were recited, not read, so that no one should think them on a par with the Hebrew, which *was* read.³⁴ The notion of Hebrew as a holy language really emerged only in the Second Temple period when, in the view of David Aaron, five different understandings of its importance coalesced, over time, into a pervasive sense of the holiness of the language which came, during the Rabbinic period, to be known as *Leshon HaQodesh*. These are: (1) allegiance to language as a form of allegiance to one's ancestors; (2) language as a unifying factor in the body politic; (3) Hebrew as the original language of all human beings; (4) Hebrew as the forgotten language of civilisation, re-taught to Abram by God; and (5) Hebrew as a holy tongue, which would become again the universal language of humanity at the end of days.³⁵

There is also another point to be borne in mind, namely that some Rabbis may, following the lead of Scripture itself,³⁶ have harboured a contemptuous attitude towards Aramaic, regarding it as a corrupt form of Hebrew, close enough to the Holy Tongue to be confused with it, or even to corrupt it. This comes out in a famous dictum in *b.Baba Qamma* 82b-83a: “Rabbi said: In the Land of Israel why [speak] Syriac (*lashon sursi*)? [Speak] either the Holy Tongue or Greek. Rabbi Yose said: In Babylonia why [speak] Aramaic? [Speak] either the Holy Tongue or Persian.” *Lashon sursi* is striking: It is, first, a contemptuous deformation of *lashon suri(t)*, linking it to the root *srs*, “to castrate”: Syriac is a bastardised form of Hebrew. But, second, it may also be possible that by referring to Syriac rather than Aramaic (as in the second half of the dictum) there is an allusion to the Christian form of Aramaic. A polemical hint may be

³⁴ *b.Megillah* 32a; *y.Megillah* 74d; *y.Peah* 2, 17a.

³⁵ David H. Aaron, “The Doctrine of Hebrew Language Usage,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Judaism* (ed. Jacob Neusner and Alan Avery-Peck; Blackwell Reference Online; Blackwell Publishing, 2002), sec. Precursors to the Rabbinic Concept of *Lashon HaQodesh* (“Holy Language”) and The Holy Tongue.

³⁶ Nehemiah 13:24

intended – a contrast between the Jewish Scriptures in the Holy Tongue and the Christian Scriptures in corrupt Aramaic.

But having said this, the denigration of Aramaic should not be pushed too far. The very existence of the Targumim confers a dignity and legitimacy on the language, as did the fact that it occurs in Scripture, a point made by *y.Sotah* 7, 21c: “Do not despise Syriac, for it is employed in the Torah.” And once Aramaic became the vernacular of Jews in both Palestine and Babylonia, its significance for the Jewish people could hardly be gainsaid, especially when the Rabbis themselves finally adopted it as the mode of instruction within the Rabbinical Schools, as the fact that much of the Gemara of the two Talmuds is in Aramaic clearly testifies. But none of this materially affected its place in the language hierarchy. It remained inferior to Hebrew.

(3) Talmud v. Miqra

There is a third dichotomy which serves to relegate Targum to the lower rungs of the traditional literary hierarchy. It is that between Talmud and Miqra. Oddly enough in this dichotomy Talmud takes precedence over Miqra. This is in many ways counter-intuitive, since one would assume that Miqra should take precedence. Theologically speaking, of course, it does: the Torah of Moses is the supremely authoritative text within Judaism, but in practice a different relationship can be observed. Knowledge of Talmud carries higher prestige than knowledge of Scripture. The greatest Rabbis are those who know Talmud, rather than those who know Scripture. Children and even women could gain knowledge of Scripture, but only the finest intellects could master Talmud. This attitude certainly dominated within Jewish circles from the Middle Ages onward, particularly among Ashkenazis, for whom the status of a Rabbi was directly associated with his expertise in Talmud, and not in Scripture. Sephardi culture was rather different and set greater store by knowledge of Scripture,³⁷ but it has

³⁷ Hirsch Jakob Zimmels, *Ashkenazim and Sephardim: their relations, differences, and problems as reflected in the rabbinical responsa* (New York: KTAV, 1993), 66.

been Ashkenazi scholarship that has dominated Judaism in modern times, and so it has been its attitude that has prevailed.³⁸

Traces of this attitude can be found in the Talmudic period. Bible was not much studied in the Babylonian Yeshivot: the curriculum was overwhelmingly dominated by the study of Mishnah and Talmud, and this fact is reflected in the almost total absence of Rabbinic Midrashim on the Bible from Babylonia: all our great classic Midrashim were composed in Palestine. This absence of interest in Bible in Babylonia was recognised in antiquity. Note the story in *b.Avodah Zarah* 4a which tells of a Babylonian scholar visiting Palestine who found himself unable to hold his own in Bible interpretation against Christian opponents. His Palestinian Rabbinic colleague defends his ignorance of Scripture on the grounds that Babylonian Rabbis are not trained in biblical exegesis. “We in Palestine, however,” he says, “are so trained because we have to spend so much time refuting you!” It was, of course, Babylonian Rabbinic culture that dominated Judaism in the post-Talmudic era, and with that came a sense that study of Scripture was a less exalted activity than study of Talmud. This attitude directly impacts on the status of Targum, which as a translation of Scripture, clearly stands on the side of Miqra.

(4) Halakhah v. Aggadah

This leads us naturally to our final dichotomy which has the tendency to downgrade the status of the Targumim, especially those of the Writings. It is the dichotomy between Halakhah and Aggadah. By Halakhah I mean the Rabbinic legal tradition, and by Aggadah I mean the stories and myths of Judaism. Just as Talmud (which is seen as the Halakhic work par excellence) trumps Miqra, so, in terms of prestige, Halakhah trumps Aggadah. As John Bowker notes, “the rabbis themselves maintained that aggadah was not authoritative.”³⁹ The reputation of a Rabbi was associated with his knowledge of Halakhah, rather than Aggadah.

³⁸ Charlotte Elisheve Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee, “Introduction: The Talmud, Rabbinic Literature, and Jewish Culture,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (ed. Charlotte Elisheve Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee; Cambridge Collections Online; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5.

³⁹ John Bowker, “Aggadah,” in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Encyclopedia.com; Oxford University Press, 1997), Online version.

Those who could not master Talmud proper were set to study the *‘Ein Ya‘aqov*, a compendium of the tales of the Talmud. *Einya’akovniks* were definitely looked down upon. The Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel decried this denigration of Aggadah, and wrote a massive tome to try to raise its standing,⁴⁰ but the fact that he had to try so hard only underscores how deeply ingrained this attitude is. Targum of course deals with Halakhah, in that it has to translate the legal portions of Torah, but no Rabbinic scholar would turn to Targum as an authoritative legal source. It was seen as fundamentally aggadic, and so suffered from Aggadah’s lower status.

1.2.2.3 Christian Appropriation of Targum

This downgrading of the status of Targum was reinforced by a historical development, namely Christian interest in, and, indeed, appropriation of Targum, which rendered it even more suspect in Jewish eyes. In the Middle Ages Targum was fairly well regarded in Rabbinic circles: for example Onqelos is quoted with appreciation by both Rashi and Maimonides, but from the Renaissance onward, it is hard to avoid the sense that Targum began to be looked at askance in Jewish scholarship. This may have something to do with the interest that Christian scholars had begun to show in it.⁴¹ The Reformation concern with the clarification of Christian dogma led many Protestant scholars to abandon centuries of established church tradition and “return to Scripture” in its most authentic literary forms. Knowledge of Hebrew was therefore deemed necessary, if the Old Testament was to be properly translated and the New Testament understood in its conceptual, historical and linguistic context. Protestant scholars and theologians turned to Jewish teachers, grammarians, and exegetes with enthusiasm to learn Hebrew and Aramaic.⁴²

⁴⁰ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Heavenly Torah: as Refracted Through the Generations* (ed. Gordon Tucker; trans. Gordon Tucker; Continuum, 2005).

⁴¹ Merrill P. Miller, “Targum, Midrash and the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 2 (1971): 36.

⁴² Jerome Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1983), 67.

Among Christian Hebraists there was massive interest in Targum, not only because it proved some texts useful to Christian polemic⁴³ (e.g. Michael Servetus used the Targums of Jonathan and Onqelos to develop his doctrine of the Trinity⁴⁴) but possibly also because there was a belief that they were written in the language of Jesus. The great Christian Polyglot Bibles (e.g. the London Polyglot edited by Brian Walton) contained not only the official Targums, but “unofficial” targums such as the Fragment Targum and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. The Palestinian Targum, Codex Neofiti 1, was copied for the Christian Hebraist, Cardinal Egidio de Viterbo in the early sixteenth century. The increased interest in Aramaic and the Targums is also manifested in the creation of editions, grammars and lexicons of Aramaic by Christian scholars, such as Sebastian Münster’s *Chaldaica Grammatica* from 1537 and *Thargum, Hoc est Paraphrasis Onkeli Chaldaica Sacra Biblia* published in 1546.⁴⁵ Jewish interest in Targum was not entirely lacking: e.g. the great Bomberg Rabbinic Bible contained the Targums, but it should be remembered that Bomberg was a Christian printer and his great edition of the Bible had Christian Hebraists in mind as much as Jewish. The greatest Jewish expert on Targum at the time of the Renaissance, Elias Levita, wrote his *Meturgeman* for a Christian audience⁴⁶ and had a Christian patron, Egidio de Viterbo⁴⁷ and this Christian interest comes through at various points (e.g., his entry under “Messiah” in the *Meturgeman*). In the succeeding centuries there are few studies by Jewish scholars of the Targum, with the exception of Azariah de’ Rossi (*Me’or Einayim*), Samuel David Luzzato (*Ohev Ger*), Ephraim Silber (*Sedeh Yerushalayim*), and Pinkhos Churgin (*Targum Yehonatan* and *Targum Ketuvim*), but these are marginal works within Jewish scholarship, and de’ Rossi was seen as positively heretical.⁴⁸ Some

⁴³ Stephen G. Burnett, “Christian Aramaism: The Birth and Growth of Aramaic Scholarship in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Seeking Out the Wisdom of the Ancients: Essays Offered to Honor Michael V. Fox on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. Ronald L. Troxel, Kelvin G. Friebel, and Dennis R. Magary; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 422.

⁴⁴ Jerome Friedman, “Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica: Scripture and the Renaissance Myth of the Past,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 11, no. 4 (Winter 1980): 77.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 77, n. 27.

⁴⁶ Deena Aranoff, “Elijah Levita: a Jewish Hebraist,” *Jewish History* 23, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 20. Further: Gérard E. Weil, *Élie Lévitte humaniste et massorete (1496-1549)* (Studia post-Biblica, 7; Leiden: Brill, 1963).

⁴⁷ Burnett, “Christian Aramaism: The Birth and Growth of Aramaic Scholarship in the Sixteenth Century,” 426.

⁴⁸ Joseph Jacobs and Isaac Broyde, “Rossi, Azariah Ben Moses Dei,” in *Jewish Encyclopedia* (ed. Isidore Singer and Cyrus Adler; vol. 10; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901), 485b; Azariaiah

Wissenschaft des Judentums scholars, such as Abraham Berliner⁴⁹, were interested in Targum, but they are the exception that proves the rule. Zunz in his seminal *Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* significantly does not deal with Targum, despite the fact that Targum perfectly fits his programme to trace the growth of “liturgical” literature in Judaism.⁵⁰ When the study of Targum revived in the 1950s it was primarily among Christian scholars. It was sparked by the discovery by the Catholic biblical scholar, Alexandre Díez Macho, of Codex Neofiti 1 in the Vatican Library⁵¹. Since then, though there have been some noted Jewish Targumists (e.g. Michael Klein and Avigdor Shinan), the vast majority of the scholarship has come from Christians. Targum has not been a priority for Jewish scholars.

Interestingly, within the history of Christian Biblical scholarship the early enthusiasm for Targum did wane in certain circles, and ambivalence towards its value crept in. This was due, in the main, to the rise of the historical-critical approach in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with its emphasis on recovering the original, historical and “literal” sense of Scripture. It was precisely because the Targum was seen to be so “midrashic” that its use for this task was discounted. Robert Hayward, commenting on this phenomenon,⁵² points to two specific cases where the targumic evidence is either overlooked or deemed to be of little value. The first is Choon-Leong Seow’s commentary on Ecclesiastes,⁵³ in which the Targum is described in a single paragraph. Seow says “The Targum (Targ) of Ecclesiastes has been characterized as ‘translation and midrash completely fused together’ (Sperber). It is, as one might expect of the Targum, both paraphrastic and interpretive. Yet it is not quite as free as the

De' Rossi, *The Light of the Eyes* (trans. Joanna Weinberg; Yale Judaica Series Vol. XXXI; New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2001); Samuel David Luzzato, *Philoxenus, sive de Onkelosi chaldaica Pentateuchi versione* (Vienna: Anthon Schmid, 1830); Ephraim Silber, *Sedeh Yerushalayim: Ein Kommentar zu Targum Chamesh Megillot* (Czernowitz: E. Heilpern, 1888); Pinkhos Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1907); Churgin, *The Targum to Hagiographa*.

⁴⁹ Abraham Berliner, *Targum Onkelos 'al ha-Torah* (Bi-defus Ts. H. Ittškoyski, 1884).

⁵⁰ Leopold Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (2nd ed. Frankfurt am Main, 1892: repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1966).

⁵¹ Robert Murray, “On Early Christianity and Judaism: Some Recent Studies,” *The Heythrop Journal* 13, no. 4 (1972): 444.

⁵² Robert Hayward, “Targum, Biblia Hebraica Quinta, and Jewish Bible Interpretation,” *Aramaic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2007): 93-110.

⁵³ C. L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes: a new translation with introduction and commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1997), 10.

midrash. At times it offers a straight translation of the Hebrew, with little or no commentary. It is, therefore, still a valuable witness to the original text of Ecclesiastes, although one must be extremely cautious in differentiating the translation from the paraphrase.” Seow then goes on (very) briefly to discuss manuscripts and editions of the text, its date and provenance, and to refer the reader to the critical editions. Hence, although Seow does acknowledge the Targum as a “valuable witness to the original text”, there is no sense that it has any more to offer the reader.

The second example is Carey A. Moore’s commentary on Esther. Here the Targum is one of several versions of Esther dealt with under the heading “Other Versions of Esther”. The information given is as follows: “Esther’s two Aramaic translations, or *targûmîm*, dating from no earlier than the eighth century A.D., render the Hebrew faithfully but also include much *haggadic* material which tells us little about Esther but much about Talmudic and post-Talmudic Judaism.”⁵⁴ Moore then goes on to say: “All of the above being the case, readings from other versions will be cited in this commentary only if they are reasonable or possibly preferred alternatives to the MT, or if they are of theological or critical interest.”⁵⁵ Again, the Targum is deemed to be of limited use for understanding a biblical book, and is to be taken note of only in very exceptional circumstances. In the case of both Seow on Ecclesiastes and Moore on Esther, the value of the Targum for their purpose is perceived to be minimal.

Another example of the apparently secondary understanding of the Targum, at least for Biblical Studies, can be found, surprisingly, in an article by Martin McNamara – I say surprisingly, because McNamara is a major authority on Targum. He writes: “It...seems likely that portions of the ‘translation’ [in the targumim] were highly influenced by a midrashic understanding of the text...Even if we restrict the presence of midrashic development in these ‘original’ targumim, we should not forget that the interpretative tradition in which they originated continued to exist and expand alongside the Aramaic

⁵⁴ C. A. Moore, *Esther: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), lxiv.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

translation and might indeed invade the Targum at any later stage of its transmission with either haggadic or halakhic interpretation.”⁵⁶ The model envisaged here seems to be that of the originally pure, literal translations of the Bible being sullied (“invaded”) by extraneous midrashic material, which reduces their value to the biblical scholar.

Hayward detects signs of a change of heart among biblical scholars. This can be seen, perhaps, in the new *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (*BHQ*) edition of the Masoretic Text, the editors of which have “adopted a wider and more positive view of the Targum than some of their predecessors,”⁵⁷ although Hayward does note that the Targum to the Song of Songs, the subject of this thesis, is not dealt with in quite as exemplary a manner as the other Writings.⁵⁸ If the general attitude of the editors of *BHQ* does herald a change of outlook, then this can only be beneficial for the future study of the Targum and its re-integration into Biblical Studies.

1.3 Inappropriate Literary Models

Previous study of the relationship of Targum to midrash has not only been flawed by questionable and unchallenged assumptions, but also by the adoption of models of textual relationships which are inappropriate and indeed misleading for the kind of literature under review, and for the conditions of text-production when it originated. It anachronistically presupposes a modern model of literary relations which envisages fixed, published texts which are used as literary sources, and it assumes a concept of originality and of intellectual property which does not apply to antiquity, at least not to the circles which produced both Targum and Midrash. It also, to a certain extent, assumes a single author, another distinctly inappropriate idea. As Fonrobert and Jaffee state “the texts of the rabbinic canon were not produced by an “author” or by one particular group of authors, unless one considers generations of sages extending at least six centuries to be a coherent group of authors.”⁵⁹ It should also be noted that the distinction

⁵⁶ Martin McNamara, “Interpretation of Scripture in the Targumim,” in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Ancient Period* (ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson; vol. 1; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 170.

⁵⁷ Hayward, “Targum, Biblia Hebraica Quinta, and Jewish Bible Interpretation,” 95.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

⁵⁹ Fonrobert and Jaffee, “Introduction: The Talmud, Rabbinic Literature, and Jewish Culture,” 2.

between author and copyist (the former being active and the latter passive) is one which has not existed for most of the history of writing.⁶⁰ Those who formed the rabbinic texts “imagine themselves at most as shapers of what already exists in tradition.”⁶¹

The idea that similarity between two works inevitably implies dependency is relatively modern, and is not readily applicable to the conditions in which the Targum and Midrash were composed and transmitted. Texts were eventually collected and written down, but for most of antiquity they were transmitted orally as *disjecta membra*, not as whole texts, in the context of study and debate within the Rabbinic schools. This mode of transmission vastly complicates the problem of literary dependence, in many cases making it insoluble – a fact that is too often ignored. While it would be foolish to rule out *a priori* all possibility of establishing direct literary dependence, the best we can usually hope to achieve is to collect together all the attestations of a given aggadah, compare and contrast them, and then try to work out some sort of tradition history.⁶² Under these conditions, as this dissertation will seek to show, the existence of the same tradition in two different works normally implies only awareness, on both sides, of the general oral teaching, rather than direct plagiarism by one of the other. I shall return to these issues in more detail in my final chapter, but it is worth noting in passing that the Rabbinic model of textual transmission sketched here does not apply right across the board in antiquity. Modern assumptions will generally hold good for much of Greek and Roman high literature. Even more interestingly they would arguably hold good for Qumran as well, where we do seem to have a culture of dependence in the case of the different versions of the *Community Rule*, or in the case of the *Damascus Document* and the *Book of Jubilees*.

⁶⁰ Martin S. Jaffee, “Rabbinic Authorship as a Collective Enterprise,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 20.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶² Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 39. The pioneers of the tradition-historical approach to midrashic tradition were Renée Bloch and Geza Vermes. See the translations of Bloch’s seminal articles “Midrash” and “Note méthodologique pour l’étude de la littérature rabbinique” in: William Scott Green, ed., *Approaches to Ancient Judaism I* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978), 29-50 and 51-76; and Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies* (2nd ed.; Studia post-Biblica, 4; Leiden: Brill, 1983).

Talk of plagiarism brings me to a further factor which complicates the Rabbinic model of literary composition and transmission. The idea that people can own their own ideas, i.e. have a right to what we would call their intellectual property, is, as Carla Hesse states, “the child of the European Enlightenment.”⁶³ As she goes on to say “A tour of the...great civilizations of the premodern world – Chinese, Islamic, Jewish, and Christian – reveals a striking absence of any notion of human ownership of ideas or their expressions.”⁶⁴ In fact, there was an overall sense that wisdom came from God, and it was his gift to the scribe or author,⁶⁵ an idea which works well with the claims for divine origin of the Septuagint.

This attitude towards intellectual property and plagiarism has a bearing on our present discussion in two ways. First, it reinforces the point that parallelism often indicates no more than knowledge of the general oral tradition. Texts were widely reused without acknowledgement, adapted, reworked, extended, abbreviated, because they were seen as common property, which no individual owned. There was, consequently, no brake put on their dissemination. The tradition was so promiscuous that asking questions which presuppose recognition of ideas of authorship and ownership is misguided. Second, even if literary dependence did apply, it would not necessarily devalue the dependent text. Dependence is not inherently negative; it does not necessarily suggest a qualitative deficiency on the part of the dependent text. It would only do so if the ancients valued independence and originality in the way that we do.

1.4 The Approach of the Present Dissertation

As already noted, this dissertation aims to address both the wider issues of how a relationship between two or more texts from the Levant in late antiquity can be assessed, as well as the specific relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah.

⁶³ Carla Hesse, “The Rise of Intellectual Property, 700 B.C.-A.D. 2000: An Idea in the Balance,” *Daedalus* 131, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 26.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

The approach I intend to take is both comparative and literary. The bulk of this dissertation will be taken up with close comparative/synoptic studies of specific cases where the Targum and Midrash show an overlap of wording that may imply the existence of a relationship between them. This approach relies heavily on the theory and method honed by New Testament scholars in the study of the Synoptic Gospels, and as a result appropriates some of their vocabulary. Similar approaches have, as we shall see, also been undertaken in studies of the Talmuds and also of the relationship between Mishnah and Tosefta. At the heart of my work stand two series of detailed comparisons between Targum and Midrash. In the first (Chapter Five) I will consider some cases of one-to-one parallelism between Targum Song and Song Rabbah. In this investigation only the Targum and the Midrash will be in view. By excluding, for the most part, other parallels to the same material, we will be able to focus more sharply on the question of direct literary dependence, without being distracted by the problems of multiple parallelism with other traditions. In the second series of comparisons (Chapter Six) I will complicate the picture, by examining synoptically a number of cases where the overlaps between Targum Song and Song Rabbah can be paralleled in other Rabbinic texts as well. Analysis of this multiple parallelism, which actually is the norm, will reinforce the conclusion tentatively drawn from the one-to-one comparison – namely that no direct literary dependence of Targum Song on Song of Songs Rabbah can be proved. At the same time the analysis will give us a clearer sense of how Rabbinic works interact with each other, and will provide a platform on which to build a more historically nuanced model of text production and text-transmission in the Rabbinic milieu in late antiquity.

In more detail, the dissertation unfolds as follows. Having in Chapter One (the present chapter) surveyed the current state of scholarship on the question of the relationship between Targum and Midrash, and demonstrated a need for further research, I will go on, in Chapter Two, to introduce the Targum to the Song of Songs, and consider various preliminary matters, such as the date, provenance, language of the work. This will be followed by some reflection on the place of Targum Song within the genre Targum, its literary unity, its theology and message, and so forth – all issues on which it is necessary to take a view before getting down to close reading of the text. Chapter Three follows a similar agenda

in introducing Song Rabbah. Together these background chapters will already begin to raise doubts about the theory of literary dependence, showing how difficult it is to locate these works in time and place, and satisfy even the minimum historical conditions for postulating a textual relationship. Chapter Four will discuss the problem of parallelism, and consider in depth the methodological considerations surrounding this research.

Chapters Five and Six, as already noted, contain the substance of the dissertation and will analyse in depth selected cases of parallelism. A working distinction will be drawn between one-to-one parallels, found in Chapter Five, and multiple parallels, found in Chapter Six. One-to-one parallels are seen as comparisons between Targum Song and Song Rabbah alone while multiple parallels are comparisons between Targum Song, Song Rabbah and one or more other Rabbinic works. Chapter Five will show how direct dependence of one text on the other is not as obvious as it is often assumed to be. Chapter Six, by complicating the one-to-one comparison offered in Chapter Five, will call into question and correct any simplistic notions that may have arisen from the earlier analysis about the nature of the relationship between any two versions of the same tradition.

Although the manuscript evidence for each work will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three, I will not systematically present manuscript variants in the analysis in Chapters Five and Six. There are good reasons for this. While the manuscript variants of Targum Song are readily available in the editions of Albert van der Heide (the Yemenite recension) and Carlos Alonso Fontela (the Western recension), and are conveniently recorded in Alexander's English translation, there is as yet no critical edition of Song Rabbah.⁶⁶ To have taken variants into account in one case and not the other would have been virtually meaningless, and in fact in the case of these two particular works it is not critical, since their texts are remarkably stable. The situation becomes more problematic once we introduce other works. Many of these are not critically edited either. In an ideal world, when one is comparing closely text with text, variant readings

⁶⁶ See 2.1 and 3.2 below for the editions and further bibliography.

should be examined, but to have done so would have vastly extended the research and necessitated preparing critical editions of the passages quoted. To cite variants for one is only meaningful if one cites variants for all. In the end I decided to use standard texts in each case, as represented in the widely used Davka and Bar Ilan databases. I would argue that because of the nature of my research these are adequate for my purposes for two reasons: (1) The comparisons I make are on a sufficiently large scale not to be materially affected by occasional variant readings. In other words, I suggest that my broad conclusions would have been no different even if I had taken all the variants into account. (2) The *textus recepti* which I have normally used show a marked and well-known tendency towards harmonisation, that is to say they are inclined to standardise a tradition, often on the basis of the form found in the most prestigious text. If what emerges from my analysis refutes any suggestion of direct literary dependence between our two texts, then it is predictable that taking the variant readings into account would be likely only to accentuate their dissimilarity and reinforce this conclusion.

It is also worth noting in passing that I have used standard translations throughout, notably Alexander's for Targum Song and Simon for Song Rabbah, with occasional changes. To have produced new translations for all the texts I cite *in extenso* would have been a massive task, and, in any case would be unnecessary. The comparisons are between the Hebrew and Aramaic. The translations are there only for convenience. One innovation should, however, be noted. I have divided the long quotations of Song Rabbah into sections, in the manner of Neusner, though my divisions do not always coincide with his. As Neusner has long argued, the lack of a detailed referencing system in Rabbinic literature, comparable to the chapter and verse divisions of the Bible, has impeded close analysis of these texts. My divisions are strictly functional – to make more exact referencing possible, and to clarify the structure of the quotations by breaking up the masses of text into smaller sense-units. In order not to impede the flow of the argument I have printed the main quotations as an appendix in a separate volume. Readers should have this volume open at the appropriate place as they work through the analyses.

Chapter 7 will attempt to draw some broad conclusions. In it I will argue in the light of my detailed analysis that the consensus view regarding the relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah is not well founded. In fact it disregards much of the evidence, which clearly suggests that there is no exclusive literary dependency between the two works, but rather that they were both aware of a wide variety of traditions, the majority of which they do not share. Lack of parallelism is as important as parallelism. Where two traditions *are* shared it is very rare for there not to be clear differences in how they are presented, understood, and used. While it is not impossible that one work was in some sense aware of the other, there is not sufficient evidence to claim a literary dependency. Nor, in fact, is there evidence enough to give one work priority over the other. I will conclude with some general observations on the implications of this outcome for our understanding of text-production and text transmission in Rabbinic culture in late antiquity.

CHAPTER TWO

TARGUM SONG OF SONGS

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the current state of research on Targum Song of Songs with particular reference to questions regarding its text, language, provenance, date, genre, theology, *Sitz im Leben*, and sources. Inevitably I will interact particularly with the work of Philip Alexander, who has produced the most extensive studies of this Targum in recent years.⁶⁷ Extensive though this work is, it does not, as Alexander himself notes, by any means say the last word on Targum Song. Together with the following chapter, which will survey research on Song Rabbah in a similar fashion, I will set the scene for the comparison of the two texts, which I will undertake in chapters Four to Six.

2.1 The Text of Targum Song

2.1.1 Manuscripts and Editions

The first printed edition of Targum Song appeared in the first Rabbinic Bible of Daniel Bomberg, issued in Venice in 1517. This was reproduced with little

⁶⁷ Besides his *The Targum of Canticles* see: "The Aramaic Version of the Song of Songs," in *Traduction et Traducteurs au Moyen Âge: Actes du colloque international du CNRS organisé à Paris, Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes les 26-28 mai 1986* (ed. Geneviève Contamine; Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1989), 119-31; "Textual Criticism and Rabbinic Literature: The Case of the Targum of the Song of Songs," in *Artefact and Text: The Recreation of Jewish Literature in Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts = Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester 75.3* (ed. Philip S. Alexander and Alexander Samely; Manchester: University of Manchester, 1993), 159-73; "Tradition and Originality in the Targum of the Song of Songs," in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context* (ed. D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 318-339; Philip S. Alexander, "The Song of Songs as Historical Allegory: Notes on the Development of an Exegetical Tradition," in *Targumic and Cognate Studies: Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara* (ed. K. J. Cathcart and M. Maher; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 14-29; "From Poetry to Historiography: the Image of the Hasmoneans in Targum Canticles and the Question of the Targum's Provenance and Date," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 19 (1999): 103-128; "Notes on Some Targums of the Targum of the Song of Songs," in *Targum and Scripture: Studies in Aramaic translations and interpretation in memory of Ernest G. Clarke* (ed. Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 159-74.

change in the second Bomberg Rabbinic Bible, Venice 1525. Often reprinted in later Rabbinic Bibles, it became the standard text of the Targum down to modern times. It even formed the basis of the text in the *Biblia Regia*, Antwerp 1568-73, though the editor of that work, Benito Arias Montano, had access to a different edition of the Targum in manuscript (copies of which are in Madrid and Salamanca: see below), prepared by the Spanish scholar, Alfonso de Zamora. Montano quite heavily “corrected” the Bomberg text on the basis of conjectural emendation, for example, removing from it what he took to be later additions. It was, however, the original Bomberg text that prevailed, and it was essentially this, tidied up a little and minus the Tiberian vocalization, that Paul de Lagarde printed in his *Hagiographa Chaldaice* in 1873.⁶⁸

Lagarde remained standard for scholars down to 1921-22 when R.H. Melamed published a new edition of Targum Song based on a fresh examination of six Yemenite manuscripts, collated with what he called the *Textus Receptus* (= Lagarde).⁶⁹ Another text appeared in volume IVA of Alexander Sperber’s influential edition of the Targumim.⁷⁰ This, however, like Sperber’s other editions of the Targumim of the Hagiographa, was a highly problematic piece of work, which Sperber produced late in life, when his powers were waning. He based his text on a Yemenite manuscript (not the same as Melamed’s base text: see below), which he printed with supralinear vocalization, but, into this he inserted any text found in the second Bomberg Rabbinic Bible, which was missing from his Yemenite manuscript, though without vocalisation. The result is a strange fusing together of two different recensions of the Targum (see below). The Sperber edition was rapidly seen as problematic and this limited its use.

The next milestone in the publication of the text of Targum Song was the doctoral dissertation of Carlos Alonso Fontela, completed in 1978 at the

⁶⁸ Paul Anton de Lagarde, *Hagiographa Chaldaice* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1873).

⁶⁹ Raphael Hai Melamed, *The Targum to Canticles according to six Yemen MSS., compared with the 'Textus Receptus' as contained in De Lagarde's 'Hagiographia Chaldaice'* (Philadelphia: Dropsie College, 1921).

⁷⁰ A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic: Volume IV A: The Hagiographa: Transition from Translation to Midrash* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 127-41.

Universidad Complutense de Madrid.⁷¹ In contradistinction to Melamed, Fontela based his edition mainly on manuscripts of European and North African provenance. What he offers, therefore, is effectively an edition of the western recension, close to that found in the Bomberg Rabbinic Bibles and Lagarde. Taken together Melamed and Fontela, which are diplomatic editions, give a reasonable conspectus of the complete manuscript tradition of Targum Song, but a comprehensive edition combining the readings of manuscripts from both traditions does not exist. The nearest one comes to this is in the translation of Alexander, which has an extensive apparatus with both Yemenite and Western variants, and which is based on an eclectic text derived from both.

The manuscripts used by Melamed and Fontela are as follows:

1. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Heb. 110. This is transcribed by Fontela as his base text and he gives it the siglum 1. This manuscript, which is North African in provenance, has long been recognized by many Targum scholars as offering the best text of the Targumim of the Writings. It is used, for example, by Juan José Alarcón Sainz as the base-text for his edition of Targum Lamentations.⁷² It is Alexander's siglum A.
2. Vatican, Biblioteca Vaticana, Urb. Ebr. 1. Fontela siglum 7; Alexander siglum B. A facsimile of this manuscript, edited by Étan Levine, was issued by Makor in Jerusalem in 1977⁷³, and a transcription and Spanish translation by Luis Díez Merino appeared in 1981⁷⁴. Codex Urbinas 1 has its advocates among Targum scholars. For example, it was used as the basis of an edition of Targum Lamentations by Étan Levine⁷⁵ and reproduced by Christian Brady in an appendix to his monograph on the

⁷¹ C. A. Fontela, *El Targum al Cantar de los Cantares: (Edición Crítica)* (Colección Tesis Doctorales, No 92/87; Madrid: Editorial de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1987).

⁷² J. J. Alarcón Sainz, *Edición Crítica del Targum de Lamentaciones según la Traducción Textual Occidental* (Colección Tesis Doctorales, N.0 89/91; Madrid: Editorial de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1991).

⁷³ Étan Levine, *The Targum to the Five Megillot: Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, Esther: Codex Urbinati I* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1977), 71-74.

⁷⁴ Luis Díez Merino, "El Targum al Cantar de los Cantares (Texto arameo del Códice Urbinati 1 y su traducción)," in *Anuario de Filología, Facultad de Filología, Universidad de Barcelona* (Facultad de Filología, Universidad de Barcelona, 1981), 237-84.

⁷⁵ Étan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Lamentations* (New York: Hermon Press, 1976; rpr. 1981).

same Biblical book⁷⁶. However, this confidence seems somewhat misplaced. Though physically an immensely impressive manuscript, its text is not nearly as good as Paris 110.

3. Madrid, Biblioteca de la Universidad Complutense, 116-Z-40. Fontela siglum 2; Alexander siglum C. A transcription of this manuscript, together with its Latin translation has been issued by Luis Díez Merino⁷⁷. This is a copy of a text prepared by Alfonso de Zamora for use in the Complutensian Polyglot, but not printed there. It was known to Arias Montano, who included some variants from it in the Biblia Regia (see above). It is a very late manuscript (early 16th century), which in effect constitutes a modern edition. Its manuscript basis is unclear, and may be eclectic. Another copy of the same text can be found in Salamanca (see no. 6 below).
4. Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Solger 1-7, 2°. Fontela siglum 3; Alexander siglum D. There are grounds for thinking that this manuscript was used as the basis for the text of the Targum of the Writings in the first Bomberg Rabbinic Bible, and some of the marginal markings and notes in it may actually be by Felix Pratensis, the editor of Bomberg I, and intended for the first type-setters. However, in Targum Song it finishes at 8:6, whereas the Biblia Rabbinica has the complete text. There are two possibilities: either the manuscript was complete when Felix consulted it, or else he had access to another manuscript.⁷⁸
5. New York, JTSA, L478. Fontela siglum 4; Alexander siglum E. This is incomplete: it begins at 1:13.
6. Salamanca, Biblioteca Universitaria, M-2. Fontela siglum 5; Alexander siglum F. See above under no. 3.
7. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 3218. Fontela siglum 10; Alexander siglum G.
8. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 3231. Fontela siglum 8; Alexander siglum H.

⁷⁶ Christian M. Brady, *The Rabbinic Targum of Lamentations: Vindicating God* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

⁷⁷ Luis Díez Merino, "El Targum al Cantar de los Cantares (Tradición Sefardi de Alfonso de Zamora)," *Estudios Biblicos* 38 (1979-80): 295-357.

⁷⁸ See Philip S. Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations: Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible, 17B; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008), 1-2.

9. Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Cod. Her. 11. Fontela siglum 9; Alexander siglum I.
10. London, British Library, Or. 1302 9. This manuscript is transcribed by Melamed as the basis of his edition. It is his siglum A. Fontela siglum 12; Alexander siglum J.
11. London, British Library, Or. 1476. Melamed siglum F; Alexander siglum K.
12. London, British Library, Or. 2375. This manuscript is transcribed by Sperber on the basis of his edition. Melamed siglum E; Fontela siglum 11; Alexander siglum L.
13. Oxford, Bodleian, Opp. Add. 2333. Melamed siglum B; Alexander siglum M.
14. New York, JTSA, L477. Melamed siglum C; Alexander siglum N. The manuscript is missing 7:9-12 and 8:9-14
15. New York, JTSA, L476. Melamed siglum D; Alexander siglum O. The manuscript is incomplete and contains only 1:1-2:2; 7:9-8:2.

These are by no means all the manuscripts of Targum Song extant. Though the list does contain all the known Yemenite manuscripts, there are numerous other Western manuscripts. In total nearly one hundred manuscripts have been identified⁷⁹ from across the Jewish world making this one of the most popular texts of the Jewish middle ages.⁸⁰

2.1.2 Recensions

As noted above, it has been recognised at least from the time of Melamed that there are two different recensions of Targum Song. The Western recension is represented by manuscripts composed in Europe and North Africa and by printed editions in the Bomberg tradition. The Yemenite recension⁸¹ is represented by modern editions such as those as Melamed, Yosef Qafih and Shelomoh Nagar.⁸²

⁷⁹ Alexander, "From Poetry to Historiography," 103.

⁸⁰ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 1-2.

⁸¹ The Yemenite recension is represented by sigla J, K, L, M, N, and O Ibid., 1.

⁸² Yosef Qafih, *Hamesh Megillot ... 'im peirushim 'attiqim* (Jerusalem, 1962); Shelomoh Nagar, *Hamesh Megillot ... Miqra, Targum, Tafsir 'im peirushim* (n.p., 1970). The textual basis of the Qafih and Nagar editions is unclear.

Although for much of the Targum the differences between the two recensions are minimal, their existence is clear from passages such as Targum Song 5:14 where each recension presents a different list of gemstones, and gives a slightly different list of the names of the twelve Israelite tribes, aligning them with different stones. Melamed cautiously suggested that the Western recension is the older, but Alexander is emphatic that where it differs from the Yemenite the Western consistently offers the superior text, at least if one looks at the consonants.⁸³ A clear example of this is found at 4:9. Here the Western recension offers a coherent reading, clearly accounting for the different elements of the original Hebrew, while the Yemenite lacks coherence to the point of being almost incomprehensible, misses out part of the underlying Hebrew, and seems to be descended from a faulty exemplar. Alexander accepts that the vast majority of the differences between the Western and Yemenite texts can be explained as the result of a series of ‘transcriptional accidents’.⁸⁴

Why then does he hold that there are two *recensions*⁸⁵? He has two reasons. First, there is clear evidence of recensional activity at 5:14, the list of gems and tribes of Israel. Although taken in isolation it is impossible to prioritise one form of the text of this verse over the other, in the light of the textual evidence elsewhere in Targum Song, the presumption must be that the Yemenite is secondary here.⁸⁶ Second, the distinction between Western and Yemenite recensions is found also in other Targums of the Writings. Alexander has clearly demonstrated this for Targum Lamentations, arguing that the Yemenite recension of the Targum of this Biblical book has its roots in a Babylonian recension of an original Palestinian Targum, which was motivated by two main considerations: (a) to shorten the expansive parts of the Targum into closer conformity to the Hebrew, and (b) to replace unusual words in the Targum with better known ones.⁸⁷ Whether there was a comprehensive Babylonian reworking of all the Palestinian Targums of the Megillot, or even more broadly of the Palestinian

⁸³ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 4.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁸⁵ I use recension here in its classical text-critical sense for a series of systematic and deliberate changes to a text which are precisely not due to transcriptional errors.

⁸⁶ A complication should, however, be noted, namely that the list intrudes awkwardly into the text of the Targum, and so the possibility must be raised that it is secondary.

⁸⁷ Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 5-11.

Targums of the Torah and the Prophets as well, remains a moot point. The work simply has not been done that would demonstrate this, but that Targum Song, like its sister Targum Lamentations, went through a Babylonian recension, which was then transmitted to the Yemen, seems a reasonable conclusion from the evidence. It is interesting that the Yemenite manuscripts of Targum Song do generally give a shorter text, as they do in Targum Lamentations. This might be due to deliberate shortening, rather than transcriptional accident, but because the schema in Targum Song was so tightly structured the shortening proved difficult, and sometimes resulted in a botched job, in which part of the original Hebrew was omitted – a cardinal sin in a Targum.⁸⁸

2.2 Language

The Targum to the Song of Songs is in Aramaic, but it is difficult to define precisely its dialect, partly because the dialect seems to change from one manuscript to another, and partly because the history of Aramaic and the classification of dialects is still very much contested. It is extremely difficult to write the history of a language when one cannot get a clear sense of how it was evolving at the spoken level. All the Jewish Aramaic texts of late antiquity are literary texts, but the main driver of linguistic change is the vernacular. Vernacular developments eventually have an impact on the literary forms of a language. This certainly happened with Aramaic. Literary Aramaic was standardised in the Achaemenid Persian period for use in the Persian administration, and this “Imperial Aramaic” remained in use, in both east and west, arguably down to the second century CE, though it was steadily modifying into a late form of Imperial Aramaic, sometimes called Middle Aramaic and sometimes Standard Literary Aramaic. The underlying spoken Aramaic, however, grew increasingly diverse, and this diversity began to appear in literary form from the third century onwards in the development of two very different *literary* dialects – Palestinian Jewish Aramaic (e.g. the Palestinian Talmud) and Babylonian Jewish Aramaic (e.g. the Babylonian Talmud). These regional Jewish dialects remained in use at both literary and vernacular levels until the Arab period, when they were finally replaced by Arabic at both levels. For a

⁸⁸ This sometimes happens even in Targum Lamentations.

time, however, after Arabic had effectively replaced Aramaic as the Jewish vernacular, Aramaic continued to be used for *literary* purposes by Jews, particularly for Targums. This Late Literary Jewish Aramaic, however, because it no longer had a vernacular base, and was never standardised, became an unstable mix of the Aramaic dialects of existing high status literary texts known to the scholars composing in Aramaic in this period – principally the Targums of Onqelos and Jonathan, the Palestinian and the Babylonian Talmuds.⁸⁹

Alexander argues that the language of Targum Song conforms to the characteristics of Late Literary Jewish Aramaic. It shows features representative of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic, Babylonian Jewish Aramaic, and the Standard Literary Aramaic of both Onqelos and Jonathan. He claims that, though learned, the Aramaic feels stilted and “artificial”.⁹⁰ Its “laboured” style, combined with a number of possible Arabisms, suggests to him that the Targumist’s native language was Arabic rather than Aramaic. The presence of Arabisms in the language of Targum Song is important for the argument, but it has yet to be thoroughly investigated. Alexander’s evidence remains thin and merely suggestive. He can point for sure to the presence of Arabic gem-stone names at 5:14, and I will argue for a potential Arabism at 1:12 (see below Chapter 5, 5.2).⁹¹ This way of classifying the Aramaic dialect of Targum Song has clear dating implications (see below).

An alternative way of explaining the mixed dialect of Targum Song would be to argue that the diversity came about through copying. It is certainly well documented that mediaeval Jewish scribes had a habit of introducing the Aramaic forms which they knew best as they copied, principally those of Onqelos-Jonathan and the Babylonian Talmud. Is it possible, for example, to argue that Targum Song was composed originally in “pure” Palestinian (Galilean) Aramaic, but that its redaction in Babylonia and the constant copying by mediaeval scribes resulted in the intrusion of other dialectal forms? If this were the case, it would allow a much earlier date for the Targum on linguistic

⁸⁹ See Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 8-9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, Appendix B.

grounds. Alexander postulates precisely this scenario for Targum Lamentations, which he dates a few centuries earlier than Targum Song, and which he argues was originally composed in Galilean Aramaic.⁹² The differences between these two cases are not at all obvious, but he argues that the degree of mixture in the Aramaic of Targum Song is so pervasive, and is so characteristic of whatever manuscript we choose to examine, that the distinction can be drawn. There is no possibility of uncovering a Galilean Aramaic substrate of the Targum Song in the way that is possible, he argues, with Targum Lamentations.⁹³

2.3 Provenance

It is not possible to decide where Targum Song was composed purely on the basis of its language. If it is in Late Literary Jewish Aramaic then that dialect could have been used in either Palestine or Babylonia, the only two regions which come plausibly into the reckoning when we consider the Targum's provenance. Debate on this issue has focused on two points. The first is the reference in Targum Song 8:14 to "this polluted land" from which the Shekhinah is urged to depart. Melamed saw this as a clear reference to Babylonia, on the grounds that Eretz Israel would not have been referred to in this pejorative way, but rather as "the holy land"⁹⁴. Alexander, however, stands this argument on its head by claiming, reasonably, that a land can hardly be called "polluted" if it is not deemed as intrinsically "holy", and it is unlikely that land outside Israel would have been viewed in this light. The pollution of the Land of Israel presumably arises from its domination by the gentiles, perhaps specifically the Christians, who, since the time of Constantine, had appropriated the old Jewish homeland as Christian space, building all over it Christian churches.⁹⁵ Dating Targum Song to the Islamic era poses no real problem for the view that it is the *Christian* presence in Palestine that pollutes the land. This presence remained religiously dominant long after the Islamic invasion had brought to an end Christian political domination. Indeed, it is probable that Christians were the most numerous religious group throughout the Middle East to the thirteenth

⁹² Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 12-19.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 13-15.

⁹⁴ Melamed, "Targum Canticles," 215.

⁹⁵ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 58.

century, when their numbers started to decline, a decline that has continued down to the present day. Jews tended to have a more positive opinion of Islam than of Christianity, because of Islam's uncompromising monotheism and its opposition to images, so it is less likely that it was the Islamic presence that would have been seen as polluting. The Targumist's messianism should be recalled here: he is waiting for the imminent coming of the Messiah to redeem Israel from gentile bondage.

It is tempting to reinforce this argument by suggesting that the reference to the Shekhinah surely also points towards Israel, in that it is in the Land of Israel, and specifically in the Temple, that the Shekhinah resides, but caution is in order. Ever since Ezekiel there was a tradition that the divine presence had gone with Israel into exile, and some Babylonians claimed that it had taken up residence in Babylonia, but this is a very minor tradition, and the natural way to understand the language is in terms of the Shekhinah's withdrawal from the Temple, and this favours a Palestinian setting.

The second point on which the debate over provenance has focused is the description in Targum Song of a Rabbinic School (see Targum Song 7:3, 7:5 and 8:13). Alexander stresses the centrality of this motif to the Targum, calling it a "paean of praise to the schools."⁹⁶ Unfortunately we do not know very much about the organisation of the Rabbinic schools in late antiquity and the early middle ages, but we know enough to suggest that the description in Targum Song fits the Palestinian structure marginally better than the Babylonian. Even more significant is the fact that Targum Song seems to envisage only *one* school, which would hardly be appropriate for Babylonia, where there were *two* schools (Sura and Pumbeditha) when it was composed. Alexander, therefore, argues that the Targum was written in part to drum up support for the School at Tiberias, and to encourage the Jewish community to support it with their "tithes".⁹⁷ A Palestinian provenance is also favoured by the general situation. As I noted earlier (Chapter One, 1.2.2.2 (2)), Midrash was less developed in Babylonia than in Palestine, and there is much less evidence for the creation of such a work

⁹⁶ Ibid., 58

⁹⁷ Ibid., 59-60.

there. The mediaeval Jewish scholars tended to assume that all the Targumim were Palestinian in provenance and they were probably right.

2.4 Date

Targum Song is a tightly structured composition (see below) which points, unusually for such a midrashic work, to a single author, and hence to a specific date of composition. There is little agreement, however, as to just when this was. Menn proposes the fifth or sixth century,⁹⁸ Christian David Ginsberg the mid sixth century or later,⁹⁹ Jacob Neusner after the seventh century,¹⁰⁰ Raphael Loewe after the Islamic conquest,¹⁰¹ and Philip Alexander the seventh or even eighth century.¹⁰² Thus the dates range over a period of around three hundred years, which suggests a consensus has yet to be reached.

Various arguments have been advanced to support a particular date:

(1) At Targum Song 1:2 there appears to be a reference to the Talmud (Aramaic *talmuda*). Now, the word *talmud* in early Rabbinic texts does not necessarily denote the Talmud in our sense of the term: it can mean simply “teaching, learning, study”.¹⁰³ However, in context here, juxtaposed to Mishnah, it seems to refer to the Talmud, and if this is the case, then the Targum itself must be post-Talmudic in date. But which Talmud is meant? Since Targum Song is Palestinian, one would naturally suppose the Palestinian Talmud is in view. The date of the closing of the Palestinian Talmud is disputed, but it is usually deemed

⁹⁸ Menn, “Targum of the Song of Songs and the Dynamics of Historical Allegory,” 423.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Weston Fields, “Early and Medieval Jewish Interpretation of the Song of Songs,” *Grace Theological Journal* 1.2, no. Fall (1980): 230.

¹⁰⁰ J. Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (London: Doubleday, 1994), 618.

¹⁰¹ Fields, “Early and Medieval Jewish Interpretation of the Song of Songs,” 230.

¹⁰² Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 55.

¹⁰³ See Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* (Judaica Treasury, 2004), 1672b. Jastrow notes that Lagarde’s ed., following Bomberg, reads at Targum Song 1:2 *Gemara* instead of *Talmud*, through a censor’s change, and this is the text adopted by Jay C. Treat, “The Aramaic Targum to Song of Songs,” *Jay C. Treat, Ph.D.*, <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~jtreat/song/targum/>. It seems that at a time when there was strong Christian prejudice against the Talmud censors regularly changed *Talmud* to *Gemara*. None of the manuscripts, however, reads *Gemara*.

to have taken place no later than 450 CE,¹⁰⁴ so this would be a *terminus post quem* for our Targum. However, the Babylonian Talmud also came to be known in the west, so a reference to it cannot be ruled out. The closing of the Babylonian Talmud is traditionally put at around 500, but recent work has tended to suggest a later date, possibly as late as the eighth century.¹⁰⁵ Then we would have to factor in time for the Bavli to be carried to the west and to become *the* Talmud there. This would suggest a very late date for our Targum, if it is indeed post-Babylonian Talmud.¹⁰⁶

(2) Raphael Loewe argued that at Targum Song 8:9 there is a reference to the *jizya*, the poll-tax imposed by the Muslim authorities on non-Muslim “peoples of the book”, to allow them to practise their religion unmolested,¹⁰⁷ but Alexander disputes this interpretation of the verse, seeing instead an allusion to the obligation to support the Rabbinic schools financially.¹⁰⁸ If Loewe is correct, this supports a post-Islamic date for Targum Song.

(3) References to Esau and Ishmael at 1:7 (cf. 6:8) have been taken to indicate that the Targumist looked out “on a world divided between Christianity (Esau) and Islam (Ishmael)”. The reference to the present age as “the exile of Edom”, i.e. of Christianity, at 7:12 does not necessarily contradict this, because in Jewish apocalyptic writings of the post-Islamic era the eschatological foe of Israel is still seen as Rome, and the anti-messiah as Armillus (Romulus).¹⁰⁹ This state of affairs, where the world was divided between Christianity and Islam, probably only applied within a narrow window of time – the short “honeymoon” period after the Islamic conquest when Christendom was still perceived as the foe and Islam as the liberator.¹¹⁰ Negative attitudes towards Islam did eventually develop

¹⁰⁴ See, e.g., Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (trans. Marcus Bockmuehl; 2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 171.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹⁰⁶ See further, Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, 618.

¹⁰⁷ Raphael Loewe, “Apologetic Motifs in the Targum to the Song of Songs,” in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations* (ed. Alexander Altmann; Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 167.; further, Raphael Loewe, “The Sources of the Targum to the Song of Songs,” in *Proceedings of the Twenty-seventh International Congress of Orientalists at Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1967* (ed. Denis Sinor; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971), 104..

¹⁰⁸ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 58.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹¹⁰ Alexander, “From Poetry to Historiography,” 121.

within Judaism: as, for example, possibly in Song Rabbah,¹¹¹ Pirquei de Rabbi Eliezer 29 and 30, and other midrashic works. However, a distaste for Muslim rule comparable to the distaste for Christian rule *never* seems to have been made explicit within late Hebrew apocalyptic. Edom, in the shape of the Romans and Christianity, continues there, as I have already noted, to be depicted as the enemy in the end time. For some reason, the scenario was never adapted to take account of the realities of the new Islamic order.

(4) As already noted, if the Aramaic of Targum Song is indeed Late Literary Jewish Aramaic, and if Late Literary Jewish Aramaic is indeed a form of Aramaic which arose after Jews had ceased speaking Aramaic as their vernacular and Arabic was routinely used in everyday life, then this would date the Targum within the Islamic period, although not right at the beginning of this period, because it took some time for Arabic to replace Aramaic as the spoken language.¹¹²

(5) If the strong link which the Targum forges between Song of Songs and the Exodus from Egypt indicates that it was meant as reading for Pesah then this might point to an origin in the Gaonic period, since all the evidence suggests that it was in this period that Song of Songs was first designated as a proper lection for this festival.¹¹³

(6) Targum Song is an eschatological work, with a substantial element of messianism, yet at the same time it clearly emanated from a Rabbinic milieu. If it is correct that Rabbinism only re-engaged with messianism in late Amoraic/Gaonic times, then it would seem to follow that the Targum cannot be dated before then. Indeed, it would be most obvious to link it with the texts of the apocalyptic revival of the late sixth to early ninth centuries, with which it broadly shares a scenario of the end of history.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Song Rabbah 7.3.3. See Carol Bakhos, "Midrashic Interpretation in Antiquity and the Middle Ages," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Medieval Through the Reformation Periods* (ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson; vol. 2; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 134.

¹¹² Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 55.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

(7) The positive attitude towards the Hasmoneans in Targum Song (Targum Song 6:7-7:11),¹¹⁵ in contrast to either the indifference towards them or the outright hostility shown in classic Rabbinic literature, is striking. It suggests the Targum belongs to a time when the Rabbinic movement was re-engaging with the Festival of Hanukkah. This does not seem to have happened before the fifth century CE, and was another aspect of the Rabbinic rediscovery of messianism.¹¹⁶

(8) Targum Song is a rich and complex work, and behind it must lie a long tradition of interpretation of Song of Songs. Its exegesis is too mature, and the forms of its traditions too developed for it to lie anywhere near the historical origins of the tradition.¹¹⁷

These arguments all carry different weight, and none of them on its own is very strong, but cumulatively they seem to point inescapably to a date for Targum Song in the early Islamic period (7th-9th centuries CE).

2.5 The Nature of Targum Song

The literary genre of Targum Song is already to some degree indicated by its title “Targum” – a term designating a type of text often referred to in classic Rabbinic literature. By calling it a Targum the medieval scribes were aligning it with a large class of compositions which bore the same name. But how well defined was this class, and what were its chief characteristics? We should begin with the word Targum itself. It is derived from a verbal root *trgm*, the fundamental meaning of which is to translate a text from one language into another.¹¹⁸ From this root, which is probably Hittite in origin, and so Indo-European, rather than Semitic, which would explain its quadrilateral form,¹¹⁹ is derived not only the

¹¹⁵ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 17; Alexander, “From Poetry to Historiography,” 111ff.

¹¹⁶ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 57. Further: Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 81-86.

¹¹⁷ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 56. Further: Fields, “Early and Medieval Jewish Interpretation of the Song of Songs,” 229-30.

¹¹⁸ See Ezra 4:7; *t.Megillah* 3.41; *y.Megillah* 1.9, 71c (translation into Greek!); *Massekhet Soferim* 1.7; Tanhuma (Buber), *Vayyera*’ 6.6 (translation into Greek!)

¹¹⁹ Chaim Rabin, “Hittite Words in Hebrew,” *Orientalia* 32 (1963): 134-136.

noun *targum*, “translation” but also *meturgeman*, “translator”.¹²⁰ Translations have certain very basic characteristics: their form mimics that of the original; as far as possible they represent the total sense of the original (in other words, they are not selective and do not omit parts of the original); they follow the order of the original; and they are free-standing compositions in their own right (in other words the reader should not have to refer to the original in order to make sense of the translation). Targum Song shows most of these characteristics: it is self-contained, there is no need to refer to the original to make sense of it, and it follows the original order, offering a rendering of every word in the original usually in exactly the same sequence. In one respect, however, it signally fails to reproduce the original: it has turned the original poetry into (very wordy) prose. Other Targums do the same with other passages of Biblical poetry, though this is not inevitable: sometimes, as Jan Wim Wesselius points out, the Targumists seem to have tried to reproduce the biblical poetry in their translations. There was a tradition of Aramaic religious poetry to draw on, and sometimes extraneous Aramaic poems are found inserted into Targums, but the translator of Targum Song has chosen not to preserve the poetry. The reason is rather clear: he chose a paraphrastic style of translation which effectively made poetic form impossible. He had to sacrifice the poetry (probably a small sacrifice in his view), because the type of rendering he chose could realistically have only been presented in prose.¹²¹

It is this paraphrastic nature of Targum Song which complicates its classification as translation. Ancient translation theory, as represented by Jerome, recognised two major types of translation: the *verbum e verbo* type and the *sensus de sensu* type.¹²² The former is what we would probably call today “literal translation”, the latter is closer to our category of dynamic-equivalent translation. The latter

¹²⁰ Targum: *m.Megillah* 2.1; *b.Qiddushin* 49a; Meturgeman: *m.Megillah* 4.4; *b.Megillah* 23a-23b.

¹²¹ Jan Wim Wesselius, “Biblical Poetry through Targumic Eyes: Onkelos' Treatment of Genesis 49:8-12,” in *Give Ear to my Words: Psalms and other Poetry in and around the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Janet Dyk; Amsterdam: Societas Hebraica Amstelodamensis, 1996), 131-145; Jan-Wim Wesselius, “Completeness and Closure in Targumic Literature: The Emulation of Biblical Hebrew Poetry in Targum Jonathan to the Former Prophets,” *Journal for the Aramaic Bible* 3 (2001): 237-247.

¹²² Jerome, *Letter 57* and Sebastian Brock, “Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 20, no. 1 (1979): 69-87; Sebastian Brock, “The Phenomenon of Biblical Translation in Antiquity,” *Alta* II.8 (1969): 96-102.

kind of translation can allow elements of paraphrase and expansion in order to clarify the original for the reader. And indeed, since the secondary meaning of the root *trgm* is to *interpret* a text by restating it *in the same language*,¹²³ an element of interpretation in a biblical translation would, probably, have been deemed allowable in a Targum, and, indeed, is very noticeable in all the extant Targums, even the most apparently literal such as Onqelos. But at approximately five times the length of the Song itself,¹²⁴ the degree of expansion and paraphrase in Targum Song is very unusual, and severely strains its classification as translation.

Within the category of Targum, Targum Song is an unusual sub-type. This is at once obvious if we compare it with Targum Onqelos, the category-defining Targum. Onqelos is generally literal, though as Pierre Grelot reminds us, it is not without aggadic additions here and there.¹²⁵ Alexander recognises two broad types of Targum: the literal, in which a more or less one-to-one rendering is offered of the original, and the expansive, in which explanatory material is added. Expansive Targums in turn fall into two sub-types. In type A the expansions are introduced into a one-to-one base-translation in such a way that they can be bracketed out leaving behind a viable literal translation. This way of adding to the text requires great ingenuity and care, and cannot be accidental. It must be the outcome of deliberate policy. In type B the element of straight translation of the biblical text is dissolved in the paraphrase in such a way that a literal base-text cannot be extracted, even though all the words of the original will have an equivalent in the Targum, and will occur in the paraphrase in the same order as in the biblical text. Targum Song belongs to type B Targum, and

¹²³ This is most obvious in the use in Rabbinic Hebrew of the noun *meturgeman* to denote the spokesman of a great Sage. The *Meturgeman* did not translate the Sages' words into another language. What he did was to take the Sages' ideas and expound them in a way that would be intelligible to a general audience. See *t.Megillah* 3.41; *y.Megillah* 4, 75c; *b.Berakhot* 27b; *b.Mo'ed Qatan* 21a; *b.Ketubbot* 8b; *b.Gittin* 60b.

¹²⁴ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 29.

¹²⁵ Pierre Grelot, "Remarques sur le second Targum du livre d'Esther," *Revue Biblique* 77 (1970): 231.

although it is by no means the only exemplar of this sub-type, the sub-type itself is less common than type A.¹²⁶

The general purpose of these expansions is clear: they are intended to make the text more accessible, to explain it, to impose a meaning on it. As Josep Ribera puts it, the aim is to aid comprehension of the biblical text, to make it understandable to those with a “social, cultural and linguistic context different from that in which the Bible was written”.¹²⁷ Étan Levine sees the stance of such Targums as fundamentally persuasive: “The more elaborately paraphrastic targums became”, he writes, “not primarily translations of Scripture but vehicles for conveying the accepted meaning and interpretation of the Bible.” Their function is more than simply to draw out for the contemporary reader the sense latent in Scripture; it is as much to impose meaning on Scripture, “to underscore extraneous ideas, values and understanding.”¹²⁸ Song of Songs had been seen in Rabbinic Judaism as a problematic text, the canonicity of which was sharply disputed, and so it was a text in need of more interpretation than most. Tradition recorded that from the time of Aqiva it had been regarded as in some way allegorical – not to be taken at face value. The reasons for this are not explicitly stated, but are not hard to guess. Song of Songs nowhere mentions the name of God, nor are the great themes of Jewish theology – the Torah, the covenant, the sin and redemption – to be found in it. All of these themes need to be imaginatively read into it, as in Targum Song (see below). Moreover Song of Songs’ overt sexuality, in which the female figure plays as active a role, or even a more active role, when compared with the male, would also have been problematic in a text included in Scripture.

This way of understanding the additions suggests they are midrashic, for it is a fundamental aim of the midrashic method to address problematic biblical texts in

¹²⁶ Philip S. Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures,” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. M. J. Mulder; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), 234.

¹²⁷ J. Ribera, “The Targum: From Translation to Interpretation,” in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context* (ed. D. R. G. Beattie and M. J. McNamara; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 166; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 218.

¹²⁸ É Levine, *The Aramaic version of the Bible: contents and context* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 7.

line with these great themes. It is not surprising, then, that some have attempted to reclassify Targum Song in terms of Midrash. Leon Liebreich calls it an “aggadic commentary, or an allegorical Midrash in Aramaic”.¹²⁹ Pierre Grelot, though he finds the question of where the line between Targum and Midrash should be drawn in the case of the paraphrastic Targums potentially too complex to be answered,¹³⁰ nevertheless concludes his study of the Second Targum of Esther, which shows the same sort of expansiveness as Targum Song, by classifying it as an “Aramaic Midrash”¹³¹. Alexander Sperber opines that the Targumim of the Megillot “are not Targum-texts but Midrash-texts in the disguise of Targum”¹³². Sperber’s classification of the Targums of the Hagiographa, where expansiveness is the norm, is very suggestive. Behind it clearly lies a theory that the Targums started out as basically literal, one-to-one translations, into which over time midrashic elements have intruded, until finally the Targum metamorphoses into a Midrash. Thus under the rubric of “Gradual Inclusion of Midrashic Elements” he classifies Targums Ruth and Chronicles as “*Quellen-Scheidung* still possible” (in other words it is still possible to separate “Targum” from “Midrash”). Targums Song, Lamentations and Ecclesiastes are “Translation and Midrash completely fused together”, and the Second Targum to Esther is “Targum a Misnomer for Midrash”.¹³³ Thus Sperber clearly sees Targum Song as representing a much later stage of targumic development than what we find in Onqelos and Jonathan, a stage in which the demarcation between Targum and Midrash has become totally blurred.

But it is important to note that there are formal features of Midrash conspicuously absent from Targum Song. First, it does not have the classic midrashic form of lemma + comment, as Sperber himself acknowledges.¹³⁴ Second, it does not quote other Scriptures in highlighted form, introduced by citation formula. The one breach of this rule is the Midrash of the Ten Songs in 1:1, but this may be because the Targumist sees Song 1:1 as a sort of

¹²⁹ L. J. Liebreich, “The Benedictory Formula in the Targum to the Song of Songs,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 18 (1944): 177.

¹³⁰ Grelot, “Remarques sur le second Targum du livre d’Esther,” 232.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹³² Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, viii.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, Contents Page.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, viii.

(secondary?) title standing outside the text, and not integral to it. Third, though behind Targum Song doubtless lie midrashic methods of interpretation, these are not argued, nor their workings exposed in the way that is common in Midrash. Fourth, the Targum tends to be monovalent in its reading of Scripture, and where multiple interpretations are implied they are introduced in such a way that the reader, without consulting the original, could not detect their presence. The Midrash, by way of contrast, is fundamentally multivalent in its reading of Scripture, and normally makes explicit this fact, e.g. by assigning the different interpretations to different named authorities, or by introducing them with a formula such as *davar 'aher* (“another interpretation”). The Targum never quotes named authorities.

From this analysis I would conclude that although the hybrid nature of Targum Song can hardly be denied (Sperber’s description of it as a “fusion” of Targum and Midrash captures this hybridity rather well), in formal terms it still remains (just) within the borders of the genre Targum. The fact that it does so offers a remarkable testimony to the Targumist’s grasp of the fundamental characteristics of that genre. It should also be noticed that it does not conform exactly to the characteristics of Rewritten Bible. Rewritten Bible – an old genre of Bible interpretation within Judaism, represented classically by works such as the Genesis Apocryphon, the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* and Jubilees, treats the biblical text more casually: it leaves sections of it out, and rearranges the order. It appears to be fundamental to Targum that all the biblical text is there in it somewhere, and in the same sequence as in the Bible.

2.6 Unity and Structure

The structure of Targum Song is self-imposed. Having set out to translate the Song of Songs the Targumist clearly had to structure his own work in accordance with the structure of the work he was translating. Consequently we can predict in advance the limits of the Targum: they must coincide with the limits of the biblical text. The basic structure of the Targum is, therefore, pre-set, but within this pre-set framework the Targumist has managed to superimpose additional levels of structure and coherence, which are not dictated by the underlying text.

This is achieved first by offering a unified reading of the whole biblical book. Song of Songs is taken as an allegorical account of the historical relationship between God and Israel from the Exodus from Egypt to the Messianic Age. As Menn observes: "...traditions [are] correlated, modified, and ordered so that Israel's historical narrative emerges as the overarching structure for understanding the entire book of the Song of Songs from beginning to end."¹³⁵ The result is a unitary reading of a biblical book which, as Alexander says, may well be unique among Rabbinic Bible commentaries.¹³⁶ The Rabbinic Midrashim tend to be atomistic in their approach: they focus on the verse, the phrase, the word, and interpret these often in isolation from even their most immediate context. If they find any unity in the biblical text then it resides in the constant discovery within it, at the micro-level, of the same limited repertory of theological themes. This thematic unity, as we shall see (2.8 below) is also found in Targum Song, but, unlike the Midrashim, it is not the only form of unity to be found in the work.

The Targumist imposes still further structure on the biblical text. The history of God's relationship with Israel from the Exodus to the Messianic Age is depicted as following a rhythm or pattern. This has struck all close readers of the Targum, and, in fact, it echoes an underlying pattern of estrangement and reconciliation in the biblical book itself. Esther Menn, for example, sees this pattern as "the repetition of a number of cycles of sin, repentance, and restoration".¹³⁷ But working out the structure of the Targum on the basis of this perception has proved surprisingly problematic. Richard T. Loring, Larry G. Schneekloth, Leon J. Liebreich, Raphael Loewe, and Philip Alexander, all starting from basically the same perception as Menn, have nevertheless divided up the text in very different ways.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Menn, "Targum of the Song of Songs and the Dynamics of Historical Allegory," 424.

¹³⁶ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 13.

¹³⁷ Menn, "Targum of the Song of Songs and the Dynamics of Historical Allegory," 429.

¹³⁸ Richard T. Loring, "The Christian historical exegesis of the Song of Songs and its possible Jewish antecedents" (unpublished PhD dissertation, General Theological Seminary, 1967), 2; L. G. Schneekloth, "The Targum of the Song of Songs: A Study in Rabbinic Biblical Interpretation" (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1977), 284-92; Liebreich, "The Benedictory Formula in the Targum to the Song of Songs," 182; Loewe, "Apologetic Motifs in the Targum to the Song of Songs," 169-73.

Loewe, for example, suggests the structure of the Targum is “symphonic.” It is made up of an introduction and five movements. The introduction is represented by the Midrash of the Ten Songs in 1:1. The first movement accounts for 1:2-3:6 and covers from the Exodus to the building of Solomon’s temple. The second movement, 3:7-4:1, deals with the dedication of the Temple. The third movement, covering 5:2-6:1, is a tale of Israel’s sin and her path to repentance, an affirmation of the importance of the Torah, and the place Jerusalem and Israel’s sages hold in God’s eyes, and an acknowledgement by Israel that it is her behaviour that leads to alienation between God and herself. The fourth movement, 6:2-7:11, tells of God’s acceptance of Israel’s repentance and the resultant blessing he bestows on her. The fifth movement, 7:12-8:14, addresses the Roman exile and looks forward to the messianic redemption which will return Israel to her previous state of divine favour, emphasises the significance of Torah study, and includes historical flashbacks to times in Israel’s history when God and the prophets assured her of her election.¹³⁹ Although this is an excellent overview of the content and order of the Targum, it does not, arguably, amount to a structure, nor is it at all obvious what is symphonic about it, and it rather obscures the historical schema which is clearly important to the Targumist.

Philip Alexander does manage to highlight the chronological aspect. Within the framework of a Preamble (1:1-2) and a Peroration (8:13-14), he sees the history of God’s relationship with Israel as moving through three cycles of exile, return and restoration: the first extends from the exile of Egypt, through the Exodus, to the glories of King Solomon’s reign (1:3-5:1); the second extends from the Babylonian exile, through the return under Cyrus, to the glories of the Hasmonean age (5:2-7:11); the third extends from the exile of Edom, through the ingathering of the exiles in the messianic age, to the restoration of the Solomonic piety under the King Messiah (7:12-8:12). This offers a neat analysis of the Targum, the key to which is the perception that in the first cycle, the Exodus from Egypt, is actually covered three times (first account: 1:3-8; second account: 1:9-2:7; third account: 2:8-3:4): the narrative doubles back on itself twice, before

¹³⁹ Loewe, “Apologetic Motifs in the Targum to the Song of Songs.,” 169-172.

moving forward. It is the failure to spot this that has skewed other attempts to discover the structure of the Targum.¹⁴⁰

While I find Alexander's analysis of the Targum's structure convincing, I would take issue with him on one small but significant point, namely an ambiguity in his use of the term "cycle". While this is a reasonable description of the basic pattern, it does not address the relationship between the cycles and the overall structure of the work. This should be pictured like the coils of a helical spring (such as a Slinky!), the beginning of which is located in what he calls "The Preamble" and the end in "The Peroration". What we have in between is a repeated pattern of events in which the Israelites move from a state of oppression and distance from God, through a reconciliation with God, leading to a time of glory, and then back to a state of oppression, but it would be wrong to assume that in each case there is simply a return to the *status quo ante*. Though the pattern is broadly the same, in keeping with the Jewish concept of time and history, there must surely be development: the highs get higher and lows lower. This insight is potentially of considerable importance for understanding the theology of the Targum. For example, it emphasises even more strongly the surprising importance the Targumist gives to the Hasmoneans: it implies that just as the glories of the King Messiah's reign will exceed those of the Hasmoneans, so their glories exceeded those of Solomon!

2.7 Theology

Targum Song, as we have seen, is a cogent, closely argued work in its own right, not simply a translation which slavishly follows its original, but what message does it seek to convey, what is its theology? This brings us to the question of the Targums as sources of theology – a much contested issue in Targumic studies at the moment. On the one hand, the nature of Targum seems to put the theological stance of the Targumist himself into the background. Primarily, he is a translator: it is the text that is being translated that contains the theology. On the other hand, every translation, Targumic or otherwise, includes an element of interpretation, and that interpretation must reflect a particular philosophical, historical, and/or,

¹⁴⁰ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 15.

in the case of the Targumim, theological mindset. While the Targumist might not have been very conscious of this mindset as he translated, his own religious, social and historical background would necessarily have informed his decisions as a translator. It would be naive to imagine that the theology of a Targum would simply replicate in some neutral way that of the text under translation.

The key issue, then, in discussing the theology of a Targum is to decide what weight we are to give to the underlying biblical text. Here two contrasting positions have been argued. The first is well represented by a study of Moshe Bernstein on the Targums of Deuteronomy 32.¹⁴¹ Seeking to avoid what he sees as subjective value judgements by modern scholars, Bernstein wants to allow the Aramaic text to speak for itself. He begins by setting aside the theology of the original Hebrew, as well as those elements in the Targum which result from the application of standard targumic “translation technique or exegetical methodology”. Having done this, what should then remain are the “pluses”, the elements added by the Targumist to clarify, from his perspective, the meaning of the biblical text, or illustrate its worldview. It is in these, Bernstein argues, that the theology of the Targum primarily resides. Having identified the key ideas here we can then return to the rest of the material in the Targum which we initially set aside – the passages of literal, “neutral” translation in which the Targumist seems passively to accept the theology of the underlying biblical text, as well as the material resulting from standard targumic translation procedures – and factor into the Targumist’s theology any elements there that align themselves with the theology of the pluses.¹⁴²

The second approach to discovering the theology of a Targum is well represented by Philip Alexander in his discussion of the theology of Targum Lamentations.¹⁴³ There, in conscious rejection of Bernstein’s position, he argues that one cannot set aside, even initially, the literal passages in a Targum in which the underlying biblical text shows through most clearly. One must begin with the

¹⁴¹ Moshe J. Bernstein, “The Aramaic Versions of Deuteronomy 32: A Study in Comparative Targum Theology,” in *Targum and Scripture: studies in Aramaic translations and interpretation in memory of Ernest G. Clarke* (ed. Ernest George Clarke and Paul Virgil McCracken Flesher; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 29-52.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 29-30.

¹⁴³ Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 23-37.

Targum in its totality, in its final form, and not simply concentrate on the pluses. The literal passages should not be seen as implying that the Targumist is passive, but rather that he is *actively accepting* the biblical text and its message *as it stands*. A fundamental move of ancient Jewish Bible interpretation was to accept the biblical text in its plain (*peshat*) sense, unless this proved theologically difficult. Only when it proved difficult did you need to find a way of reading it against the grain, and pulling it into line with your thinking. Broadly speaking, the presence of Midrash shows that a text contains problems, and the more Midrash there is the bigger the problems. Alexander then proposes a two-step procedure for discovering the theology of Targum Lamentations. Firstly, he offers a *peshat* reading of the biblical book by summarizing it “in as neutral and objective a way as possible”. Then, secondly, using this as a baseline, he attempts “to measure the Targumist’s interpretation [and] identify those aspects he found difficult and so paraphrased, and those he translated literally and so blended into his own voice.”¹⁴⁴ In this way, so Alexander argues, we can begin to build up a picture of the Targumist’s own theology. Bernstein’s claim that we must also set aside those elements in the Targum that reflect the standard exegetical features of Targum is equally questionable. While it might seem hazardous, for example, to attribute to a Targumist an anti-anthropomorphic view of God on the basis solely of “anti-anthropomorphic”/reverential translations, given that these are ubiquitous in Targumic style, they should not be discounted. As is well known, Targumic style is not consistent: the Targumist had a choice, so the adoption of specific translation-techniques from time to time must have some theological significance. Indeed, in this particular case we could not be sure that the Targumists held an “anti-anthropomorphic” view of God but for this stylistic device. They do not enunciate anti-anthropomorphism anywhere as a formal theological proposition in their own voice.

There are problems when we try to apply either of these approaches specifically to Targum Song, problems which suggest that the nature of the underlying biblical book has a strong influence on the question of how we extract a theology from a Targum of it, a point which neither Bernstein nor Alexander raises. The

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 25.

fundamental problem is that Song of Songs in itself does not have a theology: it is perhaps the least theological book in the whole of the Hebrew Bible. If it does contain a message or a story, then this has no overtly religious element. Any theology in Song of Songs is very much in the eye of the beholder. This can be seen in the fact that Marvin Pope's vast commentary on the Song of Songs contains no section dealing with the theology of the book *per se*, but instead has a lengthy discussion devoted to *interpretations* of the Song.¹⁴⁵ By way of contrast, a commentary on Deuteronomy or Lamentations which did not discuss the theology of these books would be seriously incomplete. Even the basic story which Song of Songs is telling is open to debate!¹⁴⁶ And where modern scholarship claims to have identified a key message – e.g. Michael Goulder's view that the overarching purpose of the Song is to legitimise foreign marriages.¹⁴⁷ – that claim is rarely accepted by other scholars. There is possibly less consensus about the unity of Song of Songs, its genre, its story-line and its message than any other biblical book.

But, somewhat paradoxically, this makes it less problematic to discover the theology of Targum Song. A *peshat* reading of Song of Songs, as Alexander recommends, will immediately establish that the whole of the biblical text can in effect be discounted: this particular Targum is *all* “plus” in Bernstein's terms! What Targum Song proves to be is the vanishing point of both Alexander's and Bernstein's methodologies. It shows that neither of their approaches can be universalised, but each, even on his own terms, has to take into account the nature of the biblical book, case by case. But although I am persuaded of the importance of the underlying biblical text in considering the theology of a Targum, something both Alexander and Bernstein emphasise in their different ways, I fail to see why we cannot take the final form of a Targum, rather than the biblical text, as our starting point, read it in its entirety, and derive the theology directly from that. That is precisely how ancient readers would have read the

¹⁴⁵ M. H. Pope, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Anchor Bible, 7C; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977).

¹⁴⁶ Athalya Brenner and Carole R. Fontaine, *The Song of Songs* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); Morris Jastrow, *The Song of Songs* (Philadelphia and London: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1921).

¹⁴⁷ M. D. Goulder, *The Song of Fourteen Songs* (JSOT Supplement Series 36; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 74-78.

text. In both approaches analytical procedures are implied which sit uneasily with modern, or rather post-modern, theories of text. They look for the meaning of the text in other, earlier texts, rather than on the surface of the text itself. In giving such a big role to Bible in determining the meaning of the Targum we run the risk of bringing too much biblical “baggage” into the Targum, and, correspondingly, downplaying the correct context within which the Targum’s exegesis is to be understood, namely the theological thought-world of late antique Judaism, and, in the case specifically of Targum Song, of Rabbinic Judaism. That is not to say that the theology of the biblical book should not have some weight in considering the theology of a Targum, but, as the case of the Song of Songs shows, it should be taken into account only after considering the Targum in itself and it is the Targum’s theology that should always be given priority.

All this said, I return to the basic point that Targum Song presents no tricky methodological problems when we read it for its theology. We can take all that it says at face value. Alexander identifies six key theological themes in the Targum: exile; idolatry; the merits of the righteous; the importance of the Beit Midrash and the Sanhedrin; messianism; and pacifism. He demonstrates that these themes are played upon again and again in Targum Song, and create for it a thematic unity. What he does not bring out perhaps with sufficient clarity is how interlocked the themes are, how they combine to present a strong, coherent argument. The Targum is all about the redemption of Israel, about how and when it is to be achieved. The pattern of Israel’s history is one of exile-exodus-restoration, and that pattern is about to repeat itself for the last time. The Targumist and his people are living in exile – in this case the exile of Edom. The cause of that exile was sin, its prolongation is due to idolatry on the part of the people – idolatry here being, as Alexander suggests, “a code-word for assimilation to the surrounding culture”, loss of communal identity, and maybe even apostasy.¹⁴⁸ But the exile is about to come to an end: the ingathering of the exiles and the coming of the Messiah are imminent. This note is struck right at the beginning of the Targum in the Midrash of the Ten Songs, which divides the

¹⁴⁸ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 20.

whole history of the world into ten songs: the only song still to be sung is the song of the returning exiles at the beginning of the Messianic Age. But how is this Messianic Age to be brought about? Not by force of arms (this is the Targumist's pacifist message), but by study and observance of Torah. Specifically it is the Beit Midrash/Sanhedrin that is the agent of redemption, and this is why the Targumist describes its role in such exalted, cosmic terms. This is why every Jew has a duty to support the Beit Midrash with "tithes", if he cannot himself be a Sage. The Sages acquire merit for Israel, and it is that merit which protects her during her exile, covers her sins, and ultimately will merit the Messiah. Indeed, in the Beit Midrash the people can experience something of the joys of the Messianic Age here and now, for when the Messiah comes, he will not come as a great warrior, but as a great Sage, who will reveal hitherto unsuspected depths in the Torah. The Messianic Age is but the intensification of the study of the Torah experienced in the Yeshivah here and now. The case is elegantly and subtly put, and it touches on the core values of Rabbinic Judaism, but it is a very long way from a *peshat* reading of the Song of Songs.

2.8 *Sitz im Leben*

In speaking of the *Sitz im Leben* of the Targum it is essential to define clearly what we mean by Targum. What is the precise entity we seek to situate in its literary, social and historical context? On reflection this turns out to be more problematic than one might at first suppose. Alexander Sperber draws a very firm distinction between the synagogal Targum, which he calls "Targum as an Institution" and the later written Targums, "Targum as a Literary Document". He claims that there is at least 1200 years between the origins of Targum as an Institution and the earliest evidence of Targum as a Literary Document, and thus "[a]ny attempt to treat the Literary Document as the direct successor of the Institution, or, as one might say, as the Institution transfigured from oral into written form, must be considered as a complete failure, since it has nothing even resembling a trustworthy evidence to rest upon."¹⁴⁹ Levine agrees that the literary Targum does not necessarily represent the synagogal Targum. He argues that "[synagogal use] does not mean that the extant targums *originated* in

¹⁴⁹ Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, 2.

association with the liturgical reading of Scripture in the Synagogue: this widespread conjecture is unsupported by clear evidence that, as a genre, targum derived from the synagogue, the written targums were originally oral, or that in *first century* synagogues the reading of Scripture was accompanied by public translation into Aramaic. In fact, the earliest extant targum texts are all essentially literal translations of the Hebrew Bible, and appear to be literary in origin.”¹⁵⁰

These are important *caveats*, which remind us that the first Targum texts we have are medieval, and that these medieval copies had their own *Sitz im Leben*, within the literary culture of the Jewish middle ages, in which religious compositions circulated freely in written form among scholars. But one must be careful not to push this argument so far as to imply that the mediaeval copies we now have must be treated as mediaeval creations, and bear no relation to the texts of the Targums that Rabbinic literature tells us existed in late antiquity. We should, perhaps, not put too much weight by way of counter argument on the fact that until modern times Synagogues in the Yemen maintained the “Targum as an Institution”, and that the Targums it used are the very Targums we have now,¹⁵¹ since it is not impossible (though, it must be said, hardly likely) that Targum as an Institution in the Yemen was a late medieval “revival” of a practice which the Yemenites found referred to in their Talmuds, and, indeed, sanctioned there. There are perfectly good reasons for thinking that all our extant Targum texts originated before 850. For example, given the history of Aramaic, is it likely that someone in the Middle Ages would have created, in the case of Onqelos and Jonathan, Targums in a dialect of Aramaic that predates 200 CE?¹⁵² And that some of these Targums created in late antiquity accurately reflect the Targum as delivered orally in the synagogues of that period is a reasonable assumption. The alternative, that there were parallel literary and oral forms of the Targum bearing

¹⁵⁰ Levine, *The Aramaic version of the Bible*, 9-10.

¹⁵¹ Yonatan Kolatch, *Masters of the Word* (vol. 2; New York: KTAV, 2006), 196.

¹⁵² It is true that in the Zohar we have a major work composed in the Middle Ages in Aramaic, but it makes the case for the antiquity of Onqelos and Jonathan very well. The author of the Zohar was attempting to write in the Aramaic dialect of second century Palestine, and drew heavily for this purpose on the language of Onqelos and Jonathan, but his Aramaic is highly artificial, and would not deceive anyone for a moment. The Aramaic of Onqelos and Jonathan is genuinely ancient.

little or no relationship to each other seems unnecessarily complicated. The question then becomes – What was the *Sitz im Leben* of the Targums we now have in late antiquity?

Jacob Neusner and others have identified, on the basis of Talmudic evidence, three settings for Targum in late antiquity: (1) the synagogue; (2) the school; and (3) private study.¹⁵³ The synagogue setting is the clearest. As early as the Mishnah, the Rabbinat was laying down rules to regulate the oral delivery of an Aramaic Targum of both the Torah and Haftarah readings in the synagogue.¹⁵⁴ Private study of the Targum also seems to be envisaged in the famous but rather late dictum that a man should always complete the Torah *parashah* together with the congregation, by reading it twice in the Hebrew and once in the Targum.¹⁵⁵ The meaning of this appears to be that in advance of hearing the Torah portion for the week publicly read and translated, a man should go over it in advance in both texts. It is reasonable to assume that this implies that he has written copies of both texts to hand, or at least has access to written copies. The evidence for the school setting is more circumstantial, but nonetheless strong. It is based partly on the fact that schoolmasters are depicted as possessing copies of the Targum.¹⁵⁶ As Alexander points out, given that Scripture in Hebrew was the basis of primary education, such as it was, in the Aramaic-speaking communities of Palestine in late antiquity, the Targum could play an obvious role in teaching the pupils to read Hebrew.¹⁵⁷ That they learned the Targum off by heart is suggested by the fact that according to the rules in the Mishnah, even a minor (i.e. a boy who is not *bar mitzvah*) can deliver the Targum in synagogue.¹⁵⁸ This makes perfect sense if he had to learn it by heart in school. To complete the picture we should note three additional *loci* for the creation and transmission of texts in Jewish society in late antiquity – the Beit Midrash, popular story telling, and the “forum”, that is to say public spaces in which Rabbis and non-rabbinic

¹⁵³ Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, 627.

¹⁵⁴ *m.Megillah* 4.6-10.

¹⁵⁵ *b.Berakhot* 8a-8b.

¹⁵⁶ *y.Megillah* 4, 74d; *'Avot deRabbi Natan* A6 and B12.

¹⁵⁷ Philip S. Alexander, “How Did the Rabbis Learn Hebrew?,” in *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben Yehuda* (ed. William Horbury; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 71-89.

¹⁵⁸ *m.Megillah* 4.6.

opponents (mainly Christians) met and debated with each other the merits of their respective positions.¹⁵⁹

With which of these *loci* does Targum Song plausibly correlate? Its use in a synagogue setting is very uncertain. The only context in which this would make sense would be in connection with Pesah, for which Song of Songs became a special reading in the Gaonic period. The links between Pesah and the Targum are extremely strong, and Massekhet Soferim actually seems to envisage it being read on that occasion.¹⁶⁰ This may well have been the setting envisaged for it by its author, and it is interesting to note that, despite his paraphrastic approach, it can be read against the biblical text, because the verse divisions are carefully maintained, but if it was so used, the custom did not survive. There is no evidence from later times that it was recited against the Hebrew publicly.¹⁶¹ However, there is evidence that it was read for private edification on Pesah: the practice survived among Persian Jews down to modern times.¹⁶² That it had a role in schools is surely out of the question: Song of Songs, as Origen notes, was not a text sanctioned for study by schoolboys.¹⁶³ As for the other *loci* of textual creativity and transmission, it does not correlate plausibly with popular storytelling. There is little narrative and less folklore in it. Nor is the “forum” any more likely as a setting. Raphael Loewe and others have, indeed, detected anti-Christian apologetic in Targum Song, but the evidence is very tenuous, and the arguments speculative.¹⁶⁴ The links with the Beit Midrash, and specifically with the Beit Midrash at Tiberias, are, however, extremely strong. Not only is the Targum as a whole “a paean of praise”, as Alexander puts it, for the Academy at

¹⁵⁹ Philip S. Alexander, “Lamentations Rabbah in the Context ‘Mourning for Zion’ in Late Antique Judaism,” Unpublished Lecture, Manchester, February 22, 2007, 10-13.

¹⁶⁰ *Massekhet Soferim* 14.3.

¹⁶¹ It is hard to see the basis for Manns’ confident claim that Targum Song was “à l’usage des synagogues” (F Manns, “Le Targum Du Cantiques Des Cantiques. Introduction Et Traduction,” *Liber Annuus* 41 (1991): 223.

¹⁶² See Massekhet Soferim 15.4, and further, Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 53-54.

¹⁶³ Origen, *Commentary on Canticles*, Prologue 1.7. Further: Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (2nd ed.; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965), 36-42; David J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel’s Vision* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 26-27.

¹⁶⁴ Loewe, “Apologetic Motifs in the Targum to the Song of Songs.”; E. E. Urbach, “Rabbinic Exegesis and Origen’s Commentaries on the Song of Songs, and Jewish-Christian Polemics,” *Tarbiz* 30 (1960): 148-70 [Hebrew: Eng. trans., “The Homiletical Interpretations of the Sages and the Expositions of Origen on Canticles, and the Jewish-Christian Disputation,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 22 (1971): 247-275].

Tiberias, but it is immensely erudite, and evidently aimed at a learned audience, who would know something of the scholarly tradition on which it drew, and appreciate its subtle allusions. All in all, it seems likely the Targum was composed by a learned scholar associated with the Academy at Tiberias, who envisaged as his audience primarily his fellow scholars,¹⁶⁵ but who, undoubtedly, would not have been displeased if his composition had been taken up and used in synagogue to translate publicly the Song of Songs on Pesah, or if it had reached a wider audience, among the more educated public.¹⁶⁶ The message he conveyed, of how to lead a viable religious life under the conditions of exile¹⁶⁷ -- the imminence of the redemption, and the need to stay faithful to the Torah -- and to support the Sages, was certainly not one that only scholars needed to hear.

There seem to be no good grounds, then, to deny that Targum Song is a literary Targum, which must have circulated in written form. That it was orally composed and orally circulated is highly unlikely. It shows none of the hallmarks of orally composed texts (e.g. the extensive use of fixed formulae),¹⁶⁸ though one should bear in mind that the Targumist was constrained to a degree by the underlying biblical text, nor could it have utilised the structures of learning and teaching which existed to ensure the oral transmission of the Mishnah: it surely would not have been made part of the “official” curriculum. But how exactly it would have circulated as a written text remains totally obscure. Was there some

¹⁶⁵ The targumic genre is often taken as representing “popular works designed for popular consumption” (Alexander, “Tradition and Originality in the Targum of the Song of Songs,” 321.). Unlike Talmud or Mishnah, targums are not seen as authoritative, and compared to midrash they are, by and large, neither overtly scholarly nor analytical. But while this may apply to other targums, it certainly does not fit Targum Song. Yet again this proves to be *sui generis* as a targum.

¹⁶⁶ As Alexander points out “Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures,” 218., not all targumim had a synagogal role and, over time, they became increasingly literary texts circulating in written form outside the Synagogue. The fact that Targum Song seems to be just such a literary targum can, therefore, be seen as a sign of its lateness. This argument, should, however, be used with some caution, since there is no evidence that the earliest of our targums – Onqelos and Jonathan – were created for Synagogue use. They were also, arguably, literary targums which were later pressed into Synagogue use. If this was indeed the case, then the late literary Targums were not innovating but picking up an earlier phase of Targumic development.

¹⁶⁷ See Menn, “Targum of the Song of Songs and the Dynamics of Historical Allegory,” 435-6. This concern is made explicit at Targum Song 1:7-8 where Moses asks God how the people will be sustained during exile, and the response is given that it will be through Torah study and righteous behaviour.

¹⁶⁸ See Elizabeth Shanks Alexander, *Transmitting Mishnah: The Shaping Influence of Oral Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), for a recent discussion of the rhetorics of orality and its manifestation in Rabbinic literature.

sort of Rabbinic book-market, as in the Greek world contemporary with the rabbinic period, into which copies could have been placed, and where scholars interested in such texts could have bought it? Or did the author perform it before an audience, who would then have requested copies if they liked it (another way of disseminating written texts in antiquity)? We simply do not know. It is perhaps not a straightforward question of either/or – either literary (written) composition and transmission, or oral composition and transmission. As Fraade reminds us: “It is now widely recognized that literary composition and oral performance dynamically *interface* with one another...it is impossible...to determine the primacy of one over the other: texts are composed so as to be socially (that is, orally) enacted, with the enactments in turn suffusing the process of their literary textualization...”¹⁶⁹.

2.9 Sources

The question of the sources of Targum Song is, clearly, integral to this dissertation and will be the main subject of Chapters Five and Six, but a few observations by way of preliminary orientation are in order. First, it should be noted that given Targum is regarded as the lowest rung of the Rabbinic literary hierarchy, the most derivative and unoriginal of genres,¹⁷⁰ one would expect that attention would have been paid to identifying its sources. But this has not been the case. The classic commentaries of Silber, Churgin and Komlosh¹⁷¹ identify what they assume to be sources for individual traditions, but do not take an overview, or discuss the problem of sources *per se*. A much more comprehensive approach was adopted by Raphael Loewe. It seems that he undertook a major and, in his view, exhaustive survey of the sources of Targum Song, but only a part of it was ever published, and that part now looks very dated, and does not adequately tackle the methodology of source-criticism.¹⁷² More significant was the important exchange on the pages of *Tarbiz* between Melamed and

¹⁶⁹ Steven D. Fraade, “Literary Composition and Oral Performance in Early Midrashim,” *Oral Tradition* 14, no. 1 (1999): 35. For evidence of Targum Song drawing on oral tradition see under 2.9 below.

¹⁷⁰ See Introduction, esp. Chapter 1, 1.2.2.2.

¹⁷¹ Silber, *Sedeh Yerushalayim*; Churgin, *The Targum to Hagiographa*, 117-139; Yehudah Komlosh, *The Bible in the Light of the Aramaic Translations* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1973), 77-81.

¹⁷² Loewe, “The Sources of the Targum to the Song of Songs,” 104.

Heinemann in the 1970s.¹⁷³ This did raise, especially on Heinemann's side, crucial theoretical issues, but these have not been pursued in more recent work. Esther Menn, for example, cheerfully asserts that Targum Song drew on Song Rabbah and Aggadat Shir ha-Shirim.¹⁷⁴ Identifying Aggadat Shir-ha-Shirim as a source for the Targum is particularly ill-judged, given that it is so heavily anthological in character, and may be nothing more than a scholar's notebook, created in the Middle Ages. There is no ground whatsoever for supposing that it represents the remnants of a once complete exposition of Song of Songs. Targum Song's standing has really sunk very low if it is casually assumed that it must have relied on Aggadat Shir ha-Shirim!

We need to distinguish three kinds of potential source for Targum Song. (1) The first is sources for its exegesis or ideas. In these cases there need be no, and often is no, overlap in wording between the Targum and its "source", simply a commonality of thought. Most of the material supposedly borrowed by the Targum from "sources" is of this kind, and it hardly needs to be said that proving dependence in such cases is not going to be easy.

(2) The second kind of source is where there are significant verbal overlaps between the Targum and its putative source. These are in effect "quotations", though they are never highlighted as such by the Targum. There are clearly sources of this kind behind Targum Song. In its account of the Exodus, for example, it contains strong echoes of Onqelos, so much so that it would be hyper-sceptical not to identify Onqelos as a source. The author of Targum Song knew well Targum Onqelos, and possibly also several other Targums, such as Jonathan to the Prophets.¹⁷⁵

(3) Finally, there are two cases where on source-critical grounds it is possible to identify substantial sections of text which have been taken into the Targum undigested, so to speak, passages which stand outside the Targum's narrative. The first of these is the Midrash on the Ten Songs at Targum Song 1:1. Different

¹⁷³ Melamed, "Targum Canticles," 208.

¹⁷⁴ Menn, "Targum of the Song of Songs and the Dynamics of Historical Allegory," 424.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 430.

versions of this Midrash are found in at least ten places in Rabbinic literature (including the present case).¹⁷⁶ No two examples give exactly the same ten songs (sixteen in all are mentioned), and although each makes reference to a “Song of Solomon”, a large number do not include under this rubric the Song of Songs, so the link with this biblical book was not perceived as inevitable.¹⁷⁷ Some songs do occur in every version, such as the Song at the Sea or the Song of Moses, but they are not necessarily given with the same proof text in each case. The table provided by Alexander sets out the situation clearly.¹⁷⁸ Interestingly, this midrash does not occur in Midrash Rabbah; it is the Targum alone which shares it with other Rabbinic works. The Midrash of the Ten Songs is a good example of the short of small, compact, self-contained aggadic unit so typical of Rabbinic literature, which must have free-floated in the oral tradition. Written circulation for such a small unit makes little sense. It offers, therefore, an interesting example of the Targumist drawing on the oral tradition.

The second case is the list of gemstones on the High Priest’s breastplate and their corresponding Tribes at Targum Song 5:14. This cannot be paralleled in multiple attestations in the same way as can the Midrash of the Ten Songs (and significantly it too is missing from Song Rabbah), but that it is a free-floating oral tradition that has been incorporated intact into the Targum seems beyond reasonable doubt. It should be noted that there are already in the Targum two different recensions of it, each with different lists of stones. Alexander argues that the list in the Yemenite recension is based on Exodus 28:17-20, only substituting *barqan* for *bareqet*, but over time this became contaminated in the manuscripts by readings from the Western recension. The Western recension seems to include names of gemstones from the Targumist’s own time, and although it resembles other lists from Rabbinic literature, it does not totally agree with any of them, except with that in *Leqah Tov*, which, in Alexander’s view, is based on Targum Song.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 206.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 208

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 210.

CHAPTER THREE

SONG OF SONGS RABBAH

Having introduced Targum Song in Chapter 2, the purpose of the present chapter is to introduce the main text with which it is to be compared, Song of Songs Rabbah, by considering the same background questions that we considered regarding the Targum. Some of those questions will have to be tackled in a slightly different way, because of the nature and history of the text under discussion here.

3.1 Song Rabbah as Part of Midrash Rabbah

Song Rabbah has generally been published as part of the collection of Midrashim on the Pentateuch and Five Megillot (Ruth, Song of Songs, Qohelet, Lamentations, Esther) known as Midrash Rabbah. There is evidence that the Rabbot to the Pentateuch existed as a collection from the 13th century onwards,¹⁸⁰ and a version of this was printed in Constantinople in 1512. It has been suggested that it was intended to complement Midrash Hakhamim, a collection of halakhic Midrashim, by providing a corresponding collection of aggadic Midrashim for the biblical books used in Synagogue worship.¹⁸¹ There does not, however, seem to be any evidence of the collection of the Rabbot to the Five Megillot until its publication in 1514, also in Constantinople. (For some time it was believed that the first edition of the Rabbot to the Megillot was the 1520 Pesaro edition;¹⁸² however it is now accepted¹⁸³ that this is, in fact, a copy of the 1514 Constantinople edition.¹⁸⁴) These two discrete collections were finally brought together and published under the overall title of “Midrash

¹⁸⁰ M. Bregman, “Midrash Rabbah and the Medieval Collector Mentality,” *Prooftexts* 17, no. 1 (1997): 67.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 70, n.4.

¹⁸³ M. B. Lerner, “The First Edition of ‘Midrash to the Five Scrolls,’” in *Shai le-Heman: mehkarim ba-sifrut ha-‘Ivrit shel yeme ha benayim: mugashim le-A.M. Haberman (Heman ha-Yerushalmi) bi-melot lo shivi'im ve-hamesh shanah* (ed. Zvi Malachi and Y. David,; Tel Aviv: Universitat Tel Aviv, 1983), 289-311.

¹⁸⁴ Bregman, “Midrash Rabbah and the Medieval Collector Mentality,” 70 n.4.

Rabbah” by the great Venetian printer of Hebraica, Daniel Bomberg, in 1545¹⁸⁵ – an edition which in text and form has defined Midrash Rabbah through to the present day.¹⁸⁶

The origins of the title “Rabbah” for this group of midrashim are not certain. A number of suggestions have been put forward. (1) That there were originally two collections of midrashim for each book of the Pentateuch, a larger one known as *rabbah* and a smaller, known as *zuta*.¹⁸⁷ There are also instances of the same phenomenon in some of the non-Pentateuchal books, including the Song of Songs.¹⁸⁸ In 1894 Solomon Buber published a collection of commentaries on the Five Megillot (not including Esther) which he called “Midrash Zuta”. The text came from Ms Parma 541, a thirteenth century manuscript, and comprised midrashic material much shorter in length than that found in the corresponding parts of Midrash Rabbah.¹⁸⁹ It is questionable, however, whether or not this is an edited collection in the same way that Midrash Rabbah is, and the possibility that it may, in fact, be little more than a collection of notes by a scholar should not be ignored.

(2) That the title “Rabbah” is linked ultimately to Rabbi Hoshā^cya Rabba, to whom the famous opening pericope of Genesis Rabbah is attributed. There is a tradition, found in Maimonides’ Introduction to his *Mishneh Torah*, that this rabbi was the author or compiler of Genesis Rabbah¹⁹⁰ and of other midrashim – hence *Bere’shit Rabbah*. Then the term “Rabbah” was extended from *Bere’shit Rabbah* to other Midrashim thought to be linked to it,¹⁹¹ e.g. Song Rabbah, of which *Bere’shit Rabbah* was widely regarded as a significant source.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 62.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 63. See further 3.2.5 below

¹⁸⁷ S. T Lachs, “Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* (1965): 239.

¹⁸⁸ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 268, 319-21.

¹⁸⁹ Myron B. Lerner, “The Works of Aggadic Midrash and the Esther Midrashim,” in *The Literature of the Sages: Second Part: Midrash and Targum, Liturgy, Poetry, Mysticism, Contracts, Inscriptions, Ancient Science and the Languages of Rabbinic Literature* (ed. Shmuel Safrai et al.; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2006), 168.

¹⁹⁰ Bregman, “Midrash Rabbah and the Medieval Collector Mentality,” 71 n.13.

¹⁹¹ Lachs, “Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba,” 242.

(3) Another theory proposes, in a similar way, that the origins of the title lie in Lamentations Rabbah/Rabbati, so called because of the prompt of the phrase *rabbati 'am* in Lamentations 1:1, the title then being extended to the rest of the collection.¹⁹²

It must be said that none of these explanations is at all convincing, and the obvious possibility should not be ignored that the title originated as simply a piece of publicity by an early compiler or printer who wanted to promote his collection as the biggest and best midrash collection ever. The one important conclusion that has to be drawn from this survey of the emergence of Midrash Rabbah is that as a collection it is very modern. However, its individual elements – the Midrashim on the individual biblical books – are of very different date and type, and each has its own internal textual and reception history. There was absolutely no attempt to edit the collection as a whole, though it should be noted that there is considerable parallelism between the various individual Midrashim within it. Consequently, we need not concern ourselves any further with the fact that Song Rabbah is now a part of Midrash Rabbah. It is worth noting, however, that as a separate composition, Song Rabbah circulated in the middle ages under the titles “Midrash Shir ha-Shirim”, “Midrash Hazitah” and “Aggadat Hazitah”. *Hazitah* here comes from the quotation of Proverbs 22:29 at the beginning of Song Rabbah (*hazitah 'ish mahir*).

3.2 The Text of Song Rabbah

There are four complete manuscripts of Song Rabbah and sixteen Genizah fragments, as well as three further testimonia manuscripts, which contain extracts from Song Rabbah.

¹⁹² Bregman, “Midrash Rabbah and the Medieval Collector Mentality,” 63.

3.2.1 Complete Manuscripts

1. Vatican, Ms Ebr. 76, parchment, 14th century, including Midrash Tehillim, Midrash Mishle, as well as Song Rabbah (fols 118a-182b),¹⁹³ written in Sephardi square script.¹⁹⁴

2. Frankfurt am Main, Ms hebr. oct. 133, parchment, 15th century, a collection of midrashic texts, Song Rabbah being the sixth (fols 223a-306b).¹⁹⁵

3. Oxford, Bodleian Ms Heb. 102 (Neubauer 164), paper, early 16th century, including Yalqut Shim‘oni on Proverbs, Job, Daniel, Ezra and Chronicles, as well as the Rabbot of the Five Megillot (Song Rabbah fol 261a-329b).¹⁹⁶ Spanish Rabbinic characters, 364 folios, last leaves stained.¹⁹⁷ A colophon to sections *not* relating to the Rabbot of the Five Megillot states that the manuscript was copied for R. Yaqob Zarfathi, and that it was finished in 1513.¹⁹⁸

4. München, Ms Hebr. 50, paper, mid-16th century, two parts, the second of which is called “Midrash Hazita deShir haShirim” (fols 329a-413a).¹⁹⁹ The script is Ashkenazi, and there is some evidence of ornamentation/erasure in the opening words. A colophon to the first part of the manuscript dates it to 1552.²⁰⁰

3.2.2 Genizah Fragments

1. Leningrad (Petersburg), Antonin-collection 104, one folio, parchment, c. 11th century, covering Song Rabbah 1.7.2 – 1.9.1 (= Vilna ed. fols 19a.16-20a.20).²⁰¹ The script is eastern/oriental,²⁰² a typical Palestinian hand, similar to

¹⁹³ Hans, E Steller, “Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah,” in *Rashi 1040-1990: Hommage a Ephraim E. Urbach* (ed. Gabrielle Sed-Rajna; Paris: Cerf, 1993), 301.

¹⁹⁴ “Catalogues of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts,” Online Catalogue, 2007, system no. 000194357.

¹⁹⁵ Steller, “Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah,” 301.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 301.

¹⁹⁷ Adolf Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford Including Mss. in Other Languages, Which are Written in Hebrew Characters, or Relating to the Hebrew Language or Literature; and a Few Samaritan Mss* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886), 27.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27

¹⁹⁹ Steller, “Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah,” 302.

²⁰⁰ “IMHM,” system no. 000100223.

²⁰¹ Steller, “Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah,” 305.

²⁰² “IMHM,” system no. 000090700.

that of Vatican 30, a ms of Genesis Rabbah.²⁰³ Collating the ms with the *editio princeps*, Rabbinowitz could find few differences in writing, style, or form. When words are pointed the Babylonian system is mostly used, but in some cases the Tiberian is found.²⁰⁴ Rabbinowitz sees in the manuscript evidence of antiquity,²⁰⁵ detecting behind it an Ur-text in the language of the Sages.²⁰⁶ He notes also the presence in it of Galilean Aramaic.²⁰⁷

2. Leningrad (Petersburg), Antonin 998, one sheet of two folios, parchment, from the same codex as no. 1 above, covering Song Rabbah 1.5.1 – 1.6.3 (fol. 1) and 1.12.1-3 (fol. 2) (= Vilna 17a.4-17b.8, 23a.6-23b.19).²⁰⁸ Oriental/eastern script.²⁰⁹

3. Oxford, Bodleian, Ms hebr.d.47, (Neubauer 2669/4), fols 5-8 (two sheets), parchment, covering Song Rabbah 1.15.1-2.2.3 (fols 5-6) and 2.6.1-2.9.3 (fols 7-8) (= Vilna 24b.24-27a.3, 31b.9- 33a.33). Oriental square script. There are no divisions between the *parashiyyot*. Isolated words are pointed as form requires. Perhaps the adjacent pages are in Oxford 2828/3 (no. 4 below), which should be placed after page 5 and before page six. Four pages, parchment, complete except for a few holes on the first page. There is some text missing between pages six and seven. 24-47 lines per page. The page measures approx 15.5 x 16cm. Each new section is marked by spacing.²¹⁰

4. Genizah Fragment, Oxford, Bodleian, Ms hebr.e.75, (Neubauer 2828/3), fols 5-6 (one sheet), parchment, one corner of each leaf torn off, covering Song Rabbah 1.12.3-1.15.1 (fol. 5) and 2.9.3-2.13.3 (fol. 6) (= Vilna 23b.19-24b , 33a.33-34a.27).²¹¹ Oriental square script. As indicated in 3 above, this may be the missing pages between folios 5 and 6 of hebr.d.47. 24 lines per page. The text is segmented with 3 spaces. The page measures 15 x 16cm.²¹²

²⁰³ Zvi Meir Rabinowitz, *Ginze Midrash: le-tsuratam ha-kedumah shel midreshe haza"l le-fi kitve yar min ha-Geniza* (Tel-Aviv: Bet ha-sefer le-mada'e ha-Yahadut 'a. Sh. Hayim Rosenberg, 1976), 83.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 83.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 83.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 83.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 83-101.

²⁰⁸ Steller, "Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah," 305.

²⁰⁹ "IMHM," system no. 000090699.

²¹⁰ Ibid., system no. 000145469.

²¹¹ Steller, "Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah," 305.

²¹² "IMHM," system no. 000162858.

5. Oxford, Ms hebr.e.77, (Neubauer 2851/19), fol. 41-42 (one sheet), parchment, damaged, covering Song Rabbah 1.17.2-2.1.5 (fol. 41) and 2.5.3-2.7.1 (fol. 42) (= Vilna 26a.8-26b.19, 31a.30-31b.22). Two complete pages, with the text between them missing. Semi-square script, Syrian Rabbinic characters.²¹³ Page measurement 19 x 15cm, writing block 16 x 12cm, 23-24 lines per page. End of *parashah* marked by two circles.

6. Cambridge, Taylor-Schechter Collection, T-S C 2.5 (Girón Blanc T5), 1 fol. Upper part not readable, covering Song Rabbah 3.4.5-3.5.2 (= Vilna 39a.30-39, 39b.16-30).

7. Cambridge, T-S C 2.20 (Girón Blanc T2), 1 fol. Parchment, damaged and stained, covering Song Rabbah 1.9.1-1.10.1 (Vilna 21a.32-21b.30).²¹⁴ Poorly preserved, lacking almost a third of its possible material. It is the folio following no. 8 below. 37-46 words per line, and 18 lines on page one, and possibly on page two.²¹⁵

8. Cambridge T-S C 2.51 (Girón Blanc T1), one sheet, 2 folios, badly damaged, parchment, covering Song Rabbah 1.9.6-1.9.6 (= Vilna 20a.11-21a.32). Page 1 has seventeen lines of text. Although it is possible that there were more lines which have been lost to damage, the text of page 2 seems to imply otherwise, and so it may be reasonably suggested that this part of the manuscript had seventeen lines per page. Page 3 shows 18 lines of text, and page four shows 19. 35-46 letters per line. The hole in the middle of this side of the manuscript begins below line 11 on page 4 and below line 10 on page 3, which seems to justify the difference in number of lines between the pages. The manuscript measures 14.7cm x 13.4 cm.²¹⁶

9. Cambridge, T-S C 2. 119 (Girón Blanc T3), 1 fol., paper covering Song Rabbah 3.9.2-4 (Vilna 42b.32-43b.13).²¹⁷ Written in an early hand and square letters,²¹⁸ on very thin parchment with sewing in the right margin. Both pages have 24 lines of text and 41-49 letters per line (although in one case on page 2,

²¹³ Adolf Neubauer and Arthur Ernest Cowley, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Mss in the Bodleian Library* (vol. 2; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 324.

²¹⁴ Steller, "Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah," 306.

²¹⁵ Luis F. Girón Blanc, "Cantar de los Cantares Rabbá: Seis fragmentos de la Guenizá de El Cairo conservados en Cambridge University Library," *Sefarad* 60, no. 1 (2000): 61-64.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 50-59.

²¹⁷ Steller, "Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah," 306.

²¹⁸ Rabinowitz, *Ginze Midrash*, 101.

there are 55 letters in one line). Page 2 shows roughly equal margins; however those on page one are much less so. The manuscript measures 16.5cm by 15.6cm.²¹⁹

10. Cambridge, T-S F 1(2). 72, (Girón Blanc T6), one sheet, 2 folios, paper, covering Song Rabbah 1.9.1 (= Vilna 20a.11-20b.1). Two parchment sheets, top complete, but very deteriorated at the bottom. Different texts in different hands. Fol. 1a is part of the Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Batra 25a*, while fol. 1b, is Song Rabbah 1.9. Fol. 2a, gives one line of an unknown text, and fol. 2b, gives what might be Midrash Mishle 1.5, although it differs from the standard text, and appears to be written in a different hand to that of fol. 1. Fol. 1b, with which we are concerned, has 14 lines of rabbinic hand with 38-47 letters per line. At line 14 this pattern ceases. Two lines of text in a different hand go up the left margin and along the top margin, one hundred letters in all, finishing by repeating exactly the last two words of line 14. The folio relevant to Song Rabbah measures 11 cm by 8cm.²²⁰

11. Cambridge, T-S F 17. 57 (Girón Blanc T4), one sheet, 2 folios, parchment, only fol. 1 containing a text from Song Rabbah, covering 1.2.3-5 (= Vilna 8b.24a-10a.20). The single large leaf, measuring almost 40cm wide and 23cm high, was folded in the centre thus making two folios. The manuscript contains one unknown text, and a passage of Song Rabbah. A large hole obscures parts of lines of 20-32 of side 1 and 20-34 of side 2. Written by a professional copyist in a semi-square script, which seems to be quite late, a fact corroborated by the presence of certain Greek words and other indicators. The dimensions of the ms was 20cm x 23 cm.²²¹

12. Budapest, Collection Kaufmann 27/1, 1 fol., parchment covering Song Rabbah 4.7.1-4.8.1 (= Vilna 52a.8-53a.15).²²² Oriental square script. May be related to Antonin B 104 and 998 (nos 1 and 2 above). One complete folio, two sides, 28 lines to a side. Notes in margin.

13. Manchester, Rylands B3485, 1 folio with writing on both sides. Fragment is 79mm by 71mm, with eleven lines on the first side and ca. 5 lines on the

²¹⁹ Girón Blanc, "Cantar de los Cantares Rabbá (1)," 69-72.

²²⁰ Luis F. Girón Blanc, "Cantar de los Cantares Rabbá: Seis fragmentos de la Guenizá de El Cairo conservados en Cambridge University Library," *Sefarad* 60, no. 2 (2000): 278-279.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 264-265.

²²² Steller, "Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah," 306.

second. Paper. Side one covers Song Rabbah to Song 1:9 and side two Song Rabbah to Song 1:10.

14. Cambridge, T-S NS 162.129, 1 leaf, paper, covering Song Rabbah to 1:4. 19 x 14cm.²²³

15. Cambridge, T-S NS 180.60, two leaves (a bifolium), paper, damaged, covering Song Rabbah to 7:13-14 and 8:14-15. Measures 1.5 (torn) x 27cm. There is some Aramaic evident as well as Hebrew.²²⁴

16. Cambridge T-S NS 257.45, one leaf, paper, covering Song Rabbah to Song 8:12-13. 8 (torn) x 14cm. There is some Aramaic evident as well as Hebrew.²²⁵

3.2.3 Testimonia Manuscripts

By “testimonia manuscripts” I mean manuscripts which quote extensive portions of a text, without ever having been intended as complete copies of it. They may be abbreviated versions of the text, or anthologies of diverse material which happen to have excerpted from the text in question. Both anthologies and epitomes are common among medieval Hebrew manuscripts, and are the work of scholars creating notebooks for their own use. Three such manuscripts are of some use for the text of Song Rabbah.

1. Parma, Ms Parma 3122 (formerly De Rossi 1240), from 1270, containing Midrash Tanhuma, Pesiqta Rabbati, and other midrashim. A fragment of Song Rabbah 1.1.4-1.10.2 followed by midrashim on Song 2.3-6 not found in Song Rabbah has been inserted into Pesiqta Rabbati between two *pisqas* (fol. 154a bot. to fol. 164b).

2. Vatican, Ms Vat. Ebr. 249, from the thirteenth century, is a collection of various texts, the ninth of which is called ‘Midrash Hazita’, but it is only an anthology from Song Rabbah which contains nothing not found in the main manuscripts of Song Rabbah. The Song Rabbah material occurs from folios 260a to 301a. The owner and the copyist both seem to have been from Candia (Crete).

²²³ Robert Brody, *A Hand-List of Rabbinic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Taylor-Schechter Series* (vol. 1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 45.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

Colophons in the text give some information on copyists and dates (e.g. fol. 254a, so not directly related to Song Rabbah, show that the manuscript was apparently copied by Jeremiah Nomiko and was completed in the month of Nisan in the year 5212 (1452)).²²⁶

3. Cambridge, Ms Cambridge Add. 1504, 7 folios. Fol. 1 is in a different hand and was added to the rest later, with a title page “Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah/Midrash Hazita.” On fol. 1b Song Rabbah 1.1.1-5 is copied from a printed edition, new text beginning on fol. 2a. The original leaves are dated to the sixteenth century.²²⁷ Sephardi script.²²⁸

3.2.4 Other Text-Witnesses

There are several other manuscripts extant, but Steller believes that these are simply hand-copies of printed editions, a practice that continued until very late in the Middle East (particularly in Yemen and Persia) because of the late introduction of local Hebrew printing presses.²²⁹ Other textual evidence that should also, ideally, be taken into account is: (1) the early commentaries on Song Rabbah, especially the *'Ot 'Emet* of Rabbi Yehudah Gedaliah (Saloniki 1565), an important source for the classic commentary *Mattenot Kehunah*, printed in the Vilna edition of Midrash Rabbah; (2) parallels in the great medieval encyclopaedia of midrashic interpretation, the *Yalqut Shim'oni* (Moshe ha-Darshan, 12th-13th century; *editio princeps* Saloniki 1521); and (3) quotations from Song Rabbah by medieval Jewish writers, which can be useful for the reception-history of the work, and the identification of local text-types and recensions, if they exist. But all this evidence, which generates its own textual problems, has yet to be fully collated and sifted. That this work has still to be done should not obscure the fact that it will probably contribute little, textually speaking, to the manuscript material cited in 3.2.1 to 3.2.3, which more or less exhausts the direct manuscript evidence at present known for the text of Song Rabbah.

²²⁶ “IMHM,” system no. 000063962.

²²⁷ Steller, “Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah,” 302.

²²⁸ “IMHM,” system no. 000139461.

²²⁹ Steller, “Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah,” 306.

3.2.5 Printed Editions

As noted above (3.1) the *editio princeps* of Song Rabbah first appeared in the Rabbot to the Megillot printed in Constantinople in 1514. This was reprinted with minor changes in Pesaro in 1519 by Gershom Soncino, and the Pesaro text in turn reprinted with minor changes in Constantinople in 1520 by Astruc de Toulon. It is the original Constantinople edition that is closest to the manuscripts of Song Rabbah, and since its manuscript basis is unknown it has, in effect, the status of a manuscript.²³⁰ Daniel Bomberg reprinted the Pesaro 1519 text of the Megillot Rabbot with the text of the Pentateuch Rabbot to form the first complete text of Midrash Rabbah (Venice 1545), and this text became the *textus receptus*, which has been reprinted through to modern times. The first edition was divided into two *parashiyyot* (Song of Songs 1:1-2:7 and 2:8-8:14), but from at least Bomberg onwards the text was divided into eight *parashiyyot*, corresponding to the chapters of the biblical book.²³¹ Bomberg's text is essentially reproduced in the great Vilna edition of Midrash Rabbah²³², along with a collection of traditional commentaries. The Vilna edition has often been reprinted. It forms the basis of S. Dunsky's edition of Song Rabbah, with Yiddish translation, though the editor "corrects" the Vilna text on the authority of the rabbinic parallels and the commentators, without any resort to manuscript evidence.²³³

There have been three attempts to create modern critical editions of Song Rabbah. The first, by S.T. Lachs, did not get beyond chapter 1.²³⁴ The second, by M.C. Steller-Kalff and H.E. Steller, never came to fruition either, though much preliminary work was done.²³⁵ The third, ongoing for many years, is by Luis Girón Blanc, and may yet appear.²³⁶

²³⁰ Ibid., 310.

²³¹ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 315.

²³² *Midrash Rabbah* 2 vols, folio, the Widow Rom: Vilna, 1878

²³³ S Dunsky, *Medresh Rabba Shir Ha-Shirim* (1973; repr. Amherst, MA: National Yiddish Book Centre, 2000).

²³⁴ S. T Lachs, "A Critical Edition of Canticles Rabbah: Chapter One, Edited on the Basis of Three Manuscripts and Early Editions" (PhD dissertation, The Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning, Philadelphia, 1958).

²³⁵ Steller, "Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah," 310.

²³⁶ See the small sample in Luis F. Girón Blanc, "Cantar de los Cantares Rabbâ 4, 7-8. – Edición Crítica," *Sefarad* 52 (1992): 103-112. Tamar Kadari is also reported to be preparing an edition of Song Rabbah under the auspices of Makhon Schechter in Jerusalem, but I am told she has only just begun.

Song Rabbah has been translated a number of times into modern European languages. The first translation was into German by A. Wünsche in his *Bibliotheca Rabbinica* (1881).²³⁷ The standard English rendering is by M. Simon in the Soncino *Midrash Rabbah*.²³⁸ J. Neusner offers an alternative English translation in his *Song of Songs Rabbah: An Analytical Translation* (1989).²³⁹ As noted above, Dunsky's edition of Song Rabbah contains a Yiddish translation. Luis Girón Blanc has published a Spanish version (1991).²⁴⁰ All these translations, including Girón Blanc's, are based on the *textus receptus*.

3.2.6 Stemmatics and the Question of Recensions

How do the various text-witnesses relate to each other? First the codices. A full stemmatic analysis has yet to be published but Steller makes some suggestive preliminary observations.²⁴¹ He distinguishes three groups. **Group 1:** Vatican Ebr. 76, Frankfurt hebr. oct. 133 and Munich Hebr. 50. He singles out Vatican Ebr. 76 as the best surviving copy of Song Rabbah, and proposes that it should be the basis of any future critical edition. It is the oldest and most complete manuscript, covering all of Song Rabbah, as well as being particularly well and carefully written. The *editio princeps*, the manuscript basis of which, as so often, is now unclear, belongs to this group as well. **Group 2:** Oxford 164, Vatican Ebr. 249 and Cambridge, Add. 1504. Steller regards Oxford 164 as the next best manuscript of Song Rabbah after Vatican Ebr. 76. Groups 1 and 2 share a common archetype as can be seen, in classic fashion, by their sharing of common errors, the most striking of which is the fact that in both groups the interpretation of Song 4:14 is disrupted by a quotation of Song 5:2, a comment including Amos 6:11, and an Aramaic explanation, followed by interpretations of Song 5:3-7,

²³⁷ A Wünsche, *Der Midrasch Schir Ha-Schirim, Bibliotheca Rabbinica II: Eine Sammlung alter Midraschim, zum ersten Male ins Deutsche übertragen* (Leipzig, 1880: repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1967).

²³⁸ Maurice Simon, "Midrash Rabbah: Song of Songs," in *Midrash Rabbah: Translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices* (ed. Harry Freedman and Maurice Simon; vol. 9, 3rd ed.; London and New York: Soncino, 1983).

²³⁹ Jacob Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah: An Analytical Translation* (2 vols.; Brown Judaic Series; Scholars Press, 1989).

²⁴⁰ Luis F. Girón Blanc, *Cantar de los Cantares Rabbâ, Traducción, introducción y notas* (Biblioteca Midrásica; Estella (Navarra): Ed. verbo Divino, 1991).

²⁴¹ Steller, "Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah."

before the comment on 4:14 resumes – a phenomenon which Steller is neatly able to explain as resulting from the displacement of a leaf in the common ancestor of the two traditions, resulting in the same material being copied out of order in both groups of manuscripts.²⁴² **Group 3:** this comprises only Parma 3122. Though only a fragment of Song Rabbah inserted into Pesiqta Rabbati, Steller is confident that this shows too many differences from the other two groups to be related directly to them.

Though we can identify the three textual families, they do not seem to constitute different recensions in any significant sense. The two main manuscript traditions (Groups 1 and 2) are unusually stable and each bears an unexpectedly high level of similarity to the other. This lack of recensional difference in the manuscript tradition of a major midrash is rather rare. It contrasts strikingly with the shape of the tradition in Genesis Rabbah or in Lamentations Rabbah, which exists, as Paul Mandel clearly demonstrated in his Hebrew University doctorate, in two quite distinct recensions.²⁴³ However, the fact that the Parma manuscript, the oldest manuscript of Song Rabbah, according to Stemmerger,²⁴⁴ associates Song Rabbah material with other Song midrashim not in Song Rabbah and with Pesiqta Rabbati, should give us some pause for thought here. Steller links Parma 3122 with the midrashim on Song of Songs quoted in the Yalqut Shim'oni, which also often indicates their source as being Pesiqta Rabbati. He suggests that the need to consider whether many of the quotations in Yalqut Shim'oni for which there is no extant source, may come from a different version of Song Rabbah. The argument is suggestive, but far from proven. The fact remains that the textual tradition of Song Rabbah, as we have it, and as currently analysed, is unusually stable, though what is not clear is why this might be so, or what the significance of this fact might be.

With regard to the Genizah fragments, Steller demonstrates that numbers 1, 2, 7, and 8 above come from one quire, and numbers 3 and 4 from another quire, both quires belonging to the same codex, which dates from around the 11th century –

²⁴² Ibid., 303.

²⁴³ Paul D Mandel, "Midrash Lamentations Rabbati: Prolegomenon, and a Critical Edition of the Third Parasha" (2 vols; PhD dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997).

²⁴⁴ Stemmerger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 315.

a codex to which fragments 9 and 12 may also have belonged.²⁴⁵ Fragments 5 and 6 are thought to come from two other codices, while 10 and 11 were not part of complete texts of Song Rabbah, but rather of testimonia manuscripts, such as those listed above.²⁴⁶ Their usefulness has been questioned, especially in the case of 10, the brevity and inaccuracy of which might lead one simply to dismiss it.²⁴⁷ However, Girón Blanc has pointed out that it does have parallels with no. 8, which provides a very good reason for its inclusion in any comparative study.²⁴⁸ Fragment 11 is also often set aside from the other fragments as it too comes from a testimonia work. However, it is in fact very valuable, as it differs from the majority of the testimonia texts, while basically coinciding with Parma 3122, which, as we have noted, shares similarities with Yalqut Shim'oni.²⁴⁹ It might, therefore, be seen as marginally strengthening the view that Parma 3122 and the Yalqut point to a lost alternative recension of Song Rabbah. Fragments 13-16 are so far unpublished, and are not discussed in any current works.

It is very hard to work out where any of the Genizah fragments fit into the *stemma codicum*, because they are so fragmentary. Their editors have tended to note few textual variants from the *textus receptus*, though, as Girón Blanc observes, the most significant variants in Song Rabbah tend to be found among the Genizah fragments.²⁵⁰ There are also repetitions in the Genizah fragments which seem to have been eliminated by later copyists and printers, which sheds some light on later editorial policy. None of this complicates the *stemma* in any obvious way, but once again generally confirms the stability of the text of Song Rabbah.

3.2.7 Overview of the Textual Evidence

Before moving on from the textual tradition of Song Rabbah it is worth pausing for a moment to review some of its chief characteristics, particularly in

²⁴⁵ Steller, "Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah," 306-308.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 309.

²⁴⁷ Girón Blanc, "Cantar de los Cantares Rabbá (1)," 45-46.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 46.

²⁵⁰ Luis F. Girón Blanc, "Variants on Song of Songs," *Genizah Fragments* 43 (2002): 2, <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/GF/43/#song>.

comparison to the textual tradition of Targum Song surveyed in the previous chapter. Several points are immediately striking.

(1) The number of manuscripts of the Midrash is far smaller than of the Targum. Even including the Genizah fragments we may have, at most, the remnants of around a dozen manuscripts of Song Rabbah, in contrast to well over one hundred for Targum Song.

(2) The manuscripts for Song Rabbah are notably less well distributed across the medieval Jewish world. We are missing Yemenite and Oriental manuscripts. The furthest east our manuscripts can be traced is Cairo, but the majority are European, both Sefardi and Ashkenazi. Targum Song, by way of contrast, is attested right across the medieval Jewish world, from Persia and the Yemen, through Egypt and North Africa to Spain, Ashkenaz and the Balkans. It was a truly universal text in a way that Song Rabbah was not.

(3) The texts of both the Midrash and the Targum are very stable, but probably for quite different reasons. In the case of the Midrash, it was not a very active text, that is to say it was not much copied, which explains why it was not subject to so much modification. In the case of the Targum, the exegetical programme was so clever, and so comprehensive, that it was very difficult to modify it, though two somewhat different recensions of the Targum did emerge.

(4) Finally, in the case of both the Midrash and the Targum, the textual witnesses are all alarmingly late, and come from centuries after the probable dates of origin of both works. This is particularly striking in the case of Song Rabbah. Some of the Genizah fragments may go back to the 11th century, but the two best codices date to 1379 (Vatican Ebr. 76) and 1513 (Oxford 164). The sheer lateness of our evidence for these works which we are dating to late antiquity should always be at the back of our minds, and counsel caution when we try to argue detailed points of textual comparison.

3.3 Language

The overwhelming bulk of Song Rabbah is in Hebrew, in the dialect known broadly as Rabbinic or Mishnaic Hebrew, in which the Mishnah and classic Midrashim were written, but, like other Midrashim (e.g. Lamentations Rabbah), small portions of it, representing probably remnants of the oral tradition of preaching in the old synagogue, are in Aramaic. Neither language as it is found in the manuscripts of Song Rabbah has been thoroughly investigated, and formidable obstacles stand in the way of any such investigation. First, there is the lack of a critical edition of the text. Mediaeval scribes did not preserve carefully the nuances of the dialects but freely changed what they copied into the forms best known to them. Second, the study of the historical development of the dialects of Rabbinical Hebrew is still not particularly advanced, and we lack a comprehensive historical grammar of this phase of Hebrew against which to measure the language of any given text.²⁵¹

Despite this, several points can be made about the Hebrew of Song Rabbah:

(1) The original dialect of Song Rabbah, as with the other classic Midrashim, was Palestinian Rabbinic Hebrew, though the Palestinian forms have regularly been “normalised” or “babylonised” within the tradition. The original Palestinian dialect (features such as the unbound particle *shel*, and *'t* for the 2nd masc. sing. personal pronoun²⁵²) tends to come through more strongly in the older Genizah fragments, which are where one would expect to start any linguistic analysis, on the grounds that these are chronologically closer to the original, and so would have had less time to become corrupted. Thus Stemberger notes that the language of the Genizah fragments published by Z. M. Rabinovitz (nos. 1, 2, 9 and 11, above) is more Palestinian than that found in the printed editions, and in general

²⁵¹ Angel Sáenz-Badillos, *History of the Hebrew Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 161-201. The pioneering work was done by E. Y. Kutscher. See the summary in his article, “Hebrew Language: Mishnaic,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1590-1607.

²⁵² Girón Blanc, “Variants on Song of Songs,” 2; Luis F. Girón Blanc, “Shimmushe ‘Atid’ ve-‘Sof’ bi-leshon Hazal ha-me’uheret ‘al pi Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah,” *Mehqarim be-Lashon* 5-6 (1991): 215-224.

these fragments show less evidence of the influence of the Babylonian Talmud.²⁵³

(2) One feature of Palestinian Rabbinic Hebrew is the presence in its lexicon of quite a high number of Greek loanwords – the result of intensive linguistic contact between Semitic and Greek speaking communities in Syria-Palestine over many centuries, and the use of Greek as its official language by the Roman administration in the east. This linguistic contact was less intense in the east, where the dominant language was Aramaic, and the high cultural/administrative language Pahlavi. Greek loanwords did enter Babylonian Rabbinic Hebrew, but probably in every case it was through the influence of western Rabbinic traditions. Song Rabbah has its fair share of Greek loanwords, which have been the subject of a small study by Luis Girón Blanc.²⁵⁴

(3) As for the small amount of Aramaic, from time to time some Genizah fragments preserve clearly Galilean Aramaic forms (see, e.g., nos 15 and 16 above), and the presence of these forms strongly suggests that the bulk of this material was originally in this dialect. Now here there may be an interesting contrast to be drawn with the Aramaic of Targum Song. In 2.2 above I argued that there is no possibility of recovering a “pure” Galilean Aramaic substratum from the Aramaic of Targum Song, and that the work was composed, from the outset, in the highly mixed Late Literary Jewish Aramaic. But it might be possible to argue for a Galilean substratum in the case of the Midrash. The reason for this is quite simple: the Targum is a literary text, composed “in one go” in an artificial high literary dialect. The Midrashic Aramaic material is, as already noted, the remnants of popular preaching in the old synagogue. It always had a vernacular basis, and that vernacular was the Aramaic spoken in the Galilee in late antiquity. This means that linguistically speaking the Aramaic of the Midrash is older than the Aramaic of the Targum, but we should be cautious about jumping to conclusions about what this entails for the relative dating of the two works. These old popular Aramaic traditions could have been passed down

²⁵³ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 315.

²⁵⁴ Luis F. Girón Blanc, “Al kamah milim yevaniyyot be-midrash Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah,” in *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies, Hebrew Section* (vol. 4; Jerusalem, 1993), 215-224.

orally for a very long time before being incorporated into a text like Song Rabbah.

3.4 Provenance and Date

That Song Rabbah is a Palestinian work can be stated with some confidence. The majority of authorities it appeals to are Palestinian, its allusions to the Talmud are primarily to the Jerusalem Talmud, and finally, its Aramaic is comparable to that of the Yerushalmi. It is also worth noting that the majority, if not all, of the classic midrashim were composed in Palestine.²⁵⁵

The dating of Song Rabbah, however, is more contested, though the problem is less complicated compared with similar Midrashim because, as we have seen, the textual bulk of Song Rabbah is very stable, and so we are less troubled by the problem of the exact nature of the entity we are dating. Nevertheless proposals still range from the mid sixth century to the late eighth century CE.

The current scholarly consensus follows Moshe David Herr in dating Song Rabbah to the middle of the sixth century,²⁵⁶ seemingly because it contains significant quantities of Tannaitic and Amoraic material, as well as evidence of anti-Christian polemic.²⁵⁷ Stemberger agrees, while stressing that the text draws on older material.²⁵⁸ This replaces a much later date first proposed by Zunz,²⁵⁹ but taken up by Lachs,²⁶⁰ which assigned Song Rabbah to the period 650-750, with Lachs favouring the more recent end of this range. Lachs takes Song Rabbah 1.7.2 as referring to the Persian conquest of Palestine in 614. This gives a *terminus post quem*, but internal evidence, he argues, indicates that the final editing of the work must have been after 648 when Palestine fell to the Arabs. Crucial are what he sees as “Arabisms” in the language of Song Rabbah, such as the use in 1.6 of the word *medinah* in reference to the city of Caesarea. Lachs claims *medinah* here must be used in its Arabic sense of “city”, as opposed to

²⁵⁵ Lachs, “Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba,” 245.

²⁵⁶ Moshe David Herr, “Song of Songs Rabbah,” in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 153.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 153.

²⁵⁸ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 315.

²⁵⁹ Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 274-75.

²⁶⁰ Lachs, “Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba.”

“province”, which would be the expected meaning in Hebrew or Aramaic.²⁶¹ However, the argument is highly questionable because *medinah* in the sense of “city” is well attested across several dialects of Aramaic, including Syriac.²⁶² Furthermore, although the usage “city” is not found in Biblical Hebrew²⁶³ or Biblical Aramaic,²⁶⁴ Jastrow recognises it for the corpus of texts on which he bases his dictionary. In his entry on the Hebrew form of the word, he lists the meanings “province; large town, capital,”²⁶⁵ and under the Aramaic form of the word he refers back to the Hebrew entry for meanings.²⁶⁶ The use of the term *medinah* for Caesarea is particularly apt, given that it was the administrative capital of Palestine, and remained so after the Arab conquest. Lachs’ second example of an Arabism is even weaker, and involves seeing the influence of Arabic idiom in the expression of a wish for someone to move away from one in Song Rabbah 4.3.

All this is very slender evidence on which to base the dating of a whole book. It must be conceded that none of the arguments for a particular date, whether earlier or later, is strong. The difference between the early and late dates is potentially very significant. It is the difference between a work composed at the end of the Christian Byzantine period, and a work composed in the early Islamic period. Between these dates lies the watershed of the Arab Conquest. The importance of the first few centuries after the Arab Conquest for Rabbinic culture in Palestine is beginning to be appreciated. The arrival of Islam, with its more tolerant political attitude and its new theological challenges, seems to have stimulated a flowering of Rabbinic culture – seen in the works of the Apocalyptic Revival, and in the creation of rich, late, strange Midrashim such as *Pirque deRabbi Eliezer* and *Pesiqta Rabbati*.²⁶⁷ It makes good sense to place Song Rabbah in this company. If we take the early date for Song Rabbah, then it clearly predates Targum Song, but if we take the later date the chronological

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 247f.

²⁶² Michael Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon* (Winona Lake, IN and Piscataway, NJ: Eisenbrauns and Gorgias Press, 2009), 713b.

²⁶³ F Brown, S Driver, and C Briggs, eds., *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (5th ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), 552a.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1099b.

²⁶⁵ Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 734a “medinah”.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 734a “medinta”.

²⁶⁷ Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine 634-1099* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

priority becomes less clear-cut, and the question of the inter-relationship even more confused.

3.5 Structure and Coherence

Is Song Rabbah a structured, coherent work, showing such levels of order and argument as to betray the hand of a final redactor, or is it a somewhat random collection of comments on the biblical book, a miscellany of materials gleaned from various sources, betraying no more than the hand of a compiler or series of compilers? This question, which can be repeated for all the classic Rabbinic Midrashim, has elicited a wide variety of responses. It has to be approached from a variety of angles. I will first consider the formal signs of structure and coherence in Song Rabbah (3.5), then I will look at its genre (3.6), its theology (3.7), and its use of sources (3.8). All of these topics have a bearing on the general question of the coherence and unity of the work, and interlock with each other, so the final decision as to whether Song Rabbah has a literary unity has to be postponed till we have reviewed them all.

First, then, the formal structure of Song Rabbah. Song Rabbah has a very obvious structure created by the fact that it presents itself fundamentally as a lemmatic commentary on the biblical Song of Songs. Like the Targum, its framework is dictated by that of another work, the structure and order of which it follows, generally without deviation, commenting on it verse by verse, sometimes word by word, from beginning to end. The density of its commentary on the base-text is “front-loaded”, with around a third of the material dealing with the first chapter of the biblical book,²⁶⁸ but there is a reasonable spread of comment, with no portion of Song of Songs being totally neglected, so that when one reaches the end one has a sense that a programme of commentary has been satisfactorily completed. This “front-loading” of the commentary is so general a feature of the classic Midrashim (see, e.g., Lamentations Rabbah), that it might well be regarded as an element of midrashic form.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁸ Lachs, “Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba.” 252.

²⁶⁹ Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 20-22.

Song Rabbah, then, follows the word order of the biblical text, but is it dictated to by any of the structures that have been imposed by tradition on the biblical text – e.g., the verse and chapter divisions? The verse and chapter *numbers* are, of course, modern, but the verse *divisions* are very ancient, and form part of the reading tradition of the synagogue going back at least to late antiquity. The *darshan* or *darshanim* responsible for Song Rabbah must have had a tradition of segmenting the Hebrew text of Song of Songs, which cannot have been far removed from that represented in the great medieval Masoretic manuscripts. Does the commentary respect the Masoretic segmentation? The somewhat surprising answer is, as Tamar Kadari has shown, not always!²⁷⁰ Here a contrast with the Targum should be noted, for, however paraphrastic it becomes, it never paraphrases across a *sof pasuq*. It always remains possible to recite Targum Song verse-by-verse against the Hebrew. As Kadari rightly argues these attempts to dissolve, from time to time, the verse-boundaries of the biblical text are a bid for exegetical freedom on the part of the *darshanim*. Song Rabbah itself, as we have already noted (3.2.5 above), in the first prints was divided into two large *parashiyyot* (Song of Songs 1:1-2:7 and 2:8-8:14), but then eight *parashiyyot* were imposed corresponding to the traditional chapters of the biblical book. These divisions are extraneous, and represent late attempts to break up the mass of the text. They no more reflect the intrinsic structure of the Midrash than the *massekhtot* of the Mekhilta deRabbi Ishmael reflect accurately the structure of that work.²⁷¹

Song Rabbah opens with a set of Proems (*Petihot*), traditionally five, but Lachs argues for four.²⁷² This feature of a series of Proems opening a Midrash is found elsewhere in the Rabbot to the Megillot, e.g. Lamentations Rabbah and Ruth Rabbah. The case of Lamentations Rabbah is particularly striking because the Proems are so numerous and substantial, and constitute such a large proportion of the total content of the Midrash. In all cases the question arises as to whether or not the Proems are integral to the work. They tend to be seen as later additions

²⁷⁰ Tamar Kadari, *On the Redaction of Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah*, PhD Dissertation. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2004, 219.

²⁷¹ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 252-53.

²⁷² Samuel Tobias Lachs, "The Proems of Canticles Rabba," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 56, no. 3 (January 1966): 226.

to the lemmatic commentary, but in principle there is no reason why they could not have existed as a collection prior to the creation of the lemmatic commentary, and, indeed, have served as a source for the commentary, a case which Alexander has argued for Lamentations Rabbah.²⁷³ Lachs claims that the Proems in Song Rabbah show no grounds in terms of style or content on which to pronounce them secondary, and so he treats them as integral to the work.²⁷⁴ Kadari, on the other hand, argues they are a later addition. “This claim,” she writes, “is based on the late terminology, the limited amount of Aramaic used, the names of Babylonian Sages cited, the lack of other Proems in the midrash, and the existence of another impressive introduction to the text. In addition, we can point to different conceptual objectives to the Proems as compared with the body of the midrash in connection with the way in which Solomon is presented both as a person and prophet.”²⁷⁵ The Proems are certainly attested in all our extant manuscripts and there can be no doubt that they serve a function in defining the opening of the work. The Proem is by definition a literary structure that occurs at the beginning of documents. It almost certainly originated, as Heinemann argued, as a way of introducing the reading of the Torah portion in synagogue.²⁷⁶ It then became a purely literary form within midrashic discourse, as here,²⁷⁷ but it never lost its connection with the *opening* of literary units. When readers of Midrash, therefore, find a *petihah*, still more when they find a collection of *petihot*, then they know that they are at the beginning of a work or section of a work. We could, therefore, predict from the presence of the *Petihot* that we were at the beginning of Song Rabbah, even if we didn’t know the original biblical text. What this in effect means is that Song of Songs is treated in two different ways in Song Rabbah – thematically in the opening Proems, and

²⁷³ Philip S. Alexander, “Rabbinic Paratexts: The Case of Midrash Lamentations Rabba,” in *In the Second Degree: Paratextual Literature in Ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean Culture, and its Reflection in Medieval Literature* (ed. Armin Lange, Renate J. Pillinger, and Philip S. Alexander; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 125-137.

²⁷⁴ Lachs, “The Proems of Canticles Rabba,” 225.

²⁷⁵ Kadari, *On the Redaction of Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah*, 4. I am not persuaded by all of Kadari’s arguments.

²⁷⁶ Joseph Heinemann, “The Proem in Aggadic Midrashim,” *Studia Hierosolymitana* 22 (1971): 100-122.

²⁷⁷ Richard S. Sarason, “The Petihot in Leviticus Rabba: ‘Oral Homilies’ or Redactional Constructions,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 557-565; Martin S. Jaffee, “The ‘Midrashic’ Proem: Towards the Description of Rabbinic Exegesis,” in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism IV* (ed. W.S. Green; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 95-112; Doris Lenhard, *Die rabbinische Homilie: Ein formanalytischer Index* (Frankfurter Judaistische Studien; Frankfurt am Main: Gesellschaft zur Förderung Judaistischer Studien in Frankfurt am Main, 1998), 29-41.

lemmatically in the main body of the commentary, in which a detailed parsing of the verses of the book is offered in biblical order – a point noted by Neusner.²⁷⁸ Kadari speaks of a second beginning of Song Rabbah, after the Proems,²⁷⁹ but we must be careful not to jump to conclusions about the significance of this. It is precisely because the Proems section is thematic and non-lemmatic that it can serve structurally to mark the opening of the work. She also makes a reasonable case that the commentary does not simply peter out, but that the *darshan* has chosen carefully to stress certain themes at the end to create a coda, or sense of a “happy” ending.²⁸⁰

So, then, it is clear that there is a basic structure to Song Rabbah: it follows closely and carefully the underlying biblical text, and, in addition, within its own paratext it creates a sense of a beginning and an ending. But does it produce within the paratext any coherence over and above this? Such higher order coherence will not be easy to identify: it will inevitably be against the grain of the biblical text, against the strong natural order imposed by the Song of Songs. Jacob Neusner argues that such a higher order of coherence is indeed detectable, not only in Song Rabbah, but also in almost all the other Midrashim. Neusner’s vast project of re-reading the Midrashim resulted in his claim that they should be seen as compositions rather than as compilations. To read Midrash as a mere compilation is to fail to see that each Midrash is a bounded document which advances its own “distinctive message”.²⁸¹ He argues that when we compare one Midrash with another we can see each has its own angle, each is the result of “different people talking about different things to different people.”²⁸² “Each document has its own emphases, each asks its own question and answers it in rich detail”.²⁸³ This can be seen in the fact that different Midrashim, despite being roughly contemporary, emphasise different aspects of the same verse.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁸ J. Neusner, *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash: Song of Songs Rabbah* (University Press of America, 2001), xx.

²⁷⁹ Kadari, *On the Redaction of Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah*, 4-5.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 277-364.

²⁸¹ Jacob Neusner, *The Midrash: An Introduction* (2nd ed.; Nortwale, NJ and London: J. Aronson, 1990), 1.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁸³ Neusner, *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash*, xviii.

²⁸⁴ Neusner, *The Midrash: An Introduction*, 27.

On what, then, does Neusner base his claim that a Midrash like Song Rabbah has a higher order of coherence, over and above the basic structure imposed upon it, as a lemmatic commentary, by the biblical text? For Neusner the coherence of Song Rabbah and related Midrashim is demonstrated by recurrent patterns of rhetoric, logic and topic.²⁸⁵

By rhetoric he means the formal linguistic conventions used by the *darshanim* to express their ideas, the ways they formulate their sentences, the recurrent syntactic structures they employ.²⁸⁶ He finds these limited in the case of Song Rabbah to eight rhetorical forms: (1) intersecting-verse/base-verse (*Petihta*) form; (2) commentary form; (3) propositional form; (4) parable form; (5) dispute form; (6) narrative through dialogue; (7) narrative through described action; and (8) no discernible formal pattern.²⁸⁷ He claims that the fact that such a large document as Song Rabbah says all it has to say effectively in this very limited repertory of forms gives the work a strong, unifying rhetoric.

As for logic, he argues that within Rabbinic literature as a whole four types can be discerned: (1) Propositional Logic: where the relationship between two facts or propositions leads to a conclusion or third proposition, which is greater than the two initial facts.²⁸⁸ (2) Teleological Logic: this generally uses a narrative form to present a series of facts through a logical sequence, such that a proposition is made and demonstrated to be true, whether explicitly or implicitly. The aim is to reach a designated end point or conclusion, using the narrative to guide readers through the relevant logic that allows them to reach that conclusion.²⁸⁹ (3) The Logic of Fixed Association: this relies on “an extrinsic and conventional list of items deemed joined for reasons pertinent to those items.”²⁹⁰ This form of logic does not necessarily lead to any conclusion or aim to prove any proposition beyond that which is explicit in itself (the particular sentence),

²⁸⁵ Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, 470-472; Jacob Neusner, *The Midrash Compilations of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries: An Introduction to the Rhetorical, Logical and Topical Program, IV: Song of Songs Rabbah* (Brown Judaic Studies 180; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990).

²⁸⁶ Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, 31, 34, 38.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 470-471.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

nor does it make a point relevant to any context other than that particular verse of the base text.²⁹¹ (4) Metapositional Logic: this is a ‘subspecies’²⁹² of propositional discourse and aims to ‘prove the unity of diverse cases by imposing a single programme of analytical questions upon a virtually unlimited range of problems.’²⁹³ Neusner finds that although Song Rabbah displays a mixed logic, the text is predominantly held together by the Logic of Fixed Association.

Finally, Neusner’s “topic” category relates to the theological themes that are treated in the Midrash, and again Neusner finds these are notably limited – Sinai, redemption, Torah, Israel among the nations, etc. In fact, Neusner claims, as I hinted above, that each of the major midrashim is a coherent document, which deals with a single, given topic. “Few books in rabbinic literature,” he writes, “aim merely at collecting and arranging information. Nearly all work on a specific problem concerning a given topic”.²⁹⁴ What that topic might be will be discussed under 3.7 Theology, below. Suffice to note here that Neusner makes a strong claim for topical unity with regard to Song Rabbah, and sees it as further evidence, over and above logic and rhetoric, of the coherence of the work.²⁹⁵

Has Neusner successfully made the case for a higher order of coherence in Song Rabbah? The answer must be no. There are serious problems with his analysis.

(1) The analysis itself is hard to follow. It is wordy and repetitive, and never seems to come to a sharply stated conclusion. Despite its massively inductive method, it seems to assume the coherence of the text from the outset. It fails to tackle a basic problem of the act of reading, namely the tendency of the human mind, in its attempt to grasp the meaning of any text, to start with the assumption of its coherence, and to strive to impose coherence on it even against the odds. The unity of a work is often in the eye of the beholder. There is, for example, a lot of repetition in Song Rabbah, and Theodor and Lachs see it as evidence of a lack of unity in the work, as a sign of piecemeal composition and the absence of

²⁹¹ Ibid., 61-65.

²⁹² Ibid., 66.

²⁹³ Ibid., 66.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 31.

²⁹⁵ Jacob Neusner, *The Midrash Compilations of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries, Volume Four: Song of Songs Rabbah* (Brown Judaic Studies 190; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 187-210.

a final, strong editorial hand. Kadari, on the other hand, sees the repetition as deliberate, as a device precisely to provide unity and structure.²⁹⁶ One has a constant sense in reading Neusner's work that he is forcing coherence and unity on the text against the grain.

(2) Halliday defines a "text" as a semantic unit containing specific textual components, which make it "internally cohesive".²⁹⁷ It is "the material form of a text (book, letter, etc)", he argues, "[that] tells us we have a textual unity",²⁹⁸ but it is precisely that "material form" that is lacking in the case of a Midrash such as Song Rabbah. The acid test is this: if we were to write out continuously all the Rabbot to the Megillot, would we be able by internal analysis to separate out the individual Midrashim, and define them as unities on the basis of Neusner's criteria, *without recourse to the divisions of the underlying biblical text*? I doubt that we could, because the rhetoric, logic and topics which Neusner identifies as creating the individual unities would extend right across the whole corpus: they do not end with the borders of the biblical books. In other words his criteria fail to predict or define *in themselves* the individual Midrashim.

(3) The unity which Neusner discerns is very open-ended, imposing no clear limits onto the potential size of a composition. One could go on endlessly exemplifying the same rhetorical, logical and topical programme. But it is surely an odd sort of textual coherence that allows almost infinite expansion. What this situation seems to point towards is precisely an intention of the authorship of these Midrashim *not* to create bounded documents, but rather in each Midrash to present a "slice" of a unified worldview (the Oral Torah), which extends right across the whole of Scripture. They want to establish through their commentaries on each biblical book a comprehensive, over-arching view of the meaning of

²⁹⁶ Lachs, "Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba," 245 (Lachs gives a useful list of the repetitions); Kadari, *On the Redaction of Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah*, 10-11. It is hard to see how one decides between these two positions. Certainly from an aesthetic point of view repetition can create structure (e.g. in classical music), but in literature it can simply be the result of sloppy editing.

²⁹⁷ J. Ifversen, "Text, Discourse, Concept: Approaches to Textual Analysis," *Kontur-Tidskrift for Kulturstudier* 7 (2003): 61.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 61

Scripture, to subvert any attempt to set one biblical book, or any Midrash on it, over or against another.

(4) Finally, it is hard to see on Neusner's method that one could ever discover a genuine compilation, as opposed to a composition among the Midrashim. There seems to be only one Midrash, the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael that he has identified as lacking the sort of coherence he finds in Song Rabbah, that is simply an "encyclopaedia" of biblical interpretation.²⁹⁹ But a close reading of his analysis of this Midrash, which many would see as one of the strongest and most distinctive within the Midrashic corpus, leaves one puzzled as to why he has failed to find his kind of unity and coherence within this text. His failure to find the same level of coherence in one document does not validate his method, but simply suggests that if he had tried a bit harder he could have presented the coherence of the Mekhilta in the same way as all the other Midrashim. It is really hard to falsify his conclusions.

In short, then, the structural unity of Song Rabbah is almost totally determined by the structure of the underlying biblical text. Though the paratextual (commentary) elements of Song Rabbah have been given a fairly definite sense of a beginning (the *Petihot*), and a somewhat weaker sense of an ending, the work relies fundamentally for its structure and coherence on the underlying biblical text. Any attempts to identify a superordinate coherence which identifies the Midrash as a distinctive, bounded document, must be deemed, so far, to have failed.

3.6 Genre

We turn now to the question of the genre of Song Rabbah, which, as I have already indicated, will involve us considering the same problems discussed in the preceding section, though from a different angle. What kind of text is Song Rabbah? What is its genre? Genre is fundamental to texts as modes of communication. The author chooses a particular type of text as the vehicle by

²⁹⁹ Jacob Neusner, *Mekhilta according to Rabbi Ishmael: An Introduction to Judaism's First Scriptural Encyclopaedia* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988).

which to express to the reader the message he or she wants to convey, and it is important that readers successfully identify the type of text they are reading, if they are to get the message. In other words literature as a species of communication relies on the existence of genres which are shared between author and reader, genres which arouse certain readerly expectations, which the author exploits to assist communication. For example, one reads a novel very differently from a history, even though both may consist of historical narrative. The fact that a narrative is meant as a novel rather than a history is signalled to the reader in all sorts of ways both internal and external, and the reader's success in decoding the message relies heavily on correctly picking up these signals. The genre-expectations of readers are never formally acquired, but rather through reading itself. The more literate the reader is – the more he or she has been exposed to literature in a variety of genres – the more efficient they will be in decoding the genre-signals of texts.

All literatures work with genres, and Rabbinic literature is no exception. Song Rabbah has come down within the tradition with a very clear genre tag, namely “Midrash”, but what are the characteristics of Midrash? Much ink has been spilled on this subject.³⁰⁰ The problem is that for the modern western reader Midrash is an unfamiliar, alien genre. As David Stern notes, we must “suspend temporarily ... our preconceptions as to what constitutes literature and what we are accustomed to consider its final properties – and to go over, as it were, to the other side, in order to describe the specific language of midrash and the special conditions that created its singular literary forms and modes of expression. This is necessary whether those forms and modes are recognisable techniques of narrative or whether they constitute the more unusual exegetical vehicles that are often far more typical of midrashic discourse.”³⁰¹ As with genres in many other literatures, the genre “Midrash” is nowhere abstractly defined in Rabbinic literature. We can only work inductively by observing the sorts of feature that are shared by texts which the tradition calls “Midrashim”. And as A.G. Wright

³⁰⁰ See the excellent overview in Susan E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2 Reihe, 260; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 83-120.

³⁰¹ D. Stern, *Midrash and Theory: ancient Jewish exegesis and contemporary literary studies* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 39; Alexander Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature and Thought: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

warned long ago, “in stating the primary characteristics [of Midrash], we must not think that we are thereby describing some sort of heavenly pattern of the genre. Rather we are attempting to provide the basis for recovering the historical development of a tradition of literature where we must work from the later examples to the earlier, and when we speak of the rabbinic midrash as the exemplar of the genre we do so only from the point of view of modern attempts at classification and not from the point of view of the original authors.”³⁰² This comment is particularly important because it recognises that genres are not static, but evolve. Genres are learned, not abstractly but by mimesis, by authors reading, copying and adapting the style of antecedent texts. But in this process of mimesis they can push the “genre envelope”: they can try new things, and play with readers’ expectations. Take for example the tradition of Greek historiography. The genre was effectively defined by Herodotus, the “father of history”, and subsequent Greek historians such as Thucydides, Polybius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus are clearly writing broadly in the way he defined, but they have very significantly modified the Herodotean model, and their styles of historiography differ considerably from his and from that of each other.

At the very outset of the modern study of Midrash, Renée Bloch, in her pioneering article on the subject in the *Supplément* of the *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, identified five basic characteristics of Midrash: (1) Midrash has Scripture as its starting-point; (2) it is homiletical in nature, something that arises from the liturgical use of Torah in synagogue; (3) it aims to provide a close analysis of the biblical text, addressing textual oddities, primarily through the use of other biblical texts on a similar theme; (4) it adapts Scripture to the situations faced in its own time; and finally (5), it either seeks to uncover and solve the legal difficulties in Scripture, or to show the wider significance of the narrative of Torah.³⁰³ This was a good preliminary attempt to capture some of the key features of the genre Midrash, but it needs to be heavily refined.

³⁰² A. G Wright, *The Literary Genre Midrash* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1967), 47.

³⁰³ Renee Bloch, “Midrash,” in *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* (ed. H. Cazelles and A. Feuillet; Paris: Le Touzey, 1950), 1263-1281; Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies*.

A fundamental distinction has to be drawn between Midrash as a hermeneutical process, as what James L. Kugel calls an “interpretative stance”,³⁰⁴ and Midrash as a text, with a certain textual form, which results from the application of a certain hermeneutical approach to Scripture. It is important to note that within the tradition a text has to satisfy both senses to qualify as “Midrash”. Midrashic form is lemmatic, and unless a text is some kind of lemmatic commentary on Scripture, the tradition will not recognise it as Midrash. There are texts – Targum is one – which will arguably exemplify the same interpretative stance towards Scripture as Midrash, but if they do not have lemmatic form, they will not be recognised as Midrash by the tradition. The common modern scholarly habit of referring to a particular interpretation of a verse or a word in Scripture as a “midrash” because it appears to exemplify a midrashic hermeneutic method is only weakly justified by the tradition. Midrash as a traditional genre is a marriage of method and form.

I cannot here spell this out in detail, but will have to confine myself to a few notes on how Song Rabbah exemplifies the traditional genre of Midrash, with regard to both its hermeneutics and its form.

3.6.1 The Interpretative Stance of Song Rabbah

Two points need to be stressed on this subject. The first has to do with the role which Song of Songs plays in Song Rabbah. We have already noted how theologically vacuous Song of Songs is. To turn it into an expression of the key themes of the Rabbinic worldview involves an extreme imposition on the text. In this case clearly, as Neusner puts it, “The Sages did not write *about* scripture, they wrote *with* scripture – Scripture provided the syntax and grammar of their thought.” Scripture endured everything and contributed nothing.³⁰⁵ Daniel Boyarin has caught the logic of this very well. Song Rabbah emerges from the Rabbinic perception that Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Qohelet are each to be understood as texts written by Solomon in order to clarify the understanding of the Torah, “to render the axiological meaning of the narratives of the Torah

³⁰⁴ J. Kugel, “Two introductions to Midrash,” *Midrash and Literature* (1986): 91-92.

³⁰⁵ Neusner, *The Midrash: An Introduction*, x.

accessible.”³⁰⁶ Song Rabbah is a manifestation of this perceived purpose, and, in fact, its exegesis is, by and large, not of the Song of Songs at all, but of the Torah. He refers specifically to Song Rabbah on 2:14, a passage we will consider in some detail in Chapters Five and Six. He argues that Song Rabbah to Song 2:14 is, in fact, not an interpretation of Song 2:14, but of part of the Exodus story where the Israelites are trapped on the shore of the Red Sea, with the armies of Pharaoh closing in from behind, and the sea blocking their passage in front. Song Rabbah links the two passages together, implying that they illuminate one another. Exodus is clarified in the light of the Song of Songs, the Israelites being associated with the dove in the cleft of the rock, but, equally, the Song of Songs is clarified by comparing the situation of the dove to that of the Israelites at the Red Sea.³⁰⁷ This makes a lot of sense if we bear in mind that Song Rabbah as often as not enhances our understanding of other biblical books and stories as much as or more than it enhances our understanding of the Song of Songs itself.

Song Rabbah, therefore, in Boyarin’s words, is a ‘reading that joins signifier to signifier, not signified to signified ... stringing the words of the Torah to each other and to the words of the Prophets and the Writings.’³⁰⁸ Boyarin sees the characteristic nature of Midrash as not to delve into the meanings of a given text, but to “lay bare ... the intertextual connection[s] ... which mutually read each other. [It cannot] be decided which is the interpreter and which is the interpreted’.³⁰⁹ Song Rabbah, then, should be understood as, by and large, an interpretation of the Torah, and not specifically of the Song of Songs. This understanding of the purpose of Song Rabbah is already indicated in its Proems, which stress the worthiness of Solomon and, by association, the Song of Songs he composed. It is clearly implied that as a light helps to look for lost items, so the works of Solomon aid understanding of the Torah, and that, in view of this, and the worthiness of Solomon, the Song of Songs itself is an important text, which must be studied as seriously as the Torah itself. David Stern takes a similar view, stating that Midrash does not intend so much to explain the

³⁰⁶ Daniel Boyarin, “The Song of Songs: Lock or Key? Intertextuality, Allegory and Midrash,” in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory* (ed. Regina Schwartz; Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 215.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 223., 215.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

meaning of the text, as to engage with it, and in so doing, to “prove the relevance of Torah to every conceivable circumstance.”³¹⁰

However, we must enter a caveat here. Neusner generalises writing “with Scripture” as one of the fundamental features of all Midrash, but this is arguably not the case. It all depends on the nature of the biblical text that is being exegeted. It was precisely because Song of Songs is such a theological void that it can be inscribed with meaning with such abandon, but one could surely not treat the legal portions of Deuteronomy in the same way, and indeed Rabbinic commentary on those parts of Scripture proves the opposite. Here Scripture does dictate much and the comments are often of a straightforward jurisprudential kind. The tradition has always distinguished between Midrash Halakhah and Midrash Aggadah, seeing the former as much more constrained by Scripture than the latter.

The second feature of Song Rabbah’s interpretative stance which needs to be stressed here is that it is, like the other Midrashim, essentially atomistic in its approach and does not offer a single, monovalent reading of the biblical book. Here the contrast with the Targum is stark. As Kugel points out, Song Rabbah does not deal with the biblical book as whole, nor impose any schema on it, but treats merely the given verse or phrase where a problem is deemed to occur.³¹¹ Despite its consideration of only small portions of the biblical text, Midrash nevertheless understands each biblical verse, phrase, or word to be as much “connected to its most distant fellow as to the one next door”.³¹² He illustrates this by reference to the inconsistency displayed by Song Rabbah regarding the identities of the lover and the beloved, which switch, even in interpretations of a single verse, between God, Israel, and in some cases, other biblical characters.³¹³ Although to the modern Western mind this can seem counter-intuitive, and even problematic, it was apparently not so as far as the *darshan* is concerned. In the interpretation of a given verse, the interpreter is concerned only with the meaning of that verse, and its place alongside and within the totality of the Torah. All this

³¹⁰ Stern, *Midrash and theory*, 30-32.

³¹¹ Kugel, “Two introductions to Midrash,” 93.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 93.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 93.

has relevance to the question of the unity of Song Rabbah. The form of a book, and its orderly consideration of the biblical text verse by verse, implies to us that it must have a unity, an overall aim. And yet, as Kugel points out, consistency is not part of the *darshan's* purpose. Each interpretation is 'interchangeable, modifiable, combinable – in short, not part of an overall exegesis at all.'³¹⁴ Some interpretations could occur (and in some cases do occur) as easily, and as logically, in an interpretation of Genesis or Exodus as of the Song of Songs. This further undermines Neusner's claim to see Song Rabbah as a clearly delimited, bounded "document".

3.6.2 The Forms of Song Rabbah

The macroform of Rabbinic Midrash, as I have already indicated, is lemma + comment, and a text is, apparently, not readily recognised by the tradition as belonging to the genre Midrash unless it has this form. Implicit in this form is a distancing of the voice of the *darshan* from the voice of Scripture, and hence a recognition of the authority of Scripture. In the case of Targum, by way of contrast, there is no such formal distancing: the *meturgeman* mimics the voice of Scripture, though this does not imply any challenge to the voice of Scripture. Distance is still maintained by the fact that the Targum is in another language. The form of lemma + comment unlocks certain possibilities. It allows other parts of Scripture to be brought explicitly into relationship with the text under comment through the use of citation formulae, and, in general, it makes it possible for the exegetical reasoning of the *darshan* to be exposed. It allows Rabbinic authorities to be named and quoted. It allows multiple interpretations of a verse to be offered. This last feature is very explicit in Song Rabbah: at various points, particularly towards the beginning we get multiple interpretations of a verse or phrase introduced by the formula *davar 'aher*. As Neusner perceptively points out these *davar 'ahers* are actually rather misleading, because often the interpretation introduced by *davar 'aher* is not something entirely different, but

³¹⁴ Ibid., 95.

theologically the same point that has just been made, but illustrated in a different way.³¹⁵

Within the framework provided by this macroform a number of microforms recur. The following are particularly important for Song Rabbah:

(1) The *Petihah*. As we have already noted *Petihot* are found in a cluster at the beginning of the Midrash. These are not in their classic early form (base verse + intersecting verse + *harizah* + restatement of base verse) but in the later, looser form, typical of the *Pesiqtas* and *Tanhumas*. They do not use the classic Rabbi X *patah* formula, but rather link the base verse to the intersecting verse by means of a formula such as *zeh she-'amar ha-katuv 'al yedei X*, where X is a biblical prophet. E.g. “*Song of Songs* (Song of Songs 1:1). This is what the Scripture said at the hands of Solomon, ‘Do you see a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men’ (Proverbs 22:29).” One might question whether these are true *petihot* (they are sometimes referred to as “pseudo-*petihot*”), but there is some merit in seeing them as descended from the classical early form.

(2) The *Petirah*. Kadari has stressed, following Bacher, the importance of this for Song Rabbah, claiming it is the most widespread midrashic device used in the whole book, being applied to no fewer than 94 out of the 117 biblical verses.³¹⁶ Oddly it is not recognised by Neusner. Examples are: (a) “[*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth* (Song of Songs 1:2).] Rabbi Yohanan interpreted this verse as applying to Israel when they went up to Mount Sinai (*Rabbi Yohanan patar qaryah be-Yisra'el ba-sha'ah she-'alu le-har Sinai*)” (Song Rabbah 1.2.3). (b) “[*Your ointments have a goodly fragrance* (Song of Songs 1:3).] Rabbi Yohanan interpreted this verse as applying to Abraham our father at the hour God said to him, *Get out of your country and from your kindred* (Genesis 12:1) (Song Rabbah 1.3.3). (c) “[*Tell me, you whom my soul loves* (Song of Songs 1:7).] Rabbi Judah ben Rabbi Simon interpreted this verse as applying to Moses

³¹⁵ Jacob Neusner, “The Historical Event as a Cultural Indicator: The Case of Judaism,” *History and Theory* 30, no. 2 (1991): 144.

³¹⁶ Kadari, *On the Redaction of Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah*, 169-218.

at the hour when the Holy One blessed be he said to him, *Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh* (Exodus 3:10)” (Song Rabbah 1.7.1). This sort of application-exegesis is very old in the history of Jewish Bible exegesis, and is related to Qumran *Pesher*, the only difference being that the contexts to which Qumran applied Scripture were eschatological, the history of their own community in the last days, whereas in Song Rabbah the contexts are largely in the historical past of the *Heilsgeschichte*. Though the technique is old, *Petirah* as a device within Rabbinic Midrash tends to be found in the later Midrashim, though Kadari notes some examples of it in what she calls Tannaitic Midrashim, and, as indicated, it is particularly widespread in Song Rabbah. Like *Pesher* there is an implication that the “application” relates to an esoteric level of meaning in the text, the sort of level of meaning that is to be found in dreams: note how in Rabbinical Hebrew a dream-interpreter is a *poter halomot* (b.Berakhot 55b).

(3) *Lists*. Neusner in particular has stressed the importance of lists in classic Rabbinic literature both halakhic and aggadic. There is a veritable “science of list-making” (a *Listenwissenschaft*), but he draws a distinction between the nature and function of the lists in the Mishnah and those in Song Rabbah. “When in Song of Songs Rabbah we have a sequence of items alleged to form [a] taxon, that is, a set of things that share a common taxic indicator, of course what we have is a list. The list presents diverse matters that all together share, and therefore also set forth, a single fact or rule or phenomenon. That is why we can list them, in all their distinctive character and specificity, in a common catalogue of ‘other things’ that pertain all together to one thing. And this draws us to the difference between the Mishnah’s *Listenwissenschaft* and that of Song of Songs Rabbah. In the document before us [Song Rabbah] the *purpose* is the list. For while we can point to a conclusion for which the Mishnah’s authorship uses its list, we can rarely point to a similar conclusion – a proposition important to the components of the list but transcending them – that forms the centerpiece of discourse. Rather, what we find is a list made up of this and that, combined in one way rather than another, connected to this item, rather than that. Absent [is] a propositional goal closely tied to the items on the list in the way in which the proposition about the hierarchical superiority of the monarch transcends the

items on the list we examined in the Mishnah [*m.Sanhedrin* 2:1-5], the display of an arrangement of the items forms the goal of the intellectual enterprise.”³¹⁷

(4) The *Mashal*. Neusner is rather dismissive of the role of the *Mashal* in Song Rabbah, arguing that it is “a vastly overrated form, since it only very rarely serves to bear the principal burden of a composition’s message, and very often underlines or illustrates a position stated quite clearly in propositional terms. I cannot find a great many instances in which an important message in a composition is allowed to depend wholly on a parable for representation.”³¹⁸ However, this is to underestimate Song Rabbah’s own estimation of the *Mashal*. As David Stern points out, in a remarkable passage Song Rabbah treats Song of Songs as, in its entirety, a *Mashal*, and it was through this *Mashal* that its author, Solomon, interpreted the meaning of Torah for himself and for others.³¹⁹ This is perhaps the nearest any Rabbinic Midrash ever comes to classifying Song of Songs as allegory. Compared to Lamentations Rabbah, however, there is nothing particularly original or inventive about the *Meshalim* in Song Rabbah, perhaps because it was hard to trump the biblical text itself as a *Mashal*. The *Meshalim* are introduced by the shortened formula, i.e., (*mashal*) *le-X she-* rather than *mashal: le-mah ha-davar domeh? Le-X she-*, and many of them are “king” parables, in which God is compared to “a king of flesh and blood.” Typical is Song Rabbah 6.2.3: “Rabbi Samuel bar Nahman said: To a king (*le-melekh*) who had an orchard in which he planted rows of nut-trees and apple-trees and pomegranates, and which he then handed over to the care of his son. Whenever his son did his father’s will, the king would travel and look for the finest fruit in the world; and he would pick it, and bring it, and plant it in the orchard. And whenever the son did not do his duty, then the king would look for the finest fruit in the orchard, and uproot it. So (*kakh*), whenever Israel does God’s will, he looks for the righteous among the nations of the world, for people like Jethro and Rahab, and he brings them and joins them to Israel. But when Israel does not do the will of the Holy One, blessed be he, he looks among them for whoever is

³¹⁷ Neusner, *The Midrash: An Introduction*, 209-210; Roy Shasha, “Forms and Functions of Lists in the Mishnah” (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Manchester, 2006).

³¹⁸ Neusner, *Midrash Compilations*, 82.

³¹⁹ Song Rabbah 1.1.8. David Stern, *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 63-65.

righteous and honest and pleasing and God-fearing, and he removes them from their midst.”³²⁰

As I noted earlier Midrash, like any literary genre, inevitably evolves over time, so where does Song Rabbah stand in the development of Midrash? It is not easy to answer this question, because the history of midrashic form has yet to be written. The standard nineteenth century history of Midrash based on the idea of the two schools – the School of Ishmael and the School of Aqiva – each with its own hermeneutical techniques has now been largely abandoned, but nothing has taken its place.³²¹ For the most part Song Rabbah’s midrashic profile is fairly standard, but we have noted some signs of lateness in the form of its *Petihot* and in its very extensive use of the device of *Petirah*, though we must be careful not to over-press the latter point, because it may have been more or less forced on the *darshan* by the nature of the biblical text he was exegeting. Song of Songs comprises largely unrubricated, uncontextualised speech, and one obvious way of interpreting it is to decide who said it and when, and from this work out what it means. Song of Songs thus lends itself to the “application” method of interpretation, in much the same way as the Psalms of David, from antiquity, attracted headings which attempted to work out from the words of the Psalm the occasion in David’s life when he uttered it. Nevertheless it is probably true to say that, formally speaking, as a Midrash Song Rabbah does not feel as early as say Genesis Rabbah nor as late as say Pesiqta Rabbati, and that would certainly fit with the current dating of the work to the seventh or eighth century (see above 3.4).

3.7 Theology

There is much more willingness in recent scholarship to speak about the theology of Rabbinic Judaism, and to see Midrash as above all the bearer of that theology. Stern understands Midrash as a kind of conversation invented by the Rabbis in order to enable God to speak to them from between the lines of Scripture, and since that conversation is infinitely rich and varied, it can only be conveyed

³²⁰ Cf. y.Berakhot 2.8; Qohelet Rabbah 5.8. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 71-74.

³²¹ Stern, *Midrash and theory*, 25-26.

through a multiplicity of interpretations.³²² There is obvious truth in this, but it needs to be nuanced. Certainly, if we take Song Rabbah as an example, it contains much that can be seen as dialogue between God and Israel (after all the underlying text is largely dialogue). However, although the Rabbis in interacting with Scripture are by extension interacting with God (Stern refers to Torah in Rabbinic Judaism as “a figurative trope for God”³²³), the direct conversations take place amongst themselves, within their community, and in response to their enemies and challengers. God, I would suggest, is not so much a participant in this conversation as the subject of it, and its *audience*. The Rabbis only directly address each other, not God, and argue over the minutiae of the text in the presence of God. Midrash is not so much a conversation with God as a performance for his benefit, aimed at displaying the seriousness with which the Rabbis study Torah. It is also a conversation with those who challenge Rabbinic authority. By and large these are not given a voice, but the questions posed by the community and by opponents, such as Christians, are obliquely acknowledged and addressed. Midrash at its most basic is a Rabbinic arena for the discussion of Scripture, history and contemporary issues. It is a method of Rabbinic engagement with the biblical text, aimed not only at enhancing understanding of the verse addressed, but of the Tanakh as a whole, and at applying Scripture to the political, religious, and cultural situation which the Jewish community faced. While it capitalises on anomalies and issues thrown up by the biblical text, clarifying these is not necessarily its main purpose (i.e., it is not simply exegesis for its own sake). Rather its aim is to show the inter-relation and omni-significance of the Tanakh – the relevance of Scripture to itself and to the contemporary world. It is a conversation between the Rabbis and those around them, a work of reassurance directed towards their own (asserting, e.g., the validity of rabbinic authority), and of refutation and polemic directed towards their enemies. In each case, however, it is addressing fears and concerns regarding the theological implications of recent events and present behaviours and challenges. It is more than just an attempt to legitimate the role of the Rabbis post-70 (as Neusner tends to stress). It addresses more broadly the question, without a Temple, or our own land, how do we continue to function as a

³²² Ibid., 31.

³²³ Ibid., 31

community? How do we observe the Torah? Essentially the question addressed is an anguished, “But what do we do now?” As Stern himself goes on to acknowledge, “The ubiquitous concern of midrash is to prove the relevance of Torah to every conceivable circumstance, to make it embrace every aspect of life”.³²⁴ This amounts to a fairly comprehensive definition of the agenda of theology. Whether it involves God speaking to Israel, or Israel speaking to God, or the Rabbis addressing their community and attacking their opponents, Midrash is theological through and through.

But the theology is presented in somewhat unfamiliar ways. David Stern is certainly right when he says that it is “a key feature of Rabbinic Judaism [that it has an] apparent lack of interest in making a theologically coherent whole out of the articles of their faith”.³²⁵ The Midrash does not set forward explicit theological propositions, which interlock into a systematic whole, but from this we should not conclude that it does not have a theology. The systematic, propositional way of doing theology is not the only way recognised by theologians. There is narrative theology, in which ideas of God, the world, history, humanity, sin and redemption are explored through story and personal experience. And it is always possible to state in propositional form the key ideas that underlie narrative theologies. This point is well made by Neusner. He draws a contrast between the *philosophical* articulation of the Mishnah and the *theological* articulation of Song Rabbah in the following terms: “In the Mishnah, philosophy sets forth a system, dynamic and dialectical in character, while in Song of Songs [Rabbah], the theology sets forth a structure, static and unchanging in its fixed truth about God and his relationship with Israel. *Were we to catalogue the propositions of our document, stated in the language of philosophical discourse, they would repeatedly set forth the same point: God loves Israel, Israel loves God, and the Torah is the medium of that reciprocal love.* However diverse the language and however original the ‘theological things’ that convey that message, the message is uniform throughout, and the articulation is essentially through the repetition of marginally different ‘theological things’ of the same thing: *davar aher* really does stand for ‘another matter’ that is in fact

³²⁴ Ibid., 32.

³²⁵ Ibid., 25.

the same matter. So the same method of learning is used for different purposes, the one philosophical, systematising the evidence of nature, the other theological recapitulating the evidence of supernature revealed by God in Torah.”³²⁶ In other words, Song Rabbah’s message is broadly to affirm from Scripture some of the key themes of the Rabbinic theological worldview, and from this standpoint its perspective is unified, though this does not set it apart from any other Midrash, because all the Midrashim have precisely the same perspective, a point which Neusner himself acknowledges in his *Theological Commentary*, when he claims that Song Rabbah has no theology of its own, but simply exemplifies Rabbinic theology as a whole.³²⁷

3.8 Sources

There is only one source actually acknowledged in Song Rabbah by the use of highlighted quotations, and that is the Tanakh, but it has been universally recognised that, like all the Midrashim, it has drawn extensively on pre-existent traditions, and adapted them to its own ends. There is evidence for an interest in, and an allegorical reading of, the Song of Songs within Rabbinic circles, at least from the time of Aqiva in the early second century CE.³²⁸ Between Aqiva and the probable date of the compilation of Song Rabbah lie some five hundred years, plenty of time for exegetical traditions on Song of Songs to accumulate. That they did accumulate is shown by the Rabbinic literature belonging to this period (see, e.g., *y.Sheqalim* 6, 49d), which frequently comments *en passant* on verses of the book, comments which sometimes can and sometimes cannot be paralleled in Song Rabbah. Two questions arise: First, what sources did the redactor(s) of Song Rabbah draw on? And, second, how did they handle those sources, how strongly did they edit them?

Much of the earlier scholarship on Song Rabbah, starting with Zunz, Theodor and Lauterbach,³²⁹ was focused on identifying its sources, and parallels in the

³²⁶ Neusner, *Midrash Compilations*, 190 (emphasis mine).

³²⁷ Neusner, *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash*, 248.

³²⁸ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 34-36.

³²⁹ Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*; J. Theodor, “Zur Komposition der agadischen Homilien,” *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 28 (1879):

Mekhilta, Sifra, Sifre, and the Seder ^עOlam Rabba were noted. Stemberger continued this tradition, listing the main sources of Song Rabbah as being the Palestinian Talmud, Leviticus Rabbah and Pesiqta deRav Kahana, but noting also references to the Mishnah and to Baraitot.³³⁰ Zunz provided a similar list, but added the Babylonian Talmud and Lamentations Rabbah.³³¹ Kadari accepts most of this, and, indeed, as we shall see, it is absolutely essential for her thesis that she does so, but she further notes that Song Rabbah in its turn became a “source” for the redactors of Qohelet Rabbah, the Tanhumas, Pesiqta Rabbati and Numbers Rabbah.³³²

This all seems very neat, but it is highly problematic, as will become clear from Chapters Five and Six of this dissertation. I will reserve the bulk of my argument until then, but a few preliminary points need to be made here.

(1) When we say that, e.g., the Palestinian Talmud, Leviticus Rabbah and Pesiqta deRav Kahana were “sources” on which the redactor of Song Rabbah drew, what do we mean by a “source”, and how, concretely, do we view the situation? Did the redactor of Song Rabbah have direct access to these texts either in written or oral form? Ratner was prepared to argue he did, at least for the Seder ^עOlam Rabba,³³³ but Theodor and Lauterbach, more reasonably, thought this was unlikely and suggested the knowledge was gained orally from personal contact with particular teachers.³³⁴ The problem is that the more “sources” that are identified, the more unlikely direct access to texts becomes. Theodor and Lauterbach try to ease the situation by supposing that collections of midrashim on Song of Songs had already been made before the redactor of Song Rabbah got to work, and that he drew on these.³³⁵ Jellinek made a similar suggestion: he argued that Song Rabbah was based on a collection of midrashic traditions

271-278, 337-350, 408-418, 455-462; 29 (1880) 19-23; J. Z. Lauterbach, “Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah,” in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (vol. 11; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1906), 291-292.

³³⁰ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 315.

³³¹ Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, 275.

³³² Kadari, *On the Redaction of Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah*, 13.

³³³ Ratner quoted in Lachs, “Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba,” 252.

³³⁴ Theodor, “Zur Komposition der agadischen Homilien”; Lauterbach, “Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah.”; see Lachs, “Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba,” 239.

³³⁵ Theodor, “Zur Komposition der agadischen Homilien”; Lauterbach, “Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah.”; see Lachs, “Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba,” 239.

relating to the Exodus, the giving of the Torah, the Tabernacle and the Temple, which were adapted and combined into a Midrash on Song of Songs, to which additions were made over time.³³⁶ This interposes an intermediate stage between the original “sources” and Song Rabbah, which on the face of it alleviates the problem of access, but does it? There is no clear evidence from a source-critical analysis of Song Rabbah that these prior collections existed, and the proposed prior collections only move the problem elsewhere, rather than solving it, for how did the redactors of these collections access the original “sources”?

(2) The synoptic, redaction-critical analysis of the traditions which Song Rabbah shares with other Rabbinic texts has not been carried out with sufficient rigour to support any conclusion as to who drew upon whom. The nearest we get to this is the redactional-critical study by Kadari,³³⁷ but she tends to presuppose the chronological relationship between the texts rather than proving it. Her implicit argument seems to be that where we have an overlap between Song Rabbah and say the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, since we know that the latter predates the former by quite some time, then we can assume that the form of the tradition in the Mekhilta is earlier than the form of the tradition in Song Rabbah. But we can go even further, we can read the Song Rabbah version against the Mekhilta version and note how Song Rabbah has changed the earlier tradition, and so discover its redactional *Tendenz*. However there are a number of unexamined assumptions here. While there may be good external grounds for dating Song Rabbah later than the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, it is virtually impossible to prove from direct synoptic comparison of overlapping traditions which form of the tradition is earlier and which later, or which drew on which, or even that the traditions bear a *direct* relationship to each other. This will become clear from Chapters Five and Six below. There are too many imponderables. (a) The age of a work does not necessarily reflect the age of the traditions within it. That late works can contain early traditions has long been recognised (note, e.g., the Second Temple period traditions in Pirque de Rabbi 'Eli'ezer), so to date an individual tradition on the basis of the date of the final form of the work in which it is now found is not necessarily valid. The date of the work provides only a

³³⁶ Jellinek quoted in *Ibid.*, 243.

³³⁷ Kadari, *On the Redaction of Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah*.

terminus ante quem, but not a *terminus a quo*. (b) The dominant orality of Jewish culture at the time these works were created means that it is well-nigh impossible to track the development and dissemination of individual units of tradition over time. It is all so much easier to track redactional changes when we are dealing with the relationship between *written* texts (and this is how it works in Gospel criticism: see Chapter Four), but it is questionable whether this written relationship applies in the case of Rabbinic literature. (c) The manuscript tradition of all Rabbinic literature is so late and so unstable, the boundaries and contents of the individual works so uncertain, that it is problematic to assume that any given unit of tradition is integral to any given work. Each copying became a recreation of the work. How, then, can we be absolutely sure that any given unit is not a later addition, which therefore cannot be dated by the supposed “final form” of the work?

All this said, however, there are grounds for supposing that Neusner and Kadari are correct in seeing the final redactor(s) of Song Rabbah as having exercised strong editorial control over the material they received. Though it is difficult, as we have seen, to prove this for individual traditions, in that establishing the form of the tradition they received and then modified is virtually impossible, in general, where we can make synoptic comparisons with parallel traditions, it is clear that the form of the tradition in Song Rabbah is distinctive, and always seems to fit well into the overall argument of the work. This points, in a very general way, towards strong editorial activity. The anonymous voice which holds Song Rabbah together comes across as a strong, unified voice: to this extent we would agree with Neusner, even though we would question the strength of the arguments with which he backs up this conclusion.

It is worth noting that this chimes in well with recent work on the redaction of Rabbinic literature, particularly the Babylonian Talmud. There is an emerging consensus that the anonymous voice of the Bavli – the Stam – has edited strongly whatever materials he received.³³⁸ Indeed, some would go so far as to suggest that he made much of the text up, and that many of the attributions to earlier

³³⁸ David Weiss Halivni, *Meqorot u-Masorot: Be'urim ba-Talmud* (6 vols.; Jerusalem: Bet ha-Midrash le-Rabbanim be-Ameriqa, 1968).

authorities are pseudepigraphic.³³⁹ There is no reason to think that this is the case with the anonymous voice of Song Rabbah. He was in receipt of earlier tradition, and Kadari is probably correct in seeing his attitude to that tradition as broadly conservative. Nonetheless he did not shrink from modifying it when he needed to adapt it to fit his overall message. Like the Stam of the Bavli, the “Stam” of Song Rabbah was a strong editor.

3.9 *Sitz im Leben*

Finally, a few words on the *Sitz im Leben* of Song Rabbah. This is much harder to define than the *Sitz im Leben* of the Targum. As we saw,³⁴⁰ the Targum as an institution had a clear liturgical role, and it is reasonable to assume that whoever created Targum Song envisaged it as performing that role in connection with the public reading of Song of Songs on Pesah. The fact that it may have performed that role only briefly, if at all, and then reverted to private use in private preparation for the hearing of the public reading of Song, in accordance with the injunction to prepare the *parashah* along with the congregation, “twice in the Hebrew and once in the Targum”,³⁴¹ does not detract from the fact that such a work had a clear *Sitz im Leben*. But what was the *Sitz im Leben* of Song Rabbah? It is surely reasonable to see it, too, as connected in some way with the enhanced status which Song of Songs acquired in the Gaonic era as a special reading for Pesah, and this would explain the frequent Exodus imagery in the work. It is not impossible that its Proems could have been used to introduce that reading, though there is no direct evidence for this, and the form of the Proems is not as well adapted to this purpose as the classical *Petihot*. Song Rabbah is a much more scholastic work than Targum Song. It was surely composed by Rabbis for Rabbis. It is in Rabbinic Hebrew, and this would have limited access to it to rabbinically trained scholars. The Targum, by way of contrast, was in Aramaic, in a language which would probably, despite its artificial dialect, have been accessible to Aramaic speakers. It is a deeply vexed question, to which there is

³³⁹ Louis Jacobs, “How Much of the Babylonians Talmud is Pseudepigraphic,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 28 (1977): 47-59; Louis Jacobs, *Structure and Form of the Babylonian Talmud* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 6-17.

³⁴⁰ See Chapter 2, 2.8.

³⁴¹ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 53-54.

no clear answer, what role we should assign to writing in the composition of Song Rabbah. If the *composition* was oral, then it is hard to see how this could have happened other than in the Bet Midrash, for only there would the traditions have been orally available on which to draw. Oral composition of such a work is more believable if the text is seen as fundamentally the product of a group of scholars. If the *transmission* was oral, then again a Bet Midrash setting makes sense, since only in that setting, surely, can we envisage the orally composed text being committed to memory, and so passed on. If, on the other hand, to take the diametrically opposite position, that the *darshan* composed in writing, on the basis of written sources, and then transmitted his text in writing by circulating copies within the Rabbinic community, then we do not need to invoke a Bet Midrash setting. The whole process can be a much more individualistic, private affair.³⁴² There are a number of mediating positions between these two extremes, but the simple fact is that we just don't know where the truth lies. All we know is that a major Rabbinic commentary on the Song of Songs was somehow created in late antiquity, and somehow successfully passed on to the Middle Ages.

³⁴² Paul Mandel is prepared to argue for the written transmission of Midrashim even at an early date. See his essay, Paul D Mandel, "Between Byzantium and Islam: The Transmission of a Jewish Book in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods," in *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality and Cultural Diffusion* (ed. Y. Elman and I. Gershoni; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 74-106.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEXTUAL PARALLELISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Parallelism and Textual Dependency

The claim that text A relies on, or borrows from text B, or uses text B as a source, can only be proven (unless A is explicit about its relationship to B) by showing that there are parallels between the texts and that these can only be explained by the hypothesis that A depends on B. One has only to formulate the basic problem of this thesis in this abstract way to realise that it is full of pitfalls. What constitutes a parallel? Where parallels exist and demonstrate a relationship, how do we know its direction: is A drawing upon B, or B drawing upon A? And how do we know whether the relationship is direct (A knew B and only B) or indirect, through some third party (e.g., A and B both drew on C)? These are some of the methodological questions which I want to explore in this chapter. They are questions that have arisen time and time again in the study of the Bible and Rabbinic literature, and I need to set my own work here in the context of other research in this field.

Fundamental to my discussion of the relationship specifically of Targum Song to Song Rabbah is the use of a two-fold analysis. This involves first, in Chapter Five, considering a number of cases in which we look at parallels between Targum Song and Song Rabbah one-to-one. That is to say, we focus only on these two texts and assess what might be deduced as to their relationship from this comparison. We then go on, in Chapter Six, to consider cases of multiple parallelism, that is to say cases where the parallelism is not just between Targum Song and Song Rabbah, but involves at least one other text as well. I have made this distinction between one-to-one parallelism and multiple parallelism for several reasons. (1) It corresponds to the actual literary situation. In some cases we find that in our extant literature a particular parallel is shared only by Targum Song and Song Rabbah, whereas in other cases we find that the parallel is attested across a range of early Rabbinic texts. (2) It proved useful from a purely

pragmatic point of view to establish some of the key issues of comparison on the basis of the simpler scenario, before going on to the more complex. But (3), above all, this two-step procedure turned out to be analytically important. I found that, if I focused simply on one-to-one parallelism, there was a real danger of being drawn to conclusions which were invalidated, or at least thrown into doubt, when multiple parallelism was taken into account. Multiple parallelism vastly complicates the picture, and makes it much more difficult to establish exclusive, direct, one-to-one dependency. It has this implication, I would argue, even in those cases where a parallel, on our present state of knowledge, is exclusive to Targum Song and Song Rabbah, because it would be rash to assume that the whole of Rabbinic tradition from late antiquity is still extant. There is a real possibility that what now appears to be an exclusive relationship was originally nothing of the sort, but that other parallels once existed. Multiple parallelism reminds us that we are dealing with a very fluid, probably largely oral tradition of Bible interpretation, in which private ownership of given ideas and interpretations meant little. Units of tradition were constantly being repeated and adapted in all sorts of situations, in ways that make direct dependency between the extant versions of a unit very hard to prove. Chapter Six allows us to place the parallels between Targum Song and Song Rabbah in the wider context of Rabbinic literature, and to nuance or reconsider the conclusions drawn at the end of Chapter Five. As a link between these two chapters we will analyse some of the same verses in both, where it is particularly instructive to do so. That is to say, we will treat some parallels in Chapter Five *as if* they were exclusive, before revealing in Chapter Six that they are not and showing how one-to-one comparison in Chapter Five could have led to questionable conclusions.

The way I will proceed in the present methodological chapter is as follows: First, I will consider the problem of what constitutes a parallel, and what types of parallelism between texts have been suggested by earlier scholars. Second, I will review some literature on one-to-one parallelism in Rabbinic literature (specifically between Mishnah and Tosefta, and between the Yerushalmi and the Bavli). Third, I will consider scholarly analysis of a case

of multiple parallelism. The obvious case to choose was the Synoptic Problem in the Gospels, because there the issues which exercise us here have been addressed more intensively and with more theoretical rigour than anywhere else. Fourthly, I will review some of the criteria which have been proposed as indicating, in cases of parallelism, the dependency of one text on another. And finally, I will draw some general conclusions to inform my analysis specifically of the parallels to Targum Song in Chapters Five and Six.

4.2 When is a Parallel Not a Parallel?

4.2.1 What is a Parallel?

What we are concerned with in the present study is the phenomenon of textual parallelism, that is to say the case where *two texts, or parts of texts, present a significant overlap either in their language or their ideas*, but where neither explicitly quotes the other and so makes clear to the world its relationship to the partner text. We are talking about cases where the parallelism only emerges when we set texts side by side, and where on the basis of this comparison alone we have to work out the relationship. It is important to note that implied here are two distinct scenarios: parallelism in language and parallelism in ideas. Verbal overlaps frequently entail parallelism of ideas, though not inevitably, since one text may simply use another as a model of language and style, but talk about quite different things, and parallelism in ideas does not necessarily entail verbal overlaps, since a borrowed idea may be expressed in quite different language. This distinction will be important for the case of Targum Song and Song Rabbah, because the genre and language difference between these two works means that *verbal overlaps* are less likely to occur. When we speak of parallels in such a case, we are usually talking about *parallelism of ideas*. I shall return to this point in 4.2.5 below.

Parallelism, then, occurs when two texts, or parts of texts, present a significant overlap either in their language or their ideas, but what constitutes a significant overlap – and therefore a significant parallel? There are at least two elements

involved here: quantity and quality. As to quantity, the more extensive a given parallel, and the larger the number of parallels between two texts, the more likely it is that there is a relationship between them. The key here surely is the number of individual parallels. Where a large number of parallels exist between text A and text B, even though some of those parallels may be found in other sources, economy of hypothesis would suggest that one of the texts is dependent on the other, and this in turn would allow us to see even small, individual parallels between the texts as significant. But if there are only one or two verbal overlaps, then one would like them to be substantial, if one is going to postulate a relationship between the texts. As to quality, it is important that the *quality* of the parallelism is adequate. For example, if it is a question of the parallelism of ideas, then one really does need the ideas to be more or less exactly the same. The less exact the parallelism the weaker it becomes, and the more forced becomes the claim that the texts are related.

4.2.2 Sandmel's *Parallelomania*

One of the most influential discussions of the problems of parallelism was an article by Samuel Sandmel which appeared in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* in 1962, under the title "Parallelomania".³⁴³ This was provoked by the style of Biblical scholarship in vogue at the time, exemplified particularly in biblical commentaries, and still not entirely a thing of the past, in which alleged parallels between texts were simply juxtaposed, often introduced by some vague formula such as "compare" (cf), or "see" (v.) or even "parallel" (//), without being evaluated.³⁴⁴ Sandmel referred to this as "parallelomania", which he described as "that extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in an inevitable and predetermined direction."³⁴⁵ What Sandmel was interested in was not so much counting supposed parallels as

³⁴³ Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, no. 81 (1962): 1-13.

³⁴⁴ See also, Roy K. Gibson, "Cf, e.g.: a typology of 'parallels' and the function of commentaries on Latin Poetry," in *The Classical Commentary: Histories, Practices, Theory* (ed. C. S. Kraus and Roy K. Gibson; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 331-357.

³⁴⁵ Sandmel, "Parallelomania."

weighing and evaluating them, and he suggested some important considerations that have to be borne in mind when we do so.

(1) Parallelism has to be specific, which is an aspect of the problem of quality discussed above. If two texts are concerned with some general topic in early Judaism, e.g., the question of whether or not it is permitted to heal on the Sabbath, then it is difficult to postulate a relationship between them on the basis that both talk about this topic, even if both take up similar positions in the ongoing debate. This was just too general a *topos* of early Jewish theology to serve as a specific indicator of the relationship between texts, because the position adopted by any given text might simply inform us about the tradition of Judaism to which it belonged. Both texts would have to take the same highly idiosyncratic line before we could begin to consider the possibility of a relationship.³⁴⁶ In other words not everything that can be construed as parallelism is necessarily significant.

(2) Sandmel also counsels against jumping to the conclusion that where significant parallels exist – significant in the strict sense that he and I would define the term – this necessarily implies that the two works sharing the parallels are “in thorough agreement” throughout. They may elsewhere contradict each other, but only converge at this one point. But, then, it can become problematic if we do not see their apparent convergence in the context of their divergence, for the differences between the works may be so strong and fundamental as to cast doubt on whether the convergence really indicates dependency, or demonstrates the influence of the one work on the other.³⁴⁷

(3) Context also plays a part in another *caveat* of Sandmel’s. He points out that we should consider the respective contexts of any specific cases of parallelism between two works, because the element in question may actually serve quite different or even diametrically opposed purposes in each work. The supposedly borrowed element may function in the borrowing text in very different ways from how it functioned in the original, or it may be put in a totally different

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 3.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 3-4.

setting. Context is too often ignored when parallels are cited. If the use and context is radically different, it may well lead us to wonder whether any borrowing actually took place.³⁴⁸

4.2.3 Morton's Smith's *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels*

Eleven years before Sandmel produced his celebrated "Parallomania" article, Morton Smith had attempted to address, with a sophistication that was seldom shown until then, the issue of textual parallelism. The precise question that concerned him was Rabbinic parallels to the Gospels.³⁴⁹ Smith's work has to be seen against the background of the long tradition of finding Rabbinic parallels to the New Testament that starts with the work of Christian Hebraists, such as John Lightfoot,³⁵⁰ in the Reformation and post-Reformation eras, and culminates in the massive *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* by Herman Strack and Paul Billerbeck.³⁵¹ Masses of parallels had accumulated but they were, Smith observed, of very different kinds and carried very different implications. He attempted to bring some order into the chaos. He draws a distinction between parallels and influences. Parallels are self-evident overlaps between two texts: there should not, for him, be any question that a parallel is a parallel; it should be clear and obvious, and it is on the basis of lists of such parallels that the relationship between works or literatures has to be established.³⁵² Influences are inferences that scholars have drawn about relationships between texts which cannot be empirically proven.³⁵³ The distinction is useful, if somewhat problematic, but Smith's main theoretical

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 5.

³⁴⁹ Morton Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels* (vol. 6; Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series; Philadelphia, PA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1951); I have ignored Jacob Neusner, *Are there really Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels? A Refutation of Morton Smith* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993) as a piece of highly personal polemic. For the background see the review of Neusner's book by S. J. D. Cohen, "Are there Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116 (1996): 85-89.

³⁵⁰ John Lightfoot, *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae in Novum Testamentum* (trans. Robert Gandell; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1859). This work first appeared as a series of volumes between 1658 and 1674 (see posthumous edition by Johann Benedict Carpzov, Leipzig, 1675-1679)

³⁵¹ H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, Volumes 1-4 (Munich: Beck, 1926-28); Volumes 5-6 (ed. Joachim Jeremias and Kurt Adolph; Munich: Beck, 1956-61).

³⁵² Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels*, 12.

³⁵³ Ibid., 16.

contribution to the present discussion was to suggest a typology of literary parallels between the Gospels and Tannaitic Literature.

He differentiates eight kinds of parallelism:

(1) *Verbal Parallels*: In the case of verbal parallels one word resembles another in one of a number of ways: semantically (where two totally different words have the same or similar meanings); grammatically (where two different words have the same grammatical form); or etymologically (either in the sense of being formed in the same way, or having the same root, as in the case of loan words).³⁵⁴

(2) *Parallels of Idiom*: These show similarity in using the same “conventional way of grouping words.”³⁵⁵ Smith does not define what qualifies as an idiom, but deals only with cases unlikely to be contested, such as euphemisms, and formal elements such as are found in biblical citations or in oaths and blessings.³⁵⁶

(3) *Parallels of Meaning*: Smith notes that this is the category which has received the most attention. It covers those cases where two texts express the same idea, regardless of wording or form. This contrasts with the categories of verbal parallelism and parallelism of idiom in which form is important.³⁵⁷ An example of this kind of parallelism would be the fact that passages in both the Gospels and Tannaitic literature express the thought that not everyone will have a share in the world to come.³⁵⁸

(4) *Parallels of Literary Form*: Literary forms are forms of rhetoric which depend not on single idiomatic expressions, nor on the grammatical peculiarities of the words. In the wider sense, they include forms of argument or of exegesis, and, in the narrower sense, literary forms, such as parables, prayers, sayings and

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 1.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 16.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 16.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 46.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 47ff.

sermons.³⁵⁹ Smith notes that in terms of rhetoric, “parallels of literary form come very close to parallels of idiom [T]he theoretical distinction lies in the fact that for parallels of literary form the meaning is the essential, and the words and sentences need not be parallel, whereas in parallels of idiom the parallelism of the words is essential and that of meaning only the *conditio sine qua non*.”³⁶⁰

(5) *Parallels in Types of Association*: Here Smith refers to the ways in which the material in a text is joined together (“associated”) to form a coherent text, in other words, the principles of its composition and structure. Parallelism of types of association occurs when two texts have been composed in the same way, even when their subject-matter is totally different.³⁶¹

(6) *Complete Parallels*: Complete parallels are the last of what Smith refers to as “simple parallels”. These are “passages which are parallel at once in words and in structure, in content and in literary form.”³⁶² He cites as an example the saying in Mark 4:24, “In the measure in which you mete it shall be measured to you” and its rabbinical counterpart, “In the measure in which a man metes it is measured to him”, found in the Mekhilta 13.19ff (among other rabbinic sources).³⁶³

(7) *Parallels of Parallelism*: In Smith’s own words, “every literature consisting of several books – such as the Gospels or T[annaitic] L[iterature] – makes possible the discussion of *the relationship which exists between the books*, and in the comparison of literatures it is possible to compare the relationship which exists between the books of one literature with the relationship which exists between the books of a second literature.”³⁶⁴

(8) *Parallels with a Fixed Difference*: These are cases where two texts display a range of parallels between each other, but which also always or regularly differ in some respect. He cites as an example of this how the use of the passive in the

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 78ff.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 79.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 115.

³⁶² Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels*, 135.

³⁶³ Ibid., 135.

³⁶⁴ Smith, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels*, 142.

Gospel of Matthew is the equivalent of the use of the impersonal in Tannaitic literature, when both are circumlocutions to avoid mentioning the name of God. The texts are parallel, in that, out of reverence, they do not want unnecessarily to speak the name of God, but they routinely differ as to the precise linguistic means they use to achieve this aim.³⁶⁵

This classification is undoubtedly useful and can provide a starting point for categorising parallels between other texts and literatures, but the only two of the categories that have much relevance to the precise question of the relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah are parallelism of ideas and verbal parallelism.

4.2.4 Parallelism in The Manchester-Durham Typology Project

The question of parallelism between texts forms an important element in the Manchester-Durham Project on the Typology of Anonymous and Pseudepigraphic Jewish Literature.³⁶⁶ This project is ongoing and its ideas still under development, but it has reached a stage where it can provide some useful, if interim, input into the problem I am discussing here. The project aims to provide a new, exhaustive, text-linguistic description of all complete or nearly complete anonymous and peudepigraphic Jewish texts originating between the years 200 BCE and 700 CE, including the two texts which are the subject of this thesis – Targum Song and Song Rabbah. It is corpus-based and it works inductively. The methodology of the project is as follows. The texts in the corpus are examined and every significant text-linguistic feature in them noted. These features are then classified and organized into a list, known as the Inventory, and a description or “profile” of each individual text provided in terms of the “boxes” which it ticks in the Inventory. The profiles of every text in the corpus will be made available on a publicly accessible electronic database in 2011, hosted on

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 152.

³⁶⁶ The Principal Investigator on this AHRC-funded project, now completing its third year, is Prof. Alexander Samely of Manchester. The Co-applicants are Prof. Philip Alexander of Manchester and Prof. Robert Hayward of Durham. The Postdoctoral Researcher is Dr. Rocco Bernasconi of Manchester. I am grateful to Prof. Alexander for giving me access to the preliminary findings of the project.

the University of Manchester website, and there will be a number of studies justifying the methodology of the project and explaining the Inventory

It would be impossible to address here all the complexities of this project, which, as I have noted, is still evolving, but the way it handles parallelism is very relevant to our present purposes. While some of its categories are more or less the same as those proposed by Morton Smith, it defines those categories with much greater precision, and in some cases it identifies types of parallelism which have not been captured in any shape or form elsewhere.

There is a fundamental distinction in the Inventory between *metatextual* (Inventory section 6) and *intertextual* relationships between texts (Inventory section 7). Metatextual relationships are where one text explicitly states its relationship to another text: the clearest example of this is Midrash, which constantly proclaims its direct relationship to Scripture by lemmatising it. The whole structure of Midrash depends on this lemmatisation of Scripture. Intertextual relationships are where the relationship is (for the most part) not explicit, but only emerges from a comparison of two texts. Intertextual relationships are by far the more difficult to establish and assess, and they are the kind of relationship which concerns us here, since Targum Song never explicitly quotes Song Rabbah nor vice versa. Both Targum Song and Song Rabbah bear a metatextual relationship to the Biblical Song of Songs (the former because, though structurally it is a free-standing form, it belongs to the genre of “translation”; the latter because it openly lemmatizes Scripture), but if they are related to one another, then the relationship is *intertextual*, since neither explicitly quotes the other, nor acknowledges openly any kind of relationship.

The Inventory describes intertextual relationships primarily with regard to relationships to the Bible, but the categories generated can readily be extrapolated to the relationship to other texts as well. The thirteen main categories, each of which has an extensive range of sub-categories, are as follows:

(1) “The text contains sentences or sentence parts also found in a partner text, embedded in or alongside sentences or sentence parts not found in the partner text” (Inventory 7.1).

(2) “The text is narrative and mirrors the broad outlines and some of the details of a biblical story, without necessarily adopting its wording and without necessarily limiting itself to the biblical events/actions/characters” (Inventory 7.2).

(3) “The narrative occupies an extended stretch of narrative-chronological (or ‘historical’) ground which it shares with (and which is defined by) a biblical story, through some substantial overlap with the biblical cast of characters (with or without strong overlap in the events)” (Inventory 7.3).

(4) “The narrative locates itself within the narrative-chronological (or ‘historical’) framework of the biblical story, but occupies only a niche space in it” (Inventory 7.4).

(5) “The text’s governing voice is an I-narrator or first-person voice who is meant to be recognized as also known from another text (apparently presupposing the Hebrew Bible)” (Inventory 7.5).

(6) “The text is non-narrative and often makes tacit use of the narrative fabric of biblical events/reported speech, thus providing a narrative horizon for its own discursive thematisation of biblical events and norms” (Inventory 7.6).

(7) “In a non-narrative text the overall distribution and sequence of themes in the text can be interpreted as tacitly isomorphic with the distribution and sequence of themes in another text, the partner text” (Inventory 7.7).

(8) “The range of themes addressed in the text can be interpreted as being nearly or wholly contained within the range of themes found also in another text, the partner text, whether that relationship is explicated or not. ... The text has little (relative to its size) thematic substance which does not also occur in the partner

text (but not necessarily vice versa), and offers roughly the same level of generality in treating the overlapping topics (but not necessarily the same wording, the same propositions, or the same thematic sequence)” (Inventory 7.8).

(9) “There is pervasive use of allusive language (word choice and or syntax), the (potentially) prominent choice of expressions constituting specific allusions to passages in an earlier text, or generic allusions to a number of typical passages in an earlier text” (Inventory 7.9).

(10) “There is functionally important employment (pervasive, or prominent in some way) of quotations of biblical wording, explicitly marked as quotations (that is, the biblical words are marked as not being uttered by the governing voice or the voice of a character in the text)” (Inventory 7.10).

(11) “There is explicit quotation of wording from a text other than the Hebrew Bible (as known to modern scholarship in the definition of rabbinic Judaism)” (Inventory 7.11).

(12) “There is sustained or prominent inter-textual relationship between the text and a non-biblical partner text (without judging the priority between them), of the kind described for the Hebrew Bible under 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, etc [above], and not explicable on the basis of them sharing the same biblical model” (Inventory 7.12).

(13) “There is a model for the *compilatory* technique of the text among the biblical texts” (Inventory 7.13).

A number of observations, useful for the present discussion, are provoked by this brief survey of the Manchester-Durham Project’s treatment of intertextuality. The first is the extreme care shown by the Inventory not to commit itself to implying the direction of dependency between texts which parallel each other, except in the case of the Bible, the primacy of which can be assumed on general historical and cultural grounds, even where it is not text-linguistically signalled. The parallelism is described in as neutral a language as possible. The Inventory

is concerned not with trying to demonstrate the direction of influence but to map the nature of the relationship. Second, notably absent from the Inventory is Morton Smith's parallelism of literary form. It is true that Inventory 7.13 envisages one text providing, at the level of the macro-form, a literary model for another, (examples given are Proverbs for Ben Sira, Psalms for Psalms of Solomon, Chronicles for 1 Maccabees, and Daniel for the Similitudes of Enoch), but it is clear that what Smith is thinking of are micro-forms, the smaller building blocks of the macro-forms. It is unclear why Morton Smith does not recognise macro-form intertextuality in the Inventory's sense, nor why, conversely, the Inventory does not recognise micro-form intertextuality in Smith's sense. Micro-forms are treated elsewhere in the Inventory. Perhaps, they are not included under section 7 because, though the sharing of micro-forms is parallelism of a sort, the micro-forms are so pervasive that it is hard to see how they can demonstrate a relationship between texts. It is equally striking that parallelism of *ideas* also does not directly feature in the project's list of features of intertextuality. This is perhaps more easily explained, in that the criteria are based largely on text-linguistic signals lying on the surface of the text, and unless the similar ideas are expressed in similar language, they will not show up in the Inventory. Finally, and most pertinently, only one of the categories, no. 1, obviously applies to the relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah. Several others might appear to be relevant, but this is because both texts, as already noted, share a metatextual relationship with Scripture, rather than because they have an intertextual relationship with each other.

4.2.5 Parallelism and Genre

The limited range of types of parallelism between Targum Song and Song Rabbah which our survey of typologies of parallelism has thrown up is an interesting result, which calls for an explanation. Most of the concrete cases of parallelism which will be considered in this chapter are between texts which belong to basically the same genre, the Mishnah and Tosefta, the two Talmuds, the Gospels, and one obvious explanation of the restricted range of parallelism between Targum Song and Song Rabbah is that we are making, by way of contrast, a comparison between texts in two different genres. In Chapters Two

and Three we devoted some space to describing the genres respectively of Targum and Midrash, and it is very clear that they are fundamentally different. This difference is borne out also by the Inventory of the Manchester-Durham Project, because in this, Targum Song has to be classified fundamentally as a Narrative, whereas Song Rabbah has to be classified as a Thematic Aggregate. One of the major fissures in early Jewish literature which the Inventory reveals is between narrative texts and thematic texts.

Does this render any attempt to identify parallelism between texts of different genres, and so discuss their inter-relationship in these terms pointless? Does the difference in genre devalue the analysis? Is the analysis valid only if we are comparing like with like? I would argue not, for several reasons.

(1) Though we need to bear difference in genre in mind, in that it affects the rhetorical form of the texts and so restricts the elements of comparison, nor should we forget that we are also comparing across languages (Aramaic-Hebrew), which inevitably creates problems for verbal overlaps. In the last analysis our comparison is not between the genres themselves but between the traditions contained within them. What we are comparing are the ideas, the traditions of interpretation, the stories, the aggadic content of the works. We are not comparing two genres as if they were alike, we are comparing two (or more!) versions of an aggadah, regardless of the genre of the work in which they appear. These aggadic traditions reflect the culture and environment in which the works which contain them were composed, but they are not tied to any one genre more than to others. They are critical for our understanding not only of individual texts, but also of the process of textual and theological development in the Talmudic period. To forgo such cross-genre comparison entirely would affect detrimentally the progress of our understanding of the transmission of texts, traditions and thought in Rabbinic Judaism.

(2) The problem in this particular case is somewhat eased by the peculiar nature of the Targumic text to hand (Targum Song), because it contains substantial explanatory expansions that are of a broadly midrashic nature, and so bring it rather closer to Midrash than would be the case with more literal Targums such

as Onqelos and Jonathan, though I would not by any means rule out that aggadic comparison with Midrash is meaningful even in the case of the latter as well. The expansive nature of Targum Song gives more material on which comparison can gain purchase.

(3) Finally, it is a simple fact that aggadic comparison between Targum and Midrash has been demonstrated again and again to be a worthwhile exercise. One might mention here the recent article by Everson in which the angelological traditions found in Targum and Midrash are meaningfully compared and contrasted.³⁶⁷ This can serve to represent a host of similar studies going back over many decades. The fact remains, however, that the kind of parallelism that exists between Targum Song and Song Rabbah is precisely the kind that is least likely to establish clear literary dependency between two works.

4.3 One-to-One Parallelism

I come now to a brief overview of some cases in ancient literature where texts show significant, unacknowledged overlaps, to see how these have been treated in the scholarly literature, and what inferences have been drawn from the parallelism. The texts are of two broad types – halakhic and aggadic. Under the former falls the relationship between Mishnah and Tosefta (4.3.1), and between the Yerushalmi and the Bavli (4.3.2); under the latter we can include the Gospels (4.4.1), since *aggadah* is their predominant content from a Jewish literary point of view. It will be important to note whether difference in content creates different kinds of parallelism and leads to a difference of treatment in the scholarly literature. In line with the methodology outlined in 4.1 above we will consider cases of one-to-one parallelism first, followed by the case of multiple parallelism.

³⁶⁷ D. L. Everson, “A Brief Comparison of Targumic and Midrashic Angelological Traditions,” *Aramaic Studies* 5 (2007), 75–91.

4.3.1 The Case of Mishnah-Tosefta

One of the most remarkable cases of textual parallelism in early Jewish literature is found in the Mishnah and the Tosefta. These two documents share large amounts of material in common, often expressed in the same or almost the same words, and in the same sequence, but interspersed with material not found in the other document. As Rocco Bernasconi importantly points out, the verbal overlaps between the two texts should not be considered as “quotations” by one text of the other.³⁶⁸ The striking fact is that neither text formally acknowledges the existence of the other, nor introduces the common material with any kind of citation formula. What is the relationship between these texts to which this parallelism points? Which is primary and which is secondary? Which depends upon which? From our point of view the most significant result of a rapid survey of the extensive literature is that there is no scholarly consensus on this question. The traditional view, reflected in the title Tosefta, “Supplement”, was that the Tosefta was dependent on the Mishnah: it was a kind of re-written Mishnah, created in the late third century CE, a sort of staging-post on the way to the creation of the Talmuds, which gave up the project of revising the Mishnah itself, and instead decided to write a lemmatic commentary on it. This view is still vigorously defended by Jacob Neusner on the grounds that there are large passages of the Tosefta which are effectively meaningless, unless you have the Mishnah in front of you.³⁶⁹ A number of these have been closely analysed by Bernasconi, who shows that in some cases sentences in the Tosefta are actually grammatically incomplete, and the reader has to supply wording from the Mishnah.³⁷⁰

This traditional view was, however, challenged by Shamma Friedman, who argued that close synoptic comparison suggests that in some cases the Tosefta

³⁶⁸ Rocco Bernasconi, “Wording Overlaps between Mishnah and Tosefta,” (unpublished paper prepared in connection with the Manchester-Durham Typology of Anonymous and Pseudepigraphic Jewish Literature Project, 2009). I am grateful to Dr. Bernasconi for allowing me to consult this paper. The quotation is on p. 2.

³⁶⁹ Jacob Neusner, “Describing Tosefta: A Systematic Account,” in *Introducing Tosefta: Textual, Intratextual and Intertextual Studies* (ed. T. Meacham and H. Fox; New York: KTAV, 1999), 39-71. This summarises the position that Neusner has argued at great length elsewhere. See, e.g., Jacob Neusner, *The Tosefta: Its Structures and its Sources* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986).

³⁷⁰ Bernasconi, “Wording Overlaps between Mishnah and Tosefta,” 9-20.

must be earlier than the Mishnah.³⁷¹ Indeed, he was prepared to go so far as to argue that “the primacy of the Tosefta pericope vis-à-vis its parallel Mishnah is more the rule than the exception, and indeed may indicate the pervading relationship of parallels between these two works”.³⁷² Judith Hauptman took Friedman’s position and developed it still further arguing that, ultimately, the Tosefta is a commentary not on the Mishnah as we have it but on an *Ur-Mishnah*, finding evidence for this, like Friedman, in those cases where the Mishnah version of a unit of tradition is not comprehensible unless considered alongside a version of the same unit found elsewhere, such as in the Tosefta.³⁷³ This vastly complicates the picture. Hauptman, like most scholars, seems to accept that the final redaction of the Tosefta is later than the final redaction of the Mishnah. Nevertheless it reflects an earlier form of the Mishnah on which the final form of the Mishnah is itself based. Hauptman challenges some of the basic assumptions on which the direction of dependency is often worked out. For example, she questions the idea that “the fuller and more clear source is the later one, which came into being to explain the earlier, more difficult and sketchy one.”³⁷⁴ It is just as possible, she argues, that the more difficult text is secondary to the clearer one, and, since it presupposes the existence of the latter, sees no reason to elucidate or clarify.³⁷⁵ I shall return in 4.5 below to consider more formally how in cases of parallelism one can work out the direction of dependency. Suffice to note here that Hauptman rightly questions one of the “rules of thumb” most widely applied for this purpose, namely that the longer, clearer text is inevitably later than the shorter and more obscure one.³⁷⁶

³⁷¹ Shamma Friedman, *Tosefta Atiqta, Pesah Rishon: Synoptic Parallels of Mishnah and Tosefta with a Methodological Introduction* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2002).

³⁷² Shamma Friedman, “The Primacy of Tosefta to Mishnah in Synoptic Parallels,” in *Introducing Tosefta: Textual, Intratextual and Intertextual Studies* (ed. T Meacham and H. Fox; New York: KTAV, 1999), 100.

³⁷³ Judith Hauptman, “Mishnah as a Response to Tosefta,” in *The Synoptic Problem in Rabbinic Literature* (ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen; vol. 326; Brown Judaic Studies; Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 2000), 13-24; Judith Hauptman, *Rereading the Mishnah* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); Judith Hauptman, “The Tosefta as a Commentary on an Early Mishnah,” *Jewish Studies, an Internet Journal* 4 (2005): 109-32.

³⁷⁴ Hauptman, “Mishnah as a Response to Tosefta,” 33.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 33

³⁷⁶ For the history of this debate see further, A. Houtman, *Mishnah and Tosefta: A Synoptic Comparison of the Tractates Berakhot and Sebiit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996).

4.3.2 The Case of the Yerushalmi-Bavli

A similar problem of parallelism arises in the case of the two Talmuds, the Yerushalmi and the Bavli: considerable quantities of text are shared by these two works, interspersed with material found only in one of them. Where there are overlaps the wording in the parallel *sugyot* is seldom precisely the same, raising questions of which form is older and which is younger, and why the younger may have changed the wording of the older. The relationship is complicated by the fact that though, as with Mishnah and Tosefta, neither the Yerushalmi nor the Bavli acknowledges the existence of the other work in anything like its final form, many of the traditions are presented as explicit quotations attributed to named authorities of Babylonian or Palestinian origin, and hence the texts do acknowledge, to a limited degree, sources and dependency. But there are also sizeable portions of shared text where there is no acknowledgement that one is “quoting” the other.

The traditional view is that the Bavli is dependent on the Yerushalmi, though the traditionalists are reticent on the point of whether or not the Bavli knew the Yerushalmi as more or less a finished document, or received and reworked blocks of Yerushalmi material piecemeal.³⁷⁷ Though the current trend towards dating the final redaction of the Bavli late, and making that redaction very thorough, does leave open the possibility that the final editors (the so-called *Stammaim*) had a more or less final form of the Yerushalmi in front of them,³⁷⁸ most comparison between the Yerushalmi and the Bavli has been done at the level of individual *sugyot*. A further complicating factor is the textual traditions of each Talmud, which are complex, and, particularly in the case of the Yerushalmi rather corrupt, leaving open the possibility of cross-contamination of manuscripts from one tradition by manuscripts from the other.

³⁷⁷ See Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 200-201, for a summary of the different scholarly views. Further, Sacha Stern, “Talmud Yerushalmi,” in *Rabbinic Texts and the History of Late-Roman Palestine* (ed. Martin Goodman and Phillip S. Alexander; British Academy), 205-235, esp. 221-224.

³⁷⁸ See, e.g., David Weiss Halivni, *Meqorot u-Masorot: Be'urim ba-Talmud*.

As with Mishnah-Tosefta the whole question of the Yerushalmi-Bavli relationship has been radically re-opened in recent years. Particularly useful for our present purposes is the work of Christine Hayes.³⁷⁹ She raises the question as to whether the differences between the Yerushalmi and the Bavli can be accounted for by internal or external factors. The former have to do with exegesis, textual transmission and the like, the latter with historical or cultural causes.³⁸⁰ She believes the tendency has been to assume that external reasons lie behind the differences without proper consideration being given to the option of internal explanation. As for the differences themselves, she notes four patterns: (1) the Yerushalmi contains traditions which also appear in the Bavli, but there may be traditions, analogies, debates, analytical principles or conclusions in the Bavli which do not occur in the Yerushalmi. (2) The Yerushalmi contains traditions found in the Bavli, but may also feature traditions and other material not found in the Bavli. (3) Two *sugyot* have common elements, but each contains elements not found in the other. (4) Two *sugyot* do not differ in substance, but do differ in form.³⁸¹

These patterns can be broadened in their reference to apply equally to other cases of parallelism, and are useful for classifying the kinds of differences that can be found, and for deciding what they imply about the relationship between the parallel texts or passages. On the basis of her analysis Hayes identifies four possible relationships: (1) The two texts are based on different versions of the tradition. (2) The texts cited or referred to are ambiguous, resulting in two different versions of the tradition. (3) Each text features different versions of other traditions that figure in the passage. (4) One text considers sources not considered in the other.³⁸²

³⁷⁹ C. E. Hayes, "Halakhah le-Moshe mi-Sinai in Rabbinic Sources: A Methodological Case Study," in *The Synoptic Problem in Rabbinic Literature* (ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen; vol. 326; Brown Judaic Series; Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 2000), 61-118; C. E. Hayes, *Between the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds: accounting for halakhic difference in selected sugyot from Tractate Avodah Zarah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³⁸⁰ Hayes, *Between the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds*.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 27.

The general thrust of Hayes' work, and of other recent studies of the Yerushalmi-Bavli relationship, is to complicate the traditional view, which saw the flow of influence as being overwhelmingly in one-direction – from Palestine to Babylonia, largely on external, historical grounds. If we ignore for the moment the assumption that the Bavli is later than the Yerushalmi, and so must have used the Yerushalmi, and simply concentrate on describing in neutral, text-linguistic ways the relationship between the two texts, then, while the parallelism is clear, once again its implications, particularly for the direction of influence, are not. While a case can often be made that the Bavli used the Yerushalmi and “babylonized” its traditions, there are occasions where it is just as easy to argue that the Yerushalmi used the Bavli and “palestinized” its traditions.³⁸³

4.4 Multiple Parallelism

4.4.1 The Synoptic Problem in the Gospels

I turn now to an example of multiple parallelism, that is to say, a case where parallel material can be found in three or more texts. Inevitably I have chosen the Gospels to illustrate this, because the whole question of parallelism and what it entails has been studied more exhaustively and intensely with regard to these documents than any other in antiquity. The literature on the subject is vast, and it is not my intention here to try to cover it all. I will simply highlight certain aspects of the scholarly debate which are useful as orientation for our primary task of analysing the relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah.

The Synoptic Gospels comprise the first three books of the New Testament. Although there is a Fourth Gospel, John, in our New Testaments, these three (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) bear so significant a resemblance to each other in content, order, and wording that a literary relationship between them has been

³⁸³ B. M. Bokser, “An Annotated Bibliographical Guide to the Study of the Palestinian Talmud,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* (ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase; vol. 2.19.2; Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1979), 139-256. There are other synoptic problems in Rabbinic literature, e.g. between Mishnah and Sifra (an interesting cross-genre case), or between Genesis Rabbah and the Palestinian Targumim (again cross-genre), or between the various versions of the Heikhalot texts. See: Shaye J. D. Cohen, ed., *The Synoptic Problem in Rabbinic Literature* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 2000); Jacob Neusner, *Neusner on Judaism, Volume II: Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), esp. 4-65.

posited since earliest times. As Goodacre says, there is “a firm consensus in scholarship”³⁸⁴ that there is a literary relationship between these three books of the New Testament. The three Gospels have been repeatedly laid out synoptically and their similarities and differences analysed in great depth, in order to establish how they relate to each other. However, there is still no consensus as to what that relationship is. Three main proposals have been advanced: (1) the widely held *Two-Source Hypothesis*, (2) the *Farrer Hypothesis*, and (3) the *Griesbach Hypothesis*.³⁸⁵

The Two-Source Hypothesis maintains that both Matthew and Luke had access (independently of each other) to Mark, and also to another, hypothetical, source, known as “Q”. This accounts both for passages where all three Gospels are in agreement and those where Matthew and Luke share material which does not appear in Mark. The positing of Q is the element of this theory which has the most potential to generate problems. Although its existence is widely accepted, the Two-Source Theory being the starting point for such key studies of the Synoptic Problem as those by Bultmann³⁸⁶ and Dibelius³⁸⁷, some scholars are reluctant to posit the existence of a hypothetical text such as Q – a text not independently attested³⁸⁸ – to solve the problem of the relationship between texts, and have preferred other solutions.

The Farrer Hypothesis attempts to deal with the issues raised by Q. It argues that there is actually good evidence that Luke knew both Mark and Matthew which, of course, accounts for the similarities between Luke and Matthew, and, as the Q hypothesis depends on the perceived impossibility or unlikelihood of Luke having had access to Matthew, this means there is no longer a need to postulate Q.³⁸⁹ As Farrer says: “The hypothesis of St Luke’s using St Matthew, and the

³⁸⁴ Mark Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze* (London: T&T Clark, 2001), 16.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

³⁸⁶ Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. John Marsh; Oxford: Blackwell, 1963).

³⁸⁷ Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (ed. William Barclay; trans. Bertram Lee Woolf; The Library of Theological Translations; Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1971).

³⁸⁸ A. M. Farrer, “On Dispensing with Q,” in: *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot* (ed. D. E. Nineham; Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 55–88.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

hypothesis of their both drawing from a common source, do not compete on equal terms. The first hypothesis must be conclusively exploded before we obtain the right to consider the second at all.”³⁹⁰

The Griesbach Hypothesis makes Mark the third of the Gospels, not the first, and claims that he used both Matthew, who has priority, and Luke, who is secondary to Matthew. This view, which is clearly very different from the Two-Source Hypothesis, reflects in part early Patristic evidence which gives priority among the Gospels to Matthew³⁹¹. Its most consistent advocate in recent years has been William Farmer who deplores the ease with which the Two-Source Hypothesis became mainstream, “in the absence of any conclusive demonstration of its validity, and in spite of serious scientific objections which can be and have been raised against it.”³⁹² Farmer rejects the need for Q. Although he believes that scholars should be open in principle to the possibility of such documents, “a critic should not posit the existence of hypothetical documents until he has made an attempt to solve the problem without appeal to hypothetical documents.”³⁹³ Farmer claims that out of the eighteen theoretically available options to explain the relationship between the Synoptics only six are actually viable,³⁹⁴ and of these the most logical are those which place Mark third, since this accounts for the order, the contents, and the agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark.³⁹⁵

To summarise, we have three texts which have much material in common (though the shared material is seldom verbally identical), as well as significant differences – material unique to one of them, or shared by two against the third. The shared material points unavoidably to a literary connection between the texts, but over two hundred years of intense synoptic comparison has failed to

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 56.

³⁹¹ Papias, Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Augustine all give Matthew the priority.

³⁹² William R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis* (Dissboro, NC: Western North Carolina Press, 1976). See further: C. M. Tuckett, *The Revival of the Griesbach Hypothesis: An Analysis and Appraisal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

³⁹³ Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis*, 209.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 202-211.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 211.

create any consensus as to what that relationship is. Analysis of the same body of evidence has produced at least three contradictory explanations.

This survey of the Synoptic Problem in the Gospels has relevance to our present inquiry in a number of ways. First, though everyone agrees that there must be a relationship between the first three Gospels, the failure to agree on what it is is striking. It matches the failure to reach consensus on the Mishnah-Tosefta and the Yerushalmi-Bavli relationships. This lack of consensus cannot be lightly dismissed. It suggests that there is something fundamentally problematic about synoptic comparison. The textual indicators of the direction of the relationship often seem to have an inherent ambiguity: they can point in either direction. The intractability of the problem is illustrated by the fact that many Gospel scholars feel the need to postulate the existence of a totally hypothetical source, Q, to explain the relationship between the Synoptic Gospels. Q here reminds one of Hauptman's *Ur-Mishnah*, in the sense that it too is a hypothetical source, without which, Hauptman argues, we cannot make sense of the relationship between our present Mishnah and Tosefta. Time and time again when the question arises about the relationship between parallel texts the possibility will be raised that the texts do not relate directly to each other but through a hypothetical third text which is their common source.

It is deeply unclear, methodologically speaking, what the status of such hypothetical sources is. There is some force in Farrer's argument, that their existence should not be postulated till all possibility of directly relating the texts has been exhausted – a kind of literary version of Ockham's razor. On the other hand one might well question whether strictly logical principles can apply to such complex literary situations. We certainly no longer have all the versions of the Rabbinic aggadot that circulated in antiquity. Nor do we have all the versions of the Gospel stories that were once extant, nor, probably, all the Gospels,³⁹⁶ so to see the relationships exclusively in terms of the texts we now have may be to

³⁹⁶ See J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). None of the apocryphal Gospels, with the possible exception of the Coptic Gospel of Thomas, is as old as the four canonical Gospels.

grossly oversimplify the situation. The presumption that there were other texts means that Ockham's razor simply does not apply.

Our survey of the Synoptic Problem in the Gospels raises, secondly, some questions as to how parallel it is to the problem of the relationship of Targum Song to Song Rabbah. There are some obvious differences between the early Christian and the early Jewish texts. The Gospels are literary creations, which had almost certainly individual authors, possibly the authors whose names are now attached to them. They circulated in written form. And they belong to the same genre of text. Direct, literary comparison of them makes perfectly good sense. The two Rabbinic texts, by way of contrast, were created and transmitted in a culture where orality played a major role. As Martin Jaffee puts it, "in the time and place at hand, the characteristic organs of literary life were the mouth and ear."³⁹⁷ Add to this the fact that, unlike the Gospels, which seem rapidly to have achieved some sort of canonic status, and so their texts became, to a degree, sacrosanct, this did not happen with Rabbinic literature. Each reiteration of tradition became a new performance of the tradition, almost a new creation. The boundaries of texts became "fuzzy", which means that comparing text synoptically with text is problematic. Between two versions of an aggadah may lie several oral performances of it, each of which changed it in subtle ways. And finally, we come back to the point that the two Rabbinic texts – Targum Song and Song Rabbah – belong to different genres. These are major differences, which mean that we must not extrapolate too casually from the Synoptic Problem in the Gospels to the problem we have in hand. The Synoptic Problem in Rabbinic literature is *more* complex than the Synoptic Problem in the New Testament, and this counsels caution that we are going to reach a definitive answer to the question of the relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah.

4.5 Signs of Dependency

As we have seen, agreeing that there is parallelism between texts is relatively uncontroversial compared to agreeing about what it signifies, and in particular

³⁹⁷ Martin S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism 200 BCE-400BCE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 18.

about the relationships of dependency which it may or may not entail. There have been numerous attempts to identify criteria that show that one text depends on another. We noted earlier Judith Hauptman's challenge to the common assumption that the longer, clearer text is always the later, on the grounds that it is usually possible to think of reasons where the reverse may be the case, which of course means that specific criteria are needed.

These could include (1) *Clarification*: in this case the same tradition appears in two or more works, but one version seems to offer clarification of the tradition found in the other, e.g., in the form of a brief explanatory comment. (2) *Correction*: in this case the tradition as presented in one text is changed in another in order to correct a perceived inaccuracy in the first. (3) *Re-actualisation*: in this case the same tradition is used in two texts or passages, but applied in a different way, e.g., exegetically to a different historical context. (4) *"Spinning"*: here the same tradition is used, but to different effect in terms of the ideological stance it assumes. In this case the same tradition can be used but in each text supports a different point of view.

These four criteria are reminiscent of those used by Redaction Critics, who try to show not only that text A changed text B, but to work out *why* it changed it, and so to discover the "tendency" (the *Tendenz*) of text A over against text B.³⁹⁸ But there is an obvious problem here: it is that this involves identifying authorial intention, an aspect of text-composition seen rightly in contemporary literary studies as highly problematic.³⁹⁹

Michael Fishbane suggests two criteria for establishing dependency between parallel texts within the Hebrew Bible, which can be extrapolated to the relationships between other texts.⁴⁰⁰ (1) *Unmarked Intertextuality*: in this case

³⁹⁸ See, e.g., Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969). David Weiss Halivni uses similar subjective criteria in his Weiss Halivni, *Meqorot u-Masorot: Be'urim ba-Talmud*. (note 377 above).

³⁹⁹ See, e.g., Séan Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

⁴⁰⁰ Michael Fishbane, "Types of Biblical Intertextuality," in *International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament: Congress Volume, Oslo 1998* (ed. A Lemaire and M Sæbø; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 40. Shamma Friedman offers a more halakhically oriented discussion of dependency in his essay, "Uncovering Literary Dependencies in the Talmudic Corpus," in *The Synoptic*

one passage repeats or echoes another, but without explicitly acknowledging the allusion. (2) *Marked intertextuality*: here an overt reference is made to another tradition or work, such as the superscriptions to the Psalms which refer to events of the biblical history.

However, here too there is an element of subjectivity: in unmarked textuality, because, as we noted earlier, how do we know, when text A overlaps verbally with text B, that this involves an “unmarked quotation” of text B, and not the other way round, or that A and B are not drawing on a common source? In “Marked Intertextuality”, the dependency is explicit, but this has little or no relevance to our problem, since we are concerned with parallelism where the relationship is not declared.

Fishbane’s analysis here should be seen against the background of his influential work on the growth of tradition in the Bible, in which he argues that the relationship between parallel versions of a tradition within the Bible can often be construed broadly in “midrashic” terms.⁴⁰¹ The changes introduced in the later versions can be seen as motivated by the same sorts of considerations as apply in post-biblical commentary on the Bible itself: the desire to remove obscurities or ambiguities, to re-apply the text to new situations, to correct it, where it is deemed to be out of joint with current theology or morality, and so forth. A somewhat similar approach was adopted by David Halperin in a detailed study of a single tradition in Rabbinic literature, namely the sections in the Tosefta, the Yerushalmi, and the Bavli that stand parallel to Mishnah Hagigah 2.1.⁴⁰² The material here has to do with mystical matters regarding the Merkavah, and Halperin referred to it as the “Mystical Collection”. He came to the very firm view as to the inter-relation of these four parallel texts. He decided that their chronological order was Mishnah-Tosefta-Yerushalmi-Bavli, and this was shown by the fact that each text picked up and elucidated problematic elements in the

Problem in Rabbinic Literature (ed. Shaye J. D. Cohen; Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 2000), 35-60. This is less useful for our essentially aggadic problem.

⁴⁰¹ Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

⁴⁰² David J. Halperin, *The Merkavah in Rabbinic Literature* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1980).

earlier one.⁴⁰³ The tradition, in this case, definitely expanded with the passage of time: the longer and more complex the version, the later it is in the sequence of texts. What drove the tradition was essentially midrash: the relationship between the texts, as Fishbane argued for the Bible, was essentially “midrashic”. This all sounds very plausible, and is persuasive in the particular case of the Mystical Collection, but identifying a midrashic motive behind some particular change introduced in a version of a tradition can still involve high levels of subjectivity, and still suffers from the problems involved in trying to discern the intention of an author/redactor.

Avigdor Shinan attempts a more formal approach to solving the problem, in an article devoted specifically to the relationship between Targum and Midrash.⁴⁰⁴ For him the key question is not whether or not there is a relationship between a given Targumic and Midrashic text (if there is significant parallelism, then a relationship must exist), or even whether that relationship is direct or indirect, but in which direction the borrowing runs.⁴⁰⁵ He suggests a way of answering this question, based on approaching each case of parallelism on its own merits, accepting in principle “the possibility that the Targum might be reflecting traditions originating in the world of the Bet Midrash, or, conversely, that the Targum is the source for these and other dicta in the literature of the Talmud and Midrash.”⁴⁰⁶ The admission of the latter possibility is important, given that there are clear cases where the Midrash explicitly quotes Targum⁴⁰⁷. This does not occur in Song Rabbah, but that it does happen elsewhere, and frequently, is significant. Shinan’s approach is to identify which characteristics are generic to targumic aggadah and which are not, and on this basis to argue that any tradition found in the Targum which demonstrates clearly non-targumic features is likely

⁴⁰³ The Yerushalmi and the Bavli, of course, lemmatise the Mishnah, so their posteriority to it is self-proclaimed. The real problem lies in Halperin’s assertion that the relationship of the Tosefta to the Mishnah, of the Yerushalmi to the Tosefta, and of the Bavli to the Yerushalmi, is fundamentally midrashic.

⁴⁰⁴ Shinan, “The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Rabbinic Aggadah: Some Methodological Considerations.”

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 208

⁴⁰⁷ E.g., Exodus Rabbah 3:13. See further: Rimon Kasher and M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, *Fragments of Lost Targumim* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1983); Alberdina Houtman and Harry Sysling, *Alternative Targum Traditions: the Use of Variant Readings for the Study of the Origin and History of Targum Jonathan* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

to have originated elsewhere.⁴⁰⁸ He includes under non-targumic features: king *mashals*; explanatory expansions before the translation of the biblical text itself; rabbinic epithets for God such as *hamaqom/atara*’; the creation of an aggadah based upon word-play perceptible only in Hebrew; the presentation of alternative interpretations; the use of a verse in the Aramaic translation which has not yet been translated, or the use of one out of order. These are all characteristic, he claims, of Midrash, and when we encounter them in a Targum, whether or not a parallel now exists in Midrash, we can be sure that they did not originate with the Targum.⁴⁰⁹ He concludes that “a targumic tradition of Aggadah that is consummately un-targumic – even if without parallels beyond the world of Targum – must have drawn from the literature of the Aggadah and Midrash. Only a targumic tradition of Aggadah that does not reveal any un-targumic sign is worthy of reappraisal in this regard.”⁴¹⁰

There are several problems with this argument. The confidence with which Shinan differentiates between targumic and non-targumic/midrashic features is surely questionable. He makes his case with regard to the Pentateuchal Targumim which are, by and large, stereotypical of the Targum genre, i.e., one-to-one renderings of the Hebrew (the obvious outsider here being Pseudo-Jonathan). But the Targumim to the Megillot, especially to Song of Songs and Esther, are very different kinds of Targum, with lots of interpretative expansions. Sperber saw these expansions as resulting from the incorporation of Midrash into Targum,⁴¹¹ and doubtless Shinan would agree, but this to some degree begs the question, and it is just as possible to argue that the Targum genre evolved, as most genres do, to accommodate expansiveness, so that when midrash-like elements are found in later Targums, we do not have to suppose they are borrowings from Midrash.

Add to this the evidence of Targumic creativity. We must be careful, as I argued in Chapter One, not to come with the *assumption* that Targum is a secondary, derivative genre of Bible interpretation. Shinan himself acknowledges targumic

⁴⁰⁸ Shinan, “The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums,” 208-209.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 209-212.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 216-217.

⁴¹¹ Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic.*, vol. IVA

creativity, noting many instances where a tradition found in the Targum is not paralleled elsewhere, either in Midrash, or in Second Temple sources such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Pseudepigrapha, Philo, and Josephus, or in the Church Fathers.⁴¹² He cites Brayer's claim that Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Genesis alone contains some one hundred and twenty traditions not paralleled in any extant ancient sources.⁴¹³ Now, of course, we cannot assume that we still have the sum-total of ancient Jewish tradition, but we probably have a large part of it, and the existence of so many unparalleled traditions in Targum is significant, and complicates its relationship to the Midrash. Unparalleled traditions are especially important, as we shall see, in the case of the relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah, since both texts originated in roughly the same period, in the same milieu, and offer interpretations of the same biblical book. The fact that, as well as parallels, each contains significant amounts of material that are not in the other, *and could conceivably have been there*, must be kept in mind when we are assessing their relationship. There are no good grounds for denying the vitality and creativity of the Targumists, nor the adaptability of Targumic form, and on both these grounds we may well question Shinan's confidence in sifting out the "targumic" from the "non-targumic" within a Targum.

We should note, finally, that Shinan's criteria, even on his own account, lead to a rather weak conclusion: even if the presence of a an "un-targumic" feature in a Targum suggests the tradition originated in Midrash, in a non-targumic milieu, that does not necessarily tie the Targum to any given Midrash, or prove the Targum "borrowed" from it. For example, suppose we find an "un-targumic" tradition in Targum Song paralleled in Song Rabbah, Shinan's criteria on their own will not allow us to identify Song Rabbah as the actual "source" of the Targum. We would need another mechanism to do this. Economy of hypothesis (Ockham's razor) might seem to be the answer. Why complicate matters by positing another source, when one is lying to hand? But, as we have seen, this form of argument is of questionable relevance precisely in this case.

⁴¹² A. Shinan, "Midrashic Parallels to Targumic Traditions," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 8, no. 2 (1977): 185–191.

⁴¹³ Shinan, "The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Rabbinic Aggadah: Some Methodological Considerations," 215.

4.6 General Conclusions

On the basis of the methodological discussion in this chapter we are justified in taking with us several broad conclusions into the analysis of the specific case of parallelism between Targum Song and Song Rabbah in the following chapters.

(1) What constitutes a parallel is not as obvious as it seems. Parallels are of different kinds and carry different implications. They have to be weighed, not counted.

(2) Significant parallelism indicates a relationship between texts, but the nature of the relationship, and in particular the question of which text depends on which, is highly complex. Criteria of dependency proposed to date often involve high levels of subjective judgement.

(3) Cross-generic parallelism (as between a Targum and a Midrash) poses particular problems, in that it limits the range of parallelism that will apply, almost inevitably confining it to those types which make direct literary dependence hard to prove.

(4) Nevertheless cross-generic parallelism is worth exploring, and its possibility and value have been demonstrated in numerous scholarly studies.

(5) The problem posed by the parallelism of Targum Song to Song Rabbah is only one example of a pervasive problem in the literature of Rabbinic Judaism, of the New Testament, and of the Hebrew Bible. In none of these other “synoptic problems” has consensus been reached, which suggests that there is something inherently insoluble in the problem, and so we should not expect to come to a definitive answer with regard to Targum Song’s relationship to Song Rabbah.

CHAPTER FIVE
TARGUM SONG AND SONG RABBAH
ONE-TO-ONE PARALLELS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on a series of case studies of parallelism between Targum Song and Midrash Song Rabbah. The examples have been chosen because they illustrate different kinds of relationship between these two works. These range from high levels of correlation, through medium, though still significant levels of similarity, to, in one case, no correlation at all. This last category should not be forgotten, since the lack of parallelism is as significant as the presence of parallelism. The absence of parallelism is, on the face of it, more revealing in the case of the Midrash, since Song Rabbah has clearly the nature of an encyclopaedic anthology, and so, if the compiler of that work had known the interpretation found in the Targum, then there is no obvious reason why he could not have included it. He was not under constraints of space and coherence in the same way as the Targumist. However, this argument, in fact, works both ways. If a Targumic interpretation is not in the Midrash, then clearly at this point the Targumist cannot have been reliant on the Midrash. And it should also be noted that there are a number of occasions when the Targumist, within his schema of interpretation, could easily have adopted an interpretation proposed by the Midrash, but has chosen not to do so. In the analyses of the parallels below I have occasionally touched on the possible polemical and apologetic intent of some of the interpretations offered by the Targum and the Midrash of the Song, with respect both to Christianity and to Merkavah Mysticism. These comments can only be suggestive: their purpose is to remind us of the wider socio-religious context in which the exegesis of sacred texts takes place, and the influences that can bear upon it.

The case studies represent only a small selection of the possible parallels that could have been considered, but a comprehensive survey was out of the question,

and, I would argue, would not materially affect my conclusions. The one-to-one parallels in this Chapter Five were identified in part from Alexander's notes in his *The Targum of Canticles* as well as my own reading of the Targum and the Midrash in tandem.⁴¹⁴ Those in Chapter Six were largely identified through word-searches in standard electronic databases, such as Davka.⁴¹⁵

5.2 Case Study 1: Song of Songs 1:12

Bible

עד-שְׁהַמְלִךְ בְּמִסְבוֹ נָרְדִי נִתַּן רִיחוֹ:

While the king was reclining at his table, my nard sent forth its fragrance.

Targum

והוה עד דהוה משה רבהון ברקיעא לקבלא ית תרין לוחי אבניא וית אוריתא וית תפקידתא קמו רשיעי ההוא דרא וערבובין דביניהון ועבדו עגל דדהב ואסריו עובדיהון ונפק להון שום ביש בעלמא דמן קדמת דנא ריחיהון נדיף בכול עלמא ובתר כן סריאו כנרדא דריחיה ביש לחדא ונחת מכתש סגירו על בסרהון:

But while Moses their teacher was in the firmament to receive the two tables of stone – the Torah and the statute – the wicked of that generation and the mixed multitude among them arose and made the Golden Calf; they made their actions stink and acquired for themselves an evil reputation in the world. Whereas formerly their fragrance had spread through all the world, after that they stank like spikenard, the odor of which is very bad; and the plague of leprosy came down upon their flesh.

⁴¹⁴ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*.

⁴¹⁵ David Kantrowitz, *Judaic Classics* (Institute for Computers in Jewish Life, Davka Corp.).

Midrash

Song Rabbah 1:56-58: See Appendix 1, pages 235-242.

Analysis

In comparing the two texts I will take the Targum as my starting point, since the hypothesis we are testing is that it is dependent on the Midrash.

But while Moses their teacher was in the firmament to receive the two tables of stone -- the Torah and the statute

The Targum clearly identifies Moses as “the king” and contextualises the verse to the giving of the Torah at Sinai. A similar interpretation is found in the Midrash (I:56, B 3-4), and there a proof-text is offered for identifying Moses as the king (Deuteronomy 33:5). This proof-text may well be in the Targumist’s mind, but to have cited it would have been contrary to Targumic form. So far the parallelism looks strong, but when we set it in the wider context it begins to weaken. The predominant interpretation in the Midrash is to identify “the king” not as Moses but as “the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He”. And although several interpretations in the Midrash agree with the Targum in seeing the verse as alluding to the events at Sinai, it also entertains other possibilities: the delivery of Abraham from the fiery furnace (I:56, C 1-4); Jacob’s blessing of his sons (I:56, C 5); Hezekiah and his followers eating their paschal lambs in Jerusalem (I:58, F 1); Israel and Moses eating their paschal lambs on the first Passover in Egypt (I:58, F2). In other words, the Midrash offers a multivalent reading of the verse, the Targum a consistent, monovalent reading. If the Targum is dependent on the Midrash, then we have to ask why the Targumist would choose one of the Midrash’s interpretations and not another, and at least credit him with creating a consistent, coherent reading of the biblical text.

The wicked of that generation and the mixed multitude among them arose and made the Golden Calf;

The Targum's reference to the Golden Calf is based on an interpretation of the biblical "My nard gave forth its smell", as the sequel clearly shows (see below). One Midrashic interpretation, attributed to R. Meir agrees: "Israel became corrupt and said to the Calf, *This is your god, O Israel*" (Exodus 32:4) (I:56, A 3), which implies that the phrase means, "My evil spice gave its odour" (I:56, A 6). But once again the nuances should be noted. (1) R. Meir, explicitly does not identify "the king" as Moses, but as God. (2) R. Meir does not attempt to offer any extenuation of Israel's sin: he simply says that "Israel became corrupt". The Midrash places the blame at the door of Israel as a whole, and does not blame another group for the Calf, or invoke corrupting, alien influence. The Targum, however, deflects the blame from Israel to "the wicked of that generation" and "the mixed multitude", which is a clear attempt to provide some sort of apologia for Israel as a whole. (3) Significantly R. Meir's interpretation is emphatically rejected by R. Judah: "Enough of this, Meir! The Song of Songs is not expounded in a bad sense, but only in a good sense, for the Song of Songs was revealed only for the praise of Israel" (I:56, A 4), and this is confirmed by the generally positive interpretations given by the Midrash of "My nard gave forth its smell". For example, "While the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, was at his table in the firmament, Israel sent forth a fragrance before Mount Sinai and said '*All that the Lord has said will we do, and obey*'" (I:56, A 5). Or, "While the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, was yet at His table in the firmament, *already the glory of the Lord abode on Mount Sinai*" (I:56, B 3). On the face of it, it is not obvious why the Targumist could not have adopted the first of the positive readings proposed here. If the Midrash was such an authority for the Targum, why does the Targum go with a minority opinion which the Midrash so firmly rejects? Interestingly at another point the Midrash gives a negative interpretation of "My nard gave forth its smell": Abbahu agrees with Meir that this phrase must mean "My evil spice gave forth its odour", but the bad smell is then innocuously identified with the smell of the blood of the slain paschal lambs from the first Passover night, which God neutralised with the pleasant odours from the spices of Paradise, thus sharpening the Israelites' appetites. This fanciful idea generates a long, and tortuous digression on the necessity of consuming the Passover circumcised (I:58, G 1-8).

It is hard not to see Abbahu's interpretation as an attempt to "spin" Meir's in a more positive direction – which would confirm our impression that the Midrash wants us to reject Meir's position, precisely the position adopted by the Targum. (4) Finally, we should note the Midrash at I:56, A 6-8: "R. Meir's opinion is that the verse means 'my evil spice gave its odour', but a tradition was brought by Israel from the [Babylonian] captivity which they transmitted, that God [in writing the Torah] skipped over the incident of the Calf and wrote first the construction of the Tabernacle". The meaning probably is that God described the means of atonement for the sin of the Calf (the sacrificial system associated with the Tabernacle) before he described the sin itself. In copying the Torah out of order, he made the point that the sin of the calf was *not* irredeemable.⁴¹⁶

The idea is deeply defensive and apologetic, and the reason for this will engage us in a moment. The Targum also makes a similar claim, though not precisely at 1:12, but it links the atonement for the sin of the Calf with the merits of the Aqedah rather than with the Tabernacle (Targum Song 1:13 and 2:17).⁴¹⁷

They made their actions stink and acquired for themselves an evil reputation in the world. Whereas formerly their fragrance had spread through all the world, after that they stank like spikenard, the odour of which is very bad; and the plague of leprosy came down upon their flesh.

Several points should be made about the Targum: (1) It takes spikenard as having a bad smell. As we have seen, two views in the Midrash (Meir's and Abbahu's) do the same. The perception of scents as pleasant or unpleasant is notoriously subjective, and even cultural, but the association of spikenard with unpleasantness is surely surprising.⁴¹⁸ The Midrash generally assumes that its smell is sweet, not only here but in Song 4:13-14 (the only other two references to nard in the Bible), where it is identified as one of the wedding gifts exchanged between God and Israel. The Targum itself, in the latter two passages interprets

⁴¹⁶ Cf. Leviticus Rabbah 1.10 which states that Israel only became liable for disobedience to God after they were given the Tent of Meeting.

⁴¹⁷ Though see Targum Song 1:5 where the role of the Tabernacle in atoning for the sin of the Calf is acknowledged.

⁴¹⁸ On (spike)nard see Michael Zohary, *Plants of the Bible* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 205.

the word in a strongly positive sense, though curiously there it translates it as *riqsha*, “crocus”, and not *nirda*, as here, thus forcing a sharp differentiation between the two passages. (2) Scent is seen as a metaphor for reputation – a common feature of both Targum and Midrash.⁴¹⁹ But it is hard not to see a very deliberate echo of other references in the Targum to the “scent” of Israel being wafted abroad in the world, in a positive way, e.g. at 1:3 and 4:10, where Israel’s ointment sends forth a pleasant smell, and she has a good, feared reputation in the world. This constant cross-referencing and echoing in the Targum is an aspect of its unity: it follows a consistent “symbolic lexicon”⁴²⁰ – a feature that is notably absent from the Midrash. (3) The reference to leprosy as a punishment for the sin of the Calf is not actually found in the Bible. Exodus 32:35 speaks vaguely of God afflicting the people. The Targum identifies the affliction with that imposed on Miriam for her rebellion against Moses (Numbers 12:10) – an interpretation also found in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 7.7. This idea is not found in *Song Rabbah*, though this might not be so surprising, given its rejection of any allusion to the sin of the Calf.

There can be no doubt that the Targum’s interpretation can be seen as highly coherent and original. It is driven by the Targumist’s own exegetical concerns and logic. At the level of his overall exegetical schema he finds himself in this verse of *Song at Sinai*, and so he correlates it as best he can with the Torah account of the giving of the Law. The Sin of the Calf, the supreme example of Israel’s idolatry, was a topic which was clearly of importance to him,⁴²¹ and so it is not surprising that he should find a reference to it here. He did not need to consult *Song Rabbah* to reach the position that he reached: he got there through his own, inner exegetical logic.

Linguistic considerations may also have been involved. It is possible to play with the verb *natan* in the biblical phrase *natan reiho*. As H. J. Van Dijk points out, this has a much wider semantic range than the English “give”, its standard equivalent. Especially with abstract nouns (here smell is the object of the verb), it

⁴¹⁹ See Targum *Song* 7:9 and 7:14, with Alexander’s notes *ad loc.*

⁴²⁰ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 31-32.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

can have the sense of “to cast, to shed, to bring down”, or “to send or pour forth”.⁴²² More specifically it is interesting to note that the verb *natana* in Arabic can mean to give off a bad smell.⁴²³ If, as Alexander has suggested, our Targumist was a native Arabic speaker, might he have interpreted the Hebrew in the light of the Arabic?⁴²⁴ If he did, it is hard to be sure just what he was intending to suggest. Was he making a philological point, that he had discovered a hitherto unknown meaning of the Hebrew *natan* on the basis of the Arabic *natana*? Was he simply making a cross-linguistic pun? Or did he, as a native Arabic speaker, unconsciously read an Arabic meaning into a Hebrew word? It is impossible to say, because we cannot be sure of his theory of language, but that he might have had what were to him good linguistic reasons for this interpretation is perfectly possible. We find such cross-linguistic interpretation of the Hebrew elsewhere in early Jewish exegesis. In Genesis Rabbah 81.5, the place Allon-Bacuth in Genesis 35:8, where Rebekah’s nurse was buried, is interpreted as meaning “Another Weeping”, on the basis that *allon* in Greek means “another”. And according to Yerushalmi Sukkah 3, 53d, Aquila translated the Hebrew word *hadar* in the phrase *‘etz peri hadar* in Leviticus 23:40 by the Greek word *hudor* (water) because it was a tree which grew beside water.

I mentioned earlier the extreme defensiveness of the Midrash about the sin of the Golden Calf. This defensiveness is common in Rabbinic literature. The reason for it is not hard to find: it is a reaction to Christian use of the episode to illustrate the innate sinfulness of Israel, and even to argue that the first covenant with Israel was negated as soon as it was given.⁴²⁵ The Targum also shows this defensiveness: we already noted how it attempts to shift the blame for the disgraceful incident onto the “mixed multitude” – the hangers-on who came up with Israel out of Egypt. But the Targum fights its corner in its own way, and

⁴²² H. J. Van Dijk, “A Neglected Connotation of Three Hebrew Verbs,” *Vetus Testamentum* (1968): 16, 23. Cf. how Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 88b and Gittin 36b play with the verb.

⁴²³ Pope, *Song of Songs*, 349. See Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (ed. J. Milton Cowan; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971), 942b. “*natana* ... to have an offensive smell, be malodorous, stink ... *natn* and *natāna* stench, evil smell, malodour ...”. The word is not cognate with the Hebrew *natan* but only similar sounding.

⁴²⁴ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 12.

⁴²⁵ Pier Cesare Bori, *The Golden Calf and the Origins of the Anti-Jewish Controversy* (trans. David Ward; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990); More succinctly, Philip S. Alexander, “Golden Calf,” in *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations* (ed. Edward Kessler and Neil Wenbron; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 170-171.

although it has the same objective as Song Rabbah, there is no evidence that it borrowed any of its arguments from there.

It is also not impossible that Christian exegesis influenced the Targum in one very specific way, viz., its negative interpretation of the spikenard in Song 1:12. Christian interest in Song of Songs was surprisingly strong from an early date. The first complete Christian commentary we have on any book of the Hebrew Bible is Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*.⁴²⁶ Origen related Song 1:12 to the story in John 12:3, where Mary anoints Jesus' feet with *nard*, and then wipes them with her hair. In other words, he contextualises the verse to the Christian sacred history just as the Targumist contextualises it to Jewish sacred history. Origen offers a typical allegorical interpretation: "As Mary (the soul) anoints Jesus, the nard absorbs Jesus' fragrance (his teaching and the Holy Spirit). That fragrance is then transferred back to Mary (the soul) by means of her hair, and eventually fills the house (the soul, the Church, the world)."⁴²⁷ He also speaks of Jesus himself as being called "spikenard", in the same way that he is called "the true Light" and "the Bread of Life": "He is called spikenard or ointment, that the soul's sense of smell may apprehend the fragrance of the Word."⁴²⁸ In Origen's Second Homily on Song of Songs the same view is propounded, and here good scent is taken as signifying good deeds and bad odour sinful deeds – an idea found in the Targum and, to a lesser degree in the Midrash. Once we link the spikenard of Song 1:12 with the incident in John 12 then an allusion to Christ's passion becomes inevitable, for John 12 (and Mark 14) explicitly sees the anointing as preparation for Jesus' burial. Hippolytus, another early proponent of the Christianisation of the Song of Songs, certainly finds Easter allusions in the book, linking Song 3:1-4 with the Gospel accounts of Easter morning, especially John 20:16-17.⁴²⁹ Once again we have competing

⁴²⁶ Origen, *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies* (trans. R. P. Lawson; Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation, 26; London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1957).

⁴²⁷ J. McWhirter, *The Bridegroom Messiah and the People of God: Marriage in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-2.

⁴²⁸ Origen, *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies*, 162.

⁴²⁹ Hippolytus, *On Song of Songs*, 24.3, translated by Yancy Smith, "Hippolytus' Commentary on the Song of Songs in Social and Critical Context" (PhD dissertation, Brite Divinity School, 2009), 345-50. The translation is based on the Georgian version, the original Greek, apart from a

contextualisations of the biblical text – one in the Jewish and the other in the Christian *Heilsgeschichte*. One also wonders whether intertextuality with Christian exegesis may not have played a part to some degree in the Targum's somewhat unusual identification of Moses and not God as the king in Song 1:12. Christian exegesis is very emphatic that the king here is Jesus.⁴³⁰ Is the Targum countering this by asserting that the reference is to Moses, and claiming that Moses was in heaven and communed with God, just as surely as the Christians claim was Jesus? It has long been recognised that there is a dialectic between the figure of Moses in Judaism and the figure of Christ in Christianity, the characteristics of the one being transferred to the other in a sort of competition for theological supremacy. Set in this context the Targum's interpretation takes on an added piquancy.

All this is, admittedly, highly speculative, but a number of general considerations give it greater force. Recent scholarship on the interaction of Patristic Bible commentary and Rabbinic Midrash has increasingly stressed that the influence went in both directions, and that Rabbinic Midrash is much more aware of Christian exegesis than was previously supposed.⁴³¹ The extent of this knowledge, and the degree to which it influenced Rabbinic hermeneutics is masked by the fact that, for polemical reasons, the Rabbinic tradition seldom openly acknowledges that it is countering the Christian.⁴³² That it often is, only emerges from a close intertextual reading of the two traditions on specific verses of Scripture. And that this intertextual relationship applies is particularly plausible in the case of Song of Songs, because Origen's commentary, which had an enormous influence on later Christian exegesis of the biblical book, was almost certainly deeply aware of Jewish tradition. It is no great step to complete the circle and see Rabbinic interpretation as, in some measure, reacting to

short fragment and an epitome, having been lost: see Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Early Christianity* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 530.

⁴³⁰ Pope, *Song of Songs*, 349.

⁴³¹ See, e.g., E. Grypeou and H. Spurling, eds., *The Exegetical Encounter Between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity* (Jewish and Christian Perspectives; Leiden: Brill, 2009).

⁴³² Philip Alexander has argued that the silence of Rabbinic literature about Christianity should not be taken at face value: it is a "loud silence" – a deliberate polemical ploy to deny Christianity the "oxygen of publicity", and to suggest that Judaism is the older faith. See his essay, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135* (ed. J. D. G. Dunn; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 1-25.

Christian appropriation and Christianisation of Jewish tradition.⁴³³ Much work remains to be done on this “exegetical encounter”⁴³⁴ between Judaism and Christianity,⁴³⁵ but raising the subject here serves our present purposes in one very important way. We have seen how both the Midrash and the Targum seem sensitive to Christian polemical use of the Golden Calf episode in the Bible, but each contests this in its own distinctive way. This reminds us that there is a wider exegetical context to be borne in mind, and that an exclusive focus on the relationship between the Targum and the Midrash is in danger of losing sight of this and oversimplifying the picture.

To summarise this comparison of Targum Song and Song Rabbah to Song 1:12: It is clear that both the Targum and the Midrash belong to the same exegetical tradition and have the same exegetical goals, but any attempt to establish the dependency of the Targum on the Midrash falls down on close analysis. The precise interpretation of the Targum (Moses = King; smell of the nard = Golden Calf), contrary to what is often implied, is *not* found in the Midrash. The two separate components are, but they are not combined. The Targum’s exegesis is, in fact, strongly repudiated in the Midrash, which raises the question why, if the Targumist treated the Midrash as an authoritative source, he chose to promote a view which it rejected. Moreover, even the discrete elements of the Targum’s exegesis are only one of a number of exegetical possibilities explored by the Midrash, which, unlike the Targum, adopts a multivalent approach to the text. This may be illustrated by the following table:

⁴³³ Urbach, “Rabbinic Exegesis and Origen’s Commentaries on the Song of Songs, and Jewish-Christian Polemics”; Urbach, “The Homiletical Interpretations of the Sages and the Expositions of Origen on Canticles, and the Jewish-Christian Disputation.” More generally on Origen’s knowledge of Jewish tradition see, N. R. M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

⁴³⁴ The phrase is Edward Kessler’s: see Grypeou and Spurling, *The Exegetical Encounter*.

⁴³⁵ The intertextual reading of Patristic and Rabbinic exegesis of Song of Songs has yet to be systematically attempted, but other verses which would be worth examining for evidence of Rabbinic awareness of Christian interpretation would be 1:3,4; 3:1-4; 4:12-16; 5:1,2,6; 6:13; 7:1; 8:2,13. Pope, *Song of Songs*, usefully reviews Jewish and Christian exegesis of Song verse by verse, but does not compare them. Useful from the Christian side are two anthologies: Richard F. Littledale, *A Commentary on the Song of Songs from Ancient and Mediaeval Sources* (London: Joseph Masters, 1869)., and Richard A. Norris Jr, *The Song of Songs Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (The Church’s Bible; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

Bible	Targum	Midrash
<i>King</i>	Moses	God + Moses + Jacob + Abraham + Hezekiah and his followers + Moses and Aaron
<i>Banqueting couch</i>	the firmament	the firmament + God's table (in the firmament) + eating the Paschal lambs
<i>Spikenard</i>	the wicked	Israel + Mount Sinai + Michael + odour of blood
<i>gave off its smell</i>	stinking actions because of Golden Calf	Golden Calf + rising smoke from Sinai + the holy spirit + Michael's delivery of Abraham + God's deliverance of Israel

If the Targumist had the Midrash in front of him, then evidently he would have had to negotiate his way through these multiple choices in order to create his own monovalent reading. He would have had to exercise his own exegetical judgement and creativity. The choices could, indeed, have been driven by his own overall exegetical schema for Song of Songs, but it is just as easy to suppose that this operated on its own, independently of Song Rabbah, to generate his interpretation. He has no need to turn to Song Rabbah, especially given that the language of the biblical text, seen in a certain light, was already suggestive of the position he adopted. And we must not forget that both the Targum and the Midrash show a sensitivity to the wider context of the exegetical encounter between Judaism and Christianity in late antiquity, but each is responding to the Christian challenge in its own way: though it shares the concerns of the Midrash, there is no clear evidence that the Targum's response is dependent on that of the Midrash. The independence of the Targum's response effectively refutes the claim that it has an exclusive nexus with the Midrash.

5.3 Case Study 2: Song of Songs 2:14

Bible

יֹונָתִי בְּחַגְוֵי הַסֵּלַע בְּסִתְרֵי הַמְּדַרְגָּה הִרְאִינִי אֶת-מִרְאֵיךְ הַשְּׁמִיעֵינִי אֶת-קוֹלְךָ כִּי-קוֹלְךָ עָרֵב וּמִרְאֵיךְ נָאֵה

My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

Targum

כד רדף פרעה רשיעא בתר עמא בית ישראל הות מתילא כנשתא דישראל ליונתא
דסגירא בחגוי טינרא וחויא מעיק לה מגיו ונצא מעיק לה מברא כדין הות כנשתא
דישראל סגירתא מארבע סטרי דעלם דמן קדמיהון ימא ומן בתריהון רדיף סנאה
ומן תרין סטריהון מדברן מלין חיוין קלן דנכתין וקטלין באריסיהון ית
בני אנשא מן יד פתחת פומה בצלו קדם ה' ונפקת ברת קלא מן שמי מרומא ואמרת
אנת כנשתא דישראל דמתילא ליונתא דכיא ומטמרא בסגור חגוי טינרא
דריגתא אחזיני ית חזוניך וית עובדיך תקנן אשמעיני ית קליך ארום קליך מערב
בצלוחתא בבית מקדשא וחזויך שפיר בעובדין טבין:

When wicked Pharaoh pursued after the people of the House of Israel, the Congregation of Israel resembled a dove shut up in the clefts of the rock, with a serpent threatening her from within and a hawk threatening her from without. So the Congregation of Israel was shut up from the four points of the compass: in front of them was the sea; behind them pursued the enemy; and on their two flanks were deserts full of fiery serpents that bite and kill men with their venom. At once she opened her mouth in prayer before the Lord, and a bat qol fell from the heavens above and thus said: "O Congregation of Israel, that resembles the spotless dove shut up in the clefts of the rock and in the hiding-places of the cliff, let Me see your form and your upright deeds. Let Me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet when you pray in the Little Sanctuary, and your form is comely through good deeds."

Midrash

Song of Songs Rabbah II:34-40: See Appendix 2, pages 243-254.

Analysis

When wicked Pharaoh pursued after the people of the House of Israel, the Congregation of Israel resembled a dove shut up in the clefts of the rock, with a serpent threatening her from within and a hawk threatening her from without.

The Targumist understands the verse as addressed by God to Israel, symbolised by the dove, and contextualises it to the point in the Exodus where Israel was trapped between the pursuing army of Pharaoh and the Red Sea, which had not yet opened to allow them to cross. All these elements can be matched in the Midrash, but the parallelism once again becomes less striking the more closely one looks. The dove as a symbol of Israel is very old, being found already, as the Midrash duly notes, in Hosea 7:11 (II:34, A 2). It is found again in Targum Song 5:2 and 6:9, and was a commonplace of the interpretative tradition, so no textual dependency can be based on it.

The contextualisation of the verse to the crossing of the Red Sea is found twice in the Midrash, at II:35, D 1-6 and at II:36, G 1-7. The latter case is of less interest to us, because, apart from placing the incident at the Sea, the other significant details of the interpretation are different. But in the former case the parallelism is detailed and striking, and because the exegesis has been secondarily elaborated at II:35, E 1-7 with a Mashal, which is even further developed at II:35, F 1-3, it bulks large in the midrashic exegesis of this particular verse, so would have thrust itself on the Targumist's attention if he had consulted the Midrash. Most strikingly the Midrash also uses, like the Targum, the vivid imagery of the hawk, serpent, and dove.

But once again several points can be made which take some of the gloss off the parallelism. (1) There are small differences of interpretation: these will emerge in

the course of our analysis (see below). (2) Song Rabbah gives the tradition as Tannaitic and attributes it to the School of Ishmael, and, in fact, it is found in the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, *Beshallah* 3. This clearly has implications regarding the relationship between these works, but these will be considered in Case Study 9 (page 196). (3) Though it is prominent and unavoidable in the Midrash, this particular interpretation is only one of a number proposed contextualisations of the verse. These are introduced by the formula *Rabbi X patar qaryah be-* (“Rabbi X saw a cryptic allusion in the verse to...”). This is the classic formula for introducing a contextualisation. It is ultimately related to the *peshet*-style of exegesis of the Dead Sea Scrolls (where it is used to link verses of Scripture to the contemporary history of the sect), so the hermeneutic method in itself is very old within Jewish Bible interpretation, but within *Rabbinic* exegesis it is normally found only in the later Midrashim, and it is overwhelmingly used to contextualise a biblical verse to some event in the *sacred* history. This is how it predominantly functions here in Song Rabbah, though on one occasion (II:38, I 1-9), unusually, the application is to Israel’s current state of exile under the domination of “alien powers”.

These *pitronot* contextualise the verse to: (a) the Red Sea (R. Eleazer: II:36, G 1-7); (b) Sinai (R. Aqiba: II:37, H 1-10); (c) the current condition of exile (R. Yose the Galilean: II:38, I 1-9); (d) the Tent of Meeting (R. Aha b. Haninah, following R. Meir: II:39, J 1-9); (e) the Temple (R. Tanhuma, following the Rabbis: II:39 K 1-9); and (f) the pilgrim festivals (R. Elijah: II:40, L 1-5). In each case equivalents are found for the various elements of the biblical verse which fit with, and therefore support, the contextualisation. For example in (c) above, the “clefts of the rock” are identified as “the alien powers” among whom Israel is “hidden” in exile; “let me see your countenance” is identified with study, presumably on the grounds that it is study of Torah that preserves the identity of Israel in exile; and “let me hear your voice” is identified as good actions. This leads to a short digression in which the question of the relationship of study to action (a classic problem of Jewish ethics) is discussed: study is given the priority, because it “leads to action”. “For sweet is your voice” is identified with study, and “your countenance is comely” with action, which may seem rather feeble and repetitive, until we notice the paradoxical reversal involved: earlier

“countenance” signified study and “voice” action. Perhaps by switching them round the *darshan* wished succinctly to convey the thought that study and action are inseparable. As in Case Study 1 above, the multivalency of the Midrash, in stark contrast to the monovalency of the Targum, is evident, which once again shows that if the Targumist was using the Midrash he had to exercise a certain amount of judgement in choosing between the options available. It is also noticeable that once again there is at least one interpretation in the Midrash (that of R. Eleazar at II:36, G 1-7) which was perfectly adaptable to the Targumist’s schema, but which he has chosen not to use.

So the Congregation of Israel was shut up from the four points of the compass: in front of them was the sea; behind them pursued the enemy; and on their two flanks were deserts full of fiery serpents that bite and kill men with their venom.

The Targum elaborates on the metaphor of the serpent and hawk by introducing the deserts full of fiery serpents which constrain the Israelites on their two sides. This element is missing from the corresponding passage of Song Rabbah. In tradition-historical terms it seems reasonable to assume that the form of the tradition in the Targum is later than the form of the tradition in the Midrash, and has arisen because the Targumist, or some other *darshan*, sensed an inconsistency, which he (rather pedantically) tried to eliminate: Couldn’t the Israelites, threatened from front and rear, have escaped sideways? But this tradition-historical observation cannot be used to argue the literary dependency of the Targum on the Midrash. A similar attempt to surround the Israelites and highlight the desperation of their plight is found in the form of the tradition in other versions of the tradition, something that we will consider in more detail in Case Study 9. The “fiery serpents” occur elsewhere in the Targum at Song 1:9 and 2:6. There seems to be a clear reference back to 1:9 where the Targumist states that to the left and the right of the Israelites, as they made their escape from Egypt were “deserts of fiery serpents”. This cross-referencing is typical of the Targum, and indicative of its unity. The serpents themselves are derived from the story of the Exodus in the Bible, notably Deuteronomy 8:15 and Numbers 21:6. In the former, they are a threat to Israel from which God protects them, in the latter they are used by God to punish Israel for her doubt, but then, after her

repentance, they become the instrument for healing those who had been bitten. In biblical and later Hebrew “fiery serpent” simply denotes a venomous snake, the name possibly referring to the burning pain caused by its bite.⁴³⁶ The total absence of this element from the Midrash once again underscores the independence of the Targum.

At once she opened her mouth in prayer before the Lord, and a bat qol fell from the heavens above and thus said: “O Congregation of Israel, that resembles the spotless dove shut up in the clefts of the rock and in the hiding-places of the cliff, let Me see your form and your upright deeds. Let Me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet when you pray in the Little Sanctuary, and your form is comely through good deeds.”

In both the Targum and the Midrash (II:35, D3 and D5) Israel/the dove calls out to God in distress, an element which, as the Midrash clearly shows, is derived from Exodus 14:10 (II:35, D5), and God responds, but in each case the response is different. In the Midrash God *acts* to save Israel, by opening a path in front of her through the Red Sea, but in the Targum he *speaks* to Israel with words of praise through a *bat qol*. The divine address is forced on the Targumist, who has to put the direct speech in the Bible into the mouth of God. The various interpretations proposed in the Midrash effectively ignore this speech, and give an altogether looser reading of the biblical text. The *bat qol* (“daughter of voice”) is, of course, a standard motif of Rabbinic theology: it is a divine voice by which God communicates with Israel both during and after the period of prophecy. It plays some part in Targum Song, being used as one of the instruments (along with the Memra and the Shekinah) through which God communicates with the people. Once again we have a small piece of evidence for the consistency of the Targum.⁴³⁷ If the *bat qol* is absent from the Midrash, the “owner of the dovecote” (II:35, D3) is missing from the Targum, though it would have taken little

⁴³⁶ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 977a.

⁴³⁷ Some mss of the Targum use the verb *npq* (“go forth”) to describe the action of the *bat qol*, others the verb *npl* (“fall”). The latter is so unusual that it has some claims to be the original reading here. *Npq* corresponds to *yatza'*, the standard verb with *bat qol* in Hebrew. My argument is not affected by the variant.

ingenuity to have worked it in, and it is precisely the sort of vivid detail which the Targumist seems to like.

There are other small but significant differences between the Targum and the Midrash. The “comely form” of Israel is related by the Targum to Israel’s righteous deeds, on both occasions where it is alluded to in the biblical text. This can be paralleled in the Midrash (II:38, I9), though a number of other equivalents are also proposed (see table below), but the identification of Israel’s “voice” with prayer cannot be easily paralleled in the Midrash. The Midrash predominantly relates the voice to “song”, whether it be the Song at the Sea (an obvious identification which the Targum could easily have exploited!) (II:36, G5-6), or the singing of the Temple choirs (II:39, K4); or the Hallel (II:40, I3-4), or some other song (II:39, J4-5). One exception is at II:37, H5-6, where the “voice” is linked, via Deuteronomy 5:25, to Israel’s acceptance of the yoke of the Mitzvot at Sinai. But the only correlation with prayer in the Midrash is a rather convoluted and oblique one. At II:35, F3 the Midrash identifies the cry of Israel in Exodus 14:10 as a prayer to God for deliverance. It makes a neat homiletic point: “It does not say here, “LET ME HEAR A VOICE, but YOUR VOICE: the voice which I had already heard in Egypt.” In other words Israel’s cry/prayer for deliverance on the shores of the Red Sea, echoed her cry/prayer for deliverance while still in bondage in Egypt. This is alluded to at II:35, E3-4, “So when the Israelites were in Egypt the Egyptians oppressed them and they began to cry and lift their eyes to the Holy One, blessed be He, as it says, *And it came to pass in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage and they cried (Exodus 2:23). Forthwith, And God heard their groaning (Exodus 2:24): the Holy One, blessed be He, heard their prayer and brought them forth with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.*” The Targumist, however, totally fails to exploit the references in Exodus 2:23 and 14:10 to Israel crying out in prayer to God, but instead identifies the prayer with prayer “in the Little Sanctuary”. The phrase is derived from Ezekiel 11:16 and is commonly taken as a designation of the Synagogue. In other words the voice which God wants to hear is the voice of Israel praying the statutory prayers in the synagogue. The anachronism involved here would not have troubled the Targumist, since, in company with other Jewish homilists, he is

happy to assume that the religious institutions of his own day already existed in biblical times. The parallelism, as so often, is incomplete: Targum and Midrash both see in “voice” a reference to prayer, but both have very different ideas of the prayer that is in view. The difference is rendered all the more striking by the fact that some interpretations in the Midrash are prepared to contextualise the verse to a cultic setting: II:39, J1 contextualises it to the Tent of Meeting, II:39, K1 to the Temple, and II:40 L1 to the Pilgrim Festivals, but nowhere is a contextualisation to the Synagogue proposed, though there is no reason why the Midrashist could not have included it, had he known it. It should be noted that two Yemenite manuscripts of the Targum (BL Or 2375 and Or 1302) read *Beit maqdash* (Sanctuary/Temple), but the vast majority read *Beit maqdash zē'ir* (Little Sanctuary/Synagogue), and this reading is supported by other references in the Targum to the importance of the synagogue (see, e.g., 7:13).⁴³⁸

Unlike Case Study 1 discussed above, it is not easy to see any intertextuality between the Targum and the Midrash on the one hand and Patristic Christian exegesis on the other, though some Christian commentators could not resist linking the “rock” with Christ the Rock in 1 Corinthians 10:4 and so making “the dove’s refuge the sure doctrines of the Faith and the mysteries of the Gospel.”⁴³⁹ In some Christian commentaries the “voice” is identified with the prayers of the Church, and Apponius introduces a polemical note by seeing the speech here as addressed by Christ to the Jewish people, calling them back in repentance to him.⁴⁴⁰ But there is no strong intertextuality between the two traditions. Otherwise the conclusions that can be drawn from this case-study are similar to those from Case Study 1. In some ways the parallelism between the Targum and the Midrash here is even more striking, but once again, though it is sufficient to show both texts share a common exegetical heritage, it is more impressive at a distance. On closer inspection all sorts of differences begin to emerge which throw in doubt any hypothesis of direct dependency. Once again the multivalency of the Midrash contrasts strikingly with the monovalency of the Targum, as the following table shows:

⁴³⁸ Curiously this significant variant is absent from Alexander’s *apparatus*: Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 111.

⁴³⁹ Pope, *Song of Songs*, 402.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.* and for the references, Littledale, *Song of Songs.*, *ad loc.*

Bible	Targum	Midrash
<i>Speaker</i>	God	God
<i>Dove</i>	Israel	Israel
<i>Clefts of the rock</i>	Trapped by Pharaoh at the Red Sea	Trapped by Pharaoh at the Red Sea + sheltered in a recess of the sea + hidden in the shadow of the Mount Sinai + hidden in exile under foreign powers + Tent of Meeting + Temple + Pilgrim Festivals
<i>Hiding places of mountainside</i>	Hiding place of the cliff	
<i>(Lovely) face</i>	Good deeds	Israel glorifying God at the Red Sea + Israel standing reverently at Sinai + Study + Good deeds + Israel assembled at the Tent of Meeting + Israel assembled at the dedication of the Temple + The Temple Offerings + The Pilgrims at the Pilgrim Festivals + Priestly Blessing
<i>(Sweet) voice</i>	Prayer in Synagogue	Israel's cry for deliverance at the Red Sea + The Song of Moses + Israel's acceptance of the yoke of the Mitzvot at Sinai + Good deeds + Study + Israel's "song" at the Tent of Meeting + The Temple choirs + The Hallel

Once again, although most of the elements of the Targum can be found individually in the Midrash, some are absent, and the Targum's interpretation cannot be found anywhere as a unified exegetical package in the Midrash. It really strains credulity to suppose that so creative a homilist as the Targumist could only have created his Targum by cherry-picking among the options of the Midrash and so creating his strong, coherent reading of the biblical text.

5.4 Case Study 3: Song of Songs 3:9-10

Bible

ט אַפֿריון עֲשֶׂה לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה מֵעֵצֵי הַלְבָּנוֹן: י עֲמוּדָיו עֲשֶׂה כֶסֶף רִפְיָתוֹ זָהָב מְרֻכָּבוֹ אֲרָגְמָן תּוֹכוֹ
רְצוּף אֲהַבָּה מִבְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָּם:

9. King Solomon made himself a palanquin from the wood of Lebanon.

10. He made its pillars of silver, its back of gold, its seat of purple, its interior inlaid with love by the daughters of Jerusalem.

Targum

ט היכל קודשא בנא ליה שלמה מלכא מן אלני זנגבילא ושאגי ושורבני דאיתי מן לבנון
וחפא יתיה דהב דכי.
י ובתר די שלים יתיה ושוי בגויה ית ארונא דסהדותא דהוא עמודא דעלמא ובגויה תרין
לוחי אבניא די אצנע תמן משה בחורב דיקירין מן כסף מזוקק ושפירין מן
דהב טב ופרש וטלל עלוהי ית פרוכתא דתכלא וארגונא וביני כרוביא דעלוי
כפורתא הות שריא שכינתא דה' דשכין שמיא בירושלם מן כל כרכי ארעא
דישראל.

9. King Solomon built for himself a holy Temple from woods of ginger, teak, and cedar, which he brought from Lebanon, and he overlaid it with pure gold.

10. When he had completed it he placed in it the Ark of the Testimony, which is the pillar of the world, and inside it were the two Tablets of Stone (which Moses had hidden there at Horeb), which are more precious than smelted silver, more beautiful than fine gold. And he spread out and draped over it the curtain of blue and purple. And between the cherubim which were upon the ark-cover was residing the Shekhinah of the Lord, who caused His Name to dwell in Jerusalem out of all the cities of the land of Israel.

Midrash

Song of Songs Rabbah 3.19-23: See Appendix 3, pages 255-267.

Analysis

The Targum, taken on its own, presents a coherent and consistent statement, verse 9 being about King Solomon's building of the Temple, and verse 10 about the Ark of the Testimony (= the Ark of the Covenant), and its immediate surroundings (the Holy of Holies) within the Temple, but how precisely all this relates to the underlying Hebrew is highly problematic. Alexander struggles to correlate it with the biblical text, pronouncing the exegesis somewhat atomistic, and not overly concerned with maintaining the syntax of the original.⁴⁴¹ The major problem is how the Targumist derived the Ark of the Testimony in verse 10. The biblical text seems to speak of only one entity, the *'apiryon* in both verses 9 and 10, but having clearly identified the *'apiryon* in verse 9 as the Temple, and the "woods" as literally the various kinds of wood ("ginger, teak and cedar", according to the Targumist) which Solomon brought from Lebanon to use in its construction, where does he get the Ark from in verse 10? Have we a double interpretation, *'apiryon* being taken as referring to *both* the Temple *and* the Ark? Such multiple interpretation of a single biblical item is characteristic of midrashic exegesis, but is rare (though not unknown) in Targum. Or is there some element in verse 10 which points to the Ark rather than the Temple as the subject under review? Alexander attempts to solve the conundrum as follows: (1) The "pillars" are the Ark. This equation is relatively explicit: "The Ark of the Testimony, which is the pillar of the world", but it is problematic, since the plural in the original is ignored, and the phrase "pillars of the world" is normally used in Rabbinic thought to denote "the patriarchs or other righteous men, but for whose merit the world would return to chaos"⁴⁴² – a usage actually reflected in the Targum itself (5:15; cf. 4:4 and 7:3)! The cosmic role of the Temple/Tabernacle is common enough in Rabbinic thought, but seeing the Ark specifically as playing this role is hard to parallel. Alexander suggests that it may reflect the idea, found in texts such as Numbers Rabbah 12.11-12, that the creation of the world was only complete and assured with the construction of the Tabernacle, because only then did a means exist for atoning for human sin and

⁴⁴¹ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 127, n. 50.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 127, n. 52.

preventing it returning the world to chaos.⁴⁴³ (2) The “silver” and the “gold” are the Two Tables of the Law which Moses placed within the Ark: the equation of the Torah with gold is easy and commonplace because of Psalm 19:11, “More to be desired are they [the words of Torah] than gold, yea than much fine gold”. (3) The “covering” of purple is identified with the purple curtain (*parokhet*) which hung before the Ark, though the Targum introduces confusion by claiming that the curtain was also “blue”, perhaps conflating the curtain with the blue cloth with which the Israelites supposedly covered the Ark in the Wilderness (though cf. Exodus 26:31). (4) The “inside” is the ark-cover, the *kapporet*, over which the cherubim presided. (5) The “love” is the Shekhinah. Specifically what is referred to is the love of the Shekhinah for Jerusalem, where it chose to reside rather than anywhere else. (6) The “daughters of Jerusalem” are the cities of the Land of Israel – an equation found elsewhere in the Targum.

All this is reasonably satisfactory, but it leaves “its support” (*refidato*) rather hanging in the air, as Alexander himself admits.⁴⁴⁴ There are really only two possibilities: “the support” is the Ark, which is, therefore, seen as symbolised both by “pillars” and “support”; or it is the Tables of the Law, which are seen as symbolised by both “gold/silver” and “support”. *Refidah* is a *hapax legomenon*, but the Targum clearly took the root *rpd* to mean “support” at 2:5, hence its probable understanding of *refidato* here as “its support”. Homiletically speaking it would not be difficult to justify calling either the Ark or the Torah a “support”. There is one final point to be made about the Targum’s interpretation of this verse, the significance of which will become apparent presently, and it is that the Targum takes Solomon here as the real historical king, and has been strongly influenced by the description in 1 Kings 8:6-16 of his dedication of the Temple.

Having reviewed the Targum let us now turn to the Midrash on the same verses, before comparing and contrasting the two texts. (1) The first interpretation offered by the Midrash (III:19, A 1-8) clearly identifies the *'apiryon* as the Tabernacle, but it implicitly takes Solomon here as God, the “King to whom belongs peace”, a common view in the Midrash, as we shall see (cf. III:19, B1;

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 127

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 127, n. 50.

III:21, E1, but contrast III:22, E2). The equation of Solomon with God is obvious from the Mashal which is all about how God had the Tabernacle constructed as a “pavilion” within which he could with due modesty speak to his daughter Israel, once she had reached maturity by accepting the Torah at Sinai. This interpretation is expanded in III:19-20, B1-7 by close exegesis of the biblical verses. The king remains God and the *'apiryon* the Tabernacle, but now the “woods of Lebanon” are specified as “acacia” on the basis of Exodus 25:15, the “pillars” as the pillars of the Tabernacle mentioned in Exodus 27:10, the “top (*refidah*)” of gold as the overlaying of gold on the Tabernacle’s boards (Exodus 26:29), and the “seat (*merkav*)” as “the veil of blue and purple” (Exodus 26:31). A double interpretation is offered of “its inside being inlaid with love”. R. Yudan identifies this as “the merit of the Torah and the merit of the righteous who study and practise it”, but R. ^cAzariah identifies it as the Shekhinah. This reference to the Shekhinah leads to a digression in III:20, C1-4, which considers how the Shekhinah could be manifested in the Tabernacle and at the same time manifested in the world at large – a problem solved by a Mashal of the sea and the cave: just as the sea rises to fill a cave, but the ocean is not diminished, so when the Shekhinah took up its abode in the Tabernacle, the world lost nothing of the divine presence. This ends the first unit of interpretation in the Midrash, which has three sub-units (A, B, and C).

(2) The second unit of interpretation is similarly complicated. It begins (III:21, D1-4) by identifying the *'apiryon* as the Ark, which, in a Mashal, is compared to a litter which a king constructs to show off the beauties of his fair daughter, the daughter here being identified as the Torah, which is thus implicitly compared to the Tables of the Law within the Ark. Once again the king is God. This opening statement is then followed, as in unit one, by a sub-unit tying this interpretation closely to the biblical text (III:21, E1-8). The “wood” is identified as the acacia wood of which the Ark was made (Exodus 37:1), the “pillars” with the two staves of the Ark, the “top” with the gold overlaying of the Ark (Exodus 37:2), and the “purple *merkav*” with the curtain, though a divergent opinion is also cited identifying this with the ark-cover, “the gold of which resembled purple”. For the “inside” we get the same two divergent opinions that closed the detailed exegesis in unit 1: (a) the merit of the Torah and those who study it; or (b) the Shekhinah.

The reference to the Shekhinah leads, as in unit 1, to a digression on the Shekhinah. It consists of two glosses (III:21, F and III:21, G) both of which make the same point, namely that “there is no place on earth devoid of the Shekhinah”.

(3) The third unit of interpretation comprises a detailed exegesis (III:22, H^a 1-6 + H^b 7-9) into which has been intruded, secondarily, a Tannaitic list of the seven types of gold which were used in the Temple (III:22, I1-21), hooked onto a partially Tannaitic discussion of how extensive was the gold overlaying in the Temple (III:22, H^a 5-6). The detailed exegesis offers the following identifications: (a) the King = Solomon (“Solomon literally”); (b) the *'apiryon* = the Temple; (c) the “wood” = the wood of Lebanon used in the construction of the Temple (with reference to 2 Chronicles 2:15); (d) the “pillars” = the pillars of the porch of the Temple (1 Kings 7:21); (e) the “top (*refidah*) of gold” = the gold overlaying in the Temple; (f) the “*merkav* of purple” = the curtain (with reference to 2 Chronicles 3:14). (g) The detailed exegesis ends with exactly the same double interpretation of “its inside being inlaid with love” which closed the detailed exegesis in the other two units of interpretation: either “the merit of the Torah and the merit of the righteous who study and practise it”, or “the Shekhinah”.

(4) The fourth unit of interpretation (III:23, J1-8) offers a detailed interpretation which equates the king with God and the *'apiryon* with the world. “Lebanon” is identified as the “Holy of Holies” in the Temple, an equation which probably reflects the very old idea, probably present already in Second Temple times, that saw “Lebanon” as a sort of cryptic name for the Jerusalem Temple.⁴⁴⁵ To explain how the world can be said to have been made out of the wood of Lebanon, the *darshan* invokes the traditions about the *'Even Shetiyyah*, the foundation stone of the world. This stone, which is here said to have been located in the Holy of Holies, was either regarded as the *omphalos* of the world, the first-created point from which the world grew, like the foetus in the womb of its mother, or the capstone, which sealed the waters of the abysses and prevented them from

⁴⁴⁵ See Geza Vermes, “The Symbolical Interpretation of Lebanon in the Targums,” *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 9 (1958): 1-12. The equation Lebanon = Temple is presupposed in Targum Song, e.g. 4:8.

overwhelming the world.⁴⁴⁶ The “pillars” are the tree of human descent; the “gold top” the “produce of the earth and the fruit of the tree which are sold for gold”; and the “*merkav* of purple” God’s *Merkavah*. The “inside” is yet again related to either the merits of the Torah or the Shekhinah.

(5) The fifth unit of interpretation (III:23 K1-8) offers a final detailed exposition in which the King is God and the *'apiryon* the Throne of God (the *Merkavah*). The “wood of Lebanon” is related to the celestial Holy of Holies, which is situated exactly opposite the earthy Holy of Holies. The “pillars” are the pillars of heaven (Job 19:11), and the “*merkav* of purple” the *Merkavah*. The “insides inlaid with love” are (somehow) identified with the *Hayyot* engraved on the Throne of Glory.

The Midrash, at first sight so confusing, turns out on close inspection to be rather well structured, and to show signs of careful editing. How does it compare with the Targum? Several points can be made.

(1) There is evidently a strong general similarity between the interpretations offered by the two texts. Both overwhelmingly agree that Song 3:9-10 is an allegorical description of the Temple/Tabernacle, Judaism’s holiest place, even though it seems to have been clearly enough understood that *'apiryon* meant literally “a litter, or palanquin”. Even the two divergent interpretations in the Midrash identifying the *'apiryon* respectively with the world and the Throne of Glory do not stray far from the Temple/Tabernacle theme, because each of them depends on seeing a Temple/Tabernacle reference here: the Temple or more specifically the Foundation Stone of the World in the Holy of Holies is regarded as the *omphalos* from which the World grew; and the reference to the Throne of Glory depends on the idea of a correspondence between the celestial and terrestrial Temples. The equations *'apiryon* = world and *'apiryon* = *Merkavah* are, therefore, arguably dependent on the equation of *'apiryon* in Song 3:9 as the

⁴⁴⁶ See Philip S. Alexander, “Jerusalem as the Omphalos of the World: On the History of a Geographical Concept,” in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (ed. Lee I. Levine; New York: Continuum, 1999), 104-119; Zev Vilnay, *Legends of Jerusalem* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973), 5-19.

Temple/Tabernacle is far from obvious, and that the Targum and Midrash should agree on it is very striking.

(2) Many of the detailed exegeses of the Targum are found also in the Midrash, which also finds allusions in the biblical verses to the Ark of the Covenant, the Torah, the Curtain and the Shekhinah, but it is at this micro-level that the parallelism once again begins to unravel a little. Though the individual components of the Targum's interpretation can be found scattered through the Midrash, they do not occur anywhere as a single, coherent package. The Targumist cannot have lifted his interpretation directly from the Midrash: he would have had to work very hard and very carefully to have constructed his exposition out of it. And, once again, there are elements in the Targum which are *not* in the Midrash. The Targumist's insistence that there is a reference to *both* the Temple *and* the Ark in these biblical verses appears to be unique. It hugely complicates his exegesis. Why couldn't he have adopted one of the simpler interpretations found in the Midrash, which would have been perfectly compatible with his overall schema? For example, why couldn't the "pillars" of verse 10 have been the staves of the Ark (with the *refidah* being the Ark itself)? Once again, his exegesis is much closer to the biblical text than that of the Midrash. For example, the Midrash nowhere seems to make anything of "the daughters of Jerusalem". The Targum, however, identifies them as "the cities of the land of Israel", "daughters", so to speak, of the metropolis Jerusalem. And while the equation of "love" with the Shekhinah is found in the Midrash, it is left there hanging in the air, whereas the Targum subtly suggests a link: the "love" is the preference of the Divine Presence for Jerusalem over all other places in which to make its earthly abode. The Targum is more comprehensive and coherent than the Midrash, and apparently more tightly argued. The multivalency of the Midrash in this case is to be seen at the micro-level as the following table shows:

Bible	Targum	Midrash
<i>Solomon</i>	King Solomon	King Solomon + God

<i>Palanquin</i>	Temple	Tabernacle + Temple + the World + the Throne of Glory
<i>Woods</i>	Ginger, teak, cedar	Acacia
<i>Pillars</i>	Ark of Testimony	Pillars of the Tabernacle + Staves of the Ark + Pillars of the Temple Porch + The tree of human descent + The pillars of heaven
<i>Silver</i>	First Table of the Law	
<i>Support</i>	Ark of Testimony?	Boards of the Tabernacle + Overlaying of the Temple + Words of Torah + Produce of the earth and fruit of the trees
<i>Gold</i>	Second Table of the Law	
<i>Covering (merkav)</i>	Curtain	Curtain + Ark-cover + Merkavah
<i>Inside</i>	Ark-cover (<i>Kapporet</i>)	Merit of the Torah and the righteous who study it + the <i>Hayyot</i> engraved on the Throne of Glory
<i>Love</i>	Shekhinah	Merit of the Torah and the righteous who study it + Shekhinah
<i>Daughters of Jerusalem</i>	Cities of the Land of Israel	

(3) There is also one other less obvious but potentially important difference between the Targum and Midrash – important because it sets them in a wider exegetical context – and it is that the Midrash seems comfortable with finding a mystical allusion here in the Song of Songs in its identification of the *'apiryon* with the Merkavah. Gershom Scholem argued that Song of Songs played a significant role in early Jewish mysticism by providing, *inter alia*, in the description of the beloved in Song 5:10-16, inspiration for the doctrine of the Shi'ur Qomah.⁴⁴⁷ Raphael Loewe argued that there was a two-fold apologetic thrust in Targum Song – on the one hand internally against Jewish mystical

⁴⁴⁷ Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkavah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, 36-42.

speculation and on the other externally against Christian exegesis.⁴⁴⁸ Alexander is broadly in agreement with Loewe, at least to the extent of seeing Targum Song as offering by way of “pre-emptive exegesis” a thoroughly Rabbinic reading of the Song which would be in accord with Rabbinic values and theology, and leave no room for other, unacceptable interpretations,⁴⁴⁹ and he suggests that there may be something pointed in the Targum’s avoidance of the identification of the *merkav* here in verse 10 with the Merkavah,⁴⁵⁰ though, it should be noted, the equation with the Curtain (*parokhet*) is found in the Midrash (III:19 B5; III:22 Hb 7), which has no inhibitions, apparently, about bringing in the Merkavah. We should not, perhaps, make too much of this supposed anti-mystical tendency of the Targum, nor should we rush to see here anti-Christian intent. There is an interesting Christian interpretation which sees the *'apiryon* as an allegory not of the Temple but of Christ or Mary, and relates its various components to their respective virtues,⁴⁵¹ but it would be hard to argue that the Targum (or the Midrash) was reacting to this other than pre-emptively.

5.5 Case Study 4: Song of Songs 4:1

Bible

הַנֶּחֱדָה יָפָה רֵעֵיתִי הַנֶּחֱדָה יָפָה עֵינֶיהָ יוֹנִים מִבַּעַד לְצִמְתָּהּ שְׁעָרָהּ כְּעֶדֶר הָעִזִּים שְׂגֹלְשׁוּ מֵהָר גִּלְעָד:

Behold, you are beautiful, My Love,

Behold, you are beautiful!

Your eyes are [like] doves

Within your veil.

Your hair is like the “flock of goats”

That appear on Mount Gilead.

⁴⁴⁸ Loewe, “Apologetic Motifs in the Targum to the Song of Songs.”

⁴⁴⁹ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 36-39. For the concept of “pre-emptive exegesis” see Alexander, “Pre-emptive Exegesis: Genesis Rabba’s Reading of the Story of Creation,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 43 (1992): 230-45.

⁴⁵⁰ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 127.

⁴⁵¹ Pope, *Song of Songs*, 447.

Targum

ובהיא יומא קריב מלכא שלמה אלף עלון על מדבחה ואתקבל ברעוא קורבניה קדם
ה' נפקת ברת קלא מן שמיא וכין אמרת כמא יאי אנת כנשתא דישראל וכמא
י אין אינון רברביא וחכימיא דישראל יתבי סנהדרין דאינון מנהרין לעמא
בית ישראל ודמיא לגוזלין בני יונתא ואפלו שאר בני כנישתא דישראל ועמא
דארעא אינון צדיקיא כבנוי דיעקב דלקטו אבנין ועבדו גלושיתא בטורא
דגלעד:

On the day that King Solomon offered up a thousand burnt offerings on the altar, and his offering was accepted with favour before the Lord, a bat qol went forth from the heavens and thus said: "How beautiful are you, Assembly of Israel, and how beautiful are the leaders of the assembly and the Sages sitting in the Sanhedrin, who enlighten the people of the House of Israel, and [who are] like fledglings, the young of the dove. And even the rest of the members of your assembly, and the ordinary people, are as righteous as the sons of Jacob, who gathered stones and made a memorial on Mount Gilead."

Midrash

Song of Songs Rabbah 4.1-3: See Appendix 4, pages 268-277.

Analysis

Before turning to a detailed comparison of the Targum with the Midrash, a few words are necessary on the Midrash. It is reasonably clearly structured through the succession of biblical lemmata, but it contains a considerable amount of digression. Unit 1 (IV:1, A1-24) simply presupposes the identity of Israel as the addressee, and comments on "fair" by listing the ways in which Israel shows her "fairness" through the observance of the *mitzvot*. This is a typical midrashic list which could have been extended almost indefinitely.

Unit 2 (IV:2, B1-4) comments on "eyes", identifying them as the Sanhedrin. Unit 3 (IV:2, C1-11) comments on "doves". It presupposes the identity of the dove

with Israel and provides yet another typical midrashic list systematically attributing to Israel the qualities of the dove. This leads to two digressions, both associated with Rabbi. The first (IV:2, D1-4) involves a statement by Rabbi about the power of the elder, sitting and teaching, to attract proselytes to join Israel. The point is made through a rather forced simile involving the dove: “When a certain kind of dove is given food, the other doves smell it and flock to her cote. So when the elder sits and discourses, many strangers become proselytes at such a time.” The tradition, which may be early, since it presupposes a benign relationship with the non-Jewish world, seems to reflect a time when Judaism still held an attraction for the non-Jewish intelligentsia, is linked to the previous sub-unit only through the equation of Israel and the dove. It in effect adds to the list a further parallel between Israel and the dove: just as the dove attracts other doves to her when she is fed, so Israel attracts non-Jews when she is taught. The second digression (IV:2, E1-4), is a story about how Rabbi roused a sleepy congregation by making an apparently outrageous statement. Other than the Rabbi-attribution, the link to the present context seems non-existent. This is not uncommon in Midrash, which often “parks” floating traditions in the most irrelevant of places.

The Midrash returns to the lemma in hand (“your eyes are doves”) and offers another comparison between the dove and Israel (both brought light into the world) (IV:2, F1-2). This looks like the tail end of the list that ended at IV:2, C11, but has been separated by the intrusion of the digressions in IV:2, D and E. The lemma had to be restated (IV:2, F1) in order to re-establish the connection. This simile is rather cryptic: “Just as the dove brought light into the world, so Israel brings light into the world, as it says, *And nations shall walk by your light* (Isaiah 60:30).” That Israel brings light into the world is satisfactorily proved from Scripture, but not how the dove brings light. This question is tackled in IV:2, G1-9, but the explanation is deeply obscure and almost certainly secondary and generates some speculation about the Flood.

Unit 4 (IV:3, H1-4) expounds “veil”. The comments are somewhat desultory, but involve identifying the veil with the Sanhedrin. Unit 5 (IV:3, I1-5) comments on “that trail down from Mount Gilead”. The nub of the comments is an attempt to

explain the problematic verb *galeshu* in the biblical text. The exposition then rather peters out and abruptly moves to the next verse (IV:3, J1-6 and K1-2). IV:3, G-K are very unsatisfactory. This may be due to poor redaction, but textual corruption cannot be ruled out.

I shall now turn to a detailed comparison of the Targum and the Midrash.

On the day that King Solomon offered up a thousand burnt offerings on the altar, and his offering was accepted with favour before the Lord, a bat qol went forth from the heavens and thus said.

The Targum interprets this verse as God addressing Israel at the dedication of Solomon's Temple. This contextualisation is totally absent from the Midrash. This is partly due to the different approaches exhibited by each work. The Targum offers a coherent reading of the Song as a whole which correlates it with the history of Israel. Its chronological schema more or less demanded that here it should be talking about the dedication of the Temple. The Midrash, whether or not it is a coherent and unified text, is unconcerned with chronological schemas. Its reading is atomistic and multivalent. If it has a unity, it is only a thematic unity created by the constant reiteration, in ever different words and images, of a limited repertory of themes.

“How beautiful are you, Assembly of Israel, and how beautiful are the leaders of the assembly and the Sages sitting in the Sanhedrin, who enlighten the people of the House of Israel, and [who are] like fledglings, the young of the dove.”

The Midrash identifies the “eyes” with the Sanhedrin (Song Rabbah IV:2, B1-4). The equivalence was almost certainly based originally on a *gematria*: ^c*ayin* = 70 = the seventy members of the Sanhedrin, though curiously the Midrash does not seem to recognise this, and instead offers a rather different justification: Just as the body can do nothing without the eyes, so Israel can do nothing without the direction of the Sanhedrin (IV:1, B3-4). The Targum broadly agrees with this interpretation, but characteristically finesses it, in order to be faithful to the precise wording of the Hebrew text. The Hebrew has two elements: “eyes” and

“veil”. It seems likely that he has identified here the Sages with the “eyes” and the Sanhedrin with the “veil”. Since the Sages and the Sanhedrin in this context are clearly equivalent, the interpretation is basically the same as in the Midrash, but the precision with which the Targumist provides equivalents for every word in the Hebrew is characteristic of his approach. The Midrash at IV:3, H3-4 displays a similar precision: “When a woman ties up her hair behind, this is a great ornament for her. So when the great Sanhedrin sat behind the Temple, this was an ornament to the Temple”. This presupposes equating “eyes” with Sanhedrin and “veil” with Temple. Note, yet again, that we have here a Midrash which could easily have been accommodated by the Targum, but isn’t. Though in broad agreement, the Targumist goes his own way. Equally, the solution found in the Targum could easily have been incorporated in the Midrash but is not.

The implication of this interpretation of the word “eyes” is that it is the *Sanhedrin* that is being compared to the dove. The Midrash hints at this in IV:1, C8, “Just as the dove, when it enters its cote recognises its nest, its cote, its young, its fledgelings, and its apertures, so when the three rows of disciples sit before the Sanhedrin, each one knows its place”, but effectively ignores the nuance, and expatiates instead on Israel as the dove. The Targum, by way of contrast, though its syntax is a little unclear, seems to observe the nuance by designating the Sages sitting in the Sanhedrin as “like fledgelings, the young of the dove”. The precise wording may be significant: the implication is that, actually, it is Israel that is the dove. The Sages are Israel’s young. This precision is typical of the Targum, but characteristically absent from the Midrash.

The Targum consistently equates eyes with the Sanhedrin (see 4:9; 5:12; 6:5; 7:5) – it is a fundamental element of its symbolic lexicon. And its link here with the Temple is not accidental. The Sanhedrin was deeply important for the Targumist, and he constantly attributes to it Temple-like attributes. He evidently sees it as fulfilling the role once played by the Temple, and the Sages as supplanting the Priesthood, and being worthy of maintenance by the community

through tithes.⁴⁵² In other words, the translation offered here fits in not only with the chronological schema adopted by the Targumist but also with his overall theology and message.

There is one other element in the Targum here which shows its precision over against the Midrash. Behind the statement that the Sanhedrin enlightens Israel surely lies a suppressed simile: “If the Sanhedrin are the *eyes* of Israel, then, just as the eyes give light to the body, so the Sanhedrin gives light to Israel”. This implied exegesis, which may also be presupposed at Song Rabbah IV:2, B3-4, might explain the rather puzzling statement at Song Rabbah IV:2, F2: “Just as the dove brought light into the world, so Israel brings light into the world, as it says, *And the nations shall walk by your light* (Isaiah 60:3).” As we noted earlier, how the dove brings light into the world is totally obscure and this obscurity generated a rather futile attempt to provide an answer involving Noah’s dove (IV:2, G1-9). The explanation is that probably this unit was originally not about the dove but about the “eyes”. It ran originally something like as follows: “YOUR EYES. Just as the eyes bring light into the world, so Israel brings light into the world, as it says, *And the nations shall walk by your light* (Isaiah 60:3).” That the eyes bring light into the world is self-evident: it needs no justification. Behind this statement would be the idea that just as the Sanhedrin is the “eyes” of Israel, so Israel is the “eyes” of the world. But in a typically careless fashion, the redactor of the Midrash has integrated this into his list of comparisons between the dove and Israel, assuming it was about “like doves” rather than about “your eyes”.

“And even the rest of the members of your assembly, and the ordinary people, are as righteous as the sons of Jacob, who gathered stones and made a memorial on Mount Gilead.”

The Targum offers a comprehensive, if somewhat forced, rendering of the remainder of the verse. By *'al tiqrei* it read *she^car* (“hair”) as *she'ar* (“remainder, remnant”), hence “even the rest of the members of your assembly, and the

⁴⁵² See 7:3, with Alexander’s notes *ad loc.* The importance of the Sanhedrin for the Targumist is discussed by Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 22-23.

ordinary people.” The “flock of goats” is identified as the sons of Jacob: cf. Targum Song 1:4, “...her sons who are likened to the kids of goats”. The troublesome *galeshu*, which has puzzled commentators both ancient and modern, was probably read by *'al tiqrei as gal^casu*, “(who) made a heap”.⁴⁵³ Having got this far, it was very easy to see an allusion to the story in Genesis 31 about the “heap of testimony (*gal^ced*)” which Jacob and Laban raised as a memorial to the pact between them – a view reinforced by the fact that the only other place in the Bible where the term *Har Gil^cad* is used is in Genesis 31. What is so interesting here is not just that the Targumist provides carefully thought out equivalents for all the words of the original, but he respects the *syntax* of the original as well. Behind his paraphrase lies a base translation: “The rest of you is like the flock of goats who made a heap on Mount Gilead.” None of this is in the Midrash. It seems to ignore “hair”, and it offers three different explanations of *galeshu*, all of which are totally obscure: Simon in the Soncino translation translates the three verbs in the Midrash that explain *galeshu* as “tear away”, “stream away”, and “thin”, but every one of these renderings is highly speculative. One thing is certain: the Midrash does not have the explanation found in the Targum. Moreover, although the Midrash, like the Targum, resolves Gilead into *gal^ced*, it does not then make the connection with Genesis 31, but talks vaguely about a “heap of testimony” which Israel makes for the nations (IV:3, H1).

The key equivalents in the Targum and Midrash can be summarised as follows:

Bible	Targum	Midrash
<i>Fair</i>	Fair	Fair (in precepts, deeds of kindness, etc.)
<i>My Love</i>	Assembly of Israel	Israel
<i>Eyes</i>	Leaders of the Assembly and the Sages	Sanhedrin
<i>Doves</i>	Fledglings, the young of the dove	Israel
<i>Veil</i>	Sanhedrin	The Temple

⁴⁵³ See the discussion of *galeshu* in Pope, *Song of Songs*, 458-460. Further, Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, rev. W. Baumgartner and J.J. Stamm (trans. M. E. J Richardson; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 195. The Targum’s translation, *va-^cabadu galshushita’* clearly echoes the sound of *galeshu*, but the meaning of *galshushita’* is unclear. “Memorial” is a reasonable guess from the context.

<i>Hair</i>	Remainder	
<i>The flock of goats</i>	The sons of Jacob	
<i>That streamed down</i>	Who gathered stones and made a memorial	Who tore away + Who streamed + Who thinned
<i>Mount Gilead</i>	Mount Gilead	Heap of Testimony (<i>gal^ced</i>)

This particular case study makes clearly some points useful for our present purposes. It illustrates the very different hermeneutical philosophies that lie behind the Midrash and the Targum. Though both clearly belong to the same broad tradition of Bible exegesis, and share some concrete interpretations in common, the Midrash tends to be loose, atomistic and impressionistic, whereas the Targum is precise and disciplined. It offers not only equivalents for all the elements in the Hebrew, in their correct sequence, but it tries to respect the syntax of the Hebrew – the grammatical relationship between the elements. Its reading is coherent and monovalent. The Midrash, however, does not seem to worry too much if it overlooks anything in the Hebrew, or if its various interpretations are incompatible, or, if read into the verse as a whole, create havoc with the syntax. It is selective and encyclopaedic. Given these very different philosophies of interpretation it would be no simple matter to derive the Targum from the Midrash.

5.6 Case Study 5: Song of Songs 5:14

Bible

יד יָדָיו אֶגְלִילֵי זָהָב מְמֻלָּאִים בְּתַרְשִׁישׁ מְעִיּוֹ עֵשֶׂת שָׁן מְעֻלָּפֹת סַפִּירִים:

His hands are like circlets of gold set with emeralds; his belly is like polished ivory overlaid with sapphires.

Yemenite Recension

תרי עשר שבטין דיעקב עבדיה גלילן על ציץ כלילא דדהבא דקודשא גליפן על
 תרי עשר מרגליתא עם תלתא אבהן דעלמא אברהם יצחק ויעקב ראובן גליף
 על אודם שמעון גליף על פטדה לוי גליף על ברקן יהודה גליף על נופך
 יששכר גליף על יהלום זבולן גליף על תרשיש דן גליף על ספיר נפתלי גליף
 על אחלמה גד גליף על לשם אשר גליף על שבו יוסף גליף על שוהם בנימן
 גליף על ישפה דמין לתרי עשר מזליא בחירן כעששית צחיהן בעובדיהון כשן דפיל
 ובהיקין כשבזיזין:

Western Recension

תריין עשר שיבטין דיעקב עבדיה גלילן על ציץ כליילן דדהבה דקודשא גלפן על
 תרי עשר מרגליתא עם תלתא אבהן אברהם יצחק ויעקב ראובן גליף
 על אחמר שמעון גליף על עקיק לוי גליף על זעפראן יהודה גליף על כחלי
 יששכר גליף על איזמרגד זבולן גליף על גוהאר דן גליף על בירלא נפתלי גליף
 על אספור גד גליף על טבאג אשר גליף על פירוזג יוסף גליף על מריבג בנימן
 גליף על אפנטור דמין לתרי עשר מזליא בחירן כעששית צחיהן בעובדיהון כשן דפיל
 ובהיקין כשבזיזין:

The twelve tribes of His servant Jacob are displayed on the gold plate of the holy crown, engraved upon twelve gems.

Yemenite Recension: *Along with the three fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Reuben is engraved upon 'odem; Simeon is engraved upon pitedah; Levi is engraved upon barqan; Judah is engraved upon nofekh; Dan is engraved upon sappir; Issachar is engraved upon yahalom; Gad is engraved upon leshem; Asher is engraved upon shebo; Naphthali is engraved upon 'ahlamah; Zebulun*

⁴⁵⁴ The Yemenite and the Western recensions give two different versions of the lists, but in the manuscripts there is considerable cross-contamination between these. I have followed Alexander in trying to recover the original text of each list (Alexander, *Targum Canticles*, 160, n. iii).

is engraved upon tarshish; Joseph is engraved upon shoham; Benjamin is engraved upon yashefeh.

Western Recension: *Along with the three fathers of the world, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Reuben is engraved upon 'ahmar; Simeon is engraved upon 'aqiq; Levi is engraved upon barqan za'afaran; Judah is engraved upon nofekh kohali; Issachar is engraved upon 'izmargad; Zebulun is engraved upon guhar; Dan is engraved upon birela'; Naphthali is engraved upon 'aspor; Gad is engraved upon tab'ag; Asher is engraved upon piruzag; Joseph is engraved upon meribag; Benjamin is engraved upon 'appantor.*

They resemble the twelve constellations, shining like a lantern, resplendent in their deeds as elephant ivory, and glittering like sapphires.

Midrash

Song of Songs Rabbah 5.19-21, see Appendix 5, pages 278-284.

Analysis

The text of the Targum requires some comment. This is the clearest example of the distinction between a Western and a Yemenite recension in the Targum of the Song of Songs. The differences lie in the names of the gemstones: in the Yemenite recension these corresponded originally, with possibly one minor variation (barqan for *bareqet*), with the list of the gemstones on the breastplate of the high priest as found in Exodus 28:17-20; in the Western recension equivalents have been given for the biblical gems. There has actually been considerable cross contamination from the two lists, but, as Alexander argues,⁴⁵⁵ order can be brought to the chaos if we postulate that the original scheme was that the Yemenite recension followed the Bible, and the Western recension offered identifications. It is impossible to be sure which of these two forms of the Targum text is original. Since the Western text is regularly superior to the

⁴⁵⁵ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 160, n. iii.

Yemenite, one would be inclined to assume on general grounds that its text is likely to be superior here too. The Yemenite recension might be explained on the principle that it is an attempt to bring the original Western text into closer conformity to the Bible. But it is hardly less plausible to argue that a scribe, faced with the biblical list of gems, decided to offer identifications. One thing is clear; the Targum text now has a list of gemstone which is based on the gems on the high priest's breastplate.

But how integral is that list to the Targum? The syntax of the Aramaic is awkward, and Alexander suspects that *damyan* originally stood after *margalyata*. In other words the Targum originally read: "The twelve tribes of His servant Jacob are displayed on the gold plate of the holy crown, engraved upon twelve gems, resembling the twelve constellations, shining like a lantern, resplendent in their deeds as elephant ivory, and glittering like sapphires." Into this was later inserted, after the word "gems", the names of the gems.⁴⁵⁶ There is no doubt that the list of gems is introduced very abruptly, and that the transition at *damyan* is awkward. In the current case, one would have expected a resumptive pronoun, such as *ve-'innon damyan*. However, even Alexander's reconstructed original text is not entirely smooth. We would surely have expected a relative particle – *de-damyan* rather than simply *damyan*. Moreover, a gem list is found in all the manuscripts of the Targum, belonging to both recensions, and I shall, therefore, treat it as integral to the Targum.

This verse comes from an important section of Song of Songs (5:10-16) which describes the body of the Beloved (the *Dod*). Since in the Targum's schema the *Dod* is God, this then becomes a description of his body. That immediately raises tricky theological problems, because on general theological grounds, how can God be said to have a body, and how can one picture God here without violating the Second Commandment? Surely one of the fundamental principles of Judaism is that no image is adequate to describe God. The Targum seems to show sensitivity to this issue, and notably does not take the description as in any sense a description of God's form. Rather, while still seeing God as the subject, it

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 210.

allegorises the description, projecting its various elements onto the Torah, or the study of the Torah, whether by God himself or the Sages. The idea may be that the only form of God that it is permissible to envisage is his revelation in the Torah. It is the Torah which represents God.

The sensitivity of this passage may have been further increased by the fact that it may have played a part in the mystical doctrine of the Shi'ur Qomah, the dimensions of the body of God. This did visualize God, or rather the image of God which the mystic saw on the Throne of Glory at the height of his ecstasy, in the form of a gigantic human body. Scholem and Liebermann argued that Shi'ur was inspired by Song 5:10-16.⁴⁵⁷ Later researchers have suggested that they exaggerated the influence of this passage,⁴⁵⁸ but even if they did, it is hard to deny that it played some part, and the basic theological problem remains, to which the Targum seems sensitive, that you cannot take the text as literally describing the form of God.

Within the Targum's exposition of Song 5:10-16, its treatment of 5:14 stands out, in that it is not related in any way to the Torah or the study of the Torah. Despite the fact that the biblical text refers to "hands" and "trunk" (of the body), the Targum talks of God's holy crown. There is a puzzle here. As already noted, the basis of the gem-list is the description of the twelve stones on the high priest's breastplate (*hoshen mishpat*) in Exodus 28:15-21. This might suggest that the Targumist was going to describe God in terms of the garments of the high priest,⁴⁵⁹ but the idea is not systematically developed, and, in fact the stones are said not to be on God's "breastplate", but on the "gold plate" (*tzitz*) of his "holy crown". So it deliberately seems to avoid implying that God as a

⁴⁵⁷ Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*; Saul Lieberman, "Mishnat Shir ha-Shirim," *ibid.*, 118-126.

⁴⁵⁸ E.g., Martin S. Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism* (Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 1983), 19. This is borne out by skimming through the text in Cohen's edition, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Texts and Recensions* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985). See further, Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision*, 26-27.

⁴⁵⁹ Intriguingly Philip Alexander has argued that in *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* from Qumran, a forerunner of the later Heikhalot mystical texts, the vision of the glory of God at the climax of the ascent is deflected onto the garments of the angelic high priest(s), but the text is very damaged (Philip S. Alexander, *The Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (London: Continuum, 2006), 43).

“breastplate”. In terms of the high priest’s garments, the *tzitz* was a metal plate attached to the front of his turban (Exodus 28:36; 39:30; Leviticus 8:9), and according to tradition, the only thing on the high priest’s *tzitz* was an inscription of the tetragrammaton.⁴⁶⁰ The theological implications of the Targum’s exposition are deeply unclear, but perhaps the idea is that Israel, as here represented by the twelve tribes, is a manifestation of God in the world, just as is the Torah.

When we turn to the Midrash, we find that in broad terms its exposition of the Body of the Beloved agrees with that of the Targum. It pointedly avoids any attempt to take the passage as describing the form of God, and it projects the imagery onto the Torah, but its detailed correlations differ from those of the Targum, and the difference is nowhere more striking than at 5:14. Here it says nothing whatsoever about God’s holy crown, or the twelve tribes of Israel and their gems and constellations. Instead it has a standard correlation of the verse with the Torah: the “hands”, rather neatly, are the two tables of the Law, the “rods”, again rather neatly, are the lines of writing on the tables. This leads to a digression which discusses how exactly the commandments were arranged on the tables. “Set with beryls” is used to make the point that between the lines of each of the Ten Commandments, all the other commandments were written, in small print, so to speak. This has a polemical ring to it, in that it argues, probably against Christian claims,⁴⁶¹ that the Decalogue, on the one hand, and the ritual and practical commandments, on the other, are totally integrated, and cannot be separated one from the other. This idea was argued as early as Philo in his *On the Decalogue* and *On the Special Laws*.⁴⁶² “His body” is identified as the “Law of the Priests”, i.e., Leviticus, the implication apparently being that this is the centre of the Torah (it is, of course, the middle book, with two on each side of it). And finally “overlaid with sapphires” is used to initiate a long discussion, with anecdotes, of how study of the Torah wears a man out.

⁴⁶⁰ See Exodus 28:36 and 39:30, but cf. Josephus *Antiquities* 3.178; *Jewish War* 5.235; Philo, *Life of Moses* 2.114.

⁴⁶¹ See Geza Vermes, “The Decalogue and the Minim,” in *In Memoriam Paul Kahle* (ed. M. Black and G. Fohrer; Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1968), 232-340.

⁴⁶² See Joseph Heinemann, *The Reasons for the Commandments in Jewish Thought: From the Bible to the Renaissance* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies Press, 2008), 34-47.

The Midrash could not be more different from the Targum, but what is most striking here is that the Midrashic approach is detailed and rather neat, and is totally compatible with the overall interpretation of the Body of the Beloved adopted by the Targum. The obvious question arises: Why, if the Targumist had the Midrash in front of him, did he not adopt its simpler and more convincing exegesis? Why did he offer his much more obscure interpretation? Conversely, given its encyclopaedic nature, why if the Midrash knew the Targum did it not include a version of its interpretation in its anthology of readings of this verse? Such cases of a striking lack of correlation between the Midrash and the Targum are as important as the parallels. They show that any suggestion of direct dependency in either direction is simplistic. If the Targum does know, and has used the Midrash, it clearly has other sources or influences, something which indicates at least some level of independence.

5.7 Case Study 6: Song of Songs 8:14

Bible

בָּרַח דּוֹדִי וּדְמָה-לָּךְ לְצִבְי אוֹ לְעִפָּר הָאֲזִלִּים עַל הָרֵי בְשָׁמִים

Flee, my Beloved.

And be like a gazelle or young hart

Upon the mountains of spices.

Targum

בי היא שעתא יימרון סבי ישראל ערוק לך רחימי מרי עלמא מארעא הדא מסאבתא ותשרי שכינתך בשמי מרומא ובעידן עתקתן דאנחנא מצלן קדמך תהי דמי לטביא דבעידן דדמיך עינא חדא קמיץ ועינא חדא פתיה או כארזילא דאיילא דבעידן דעריק מסתכל בתריה כין את תהי משגח בן ומסתכל בצערן ובסיגופן משמי מרומא עד זמן דתיתרעי בן ותפרוק יתן ותעיל יתן על טורא דירושלם ותמן יסקון כהניא קדמך קטורת בוסמין:

Then the elders of the Assembly of Israel will say: “Flee away, my Beloved, Lord of the World, from this polluted land, and cause your Shekhinah to dwell in the highest heavens, but at the time of our distress, when we pray before You, be like a gazelle, which, when it sleeps, [has] one eye shut and one eye open, or like the young of the hart, which, when it flees, looks behind it. So watch over us and observe our trouble and affliction from the highest heavens, till such time as You are pleased with us and redeem us and bring us up to the mountains of Jerusalem, where the priests will offer up before You incense of spices.”

Midrash

Song of Songs Rabbah 8.19, see Appendix 6, pages 285-291.

Analysis

The interpretation in both the Targum and the Midrash of the final verse of Song of Songs takes on added significance since it is here, if anywhere, that one can see whether either work expresses a sense of its own boundedness by providing an effective closure. Neither disappoints on this score. Both, as was common in Jewish writings of the period, manage to round off their composition with a messianic coda alluding to the future redemption of Israel, which brings the work to a satisfactory climax. But there the similarity between them more or less ends. Despite some possible further parallelism, they differ significantly in detail.

Then the elders of the Assembly of Israel will say: “Flee away, my Beloved, Lord of the World, from this polluted land, and cause your Shekhinah to dwell in the highest heavens.”

Both Targum and Midrash take this verse as an address to God by Israel, and so identify God with the gazelle, but, as usual, the Targum has a nuance. The speakers are not Israel as a whole, but “the elders of the Assembly of Israel” – an interpretation probably based on *'ayyalim* in the biblical text. The Targum offers a clear, monovalent reading. The elders exhort the Lord of the World to flee from “this polluted land” and take up his Shekhinah to the highest heavens. There has

been much discussion of what “land” is meant. Melamed argued it is Babylonia, Alexander that it must be Israel, because the Palestinian provenance of the Targum seems to be beyond reasonable doubt, and a land can hardly be “polluted”, unless it is first “holy” – which would point to Palestine.⁴⁶³ “Earth” is another possible translation of the word, which effectively bypasses the problem, and hasn’t been given as much support as it deserves. The idea that human sin drives the Shekhinah back to heaven is a widespread trope of the aggadic tradition.⁴⁶⁴

The Midrash, typically offers a range of interpretations. The first is “FLEE...from the exile in which we are at present living and in which we are defiled with iniquities” (VIII:19, B1). This is somewhat similar to the Targum and might be taken to support the view that “its polluted land” is not the Land of Israel. But it does not necessarily follow that “exile” has to denote outside the Land. Jews can be “in exile” even within the Land, if they do not possess sovereignty over it. “Exile” denotes a political condition as much as a geographical region.⁴⁶⁵ The Midrash does not make clear where the Beloved is to flee too – no reference to the Shekhinah and its removal to heaven. The second interpretation is “FLEE...from the heathens and cleave to Israel” (VIII:19, E9).

“But at the time of our distress, when we pray before You, be like a gazelle, which, when it sleeps, [has] one eye shut and one eye open, or like the young of the hart, which, when it flees, looks behind it.”

⁴⁶³ Melamed, “Targum Canticles,” 215; Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 58.

⁴⁶⁴ Genesis Rabbah 9.7; Lamentations Rabbah, Proem 24; Pesiqta deRav Kahana 1.1; 3 Enoch 5:1-14.

⁴⁶⁵ The idea that the exile was not negated by the return under Cyrus nor, for sure, by the Hasmonean “restoration”, may have been embraced by the Qumran group, who seem to have continued to observe the 9th of Av during the Second Temple period (see 3Q3 [3QLam]; 4Q111 [4QLam]; 5Q6 [5QLam^a]; and 5Q7 [5QLam^b]), and to compose new laments for the fall of Jerusalem (4Q179 [4QapocrLam A]; 4Q501 [4QapocrLam B]; and 4Q241 [4QFragments citing Lamentations]), and may even have called themselves “The Mourners for Zion”, on the basis of Isaiah 61:3 (11QMelchizedek II 17 and 20). That this attitude would have been adopted by Jews in Palestine after the destruction of the Second Temple period is surely plausible. Mere physical presence in the Land does not mean the end of exile. This has been argued by Philip Alexander in “Was the Ninth of Av observed in the Second Temple Period?” (presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study, Cambridge, Summer 2009). The idea had already been adumbrated in N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Christian Origins and the People of God, vol. 1; London: SPCK, 1992), 299-302.

Despite the Targum's plea to God to flee from this evil world back to heaven, it still asks him not to lose sight of Israel, and to intervene on her behalf when she cries to him in time of trouble. It cleverly exploits the image of the "gazelle" and the "hart" to express this idea. The gazelle sleeps with one eye open and one eye shut; the hart as it flees always looks back to where it is fleeing from. One of the interpretations offered by the Midrash also utilises the idea that the "gazelle sleeps with one eye open and one eye closed" (VIII:19, F1), but develops it in a different way: when Israel do what God desires, he looks at them with two eyes, but when they don't he looks at them only with one! There is no idea here of eternal watchfulness. This takes some of the gloss off the apparently striking parallel. It is plausible that the idea of the gazelle sleeping with one eye open is from some ancient bestiary tradition, perhaps popularised through an everyday proverb or saying. That it could have occurred quite independently to both the Targumist and the Midrashist is not beyond the bounds of possibility. Moreover, it should be noted that the Midrash does not offer the same interpretation of the "hart" as we find in the Targum. The closest it gives is: "OR THE YOUNG OF THE HARTS ('AYYALIM): receive our prayer like an offering of kids and rams ('elim)" (VIII:19, B1). Other interpretations of the gazelle in the Midrash involve seeing the word as alluding to the host (*tzava*) of heaven (VIII:19, A1)⁴⁶⁶, or taking the gazelle, for some reason, as a paragon of purity ("make us as pure as the gazelle": VIII:19, B2).

"So watch over us and observe our trouble and affliction from the highest heavens, till such time as You are pleased with us and redeem us and bring us up to the mountains of Jerusalem, where the priests will offer up before You incense of spices."

The Targum takes the Biblical "mountains" as "the mountains of Jerusalem", and the "spices" as the incense which the priests will offer there in the messianic age,

⁴⁶⁶ The Soncino translation of this, "MAKE HASTE, MY BELOVED, AND BE THOU LIKE TO A GAZELLE (ZEBI): like the celestial host (zaba) who pay homage (domim) to Thee with one voice, with one chant", is untenable. A more accurate translation would be: "FLEE, MY BELOVED, AND BE LIKE A GAZELLE: like the celestial host who resemble Your glory with one voice and with one chant". But the meaning is obscure. There is clearly a reference to the angelic choirs praising God, but how these "resemble" God's glory, and why God should be exhorted to be like them is not at all obvious.

after God has redeemed Israel and brought her back to the Land. “Spices” (*besamim*) may also have generated the reference to “the highest heaven” through an *'al tiqrei (ba-shamayim)*. This *'al tiqrei* is also found in the Midrash (VIII:19, A2 and VIII:19, G10), along with the idea that “spices” alludes to the good scent of the merits of the Fathers (VIII:19, B4). At VIII:19, G10 “mountains of spices” has been taken to mean “mountains in the heavens”, the “mountains” here being seen as a reference to the seventy Princes of Kingdoms who act as the heavenly representatives of the seventy nations on earth, the Prince of Israel being Michael.⁴⁶⁷ Any punishment that God metes out to any nation on Earth is preceded by a judicial trial before the heavenly Sanhedrin of its angelic representative.

This case, then, yields results compatible with those from the previous cases. Though there is some correlation between the Targum and the Midrash, there is a great deal of difference. Where the Midrash is loose and multivalent, the Targum is tightly argued and monovalent, and it is hard to see how it could be derived from the Midrash.

The main equivalents for the major elements of the biblical text in both Targum and Midrash can be seen from the following table:

Bible	Targum	Midrash
<i>Flee</i>	Flee from the earth to heaven	Flee from the nations + Flee from exile
<i>My Beloved</i>	God	God
<i>Gazelle</i>	Gazelle that sleeps with one eye open	Host of heaven + symbol of purity + gazelle that sleeps with one eye open
<i>Young of the harts</i>	Hart that looks behind it when it flees	Offerings of rams
<i>Mountains</i>	Mountains of Jerusalem	Princes of Kingdoms
<i>Spices</i>	Incense offered in the restored Temple	In the heavens + merits of the fathers + Garden of Eden

⁴⁶⁷ The germ of this idea is to be found already in Daniel 10:20-21. See Mekhilta deRabbi Ishmael, *Shirah* 2; Exodus Rabbah 21.5; Leviticus Rabbah 29:2; Deuteronomy Rabbah 1.22; Pirquei deRabbi Eliezer 24; Pseudo-Jonathan to Genesis 11:7-8; 3 Enoch 30:1-2.

5.8 Conclusion

The analyses of our six case studies of one-to-one parallelism between the Targum and the Midrash yield a clear and consistent set of outcomes which can be succinctly summarised as follows:

(1) There is clearly some sort of relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah, since both exhibit significant parallelism in exegetical method and concrete exegetical traditions.

(2) It is difficult, however, to conceive of this relationship as one of literary dependence in either direction (Targum to Midrash or Midrash to Targum), because there are significant traditions which are found in one text which are not in the other, even though they conceivably could have been. Even when the parallelism is striking, it is hardly ever exact, each text spinning it in its own distinctive way.

(3) Specifically, it is difficult to see the Targum as dependent on the Midrash, because, even where the elements of the Targum's tightly argued, monovalent readings are found in the Midrash (which, to reiterate, is by no means always the case), they are scattered through its multivalent reading, and so the Targumist would have had to work implausibly hard "cherry-picking" them out of it, and he would have had to have had his broad schema already worked out in advance in order for him to know what elements to choose and what to reject. The process is not impossible to imagine, but it implies a mechanical method of composition which carries little conviction, and which seems to ignore the palpable exegetical inventiveness and independence of the Targumist. The resemblances between the Targum and the Midrash are more readily explained by supposing that both belonged to the same broad Palestinian tradition of Bible interpretation in late antiquity, and are drawing on that, rather than directly on each other.

CHAPTER SIX
TARGUM SONG AND SONG RABBAH:
MULTIPLE PARALLELS

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we looked at the relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah on the basis of a comparison and contrast of how each treated specific verses in the Song of Songs. This showed that what might at first sight look like strong evidence for a literary relationship often proved on closer analysis to be insignificant or inconclusive. In this exercise we focussed almost exclusively on just the two works under consideration (one-to-one parallelism). In this chapter we will widen the scope of the inquiry by bringing in parallels in other Rabbinic texts which share traditions with Targum Song and Song Rabbah. It happens not infrequently that a tradition in Targum Song that can be paralleled in Song Rabbah can also be paralleled in one or more other sources (multiple parallelism). The relevance of this evidence to the present inquiry does not need spelling out. A case for the dependency of Targum Song on Song Rabbah based on the fact that Song Rabbah contains the same traditions, and so could be the Targum's source, immediately becomes more problematic if it can be shown that many of those traditions are found in other Rabbinic works as well. Might not the Targum have drawn on these? Bringing in the broader context unquestionably complicates the picture, but in some cases it helps to shed light on the situation and clarify the possible relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah. Either result is valuable for our purposes.

Analysing multiple parallelism can be complex and longwinded. I have adopted the following procedure in each case. First, I identify the basic, core tradition found in all the texts, i.e. what all, or most of the versions share in common. This basic tradition gives us a useful yardstick by which to measure the versions themselves, to clarify where material may have been added, and where it may have been omitted, and to gain some purchase on the question of how the

tradition may have developed over time. Second, I survey and compare the contents of each version. Third, I attempt, where possible to suggest a history of the tradition and to consider the implication of this for the specific question of how Targum Song and Song Rabbah may be related.

Several of the case studies here will deal with verses already considered in Chapter Five. This overlap allows us to build on the analysis we conducted there, and also to reflect on how misleading one-to-one parallelism, considered strictly on its own, can be. But I have also included some additional case studies of verses which we did not deal with in Chapter Five. I would stress again that there are many other cases we could have considered in both chapters, but could not because of limits of space, but I would argue that the case studies I have presented are thoroughly indicative and sufficient to prove my case, and further examples would only reinforce my conclusions.

6.2 Case Study 7: Song of Songs 1:5

Bible

שְׁחֹרָה אֲנִי וְנֹאֵהָ בָנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם כְּאַהֲלֵי קֶדָר כִּירִיעוֹת שְׁלֹמֹה:

I am black, but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Qedar, like the curtains of Solomon.

Targum and Parallels

Targum Song 1:5; Song Rabbah 1.34; Exodus Rabbah 49.2; Song Zuta to 1:5.

For texts see Appendix 7, pages 293-295.

The Basic Tradition

1. The “blackness” is associated with the appearance of Israel to God at the time that they made the golden calf.
2. The “comeliness” is associated with the appearance of Israel to God at the time that they made the Tabernacle.

Comparison of the Versions

(1) Targum Song

The Targum interprets the verse very much in line with the basic tradition. The Israelites' "blackness" was brought about by their actions in making the Calf, which made their faces "dark as [those of] the sons of Cush who dwell in the tents of Qedar". The link with Qedar is made through a play on the Hebrew root *qdr*, meaning to be dark.⁴⁶⁸ Their "comeliness", however, came about through the making of the curtains for the Tabernacle. This involves a slight deviation from the basic tradition, in that rather than saying that it was the making of the Tabernacle itself that led to the comeliness, the second part of the verse is drawn in ("as the curtains of Solomon"), and it is the making of the *curtains* that is viewed as the meritorious act: "curtains" here can easily of course, stand for the Tabernacle *pars pro toto*. This attention to the precise detail of the underlying biblical verse is typical of the Targum: it attempts to represent every element in the Hebrew. Interestingly, and unusually, however, the Targum has left an element of the Hebrew *uninterpreted*: "the Daughters of Jerusalem". It may be, as Alexander suggests, that it is attached to the interpretation of verse 6, where Israel addresses the nations.⁴⁶⁹

The Targum's interpretation fits easily into its chronological framework. A reference to Sinai, the giving of the Torah, and the making of the Calf and Tabernacle comes naturally after the account of the Exodus from Egypt.

As we have noted elsewhere (see Case Study 1 in Chapter Five, and Case Study 8 below), the treatment of this verse may involve an oblique response to Christian apologists who attempted to use the incident of the Calf to argue that the Sinai covenant was flawed, if not severed, right at its inception. In the Targum to 1:12 an attempt was made to pin the blame for the Calf on the "mixed multitude" who came up with Israel from Egypt, whereas here the implication is that the act of sin, which is freely acknowledged, was negated by the meritorious act of making the curtains/Tabernacle, which had the effect of bringing down the Shekhinah to dwell on earth, and made the Israelites like the angels. The idea

⁴⁶⁸ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 871a.

⁴⁶⁹ Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*, 81 n.35.

here alludes to the fact that the Tabernacle was made after the pattern of the heavenly sanctuary in which the angels worship God. Israel on earth was like the angels in heaven. One could imagine no closer relationship, no greater reconciliation. And just in case the reader does not get the point, the Targumist explicitly states that “Moses their teacher ascended to heaven to make peace between them [Israel] and their King”. It is possible then, to relate the expansions of the basic tradition in the Targum to its apologetic purpose of refuting Christian exegesis.

(2) Song of Songs Rabbah

Song Rabbah contains both elements of the basic tradition, but they are “buried”, so to speak, in a multiplicity of other interpretations. As we saw constantly in Chapter Five, the multivalency of the Midrash’s reading of the Song often obscures the comparison with the Targum. The first element of the basic tradition is stated in the form “I was black at Horeb, as it says, *they made a calf at Horeb* (Psalm 106:19).” Specifying the location at Horeb, an element not found in the Targum, but which can be taken as read, emerges naturally from the proof-text. The first attempt at interpreting the “comeliness” links it not with the Tabernacle, but with Israel’s promise at Sinai to keep the Torah: “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do and obey” (Exodus 24:7). (This link to Torah acceptance is not reflected in any other version of the tradition.) It is only then that the Tabernacle is brought in, and it is not directly linked to the making of the Calf: “I AM DARK: in the wilderness, [as it is written], *How often did they rebel against him in the wilderness* (Psalm 78:40). BUT COMELY: in the wilderness at the setting up of the Tabernacle, [as it is written], *On the day that the Tabernacle was set up* (Numbers 9:15).” The sin of the Calf may have been one of the rebellions in the wilderness, and so it may be implicit here, but it was by no means the only one, and it is not obviously invoked. In other words, the two halves of the basic tradition are not actually joined up in the Midrash. And the Midrash is less clear than the Targum on just how the Tabernacle functioned to create Israel’s comeliness. The Targum stresses Israel’s involvement in *making* the Tabernacle. It was the act of *making* the Tabernacle that atoned for Israel’s sin. The *making* of the Tabernacle negated the *making* of the Calf. This is not in the Midrash, which, by default, seems to imply that it was the Tabernacle itself,

as a place where sacrifice for sin could be brought, and where God could meet with Israel, that effected the atonement.

(3) Exodus Rabbah

Exodus Rabbah represents the basic tradition precisely and succinctly: I AM BLACK: through the making of the Golden Calf. BUT COMELY: through the making of the Tabernacle”. The stress here on the *making*, as in the Targum, is significant: the one making cancels the other. And this point is underscored by the fact that the interpretation is linked to the passage in Exodus which speaks of how “every wise-hearted man among them that wrought the work made the Tabernacle” (Exodus 36:8).

Exodus Rabbah, like Song Rabbah, offers a range of interpretations of the biblical verse. Here our basic tradition is only one of seven instances from Israel’s history when she was “black but comely”. Interestingly another interpretation also links the blackness with the Calf. “I AM BLACK: because of the ox [= the Calf], as it says, *Thus they exchanged their glory for the likeness of an ox that eats grass* (Psalm 106:20), but I AM COMELY on account of another kind of ox, namely, *What man soever there be of the House of Israel who kills an ox, or lamb, or goat, etc.* (Leviticus 17:3).” Here the idea is that it was the sacrificial system that atoned for Israel’s sin, and if that had not been instituted the making of the Calf would have been an absolute disaster, and would have led to the immediate annulment of the covenant. This confirms our suspicion that when Song Rabbah made the Tabernacle the antidote to the sin of the Calf it was not thinking of the act of making it, but the sacrifices associated with it.

(4) Song of Songs Zuta

Song Zuta contains the basic tradition in exactly the same words as Exodus Rabbah, though any direct dependence of it on Exodus Rabbah, or vice versa, is complicated by the fact that Song Zuta offers other interpretations which are not in Exodus Rabbah. They are not in Song Rabbah either, which serves to complicate its relationship with that work too, and rule out direct literary dependency in either direction.

The Development of the Tradition

This is not a case where we can postulate how this particular unit of interpretation developed with any great confidence. Nevertheless a few speculative observations can be made that are relevant to our present inquiry. The concise nature of the form of the tradition in Song Zuta and Exodus Rabbah is very striking. This conciseness does not appear to be allusive: one needs to know, of course, the stories of the making of the Calf and the making of the Tabernacle, but that would apply to all versions of the tradition. But the basic point of the exegesis is fully made: Israel's making of the calf was cancelled by her making of the Tabernacle. It is hard not to see this as the earlier form of the tradition. Song Rabbah is later: not only has it separated the two halves of the basic tradition and paired each half with another exegesis, but it *is* allusive, in that it does not specify in what way the Tabernacle atoned for the Calf. The reader is supposed to work that out, presumably from his knowledge of other traditions. Song Rabbah feels abbreviated at this point. All the Midrashic forms of the tradition seem to show sensitivity to Christian polemical use of the Golden Calf incident, and, indeed, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that it was this that sparked off the tradition in the first place. The Targumic version of the tradition also, as we saw, seems aware of Christian polemic. It is the most developed of the versions, largely because it ties itself so closely to the wording of Song 1:5 and feels obliged, in a way that the Midrashim do not, to account for every element in the biblical verse. It is this sense of obligation, which is related to its basic genre as translation, which generates its expansiveness. But we should not assume that because it is the most developed form of the tradition that it is the latest. Because of the genre difference it is difficult to integrate it very directly into the midrashic trajectory. It is significant though, surely, that it seems to agree fundamentally with Exodus Rabbah and Song Zuta against Song Rabbah. This is further evidence of the dangers of comparing Targum Song exclusively with Song Rabbah, and ignoring other midrashic parallels.

6.3 Case Study 8: Song of Songs 1:12

Bible

עד-שְׁהִמְלֵךְ בְּמִסְבּוֹ נָרְדִי נִתַּן רִיחוֹ:

While the king was reclining at his table, my nard sent forth its fragrance.

Targum and Parallels

Targum Song of Songs 1:12; Song of Songs Rabbah 1.56-58; Song of Songs Zuta to Song 1:12; and Seder Eliyahu Zuta 4.3. For the texts see Appendix 8, pages 296-300.

The Basic Tradition

The basic tradition here has to do with the meaning of the expression in Song 1:12, “My spikenard gave off its smell”. Is this to be taken in a positive or negative sense? As we shall see, the majority view is that it has to be taken positively and related to Exodus 24:7. The minority view is that it has to be taken negatively and related to the sin of the Golden Calf.

Comparison of Parallels

(1) Targum and Midrash

We have already dealt at some length with Targum Song and Song Rabbah to this verse (Case Study 1, above), so need only give an overview of the key points here. We saw that the Targum took “My spikenard gave off its smell” in a strongly negative way by relating it to the bad reputation about Israel that went out into the world as the result of the making of the Golden Calf. Song Rabbah rejected this interpretation on the basis that the Song of Songs should not be expounded to bring discredit on Israel. Its rejection of the interpretation was also implicit in its identification of the scent with the bad smell of the blood of the Paschal lambs on the night of the first Passover, which spoiled the appetites of

the Israelites, until God neutralised the stench by wafting in fragrances from Paradise. Instead, Song Rabbah proposed interpreting the scent in a good sense, as the pleasant odour that emanated from Israel when she accepted the Torah with the words, “All that the Lord has said we will do and we will obey (Exodus 24:7).”

(2) Seder Eliyahu Zuta

The Seder Eliyahu version is very compressed, but it clearly recognises the possibility of both a positive and a negative interpretation of the biblical phrase. It rejects the negative interpretation on the grounds that the text does not say “my spikenard gave off its stench (*siryō*),” but “my spikenard gave off its fragrance (*reihō*)”. In other words, on linguistic grounds alone the negative interpretation has to be rejected. But there is more to it than that. Seder Eliyahu Zuta implies that it would have been possible to have used negative language, if some of Israel’s bad behaviour had been taken into account, but God chose to remember “the former things” and pardon “the latter things”. The reference here is vague, perhaps deliberately so, but there can be little doubt that top of the list of things which God chose to overlook must surely have been the sin of the Calf. It is clear from a little earlier in this chapter of Seder Eliyahu that the general context here is the period of the wilderness wanderings. In other words, Seder Eliyahu Zuta, like Song Rabbah, rejects linking “My spikenard gave off its scent” with the Calf, but connects it instead to Israel taking upon herself “the rule of God” by pronouncing the words “All that the Lord has said we will do and we will obey (Exodus 24:7).”

(3) Song of Songs Zuta

Song Zuta is the most compressed of the four versions, and it is doubtful if we could have made much sense of it on its own without the other three. The text does not seem totally convincing, particularly the words *‘ad she-ha-shekhinah ba-maqom qibbelu ‘aleihem Yisra’el*. Though the broad meaning is clear, surely an object for the verb *qibbelu* is missing (e.g. *‘ol malkhut ha-shamayim*, “the yoke of the kingdom of heaven”). What is perfectly clear, however, is that it

takes “my spikenard gave off its scent” in a positive sense, and it does not mention the negative interpretation at all.

The Development of the Tradition

The Targum offers the most elaborate version of the tradition, in the sense that it expounds the biblical verse, Song 1:12, the most thoroughly and consistently, but this, as we have seen time and again, is a concomitant of its genre. It should not be used to argue that because it is the most developed, it is therefore the latest version. What is more significant is that it offers an interpretation that is explicitly rejected by one of the other two versions (Song Rabbah), and implicitly by another (Seder Eliyahu Zuta). This rejection of the view embraced by the Targum shows that that view was certainly around when Song Rabbah and the Seder Eilyahu were compiled, though whether either or both knew this interpretation specifically from the Targum cannot be proved.

Seder Eliyahu is generally dated later than Song Rabbah (possibly to the tenth century),⁴⁷⁰ and so it is likely that its version is the later. This would make sense on internal grounds. It is, as we have seen, much more cryptic and allusive: it presupposes knowledge of a fuller form of the tradition. By the same token, Song Zuta, as the most cryptic of the versions, is probably the latest of all. Song Zuta is also generally regarded as late (again, possibly tenth century),⁴⁷¹ and this might explain why it seems to have lost all interest in the original, apologetic, anti-Christian context of this tradition. If, as is very likely to have been the case, it was written under Islamic rule, in an Islamic country, then some of the old exegetical “chestnuts” of the Jewish-Christian debate might have been of less interest to it. It would be premature to jump to the conclusion that the triumph of Islam brought to an end the Jewish-Christian debate in the Muslim world: on the contrary there is evidence that it prodded it back into life, because Jews could now express themselves without fear of retaliation from the Christian authorities. But the debate moved away from the old exegetical arguments to a more

⁴⁷⁰ The date of Seder Eliyahu Zuta is much disputed: see Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 340-342.

⁴⁷¹ See *Ibid.*, 319-320.

philosophical agenda (e.g. to questions such as whether the doctrines of the Trinity or the Incarnation were rational and compatible with the unity of God).⁴⁷² The Targum's view must surely stand at the beginning of this trajectory. We developed the argument in Case-Study 1 that if the Targumist was reliant on Song Rabbah, and so had Song Rabbah's exposition of Song 1:12 in front of him, then it is extremely puzzling why he would have chosen an interpretation which the Midrash rejects (especially given that the Midrash's alternative could, with little trouble, have been adopted to the Targumist's purpose). This argument has been reinforced by considering the other parallels, none of which adopt the Targum's view either.

6.4 Case Study 9: Song of Songs 2:14

Bible

יִנְתֵּי בְּחַגְוֵי הַסֵּלַע בְּסִתְרֵי הַמְּדֻרְגָה הָרְאִינִי אֶת-מְרֵאִיךָ הַשְּׁמִיעֵנִי אֶת-קוֹלְךָ כִּי-קוֹלְךָ עָרֵב וּמְרֵאִיךָ נָאוֶה

O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let Me see your countenance, let Me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your countenance is comely.

Targum and Parallels

Targum Song 2:14; Song Rabbah 2.35; Mekhilta deRabbi Ishamel, *Beshallah* 3; Midrash Tanhuma (Warsaw), *Shofetim* 13; Midrash *Vayyosha*^c (Otzar Midrashim I, 146). There are other examples of this tradition, some partial or mere allusions, others more or less complete (e.g., Mekhilta deRabbi Shim^con b. Yohai 14.13; Exodus Rabbah 21.5; Sekhel Tov (Buber) 14; Yalqut Shim^coni, *Torah* 232 and *Shir ha-Shirim* 986). I have not included these, because they would not have

⁴⁷² The earliest surviving Jewish anti-Christian polemic from the Islamic era, the Judaeo-Arabic treatise *Qissat Mujadalat al-Usquf* (later translated into Hebrew under the title *Sefer Nestor ha-Komer*), is roughly contemporaneous with Song Zuta, but it has conspicuously lost all interest in the old exegetical arguments, but instead it spends its time trying to prove that Christianity is an irrational religion. See Daniel J. Lasker and Sarah Stoumsa, *The Polemic of Nestor the Priest, Qissat Mujadalat al-Usquf and Sefer Nestor Ha-Komer: Introduction, Annotated Translations, and Commentary* (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1996).

added much to our discussion. They do, however, show how popular this tradition was. For texts see Appendix 9, pages 301-303.

The Basic Tradition

The basic tradition compares Israel trapped at the Red Sea, with the sea in front and Pharaoh and his army behind, to a dove which, threatened by a hawk, flies for safety into a cleft in a rock only to be confronted by a serpent. The tradition quotes or clearly alludes to Song 2:14. Its key elements are: (1) a quotation or allusion to Song 2:14; (2) Israel compared to a dove; (3) a hawk threatening the dove from without; (4) a serpent threatening it from within; (5) a contextualisation to the Exodus from Egypt.

Comparison of the Parallels

(1) Targum Song of Songs

I have dealt already with Targum Song 2:14 in relation to Song Rabbah in Case Study 2 (above, pp 152-159.), so need only make some additional points here relevant to the present discussion. The Targum, as we saw, provides a version of the tradition that is detailed, cogent, comprehensible, and closely argued from the biblical text. It contains several elements which are noteworthy in comparison with the other versions of the tradition. (1) It mentions the serpent before the hawk, whereas the other versions, at least on first mention, have the hawk before the serpent. The latter seems the more natural narrative order, and it is tempting to suppose that this is the earlier form of the tradition, which the Targumist has changed. However, it is also possible to argue the opposite case. If the image was generated, as is likely, by Song 2:14, then there the dove is “in the cleft of the rock”, and it would be obvious to start from that, and introduce the hawk outside later. If the Targumist did change the order, then it would almost certainly have been under the influence of his fidelity to the biblical text, and his desire to follow it closely and exactly. (2) The Targumist uses the word *ḥivya*’ for “serpent”, whereas the other versions all use *naḥash*. This is not just a matter of language: *ḥivya*’ is certainly the commonest term in Jewish Aramaic for serpent,

but *nahsha'* is also widely attested.⁴⁷³ It is interesting that, if the Targumist had a Hebrew source, he didn't preserve a key term when he switched from one language to another. (3) The Targum stresses that Israel was hemmed in on all four sides, not just behind and before. The Tanhuma version also has them completely encircled, but again the precise language is different: the Targum has "from the four *sides* of the world" (*me-'arba' sitroi de-alam*); Tanhuma has "from the four *winds*" (*[muqafin] me-'arba' ruhot*). The Targum could easily have adapted the Tanhuma's phrase directly into Aramaic (note Targum to 2:6, *me-'arba' ruhei alma'*), and Tanhuma could just have easily adapted the Targum's phrase into Hebrew. (4) The Targum also differs from the Tanhuma as to the dangers that menaced Israel on her flanks. In the Targum it is deserts full of fiery serpents (again *hivya'* is used), but in Tanhuma it is deserts full of unspecified wild beasts (*hayyot*). The similarity between *hivya'* and *hayyah* is tantalising, but what it might say about the relationship between the two versions of the tradition is unclear. (5) The Targum has God address Israel through a *bat qol*. This is not found in any of the other versions, which are happy to have God address Israel directly, if he addresses her at all. The *bat qol* plays a significant role in Targum Song, as an agent communicating between God and humanity, and it can be seen as generally typical of the Targum's reverential, anti-anthropomorphic style. Again, however, it should be noted that it was perfectly possible for the Midrashim to have included the *bat qol* here: the concept is fully at home in Midrash. It is unlikely that it was in the original form of the tradition: nothing in the Hebrew suggests it. In fact it strikes one as slightly pedantic. Its presence suggests how carefully the Targumist reworked whatever form of the tradition he received, and how he shaped it to fit his own worldview.

(2) Song of Songs Rabbah

Song Rabbah 2.35 is discussed fully in Case Study 2 above (pp. 152-159) in relation to the Targum, so again only some points relevant to the present discussion need to be made here. The Midrash begins by assigning it to the school of R. Ishmael and, significantly, a version of it appears in the Mekhilta of

⁴⁷³ Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 896b-897b.

Rabbi Ishmael, *Beshallah* 3 (see Appendix 9 and below). The relationship between these two versions is very close, but the wording is not identical. E.g. in the Mekhilta when the dove enters the cleft in the rock, a “serpent was there hissing at it” (*ve-hayah nahash noshef bah*), but in Song Rabbah “it found there a serpent nesting” (*u-matze’ah sham nahash meqannen*). The description of the dove’s distress is more vivid in Song Rabbah (“beating its wings”, as is the reference to the owner of its dovecote – an element missing from the Targum’s version as well). All this has the feel of secondary expansion of the Mekhilta version in the direction of greater dramatic effect and coherence. If Song Rabbah did draw on the Mekhilta version, then it is interesting to note that it did not feel obliged to quote it verbatim, even though it was happy to acknowledge its source. It felt free to embellish. This is typical of the reproduction of aggadic material in a Jewish setting. It does not have to be reproduced verbatim: it can be reworked, and reworking is fully compatible with a claim (not actually made here) to be reproducing the tradition exactly. But there are limits to this reworking, and it should be noted here that in general the wording of Song Rabbah follows closely the wording of the Mekhilta. Even if Song Rabbah had not attributed its version to the school of Ishmael, we would still have had grounds for linking it closely to the Mekhilta version.

Song Rabbah also shares some very close wording with Midrash Tanhuma, although this is not at all on the same scale as the similarity between Song Rabbah and the Mekhilta.

(3) Mekhilta d’Rabbi Ishmael, *Beshallah* 3

The Mekhilta offers the most succinct of the versions, and the one closest to the basic tradition. In tradition-historical terms it has an early feel to it. It is also very close, as we have seen, to Song Rabbah in vocabulary and word order, and to a lesser extent, to Midrash Tanhuma. These facts suggest that this tradition originated in connection with the description of the plight of the Israelites in the wilderness as described in Exodus, and that Song 2:14 was only brought in secondarily to dramatise that plight, though surely it must have been suggested by the image of the dove. The quotation of Song 2:14 is introduced by the

unusual formula ^c*alei hem meforash be-qabbalah*, “concerning them it is made clear in tradition”, where *qabbalah* is used to denote the parts of Tanakh outside the Torah.

(4) Midrash Tanhuma (Warsaw) *Shofetim* 13

The Tanhuma version of the tradition (which occurs only in the Warsaw edition and not in the Buber) differs from the basic tradition mainly in its reference to Israel/the dove being trapped from four sides, the lateral threat being the desert with wild animals. As we saw, the same idea of complete encirclement is found in the Targum, which may indicate some relationship between it and the Tanhuma. But there is also, as indicated, significant similarity in vocabulary and word order with the Mekhilta and Song Rabbah, though it is much less than that between the Mekhilta and Song Rabbah. In Tanhuma the similarity relates primarily to the wording of the simile of the trapped dove. Thereafter the wording diverges and the style of the Tanhuma becomes more paraphrastic. The verbal correlation with Midrash Vayyosha^c relates to the same element of the tradition, which suggests that that element may have reached a set form early on, which was later maintained. Only the Targum offers significant variation.

(5) Midrash Vayyosha^c

The Midrash Vayyosha^c version sticks very closely to the basic tradition, displaying most of its elements. It does not, however, explicitly quote or even allude to Song 2:14. The exegesis is attached to Exodus 14:30, *Vayyosha^c H'* (“Thus the Lord saved Israel that day”), a verse that rounds off Song Rabbah 2.35. Another peculiarity of the Midrash Vayyosha^c version is that it goes off into a long account of the ^cAqedah, the merit of which is seen as providing God with the grounds for his deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea. So absorbed does the *darshan* become in his retelling of the ^cAqedah that he loses sight of the story at the sea. Despite the very basic form of the Vayyosha^c version of the tradition, it is surely late. Midrash Vayyosha^c is a late text dated to around the eleventh

century.⁴⁷⁴ Moreover, the tradition is assigned to Ḥazal, a late way of referencing “quotations” from Rabbinic literature. The absence of any quotation of Song 2:14 or even any allusion to it, e.g. by God referring to Israel as “My dove”, is also, probably, a mark of lateness. By the time Midrash Vayyosha^c was compiled, the tradition was so well known that it had taken on a life of its own and didn’t need the “peg” of its key biblical verse from which to hang. It is sometimes claimed that Midrash Vayyosha^c drew much of its material from Tanhuma.⁴⁷⁵ This is not obvious in this particular case.

The Development of the Tradition

The tradition-history of any rabbinic aggadah is always going to contain a large dose of speculation, and we must not conceive that development in terms of static relationships between written texts, but a dynamic process of transmission in which orality played a major part. Nevertheless, on the basis of our analysis above, a reasonably convincing tradition history in this case does emerge. The Mekhilta looks like the earliest of the five versions. It represents the basic tradition precisely, and it is by far the simplest of the versions. Here the simplicity indicates that it is early, rather than that it is late, because there is no allusiveness in it. This early dating of its form of this aggadah chimes with the fact that the text in which it is found, the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, is by far the earliest of the sources we are considering. This is commonly dated to the second or third century CE, though some have argued it is much later; possibly from the eighth century. This would probably make it roughly contemporary with, or even later than, Targum Song and Song Rabbah.⁴⁷⁶ The late date has not, however, gained much support, and it is not borne out in this particular case.

Song Rabbah probably represents the next stage of the development. It has all the elements of the Mekhilta version, but with some vivid additions which read like dramatic embellishment of the Mekhilta’s simpler tale. The Tanhuma may come

⁴⁷⁴ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 337.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. “Much of its [Midrash Vayyosha^c’s] material derives verbatim from Tanhuma”. But “Tanhuma” here is a bit vague. Which Tanhuma?

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 253-255. The eighth century date was argued by B. Z. Wacholder, “The Date of the Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 39 (1968): 117-144.

next. It adds, for the first time, the idea that Israel was *encircled* by dangers at the sea. Finally, very late, we have the version in Midrash Vayyosha^c which reverts to simplicity, but now it is the simplicity of allusiveness: the aggadah is so well known that a brief reference to it will suffice. Where does the Targum fit in? As usual it is somewhat idiosyncratic: it is the most exegetical of the versions, in the sense that it sticks closest to the biblical text of Song 2:14. But there is a case to be made that it is closest to the Tanhuma text, and that it may have developed out of a version close to that found in the Tanhuma. In terms of our genealogy of the tradition, it is probably to be placed on a branch-line striking off from Tanhuma.

Now, I fully concede that the schema proposed here is speculative, and, in many ways, intuitive. The relationship between the different versions of a rabbinic aggadah cannot be viewed in terms of literary dependence of one text directly on another, nor is it chronologically straightforward. Each extant version provides only a snapshot, a “freeze-frame”, of a continuous tradition, and some stages of the developmental process are missing from our record. Whether these missing stages took place in an oral or a literary medium we are not in a position to know, and the fact that, most likely, both were involved only complicates the picture still further. However, with all these caveats, the exercise we have just performed does serve a useful purpose in the present argument. In Case Study 2 we focused exclusively on the relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah to this verse, and the parallels seemed so striking that there was a temptation to assume that the two texts must bear a close relationship to each other. For those who accept the hypothesis that the Targum draws on the Midrash, this could furnish a prime case in point. But we now know that such a conclusion would be unwarranted. Seen against the background of the multiple parallels to the Targum at this point, an exclusive relationship with Song Rabbah is out of the question. This tradition was clearly widespread, and although the Targumic form of the tradition is idiosyncratic, it is closer to that found in the Tanhuma than that found in Song Rabbah.

6.5 Case Study 10: Song of Songs 5:1

Bible

בָּאתִי לְגַנִּי אֶחְתִּי כָלָה אֶרִיתִי מוֹרִי עִם-בְּשָׂמִי אֶכְלֶתִי יַעֲרִי עִם-דְּבָשִׁי שְׁתִּיתִי יַיִנִי עִם-חֶלְבִי אֶכְלוּ רְעִים
שְׁתוּ וְשָׁקְרוּ דוֹדִים:

I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, O friends; drink, drink deeply, O loved ones.

Targum and Parallels

Targum Song 5:1; Song Rabbah 5.1; Numbers Rabbah 13.2; Seder ‘Olam Rabbah 7.3; and Pesiqta Rabbati 5.4. See Appendix 10, pp. 304-306.

The Basic Tradition

This tradition is, as we shall see, quite flexible, but seems to comprise the following elements: (1) Song of Songs 5:1 is associated with sacrifices in either the Temple or the Tabernacle; (2) the “myrrh” and “spices” are correlated with the incense; (3) the “honey” and “honeycomb” are correlated with the most holy offerings; (4) the “milk” and “wine” are correlated with the libations and lesser offerings; (5) the “friends” are Moses and Aaron; and (6) the “lovers” are the community of Israel.

Comparison of Parallels

(1) Targum Song of Songs

Although, as we have seen in other case studies, the style of the Targum is often different, it nonetheless contains a version of the tradition found in the midrashim. It is at once close to the basic tradition and also significantly different from it. It includes points 1 to 4 above, but in points 1, 5 and 6 it betrays

its distinctive concerns. In point 1 it sees a reference to the sacrifices in the *Temple*, where the other sources all see a reference to the sacrifices in the *Tabernacle*. This plays through into its treatment of points 5 and 6. Since the Temple is in view, then identifying the “friends” as Moses and Aaron will not work, because they had nothing to do with the Temple. The Targumist takes the “friends”, therefore as a reference to the priests. He takes the “lovers” also as the priests (“priests, lovers of my precepts”). Why he diverges from the latter identification is less obvious, since there would be no chronological reason why the reference could not have been to the community of Israel. It might be argued that the offerings which the Targumist describes were not such as would have been consumed by the people, so, in a sense, he backed himself into a corner: he couldn’t mention the people here. If that is the case, then he got himself out of it very cleverly. But it should also be noted that the stress on the priesthood that results is a preoccupation of our Targumist – a preoccupation not reflected in the cognate literature, which is more concerned with rabbinic than priestly authority.

(2) Song of Songs Rabbah 5.1

Song Rabbah represents the basic tradition almost exactly, except for point 6 where “the lovers” are identified not as the congregation of Israel, but as Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, who “offered strange fire before the Lord” (Numbers 3:4; 26:61; Leviticus 10:1-2; 1 Chronicles 24:2). How this identification has come about is very obscure. This version seems to take the reference to drinking and interprets it in a negative way, in line with the negative results of drunkenness experienced by Nadab and Abihu. The *Yefeh Qol*, accepted by Simon in a footnote in the Soncino translation *ad loc.*, suggests that “drink” in the Song text should be understood in the sense of “accept your punishment”. But this is forced and unsatisfactory. It makes better sense to suppose the Midrashist saw Nadab and Abihu’s serious cultic aberration, which the Bible implies resulted in their “death before the Lord”, as a kind of madness: it was as if they were drunk, not in total command of themselves. But this interpretation is still very forced and jars in the context in the Song. The more positive interpretation in the other versions of the tradition is more plausible, not least

because it avoids the paradox of God implicitly calling two such conspicuous miscreants as Nadab and Abihu “lovers”.

There is unquestionably a close similarity between Song Rabbah and the Targum on this verse, but yet again we see that even where basically the same idea is expressed in each text, the wording is not the same, and there is often some twist or nuance that sets each text apart. We have already noted that while the Midrash, like the other non-Targumic sources speak of sacrifices in the *Tabernacle*, the Targum speaks of sacrifices in the *Temple*. Note also the precise interpretations of “I have drunk my wine with my milk”. The Targumist takes this as referring to “libations of red and white wine”. Obviously he could not take “milk” literally here, since milk was not offered as a libation in the Temple. The Midrash explains the phrase as alluding to “the drink-offerings and the sacrificial parts of the lesser holy things”. There was absolutely no reason why the Targum could not have accepted the Midrash’s interpretation, or vice versa. Each chose to go its own way, within a general framework of agreement. This makes it difficult to prove literary dependency.

(3) Numbers Rabbah 13.2

Numbers Rabbah is the most compact of the versions, and corresponds exactly to the basic tradition as we have defined it above. It is close verbally and in substance to Song Rabbah and its relationship to this work is interesting. There are two significant points of difference. First, Song Rabbah includes in its exposition of the first unit of the verse, “I have come into my garden my sister, my bride”, a long passage about how the sins of Adam and the early generations drove the Shekhinah even further up to heaven from earth, until the days of Abraham it resided in the highest, seventh heaven. Then Abraham and the patriarchs, by their righteousness, brought it back, heaven by heaven, to earth until it finally took up its abode again on earth when Moses raised the Tabernacle. The exegetical basis of this interpretation is the allusion the *darshan* detected in the word “garden” in Song 5:1 to the Garden of Eden, where God once walked with humanity: “my garden”, presupposes the garden which I (God) once frequented. Numbers Rabbah does have a version of this well known

tradition, but it does not introduce it into the basic exposition, it is cited later. Song Rabbah looks secondary here: this long intrusion spoils the balance of the unit because Song Rabbah does not expand any of the other components of the unit in this way, though it had plenty of material with which to do so.

The second interesting difference is that Numbers Rabbah identifies the “lovers” with the community of Israel, whereas, as we saw above, Song Rabbah has the problematic “Nadab and Abihu”. Numbers Rabbah cites the Nadab and Abihu identification later, as a secondary interpretation. It looks as if Song Rabbah moved this into the basic tradition for some reason. It should also be noted that, even where Song Rabbah and Numbers Rabbah basically agree, they may differ as to precise wording. For Numbers Rabbah “I have gathered my myrrh with my spice” is explained as “the frankincense of the incense and the incense of the meal-offerings”, whereas for Song Rabbah it is “the incense of spices and the handful of frankincense”.

A reasonable case can be made that Song Rabbah here is later than Numbers Rabbah, but we must be careful to clarify what such a claim might imply. As the analysis of the remaining parallels shows, we should not simply presuppose from the outset an exclusive relationship between these two texts: either Numbers Rabbah is dependent directly on Song Rabbah or vice versa. The relationship is not straightforward, and, as I have constantly argued in this dissertation, should not be conceived of in static, literary terms. The relative dates of the works might also complicate the theory that Numbers Rabbah is here dependent on Song Rabbah (see below). One thing is clear: whatever form of the tradition either text drew on, they treated it with considerable freedom. Even in the case of a parallelism as close as this, the questions of direct dependency and the direction of dependency remain open.

(4) Seder °Olam Rabbah 7:3

Seder °Olam Rabbah’s version, like Numbers Rabbah’s, is also compact and close to the basic tradition. It agrees with Numbers Rabbah that the “garden” is the Tabernacle, and that God’s coming into his garden must have happened on

the eighth day when the dedication of the Tabernacle was complete. This precision is absent from Song Rabbah. It looks, at first sight, pedantic, but there may be an exegetical point. The phrase the “eighth day” is commonly associated in midrashic tradition with the messianic age, so perhaps with this single little phrase Numbers Rabbah and Seder ʿOlam look forward to the restoration of all things, and God’s return to dwell with humanity. This element is surely likely to be original. Song Rabbah did not see the significance and so dropped it, while continuing to see a reference to the dedication of the Tabernacle. The one point the Seder ʿOlam does differ from Numbers Rabbah is adding Miriam to Moses and Aaron as the “friends”. This is singular, and again, surely likely to have been original. It is easier to imagine Miriam dropping out than to imagine her being put in.

(5) Pesiqta Rabbati 5:4

Pesiqta Rabbati is in some ways the most idiosyncratic of the versions. It seems to presuppose the basic tradition, as presented by Numbers Rabbah, but has utilised it for its own ends, deconstructing it and introducing other elements into it. For example, its intrusion of a *davar ’aḥer* containing reference to “the princes” between items 4 and 5 of the basic tradition spoils the symmetry of the unit. The “three princes” tradition is also found in both Numbers Rabbah and Song Rabbah, but they place it elsewhere. So we have a similar situation to Song Rabbah’s intrusion of additional material between items 1 and 2. In both cases the longer text is secondary. The same can be said about Pesiqta Rabbati’s intrusion of the king mashal after the lemma and the *davar ’aḥer* between items 1 and 2. The introduction of the proof-text for identifying the people of Israel as the “lovers” is also secondary. Otherwise Pesiqta Rabbati is close to the basic tradition, though with the usual variations in precise wording. Its interpretation of “I have drunk my wine with my milk (*ḥalavi*)” is particularly neat, and actually rather obvious: “These are the libations and the fat-portions (*ḥalavim*: cf. Leviticus 8:26)”. This is, surprisingly, not found in any other version.

The Development of the Tradition

Taking the above analysis into account, I would suggest that the following is a reasonable account of the development of this tradition. The Seder °Olam has, perhaps, the best claim to represent the earliest phase. It is very compact and very clear, and as already noted, it alone includes Miriam among the “friends”, an element more likely to be original than not. This would not be incompatible with some datings of the work. Milikowsky has argued on the basis of a comparison of several passages in it with Tosefta Sota 12 that it was redacted before the completion of the final redaction of the Tosefta. This would make it a late Tannaitic, or early Amoraic work, but others have put it much later, some even making it post Talmudic.⁴⁷⁷ It is interesting that this exegetical unit should occur in what is fundamentally a non-midrashic work, so it can hardly have been invented by the author of the Seder °Olam. Be all this as it may, the fact remains that, from a tradition-historical point of view, seeing the Seder °Olam as containing the earliest form of this particular tradition makes good sense.

Next I would place Numbers Rabbah. Again, it is compact and coherent. The dating of the work may complicate the picture. The structure of Numbers Rabbah is complex. There are manuscripts containing part of this work from as early as the thirteenth century, but no complete manuscripts until the fifteenth, close to the time of the first printed text, Constantinople 1512.⁴⁷⁸ It clearly falls into two distinct parts: (1) an aggadic midrash on Numbers 1-7, and (2) a homiletic midrash on Numbers 8-36, which is in large part a version of Midrash Tanhuma.⁴⁷⁹ Herr has dated this latter section to the ninth century, but Stemberger, following Fritz Böhl, would put it earlier, possibly as early as 400.⁴⁸⁰ The ninth-century dating would put Numbers Rabbah 8-36 a little later than Song Rabbah or Targum Song, though that would not necessarily be a problem for us here, since it is a well-known phenomenon that late works can contain early forms of tradition. If Numbers Rabbah 8-36 is fifth century, then it

⁴⁷⁷ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 326.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 337.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 338-339.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 332 and 339.

would be earlier than Song Rabbah and Targum Song, so putting its version early in the tradition-history would raise no problems.

The next stage of the tradition is represented by Song Rabbah. Here we begin to see the basic structure being broken up by intrusions, The identification of the “lovers” with Nadab and Abihu is problematic and suggests an atomistic perspective which involves a certain lack of attention to the context of Song 5:1. The deconstruction of the structure of the tradition continues in Pesiqta Rabbati, which I would place later still. The date of Pesiqta Rabbati is deeply controversial. Like the other midrashim, it is a compilation, the final creation of which cannot necessarily be posited on the basis of the individual traditions contained within it. Zunz assigned it to the second half of the ninth century, which would bring it close in time to Song Rabbah and Targum Song, but others suggest that some of the material it contains may be older.⁴⁸¹ Stemberger concluded that: “The idea of an individual final redactor is ... untenable. Instead a lengthy process of development must be assumed ... The indiscriminately late dating by Zunz *et al* is ... unwarranted. Nowadays scholars more frequently opt for a date in the sixth or seventh century;⁴⁸² but even this can only be regarded an approximate time-frame that remains to be secured in detail.”⁴⁸³ The “feel” of many of the traditions in Pesiqta Rabbati (e.g. Pisqa 34) is late, and there is nothing in its history that would obviously conflict with our suggestion that at this point it offers a form of a tradition later than that found in Seder ^oOlam, Numbers Rabbah, and Song Rabbah.

Where does Targum Song fit into this midrashic trajectory? Yet again, it is far from easy to say. It runs parallel to it, but where it branches off from it is unclear. In terms of the basic tradition, the Targum offers the most idiosyncratic interpretation of all, one that has been clearly influenced by the Targumist’s overall schema for reading the Song, and by his palpable desire to exegete the biblical text closely. Certainly one thing is clear: If we are looking for midrashic

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 300.

⁴⁸² So W. G. Braude in the introduction to his English translation of Pesiqta Rabbati (*Pesiqta Rabbati* (2 vols.; Yale Judaica Series XVIII; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968) and Daniel Sperber, “Pesikta Rabbati,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (ed. Cecil Roth; vol. 13; Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), 335f.

⁴⁸³ Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 302.

sources of the Targum, then there is no reason to link it any more closely with Song Rabbah than with any other of the midrashic parallels.

6.6 Case Study 11: Song of Songs 8:14

Bible

בְּרַח דְּוֹדֵי וּדְמֵה-לָהּ לְצִבְי אוֹ לְעֵפֶר הָאֲזִילִים עַל הַרֵי בְּשָׂמִים:

Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or like a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

Targum and Parallels

Targum Song 8:14; Song Rabbah 8.19; Tanḥuma (Buber), *Toledot* 5; Tosafot Hullin 59a; Zohar, *Exodus*, II, 14a. For texts see Appendix 11, pages 307-308.

The Basic Tradition

I have dealt with this tradition at some length in Case Study 6 above, and only want to make a few points here in connection with some multiple parallels to the tradition found in Targum Song and Song Rabbah. To reiterate, the basic tradition involves: (1) reference to the fact that the gazelle sleeps with one eye open; (2) comparison of God with the gazelle; (3) depiction of God's behaviour towards Israel in terms of that of the sleeping gazelle.

Comparison of Parallels

(1) Targum Song

As will become apparent from the parallels below, the nub of the question in the multiple comparison turns out to be exactly what is implied by the idea that God keeps an eye on Israel like a sleeping gazelle. Alexander translates *tehe' mashgah ban u-mistakkel*, "So watch over us, and observe (our trouble and

affliction from the highest heavens)”. In other words, the looking implies protection. But the Aramaic verb used here, *shegah*, is rather more ambiguous than this: it could be understood in context in this way, but there are other possibilities. Both Jastrow and Sokoloff in their dictionaries suggest that the basic sense of the verb is to “pay attention to, take notice of”,⁴⁸⁴ and this sense fits well the flow of the Targumist’s thought here. He is not, strictly speaking, asking God to protect Israel from trouble and affliction: he expects trouble and affliction. He only asks God not to forget Israel, to keep her in mind, and to bring the redemption which will put an end to her suffering.

(2) Song Rabbah

Song Rabbah, as we saw in our analysis in Case Study 6, offers a wide variety of interpretations of this verse, but in its parallel to the Targum’s imagery of the sleeping gazelle it offers a slightly different perspective on the meaning of the image. It should be noted that, unlike the Targum, it does not take the image in an eschatological sense. God’s looking on Israel is apparently in the here and now. It is a matter of God rewarding Israel when she does his will, and punishing her when she does not. The Midrash exploits the variation in the number of the word *‘ayin*, “eye” in the Psalms to make this point. In Psalm 34:16 God looks with two eyes, but in Psalm 33:18 with one. The recipients of the two-eyed look are “the righteous”, those of the one-eyed, presumably quizzical, disapproving look, “those who fear him”, taken here negatively, to mean those who are rightly fearful of God, because they are doing wrong. In the Midrash it is all a matter of doing or not doing God’s will in the here and now, and the reward or punishment that will result from this behaviour. This is all standard Rabbinic theology, and it has no eschatological overtones whatsoever. We are in a different theological world from the Targum.

⁴⁸⁴ Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 1521b; Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1992), 537b; Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2002), 1108b.

(3) Tanhuma (Buber), Toledot 5

The Tanhuma tradition is attached to an exposition of Psalm 33:18, and comprises the reference to God's one-eyed look, which is linked to Song 8:14 and the image of the sleeping gazelle. The tradition is very compressed, and really on its own conveys little meaning: the basic sense is: "the *eye*" (sing.) in Psalm 33:18 recalls the reference to God as a gazelle in Song 8:14, because a gazelle sleeps with one eye open and one eye shut. But what wider significance this might have is not spelled out. It seems as if the Tanhuma version of the basic tradition presupposes the fuller Song Rabbah version. The *darshan* in the Tanhuma either didn't get the point of the Song Rabbah version, or he assumed knowledge of the fuller tradition to make his point. But once again he offers no eschatological perspective. The implication is that God's looking is for judgement in the here and now.

(4) Tosafot Hullin 59b

A version of our tradition appears in a homiletic note in a halakhic discussion about gazelles found in the glosses to Rashi's commentary on the Talmud known as the Tosafot. The Tosafot are, of course, outside our time-frame, and are not *darshanim*, but their allusion to our tradition allows me to make a useful observation. The Tosafot quote the image of God as like the sleeping gazelle from Midrash Shir ha-Shirim. There can surely be little doubt that they are referring precisely to the passage in Song Rabbah discussed above, but they have arguably misunderstood the meaning. They assume that it is talking about God protecting Israel: "... So the Holy One, blessed be He, in the hour of Israel's exile and tribulation, sets his eye upon them *to preserve them (le-shomram)*." As I have just demonstrated this is *not* at all the argument of Song Rabbah. For Song Rabbah the idea is that God looks on Israel to judge her. For the Tosafot he looks on Israel *providentially to ensure she is not annihilated by her afflictions*.

(5) Zohar

The Zohar is also a late text, which lies beyond the range of our tradition history, but it, too, allows us to reinforce the point just made in the discussion of the Tosafot. It too knows the image of God as the sleeping gazelle. It does not say where it got it from, but its source too may have been Song Rabbah. A derivation from the Targum, which could also have been known to the author of the Zohar, is put in some doubt by the fact that he does not in any way reflect the Targum's eschatological perspective, but, as we shall see, is in broad agreement with Song Rabbah. The Zoharic version is very compressed, but it clearly associates the idea of God's looking with the providential preservation of Israel in this age, and it cleverly (and, indeed, rather obviously) links it with Psalm 121:4: "The gazelle, when it sleeps, sleeps only with one eye, but the other is wakeful. So Israel says to the Holy One, blessed be He, "Make yourself like the gazelle!" (cf. Song 8:14), for behold, *He who keeps Israel (shomer Yisra'el) neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:4).*" Note the care with which the traditional wording "one eye open and one eye shut" has been rephrased, the better to anticipate the introduction of Psalm 121:4.

The Development of the Tradition

There is no point attempting to write a tradition history of this particular interpretation (see, in part, above 5.7), but our analysis does shed some light on how such traditions develop. I can find only five instances in Jewish literature down to the Middle Ages which contain this striking idea that God can be compared to a sleeping gazelle. They are the five that I have quoted. But the way the image is understood is very different. In two of the texts (Tosafot and Zohar) it is used to express God's providential care for Israel. In two (Song Rabbah and possibly Tanhuma), it is used to express God's judgement of Israel, his taking cognisance of her deeds and rewarding and punishing her accordingly.⁴⁸⁵ In the fifth (the Targum) it is used to express the idea of God not forgetting Israel, but

⁴⁸⁵ One wonders if at the back of the *darshan's* mind here is the famous dictum in Mishnah Pirquei 'Avot: "Consider three things and you will not fall into the hands of transgression. Know what is above you – a seeing eye, a hearing ear, and all your deeds written in a book."

taking note of her distress and bringing the redemption. What this illustrates is the creativity of the tradition. Even assuming that one of these texts originated the image, the others used it for their own ends. They did not copy their source slavishly. This is particularly obvious in the case of the Tosafot, who actually tell us they got the tradition from Song Rabbah, but then proceed to interpret it in a totally different way. If they hadn't told us their source we would have been in some doubt as to what it was, because of this difference. And, although by the Middle Ages, we can begin to speak of written texts and hence the possibility of fixed literary relationships, before then what we seem to have are core ideas (here "God is like a gazelle which sleeps with one eye open and one shut") being carried down, largely orally, in the stream of homiletic tradition, which each darshan adapts for his own ends. To apply to this fluid situation the language of "sources", "borrowings", and "dependency" is deeply misleading.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has yielded some important results which can be summarised as follows.

(1) There is a real danger that, if we look exclusively at one-to-one parallelism between the Targum and the Midrash, we can be led into drawing incorrect inferences as to the relationship between the two works. By adding in other parallels to the cases we had already studied in Chapter Five, we were able to nuance our analysis there. This caution engendered by the study of multiple parallelism has to be applied across the board, even to those cases where we have a tradition attested *only* in two texts, since we cannot assume that we have the sum total of the aggadah from late antiquity. Multiple attestation is the norm, particularly when a tradition is striking, and so, on the face of it, might offer the chance of establishing an exclusive relationship.

(2) In several cases of multiple parallelism, the Targum was closer to other sources than it was to Song Rabbah. In general, however, the relationship of the Targum to the midrashic tradition was problematic. It was usually possible to draw up a reasonably persuasive trajectory of the midrashic forms of each

tradition, but how the Targum intersected with it was far from clear. The Targum, from the midrashic standpoint, was often idiosyncratic. It clearly represented in general terms the same basic tradition, but it was on a parallel trajectory, so to speak. One reason for this may be related to genre: the Targum offers a much closer reading of the biblical text. The Midrash is more atomistic. The discipline of “translating” every element of the biblical text sometimes demanded greater ingenuity and creativity on the part of the *meturgeman* than the more impressionistic approach of the *darshanim*.

(3) Close exegesis of the parallels is absolutely essential. Many in the past have not bothered to note how different the use of similar motifs can be. They have simply snatched at the similarity, and ignored the significant difference. The model of the tradition which emerges from our analysis of the multiple parallels is of a basic tradition, a constellation of motifs, which is passed on, but elaborated in a variety of creative ways. These core motifs are often very basic, very skeletal. They are full of potential, and each expositor fills them, or fleshes them out with his own meaning. It is the constellation of core motifs that is remembered, not the detailed reworkings of them. They act as an inspiration rather than as strictly speaking a source. Each concrete Midrash is like an elaborate musical variation on a simple musical theme. What links the concrete midrashim is not so much their direct dependence on one another, as their relationship to the basic theme. The most satisfactory way of understanding the tradition is in terms of a large number of these themes being passed down orally within a homiletic tradition of preaching and teaching, rather than in terms of fixed, written, texts circulating within schools or through a book market servicing private consumption.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION: TARGUM SONG OF SONGS AND SONG OF SONGS RABBAH

The aim of this dissertation has been to explore the relationship between Targum Song of Songs and Song of Songs Rabbah. That these two texts are related in some way is beyond any shadow of doubt, and is acknowledged on all sides. What is disputed is the nature of this relationship. I shall argue in this final chapter that the view that the Targum is dependent on and derived from the Midrash cannot be maintained in the light of the analysis I have conducted in the body of this dissertation. My analysis was confined to close synoptic comparison of the exegesis in both Targum and Midrash of selected verses in Song of Songs. It engaged with the exegetical substance of the two works, but before drawing out the broader implications of this research, we need to set it in the context of a more comprehensive comparison. That comparison embraces the following aspects: (1) language; (2) literary form and genre; (3) exegetical method; (4) exegetical and aggadic content. It is with the fourth point that the majority of my analysis has been concerned, but I would suggest that this has to be considered, however briefly, in the light of the three former points.

7.1 Language

Here there is an obvious and major difference: the Targum is in Aramaic, in the dialect now commonly known as Late Literary Jewish Aramaic; the Midrash is in Hebrew, in the dialect now commonly known as Rabbinic Hebrew, probably in its Palestinian Amoraic form.⁴⁸⁶ Both these languages serve to distinguish the ‘commentary’ from the original biblical text. This is no less true of the Midrash than of the Targum. Rabbinic Hebrew is very different from Biblical Hebrew, and was probably used by the Rabbis as the language of Midrash for that very

⁴⁸⁶ For the Aramaic of the Targum see Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles*; Sáenz-Badillos, *History of the Hebrew Language*; S Kaufman, *The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*, <http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/>.

reason: there could be no danger of confusing the comment and the original, as might have happened if they had written, as some decided to do in the Middle Ages, in Biblical Hebrew. The significance of this linguistic difference between the Targum and the Midrash should not be underestimated. It means that if the Targum is dependent on the Midrash, then the Targumist would have had to recast an idea which he found in his source in Rabbinic Hebrew into Aramaic: an element of translation would inevitably have been involved. Crucially, this makes verbal overlaps effectively impossible to identify, and therefore the overlaps will have to be a matter of substance, rather than of wording. Quotation of Midrash by the Targum, in any strict sense of the word 'quotation', is virtually ruled out. It is surprising how often the advocates of literary dependency ignore this simple but important fact. The possibility of literary 'quotation' might be more plausible if we could be sure that interpretation of Scripture in the circles in which these works were created was primarily conducted in Hebrew, but the very existence of the Targumim suggests otherwise, and there is good evidence, for example from the Proems of Lamentations Rabbah, that a tradition of popular preaching in Aramaic did exist.⁴⁸⁷ So the simple fact that Targum Song and Song Rabbah are in different languages complicates the question of their relationship.

7.2 Literary Form and Genre

Here again there is an obvious major difference. The Midrash clearly has the form of a lemmatic commentary, that is to say, it works through the biblical text verse by verse, from start to finish. The Midrash is punctuated, segmented and structured by the biblical lemmata it quotes, either in full or in abbreviated form, depending on the manuscript. The commentary is actually rather unevenly spread. Like many midrashim, Song Rabbah tails off towards the end:⁴⁸⁸ its comments are less extensive in the later chapters of the biblical book than they are at the beginning, although it does reach the end. If we were to remove the biblical lemmata from the Midrash the remaining text could not stand on its own. Targum Song, however, has the literary form of translation – admittedly the translation given is unusual in its limited connection to the original Hebrew, but

⁴⁸⁷ See Alexander, *The Targum of Lamentations*, 51-61; Galit Hasan-Rokem, *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

⁴⁸⁸ Though interestingly not as much as Lamentations Rabbah.

nevertheless, the *form* is that of translation. This point requires careful articulation, because it is not as obvious in the case of Targum Song as it would be in the case of a number of the other Targumim. When we look at the manuscripts of Targum Song, and indeed of the other Targumim, the Targum is always presented alongside the biblical text. The Yemenite manuscripts quote the biblical text in full (one verse of Bible in Hebrew followed by the verse of Targum in Aramaic, in some cases followed by an Arabic version as well), but Western manuscripts may give the biblical text in abbreviated form. Although it may seem tempting to argue that this is the equivalent of the lemma plus comment form of the Midrash, there is one important difference: if the lemmata are cut out of the Targum what is left is a free-standing, self-contained literary work, which does not require the reader to refer to the original. The inclusion of the biblical text in the Targum is a matter of convenience or theology, because the Targum's public role always requires it to be recited against the Hebrew, or, even if studied in private, to be read against the Hebrew ("twice in the Hebrew and once in the Targum"⁴⁸⁹). The lemmata are not intrinsic to the literary form of the Targum itself.

The free-stranding, self-contained nature of the Targum is characteristic of translation. The basic meaning of the word *targum* is to translate from one language into another, and one of the fundamental characteristics of a translation is that it mimics the literary form and literary characteristics of the original. Targum Song observes this principle to a surprising degree, and in a surprisingly sophisticated way, despite its paraphrastic character. It shows that the Targumist had a strong sense of what is appropriate for a translation and what is not. Thus he avoids multiple translations of the same biblical item. It occasionally happens that he does offer a double interpretation of a biblical word or phrase, but he slips it in in such a way that one would never guess this was happening from reading the Targum itself. Different interpretations are not highlighted by devices such as *davar aher*, as we find sometimes in Midrash, or even *targum aher*, as we find in

⁴⁸⁹ See b.Ber. 8a-8b, 'R. Huna b. Judah says in the name of R. Ammi: A man should always complete his *Parashiyyot* together with the congregation, twice in the Hebrew and once in the Targum, and even [such verses as] *Atarot* and *Dibon* (Num. 32:3), for if one completes his *Parashiyyot* together with the congregation, his days and years are prolonged.'

Targum Job and Targum Psalms. His reading is fundamentally monovalent. He ‘translates’ everything in the biblical text usually in its correct biblical sequence. He does not quote named Rabbis, or other parts of Scripture in a way that highlights them as quotations (‘as it is written’), nor introduce anything that would manifestly violate the translational ethos of his work. There are two aspects in which he does depart from this principle. Most obvious is the fact that he has not attempted to maintain the poetic form of the original: the Targum is prose, not poetry. As indicated in Chapter Two (2.1)⁴⁹⁰, there is some inconsistency in the targumic translations of biblical poetry, as to whether or not the poetical form is maintained. As a result of this inconsistency, the Targumist’s departure from the literary form in this sense may not be overly significant, but it is likely to have been a conscious decision and therefore should not be ignored. The second element is in Song 1:1, where he introduces a version of the Midrash of the Ten Songs, which includes explicit biblical quotations in Hebrew. It is possible, however, that he saw this introductory verse as a title that stands outside the main text, and so could be treated in different way. The change of voice in the second verse is very dramatic, and from there on the Targumist does not breach the cardinal principle of translation.

This fundamental difference of genre between translation on the one hand and lemmatic commentary on the other sets the stage for a whole range of other differences between Targum Song and Song Rabbah. It is too often ignored by the advocates of dependence. If the Targumist was indeed using the Midrash then he would have been forced to adapt its traditions in a number of ways before he could fit it into his translation. For example, he would have had to be selective, and he would have had to anonymise the interpretations in those cases where the Midrash attributed them to a named scholar. Again this immensely complicates the relationship between the two texts. I will return to some of these points below.

⁴⁹⁰ Page 33.

7.3 Exegetical Method

We have seen time and again in the detailed synoptic comparisons of this thesis that Targum Song and Song Rabbah adopt a similar approach to the exegesis of Scripture. Their hermeneutical axioms and hermeneutical techniques appear to be broadly the same; they come from the same hermeneutical tradition. This is hardly surprising given that historical analysis suggests they emanate from the same Palestinian Rabbinic milieu at roughly the same period of time. There are, however, some important differences, which become all the more important precisely because of this shared historical background. The first is that the Targum is more consistent in addressing each element in the biblical text than is the Midrash: almost every word of the Hebrew is represented in the Targum usually in its biblical sequence. Despite being longer, the Midrash does not adhere as closely to the biblical text, and is, in fact, much more selective. As I noted before (7.2), this is a function of the difference between translation and commentary. Selectivity is possible in a commentary (though not inevitable), but it is not an option in translation.

Second, while the Midrash from time to time makes clear its exegetical reasoning, for example by explicitly quoting a verse of Scripture that plays a crucial role in a particular exegetical manoeuvre, the Targum does not. This difference can also be seen as a function of the difference in genre between the two works (commentary v. translation: 7.2 above), but it is important nonetheless. We have to guess less about the underlying exegetical logic of the Midrash; it lies closer to the surface. When we find the same exegesis in the Targum, it is reasonable to postulate that the same logic lies behind it, but this fact will be less obvious, and has to be assumed. This might seem, in principle, to point to an argument in favour of the dependency of the Targum on the Midrash: the *darshan* does the exegetical work and the *meturgeman* appropriates it. But such an argument would be simplistic and denigrate unreasonably the exegetical competence of the Targumist. The *meturgeman* of Targum Song is clearly highly learned, and the exegetical procedures he deploys are, on the whole, so standard and so pervasive in Rabbinic culture, that to suppose he could not have operated them for himself would be highly implausible.

It should be noted, however, that there may be a certain asymmetry in the situation. While the lack of overt exegetical logic in the Targum cannot be used to argue that the Targum relies on the Midrash, it does make somewhat problematic the suggestion that the Midrash is dependent on the Targum. If the *darshan* derived some of his exegeses from the Targum, he would have had to reconstruct their exegetical logic for himself if he wished to present them in his Midrash in 'worked' form. This is, of course, not impossible, but it does show yet again how complex the relationship between the Midrash and the Targum may be. Casual assumptions of direct literary dependence in either direction ignore these nuances.

But there is a third, much more significant difference between the Targum and the Midrash at the exegetical level. It is that the two texts differ fundamentally in their overall understanding of Song of Songs. The Targum, as has long been recognised, presents a total, coherent reading of the book, which sees it as an allegorical account of the ups and downs of the relationship between God and Israel from the Exodus from Egypt to the coming of the Messiah. This schema is imposed on the biblical book with great skill, and it determines the detailed interpretation of every verse.⁴⁹¹ Exegetical possibilities have to be discarded because they do not fit into the schema. The Midrash does not adopt this schema. Its agenda seems to be fundamentally encyclopaedic. Elements of the Targum's schema are, indeed, to be found in Song Rabbah, but only as one of a number of possibilities. The reading of the Midrash is atomistic and multivalent, and one would have to work very hard to extract this schema from it. The coherence of the Midrash is very different from that of the Targum: it is a thematic rather than a schematic coherence; that is to say, it creates unity by reiterating again and again the same small repertory of themes, which emerge from and reinforce the Rabbinic worldview. This is the normal kind of coherence we find in the classic Rabbinic Midrashim,⁴⁹² and it is a loose, open-ended coherence, which is

⁴⁹¹ See Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles* for an analysis of the schema of the Targum and Chapter 2 of this thesis (2.6 p.51).

⁴⁹² As was proved time and time again by Neusner, *The Midrash Compilations of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries: An Introduction to the Rhetorical, Logical and Topical Program, IV: Song of Songs Rabbah*.

capable, within the limits of the thematic inventory itself, of almost infinite expansion and exemplification. The Targum's schema is much more restrictive: it cannot be expanded at will, a fact graphically illustrated by the fact that successive copyists found it almost impossible to alter it, and so, contrary to what one might expect in the case of such a paraphrastic work which seems to invite endless reworking, its manuscript tradition is highly stable.⁴⁹³

As has been noted by others, this totalising reading of a biblical text which we find in Targum Song is extremely rare in early Rabbinic Bible commentary. Indeed, it may be unique. What the Targumist has done, whether knowingly or otherwise, has been to reintroduce a form of allegory into Jewish Bible interpretation. The allegorical method of interpreting texts was widespread in late antiquity. It had been introduced possibly from as early as the fourth century BCE into the interpretation of Homer, and was much used by the Stoics as a way of defending Homer against the charge of philosophers such as Plato and Epicurus that he was guilty of primitive or even impious views of the gods.⁴⁹⁴ The concept of allegory is highly problematic in the Greek tradition of exegesis, but the basic hermeneutical move is always the same: the text is not to be taken at face value; it actually means something different from what it appears to say. This method of interpretation was apparently introduced into the Jewish exegetical tradition by the Alexandrians: its most prominent exponent is, of course, Philo. It was taken up also by early Christian exegetes, partly under the influence of Philo, and partly under the influence of contemporary philosophical exegesis of Homer. It proved a highly valuable instrument in the Christian appropriation of the Jewish Scriptures: it made the Old Testament more malleable, more susceptible to the reception of Christian doctrine. The allegorical method was also widespread in medieval Jewish exegesis: it was used

⁴⁹³ See Chapter 2 above on the manuscripts of Targum Song.

⁴⁹⁴ See Philip S. Alexander, "Heraclitus's Homeric Problems and Midrash Bere'shit Rabbah: Comparisons and Contrasts" (presented at the Research Workshop of the Israel Science Foundation, 'Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters: Between Literary and Religious Concerns, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, June 2, 2010); David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992); Robert Lamberton and J. J. Kearney, eds., *Homer's Ancient Readers: The Hermeneutics of Greek Epic's Earliest Exegetes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Luc Brisson, *How Philosophers Saved Myths: Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

to validate both mystical and philosophical ideas from Scripture. The *Zohar*, for example, is full of allegorical readings of Genesis. But allegory is almost totally absent from classic rabbinic Midrash, and this includes Song Rabbah. The seeds of an allegorical reading of Song of Songs are unquestionably there, and indeed, these seeds may well go back to the second century CE, when the ‘Aqivan’ non-literal reading of the book was propounded, and, apparently, accepted within the Rabbinic movement. But it is a simple fact that Song Rabbah does not produce an allegorical reading of Song of Songs, and its allegorising tendencies are buried deep amongst its other readings. That Targum Song conforms to ancient definitions of allegory is surely clear: Song of Songs means something different from what it says. The *kallah* is not a bride in the ordinary sense of the term, but represents symbolically Israel; the *dod* is not her human lover but God; the ‘daughters of Jerusalem’ are not the ordinary women of Jerusalem, but the nations of the world; and the dramatic interplay of these actors is not a simple tale of the vicissitudes of human courtship and love, but a grand and sweeping narrative of the history of Israel’s troubled relationship to her God from the Exodus to the end of the world.⁴⁹⁵ If Origen’s *Commentary on the Song of Songs* exemplifies the allegorical method, then so too does Targum Song, and it may be the earliest example we have of allegory in any strict sense of the term within the Rabbinic tradition of biblical interpretation.

These observations are pertinent to the argument of the present dissertation in two ways. First, they establish the exegetical independence of the Targumist of Targum Song, and counteract the idea that he needed to rely on the *darshanim* to create his own reading of Song of Songs. He was a bold, highly creative, highly innovative exegete in his own right, not a mere imitator of the Midrash, and if, as all commentators do, he drew both content and inspiration from antecedent tradition, he has made what he took so totally his own that direct dependency on other texts would be hard to prove. But secondly, and incidentally, his allegorical method aligns him with contemporary Christian biblical interpretation and

⁴⁹⁵ Note, for example, the definition of allegory offered by Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems* 4, ‘For the moment, it is probably essential to give a little technical account of allegory, quite briefly. The word itself, which is formed in a way expressive of truth, reveals its own significance. For the trope which says [*agoreuôn*] one thing but signifies something other [*alla*] than what it says receives the name “allegory” precisely from this’ (trans. Donald A. Russell and David Konstan; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 9.

distances him from contemporary Rabbinic interpretation.⁴⁹⁶ This gives some support to the cases we noted above where we suspected that there is some sort of hidden dialectic with Christian readings of Song of Songs in operation in his work.⁴⁹⁷

7.4 Exegetical and Aggadic Content

The final level of comparison between Targum Song and Song Rabbah relates to what I call the exegetical and aggadic content of the two works, that is to say, the concrete, exegetical and aggadic traditions which they contain. It is to this level of analysis that the bulk of this dissertation belongs. The other levels surveyed briefly in points 1-3 above emerged in our discussion in passing. However, they should not, as I have stated, be ignored, because they provide the framework within which conclusions should be drawn as to what shared exegetical and aggadic content might mean. If significant differences in language, literary form and genre, and even exegetical method between the two works make the hypothesis of direct literary dependence problematic, then the exegetical and aggadic content is left to bear the burden of the proof. If that cannot prove it, then the hypothesis cannot be maintained.

From our detailed case studies of overlaps between the Targum and the Midrash the following general points emerge:

Firstly, we should note that not all parallels are equal, and capable of supporting the same conclusions. When parallels do occur we need to assess their quality. The quality of the parallelism in the case of Song of Songs 2:14 (Case Studies 3 and 9) is much greater than the quality of the parallelism in the case of Song of Songs 8:14 (Case Studies 6 and 11). In the former there is a full and rather complex tradition in which many points of comparison and contact can be found,

⁴⁹⁶ The literature on the Christian appropriation of the allegorical method is vast: for an introduction see Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Early Christianity*, 248-55.

⁴⁹⁷ It is interesting to note that where Song Rabbah may show evidence of knowledge of Christian exegesis of Song of Songs its attitude seems to be hostile. This hostility is not so clear in the Targum. Maybe the *darshan* rejected allegory precisely because it had been taken up so effectively by the Church.

and in which parallels can be easily identified. This is an example of strong parallelism. In the latter, the tradition is so concise that, although the same broad tradition is clearly used, there are fewer points of comparison, and so less substantial conclusions can be drawn. This is not to say that parallels of poorer quality should be ignored – they certainly should not! – but they should not be treated as if they are able to show us more than they really can. The fact is that there are few really strong parallels between Targum Song and Song Rabbah. The mere amassing of parallels of all kinds, without examining them in detail and weighing them, is one of the characteristics of what Samuel Sandmel famously condemned as ‘parallelomania’.⁴⁹⁸

Secondly, our analysis highlighted the dangers of drawing conclusions based on one-to-one comparison between Targum Song and Song Rabbah. In many cases multiple versions of the same tradition exist in Rabbinic literature and to ignore these further parallels and focus exclusively on the Targum and the Midrash, involves ignoring a substantial part of the evidence. For example, in Case Study 3 (Song of Songs 2:14), a one-to-one comparison of the Targum and the Midrash might be seen as supporting an argument for a direct relationship between the two (though it fell well short of proving *literary* dependence of the former on the latter), but when the same verse was considered in Case Study 9, alongside other examples of the same exegetical tradition, it became clear that the relationship was rather more complex, and the hypothesis of a direct relationship between Targum Song and Song Rabbah seemed much less persuasive and inevitable.

Not all the traditions shared by the Targum and the Midrash have multiple attestations. In some cases they seem to be exclusive to these two works, but we should be careful about basing too much on this fact. It is reasonable to assume that the Rabbinic literature we now have from late antiquity represents only a fraction of the material generated then. The absence of multiple attestations may, therefore, be an accident of history, but even if it is not, we can never discount the possibility that both the *meturgeman* and the *darshan*, working within the same exegetical parameters, could have come independently to the same or a

⁴⁹⁸ Sandmel, “Parallelomania.”

similar exegetical conclusions. Nor can we be sure who might have ‘borrowed’ from whom: as I argued at the beginning of this dissertation,⁴⁹⁹ there are no grounds for assuming *a priori* that the *meturgeman* must have been dependent on the *darshan*, and none of the parallels are so verbally close as to allow a case to be made one way or the other on purely literary grounds.

Thirdly, Targum Song and Song Rabbah sometimes take diametrically opposed approaches to a given verse. This is exemplified in Song 5:14 (Case Study 5). There are also rare, but significant, cases where the interpretation in one work appears to be overtly rejected by the other. This arguably happens in Song 1:12 (see Case Studies 1 and 8). Add to this the point made earlier that where a parallel does exist the tradition in Song Rabbah will normally be only one of a plurality of exegetical positions taken up that Midrash. Assuming the *meturgeman* had access to Song Rabbah in some shape or form, it is often hard to see why he would have selected one tradition over another, which might have just as easily been integrated into his schema. Some interpretations in Song Rabbah were excluded from the outset by the Targum’s overall historical-allegorical approach, but many were not, and the Targum’s schema is not, therefore, on its own, a sufficient explanation of the *meturgeman*’s selectivity.

Fourthly, even when we take the strongest possible scenario, namely the one where the parallel exists only between the Targum and the Midrash, and the tradition is reasonably complex and shows numerous points of comparison, the parallelism is seldom, if ever, exact. The Targum, as we have seen, will always differ in small but significant ways from the Midrash. I have already commented on the *meturgeman*’s originality and independence as an exegete (7.3 above), and this is a further manifestation of it. Now it is always possible to argue that this nuancing of the Midrash does not preclude dependency on the Midrash, in fact it could be seen as demonstrating it, but such an argument would be essentially circular. How do we know that the Targumic interpretation is a ‘nuancing’ or ‘finessing’ of the midrashic interpretation? That already presupposes a certain relationship – a relationship of dependency. It is just as easy to suppose that the

⁴⁹⁹ See Chapter One, 1.2.1.

differences point in the opposite direction – to a lack of direct dependency of the Targum on the Midrash, especially given that there are cases where the Targum shows a higher level of coherence and exegetical logic than the Midrash, so that it is easier to see the Midrash as a rather inept use of the Targum, than the Targum as a nuanced or finessed use of the Midrash. The fact is that even when we have multiple parallels in Rabbinic literature to a Targumic tradition the Targum seldom agrees precisely with any of them: it bears broadly the same relationship at this point to all the other sources as it does to Song Rabbah. This strongly suggests that its relationship is with the evolving tradition as a whole, and not with any particular literary source or literary crystallisation of it.

Fifthly, even if we could prove that the Targum had borrowed extensively from the Midrash, we must be careful not to assume that this makes the Targum a secondary, inferior work. I commented in the Introduction to this thesis that we must be careful not to import modern ideas of literary value into ancient sources.⁵⁰⁰ Today we value highly originality and innovation. We have a strong sense of intellectual property and condemn plagiarism, but these values were certainly not shared to anything like the same extent or held as strongly in antiquity. Wholesale literary appropriation, usually unacknowledged, was both common and acceptable. The Midrash, too, presumably had its sources, and these sources had their sources, and so on *ad infinitum*. The literature of the Sages is a collective enterprise, which persistently points beyond itself to the tradition as a whole, and constantly subverts any modern attempts to interpret it at a documentary level, and to pit one document against another.

This brings me, sixthly, to the final conclusion which I would draw from my analysis. The immensely complex and fluid relationship which my synoptic study of Targum Song and Song Rabbah reveals, shows that the advocates of dependency are assuming too simplistic and modern a model of textual production in late antiquity. I alluded to this point in my Introduction⁵⁰¹ and I want now to tease it out at a little more length.

⁵⁰⁰ See Chapter One, 1.3.

⁵⁰¹ See Chapter One, 1.3.

Though they nowhere say so explicitly, the advocates of dependency seem to assume that literary and textual production in antiquity was broadly similar to what we find today; that is to say, bounded, well-defined, stable texts circulated in written form. If this was the case, then talk of ‘influences’, ‘borrowings’, ‘dependency’, and ‘quotations’ make sense. The whole *Wissenschaft des Judentums* project, represented classically by Zunz’s *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*,⁵⁰² was based on the attempt to discover the *literary* relationships between discrete and essentially self-contained Rabbinic texts: the aim was essentially to find who quoted whom and thereby establish the history of the literature. This approach is also exemplified in the influential study by Abrahams of the sources of *Lamentations Rabbah*,⁵⁰³ and even in the most recent editions of Günter Stemberger’s *Introduction to Talmud and Midrash* we still find statements along the lines that Rabbinic text A quotes/uses/borrows from Rabbinic text B and is in turn quoted by/used by/ borrowed from by Rabbinic text C.⁵⁰⁴ But this does not address the probable realities of text-production and text-transmission in a Rabbinic milieu. There are textual traditions in antiquity to which the modern model could conceivably apply, but these comprise authored works written in Greek, and disseminated through a rudimentary kind of book-market.⁵⁰⁵ Rabbinic literature does not belong to this world. Rather it comprises traditions which were largely circulated orally within the Rabbinic schools.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰² Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*.

⁵⁰³ Joseph Abrahams, *The Sources of Midrash Echa Rabbah: A Critical Investigation* (Berlin: J. Gorzelanczyk, 1883).

⁵⁰⁴ Note, for example, the following: ‘Lam[entations]R[abbah] uses M[ishnah] and T[osefta] as well as Mek[hilta], Sifra and Sifre ... Lam[entations]R[abbah] itself appears to have been used in Lev[iticus]R[abbah], RuthR[abbah] and in a number of other midrashim’ (Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 285-86.)

⁵⁰⁵ For a convenient survey see Loveday Alexander, “Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels,” in *The Gospel for All Christians* (ed. Richard Baukham; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 71-112. Further: Frederick G. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951); E. G. Turner, *Greek Papyri: An Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968); Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1995); Catherine Hezser, “The Mishnah and Ancient Book Production,” in *The Mishnah in Contemporary Perspective* (ed. Alan Avery-Peck and Jacob Neusner; Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2002), 167-92.

⁵⁰⁶ See Philip S. Alexander, “Orality in Pharisaic-Rabbinic Judaism at the Turn of the Eras,” in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (ed. Henry Wansborough; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 159-84; Elizabeth Shanks Alexander, “Orality in Rabbinic Literature,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (ed. Charlotte Elisheve Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 38-57.

The emphasis on orality within the Rabbinic schools was the outcome of a number of factors. First, it reflected the simple fact that before the invention of printing the technology did not exist to easily make multiple copies of a book, and circulate them widely and cheaply. Making copies was an expensive process, and even leading scholars would not have owned many personal copies of books. What they seem to have done was to create their own notebooks⁵⁰⁷ into which they copied excerpts from texts in which they were interested, as those texts may have become available to them. They had to rely to a very large extent on memory, and much of their teaching would have been based on what they had memorised, rather than on what they had read. Second, the emphasis on orality may also be a function of levels of literacy. Levels of literacy within the ancient world have become a matter of intense debate in recent years. The general opinion is that they were not high: very few people could read, and even fewer could read well. Fewer still could both read well and write well. Rabbinic society was probably little different from the general population. There were, for sure, Rabbis who could read and write, but probably few who could read easily and write fluently. They would have relied heavily on memorising what they heard, and on composing orally rather than in writing, as would be natural for us today.⁵⁰⁸ Third, the emphasis on orality in the Rabbinic milieu reflected more than the constraints of technology and education. It reflected also a pedagogical stance. There was a widespread scepticism towards the written word right across ancient education. A high premium was placed on memorisation: one had not truly grasped the teaching until one had internalised it within one's memory and knew it off by heart. Having written texts weakened the memory, they made it lazy, and so in many scholastic situations they were banned. This general pedagogical theory was taken by the Rabbinic movement and elevated into a cardinal theological doctrine. All that emerged within the Rabbinic schools belonged to the Oral Torah, and should not be written down. There was only one

⁵⁰⁷ These were known as *pinaksa'ot* (from the Greek *pinax/pinakes*) or possibly *sifrei de-aggadata* in Rabbinic literature.

⁵⁰⁸ See William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker, *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

written text which the schools recognised, and that was the Written Torah – the Tanakh.⁵⁰⁹

Despite the difficulties and constraints it is perfectly clear that the Rabbinic schools did manage to create large-scale compositions – the Mishnah, the Tosefta, the Talmuds, the major Midrashim. Oral composition on this scale has not been much studied – apart from epics – but it clearly depends on formulae and literary structures which assist composition and memorisation.⁵¹⁰ Written texts may have played some role in the creation and dissemination of these works, but there is little evidence that it did, and even if some written texts did exist, oral transmission seems to have been the norm, until written copies were finally produced in the early Middle Ages.⁵¹¹ It is from these written copies that our current texts descend, but how faithfully they represented the oral stage which preceded them, and how accurately our present manuscripts of Song Rabbah represent the Midrash that originated in late antiquity, remains a very open question.

It is not inconceivable that such oral compositions could have achieved a high degree of textual fixity, despite their oral transmission. There are certainly plenty of injunctions in Rabbinic literature about passing on the teaching one receives with fidelity and exactness, but the actual evidence seems to show that whatever this may mean, it does not mean that the exact wording was necessarily regarded as sacrosanct.⁵¹² As my synoptic analysis clearly shows, traditions were not

⁵⁰⁹ See Loveday Alexander, “The Living Voice: Scepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and Graeco-Roman Texts,” in *The Bible in Three Dimensions* (ed. Clines, David J. A., S. E. Fowl, and S. E. Porter; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 221-47; H. I. Marrou, *History of Education in Antiquity* (3rd ed.; New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956); Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism 200 BCE-400BCE*.

⁵¹⁰ The classic discussion of orality in the large-scale composition of epic remains Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (ed. Stephen Mitchell and Gregory Nagy; 2nd ed.; Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2000); Alexander, *Transmitting Mishnah: The Shaping Influence of Oral Tradition*; J. M. Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

⁵¹¹ Between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the earliest Cairo Genizah fragments from the 10th century, there is not a single scrap of Jewish written literary text in either Hebrew or Aramaic that has survived. The nearest we get to this are the Aramaic incantation bowls from Iraq, which quote, for example, sections of the Bible. The absence is probably not totally accidental but reflects the reluctance to write down texts in Rabbinic society. That reluctance seems to have vanished for some reason in the 10th century.

⁵¹² The classic study of this remains Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity* (1961; repr.

simply reproduced verbatim, they were constantly re-performed, re-worked and re-created to make different points and emphasise different features. Perhaps their tradents would have argued, if challenged, that they were remaining faithful to the essence of the tradition, despite the changes they introduced. However, they do not show much concern, at least in aggadic contexts (with which we are concerned here), to hold closely to its wording.

This more fluid and dynamic model of the development of Rabbinic literature is amply borne out by the analysis, and it renders virtually meaningless any suggestion of direct literary dependence of Targum Song on Song Rabbah. There is clearly a relationship between these two works: they share too many distinctive overlaps for this not to be the case. But that relationship is misconceived if it is understood in terms of literary dependency or literary borrowing by the Targum from the Midrash. Both are different crystallisations of exegesis on Song of Songs drawn from the vast reservoir of oral midrash on that biblical book which had collected in the Rabbinic schools in late antiquity. Their relationship can be clarified a little by invoking my concept of a 'basic' or 'core' tradition. I introduced this in Chapter Six as an analytical tool to help define the relationship between multiple forms of the same tradition. The basic or core tradition is an ideal-typical construct, attested by all the concrete versions of the tradition, but to which none of them need exactly conform. The tradition as a whole can be defined as the sum-total of these basic traditions. Targum Song and Song Rabbah can then be configured as different variations of these core themes. That two such rich and distinctive compositions could have emerged at roughly the same time and in the same narrow circles is testimony to the interest which this book aroused and to the vitality of the Rabbinic schools' intellectual life.

Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998). Gerhardsson takes the ancient professions of fidelity to the tradition too much at face value: he fails to grasp properly their rhetorical, even apologetic, character, or the evidence of the texts themselves which show conclusively that fidelity was certainly not observed by preserving the exact wording of the tradition.

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TARGUM SONG OF
SONGS AND MIDRASH RABBAH SONG OF SONGS**

Volume II of II

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SCHOOL OF ARTS, HISTORIES, AND CULTURES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME TWO

TITLE PAGE	232
TABLE OF CONTENTS: VOLUME TWO	233
VOLUME TWO	233
APPENDICES	234
Note to Appendices 1 to 6	234
Appendix 1	235
Appendix 2	243
Appendix 3	255
Appendix 4	268
Appendix 5	278
Appendix 6	285
Note on Appendices 7-11	292
Appendix 7	293
Appendix 8	296
Appendix 9	301
Appendix 10	304
Appendix 11	307
BIBLIOGRAPHY	309

APPENDICES

Note on Appendices 1 to 6

The Hebrew of Song Rabbah is taken from the Davka Judaic Classics Library CD-ROM (version 3.0.8) which transcribes the Vilna text, and it follows the Davka numbering of the units. The English translation is that of the Soncino edition, as provided by the same electronic database, but with some minor corrections and harmonisations. The text, in both Hebrew and English, has been divided up into smaller units (in the manner of Jacob Neusner), to clarify its structure and to facilitate reference. For the textual problems of Song Rabbah see Chapter Three. The *textus receptus* of the Hebrew and the standard English version suffice for the kind of analysis I am undertaking here.

Appendix 1

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs 1.56-58 (Song of Songs 1:12)

Hebrew Text (Vilna)

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה א סימן נו

עד שהמלך במסבו	1	A
ר' מאיר ור' יהודה	2	
רבי מאיר אומר עד שהמלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה במסבו ברקיע נתנו ישראל	3	
ריח רע ואמרו לעגל (שמות ל"ב) אלה אלהיך ישראל		
אמר ליה ר' יהודה דייך מאיר אין דורשין שיר השירים לגנאי אלא לשבח שלא	4	
נתן שיר השירים אלא לשבחן של ישראל		
ומהו עד שהמלך במסבו עד שהמלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה במסבו ברקיע נתנו	5	
ישראל ריח טוב לפני הר סיני ואמרו (שמות כ"ד) כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע		
היא דעתיה דר' מאיר למימר סיריי נתן ריחו	6	
אלא מסכתא עלתה בידם מן הגולה ושנו בה שקפץ להם מעשה העגל והקדים	7	
להם מעשה המשכן		
ר' אליעזר ור' עקיבא ור' ברכיה	1	B
ר' אליעזר אומר עד שהמלך במסבו עד שמלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה במסבו	2	
ברקיע כבר הר סיני מתמר באור שנאמר (דברים ד') וההר בוער באש		
ר' עקיבא אומר עד שמלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה במסבו ברקיע כבר (שמות כ"ד)	3	
וישכן כבוד ה' על הר סיני		
ר' ברכיה אומר עד שמשה במסבו ברקיע שנקרא מלך שנאמר (דברים ל"ג) ויהי	4	
בישורון מלך בהתאסף ראשי עם כבר (שמות כ') וידבר אלהים את כל הדברים		
האלה לאמר		
ר' אליעזר בן יעקב ורבנן	1	C
רבי אליעזר אומר עד שמלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה במסבו ברקיע כבר ירד	2	
מיכאל השר הגדול מן השמים והציל את אברהם אבינו מכבשן האש		
ורבנן אמרי הקב"ה ירד והצילו שנאמר (בראשית ט"ו) אני ה' אשר הוצאתיך	3	

מאור כשדים

- 4 ואימתי ירד מיכאל בימי חנניה מישאל ועזריה
- 5 אמר רבי טביומי עד שיעקב אבינו מסב במטתו נצנצה בו רוח הקדש ואמר לבניו והיה אלהים עמכם אמר להם עתיד הוא להשרות שכינתו ביניכם

- 1 D אמר רב נחמן כתיב (שם מ"ו) ויסע ישראל וכל אשר לו ויבא בארה שבע
- 2 להיכן הלך הלך לקוץ ארזים שנטע אברהם אבינו בבאר שבע שנא' (שם כ"א) ויטע אשל בבאר שבע
- 3 אמר רבי לוי כתיב (שמות כ"ו) והבריה התיכון בתוך הקרשים הבריה שלשים ושתים אמה היה ומהיכן היתה נמצאת בידם לשעה מלמד שהיו מוצנעים עמהם מימות יעקב אבינו הה"ד (שמות ל"ה)
- 4 וכל איש אשר נמצא אתו עצי שטים אשר נמצא עצי שטים אין כתיב כאן אלא אשר נמצא אתו מתחלה
- 5 אמר ר' לוי בר חייא במגדלא דצבעיאי קצצום והורידום עמם למצרים ולא נמצא בהם קשר ופקע
- 6 אעין דשטים הוּו במגדלא והוּו נוהגים בהם באיסור מפני קדושת הארון אתון וישאלון לרב חנניה חברין דרבנן ואמר לון אל תשנו ממנהג אבותיכם

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה א סימן נז

- 1 E ר' פנחס בשם רבי הושעיא אמר עד שהמלך במסבו עד שהמלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ב"ה במסבו ברקיע כבר הקדים שנא' (שמות י"ט) ויהי ביום השלישי בהיות הבקר
- 2 למלך שגזר ליום פלוני אני נכנס למדינה וישנו להם בני המדינה כל הלילה וכשבא המלך ומצאם ישנים העמיד עליהם בקלאנין בוקינס ושופר והיה השר של אותה מדינה מעוררן ומוציאן לאפנתי של מלך והיה המלך מהלך לפניהם עד שהגיע לפלטין שלו
- 3 כך הקב"ה הקדים דכתיב (שם) ויהי ביום השלישי בהיות הבקר וכתיב (שם) כי ביום השלישי ירד ה' לעיני כל העם ישנו להם ישראל כל אותו הלילה לפי ששינה של עצרת עריבה והלילה קצרה אמר ר' יודן אפילו פורטענא לא עקן במ
- 4 בא הקב"ה ומצאן ישנים התחיל מעמיד עליהם בקלאנין הה"ד ויהי ביום השלישי בהיות הבקר ויהי קולות וברקים והיה משה מעורר לישראל ומוציאן לאפנתי של מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה הה"ד (שם) ויוצא משה את העם לקראת האלהים

והיה הקב"ה מהלך לפנייהם עד שהגיע להר סיני דכתיב (שם) והר סיני עשן כלו
 5 א"ר יצחק זה הוא שמקנתרן על ידי ישעיהו שנאמר (ישעיה נ') מדוע באתי ואין
 איש קראתי ואין עונה הקצר קצרה ידי מפדות

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה א סימן נח

- | | | |
|---|---|----------|
| <p>אמר ר' יודן עד שחזקיהו וסיעתו אוכלין פסחיהם בירושלים כבר הקדים הקב"ה
 בלילה ההוא שנאמר (מ"ב יט) ויהי בלילה ההוא ויצא מלאך ה' ויך במחנה
 אשור</p> <p>א"ר אבהו עד שמשה וישראל מסובין ואוכלין פסחיהם במצרים כבר הקדים
 הקב"ה שנאמר (שמות י"ב) ויהי בחצי הלילה וה' הכה כל בכור בארץ מצרים</p> | <p>1</p> <p>2</p> | <p>F</p> |
| <p>היא דעתיה דרבי אבהו למימר סיריי נתן ריחו מלמד שהיה ריחו של אותו הדם
 קשה והופיע להם הקב"ה ריח טוב מבשומי גן עדן</p> <p>והיתה נפשם קוהא לאכול אמרו לו משה רבינו תן לנו מה נאכל אמר להם משה
 כך אמר לי הקב"ה (שם) כל בן נכר לא יאכל בו עמדו והפרישו הנכרים
 שביניהם והיתה נפשם קוהא לאכול</p> <p>אמרו לו משה רבינו תן לנו מה נאכל אמר להם כך אמר לי הקב"ה (שם) וכל
 עבד איש מקנת כסף ומלתה אותו אז יאכל בו עמדו ומלו את עבדיהם והיתה
 נפשם קוהא לאכול</p> <p>אמרו לו תן לנו מה נאכל אמר להם כך אמר לי הקב"ה סינטומוס (שם) כל ערל
 לא יאכל בו מיד כל אחד ואחד נתן חרבו על ירכו ומהל עצמו
 מי מלך</p> <p>ר' ברכיה אמר משה היה מוהל ואהרן פורע ויהושע משקה וי"א יהושע היה מוהל
 ואהרן פורע ומשה היה משקה הה"ד (יהושע ה') בעת ההיא אמר ה' אל יהושע
 עשה לך חרבות צורים ושוב מול את בני ישראל שנית
 ולמה שנית מכאן שמלך בראשונה</p> <p>מיד ויעש לו יהושע חרבות צורים וימל את בני ישראל אל גבעת הערלות מהו
 אל גבעת הערלות אמר רבי מכאן שעשו אותה גבעה בערלה</p> | <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> | <p>G</p> |

English Translation (Soncino)

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs I:56

- A
1. WHILE THE KING SAT AT HIS TABLE.
 2. R. Meir and R. Judah expounded this differently.
 3. R. Meir said: While yet the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, was at His table in the firmament, Israel became corrupt and said to the calf, *This is your god, O Israel* (Exodus 32:4).
 4. Said R. Judah to him: Enough of this, Meir! The Song of Songs is not expounded in a bad sense, but only in a good sense, for the Song of Songs was revealed only for the praise of Israel.
 5. What then is meant by WHILE THE KING WAS AT HIS TABLE? While the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, was at His table in the firmament, Israel sent forth a fragrance before Mount Sinai and said, *All that the Lord has said will we do, and obey* (Exodus 24:7).
 6. R. Meir's opinion is that the verse means "my evil spice gave its odour".
 7. But a tradition was brought by Israel from the [Babylonian] captivity which they transmitted, that God [in writing the Torah] skipped over the incident of the calf and wrote first the construction of the Tabernacle.
- B
1. R. Eliezer and R. Akiba and R. Berekiah, too, gave different explanations of this verse.
 2. R. Eliezer said: WHILE THE KING WAS AT HIS TABLE: while the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, was at His table in the firmament, Mount Sinai was already sending up pillars of smoke, as it says, *And the mountain was burning with fire* (Deuteronomy 4:11).
 3. R. Akiba said: While the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, was yet at His table in the firmament, already the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:16)

4. R. Berekiah said: While Moses, who was also called “king”, as it says, *And there was a king in Jeshurun when the heads of the people were gathered* (Deuteronomy 33:5), was at his table in the firmament, already God spoke all these words (Exodus 20:1).

- C
1. R. Eliezer b. Jacob and the Rabbis gave different explanations.
 2. R. Eliezer said: While the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, was still at His table in the firmament, Michael the great prince had already descended and delivered our father Abraham from the fiery furnace.
 3. The Rabbis, however, say that the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself came down and delivered him, as it says, *I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees* (Genesis 15:7).
 4. And when did Michael come down? In the time of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.
 5. R. Tabyumi said: While our father Jacob was still reclining on his couch, the holy spirit flashed on him and he said to his sons, *God will be with you* (Genesis 48:21), meaning, “He will make His Divine presence rest on you.”

- D
1. R. Nahman said: It is written, *And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba* (Genesis 46:1).
 2. Where was he going? He was going to cut down cedars which Abraham our father had planted in Beersheba, as it says, *And he planted a grove in Beer- sheba* (Genesis 21:33).
 3. R. Levi said: It is written, *And the middle bar in the midst of the boards* (Exodus 35:28). The bar was thirty-two cubits long, and how could they get such a one at that time? This verse shows that the Israelites had them stored up from the days of Jacob our father, and so it is written, *And every man, with whom was found with him acacia-wood* (Exodus 35:24).
 4. It does not say simply “was found”, but “was found with him” – as much as to say, from the beginning.

5. R. Levi b. Hiyya said: They cut them down in the Magdala of the Dyers, and took them down with them to Egypt, and they were free from all knots and cracks.

6. There were some acacia-trees in Magdala, and people refrained from touching them on account of the holiness of the ark. They came and asked R. Hananiah, the colleague of the Rabbis, about them, and he said to them, Do not depart from the custom of your ancestors.

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs I:57

- E 1. R. Phinehas said in the name of R. Hoshaia: WHILE THE KING IS AT HIS TABLE: while the supreme King of kings was yet at His table, He had already anticipated [His descent on Mount Sinai],’ as it says, *And it came to pass on the third day while it was yet morning that there were thunders, etc.... upon the mount* (Exodus 19:16).
2. It was like a king who had proclaimed, “On such-and-such a day I am going to enter the city.” The inhabitants of the city slept through the night, so when the king came he found them asleep, so he ordered trumpets and horns to be sounded, and the governor of the city woke them up and brought them out to meet the king, and the king then went before them till he reached his palace.
3. Thus the Holy One, blessed by He, anticipated [His descent on Mount Sinai], as it says, *And it came to pass on the third day when it was morning*. It says before this, *For the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all people* (Exodus 19:11. Israel slept all that night, because the sleep of Pentecost is pleasant and the night is short. R. Judan said: Not a flea worried them.
4. The Holy One, blessed be He, came and found them sleeping, so he began to rouse them with trumpeters, as it says, *And it came to pass on the third day... that there were thunders and lightnings* (Exodus 19:16), and Moses roused Israel and brought them out to meet the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, as it says, *And Moses brought forth the people... to meet God* (Exodus 19:17), and then God went before

them till He reached Mount Sinai, as it is written, *Now mount Sinai was altogether on smoke* (Exodus 19:18).

5. R. Isaac said: It was for this that He taunted them through the mouth of Isaiah, saying, *Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there none to answer? Is My hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?* (Isaiah 50:2).

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs I:58

F 1. [WHILE THE KING WAS AT HIS TABLE.] R. Judan said: While Hezekiah and his followers were still eating their paschal lambs in Jerusalem, the Holy One, blessed be He, had already wrought [their deliverance] on that night, as it says, *And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians* (2 Kings 19:35).

2. [WHILE THE KING WAS AT HIS TABLE.] R. Abbahu said: While Moses and Israel were still reclining and eating their paschal lambs in Egypt, the Holy One, blessed be he, had already wrought [their deliverance], as it says, *And it came to pass at midnight, that the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt* (Exodus 12:29).

G 1. [MY NARD GAVE FORTH ITS SMELL.] It is the opinion of R. Abbahu that the text means ‘my evil spice gave forth its odour’, indicating that the odour of the blood was unpleasant and God wafted to them a pleasant odour from the spices of Paradise.

2. This made them long to eat, and they said to him: “Our master Moses, give us to eat.” Said Moses to them: “Thus has God said to me, *There shall no alien eat thereof* (Exodus 12:43).” They went and removed the aliens from among them, and they still fainted for food.

3. They said to him: “Our master Moses, give us to eat.” He said to them: “Thus has God said to me: Every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof (Exodus 12:44).” They went and circumcised their servants, and still fainted for food.

4. So they said to him, “Give us to eat.” He said to them: “Thus has God said to me, in one word: *No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof* (Exodus 12:48).” Forthwith each one put his sword on his thigh and circumcised himself.

5. Who circumcised them?

6. R. Berekiah said: Moses circumcised them and Aaron turned back the flesh and Joshua gave them to drink. Some, however, say that Joshua circumcised them and Aaron turned back the flesh and Moses gave them to drink, wherefore it is written, At that time the Lord said unto Joshua: Make thee knives of flint, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time (Joshua 5:2).

7. Why “a second time”? This shows that he circumcised them the first time.

8. *Straightway, Joshua made him knives of flint, and circumcised the children of Israel at Gibeath-ha-'araloth* (Joshua 5:3). What means “at Gibeath-ha-'araloth”? Rabbi said: Thence we infer that they made a hill of foreskins.

Appendix 2

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs II:34- 39 (Song of Songs 2:14)

Hebrew Text (Vilna)

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ב סימן לד

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | יונתי בחגוי הסלע | A |
| 2 | מהו יונתי בחגוי הסלע | |
| 3 | אמר ר' יוחנן אמר הקב"ה קורא אני לישראל יונה דכתיב (הושע ז') ויהי אפרים כיונה פותה אין לב | |
| 4 | אצלי הם כיונה אבל אצל אומות העולם כמין חיות דכתיב (בראשית מ"ט) גור אריה יהודה נפתלי אילה שלוחה יהי דן נחש עלי דרך בנימין זאב יטרף וכל י"ב שבטים משולים כחיות | |
| 5 | לפי שהאומות נלחמים לישראל ואומרים לישראל מה אתם רוצים מן השבת ומן המילה | |
| 6 | והקב"ה מגבירן לישראל ונעשין בפני האומות כחיות להכניען לפני הקב"ה ולפני ישראל | |
| 7 | אבל אצל הקב"ה נעשים כיונה תמה ושומעין לו הה"ד (שמות ד') ויאמן העם וישמעו כי פקד ה' | |
| 1 | אמר הקב"ה למשה משה את עומד וצועק כבר שמעתי ישראל וצעקתם הה"ד (שם י"ד) מה תצעק אלי אין בני ישראל צריכין לך | B |
| 2 | לפיכך אמר הקב"ה יונתי בחגוי הסלע | |
| 1 | [יונתי בחגוי הסלע] | |
| 2 | אמר רבי יהודה ברבי סימון אמר הקב"ה לישראל אצלי הם תמימים כיונים אבל באומות העולם הם ערומים כנחשים הה"ד (דניאל ג') ענו שדרך משך ועבד נגו ואמרין למלכא נבוכדנצר | C |
| 3 | אין למלכא למה נבוכדנצר ואין נבוכדנצר למה מלכא | |

- 4 אלא כך אמרו לו אם לפסים וגולגליות ודימוסיות וארנוניות מלך את עלינו הה"ד
למלכא נבוכדנצר
- 5 ואם לדבר זה שאת אומר לנו להשתחוות לצלמך נבוכדנצר את נבוכדנצר שמך
הוא גברא וחד נבו עלינו כחדא
- 6 נבוכדנצר נבח ככלבא נפיה כקולתה נצר כצרצרה
- 7 מיד נבח ככלבא ואתעבד ככדא ונצר כצרצרה
- 8 כתיב (קהלת ח') אני פי מלך שמור
- 9 אמר רבי לוי אני פי מלך מלכי המלכים אשמור אותו הפה שאמר לנו בסיני (שמות
כ') אנכי ה' אלהיך (קהלת ח')
- 10 ועל דברת שבועת אלהים על שם לא תשא את שם ה' אלהיך לשוא (שמות כ'):

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ב סימן לה

- D
- 1 תני דבי ר' ישמעאל בשעה שיצאו ישראל ממצרים למה היו דומין ליונה שברחה
מפני הנץ ונכנסה לנמקי הסלע ומצאה שם הנחש מקנן
- 2 ונכנסה לפנים ולא היתה יכולה להכנס שעדיין הנחש מקנן תחזור לאחורה לא תהי
יכולה שהנץ עומד בחוץ
- 3 מה עשתה היונה התחילה צווחת ומטפחת באגפיה כדי שישמע לה בעל השובך
ויבא ויצילה
- 4 כך היו ישראל דומים על הים לירד לים לא היו יכולין שעדיין לא נקרע להם הים
לחזור לאחוריהם לא היו יכולין שכבר פרעה הקריב
- 5 מה עשו וייראו מאד ויצעקו בני ישראל אל ה' מיד (שמות י"ד) ויושע ה' ביום
ההוא
- E
- 1 ר' יהודה בשם ר' חמא דכפר תחומין משל למלך שהיתה לו בת יחידה והיה מתאוה
לשמוע שיחתה
- 2 מה עשה הוציא כרוז ואמר כל עמא יפקון לקמפון כשיצאו מה עשה רמז לעבדיו
ונפלו לה פתאום בליסטין והתחילה צווחת אבא אבא הצילני אמר לה אילו לא
עשיתי לך כך לא היית צווחת ואומרת אבא הצילני
- 3 כך כשהיו ישראל במצרים היו המצריים משעבדין אותם והתחילו צועקין ותולין
עיניהם להקב"ה הה"ד (שם ב') ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו
בני ישראל מן העבודה ויצעקו וגו'
- 4 מיד וישמע אלהים את נאקתם שמע הקב"ה לתפלתן והוציאן ביד חזקה ובזרוע

נטויה

- 5 והיה הקב"ה מתאוה לשמוע קולן ולא היו רוצין
- 6 מה עשה הקב"ה חיזק לבו של פרעה ורדף אחריהם הה"ד (שם י"ד) ויחזק ה' את לב פרעה מלך מצרים וירדוף וגו'
- 7 וכתוב ופרעה הקריב מהו הקריב שהקריב את ישראל לתשובה

- F
- 1 כיון שראו אותם תלו עיניהם להקב"ה ויצעקו לפניו שנא' וישאו בני ישראל את עיניהם והנה מצרים נוסע אחריהם וייראו מאד ויצעקו בני ישראל אל ה' כאותה צעקה שצעקו במצרים
 - 2 כיון ששמע הקב"ה אמר להם אילולי שעשיתי לכם כן לא שמעתי את קולכם
 - 3 על אותה שעה אמר יונתי בחגוי הסלע השמיעני את הקול אין כתיב כאן אלא קולך שכבר שמעתי במצרים וכשצעקו בני ישראל לפני הקב"ה מיד ויושע ה' ביום ההוא:

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ב סימן ל

- G
- 1 [יונתי בחגוי הסלע]
 - 2 ר' אלעזר פתר קרייה בישראל בשעה שעמדו על הים
 - 3 יונתי בחגוי הסלע שהיו חבויים בסתרו של ים
 - 4 הראיני את מראיך הה"ד (שם) התיצבו וראו את ישועת ה'
 - 5 השמיעני את קולך זו השירה שנא' אז ישיר משה
 - 6 כי קולך ערב זה השיר
 - 7 ומראך נאווה שהיו ישראל מראין באצבע ואומרים זה אלי ואנוהו:

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ב סימן לו

- H
- 1 ר"ע פתר קרייה בישראל בשעה שעמדו לפני הר סיני
 - 2 יונתי בחגוי הסלע שהיו חבויין בסתרו של סיני
 - 3 הראיני וגומר שנא' וכל העם רואים את הקולות
 - 4 השמיעני את קולך זה קול שלפני הדברות שנא' (שמות כ"ד) כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע
 - 5 כי קולך ערב זה קול שלאחר הדברות שנאמר (דברים ה') וישמע ה' את קול דבריכם וגו' הטיבו כל אשר דברו

- 6 מהו הטיבו כל אשר דברו
- 7 חייא בר אדא ובר קפרא
- 8 חד אמר הטבה כהטבת הנרות
- 9 וחד אמר הטבה כהטבת הקטורת
- 10 ומראך נאווה שנא' (שמות כ') וירא העם וינועו ויעמדו מרחוק

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ב סימן לה

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | רבי יוסי הגלילי פתר קרייה במלכיות | I |
| 2 | יונתי בחגוי הסלע שחבויין בסתרן של מלכיות | |
| 3 | הראיני את מראיך זה התלמוד | |
| 4 | השמיעני את קולך זה מעשה הטוב | |
| 5 | וכבר נמנו פעם אחת בבית עליית ערים בלוד ואמרו מי גדול התלמוד או המעשה | |
| 6 | ר' טרפון אומר גדול הוא המעשה ר' עקיבא אומר גדול הוא התלמוד | |
| 7 | נמנו וגמרו גדול הוא התלמוד שמביא לידי מעשה | |
| 8 | כי קולך ערב זה התלמוד | |
| 9 | ומראך נאווה זה מעשה הטוב: | |

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ב סימן לט

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | רבי הונא ור' אחא בשם רבי אחא בר חנינא פתרי קרייה על דעתיה דרבי מאיר באהל מועד | J |
| 2 | יונתי בחגוי הסלע שחבויין בסתר אהל מועד | |
| 3 | הראיני את מראיך שנא' (ויקרא ח') ותקהל העדה אל פתח אהל מועד | |
| 4 | השמיעני את קולך (שם ט') וירא כל העם וירונו שירה נאה אמרו על ידי שראו דבר חדש לפיכך אמרו שירה חדשה | |
| 5 | כי קולך ערב זה השיר | |
| 6 | ומראך נאווה המד"א (שם) ויקרבו כל העדה ויעמדו לפני ה' | |

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | אמר ר' תנחומא אינון פתרון לה על דעתיה דר' מאיר באהל מועד אף אנא נפתרינה על דעתיה דרבנן בבית העולמים | K |
| 2 | יונתי בחגוי הסלע שהיו חבויין בסתר בית עולמים | |
| 3 | הראיני את מראיך המד"א (מלכים א' ח') אז יקהל שלמה | |

- 4 השמיעני את קולך המד"א (ד"ה ב' ה') ויהי כאחד למחצצרים ולמשוררים קול אחד
- 5 ר' אבין בשם ר' אבא כהן בן דליה אמר כתיב (שמות י"ט) ויענו כל העם יחדיו וכתוב (שם כ"ד) ויען כל העם קול אחד ויאמרו
- 6 עד איכן עמד להם אותו הקול עד ויהי כאחד למחצצרים ולמשוררים להשמיע קול אחד
- 7 כי קולך ערב זה השיר
- 8 ומראך נאווה אלו הקרבנות המד"א (מלכים א' ח') ויזבח שלמה את זבח השלמים וגו'
- 9 בקר אי זה בקר את ארבע העגלות ואת שמונת הבקר

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרישה ב סימן מ

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1 | L |
| ר' אליהו פתר קרייה בעולי רגלים | | |
| הראיני את מראיך אלו עולי רגלים שנא' (דברים ט"ז) שלש פעמים בשנה יראה וגו' | 2 | |
| השמיעני את קולך זה קריאת ההלל בנועם בשעה שישראל קורין את ההלל קולן עולה למרום מתלא אמר פסחא בבייתא והלילא מתברא אברייאה | 3 | |
| כי קולך ערב זה השיר | 4 | |
| ומראך נאווה זה הדוכן | 5 | |

English Translation (Soncino)

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs II:34

- A
1. O MY DOVE THAT ART IN THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK.
 2. What is the meaning of O MY DOVE THAT ART IN THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK?
 3. R. Johanan said: The Holy One, blessed be He, said: 'I call Israel a dove, as it is written, *And Ephraim is become like a silly dove, without understanding* (Hosea 7:11).
 4. To Me they are like a dove, but to the nations they are like various kinds of beasts, as it is written, *Judah is a lion's whelp* (Genesis 49:9), *Naphtali is a hind let loose* (Genesis 49:21), *Dan shall be a serpent in the way* (Genesis 49:17), *Benjamin is a wolf that ravens* (Genesis 49:27), and all the twelve tribes are likened to wild beasts.
 5. For the nations make war with Israel and say to them, 'What do you want with the Sabbath and circumcision?'
 6. But the Holy One, blessed be He, makes Israel strong, and they become in the presence of the nations like wild beasts to subdue them before God and before Israel.
 7. But with the Holy One, blessed be He, they are like an innocent dove, and they listen to Him, and so it is written, *And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had remembered, etc.* (Exodus 4:31).
- B
1. Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Moses: "Moses, you stand there and cry, but I have already heard Israel and their cry, as it says, *Wherefore criest thou unto Me?* (Exodus 14:15). The children of Israel do not require you."
 2. Therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, said, O MY DOVE IN THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK.
- C
1. [O MY DOVE IN THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK.]
 2. R. Judah said in the name of R. Simon: With Me they are innocent like doves, but with the nations they are cunning like serpents. For so it says,

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king: O Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:16).

3. Now if 'king', why 'Nebuchadnezzar, and if 'Nebuchadnezzar, why "king"?

4. What they meant in fact was this: 'If it is for taxes or poll tax or levy or produce tax, thou art king over us; hence it says, *to the king Nebuchadnezzar.*

5. But if it is for this thing that thou art telling us, to bow down to thy image, Nebuchadnezzar art thou, and Nebuchadnezzar is thy name, and we account thee as no more than a dog.

6. "O Nebuchadnezzar, bark (*nebah*) like a dog, bubble [with rage] like a pot (*kad*), chirp (*nezar*) like a cricket."

7. Straightway he barked like a dog and seethed like a pot and chirped like a cricket.

8. It is written: *I counsel thee: keep the king's command* (Ecclesiastes 8:21).

9. R. Levi said: It means: I will observe the command of the supreme King of kings, the command of that mouth that said to us at Sinai, *I am the Lord thy God* (Exodus 20:2).

10. And that in regard of the oath of God (Ecclesiastes 8:2), it is laid down, *You shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain* (Exodus 20:7).

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs II:35

- D
1. It was taught in the school of R. Ishmael: When Israel went forth from Egypt, what did they resemble? A dove which was fleeing from a hawk and flew into the cleft of a rock, and found a serpent lurking there.
 2. When it tried to get right in it could not, because the serpent was lurking there, and when it tried to turn back it could not because the hawk was hovering outside.
 3. What then did the dove do? It began to cry and beat its wings so that the owner of the cote should hear and come to its rescue.

4. This was the position of Israel by the Red Sea. They could not go down into the sea, because it had not yet been divided before them. They could not turn back, because Pharaoh had already drawn near.

5. What did they do? *And they were sore afraid; and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord* (Exodus 14:10).

6. Then straightway, *Thus the Lord saved Israel that day* (Exodus 14:30).

- E
1. R. Judah said in the name of R. Hama from Kfar Tehumin: It is as if a king who had an only daughter desired very much that she should talk to him.
 2. So what did he do? He made a proclamation saying, 'Let all the people go out to the sports ground.' When they went there, what did he do? He gave a sign to his servants, and they fell on her suddenly like brigands. She began crying out, 'Father, save me.' He said to her: "Had I not done this, you would not have cried out, 'Father, save me.'"
 3. So when the Israelites were in Egypt the Egyptians oppressed them and they began to cry and lift their eyes to the Holy One, blessed be He, as it says, *And it came to pass in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried* (Exodus 2:23).
 4. Forthwith, *And God heard their groaning* (Exodus 2:24): the Holy One, blessed be He, heard their prayer and brought them forth with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.
 5. The Holy One, blessed be He, desired to hear their voice further, but they were not willing.
 6. What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do? He hardened the heart of Pharaoh and he pursued them, as it is written, *And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued, etc.* (Exodus 14:8).
 7. It is also written, *And Pharaoh brought near* (Exodus 14:10).¹ What is meant by "brought near"? That he brought Israel near to repentance.

- F
1. When the Israelites saw them [the Egyptians], they lifted up their eyes to the Holy One, blessed be He, and cried before Him, as it says, *The*

children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians were marching after them; and they were sore afraid; and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord (Exodus 14:10) -- in the same way as they had cried out in Egypt.

2. When the Holy One, blessed be He, heard, He said: "Had I not done so to you, I should not have heard your voice."

4. Referring to that moment He said, O MY DOVE IN THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK. It does not say here, LET ME HEAR a voice, but THY VOICE: the voice which I had already heard in Egypt. And when the children of Israel cried before the Holy One, blessed be He, straight way, *Thus the Lord saved Israel that day (Exodus 14:30).*

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs II:36

- G
1. [O MY DOVE IN THE CLEFTS OF THE ROCK]
 2. R. Eleazar interpreted the verse as referring to Israel when they stood by the Red Sea.
 3. MY DOVE IN THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK: they were so called because they were sheltered in the recess of the sea.
 4. LET ME SEE THY COUNTENANCE: as it says, *Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord (Exodus 14:13).*
 5. LET ME HEAR THY VOICE: this refers to the Song, as it says, *Then sang Moses (Exodus 15:1).*
 6. FOR SWEET IS THY VOICE: this refers to the Song.
 7. AND THY COUNTENANCE IS COMELY: because the Israelites pointed with the finger saying, *This is my God, and I will glorify Him (Exodus 15:2).*

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs II:37

- H
1. R. Akiba interpreted the verse as applying to Israel at the time when they stood before Mount Sinai.
 2. O MY DOVE IN THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK: So called because they were hidden in the shadow of the mountain.

3. SHOW ME, etc., as it says, *And all the people perceived the thunderings, etc.* (Exodus 20:15).
4. LET ME HEAR THY VOICE: this refers to what they said before the Commandments were given, as it says, *All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and obey* (Exodus 24:7).
5. FOR SWEET IS THY VOICE; this refers to what they said after the Commandments were given, as it says, *And the Lord heard the voice of your words... and said,... they have well said all that they have spoken* (Deuteronomy 5:25).
6. What is meant by 'they have well (*hetibu*) said all that they have spoken'?
7. Hiyya b. Adda and Bar Kappara gave different explanations [of the word 'well'].
8. One compared it to the trimming (*hatabot*) of the lamps,
9. the other to the preparation (*hatabot*) of the incense.
10. AND YOUR COUNTENANCE IS COMELY: as it says, *And when the people saw it, they trembled, and stood afar* (Exodus 20:15).

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs II:38

- I 1. R. Jose the Galilean interpreted the verse with reference to the alien powers.
2. O MY DOVE IN THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK: being hidden in the shadow of the alien powers.
3. LET ME SEE THY COUNTENANCE: this signifies study.
4. LET ME HEAR THY VOICE: this signifies good actions.
5. Once they had a discussion in the house of 'Aliyath 'Arim at Lydda on the question: Which is more important, study or action?
6. R. Tarfon maintained that action was more important; R. Akiba maintained that study was more important.
7. They took a vote and decided that study was more important, because it leads to action.
8. FOR SWEET IS THY VOICE: this signifies study;
9. AND THY COUNTENANCE IS COMELY: this signifies good action.

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs II:39

- J
1. R. Huna and R. Aha in the name of R. Aha b. Hanina interpreted the verse, following R. Meir, as referring to the tent of meeting.
 2. O MY DOVE IN THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK: because they are hidden in the shelter of the tent of meeting.
 3. LET ME SEE THY COUNTENANCE; as it says, *And the congregation was assembled at the door of the tent of meeting* (Leviticus 8:4).
 4. LET ME HEAR THY VOICE, as it says, *And when all the people saw it, they shouted* (Leviticus 9:24). They chanted a beautiful song because they saw a new thing; therefore they chanted a new song.
 5. FOR SWEET IS THY VOICE: this refers to the song,
 6. AND THY COUNTENANCE IS COMELY: as it says, *And all the congregation drew near and stood before the Lord* (Leviticus 9:5).
- K
1. R. Tanhuma said: They [R. Huna and R. Aha] interpreted it, following R. Meir, as referring to the Tent of Meeting; I too will interpret it, following the Rabbis, as referring to the Temple.
 2. O MY DOVE IN THE CLEFT OF THE ROCK: because they were hidden in the shelter of the Temple:
 3. LET ME SEE THY COUNTENANCE: as it says, *Then Solomon assembled, etc.* (I Kings 8:1).
 4. LET ME HEAR THY VOICE: as it says, *It came even to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one* (2 Chronicles 5:13).
 5. R. Abin said in the name of R. Abba Cohen b. Daliah: It is written, *And all the people answered together* (Exodus 19:8), and it is also written, *And all the people answered with one voice, and said...* (Exodus 24:3).
 6. Till when did that voice stand by them? *Until, it came even to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one.*
 7. FOR SWEET IS THY VOICE: this refers to the song;

8. AND THY COUNTENANCE IS COMELY: this refers to the offerings, of which it says, *And Solomon offered for the sacrifice of peace-offerings, etc.* (1 Kings 8:63).

9. What oxen, are referred to? *The four wagons and the eight oxen* (Numbers 7:8).

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs II:40

- L
1. R. Elijah interpreted the verse as referring to the festival pilgrims.
 2. LET ME SEE YOUR COUNTENANCE: This refers to the festival pilgrims, of whom it says, *Three times a year shall all your males be seen, etc.* (Deuteronomy 16:16).
 3. LET ME HEAR YOUR VOICE: this refers to the melodious reciting of the *Hallel*. When Israel recites the *Hallel*, their voice ascends on high; and so the proverb says, “The Passover in the House and the *Hallel* break the roof”.
 4. FOR SWEET IS YOUR VOICE: this refers to the song.
 5. AND YOUR COUNTENANCE IS COMELY: this refers to the priestly blessing.

Appendix 3

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs III:19-23 (Song of Songs 3:9-10)

Hebrew Text (Vilna)

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ג סימן יט

- 1 אפריון עשה לו 1 A
- 2 ר' עזריה בשם ר' יהודה בר' סימון פתר קרייה במשכן אפריון זה משכן
- 3 אמר ר' יהודה ברבי אלעאי למלך שהיתה לו בת קטנה עד שלא הגדילה ובאת לידי סימנים היה רואה אותה בשוק ומדבר עמה בפרהסיא במבוי ובחצר כיון שהגדילה ובאת לידי סימנים אמר המלך אין שבחה של בתי שאהא מדבר עמה בפרהסיא אלא עשו לה פפליון וכשאהיה צריך לדבר עמה אדבר עמה מתוך הפפליון
- 4 כך כתיב (הושע י"א) כי נער ישראל ואהבהו
- 5 במצרים ראו אותו בפרהסיא שנא' (שמות י"ב) ועבר ה' לנגוף את מצרים
- 6 בים ראו אותו בפרהסיא שנאמר (שם י"ד) וירא ישראל את היד הגדולה והיו העוללים מראים אותו באצבען ואומרים (שם ט"ו) זה אלי ואנוהו
- 7 בסיני ראו אותו פנים בפנים שנאמר (דברים ל"ג) ויאמר ה' מסיני בא וגו' כיון שעמדו ישראל על הר סיני וקבלו את התורה ואמרו (שמות כ"ד) כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע נעשה לו אומה שלימה אמר הקב"ה אין שבחן של בני שאהיה מדבר עמם בפרהסיא אלא יעשו לי משכן וכשאני צריך לדבר עמהם אהיה מדבר עמהם מתוך המשכן ה"ד (שם ל"ד) ובבא משה אל אהל מועד לדבר אתו עשה לו
- 1 המלך שלמה המלך שהשלום שלו 1 B
- 2 מעצי הלבנון המד"א (שם כ"ו) ועשית את הקרשים למשכן עצי שטים עומדים

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ג סימן כ

- 3 עמודיו עשה כסף אלו העמודים שנא' (שם כ"ז) ווי העמודים וחשוקיהם כסף
- 4 רפידתו זהב שנא' (שם כ"ז) ואת הקרשים תצפה זהב

- 5 מרכבו ארגמן שנא' (שם) ועשית פרכת תכלת וארגמן
- 6 תוכו רצוף אהבה רבי יודן אמר זו זכות תורה וזכות צדיקים שעוסקין בה
- 7 רבי עזריה בשם ר' יודה בשם רבי סימון אמר זו השכינה

- C
- 1 כתוב אחד אומר (מלכים א' ח') ולא יכלו הכהנים לעמוד לשרת וגו' וכתוב אחד אומר (יחזקאל י') והחצר מלאה את נוגה כבוד ה' כיצד יתקיימו שני כתובים
 - 2 רבי יהושע דסכנין בשם רבי לוי למה היה אהל מועד דומה למערה שהיתה סמוכה לים געש הים והציף את המערה המערה נתמלאה והים לא נחסר כלום כך אהל מועד נתמלא מזיו השכינה והעולם לא חסר מן השכינה
 - 4 אימתי שרתה השכינה בעולם ביום שהוקם את המשכן שנא' (במדבר ז') ויהי ביום כלות משה וגו'

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ג סימן כא

- D
- 1 ר' יודה ברבי אלעאי פתר קרא בארון אפריון זה הארון
 - 2 ומה הוא אפריון פריומא
 - 3 משל למלך שהיתה לו בת יחידה נאה וחסידה ומשובחת אמר להם המלך לעבדיו בתי נאה וחסידה ומשובחת ואין אתם עושין לה פריום עשו לה פריום ומוטב שיראה יפיה של בתי מתוך הפריום
 - 4 כך אמר הקב"ה תורתך נאה וחסידה ומשובחת ואין אתם עושים לה ארון מוטב שיראה יופיה של תורתך הארון

- E
- 1 עשה לו המלך שלמה המלך שהשלום שלו
 - 2 מעצי הלבנון המד"א (שמות ל"ז) ויעש בצלאל את הארון עצי שטים
 - 3 עמודיו עשה כסף אלו שני העמודים העומדים לפניו שהיו של כסף
 - 4 רפידתו זהב שנא' (שם) ויצפהו זהב טהור
 - 5 מרכבו ארגמן ר' תנחומא אומר זו פרכת הסמוכה לה
 - 6 רבי ביבי אמר זה הכפרת שזוהבה דומה לארגמן
 - 7 תוכו רצוף אהבה מבנות ירושלם ר' יודן אמר זו זכות תורה ולומדיה
 - 8 רבי עזריה אמר בשם ר' יודה בשם ר' סימון זו השכינה

- F
- 1 א"ר אבא בר כהנא ונועדתי לך שם וגו'

2 ללמדך שאפי' מה שאחרי הכפרת לא היה פנוי מן השכינה

- G
- 1 עובד כוכבים אחד שאל לר' יהושע בן קרחה אמר לו למה דבר הקב"ה מתוך הסנה ולא מאילן אחר
 - 2 אמר לו אלו דבר עמו מתוך חרוב או מתוך שקמה היית שואלני והייתי משיבך עכשיו להוציאך חלק אי אפשר ללמדך
 - 3 שאין מקום פנוי בארץ מהשכינה שאפי' בתוך הסנה היה מדבר עמו

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ג סימן כב

- H^a
- 1 ד"א אפריון זה בהמ"ק
 - 2 עשה לו המלך שלמה שלמה ודאי
 - 3 מעצי הלבנון שנא' (ד"ה ב' ב') ואנחנו נכרת עצים מן הלבנון
 - 4 עמודיו עשה כסף שנא' (מ"א ז') ויקם את העמודים לאולם ההיכל
 - 5 רפידתו זהב כההוא דתנינן שכל הבית נטוח בזהב חוץ מאחורי הדלתות
 - 6 אמר ר' יצחק הדא מתניתא דתנינן לבנין השני אבל לבנין הראשון אפי' אחורי הדלתות היה מחופה בזהב

- I
- 1 תנינן שבעה מיני זהבים הם שהיו בו זהב טוב זהב טהור זהב סגור זהב שחוט זהב מופז זהב מזוקק זהב פרוים
 - 2 זהב טוב כמשמעו המד"א (בראשית ב') וזהב הארץ ההיא טוב
 - 3 א"ר יצחק טובי דהוא בביתה טובי דהוא בת בלוייתה
 - 4 זהב טהור שהיו מכניסין אותו לכור ואינו חסר כלום
 - 5 ר' יודה בשם רבי אמי אלף ככרים זהב הכניס שלמה לאור אלף פעמים עד שהעמידו על ככר אחד
 - 6 והא תני א"ר יוסי ב"ר יהודה מעשה במנורת המקדש שהיתה יתרה על מנורת המדבר משקל גורדינון הכניסוה לאור שמונים פעמים עד שחסרה
 - 7 אלא מן קדמי הות חסרה סגין ברם מן הכא ולהלן לא הות חסרה אלא צבחר צבחר
 - 8 זהב שחוט שנמשך כשעוה אדריינוס היה לו משקל ביצה דוקליטיאנוס היה לו משקל דינר גורדייני הדא מלכותא לית לה מיניה ולא הוי ליה מיניה
 - 9 זהב סגור שהיה סוגר בעד כל בעלי זהבים
 - 10 והא כתיב (ד"ה א' כ"ט) ושבעת אלפים ככר כסף מזוקק לטוח קירות הבתים

- וכי כסף היה והלא זהב היה ולמה קורין אותו כסף שהיה מכסיף בעד כל בעלי זהבים
- 11 וממנו היו נעשים כל הכלים הסיפים והסירות והיעים והמזמרות והמזרקות והמזלגות והכפות והמחטות והפיות
- 12 ר' יצחק מגדלאה אמר אלו חפיפות
- 13 ר' סימאי אמר זה פותה שתחת הציר ללמדך שאפי' דבר קל לא היה המקדש חסר
- 14 זהב מופז ר' פטריקי אחוי דרבי דרוסה בשם ר' אבא ברבי בונא אמר דומה לגפרית הזה שמוצצת באש
- 15 רבי אבון אמר על שם מדינתו נקרא מאופז
- 16 זהב מזוקק דבי ר' ינאי ודבי רבי יודן ברבי שמעון
- 17 דבי ר' ינאי אמרי שמחתכין אותו כזיתים ומאכילין אותו לנעמיות והוא יוצא מזוקק דבי ר' יודן ברבי שמעון אמרי שמטמינין אותו בזבל ז' שנים ויוצא מזוקק
- 18 זהב פרוים ריש לקיש אמר אדום דומה לדם הפר
- 19 ויש אומרים שעושה פירות שכשבנה שלמה בית המקדש צר בו כל מיני אילנות ובשעה שאילנות שבשדה עושים פירות אלו שבבית עושים פירות והיו משירים פירותם ומלקטין אותם ומניחים אותם לבדק הבית
- 20 ובשעה שהעמיד מנשה צלם בהיכל יבשו כל אותם האילנות הה"ד (נחום א') ופרח לבנון אמלל
- 21 אבל לעתיד לבא הקב"ה חוזר אותם הה"ד (ישעיה ל"ה) פרח תפרח ותגל אף גילת ורנן

- 7 H^b מרכבו ארגמן המד"א (ד"ה ב' ג') ויעש את הפרוכת תכלת וארגמן וכרמיל ובוץ
- 8 תוכו רצוף אהבה ר' יודן אמר זו זכות התורה וזכות צדיקים העוסקין בה
- 9 ר' עזריה בשם ר' יודה בשם ר' סימון אמר זו השכינה

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ג סימן כג

- 1 J ד"א אפריון זה העולם
- 2 עשה לו המלך שלמה המלך שהשלום שלו

- 3 מעצי הלבנון שנבנה מבית קדשי הקדשים שלמטה דתנינן משניטל הארון אבן
היתה שם מימות הנביאים הראשונים ושתיה היתה נקראת
- 4 ולמה נקראת שתיה שממנה הושתת כל העולם הה"ד (תהלים נ) מציון מכלל
יופי
- 5 עמודיו עשה כסף זה שלשלת יוחסין
- 6 רפידתו זהב אלו פירות הארץ ופירות האילן שנמכרין בזהב
- 7 מרכבו ארגמן המד"א (דברים ל"ג) רוכב שמים בעזרך
- 8 תוכו רצוף אהבה ר' יודן אמר זו זכות התורה וזכות צדיקים העוסקין בה
- 9 רבי עזריה בשם רבי יודה בשם ר' סימון אמר זו השכינה

- 1 ד"א אפריון זה כסא הכבוד K
- 2 עשה לו המלך שלמה המלך שהשלום שלו
- 3 מעצי הלבנון זה בית קדשי הקדשים של מעלה שהוא מכוון כנגד בית קדשי
הקדשים של מטה הה"ד (שמות ט"ו) מכוון לשבתך מכוון כנגד שבתך
- 4 עמודיו עשה כסף המד"א (איוב כ"ו) עמודי שמים ירופפו
- 5 רפידתו זהב אלו דברי תורה שנאמר (תהלים י"ט) הנחמדים מזהב ומפז רב
- 6 מרכבו ארגמן המד"א (שם ס"ח) לרוכב בשמי שמי קדם
- 7 תוכו רצוף אהבה ר' ברכיה ורבי בון בשם ר' אבהו ארבע גאים הם גאה
שבעופות נשר גאה שבבהמות שור גאה שבחיות אריה גאה שבכלן אדם
- 8 וכלן נטלן הקב"ה וחקקן בכסא הכבוד שנא' (שם ק"ג) ה' בשמים הכין כסאו
ממה שהכין כסאו על הגאים תדע שמלכותו בכל משלה

English Translation (Soncino)

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs III:19-23

- A
1. KING SOLOMON MADE HIMSELF A PALANQUIN.
 2. R. 'Azariah in the name of R. Judah b. Simon interpreted the verse as applying to the tabernacle. A PALANQUIN: this refers to the tabernacle.
 3. Said R. Judah b. R. Il'ai: It is as if a king had a young daughter, and before she grew up and reached maturity he used to see her in the street and speak to her in public, in an alleyway or in a courtyard, but after she grew up and reached maturity he said, 'It is not becoming for my daughter that I should converse with her in public. Make her therefore a pavilion, and when I require to converse with her, I will do so within the pavilion.'
 4. So it is written, *When Israel was a child, then I loved him* (Hosea 11:1).
 5. In Egypt the Israelites saw God in the open, as it says, *For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians* (Exodus 12:23).
 6. At the Red Sea they saw Him in the open, as it says, *And Israel saw the great work* (lit. 'hand') (Exodus 14:31), and the children pointed to him with the finger, and said, *This is my God, and I will glorify Him* (Exodus 15:2).
 7. At Sinai they saw Him face to face, as it says, *And he said: The Lord came from Sinai* (Deuteronomy 33:2).
 8. But after Israel had stood before Mount Sinai and received the Torah and said, *All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and obey* (Exodus 24:7), and they had become completely God's people, the Holy One, blessed be He, said, "It is not becoming for My people that I should speak with them in the open. Let them therefore make for Me a tabernacle, and whenever I require to speak with them, I shall speak with them from the midst of the tabernacle"; and so it says, *But when Moses went in before the Lord that He might speak with Him, etc.* (Exodus 34:34).
- B
1. KING SOLOMON MADE HIMSELF: the King whose is peace.

2. OF THE WOOD OF LEBANON: as it says, *And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle of acacia-wood, standing up* (Exodus 26:15).

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs III:20

3. HE MADE THE PILLARS THEREOF OF SILVER: this refers to the pillars, as it says, *The hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver* (Exodus 27:10).

4. THE TOP THEREOF OF GOLD: as it says, *And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold* (Exodus 26:29).

5. THE SEAT OF IT OF PURPLE: as it says, *And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple* (Exodus 26:31).

6. THE INSIDE THEREOF BEING INLAID WITH LOVE: R. Judan said: This refers to the merit of the Torah and the merit of the righteous who study and practise it.

7. R. 'Azariah said in the name of R. Judah who had it from R. Simon: This refers to the Shekhinah.

C 1. One verse says, *So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord* (1 Kings 8:11), and another verse says, *And the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory* (Ezekiel 10:4).

2. How can these two verses be reconciled?

3. R. Joshua of Sikhnin said in the name of R. Levi: To what can the tent of meeting be compared? To a cave adjoining the sea, which the sea overflows when it becomes rough. Though the cave is filled, the sea loses nothing. So the tent of meeting was filled with the glory of the divine presence, and yet the world lost nothing of the Shekhinah.

4. When did the Shekhinah rest on the world? On the day when the tabernacle was set up, as it says, *And it came to pass on the day that Moses had made an end, etc.* (Numbers 7:1).

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs III:21

- D
1. R. Judah b. R. Il'ai interpreted the verses as referring to the ark.
A PALANQUIN (APIRYON): this refers to the ark.
 2. What is APIRYON? A litter.
 3. It is as if a king had an only daughter, fair, gracious, and of high repute, and he said to his servants, "My daughter is fair, gracious, and renowned; why make you not for her a litter? Make her a litter, for it is better that her beauty should be seen from out of the litter."
 4. So the Holy One, blessed be He, said: "My Torah is fair, gracious, and of high repute; make ye not for it an ark? It is better that the beauty of My Torah should be discerned from out of the ark."
- E
1. KING SOLOMON MADE HIMSELF: the King whose is peace.
 2. OF THE WOOD OF LEBANON: as it says, *And Bezalel made the ark of acacia-wood* (Exodus 37:1).
 3. HE MADE THE PILLARS THEREOF OF SILVER: this refers to the two staves inside the ark which were of silver.
 4. THE TOP THEREOF OF GOLD: as it says, *And he overlaid it with pure gold* (Exodus 37:2).
 5. THE SEAT OF IT OF PURPLE: R. Tanhuma said: This refers to the veil which adjoined it.
 6. R. Bibi said: This refers to the ark-cover, the gold of which resembled purple.
 7. THE INSIDE THEREOF BEING INLAID WITH LOVE FROM THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM: R. Judan said: This refers to the merit of the Torah and those who study it.
 8. R. 'Azariah said in the name of R. Judah who had it from R. Simon: This refers the Shekhinah.
- F
1. R. Abba b. Kahana said: *And there I will meet with thee* (Exodus 25:22).
 2. This verse teaches us that even the space behind the arkcover was not void of the Shekhinah.

- G
1. A certain idolater asked R. Joshua b. Qarha: “Why did the Holy One, blessed be He, speak from the midst of the bush and not from some other tree?”
 2. He replied: “Had He spoken from a carob or a sycamore, you could have asked the same question, and need I have answered you? However, now that you have asked, I cannot let you go away empty-handed. It is to show that there is no place on earth devoid of the Shekhinah, seeing that even in the midst of the thorn-bush God spoke with him.”

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs III:22

- H^a
1. Another explanation: A PALANQUIN: this refers to the Temple.
 2. KING SOLOMON MADE FOR HIMSELF: Solomon literally.
 3. OF THE WOOD OF LEBANON: as it says, *And we will cut wood out of Lebanon* (2 Chronicles 2:15).
 4. HE MADE THE PILLARS THEREOF OF SILVER: as it says, *And he set up the pillars at the porch of the Temple* (1 Kings 7:21).
 5. THE TOP THEREOF OF GOLD: as we have learnt on Tannaitic authority, “All the building was overlaid with gold except the backs of the doors.”
 6. R. Isaac said: This statement of the Mishnah refers to the Second Temple; but in the First Temple even the backs of the doors were covered with gold.
- I
1. We have learnt: Seven kinds of gold were employed in the Temple-- good gold, pure gold, chased gold, beaten gold, gold of *mufaz*, refined gold, gold of *parvayim*.
 2. “Good gold” means literally good, as it says, *And the gold of that land is good* (Genesis 2:12)
 3. Commenting on which R. Isaac said: “It is good to have in the house, it is good to take with on a journey.”
 4. “Pure gold”: so called because it could be put in the furnace and come out without losing anything.

5. R. Judah said in the name of R. °Ammi: “Solomon passed a thousand talents of gold through the furnace a thousand times until he reduced them to one talent.”
6. But it has been taught: R. Jose said in the name of R. Judah: It happened that the candlestick of the Temple was heavier than the candlestick of the wilderness by the weight of one Gordian denarius, and it passed through the furnace eighty times until it lost the excess.
7. The fact is that at first it lost dross, but subsequently it lost only very minute quantities.
8. “Beaten gold” is gold that is drawn out like wax. Hadrian had an egg's weight of it; Diocletian had a Gordian *denarius's* weight of it; the present Government has none of it and never had any.
9. “Chased gold”: so called because it made all goldsmiths shut up their shops.
10. It is written, *Seven thousand talents of refined silver, wherewith to overlay the walls of the houses* (1 Chronicles 29:4). Now was silver used for this purpose? Was not gold used? [It was]; and why is it called “silver” (*keseḥ*)? Because it put to shame (*maksif*) all owners of gold.
11. From it were made all the vessels--the basins and the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the bowls and the forks and the spoons and the censers and the *potot*.
12. R. Isaac of Magdala said: *Potot* means the pivots.
13. R. Simai said: It means the cup under the hinge. This shows that not the slightest detail was neglected in the Temple.
14. “Gold of *mufaz*”: R. Patriqi, brother of R. Drosah, said in the name of R. Ahba b. R. Buna: It resembles sulphur flaring up in the fire.
15. R. Abun said: It was called after the country of its origin, Ufaz.
16. “Refined gold.” Different explanations of this were given in the schools of R. Jannai and R. Judan b. R. Simeon.
17. The school of R. Jannai said that they used to cut it into the size of olives and give it to eat to the ostriches, and it issued from them refined. The school of R. Judan b. R. Simeon said: They used to bury it in dung for seven years and it came out refined.

18. “Gold of *parvayim*”: Resh Lakish said: It was red, resembling the blood of a bullock (*par*).

19. Some say it produced fruit (*perot*). For when Solomon built the Temple, he fashioned out of this gold all manner of trees, and when the trees in the field produced their fruit, these in the Temple also produced fruit, and the fruit used to drop off and it was gathered and put aside for the repair of the Temple.

20. When Manasseh set up an image in the Temple, all those trees withered, and so it says, *And the flower of Lebanon languisheth* (Nahum 1:4).

21. But in the time to come, the Holy One, blessed be He, will restore them, as it says, *It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing* (Isaiah 35:2).

H^b 7. THE SEAT OF IT OF PURPLE: as it says, *And he made the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen* (2 Chronicles 3:14).

8. THE INSIDE THEREOF BEING INLAID WITH LOVE: R. Judan said: This refers to the merit of the Torah and the merit of the righteous who study and practise it.

9. R. ‘Azariah said in the name of R. Judah who had it from R. Simon: This refers to the Shekhinah.

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs III:23

- J
1. Another explanation: A PALANQUIN: this is the world.
 2. KING SOLOMON MADE FOR HIMSELF: the King whose is peace.
 3. OF WOOD OF LEBANON: this intimates that it [the world] was formed out of the earthly Holy of Holies, as we have learnt: When the ark was taken away, a stone was left in its place which had been there from the days of the early prophets, and which was called *Shetiyyah*.
 4. Why was it called *shetiyyah*? Because on it, all the world was based (*hushtat*), as it says, *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth* (Psalm 50:2).

5. HE MADE THE PILLARS THEREOF OF SILVER: this is the tree of [human] descent.

6. THE TOP THEREOF OF GOLD: this refers to the produce of the earth and the fruit of the tree which are sold for gold.

7. THE SEAT OF IT OF PURPLE: as it says, *Who rideth upon the heaven as thy help* (Deuteronomy 33:26).

8. THE INSIDE THEREOF BEING INLAID WITH GOLD. R Judan said: This refers to the merit of the Torah and the merit of the righteous who study and practise it.

9. R. 'Azariah said in the name of R. Judah who had it from R. Simon: This refers to the Shekhinah.

- K
1. Another explanation: A PALANQUIN: this refers to the Throne of Glory.
 2. KING SOLOMON MADE FOR HIMSELF: the king whose is peace.
 3. OF THE WOOD OF LEBANON: this refers to the celestial Holy of Holies, which is exactly opposite (*mekhuvan*) the lower holy of holies, as it says, *The place (makhon)... for Thee to dwell in* (Exodus 15:17) – that is, exactly opposite to Your dwelling place.
 4. HE MADE THE PILLARS THEREOF OF SILVER: as it says, *The pillars of heaven tremble* (Job 26:11).
 5. THE TOP THEREOF OF GOLD: this refers to the words of Torah, of which it says, *More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold* (Psalm 19:11).
 6. THE SEAT (MERKABO) OF IT OF PURPLE: as it says, *To Him that rideth (rokev) upon the heaven of heavens, which are of old* (Psalm 68:34).
 7. THE INSIDE THEREOF BEING INLAID WITH LOVE: R. Berekiah and R. Bun in the name of R. Abbahu said: There are four lordly creatures. The lord among the birds is the eagle; the lord among cattle is the ox; the lord among beasts is the lion; and the lord over all of them is man.
 8. The Holy One, blessed be He, took them and engraved them the Throne of Glory, as it says, *The Lord hath established His throne in the*

heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all (Psalm 103:19). The fact that He has established His throne above the lordly ones proves that 'His kingdom ruleth over all.

Appendix 4

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs IV:1-3 (Song of Songs 4:1)

Hebrew Text (Vilna)

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ד סימן א

הנך יפה רעיתי הנך יפה	1	A
הנך יפה במצות	2	
הנך יפה בגמילות חסדים	3	
הנך יפה במצות עשה	4	
הנך יפה במצות לא תעשה	5	
הנך יפה במצות הבית בחלה תרומה ומעשרות	6	
הנך יפה במצות השדה בלקט שכחה ופאה ומעשר עני וההפקר	7	
הנך יפה בכלאים	8	
הנך יפה בסדין בציצית	9	
הנך יפה בנטיעה	10	
הנך יפה בערלה	11	
הנך יפה בנטע רבעי	12	
הנך יפה במילה	13	
הנך יפה בפריעה	14	
הנך יפה בתפלה	15	
הנך יפה בקריאת שמע	16	
הנך יפה במזוזה	17	
הנך יפה בתפילין	18	
הנך יפה בסוכה	19	
הנך יפה בלולב ואתרוג	20	
הנך יפה בתשובה	21	
הנך יפה במעשים טובים	22	
הנך יפה בעולם הזה	23	
הנך יפה בעולם הבא:	24	

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ד סימן ב

- B**
- 1 עיניך יונים
- 2 עיניך הן סנהדרין שהם עינים לעדה הה"ד (במדבר ט"ו) והיה אם מעיני העדה
- 3 רמ"ח אברים יש באדם וכולם אינם הולכין וחוזרין אלא אחר העינים
- 4 כך אין ישראל יכולים לעשות דבר חוץ מסנהדרין שלהם
- C**
- 1 יונים
- 2 מה יונה זו תמה כך ישראל נאים בהילוכן כשהן עולין לפעמי רגלים
- 3 מה יונה זו מצויינת כך ישראל מצויינין בתגלחת במילה וציצית
- 4 מה יונה זו צנועה כך ישראל צנועים
- 5 מה יונה זו פושטת צוארה לשחיטה כך ישראל (תהלים מ"ד) כי עליך הורגנו כל היום
- 6 מה יונה זו מכפרת על העולים כך ישראל מכפרין על האומות שכל אותן שבעים פרים שמקריבים בחג כנגד שבעים אומות שלא יצדה העולם מהן הה"ד (שם ק"ט) תחת אהבתי ישטנוני ואני תפלה
- 7 מה יונה זו משעה שמכרת בן זוגה עוד אינה ממירה אותו באחר כך ישראל משעה שהכירו להקב"ה לא המירוהו באחר
- 8 מה יונה זו נכנסת לקנה ומכרת קנה ושובכה וגוזליה ואפרוחיה וחלונותיה כך הן שלש שורות של תלמידי חכמים כשהן יושבין לפניהם כל אחד ואחד מכיר את מקומו
- 9 מה יונה זו אע"פ שאת נוטל גוזליה מתחתיה אין מנחת שובכה לעולם כך ישראל אע"פ שחרב בית המקדש לא בטלו שלש רגלים בשנה
- 10 מה יונה זו מחדשת לה בכל חדש וחדש גרן כך ישראל מחדשים להם בכל חדש תורה ומצות ומעשים טובים
- 11 מה יונה זו משוגרת רוגליות הרבה וחוזרת לשובכה כך ישראל הה"ד (הושע י"א) יחרדו כצפור ממצרים זה דור המדבר וכיונה מארץ אשור אלו עשרת השבטים אלו ואלו והושבתים על בתיהם נאם ה'
- D**
- 1 רבי אומר יש מין יונה שמאכילין אותה וחברותיה מריחות אותה ובאות אצלה לשובכה
- 2 כך בשעה שהזקן יושב ודורש הרבה גרים מתגיירין באותה שעה כגון יתרו הא

שמע ואתי רחב שמעה ואתיא

- 3 אף בחנניה מישאל ועזריה הרבה גרים נתגיירו באותה שעה
4 מה טעמא (ישעיה כ"ט) כי בראותו ילדיו מה כתיב בתריה וידעו תועי רוח בינה

- E 1 רבי היה יושב ודורש ונתנמנם הציבור
2 בקש לעוררן אמר ילדה אשה אחת במצרים ששים רבוא בכרס אחת
3 והיה שם תלמיד אחד ורבי ישמעאל ברבי יוסי שמו אמר ליה מאן הוה
4 כך אמר ליה זו יוכבד שילדה את משה ששקול כנגד ששים רבוא שהם כל ישראל
הה"ד (שמות ט"ו) אז ישיר משה ובני ישראל (שם ל"ט) ויעשו בני ישראל ככל
אשר צוה ה' את משה (דברים ל"ד) ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה

- F 1 עיניך יונים כיונים דוגמא דידך דמייה להדא יונה
2 מה יונה זו הביאה אורה לעולם כך ישראל מביאין אורה לעולם שנא' (ישעיה ס')
והלכו גוים לאורך

- G 1 ואימתי הביאה יונה אורה לעולם בימי נח הה"ד (בראשית ח') ותבא אליו היונה
לעת ערב והנה עלה זית טרף בפיה וגו'
2 מהו טרף בפיה קטיל כמה דתימר (שם ל"ז) טרוף טורף יוסף
3 אמר ר' ברכיה אילולי קטלתינייה אילן רב הוה מתעבד
4 ומהיכן הביאה אותו רבי לוי אמר משמטוטי ארץ ישראל
5 הביאתו הדא היא דאמרין בריתא ארץ ישראל לא לקת במוי דמבולא
6 הוא שנאמר על ידי יחזקאל (יחזקאל כ"ב) בן אדם אמור לה את ארץ לא מטוהרה
היא לא גשמה ביום זעם
7 אמר רבי יוחנן אפי' אצטריבולין של ריחים נמחו במים
8 ר' טריי אמר שערי גן עדן נפתחו לה ומשם הביאה אותו
9 אמר ליה ר' איבו אילו מגן עדן הביאה אותו לא היה לה להביא דבר מעולה כגון
קנמון ובלסמון אלא רמז רמזה לנח ואמרה לו מרי נח מר מזה מתחת ידו של
הקב"ה ולא מתוק מתחת ידיך:

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ד סימן ג

- H 1 מבעד לצמתך
2 אמר ר' לוי כל כלה שענייה כעורות כל גופה צריך בדיקה ושענייה יפות אין כל

גופה צריך בדיקה

- 3 והאשה הזאת כשמצמת שיערה לאחוריה והוא תכשיט לה
- 4 כך היתה סנהדרי גדולה יושבת אחורי בית המקדש והיא היתה תכשיט של בית המקדש
- 5 אמר רבי אבהו נראין מצומדין והן מרווחין כהדין רבה דצפורין
- 6 ור' לוי אמר לשון ערבי הוא אין בעי ליה מימרא ארוח לי הוא אומר מבעד לי

- I
- 1 שעריך כעדר העזים שגלשו מהר גלעד
 - 2 הר שגלשתי מתוכו עשיתי אותו גלעד לאומי העולם
 - 3 איזה זה זה ים סוף
 - 4 ורבי יהושע דסכנין בשם רבי לוי אמר טורא דאתנהרתון מן גווה
 - 5 הדא אתתא כד שיערה סגין היא עבדה לה גלשין גלשין הדא מוצינא כההוא לפי טבאות הוא עבד גלשין גלשין

- J
- 1 ומה גלשה הגלשתי מתוכה
 - 2 שניך כעדר הקצובות מילין קצובין בזת מצרים ובזת הים
 - 3 שעלו מן הרחצה ר' אבא בר כהנא אמר בשם רבי יהודה ברבי אלעאי לפני השירה כתיב (שופטים ד') ויוסיפו בני ישראל לעשות הרע בעיני ה' לאחר השירה כתיב (שם ו') ויעשו בני ישראל הרע בעיני ה'
 - 4 תחלת עשייה אלא כבר מחלה שירה לשעבר
 - 5 כיוצא בדבר אתה אומר (שמואל ב' כ"ג) ואלה דברי דוד האחרונים
 - 6 והראשונים היכן הם אלא כבר מחלה שירה לשעבר

- K
- 1 שכלם מתאימות שהיו כולן מותאמים בין שכינה למלאך הה"ד (שמות י"ד) ויסע מלאך האלהים ההולך וגו'
 - 2 ושכלה אין בהם שלא ניזק אחד מהם:

English Translation (Soncino)

Midrash Rabbah – The Song of Songs IV:1

- A 1. BEHOLD THOU ART FAIR, MY LOVE, BEHOLD THOU ART FAIR.
2. Behold thou art fair with precepts,
 3. behold thou art fair with deeds of kindness;
 4. behold thou art fair in positive precepts,
 5. behold thou art fair in negative precepts;
 6. behold thou art fair in the religious duties of the house, with the, *hallah, terumah*, and tithes,
 7. behold thou art fair in religious duties of the field, with the gleanings, the forgotten sheaf, the corner, the second tithe, and the renunciation of ownership;
 8. behold thou art fair in the [avoidance of] mixed kinds,
 9. behold thou art fair in a [linen] robe with [woollen] fringes;
 10. behold thou art fair with plantation;
 11. behold thou art fair with *orlah*;
 12. behold thou art fair with the plant of the fourth year;
 13. behold thou art fair with circumcision,
 14. behold thou art fair with *peritah*;
 15. behold thou art fair with Prayer;
 16. behold thou art fair with the recital of the *Shema*,
 17. behold thou art fair with the *mezuzah*,
 18. behold thou art fair with the phylacteries;
 19. behold thou art fair with the *Sukkah*;
 20. behold thou art fair with the *lulab* and citron;
 21. behold thou art fair with repentance,
 22. behold thou art fair with good deeds;
 23. behold thou art fair in this world,
 24. behold thou art fair in the world to come.

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs IV:2

- B**
1. THINE EYES ARE AS DOVES.
 2. THINE EYES refers to the Sanhedrin, who are the eyes of the community, as it says, *If it be done in error by the congregation, it being hid from their eyes* (Numbers 15:24).
 3. There are two hundred and forty-eight limbs in the human body, and they move only by the direction of the eyes.
 4. So Israel can do nothing without their Sanhedrin.
- C**
1. DOVES:
 2. Just as the dove is innocent, so Israel are graceful in their step when they go up to celebrate the festivals.
 3. Just as the dove is distinguished [by its colouring], so Israel are distinguished through [abstention from] shaving, through circumcision, and through fringes.
 4. Just as the dove is chaste, so Israel are chaste.
 5. Just as the dove puts forth its neck for slaughter, so Israel, as it says, *For Your sake are we killed all the day* (Psalm 44:23).
 6. Just as the dove makes atonement for the pilgrims, so Israel makes atonement for the other nations, since the seventy bullocks that they offer on Tabernacles correspond to the seventy nations, and are brought in order that the earth may not be left desolate of them; and so it is written, *In return for my love they are my adversaries; but I am all prayer* (Psalm 109:4).
 7. Just as the dove, from the time that she recognises her mate, never changes him for another, so Israel, once they had learnt to know the Holy One, blessed be He, have never changed Him for another.
 8. Just as the dove when it enters its cote recognises its nest, its cote, its young, its fledgelings, and its apertures, so when the three rows of disciples sit before the Sanhedrin, each one knows his place.
 9. Just as a dove, even if its young are taken from it, never abandons its cote, so Israel, although the Temple has been destroyed, have not ceased to celebrate three festivals a year.

10. Just as a dove produces a fresh brood every month, so Israel every month renew their study of the Torah, their performance of precepts and of good deeds.

11. Just as the dove travels far afield, and yet comes back to her cote, so Israel, as it says, *They shall come trembling as a bird out of Egypt* – this refers to the generation of the wilderness – and *as a dove out of the land of Assyria* (Hosea 11:11) – this refers to the ten tribes; and of both of them it says *And I will make them to dwell in their houses, saith the Lord* (Hosea 11:11).

- D
1. Rabbi says: When a certain kind of dove is given food, the other doves smell it and flock to her cote.
 2. So when the elder sits and discourses, many strangers become proselytes at such a time; so, for instance, Jethro heard the news and came, Rahab heard and came.
 3. So through Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, many strangers became proselytes at that time.
 4. What is the reason? *Because, when he seeth his children sanctify My name, then, as it goes on, they also that err in spirit shall come to understanding* (Isaiah 29:23-24).
- E
1. As Rabbi was once expounding the Scripture, the congregation became drowsy.
 2. In order to rouse them he said: "One woman in Egypt brought forth six hundred thousand at a birth."
 3. There was a certain disciple present named R. Ishmael son of R. Jose, who said to him: "Who can that have been?"
 4. He replied: "Jochebed who bore Moses, who was considered the equal of six hundred thousand, the number of all Israel, as it says, *Then sang Moses and the children of Israel* (Exodus 15:1). And again, *And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses* (Exodus 39:32), and again, *And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel* (Deuteronomy 34:10)."

- F 1. YOUR EYES ARE [AS] DOVES: like doves; that is, thy quality is like that of the dove.
2. Just as the dove brought light into the world, so Israel bring light into the world, as it says, *And nations shall walk at thy light* (Isaiah 60:3).
- G 1. When did the dove bring light to the world? In the days of Noah, as it says, *And the dove came in to him at eventide; and lo in her mouth an olive-leaf freshly plucked* (Genesis 8:11).
2. What is meant by “in her mouth... freshly plucked”? Killed, as it says, *Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces (toraf)* (Genesis 37:33).
3. R. Berekiah said: Had the dove not killed it, the leaf would have become a great tree.
4. Whence did she bring it? R. Levi said: From the young shoots of the Land of Israel.
5. This accords with the popular saying: “The Land of Israel was not smitten by the waters of the Flood”;
6. And so it was stated by Ezekiel: *Son of man, say unto her: Thou art a land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation* (Ezekiel 22:24).
7. R. Johanan said: Even mill-stones were dissolved by the water [of the Flood].
8. R. Tarye said: The gates of the Garden of Eden were opened to her, and from there she brought it.
9. Said R. Aibu to him: Had she brought it from the Garden of Eden, she should have brought something fine, like cinnamon or balsam. But in truth she gave a hint to Noah, as if to say, “Good sir Noah, let me have something as bitter as this from the hand of God rather than something sweet from your hand.”

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs IV:3

- H 1. BEHIND (*MIBA^cAD*) THY VEIL (*LE-TZAMMATEKH*).

2. R. Levi said: If the eyes of a bride are unprepossessing, one must survey her whole body, but if her eyes are beautiful, one need not look at the rest of her body.

3. When a woman ties up (*metzammetet*) her hair behind, this is a great ornament to her.

4. So when the great Sanhedrin sat behind the Temple, this was an ornament to the Temple.

5. R. Abbahu said: They seemed to be crowded together (*metzummadin*), yet had plenty of room, like the great [assembly] of Sepphor is.

2. R. Levi said: The word *miba^cad* is Arabic. If an Arab wants to say “Make room for me”, he says “*Mab^cad* for me.”

I 1. YOUR HAIR IS AS A FLOCK OF GOATS THAT TRAIL DOWN (*SHE-GALESHU*) FROM MOUNT GILEAD.

2. This means, “The mountain from which I tore away [spoil] I made a standing witness (*gal^ced*) to the other nations.”

3. And what was this? The Red Sea.

4. R. Joshua of Siknin said in the name of R. Levi: It means, “The mountain from which you streamed away.”

5. When a woman's hair grows thick she thins it (*galshin*); when pumpkins sprout in profusion, they must be thinned (*galshin*).

J 1. What did I tear away from it?

2. [The answer is] THY TEETH [ARE] LIKE A FLOCK OF EWES ALL SHAPED ALIKE (*QETZUVOT*) (Song 4:2): well-defined things (*qetzuvin*), the spoil of Egypt and the spoil of the Red Sea.

3. WHICH ARE COME UP FROM THE WASHING: R. Abba b.

Kahana said in the name of R. Judah b. Il^cai: Before the song [of Deborah], it is written of the children of Israel that *they again did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord* (Judges 4:1); but after the song we read merely, *And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord* (Judges 6:1).

4. Were they now doing it for the first time? The truth is that the song had wiped out all that went before.

5. Similarly we read, *Now these are the last words of David* (2 Samuel 23:1).

6. Where then are the first? The fact is that the song had already wiped out all that went before.

- K
1. WHEREOF ALL ARE PAIRED (*MAT'IMOT*): they were all placed between (*mut'amim*) the angel and the Shekhinah, as it says, *And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, removed, etc.* (Exodus 14:19).
 2. AND NONE FAILETH AMONG THEM: none suffered injury.

Appendix 5

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs V:19-21 (Song of Songs 5:14)

Hebrew Text (Vilna)

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ה סימן יט

- 1 A ידיו גלילי זהב אלו לוחות הברית שנא' (שמות ל"ב) והלוחות מעשה אלהים המה
2 גלילי זהב אלו דברי תורה שנאמר (תהלים י"ט) הנחמדים מזהב ומפז
3 אמר ר' יהושע בר נחמיה מעשה נסים היו נגללין היו של סנפרינון היו והיו נגללין
4 רבי מנחמא בשם ר' אבון אמר וחצובין מגלגל חמה היו
- 1 B כיצד היו כתובין חמשה על לוח זה וחמשה על לוח זה על שם
2 חמשה על לוח זה וחמשה על לוח זה על שם שנא' ידיו גלילי זהב
3 כדברי רבי חנינא בן גמליאל הה"ד (דברים ד') ויכתבם על שני לוחות אבנים
4 ורבנן אמרי עשרה על לוח זה ועשרה על לוח זה שנאמר (שם) ויגד לכם את בריתו
אשר צוה אתכם עשרת הדברים ויכתבם על שני לוחות אבנים
5 רבי שמעון בן יוחאי אמר עשרים על לוח זה ועשרים על לוח זה שנא' ויכתבם על
שני לוחות אבנים עשרים על לוח זה ועשרים על לוח זה
6 ר' סימאי אומר ארבעים על לוח זה וארבעים על לוח זה שנא' (שמות ל"ב) לוחות
כתובים משני עבריהם מזה ומזה טטרוגא

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ה סימן כ

- 1 C [ממולאים בתרשיש]
2 חנניה בן אחי ר' יהושע אמר בין כל דבור ודבור פרשיותיה ודקדוקיה של תורה היו
כתובין
3 ר' יוחנן כד הוה פשיט קרייה והוה מטי בדין פסוקא ממולאים בתרשיש הוה אמר
יפה למדני בן אחי ר' יהושע
4 מה גלים הללו בין גל גדול לגל גדול גלים קטנים כך בין כל דבור ודבור פרשיותיה
ודקדוקיה של תורה היו כתובים
- 1 D ממולאים בתרשיש זה התלמוד שהוא כים הגדול הדא דאת אמר תרשישה הדא מה
דאת אמר כל הנחלים הולכים אל הים

2 זה התלמוד שהוא כים הגדול הדא דאת אמר תרשישה הדא מה דאת אמר כל הנחלים הולכים אל הים

- E
- 1 מעיו עשת שן זו תורת כהנים
 - 2 מה הכרס הזה הלב מכאן והכרעים מכאן והוא בתוך כך תורת כהנים שני ספרים מכאן ושנים מכאן והוא באמצע
 - 3 עשת שן מה עשת שן זה את עושה ממנה כמה יתדות כמה רמחים כך תורת כהנים יש בה כמה מצות כמה דקדוקין כמה קלים וחמורים כמה פיגולים כמה נותרות כתובים בתורת כהנים:

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ה סימן כא

- F
- 1 מעולפת ספירים
 - 2 מעולפת כחן של בני אדם שהיא קשה כספיר
 - 3 הזה ר' יודן ורבי פנחס
 - 4 רבי יודן אמר אי תימר שהספיר הזה רך הוא בא וראה מעשה שהיה
 - 5 נבחין אותו באדם א' שהביא ספיר א' ברומי למכרו אמר הלוקח ע"מ לבדוק אותו לשבור ממנו חתיכה קטנה נתנו על הסדן התחיל מכה עליו בפטיש נבקע הסדן ונחלק הפטיש והספיר במקומו ולא חסר
 - 6 הה"ד מעולפת ספירים

- G
- 1 א"ר אבא בר ממל אם נתעלף אדם בדברי תורה והלכה סוף שנעשה בהם קסם
 - 2 ורבנן אמרין כל מי שנעשה קסם בדברי תורה סוף שהוא נעשה בהם מלך המד"א (משלי ט"ז) קסם על שפתי מלך

- H
- 1 רבי אלעזר ב"ר שמעון אתוי חמרייא גבי אבוי למיזבן עיבור מן קרייתא המונייא
 - 2 יתיב גבי תנורא אמיה נסחא והוא אכיל אמיה נסחא והוא אכיל עד דאכיל כל אצוותא
 - 3 אמרין ווי חיווא בישא שריא במיעני דהדין דומה שזה מביא רעבון לעולם
 - 4 שמע קולהון מדנפקון למזבן טעניהון נסב חמריהון ואסיקון לאגרא
 - 5 אתון תבעון חמריהון ולא אשכחון יתהון תלון עיינהון וחמון יתהון יהיבין באגרא
 - 6 אזלון גבי אבוי תנון ליה עובדא
 - 7 אמר לון דלמא מילה בישא אשמעתוניה
 - 8 אמרין ליה לא מרי אלא כן וכן הוה עובדא

- 9 אמר לון ולמה הכנסתם בו עין רעה וצרה איפשר דמן דדכון הוה אכיל או עליכון
אינון מזוני לא ההוא דברייה ברא ליה מזוני אע"פ כן אוזלו ואמרון ליה מן שמי
והוא מחית לכון
- 10 הנס האחרון היה קשה מן הראשון מן מסקן להון הוה מסיק להון חד חד מן נחית
להון הות מחית להון תרי תרי
- 11 וכיון שנתעסק בתורה אפילו טליתו לא היה יכול לסבול
- 12 לקיים מה שנאמר מעולפת ספירים
- I 1 בן בית אחד היה לו לרבן גמליאל והיה למוד להיות נוטל קופה של ארבעים סאה
ומוליכה אצל הנחתום
- 2 א"ל כל הדין חילא טבא אית בך ולית את עסיק באורייתא
- 3 כיון שנתעסק בתורה התחיל להיות נוטל של שלשים של עשרים של שנים עשר של
שמונה סאים
- 4 כיון דגמר ספרא אפילו קופה של סאה לא היה יכול לסבול ואית דאמרי אפילו
סבניה לא הוה יכול למיסבל אלא אחרנין מעברין ליה מעילווי דהוא לא היה יכול
5 לקיים מה שנאמר מעולפת ספירים:

English Translation (Soncino)

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs V:19

- A
1. HIS HANDS [ARE AS RODS OF GOLD]. This refers to the tablets of the covenant, as it says, *And the tables were the work of God* (Exodus 23:16).
 2. RODS (*GELILEI*) OF GOLD: this refers to words of Torah of which it is said, *More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold* (Psalm 19:11).
 3. R. Joshua b. Nehemiah said: They [the tablets] were of a miraculous nature: they were of hard stone, and yet they rolled up (*niglalin*).
 4. R. Menahema said in the name of R. Abun: They were hewn from the orb of the sun.
- B
1. How were they inscribed?
 2. Five commandments on one tablet and five on the other, as it says, HIS HANDS ARE AS RODS OF GOLD.
 3. This follows the view of R. Hanina b. Gamaliel, who adduced the verse, *And He wrote them upon two tables of stone* (Deuteronomy 4:13).
 4. The Rabbis say there were ten on each tablet, as it says, *And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even the ten words; and He wrote [all of] them upon [each of] two tables of stone* (Deuteronomy 4:13).
 5. R. Simeon b. Yohai said: There were twenty on each tablet, as it says, *And He wrote them upon two tables of stone* (Deuteronomy 4:13) - that is, twenty on each.
 6. R. Simai said: There were forty on each stone, as it says, *Tables that were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other* (Exodus 32:15) – in a square.

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs V:20

- C
1. [SET WITH BERYLS.]

2. Hananiah the son of the brother of R. Joshua said: Between every two commandments were written the sections and the minutiae of the Torah.
3. When R. Johanan in the course of studying the Scripture came to this verse, SET WITH BERYLS, he used to say: I have to thank the son of the brother of R. Joshua for teaching me this.
4. Just as in the sea between every two large waves there are small waves, so between every commandment and the next one [on the tablets] the sections and minutiae of the Torah were written.

D 1. SET WITH BERYLS (*TARSHISH*)

2. This refers to the Talmud which is like the Great Sea [the sea being called tarshish,] as we read, *Unto Tarshish* (Jonah 1:3); and so we read, *All the rivers run into the sea* (Ecclesiastes 1:7).

E 1. HIS BODY IS AS POLISHED IVORY: This refers to the law of the priests.

2. Just as the belly is situated in the middle between the heart and the legs, so Leviticus is in the middle between two books before and two books after.
3. POLISHED IVORY: just as out of a block of ivory you can make ever so many nails or javelins, so Leviticus contains numbers of precepts, of minutiae, of rules both more and less stringent, of cases of *piggul* and of *notar*.

Midrash Rabbah - The Song of Songs V:21

F 1. OVERLAID WITH SAPPHIRES.

2. [The Torah] wears out a man's strength, being as hard as sapphire.
3. R. Judan and R. Phinehas gave illustrations of this.
4. R. Judan said: If you imagine that sapphire is soft, you may learn the contrary from the following fact:
5. A man brought a sapphire to Rome to sell. The purchaser wanted to test it and said, "Let us try it by breaking a small piece off it." They put it

on the anvil and he began to strike it with a hammer. The anvil split, the hammer broke, but the sapphire remained intact.

6. So it is written, OVERLAID (*ME^C ULEFET*) WITH SAPPHIRES.

G 1. R. Abba b. Meme said: If a man grows faint (*nit^calef*) over the study of Torah and the Halakhah, he will ultimately become able to conjure with them.

2. And the Rabbis say: Whoever is able to conjure with the words of Torah will finally become a king over them, as it says, *Divination is in the lips of the king* (Proverbs 16:10).

H 1. Some ass-drivers came to the house of the father of R. Eliezer b. R. Simeon to buy corn from the town of Hamunia.

2. Eliezer was sitting by the oven [in which his mother was baking loaves], and as she took them out so he ate them, until he had eaten all the rolls.

3. The ass-drivers said: "For shame! An evil snake is lodged in the belly of this fellow. He is like to bring a famine into the world."

4. He heard what they said, and when they went out to make their purchases, he took their asses and mounted them on to the roof.

5. When they returned, they looked for their asses but could not find them until they lifted up their eyes and saw them on the roof.

6. They went to his father and told him what had happened.

7. He said to them: "Perhaps you said something to offend him?"

8. They replied: "No sir; what happened was so and so."

9. He said to them: "Why were you so grudging and ill-natured towards him? Did he eat what was yours? Or have you to provide his food? Did not his Creator create food for him? All the same, go and speak to him in my name and he will bring the asses down for you."

10. The second miracle was greater than the first. In taking them up, he had taken them one by one; in bringing them down, he brought them two by two.

11. And this same man, after he had devoted himself to the study of the Torah was not able to carry even his own cloak,

12. thus bearing out the words, WEAKENED WITH SAPPHIRES.

- I
1. There was a certain member of the household of Rabban Gamaliel who was accustomed to take up a bag of forty *se'ahs* and carry it to the baker.
 2. He said to him: “Do you possess such strength and yet not study the Torah?”
 3. After studying the Torah he commenced carrying a bag of only thirty *se'ahs*, then twenty, then twelve, then eight.
 4. When he had finished the book, he was not able to carry even a bag of one *se'ah*; some say, he was not able to carry even his *sibni* [hat], but others had to take it off him, since he was not able,
 5. thus bearing out the words, WEAKENED WITH SAPPHIRES.

Appendix 6

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs VIII:19 (Song of Songs 8:14)

Hebrew Text (Vilna)

מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה ח סימן יט

- 1 A יב ברה דודי ודמה לך לצבי לצבא של מעלה הדומים לכבודך בקול אחד בנעימה אחת
2 על הרי בשמים בשמי שמים העליונים
- 1 B ד"א ברה דודי מן גלות שאנו בה ומתלכלכין בעונות
2 ודמה לך לצבי טהרנו כצבי
3 או לעופר האילים שתקבל את תפלתנו כקרבת גדיים ואילים
4 על הרי בשמים אתא לך לריחא טבא בזכות אבותינו שריחן עולה לפניך כבשמים
5 זו גן עדן שכולה בשמים לכך נאמר על הרי בשמים
- 1 C ד"א היושבת בגנים חברים
2 ר' ירמיה בשם ר' חייא רבה שני חברים שהיו עסוקים בדבר הלכה ונכבשין זה לזה
בהלכה עליהם הכתוב אומר (מלאכי ג') אז נדברו יראי ה' איש אל רעהו ויקשב ה'
וישמע
3 ואין דבור אלא לשון נחת שנא' (תהלים מ"ז) ידבר עמים תחתינו
4 ולא עוד אלא שאם טעו הקב"ה מחזיר להם טעותן
5 מ"ט ויקשב ה' וישמע ויכתב ספר זכרון לפניו ליראי ה' ולחושבי שמו
6 וישמע להם ויכתב שהוא כותב על לבם המד"א (ירמיה ל"א) ועל לבם אכתבנה
7 ספר זכרון לפניו שהוא מזכירה להם למאן ליראי ה' ולחושבי שמו
- 1 D א"ר יודן בשעה שישראל קורין בתורה בחבורות קולך השמיעני ואם לאו ברה דודי
2 א"ר זירא בשעה שישראל קורין את שמע בפה אחד בקול אחד בנעימה אחת קולך
השמיעני ואם לאו ברה דודי
- 1 E ברה דודי
2 א"ר לוי למלך שעשה סעודה וזימן האורחין

- 3 מהם אוכלין ושותין ומברכים למלך ומהן אוכלין ושותין ומקללין למלך
- 4 הרגיש המלך ובקש להכניס בהם מהומה בסעודתו ולערבבה
- 5 נכנסה מטרונה ולימדה עליהם סניגוריא אמרה לו אדוני המלך עד שאתה מביט באלו שאוכלין ושותין ומקללין אותך הביט באלו שאוכלים ושותים ומברכים אותך ומשבחים לשמך
- 6 כך כשישראל אוכלים ושותים ומברכין ומשבחין ומקלסין להקב"ה מקשיב לקולם ומתרצה
- 7 ובשעה שאומות העולם אוכלין ושותין ומחרפין ומנאצין להקב"ה בעריות שמזכירים אותה שעה חושב הקב"ה אפילו להחריב לעולמו
- 8 והתורה נכנסה ומלמדת סניגוריא ואומרת רבוננו של עולם עד שאתה מביט באלו שמחרפין ומכעיסים לפניך הביטה בישראל עמך שמברכים ומשבחים ומקלסים לשמך הגדול בתורה ובזמירות ובשבחות
- 9 ורוח הקדש צווחת ברח דודי ברח מאומות העולם והדבק בהם בישראל

1 F ודמה לך לצבי

- 2 מה צבי זה בשעה שהוא ישן עינו אחת פתוחה ועינו אחת קמוצה כך בשעה שישראל עושין רצונו של הקדוש ברוך הוא מביט אליהם בשתי עיניו הדא הוא דכתיב (תהלי' ל"ד) עיני ה' אל צדיקים
- 3 ובשעה שאין עושים רצון הקב"ה מביט להם בעינו אחת שנא' (שם ל"ג) הנה עין ה' אל יראיו

1 על הרי בשמים

- 2 G א"ר סימון אמר הקדוש ב"ה המתינו לי עד שאשב בדין על הריהם שהם שריהם שנתונות אצלי בשמים הה"ד על הרי בשמים
- 3 א"ר יצחק כי הדא (שמות ל') ואתה קח לך בשמים ראש ראש גמלים נושאים זהב ובשמים זהב וסמים

1 H ר' חוניה על הדא דר' יצחק אין הקב"ה פורע מאומה למטה עד שמשפיל שריה מלמעלה

- 2 ואית ליה חמשה קריין
- 3 חד דכתיב (ישעיה כ"ד) והיה ביום ההוא יפקד ה' על צבא המרום במרום ואחר כך על מלכי האדמה
- 4 תרין (שם י"ד) איך נפלת משמים הילל בן שחר ואח"כ נגדעת לארץ

- 5 תלתא (שם ל"ד) כי רותה בשמים חרבי ואחר כך הנה על אדום תרד
- 6 ארבעה (תהלים קמ"ט) לאסור מלכיהם בזקים ואח"כ ונכבדיהם בכבלי ברזל א"ר
תנחומא לאסור מלכיהם בזקים אלו שרים של מעלה ונכבדיהם בכבלי ברזל אלו שרים
של מטה
- 7 חמשה (שם) לעשות בהם משפט כתוב ואח"כ הדר הוא לכל חסידיו הללויה
- I
- 1 בארבעה דברים נמשלה גאותן של ישראל בקציר ובבציר בבשמים וביולדה
- 2 בקציר הדא חקלאא כד היא מחצדא בלא ענתה אפילו תבנא לית הוא טב בענתה הוא טב
הדא הוא דכתיב (יואל ד') שלחו מגל כי בשל קציר
- 3 נמשלה בבציר הדין כרמא כד מקטיף בלא ענתיה אפילו בסמיה לית הוא טב בענתיה
הוא טב כך (ישעיה כ"ז) כרם חמר ענו לה איתעביד כרמא חמר זמר לה
- 4 נמשלה בבשמים מה בשמים הללו כשהן נלקטין כשהן רכיין לחים אין ריחם נודף
כשהן יבשים ונלקטין ריחן נודף
- 5 נמשלה כיוולדה הדא איתתא כד ילדה כלא ענתה לא חייא ולדא כד ילדת בענתה חיי כן
כתיב (מיכה ה') לכן יתנם עד עת יולדה ילדה
- 6 ר' אחא בשם ר' יהושע בן לוי אמר (ישעיה ס') אני ה' בעתה אחישנה לא זכיתם בעתה
זכיתם אחישנה
- 7 כן יהי רצון במהרה בימינו אמן

English Translation (Soncino)

Midrash Rabbah Song of Songs VIII:19 (Song of Songs 8:14)

- A
1. MAKE HASTE, MY BELOVED, AND BE THOU LIKE TO A GAZELLE (*TZEVI*): like the celestial host (*tzava*) who pay homage (*domim*) to Thee with one voice, with one chant.
 2. UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF SPICES (*BESAMIM*): in the very highest heavens (*shamayim*).
- B
1. Another explanation: FLEE AWAY, MY BELOVED: from the exile in which we are at present living and in which we are defiled with iniquities.
 2. AND BE THOU LIKE TO A GAZELLE: purify us like a gazelle.
 3. OR TO A YOUNG HART (*'AYYALIM*): receive our prayer like an offering of kids and rams (*'elim*).
 4. UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF SPICES: savour us favourably for the sake of our ancestors whose savour ascended to Thee like the scent of spices.
 5. This refers to the Garden of Eden which is filled with spices; therefore it says, UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF SPICES.
- C
1. Another explanation: THOU THAT DWELLEST IN THE GARDENS, THE COMPANIONS [ARE LISTENING FOR YOUR VOICE; LET ME HEAR IT] (Song 8:13).⁵¹³
 2. R. Jeremiah said in the name of R. Hiyya Rabbah: If two colleagues are discussing a point of halachah, and yield to one another's arguments, Scripture says of them, *Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard* (Malachi 3:16).
 3. The word "speaking" (*dibbur*) always implies concessions, as it says, *He subdues (yadber) peoples under us* (Psalm 47:4).

⁵¹³ E 1-5 and D 1-2 are based on a lemma from the previous verse. The Midrash weaves Song 8:13 and Song 8:14 together. I have ignored this in my analysis. It is worth noting, however, that the Targum does not do this.

4. What is more, if they fall into error, God recalls to them what they have forgotten.
5. How do we know? Because it says, *And the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name* (Malachi 3:16).
6. He heard [for them] and it was written: this means that He writes it on their hearts, as it says, *In their heart will I write it* (Jeremiah 31:33).
7. “A book of remembrance before Him”: this means that He recalls it to their mind. And to whom? ‘For them that fear the Lord, and that think upon His name.’

- D
1. R. Judan said: When Israel read the Torah in groups, [it can be said of them,] CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY VOICE, but otherwise, FLEE, MY BELOVED.
 2. R. Ze'ira said: When Israel recite the Shema^c with one mouth, one voice, one chant, [then it can be said,] CAUSE ME TO HEAR THY VOICE, but otherwise, FLEE, MY BELOVED.

- E
1. FLEE, MY BELOVED.
 2. R. Levi said: [This may be explained by] a parable of a king who made a feast and invited guests.
 3. Some ate and drank and blessed the king, and others ate and drank and cursed the king.
 4. When the king noticed it, he was at first inclined to make a disturbance and to upset the feast.
 5. The queen, however, came in and pleaded for the guests, saying: “Your Majesty, instead of noticing these who eat and drink and curse thee, rather take note of these who eat and drink and bless thee and praise thy name.”
 6. So when Israel eat and drink and praise and extol God, He listens to their voice and is appeased.
 7. But when the heathens eat and drink and curse and blaspheme the Holy One, blessed be He, with the lewdness which they utter, at that moment God is ready even to destroy His world,

8. but the Torah enters and pleads saying, “Sovereign of the Universe, instead of taking note of these who blaspheme and provoke Thee, rather take note of Israel Thy people who bless and praise and extol Thy great name with Torah, and with hymns and praises”;
9. and the holy spirit cries out, FLEE AWAY, MY BELOVED: flee away from the heathens and cleave to Israel.

- F
1. AND BE THOU LIKE TO A GAZELLE
 2. Just as a gazelle sleeps with one eye open and one eye closed, so when Israel act according to the desire of the Holy One, blessed be He, He looks upon them with both eyes, as it is written, *The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous* (Psalm 34:16).
 3. But when they do not act according to His desire, He looks upon them with one eye, as it says, *Behold, the eye of the Lord is toward them that fear Him* (Psalm 33:18).
- G
1. UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF SPICES.
 2. R. Simon said: The Holy One, blessed be He, said: “Wait for Me until I sit in judgment on their mountains, to wit, their guardian angels who are posted with Me in heaven”; and so it says, UPON THE MOUNTAINS IN THE HEAVENS.
 3. R. Isaac said: Its meaning is as in the verse, *Take thou also unto thee the chief spices* (Exodus 30:23); [also,] *With camels that bore spices and gold very much* (1 Kings 10:2).
- H
1. R. Hunia said with reference to the dictum of R. Isaac: “The Holy One, blessed be He, does not punish a nation on earth till He has cast down its guardian angel from heaven.”
 2. This is borne out by five Scriptural verses.
 3. The first is, *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will punish the host of the high heaven on high-that first, and then-and the kings of the earth upon the earth* (Isaiah 24:21).

4. The second is: *How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning!* After which we read, *How art thou cut down to the ground* (Isaiah 14:12).

5. The third is: *For My sword hath drunk its fill in heaven; and then, Behold, it shall come down upon Edom* (Isaiah 34:5).

6. The fourth is: *To bind their kings with chains, and then, and their nobles with fetters of iron* (Psalm 149:8), explaining which R. Tanhuma said: “To bind their kings with chains”: this refers to the heavenly princes. “And their nobles with fetters of iron”: this refers to the earthly rulers.

7. The fifth is: *To execute upon them the judgment written, and then, He is the glory of all His saints, hallelujah!* (Psalm 149:9).

- I
1. The greatness of Israel is compared to four things – to harvest, to wine-gathering, to spices, and to a woman bearing child.
 2. To a harvest, because if a field is reaped before its time even its straw is no good, but if in its proper time all its yield is good, as it is written, *Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe* (Joel 4:13).
 3. It is compared to wine-gathering, because when the vineyard is gathered before its time even the vinegar made from it is not good, but if gathered in its time its vinegar also is good; so, *Sing of her: A vineyard of foaming wine* (Isaiah 27:2): when the vineyard is ready to produce foaming wine, then pluck it.
 4. It is compared to spices, because if spices are gathered when they are moist and soft, they do not give off scent, but if gathered when they are dry, they give off scent.
 5. It is compared to a woman bearing child, because if the woman gives birth before the time, the child does not live, but if at the right time, the child lives. So it is written, *Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she who travails hath brought forth* (Micah 5:2).
 6. R. Aha said in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: *I the Lord will hasten it in its time* (Isaiah 60:22). If you prove not worthy, it [the redemption] will be at its due time; if you prove worthy, I will hasten it.
 7. So may it be God's will speedily in our days, Amen.

Note on Appendices 7-11

Appendices 7-11 relate to the argument of Chapter Six on multiple parallelism. Because of constraints of space English translations are not provided, though some are available in earlier appendices for the Targum and Song Rabbah where the same texts were utilised also in Chapter Five. The key elements of the parallelism with the Targum are highlighted in yellow, to aid their identification.

Appendix 7

Song of Songs 1:5

Targum Song 1:5	Song Rabbah 1.34	Exodus Rabbah 49.2	Song Zuta to 1:5
<p>כד עבדו עמא בית ישראל ית עגלא אתקדרו אפיהון כבניי כוש דשרין במשכני קדר וכד תבו בתויבתא ואשתביק להון סגא זיו יקרא דאפיהון כמלאכיא ועל דעבדו יריעתא למשכנא ושרת ביניהון שכינתא דה' ומשה רבהון סליק לרקיעא ויהב שלמא ביניהון ובין מלאכא:</p>	<p>שחורה אני ונאווה שחורה אני במעשי ונאווה במעשה אבותי שחורה אני ונאווה אמרה כנסת ישראל שחורה אני בפני עצמי ונאווה בפני קוני דכתיב (עמוס ט) הלא כבני כושיים אתם לי בני ישראל כבני כושיים אתם בפניכם אבל אתם לי כבני ישראל נאם ה' דבר אחר שחורה אני במצרים ונאווה אני במצרים שחורה אני במצרים (יחזקאל כ) וימרו בי ולא אבו לשמוע אלי ונאווה אני במצרים בדם הפסח ובדם המילה דכתיב (שם טז) ואעבור עליך ואראך מתבוססת בדמיך ואמר לך בדמיך חיי זה דם הפסח ואמר לך בדמיך חיי זה דם המילה דבר אחר שחורה אני בים שנא' (תהלים קו) וימרו על ים בים סוף ונאווה אני בים שנא' (שמות טו) זה אלי ואנוהו שחורה אני במרה שנאמר (שם) וילונו העם על משה לאמר מה נשתה ונאווה אני במרה שנא' (שם) ויצעק אל ה' ויורהו ה' עץ וישלך אל המים</p>	<p>ד"א כל חכם לב הה"ד (שיר א) שחורה אני ונאווה אם שחורה למה נאווה וכי יש שחורה נאווה אלא אמרה כנסת ישראל שחורה אני במעשי ונאווה אני במעשה אבותי שחורה אני במצרים ונאווה אני באמרי בסיני (שמות כד) כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע שחורה אני על הים שנאמר (תהלים קו) וימרו על ים בים סוף ונאווה אני באמרי (שמות טז) זה אלי ואנוהו שחורה אני במעשה העגל ונאווה אני במעשה המשכן שחורה אני בשור שנא' (תהלים קו) וימירו את כבודם בתבנית שור ונאווה אני בשור (ויקרא טז) שור או כשב או עז שחורה אני במשכן שנאמר (יחזקאל כג) טמאו את מקדשי ונאווה אני במשכן ויעשו כל חכם לב מה מלאכה היו עושין אלא ראה מה כתיב (שמות כה) וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם זו כנסת ישראל שהיא תרומה שנאמר (ירמיה ב) קדש ישראל לה' ראשית תבואתה זהב</p>	<p>שחורה אני ונאווה. וכי אפשר לשחור להיות נאה, משל למה הדבר דומה לתינוקת בת מלכים שקלקלה בבית אביה ונזפה ויצאת והיתה מלקטת בשבלים והשחירה, התחילו חברותיה (מחסרות) [מחסדות] אותה, מה היא אומרת להן אל תראוני שאני שחרחרת ששזפתני השמש, ואינו דומה אדם שיצא כעור ממעי אמו לאדם שיצא נאה ונתגול, כי נוח לו במהרה לחזור ולהיות נאה, כך אמרה כנסת ישראל לאומות העולם שחורה אני ונאווה. שחורה אני במעשה העגל ונאווה אני במעשה המשכן. ד"א שחורה אני ונאווה, שחורים היו ישראל במצרים כשהיו עושים בטיט בחמר ובלבנים, אבל נאים היו על הים כשהיו טוענים ביזתם של מצרים. שהיה רבי אלעזר בן פילה</p>

אומר לא היה סוס שלא היה במעוטה יותר מבעשר רבוא זהב, לקיים מה שנאמר כנפי יונה נחפה בכסף ואברותיה בירקרק חרוץ (תהלים ס"ח י"ד). ד"א שחורה אני ונאווה, כנסת ישראל אומרת למי שברא את העולם שחורים אנו במעשינו כאהלי קדר אלא מה אתה רואה אהלי קדר מבחון, נכנס אדם לתוכו הרי הוא מלא כל ברכה, כך ישראל האומות מבזין עליהם ואינן יודעות שהם מלאים מצות. ד"א מאהלי קדר. כדרך שמותחים את האהל הזה אין אדם אחד יכול למתחו לעצמו אל אלא רבים מותחים אותו, יכול כך הוא עושה הקב"ה, ת"ל הנוטה כדוק שמים וימתחם כאהל לישבת (ישעיה מ' כ"ב), הוא עצמו מתח את הרקיעים ולא סיעו בריה לכך נאמר כאהלי קדרה כיריעות שלמה, המלך שהשלום שלו ברא ששת ימי בראשית וברא את האדם ביום הששי שלא יהיה מתגאה, ומה עכשיו שאין יוצא מן המעינות שלו אלא מים סרוחים הוא מתגאה, אלו היו יוצאים ממנו מעינות של דבש ושל חלב על אחת כמה וכמה שהיה

וכסף זו כנסת ישראל שנא' (תהלים סח) כנפי יונה נחפה בכסף ונחשת זו א"י שנאמר (דברים ח) ומהרריה תחצב נחשת תכלת זו כנסת ישראל שנא' (במדבר טו) ונתנו על ציצית הכנף פתיל תכלת וארגמן ותולעת שני זו כנסת ישראל שנאמר (ישעיה מא) אל תיראי תולעת יעקב וכן כחוט השני שפתותיך ואומר (תהלים סח) שרי יהודה רגמתם ד"א זהב זה אברהם שנבחן בכבשן האש כזהב וכסף זה יצחק שנצטרף ככסף ע"ג המזבח ונחשת זה יעקב שנאמר (בראשית לב) נחשתי ויברכני ה' בגללך

וימתקו המים שחורה אני ברפידים שנא' (שם יז) ויקרא שם המקום מסה ומריבה ונאווה אני ברפידים שנא' (שם) ויבן משה מזבח ויקרא שמו ה' נסי **שחורה אני בחורב שנא' (תהלים קו) יעשו עגל בחורב ונאווה אני בחורב שנא' (שמות כד) כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע שחורה אני במדבר שנא' (תהלים עח) כמה ימרוהו במדבר ונאווה אני במדבר בהקמת המשכן שנא' (במדבר ט) וביום הקים המשכן שחורה אני במרגלים שנא' (במדבר יג) ויוציאו דבת הארץ ונאווה אני ביהושע וכלב שנא' (שם לב) בלתי כלב בן יפונה הקנזי שחורה אני בשטים שנאמר (שם כה) וישב ישראל בשטים ונאווה אני בשטים שנא' (תהלים קו) ויעמוד פינחס ויפלל שחורה אני בעכן שנאמר (יהושע ז) וימעלו בני ישראל מעל בחרם ונאווה אני ביהושע שנאמר (שם) ויאמר יהושע אל עכן בני שים נא כבוד שחורה אני במלכי ישראל ונאווה אני במלכי יהודה אם בשחורים שהיו שלי כך אני נאווה בנביאים שלי על אחת כמה וכמה**

			מתגאה
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Appendix 8

Song of Songs 1:12 (See also Appendix 1)

Targum Song 1:12	Song Rabbah 1.56-58	Song Zuta to 1:12	Seder Eliyahu Zuta 4.3
<p>ועד שהוא משה רבהון ברקיעא לקבלא ית תרין לוחי אבניא ואוריתא וית תפקידתא קמו רשיעי ההוא דרא וערבובין דביניהון ועבדו עיגל דדהב ואסריו עובדיהון ונפק להון שום ביש בעלמא דמן קדמת דנא הוה ריחהון נדיף בכל עלמא ובתר כין סריאו כנרדא דריחיה ביש לחדא ונחת מכתש סגירו על בסרהון:</p>	<p>מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה א סימן נו עד שהמלך במסבו ר' מאיר ור' יהודה רבי מאיר אומר עד שהמלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה במסבו ברקיע נתנו ישראל ריח רע ואמרו לעגל (שמות ל"ב) אלה אלהיך ישראל אמר ליה ר' יהודה דיך מאיר אין דורשין שיר השירים לגנאי אלא לשבח שלא נתן שיר השירים אלא לשבחן של ישראל ומהו עד שהמלך במסבו עד שהמלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה במסבו ברקיע נתנו ישראל ריח טוב לפני הר סיני ואמרו (שמות כ"ד) כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע היא דעתייה דר' מאיר למימר סיריי נתן ריחו אלא מסכתא עלתה בידם מן הגולה ושנו בה שקפץ להם מעשה העגל והקדים להם מעשה המשכן ר' אליעזר ור' עקיבא ור' ברכיה ר' אליעזר אומר עד שהמלך במסבו עד שמלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה במסבו ברקיע כבר הר סיני מתמר באור שנאמר</p>	<p>עד שהמלך במסבו נרדי נתן ריחו. עד שהשכינה במקום קבלו עליהם ישראל ואמרו כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע (שם שמות כ"ד ו'). ד"א עד שהשכינה בשמי מרום נתנה רשות להפרע מן האומות</p>	<p>ברוך שאמר והיה העולם, ברוך הוא, ברוך אומר ועושה, ברוך גוזר ומקיים, ברוך עושה בראשית, ברוך שזכר את הראשונות והעביר את האחרונות, שאילו לא זכר את הראשונות והעביר את האחרונות, היה לו שיאמר, נרדי נתן סריו, ואמר נרדי נתן ריחו (שם שיר השירים א'), כיון שקיבלו ישראל מלכותו של הקב"ה ואמרו, כל אשר דבר ה' נעשה ונשמע (שמות כ"ד ז'), לכך נאמר, נרדי נתן ריחו, ולא נרדי נתן סריו</p>

	<p>(דברים ד') וההר בוער באש ר' עקיבא אומר עד שמלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה במסבו ברקיע כבר (שמות כ"ד) וישכן כבוד ה' על הר סיני ר' ברכיה אומר עד שמשוה במסבו ברקיע שנקרא מלך שנאמר (דברים ל"ג) ויהי בישורון מלך בהתאסף ראשי עם כבר (שמות כ') וידבר אלהים את כל הדברים האלה לאמר ר' אליעזר בן יעקב ורבנן רבי אליעזר אומר עד שמלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה במסבו ברקיע כבר ירד מיכאל השר הגדול מן השמים והציל את אברהם אבינו מכבשן האש ורבנן אמרי הקב"ה ירד והצילו שנאמר (בראשית ט"ו) אני ה' אשר הוצאתיך מאור כשדים ואימתי ירד מיכאל בימי חנניה מישאל ועזריה אמר רבי טביומי עד שיעקב אבינו מסב במטתו נצנצה בו רוח הקדש ואמר לבניו והיה אלהים עמכם אמר להם עתיד הוא להשרות שכינתו ביניכם אמר רב נחמן כתיב (שם מ"ו) ויסע ישראל וכל אשר לו ויבא בארה שבע להיכן הלך הלך לקוץ ארזים שנטע אברהם אבינו בבאר שבע שנא' (שם כ"א) ויטע אשל בבאר שבע אמר רבי לוי כתיב (שמות כ"ו) והבריח התיכון בתוך הקרשים הבריח שלשים ושתים אמה היה ומהיכן היתה נמצאת בידם לשעה מלמד שהיו מוצנעים עמהם מימות יעקב אבינו</p>		
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	<p>הה"ד (שמות ל"ה) וכל איש אשר נמצא אתו עצי שטים אשר נמצא עצי שטים אין כתיב כאן אלא אשר נמצא אתו מתחלה אמר ר' לוי בר חייא במגדלא דצבעיאי קצצום והורידום עמם למצרים ולא נמצא בהם קשר ופקע אעין דשטים הוו במגדלא והוו נוהגים בהם באיסור מפני קדושת הארון אתון ושאלון לרב חנניה חברין דרבנן ואמר לון אל תשנו ממנהג אבותיכם</p> <p>מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה א סימן נז</p> <p>ר' פנחס בשם רבי הושעיא אמר עד שהמלך במסבו עד שהמלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ב"ה במסבו ברקיע כבר הקדים שנא' (שמות י"ט) ויהי ביום השלישי בהיות הבקר למלך שגזר ליום פלוני אני נכנס למדינה וישנו להם בני המדינה כל הלילה וכשבא המלך ומצאם ישנים העמיד עליהם בקלאנין בוקינס ושופר והיה השר של אותה מדינה מעוררן ומוציאן לאפנתי של מלך והיה המלך מהלך לפנייהם עד שהגיע לפלטין שלו, כך הקב"ה הקדים דכתיב (שם שמות י"ט) ויהי ביום השלישי בהיות הבקר, וכתיב (שם שמות י"ט) כי ביום השלישי ירד ה' לעיני כל העם, ישנו להם ישראל כל אותו הלילה לפי ששינה</p>		
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	<p>של עצרת עריבה והלילה קצרה, אמר ר' יודן אפילו פורטענא לא עקץ במ, בא הקב"ה ומצאן ישנים התחיל מעמיד עליהם בקלאנין הה"ד ויהי ביום השלישי בהיות הבקר ויהי קולות וברקים והיה משה מעורר לישראל ומוציאן לאפנתי של מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה הה"ד (שם שמות י"ט) ויוצא משה את העם לקראת האלהים, והיה הקב"ה מהלך לפניהם עד שהגיע להר סיני דכתיב (שם שמות י"ט) והר סיני עשן כלו, א"ר יצחק זה הוא שמקנתרן על ידי ישעיהו שנאמר (ישעיה נ') מדוע באתי ואין איש קראתי ואין עונה הקצר קצרה ידי מפרות</p> <p>מדרש רבה שיר השירים פרשה א סימן נה</p> <p>אמר ר' יודן עד שחזקיהו וסיעתו אוכלין פסחיהם בירושלים כבר הקדים הקב"ה בלילה ההוא שנאמר (מ"ב מלכים ב' יט) ויהי בלילה ההוא ויצא מלאך ה' ויך במחנה אשור, א"ר אבהו עד שמשה וישראל מסובין ואוכלין פסחיהם במצרים כבר הקדים הקב"ה שנאמר (שמות י"ב) ויהי בחצי הלילה וה' הכה כל בכור בארץ מצרים, היא דעתיה דרבי אבהו למימר סיריי נתן ריחו מלמד שהיה ריחו של</p>		
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	<p>אותו הדם קשה והופיע להם הקב"ה ריח טוב מבשומי גן עדן והיתה נפשם קוהא לאכול, אמרו לו משה רבינו תן לנו מה נאכל, אמר להם משה כך אמר לי הקב"ה (שם שמות י"ב) כל בן נכר לא יאכל בו עמדו והפרישו הנכרים שביניהם והיתה נפשם קוהא לאכול, אמרו לו משה רבינו תן לנו מה נאכל, אמר להם כך אמר לי הקב"ה (שם שמות י"ב) וכל עבד איש מקנת כסף ומלתה אותו אז יאכל בו, עמדו ומלו את עבדיהם והיתה נפשם קוהא לאכול, אמרו לו תן לנו מה נאכל, אמר להם כך אמר לי הקב"ה סינטומוס (שם שמות י"ב) כל ערל לא יאכל בו, מיד כל אחד ואחד נתן חרבו על ירכו ומהל עצמו, מי מלך, ר' ברכיה אמר משה היה מוהל ואהרן פורע ויהושע משקה, וי"א יהושע היה מוהל ואהרן פורע ומשה היה משקה הה"ד (יהושע ה') בעת ההיא אמר ה' אל יהושע עשה לך חרבות צורים ושוב מול את בני ישראל שנית, ולמה שנית מכאן שמלך בראשונה, מיד ויעש לו יהושע חרבות צורים וימל את בני ישראל אל גבעת הערלות, מהו אל גבעת הערלות, אמר רבי מכאן שעשו אותה גבעה בערלה</p>		
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Appendix 9

Song of Songs 2:14 (See also Appendix 2)

Targum Song 2:14	Song Rabbah 2.35	Mekhilta deRabbi Ishmael, <i>Beshallah</i> 3	Tanhuma (Warsaw), <i>Shofetim</i> 13	Midrash <i>Vayyosha</i> ^c (Otzar Midrashim I, 146)
<p>כד רדף פרעה רשיעא בתר עמא בית ישראל הות מתילא כנשתא דישראל ליונתא דסגירא בחגוי טינרא וחויא מעיק לה מגיו ונצא מעיק לה מברא כדין הות כנשתא דישראל סגירתא מארבע סטרוי דעלם דמן קדמיהון ימא ומן בתריהון רדיף סנאה ומן תרין סטריהון מדברין מליין חיוין קלן דנכתין וקטלין באריסיהון ית בני אנשא מן יד פתחת פומה בצלו קדם ה' ונפקת ברת קלא מן שמי מרומא וכן אמרת אנת כנשתא דישראל דמתילא ליונתא דכיא ומטמרא</p>	<p>תני דבי ר' ישמעאל בשעה שיצאו ישראל ממצרים למה היו דומין ליונה שברחה מפני הנץ ונכנסה לנזקיק הסלע ומצאה שם הנחש מקנן ונכנסה לפנים ולא היתה יכולה להכנס שעדיין הנחש מקנן תחזור לאחורה לא תהי יכולה שהנץ עומד בחוץ מה עשתה היונה התחילה צווחת ומטפחת באגפיה כדי שישמע לה בעל השובך ויבא ויצילה כך היו ישראל דומים על הים לירד לים לא היו יכולין שעדיין לא נקרע להם הים לחזור לאחוריהם לא היו יכולין שכבר פרעה הקריב מה עשו וייראו מאד ויצעקו בני ישראל</p>	<p>למה היו ישראל דומים באותה שעה ליונה שבורחת מפני הנץ ונכנסה לנזקיק הסלע והיה נחש נושף בה אם תכנס לפנים הרי הנחש ואם תצא לחוץ הרי הנץ כך היו ישראל באותה שעה הים סוגר ושונא רודף מיד נתנו עיניהם בתפלה. עליהם מפורש בקבלה (שה"ש ב') יונתי בחגוי הסלע בסתר המדרגה וגוי' ונאמר (שם) כי קולך ערב ומראך נוה כי קולך ערב בתפלה ומראך נאווה בתלמוד תורה דבר אחר כי קולך ערב בתפלה ומראך נאווה במעשה הטוב</p>	<p>אמר הקב"ה יונתי בחגוי הסלע בסתר המדרגה (שיר השירים ב) למה היו ישראל דומין באותה שעה ליונה שברחה מלפני הנץ ובאה להכנס לפנים מן הסלע והיה הנחש בתוכו בקשה לצאת הרי הנץ על הפתח כך היו ישראל הים הולך וסוער עליהם והשונא רודף אחריהם והחיות מן המדבר והיו מוקפין מארבע רוחות ומנין שהיו החיות מן המדבר שנאמר (שמות יד) סגר עליהם המדבר ואין סגר אלא חיות רעות שנאמר (דניאל ג) אלהי שלח מלאכיה וסגר פום אריותא מה עשו נשאו עיניהם לאביהן שבשמים וצעקו שנא'</p>	<p>ויושע ה' אמרו חז"ל בשעה שרדפו המצריים את בני ישראל וראו אותם ישראל אחזם אימה ורעדה ואז נמשלו ישראל ליונה שבורחת מן הנץ וכשבאה לקנה מצאה שם נחש כך ישראל בשעה שראו את המצריים אמרו למשה, משה רבינו! אנה נלך הרי מצרים לאחרינו והים לפנינו אז נשאו קולם בבכיה ואף משה בכה עמם מיד נתגלגלו רחמיו של הקב"ה ואמר למשה משה כבר זכור אני התפלה שהתפלל אברהם אוהבי בשעה שאמרתי לו לך שחוט יצחק בנך מיד קבל באהבה ולמחר השכים לעשות רצוני שנאמר וישכם אברהם</p>

<p>בסגור חגוי טינרא ובחביוני דריגתא אחזיני ית חזוניך וית עובדיך תקנן אשמעיני ית קליך ארום קליך מערב בצלותא בבית מקדשא זעיר וחזויך שפיר בעובדין טבין:</p>	<p>אל ה' מיד (שמות י"ד) ויושע ה' ביום ההוא ר' יהודה בשם ר' חמא דכפר תחומין משל למלך שהיתה לו בת יחידה והיה מתאוה לשמוע שיחתה מה עשה הוציא כרוז ואמר כל עמא יפקון לקמפון כשיצאו מה עשה רמז לעבדיו ונפלו לה פתאום בליסטין והתחילה צווחת אבא אבא הצילני אמר לה אילו לא עשיתי לך כך לא היית צווחת ואומרת אבא הצילני כך כשהיו ישראל במצרים היו המצריים משעבדין אותם והתחילו צועקין ותולין עיניהם להקב"ה, הה"ד (שם שמות ב') ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבודה ויזעקו וגו', מיד וישמע אלהים את נאקתם שמע הקב"ה לתפלתן והוציאן ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה, והיה הקב"ה מתאוה לשמוע קולן ולא היו רוצין, מה עשה הקב"ה חיזק לבו של פרעה ורדף אחריהם, הה"ד (שם שמות י"ד) ויחזק ה' את לב פרעה מלך מצרים וירדוף וגו', וכתיב ופרעה הקריב, מהו</p>		<p>פרעה הקריב וישאו בני ישראל את עיניהם וגו' ויצעקו בני ישראל אל ה' לכך כתיב יונתי בחגוי הסלע</p>	<p>בבקר ויחבוש את חמורו ויקח את שני נעריו אתו ואת יצחק בנו ומי היו הנערים האלו אליעזר עבד אברהם וישמעאל אמר יצחק לאביו לאן אנו הולכים לברכו אמר לו אביו עד כה עד מקום קרוב וכתיב ויקח אברהם את עצי העולה וישם על יצחק בנו ויקח בידו את האש ואת המאכלת וילכו שניהם יחדיו וגו' באותה שעה נשא אברהם את עיניו לשמים ואמר רבש"ע בשעה שיעמדו בני בצער תזכור להם זאת השעה שאני עומד לפניך</p>
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	<p>הקריב, שהקריב את ישראל לתשובה, כיון שראו אותם תלו עיניהם להקב"ה ויצעקו לפניו, שנא' וישאו בני ישראל את עיניהם והנה מצרים נוסע אחריהם וייראו מאד ויצעקו בני ישראל אל ה' כאותה צעקה שצעקו במצרים, כיון ששמע הקב"ה אמר להם אילולי שעשיתי לכם כן לא שמעתי את קולכם, על אותה שעה אמר יונתי בחגוי הסלע, השמיעני את הקול אין כתיב - כאן אלא קולך, שכבר שמעתי במצרים, וכשצעקו בני ישראל לפני הקב"ה מיד ויושע ה' ביום ההוא</p>			
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Appendix 10

Song of Songs 5:1

Targum Song 5:1	Song Rabbah 5.1	Numbers Rabbah 13.2	Seder °Olam Rabbah 7.3	Pesiqta Rabbati 5.4
<p>אמר קודשא בריך הוא לעמיה בית ישראל עלית לבית מקדשא דבנית לי אחותי כנשתא דישראל דאימתילא לנינפי צניעא ואשרית שכינתי ביניך קבילית ברעוא ית קטורת בוסמידך דעבדת לשמי שלחית אישתא מן שמיא ואכלית ית עלון וית נכסת קודשין אתקבל ברעוא קדמי ניסוך חמר סומק וחמר חיור דנסיבו כהניא על מדבחא כען איתיאו כהניא רחמי פקודי אכלו מא דאשתאר מן קורבניא ואתפנקו מא טובאדאתעד לכון:</p>	<p>באתי לגני אמר ר' מנחם חתניה דר' אלעזר בר אבונה בשם ר' שמעון בר' יוסנה באתי לגן אין כתיב כאן, אלא לגני לגנוני למקום שהיה עיקרי מתחלה, ועיקר שכינה לא בתחתונים היתה הה"ד (בראשית ג') וישמעו את קול ה' אלהים מתהלך בגן א"ר אבא מהלך אין כתיב כאן אלא מתהלך מקפץ וסליק מקפץ וסליק חטא אדם הראשון ונסתלקה השכינה לרקיע הראשון חטא קין נסתלקה לרקיע השני חטא אנוש נסתלקה לרקיע השלישי חטא דור המבול נסתלקה לרקיע הרביעי חטא דור המגדל נסתלקה לרקיע החמישי חטאו אנשי סדום נסתלקה לרקיע</p>	<p>באתי לגני אחותי כלה זה יום שמיני אריתי מורי עם בשמי זה לבונת הקטרת ולבונת המנחה אכלתי יערי עם דבשי זה אברי העולה ואמורי קדשי קדשים שתיתי ייני עם חלבי אלו הנסכים ואימורי קדשים קלים אכלו רעים זה משה ואהרן שתו ושכרו דודים זה כנסת ישראל</p>	<p>באתי לגני אחותי כלה (שיר השירים ה': א) זה יום השמיני אריתי מורי עם בשמי (שם שיר השירים ה': א) זו קטורת ולבונה ולבונות המנחות אכלתי יערי עם דבשי (שם שיר השירים ה': א) אילו איברי עולה ואמורי קדשי קדשים שתיתי ייני עם חלבי (שם שיר השירים ה': א) אילו הנסכים ואמורי קדשים קלים איכלו רעים (שם שיר השירים ה': א) זה משה ואהרן ומרים שתו ושכרו דודים (שם שיר השירים ה': א) זו כנסת ישראל</p>	<p>באתי לגני אחותי כלה (שה"ש שיר השירים ה' א') למה הדבר דומה למלך שאמר לבני המדינה שיבנו פלטין ובנו אותו והיו בני המדינה על פתח פלטין ומצעקין ואומרים יכנס המלך בפלטין מה עשה המלך נכנס בפישפש ושילח את הכרוז ואמר להם אל תצעקו שכבר באתי לפלטין כך כשעמד המשכן היו ישראל אומרים יבא דודי לגנו שלח הקב"ה ואמר להם מה אתם יריאים כבר באתי לגני אחותי כלה. דבר אחר באתי לגני אמר רבי שמעון בר יוסני באתי לגן אין כתיב כאן אלא לגני מהו לגני לאותו הגן שנסתלקתי הימנה כמה שכתב מתהלך בגן (בראשית ג' ח') אריתי מורי</p>

	<p>הששי חטאו המצריים בימי אברהם נסתלקה לרקייע השביעי כנגדן עמדו שבעה צדיקים והורידה לארץ זכה אברהם הורידה משביעי לששי עמד יצחק והורידה מששי לחמישי עמד יעקב והורידה מחמישי לרביעי עמד לוי והורידה מרביעי לשלישי עמד קהת והורידה משלישי לשני עמד עמרם והורידה משני לאחד שהוא ראשון עמד משה והורידה לארץ א"ר יצחק הה"ד (תהלים ל"ז) צדיקים יירשו ארץ וישכנו לעד עליה הרשעים מה עשו תלויין באויר כי לא השכינו שכינה לארץ אבל הצדיקים השכינו שכינה לארץ מה טעם צדיקים יירשו ארץ וישכנו לעד עליה ישכנו לשכינה עליה שוכן עד וקדוש שמו ואימתי שרת שכינה עליה ביום שהוקם המשכן שנא' (במדבר ז') ויהי ביום כלות משה להקים את המשכן רבי עזריה בשם ר' יהודה ברבי סימון אמר משל למלך שכעס על מטרונה והוציאה מתוך</p>			<p>עם בשמי (שה"ש שם שיר השירים ה') [זה הקטורת], אכלתי יערי עם דבשי, אילו קדשי הקדשים וקדשים קלים, שתיתי ייני עם חלבי (שה"ש שם שיר השירים ה') אילו הנסכים והחלבים.</p> <p>דבר אחר אכלתי יערי אילו שלשה דברים שעשו הנשיאים שלא כהוגן וקיבלם הקדוש ברוך הוא שהיחיד אינו מתנדב קטורת והביא כל נשיא קטורת כמה שכתב כף אחת עשרה זהב מליאה קטורת (במדבר ז' ו"ד), ושאין יחיד מביא חטאת אלא אם כן הודע לו שנאמר או הודע עליו חטאתו (ויקרא ד' כ"ג) והביא כל נשיא ונשיא שלא הודע לו כמה שכתב שעיר עזים אחד לחטאת (במדבר ז' ט"ז) ושאין קרבנו של יחיד דוחה את השבת וקרבנו של נשיא דוחה את השבת כמו שכתב ביום השביעי נשיא לבני אפרים (שם שם במדבר ז' מ"ח) אכלו רעים שתו ושכרו דודים (שה"ש שם שיר השירים ה') אילו ישראל שנקראו ריעים</p>
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	<p>פלטין שלו לאח"כ בקש להתרצות לה שלחה לו ואמרה יעשה לי המלך דבר חדש ויבא אצלי כך לשעבר היה הקב"ה מקבל הקרבנות מלמעלה דכתיב (בראשית ח') וירח ה' את ריח הניחוח וגו' עכשיו מקבל מלמטה הה"ד באתי לגני אחותי כלה אריתי מורי עם בשמי זה קטרת הבסמים וקומץ הלבונה אכלתי יערי עם דבשי אלו איברי עולה ואמורי קדשי קדשים שתיתי ייני עם חלבי אלו הנסכים ואמורי קדשים קלים אכלו רעים זה משה ואהרן שתו ושכרו דודים אלו נדב ואביהוא שנשתכרו בצרתן</p>			<p>שנאמר למען אחי ורעי (תהלים קכ"ב ח')</p>
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Appendix 11

Song of Songs 8:14 (See also Appendix 6)

Targum Song 8:14	Song Rabbah VIII.19	Tanhuma (Buber), <i>Toledot 5</i>	Tosafoth Hullin 59b	Zohar, <i>Exodus II, 14a</i>
<p>בי היא שעתא יימרון סבי ישראל ערוק לך רחימי מרי עלמא מארעא הדא מסאבתא ותשרי שכינתך בשמי מרומא ובעידן עתקתן דאנחנא מצלן קדמך תהי דמי לטביא דבעידן דדמיך עינא חדא קמיץ ועינא חדא פתיח או כארזילא דאיילא דבעידן דעריק מסתכל בתריה כיין את תהי משגח בן ומסתכל בצערון ובסיגופן משמי מרומא עד זמן דתיתרעי בן ותפרוק יתן ותעיל יתן על טורא דירושלם ותמן יסקון כהניא קדמך קטורת בוסמין:</p>	<p>ברח דודי ברח מאומות העולם והדבק בהם בישראל ודמה לך לצבי מה צבי זה בשעה שהוא ישן עינו אחת פתוחה ועינו אחת קמוצה כך בשעה שישראל עושין רצונו של הקדוש ברוך הוא מביט אליהם בשתי עיניו הדא הוא דכתיב (תהלי' ל"ד) עיני ה' אל צדיקים ובשעה שאין עושים רצון הקב"ה מביט להם בעינו אחת שנא' (שם ל"ג) הנה עין ה' אל יראיו על הרי בשמים</p>	<p>ד"א הנה עין ה' לפי שהוא אומר ברח דודי ודמה לך לצבי (שה"ש שיר השירים ח יד) מה הצבי הזה כשהוא ישן עין אחת קמוצה ואחת פתוחה ואף את ודמה לך לצבי, לכך אמר דוד הנה עין ה' אל יראיו</p>	<p>והרי צבי שאין מפוצלות וכו'. פירש בקונטרס צבי אין זה שאינו קורין צבי דהא ודאי מפוצלות הן אלא צבי זהו אותו שאנו קורין אותו אשטנבו"ק דקרניה שלו אינם מפוצלות ור"ת אומר דזהו אותו שאנו קורין צבי דהא הזיגן שאיין עורו מחזיק את בשרו וצבי כן הוא כדאמר במסכת כתובות (דף קיב) בסוף וחזיגן נמי דבשעה שהוא ישן עינו אחת פתוחה ואמרינן במדרש שיר השירים דומה דודי לצבי מה צבי זה בשעה שהוא ישן עינו אחת פתוחה כך הקב"ה בשעת גלותן וצרתן של ישראל נותן עינו עליהם לשומרם וה"ג ר"ת מבוצלות כלומר זקופות</p>	<p>הצבי כשהוא ישן הוא ישן בעין אחת והאחרת הוא נעור כך אמרו ישראל להקודשא ברוך הוא עשה כמו הצבי שהנה לא יגום ולא יישן שומר ישראל</p>

			<p>וראשיהם כפופות ושל צבי אינם כפופות כלל ומבוצלות גריסנן מפוצלות אין לחוש דכמו מבוצלות הוא כדאשכחן פרק בכל מערבין (עירובין כט) דאפציל זירתא דהוי כמו דאבציל ובמשניות יש בכמה מקומות הבקר במקום הפקר (פאה פ"ו משנה א)</p>	
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