

Targum Neofiti 1 – Księga Wyjścia. Tekst aramejski – przekład, aparat krytyczny – przypisy, przekład i opracowanie Mirosław S. Wróbel, Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Lubelskiej Gaudium, Lublin 2017, 471 pp. (Biblia Aramejska, 2)

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From the initiative of Rev. Prof. Dr. Hab. Mirosław Wróbel, director of the Chair in Biblical Philology and Inter-Testamental Literature at the Faculty of Theology of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, the second volume of the Polish translation of the targumim, the Aramaic Bible, has been published. The first volume of this work was the text of the Aramaic Targum Neofiti 1 for the Book of Genesis, its translation along with a critical apparatus, and footnotes that make reading the text easier. The second volume has an analogous construction. The translation is from the critical edition edited by Alejandro Díaz Macho: *Neophyti. I Targum Palestinense. MS de la Biblioteca Vaticana*, vol. 2: *Éxodo*, Madrid–Barcelona 1970. It is preceded by a preface by Prof. James H. Charlesworth. The author of the translation, who is also the editor of this edition of the Aramaic Bible, and a team of collaborators have provided readers with a major and important work.

The targumim, or the Aramaic translation of Biblical Hebrew texts, which were first transmitted orally and later written down, explain, interpret, and frequently paraphrase. They are something like a reflection by this circle of Biblical scholars that conclude with explanations of the intricacies, ambiguities, and inconsistencies in the Hebrew text. Finally, they are also a reinterpretation and an updating application, trying to explain questions that were raised by Jews at the time and to answer them.

They appeared in order to make holy texts available to the Jews in a language they commonly spoke during the late Second Temple period, when Hebrew was not commonly known. Many Jewish groups of the late Second Temple period created their own targumim; hence their multiplicity and diversity with a tendency to idealize certain things, especially the law. Perhaps

this tendency gave rise to questionable matters, as when the targumim ceased to be a living oral phenomena and began to become immortalized in literary form and their impact spread, hence the rabbinical opinion (which was not necessarily common) that it should be limited to private reading.

In the phenomenon of targumism, we can speak of a kind of “transplantation” in which the targoman often ceased to be faithful to the Biblical text and instead, not necessarily intentionally, focused on communicating its essence, taking into consideration the conditions of the Jewish communities at the time. Furthermore, the nascent targum had to take into consideration the essence of the synagogal liturgy, which for obvious reasons contained sacrificial elements, and include it in the rhythm of everyday life. In this way, the Word of God interacted with Jewish life expressed in the synagogal liturgy.

The targumim sought to provide a comprehensible translation. They included explanatory glossaries and reflected the ideas of their time and environment. By introducing moral paraphrases and incentives, they impacted everyday life. They also created a new targumic theology. Targumism was the natural environment of Jesus, His first followers, and the first Church community. Thus a new publication of the Aramaic Bible is welcome.

Studying it will help theologians and those interested in the subject matter to better understand Biblical texts and their message, thus increasing their own competences and to satisfy their natural academic curiosity. We have also received a new tool for comparative Biblical studies. Furthermore, as the editor himself notes, this edition should be considered to be a new source in the construction of Christian-Jewish dialogue. The critical apparatus, explanations contained in the footnotes, the explanation of terms unique to the targum, and especially the explication of targumic extensions are especially valuable elements of this work.

In the introduction to the edition of the Book of Exodus from Targum Neofiti 1, Prof. Charlesworth writes: “We we want to perfect our understanding of Scripture, we should become acquainted with the method in which ancient Jews understood the Word of God. The targumim are one of the main sources we can use” (p. XXII).