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Ideological and Intertextual Relations Between the Targum Isaiah and the Gospel of John¹

Abstract: In this article, the author asks whether there are ideological and intertextual connections between the Targum Isaiah and the Gospel of St. John, and whether the traditions contained in the targums could have influenced the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles. The targums are first shown in their Jewish and Christian contexts. The author then turns his attention to the reception and significance of the book of Isaiah for the Jewish community and for the Johannine community. In particular, he emphasizes the use of this book in the synagogue liturgy and in the Gospel of John. The author also shows new interpretive perspectives for selected Johannine texts in light of the texts contained in the Targum Isaiah. He analyzes the Memra–Logos relationship, the messianic identity of the Johannine Jesus, the significance of Abraham in relation to the sons of Israel, the significance of God's glory, the identity of YHWH's suffering Servant, Jesus as the New Temple, and the use of the *ego eimi* formula in an absolute form. He encourages further detailed research on the influence of targumic traditions on the teaching of Jesus and on the Christology of the Fourth Gospel.

Keywords: Targum Isaiah, Gospel of John, intertextuality, Memra, Messiah, *ego eimi*

After the Babylonian captivity, when Aramaic began to become the *lingua franca* in Judea, the need arose, in the context of Temple and synagogue liturgy, to translate the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings from Hebrew into Aramaic. This translation was not

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literal in character but was a kind of commentary that paraphrased and clarified the original text of Scripture. Thus, first in oral form and then in written form, targums appeared in the Jewish community as Aramaic translations of the word of God.² Could the traditions contained in the Targums have influenced the teaching of Jesus and the authors of the New Testament? This article attempts to answer this question by paying particular attention to the ideological and intertextual relationships between the Targum Isaiah and the Gospel of John.³ These topics will be presented in three sections: 1. The Targums in the Jewish and Christian context; 2. The use of the book of Isaiah in the synagogue liturgy and in the Gospel of John; 3. The interpretation of certain Johannine texts in light of the Targum Isaiah.

1. The Targums in the Jewish and Christian Context

Targums are Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible that took place in a liturgical context. In the Hebrew Bible, the term appears only in the form of the past participle *meturgam* (מתורגם) in Ezra 4:7, which is the introduction to the Aramaic portion of the book of Ezra (Ezra 4:8–6:18). The Septuagint translates the term as ἡρμηνευμένην (*translated*). The earliest trace of the use of oral targumic tradition is a text from the book of Nehemiah (Neh 8:1–8), which contains a description of reading the Torah in a public manner and translating it into Aramaic.⁴ The text refers to Ezra reading the Torah to the people

² Le Déaut, *Introduction*; Beattie – McNamara, *The Aramaic Bible*; Flesher, *Targum Studies*; Hayward, *Targums*; McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited*; Flesher – Chilton, *The Targums*; Legrand – Joosten, *The Targums*; Burnet, “Les targums.”

³ See earlier studies on this topic: Boismard, “Les citations targumiques,” 374–378; Reim, “Targum und Johannevangelium,” 1–13; Chilton, “Typologies of Memra,” 89–100; Boyarin, “The Gospel of the Memra,” 243–284; Ronning, “The Targum of Isaiah,” 247–278; Ronning, *The Jewish Targums*; McNamara, “To Prepare a Resting-Place,” 444–449.

⁴ Van der Kooij, “Nehemiah 8:8,” 79–90; Janzen, “The ‘Mission’ of Ezra,” 619–643; Himbaza, “La tradition du Targum,” 543–552; Wróbel, *Księga Ezdrasza – Księga Nehemiasza*, 178–184.

gathered before the Water Gate. The Hebrew text is translated into Aramaic in a simultaneous manner, so that it can be understood by the listeners gathered there (Neh 8:8). From this text Jewish tradition derives the beginning of the targumic phenomenon. The targumic text was considered part of the so-called oral Torah (Hebrew: *Torah she-be'al pe*) and was in close relationship with the so-called written Torah (Hebrew: *Torah she-biktav*). In first-century Palestine, the Aramaic translation of the Bible was more vivid and widespread in the minds of the people than the normative text of the Torah and Haftarah in Hebrew.⁵ The purpose of this translation was to make the text of the Hebrew Bible more comprehensible and accessible to the people. During the liturgy, care was taken to ensure that there was no pause between the Hebrew text read from the scroll and its Aramaic translation done from memory. In this way, the Hebrew text and its Aramaic translation constituted a whole for the audience. In the case of text derived from the Torah, each verse read was followed by its translation. In the case of a text from the prophets, no more than three verses in Hebrew were read first, followed by an Aramaic translation.

The Targums found at Qumran – fragments referring to the book of Job (4QtgJob [4Q157]; 11QtgJob [11Q10]) and to the book of Leviticus (4QtgLev [4Q156]) – are an important testimony that there were Targums in a written form as early as the first century B.C. in the pre-Christian and pre-rabbinic eras.⁶ Also, the discovery of the Targum Neofiti 1 in the Vatican library in 1949 by professors A. Díez Macho and J. Milas Vallicros⁷ allowed scholars to conclude that the targumic text contains many ancient traditions that can be dated to pre-Christian times. These discoveries have contributed to a deeper interest in the influence of targumic traditions on New

⁵ York, “The Targum in the Synagogue,” 74–86; Kasher, “The Aramaic Targumim,” 75–85.

⁶ Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte*; VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 30–35; Tronina, *Wokół Biblii w Qumran*.

⁷ Díez Macho, *Neophyti I*. In Poland, the critical edition of Targum Neofiti 1 was first published in 2014; see Wróbel, *Targum Neofiti I*.

Testament texts.⁸ Four types of relationships between targums and New Testament texts are emphasized in the contemporary discussion: 1. terminological parallels; 2. similar interpretation of the texts contained in the Hebrew Bible; 3. common historical and thematic ideas; and 4. common theological ideas.⁹

The traditions handed down in the Targums could have been sources for the nascent Church. Jesus of Nazareth and his first disciples could have drawn inspiration from them. The reception of targumic traditions in first-century Palestine could have been widespread. The common religious and cultural environment of the Targums and the New Testament writings results in many connections between them. Jesus thought and spoke Aramaic. Although the Gospels in the final edition were written in Greek, numerous Aramaisms and Semitic constructions testify that Jesus' Aramaic teaching is at their root. In the Gospel of John, many Aramaisms can be extracted, e.g., "rabbi" – *teacher* (John 1:38, 49; 3:2; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8); "rabbouni" – *my teacher* (John 20:16); "Messias" – *Messiah, Christ* (John 1:41; 4:25); "Kēfas" – *Rock, Peter* (John 1:42); "Silōam" – *Siloah, the Sent One* (John 9:7, 11); "Bēthzatha" – *the Sheep's Pool* (John 5:2); "Gabbatha" – *the Place of Stone* (John 19:13); "Golgotha" – *the Place of the Skull* (John 19:17). A characteristic feature of the Gospel of John is the frequent use of the Aramaic formula "Amen, amen."¹⁰ There are 17 quotations from the Old Testament in the text of John's Gospel. They include literal¹¹ and more general¹² quotations. When comparing the quotations used by John with those used by the Synoptics, one can see his

⁸ Among the more important studies addressing this issue are the following: Díez Macho, "Targum y Nuevo Testamento," 153–185; McNamara, *Targum and Testament*; McNamara, *The New Testament*; Chilton, *Targumic Approaches*; Manns, *L'Évangile de Jean*; Chilton, "Four Types of Comparison," 163–188.

⁹ For examples of particular dependencies, see Chilton, "Four Types of Comparison," 163–188; Kot, *Targumy*, 63–82; Flesher – Chilton, *The Targums*, 389–408.

¹⁰ John 1:51; 3:3, 5, 11; 5:19, 24, 25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20, 21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18.

¹¹ John 1:23; 2:17; 6:31, 45; 7:38; 10:34; 12:15, 38, 40; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24, 28, 36–37.

¹² John 1:45; 7:42; 8:17; 17:12.

great independence and predilection for combining various phrases from the Old Testament in a single quotation.¹³ This is reminiscent of a synagogue homily, in which one biblical text is backed by others. Analyzing the Old Testament quotations used in the Gospel of John, one can see his particular predilection for the text of the prophet Isaiah.¹⁴

2. The Use of the Book of Isaiah in the Synagogue Liturgy and in the Gospel of John

In the synagogue liturgy, the reading of *sedarim* – passages from the Torah of Moses – is followed by the so-called *Haftarah*, the reading of passages from the second part of the Hebrew Bible – the prophets (Hebrew: *Nebi'im*). The text of the prophet Isaiah is an essential reading in this part of the synagogue liturgy. Thanks to this, liturgy participants listening to the translation of Isaiah texts into Aramaic had the contents of the Targum Isaiah in their minds.¹⁵ During the synagogue liturgy, the following passages from the book of Isaiah were read at different times of the year:

<i>Bereshit</i> : Isa 42:5–43:10	First Song of the Suffering Servant of the Lord; God as the Defender and Redeemer of Israel
<i>Noach</i> : Isa 54:1–55:5	The New Jerusalem
<i>Lech Lecha</i> : Isa 40:27–55:5	Israel as the Lord's faithful servant
<i>Shemot</i> : Isa 27:6–28:13; 29:22–23	A call to repentance
<i>Yitro</i> : Isa 6:1–7:6; 9:5–6	Isaiah's call and mission; Messianic prophecy
<i>Vayikra</i> : Isa 43:21–44:23	God's call to Israel to repentance and faithfulness
<i>Devarim</i> : Isa 1:1–27	A lamentation over Israel and Jerusalem
<i>Vaetachana</i> : Isa 40:1–26	Israel's deliverance

¹³ For example, in John 6:31 there is a fragment from Exod 16:15–16 and Ps 78:24; in John 19:36 – from Ps 34:21 and Exod 12:46.

¹⁴ Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*; Evans, *To See and not Perceive*; Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*; Westermann, *The Gospel of John*; Hamilton, “The Influence of Isaiah,” 139–162; Rytel-Andrianik, *Use of Isaiah*; Daise, *Quotations in John*.

¹⁵ Wróbel, “The Influence of Isaiah,” 186–201.

<i>Re'eh</i> : Isa 54:11–55:5	The new Jerusalem and the call to live in the presence of God
<i>Shoftim</i> : Isa 51:12–52:12	God as consolation for Israel and Jerusalem
<i>Ki Teitze</i> : Isa 54:1–10	The joy of Jerusalem
<i>Ki Tavo</i> : Isa 60:1–22	The prosperity of Jerusalem

Texts from the book of the prophet Isaiah are used during Jewish feasts. During *Yom Kippur*, the text Isa 57:14–58:14 is read, concerning the true attitude of fasting.¹⁶ On the holiday of *Tisha B'Av*, the text Isa 55:6–56:8 is read, which speaks of the effectiveness of God's word.¹⁷ On the Sabbath after the feast of *Tisha B'Av*, the text of Isaiah 40 is read, in which God announces His salvific intervention and the revelation of God's glory.¹⁸ The text of the prophet Isaiah is also read on the last day of *Passover* (Isa 10:32–12:6). The prophet announces there the coming of the Messiah, the King of Righteousness (Isa 11:1–5), and delivers a hymn of thanksgiving for God's salvific action (Isa 12:1–6). On the holiday of *Rosh Chodesh*, the text of the prophet Isaiah (Isa 66:1–24) is read, in which Jerusalem finds true joy in serving God in faithfulness and love (Isa 66:10–11).

In the Gospel of John, there are many terminological and thematic connections with the text of the prophet Isaiah. The proclamations of the prophet Isaiah find their fulfillment in the event of Jesus Christ. Quotations referring to the text of the prophet Isaiah appear on the lips of Jesus, John the Baptist and the Evangelist. Often, these are not literal quotations from the Hebrew Bible but contain elements that allude to the targumic version of the prophet Isaiah.

John the Baptist (John 1:23) defines his identity using words taken from the book of the prophet Isaiah (Isa 40:3). In his Eucharistic speech (John 6:45), while teaching, Jesus quotes Isaiah (Isa 54:13). During the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:34), Jesus addresses the words of the prophet Isaiah (Isa 55:6) to his hostile interlocutors. Concluding the first part of the Gospel (John 12:37–41), John cites two texts from

¹⁶ The text includes a passage known by New Testament authors from Isa 58:6–8.

¹⁷ Here appears a fragment known from Isa 55:10–11.

¹⁸ The text of Isa 40:3 in the New Testament is cited by Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; and the text of Isa 40:3–5 is cited by Luke 3:4–6.

Isaiah in which he says that the unbelief of the Jews is part of God's plan. The words spoken earlier by the prophet Isaiah refer to and explain the current situation. In other words, the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and their unbelief in Him as the Messiah is the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. The two quotations (John 12:38 and 12:40) exemplify the Jewish rhetorical figure of *gezera shawa*, according to which two passages containing similar vocabulary explain each other.¹⁹ The first quotation refers to Isa 53:1, and it is found in that part of the Book of Isaiah which tells of the suffering Servant of YHWH (Isa 52:13–53:12). The second quotation was taken by the Evangelist from a scene describing the vision of the calling of the prophet Isaiah (Isa 6:10). After deeper analysis of the verse, one can see the differences between the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, and the Gospel of John. It is not impossible that the author of the Fourth Gospel, using these quotations from the prophet Isaiah, may have also had other texts of his in mind (Isa 29:10; 42:18–19; 56:10) and texts of the Targumic tradition. In John 12:41, Isaiah's vision is referred to the glory of Jesus. The theme of "glory" is an important point in the Targumic tradition. Also in the second part of the Gospel, in the allegory of the vine (John 15:1–11), John uses the biblical image of the vine contained in Isa 5:1–7. The existence of intertextual links between Isaiah and the Gospel of John may indicate the influence of this book on the Johannine community. The Aramaic translation of Isaiah texts used in the synagogue liturgy may have been well known to Jesus and his first followers.

3. The Interpretation of Certain Johannine Texts in Light of the Targum Isaiah

Targum Isaiah is part of a collection containing texts of earlier and later prophets, which is called the *Targum Jonathan*. According to Jewish tradition contained in the Babylonian Talmud, its author was Jonathan ben Uzziel, a disciple of the famous Rabbi Hillel. According to the Talmudic text, this Targum was said to have been

¹⁹ Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 57–62; Freed, *Old Testament Quotations*, 87.

written at the command of the prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.²⁰ In many texts of Talmudic tradition, the person of Rabbi Yosef bar Hijja, who lived at the turn of the 3rd and 4th centuries and was the head of the Pumbedita academy,²¹ is associated with this Targum. *Targum Jonathan* was recognized by the rabbis as the normative text for the entire Judaism. The text of the *Targum Jonathan* was used to translate the *haftarah* (prophetic texts) read during synagogue liturgies. Although the final editing was done in Babylonia, the language and content clearly indicate its Palestinian origin. On the basis of linguistic analyses, researchers conclude that the language of the Targum to the Prophets originated in the Judean area and was not written later than AD 135.²² Many of the traditions contained in this targum may have ancient origins and be dated to the pre-rabbinic era.

In the Targum Isaiah, one can find expressions and ideas in light of which the text of the Gospel of John becomes clearer. Right at the beginning of the Targum Isaiah, there is a text (Tg. Isa. 1:19–20) which shows the consequences of Israel's attitude toward the *Memra* (Word). The term *Memra* occurs in Tg. Isa. 1:19–20 as many as three times:

אם תיבון ותקבלון למימרי טובא דארעא תיכלון: 1:19

ואם תסרבון ואלא תקבלון למימרי בתרב סנאה תתטלון ארי במימרא דיין גזיר כין: 1:20

*If you will and accede to my Memra, then you shall consume the goods of the land; but if you will not and do not accede to my Memra, then you shall be killed by the sword of the enemy, for by the Memra of the Lord it has been so decreed.*²³

The term *Memra* is a verb-derived noun and comes from the root *amar*, which means “to speak,” “to say.” It means the creating, revealing and salvific word of God. The term focuses on two

²⁰ b. Meg. 3a; b. Sukkah 28a.

²¹ b. Pesah. 68a; b. Menah. 110a; b. B. Qam. 3b; b. Sanh. 94b.

²² Tal, *The Language of the Targum*.

²³ The Aramaic texts in the present article are taken from: Kaufman, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* and translated by the author. The English translations of the Aramaic texts from Tg. Isa. can be also compared with: Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum*.

aspects of God's action evident in the verbs "to speak" and "to be." *Memra* expresses God's eternal presence and his special relationship to creation and to history. In targumic terms, in various contexts, it can refer to "God's word – speech – utterance" or "God's will – intention – resolution." The term appears in targums in the context of the relationship between God and man. In the Fourth Gospel, in the Prologue, the idea of the Incarnate Word (Greek: *Logos*), who as a divine being shares in the work of creation and salvation of the world, is strongly exposed. Jesus – the Son sent by the Father – reveals God's plan for man's salvation and participates in it. The Gospel of John often highlights the preexistence of the *Logos* identified with the Son of God.²⁴ In light of the expression "Memra of the Lord," which is used in the context of God's creative and salvific action, one can delve deeper into the understanding of John's concept of the *Logos*.²⁵ The expression "Memra of the Lord" appears only in the targums and does not appear in any other writings of Jewish literature.

In the context of the close bond with the *Logos* – Jesus' recommendations about his disciples' abiding in His Word, conditioning being His disciple and eternal life become clearer.²⁶ In the Gospel of John there is a clear division between those who accept Jesus – the Incarnate Word receiving eternal life and those who reject Him condemning themselves to perdition. Jesus in the Fourth Gospel emphasizes that the Word becomes the criterion of man's

²⁴ See John 1:1–3: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made*; John 8:58: *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."*; John 17:5: *And now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made*; John 17:24: *Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world.*

²⁵ McNamara, "Logos of the Fourth Gospel," 115–117; Ronning, *The Jewish Targums*.

²⁶ John 8:31: *Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples*; John 8:51: *Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death*; John 8:55: *But you have not known him; I know him. If I said, I do not know him, I should be a liar like you; but I do know him and I keep his word.*

judgment (John 12:48).²⁷ This idea is also vividly captured in another text contained in the Targum Isaiah (Tg. Isa. 26:19):

את הוא מחי מיתיו גרמי נבילתהון את מקים ייחון וישבחו קדמך כל דהוון רמן בעפרא ארי 26:19
טל ניהור טלך לעבדי אוריך ורשיעיא דיבתא להון גבורו ואנון עברו על מיימרך לגיהנם
תמטר:

You revive the dead; You raise the bones of their bodies. All who have been cast into the dust shall live and sing before You. For Your dew is the dew of light for those who serve Your law. And the evildoers to whom You have given power, and they transgress Your word (Memra), You shall deliver to Gehenna.

In John's Prologue, there is a sentence: *He came to his own home, and his own people received him not* (εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον: John 1:11).²⁸ The expression "to his own home, his own possession" (εἰς τὰ ἴδια) can better be understood in the light of the Aramaic phrase אַתְּ דִּילִי. This expression is encountered in Tg. Isa. 43:1:

וכען כדנון אמר יוי די ברך יעקב ודאתקנד ישראל לא תדחל ארי פרקתך רביתך בשמך דילי 43:1
את:

And now says the Lord; He who created you, Jacob; who established you Israel: "Fear not, for I have delivered you; I have exalted you by your name. You are my possession."

The targumic tradition in the text announcing a king descended from the lineage of Jesse explicitly – in contrast to the Masoretic text – also mentions the Messiah who will come forth from the offspring of Jesse. On the Messiah, the spirit of the Lord will rest (Tg. Isa. 11:1–2):

²⁷ John 12:48: *He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day.*

²⁸ See also the text of John 19:27b: *And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home* (εἰς τὰ ἴδια).

ויפוק מלכא מבנוהי ד'שי ומשיחא מבני בנוהי יתרכי: 11:1
 ותשרי עלוהי רוח מן קדם יוי רוח חכמה וסכלתגו רוח מילד וגבורא רוח מדע ונדחלמא 11:2
 דיוי:

*And a king shall come forth from the sons of Jesse, and the Messiah shall be exalted from the sons of his sons. And the spirit from before the Lord shall rest upon him [Messiah], the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and power, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.*²⁹

This tradition is also present in *Pesiqta Rabbati* 152b: *The King Messiah was born before the creation of the world, when the spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters, for the spirit of God is the King Messiah, as it is written: the spirit of God will rest on him.* It is used by the Gospel of John in the testimony of John the Baptist about the Messiah (John 1:32–33).³⁰

The Masoretic text in Isa 5:1 foreshadows a song of love for the vineyard: *I want to sing to my Friend a song of His love for His vineyard! My Friend had a vineyard on a fertile hill.* The Targum Isaiah introduces here the figure of Abraham, who is explicitly called God's friend. The people of Israel are portrayed as Abraham's seed and God's beloved people. The text emphasizes Israel's special bond with God and fatherly relationship with Abraham (Tg. Isa. 5:1):

אָמַר נְבִיאָא אֲשֶׁבַחִיהּ כְּעַן לְיִשְׂרָאֵל דְּמַתִּיל בְּכַרְמָא זְרַעִיהּ דְּאַבְרָהָם רַחֲמֵי תוֹשְׁבַחַת רַחֲמֵי 5:1
 לְכַרְמִיהּ עִמִּי חֲבִיבֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהִיבִית לְהוֹן אַחְסָנָא בְּשׂוֹר רַם בְּאַרְעֵי שְׁמַיָּא:

The prophet said: "I wish now to praise Israel, who is like a vineyard, the seed of Abraham, my friend; sing to my friend about his vineyard. My people, my beloved Israel – I have given them an inheritance on a lofty mountain, in a fertile land."

In light of this text, one can better understand Jesus' dialogue with "the Jews" (John 8:31–59), in which the figure of Abraham repeatedly appears. "The Jews" are referred to in this dialogue as "the seed of Abraham" (John 8:33, 37) and wish to demonstrate their

²⁹ See Ulmer, "Pesiqta Rabbati," 64–97.

³⁰ John 1:32–33: *And John bore witness, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'"*

participation in a father-son relationship with Abraham (John 8:39, 53, 56). Through their close relationship with Abraham, they want to convince Jesus of their filial relationship to God. This is met with a sharp reproach from Jesus, who exposes their hatred, pride and murderous intentions.

John the Evangelist, showing the unbelief of “the Jews,” recalls prophet Isaiah: *Therefore they could not believe. For Isaiah again said, “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and turn for me to heal them.”* (John 12:39–40). This text shows multiple intertextual convergences with Targum Isaiah (Tg. Isa. 6:9–10):

וְאָמַר אִיזִיל וְתִימַר לְעַמָּא הַדְּדִין דְּשָׁמְעִין מִשְׁמַע וְלֹא מִסְתַּבְּלִין וְתַנּוּן מִחֲזָא וְלֹא יִדְעִין: ^{6:9}
 טְפִישׁ לְבַיָּה דְּעַמָּא הַדְּדִין וְאֹדְנֻהִי יְקַר וְעֵינֵיהִי טַמְטִים דְּלִמָּא יַחֲזוּן בְּעֵינֵיהוֹן וּבְאֹדְנֵהוֹן ^{6:10}
 יִשְׁמְעוּן וּבְלִיבָהוֹן יִסְתַּבְּלוּן וְיִתְבַּחוּן וְיִתִּיבוּן וְיִשְׁתַּבְּיָק לְהוֹן:

And [God] said: Go and say to this people who diligently listen but do not understand, and diligently look but do not know. Make fat the heart of this people, and make heavy their ears and dark their eyes, that they may not see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, lest they repent and be forgiven.

The text of Isaiah, who speaks about the vision of God: *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple* (Isa 6:1b), reads in the Aramaic translation (Tg. Isa. 6:1):

אָמַר נְבִיאָהּ תְּהוּתִי יְתֵי יְקָרָא דִּיּוּ שְׂרִי עַל כּוֹרְסֵי רַם וּמְנַטֵּל בְּשָׁמַי מְרוּמָא: ^{6:1}
The prophet said, “I saw the glory of the Lord sitting on a high and lofty throne as high as the heavens.”

In the light of the Aramaic version, the text of the Fourth Gospel becomes more comprehensible: *Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him* (John 12:41).

Jewish tradition commonly identifies the figure of YHWH’s suffering servant, who appears in the pages of Deutero-Isaiah, with Israel. The targumic text opens up a different interpretive perspective, as it relates the suffering servant of YHWH to the person of the Messiah (Tg. Isa. 42:1):

הא עבדי אַקרבניא בחירי דאתרעי ביה מימרי אתיו רוח קודשי עלוהי דיני לעממי יגלי: 42:1
Behold my servant, they will bring him soon. He is my chosen one in whom my word (Memra) is pleased. I will put my spirit of holiness on him. He will reveal my judgment to the nations.

And, similarly, in Tg. Isa. 43:10:

אתון סהדין קדמי אמר יי ועבדי משיחא דאתרעיתי 43:10
The Lord said: "You are my witnesses before me, and my servant Messiah, in whom I am well pleased."

In the fourth song about the suffering servant of YHWH, in the targumic translation the servant appears not as suffering and humiliated, but as triumphant and exalted (Tg. Isa. 52:13–53:12).³¹ In light of the targumic tradition, one can better understand John's Christology, in which the crucified Messiah is shown in triumph and glory.

In the Targum Isaiah, there is a reference to the future Messiah, who, as Teacher of peace, Defender and Judge, will rebuild the temple destroyed because of human sins (Tg. Isa. 53:5):

יהוא יבני בית מקדשא דאיתחל בחובנא אתמסר בעוניתא ובאלפניה שלמא יסגי עלנא 53:5
 ובידנתינוהי לפתגמוהי חובנא ישתבקרן לנא:
He will rebuild the temple that was destroyed because of our sins, spent because of our iniquities. Through His teaching, His peace will increase over us, and in this way we ourselves will cling to His words and our sins will be forgiven us.

This text allows us to look at John's Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God, who becomes the New Temple, in a new light: *Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he spoke of the temple of his body* (John 2:19–21). Through the prism of the targumic text, too, the words of the Risen Lord to the fearful disciples can better be understood: *Peace be with you* (John 20:19, 21), as well as the words: *If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained* (John 20:23).

³¹ Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum*, 103–105.

In the Targum Isaiah, the role of the Messiah as God's witness is emphasized. In this context, the Targumist uses the phrase "I am" in an absolute form (Tg. Isa. 43:10):

אַתּוֹן סְהַדִּין קְדָמִי אָמַר יְיָ וְעַבְדֵי מְשִׁיחָא דְאַתְרָעִיתֵי בֵּיהּ כְּדִיל דְתַדְעוּן וּתְהִימְגִנוּן קְדָמִי
 43:10
 וְתִסְמַכְלוּן אַרְי אֲנָא הוּא אֲנָא הוּא דְמִלְקַדְמִין אַף עָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא דִּילֵי אֲנוּן וּבָר מְנִי לִית אֱלֹהַּ:
 "You are witnesses before Me," says the Lord and My servant Messiah, in
 whom I am well pleased, that you may know and believe before Me and
 understand that I am. I am He who was from the beginning, the ages
 of the ages are Mine, and there is no God besides Me."

The Targumic text is very inspiring for a better understanding of the content of the Fourth Gospel, in which the Evangelist pays special attention to the testimony of the Son. As *the Only-begotten [Son]*³² and *Sent by the Father*,³³ He reveals to mankind the mystery of God the Father.³⁴ Jesus dwelling in the glory of the Father before the creation of the world (John 17:5) appears as the Wisdom of God presiding over its creation.³⁵ He is the Word of God through which everything receives existence.³⁶ Jesus does not come from Himself, but is sent by His Father. As the *Sent One* He gains not only the authority of action from God but reveals himself as one with the Father and as the One who shares in the work of the Father.³⁷ The Son has a full experience of the truth to which He bears witness (John 3:31–33). He comes into the world as the *Word to bear witness to the truth* (John 18:37). His testimony, on the one hand, is met with acceptance on the part of those who believe in him, and on the other hand with rejection and opposition on the part of those who do not believe in him.³⁸ Jesus' testimony clearly has the character of authoritative self-revelation. In light of the targumic text, the formula *ego eimi* ("I am") used by John in absolute form can be explained better. In the text of the Fourth Gospel, we can find its being used in seven texts (John

³² John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18.

³³ John 5:23, 37; 6:44; 8:16, 18; 12:49; 14:24.

³⁴ John 3:11, 32; 5:19, 30; 8:38; 15:15.

³⁵ Prov 8:22–31; Wis 9:9; Sir 24:9.

³⁶ Isa 55:10–11; John 1:3, 14.

³⁷ Wróbel, "Jezus Janowy," 191–203.

³⁸ John 8:13: *You are bearing witness to yourself; your testimony is not true.*
 See also John 3:11, 32.

4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8). Using this formula, Jesus testifies in a solemn way about his divine dignity.

To sum up, we can say that the contents of the Targum Isaiah provide a deeper understanding of John's Christology. John the Evangelist uses expressions in relation to Jesus that are referred to the God of Israel in the Targum Isaiah. In light of the Targum Isaiah, many of John's texts gain a new interpretive perspective. The demonstrated ideological and intertextual relations between the Targum Isaiah and the Gospel of John are an invitation for further detailed intertextual, philological, exegetical and theological studies on this issue.

Relacje ideowe i intertekstualne pomiędzy Targumem Izajasza a Ewangelią Janową

Abstrakt: W niniejszym artykule autor poszukuje odpowiedzi na pytania: Czy istnieją związki ideowe i intertekstualne pomiędzy Targumem Izajasza a Ewangelią św. Jana? Czy tradycje zawarte w targumach mogły mieć wpływ na nauczanie Jezusa z Nazaretu i na Apostołów? W artykule targumy najpierw zostają ukazane w ich żydowskim i chrześcijańskim kontekście. Następnie autor zwraca uwagę na recepcję i znaczenie księgi Izajasza dla wspólnoty żydowskiej i dla wspólnoty Janowej. W sposób szczególny akcentuje on użycie tej księgi w liturgii synagogałnej i w Ewangelii Janowej. Autor ukazuje także nowe perspektywy interpretacyjne dla wybranych tekstów Janowych w świetle tekstów zawartych w Targumie Izajasza. Analizuje on relację Memra–Logos, mesjańską tożsamość Janowego Jezusa, znaczenie Abrahama w relacji do synów Izraela, znaczenie chwały Bożej, tożsamość cierpiącego Sługi JHWH, Jezusa jako Nowej Świątyni oraz zastosowanie formuły *ego eimi* w formie absolutnej. Autor zachęca do dalszych szczegółowych badań nad wpływem tradycji targumicznych na nauczanie Jezusa i na chrystologię czwartej Ewangelii.

Słowa kluczowe: Targum Izajasza, Ewangelia Janowa, intertekstualność, Memra, Mesjasz, *ego eimi*

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