

Antiquities, since his literary analysis presupposes a certain theology in the work and draws some theological conclusions. Murphy's style throughout is lucid, but his use of "human(s)" as a noun was distracting.

The bibliography is a comprehensive one on Pseudo-Philo and includes some related works on the Pseudepigrapha as well as recent major works in literary and narrative criticism. Murphy also provides a "Concordance of Proper Names" and a "General Concordance," both based on Harrington's critical work, as well as an index of modern authors and a general index. The concordances will prove useful for future studies of *Biblical Antiquities*.

Murphy is to be congratulated for providing a good introduction and companion to Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*. His commentary is an intelligent exposition of its major themes. His narrative conclusions are solidly rooted in a close familiarity with the text in all its parts and in the whole. His literary analysis comprehensively demonstrates the unity of plot, character, and themes of the individual episodes and the narrative as a whole, while offering an excellent understanding of how Pseudo-Philo rewrote the Bible. Murphy's commentary is a significant contribution to the understanding of *Biblical Antiquities* as a consistent and connected narrative.

Susan F. Mathews
University of Scranton
Scranton, Pa.

Bernard Grossfeld. *The Targum Sheni to the Book of Esther: A Critical Edition Based on MS. Sassoon 282 with Critical Apparatus*. New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1994. xvii, 314 pp.

Bernard Grossfeld's critical edition of Targum Sheni to Esther represents a prodigious amount of useful and important work. Nearly everything the interested scholar would desire for the study of this ancient text is included in this volume. Grossfeld used as his basic text MS Sassoon 282, dated to 1189 in Germany; in addition the manuscript collection of the Institute of Hebrew Microfilms at the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem "was exhaustively consulted" (p. ix) to identify an additional twenty-nine manuscripts of Targum Sheni. M. David's earlier critical edition, *Das Targum Scheni zum Buche Esther: Nach Handschriften Herausgegeben* (Cracow, 1898), also utilized MS Sassoon 282, but compared it to only two other manuscripts in German libraries. A still earlier critical edition, L. Munk's *Targum Sheni zum Buche Esther Nebst Variæ Lectiones* (Berlin, 1876), produced an eclectic text based

on three manuscripts, again from German libraries, though not MS Sassoon 282.

This brief review of scholarship indicates the remarkable progress made in our times in the study of ancient texts. Whereas Munk and David about a century ago were limited to a few manuscripts in their native Germany, today a scholar from the United States can avail himself of the microfilm collection in Israel to view Yemenite manuscripts housed in London, an Algerian manuscript housed in Paris, a Moroccan manuscript housed in Parma, additional manuscripts housed in Sydney, Moscow, Budapest, Copenhagen, etc., and so on. And while we cannot be sure that an additional manuscript of Targum Sheni is not lurking somewhere in the world awaiting discovery, we can be sure that Grossfeld has included in this work every manuscript known to scholarship today. Thus, even though Grossfeld's basic text is the same as that of David almost a hundred years ago, the comparison to twenty-nine other manuscripts instead of only two other manuscripts affords a more complete picture of this ancient composition. In addition, Grossfeld's volume includes much more.

The volume contains brief discussions on the language, provenance, and date, and on the manuscript groups; a presentation of variant readings among the manuscripts; the text with complete critical apparatus; several useful appendices; a complete concordance of MS Sassoon 282; and the full manuscript in clearly printed and easily legible plates. Comparison with Grossfeld's previous work, *The First Targum to Esther, According to the MS Paris Hebrew 110 of the Bibliotheque Nationale* (New York, 1983), reveals that the current work on Targum Sheni contains much more than the earlier work on Targum Rishon (note, most importantly, the presence of a concordance in the new book). In addition, the Hebrew and English fonts utilized by the (same) publisher are greatly improved.

Grossfeld's introduction in this volume is very brief, but the reader is referred to the same author's treatment in The Aramaic Bible series (*The Two Targums to Esther: Translated, with Apparatus and Notes* [Collegeville, Minn., 1991]) for further details. A crucial issue in the study of Targum Sheni is its date and provenance. On the basis of the text's Western Aramaic dialect, the provenance appears to be without doubt Eretz-Israel. But the date of Targum Sheni remains a debated question; opinions range from as early as the fourth century C.E. to as late as the eleventh century. Grossfeld does not enter into the debate with any fervor, though clearly he leans toward the earlier date; that is, he wishes to place the composition within

the Byzantine period. One can only agree with Grossfeld's conclusion that to establish a definitive answer "would require an exhaustive grammatical and lexicographical analysis of the total text. It is hoped that with the publication of this critical edition of Targum Sheni this task has been facilitated" (p. xi).

Let us for a moment imagine that a detailed analysis reveals that the text definitely is from Eretz-Israel and that it dates to the Byzantine period. If such were the case, then considerable more fodder would be available for the lexicon of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. Michael Sokoloff's recent dictionary is a monumental achievement,¹ and one hardly could have thought that it would be necessary to supplement it so soon. But if we carry the above lines of thought to their logical extension—and I emphasize that I am only musing, because any conclusions at this time are premature—then yes indeed, it may be necessary to supplement the database with the information forthcoming from Targum Sheni. Once more, for any scholar who wishes to undertake the task, Grossfeld has provided the means to facilitate such work, especially by providing a complete concordance of the text.

Grossfeld classifies the various manuscripts into four different groups based on textual type. The largest group, sixteen manuscripts plus MS Sassoon 282, represents the "Mainstream Tradition," whereas the other groups "represent textual traditions that are unique in linguistic as well as Aggadic content" (p. 2). An appendix presents the statistical collations to allow the reader to check the percentage of equivalencies among the different manuscripts. Understandably, Grossfeld omitted from his classification scheme a handful of manuscripts that are fragmentary or illegible; but he does not mention this directly, and it took me some time before I determined this. Among such manuscripts are the recently published Geniza materials.²

The concordance comprises 195 pages, and is divided into small sections of Greek loanwords, personal names, and place names, and then the large section of general concordance. The Greek loanwords and the general entries are all translated. The concordance was prepared by Edward Cook of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project and utilizes the keyword-in-context format that is becoming more and more familiar. These pages are printed in landscape format, but each page faces the center of the book. Thus, as one turns the book sideways to view a particular page, the other page before one's

1. *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat-Gan, 1990).

2. See R. Kasher and M. L. Klein, "New Fragments of Targum to Esther from the Cairo Geniza," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 61 (1990): 89–124.

eyes is upside-down. In the future, I would hope that publishers will take this into account and correct the layout. It would be much better if all the pages faced the same direction, so that one could read and utilize them as the computer printouts that they originally were.

A critical edition of a classical text is always painstaking and typically unexciting. But it is the most basic work that a humanist can do, and all other advances emanate from such toil. Grossfeld has put us in his debt with this careful product and clear presentation.

Gary A. Rendsburg
Cornell University
Ithaca, N.Y.

Hannah K. Harrington. *The Impurity Systems of Qumran and the Rabbis: Biblical Foundations*. SBL Dissertation Series 143. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993. xv, 313 pp.

This dissertation, produced under the direction of Jacob Milgrom and Daniel Boyarin, compares the hermeneutical perspectives on Scripture which yield the contrasting contamination systems of the Qumran community and the early rabbinic literature. The author proposes “to uncover the motives of the sectarians and the Rabbis in developing their impurity systems in the manner in which they do” (p. 1). Her conclusion is “that much of what appears to be innovation in contrast to biblical principles is actually a valid, astute reading of Scripture itself” (p. 1). As a result, Hannah K. Harrington urges the reader to view “the sectarians and the Rabbis [as] careful exegetes who had a sacred regard for the divinely appointed Torah. Their concepts of impurity grow out of Scriptural roots rather than out of different stock” (p. 1–2). After an introductory review of research on the issue (pp. 1–43), the book is divided between the Qumran material (pp. 47–110) and the rabbinic material (pp. 113–260). A brief summary of conclusions is followed by appendices on the role of purity in Pharisaic table fellowship (pp. 267–281) and a synoptic chart of scriptural, sectarian, and rabbinic perspectives on purity (pp. 283–291). The bibliography is excellent. Lacking is an index of citations from primary sources.

In light of the flood of new texts and materials in Qumran studies, Harrington has chosen an opportune moment to review the legal traditions of the community on cultic contamination. She has industriously collected the various sources, old and recent, and has done a fine job of drawing