

TOOLS AND CRITICAL EDITIONS

The Targum of Ruth: Translated, with Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes, by D. R. G. Beattie; *The Targum of Chronicles: Translated, with Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes*, by J. Stanley McIvor. The Aramaic Bible 19. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994. Pp. vi + 38 (Ruth) + 258 (Chronicles). \$65.00.

This volume follows the typical format of the Aramaic Bible, a series now well familiar to biblical scholars. After a brief introduction to each work, the bulk of the volume is devoted to an English translation of each targum, critical apparatus with reference to the manuscripts, and extensive notes on the differences (mainly expansions, of course) between the targum and the MT. Where the targum differs from the Hebrew original, this is indicated in the English translation through the use of italics.

D. R. G. Beattie is responsible for the section on Ruth; his extensive work on the Targum to Ruth (e.g., *Jewish Exegesis of the Book of Ruth* [JSOTSup 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1977]) made him the clear choice for this project. J. Stanley McIvor tackled the much larger project of producing the Chronicles section of this volume.

In a work such as this, the first issue that needs to be addressed is determining which version of the Targum should serve as the basis for the English translation. The two scholars chose different solutions to this problem. Beattie opted for the eclectic route, relying on the text appearing in the standard editions of *Miqra'ot Gedolot*, P. Lagarde (1873) and A. Sperber (1968), though “supplemented with material from the manuscripts that have been examined” (p. 12). The result is that “while the translation, for the most part, follows the ‘received’ text, sometimes the readings of the majority of manuscripts (or the unanimous manuscript tradition) and sometimes minority readings have been adopted. The guiding principle in any given instance has been that the fullest information should be conveyed as clearly and conveniently as possible” (ibid.). There are twenty-one manuscripts of Targum Ruth extant, but many of these are late (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) and derive from the printed editions. Accordingly, Beattie utilized only eight manuscripts in producing his translation and apparatus.

McIvor, by contrast, utilized a single manuscript as the basis of his translation, namely, Vatican manuscript *Cod. Vat. Urb. Ebr. 1* (dated 1294), the same text utilized by R. Le Deaut and J. Robert in their standard work (*Targum des Chroniques* [AnBib 51; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971]). There are only two other extant manuscripts of Targum Chronicles, one from Erfurt (dated 1343) and one from Cambridge (dated 1347). Alas, a fourth manuscript existed in Dresden, but was destroyed in 1945; as far as I can tell, this manuscript never was published.

The dates of most targumim remain elusive. There is general agreement that Tar-

gum Chronicles is late, that is, eighth or ninth century. But the date of Targum Ruth is much debated. Some of its contents points to an early date, some to a later date. Beattie reminds us that the Tosafists “observed that it was made in the time of the tannaim. That is the oldest known opinion on the origin of this Targum, and it may very well be right” (p. 12).

Still, there is very little in either of these targumim that assists the biblical scholar in the exegetical mode. For example, whereas the Masora correctly transmitted the pausal break on the word *nā’ōmî* in Ruth 4:5 and thus recognized that Naomi and Ruth in this passage are the objects of separate actions, the targumist connected the two women with the addition of the phrase “the hand of” before Ruth. The result is a rendering that reads, in Beattie’s English, “from the hand of Naomi and from *the hand of* Ruth the Moabite, wife of the deceased.” Most modern English translations of the MT render similarly, though new evidence now indicates that the Masora is essentially correct (cf. C. H. Gordon, “*wm-* ‘and’ in Eblaite in Hebrew,” *Eblaitica* 1 [1987] 29–30; and G. A. Rendsburg, “Eblaite *ù-ma* and Hebrew *wm-*,” *Eblaitica* 1 [1987] 33–41).

Similarly, the very difficult passage in Ruth 2:7 (*zeh šibtāh habbayit mē’āt*) is translated rather straightforwardly by the targumist, affording the modern scholar no assistance in the meaning of this passage. Notwithstanding the typical expansive nature of these targumim, just when the modern scholar might want some more information, the Targum is silent. Beattie’s English rendering reads “It is but a short time that she has sat in the house for a little” (see below, however, for further discussion concerning this passage).

Rather, the value of these texts lies in the area of Jewish interpretation of Miqra’ in the first millennium CE. For example, whereas 2 Chr 35:21–22 is clear that Pharaoh Necho had received the word of God, the Targum takes a different view, understanding the Hebrew word *’ēlōhîm* as “idol.” Similarly, 2 Chr 35:23 is silent on the theological implications of the good king Josiah’s premature death. The Targum, however, adds an extensive statement, in McIvor’s English, “*Because Josiah had not sought instruction from before the Lord and had gone to wage war in the plain of Megiddo, the Lord of the universe punished him.*” McIvor very appropriately notes these points in his comments: “Tg. Chr does not wish to accept that God could have spoken through Necho” and “Tg. Chr goes out of the way to explain how such a good king could have come to such an abysmal end” (p. 239).

There are many good introductions to the methods of targumic translation and interpretation available, but for a teacher wishing to demonstrate such methods in a succinct manner, yet with numerous illustrations, I am happy to recommend McIvor’s sections in his Introduction on “The Work of the Targumist,” “The Methods of the Targumist,” and “The Theology and Teaching of the Targumist” (pp. 18–31). Here the reader will find such examples as the following: how the targumist updates Dan to Pameas (*sic*, not Paneas = modern Banias); how he changes David’s wearing an ephod (1 Chr 15:27), a garment associated with the priests in the Torah, to a generic “sleeved linen tunic”; how “hand of God,” “mouth of God,” and so on all become “Memra of God”; the above-mentioned theological reworkings of Necho and Josiah; etc. True, Targum Chronicles is a rather late work, yet it is perfectly illustrative of the targumim in general.

A comparison of these English renderings with the Aramaic originals reveals that both Beattie and McIvor have accomplished their main task well. I take the opportunity to raise one small point, however. Beattie’s rendering of Ruth 2:7 presented above fol-

lows the Targum nicely. But note that the Hebrew text has only one word, *mē'āṭ*, indicating brevity, whereas the Targum has two such terms, *z'yr* and *šybhḏ*, in the phrase *pwn z'yr dyn dytb' bbyt' šybhḏ*. Accordingly, in Beattie's translation (see above) "but a short time" should be italicized.

Though not directly relevant to McIvor's main task, one of his comments is somewhat disconcerting. I refer to his statement that in Genesis Laban "appears as a rather wily Oriental" (p. 43). This characterization reflects Western mores which see guile as a negative trait. The ancient Mediterranean world, however, had a different standard of values, and it is improper to impose our mores on the biblical portrayal of Laban. (See further C. H. Gordon, *The Ancient Near East* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1965] 106.)

Nothing can replace a scholar's firsthand interaction with an ancient text in the original language. But insofar as this volume and the series as a whole can serve as a catalyst to direct attention to the targumim, they represent a worthy effort.

Gary A. Rendsburg
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-2502

The Old English Version of the Gospels. Vol. 1, *Text and Introduction*, ed. by R. M. Liuzza. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. Pp. lxxviii + 202. \$49.95.

This will be the standard edition of the Old English Gospels for the foreseeable future. The detailed seventy-eight-page introduction describes all of the Old English manuscripts, demonstrates their relationships to one another, and indicates the editorial procedures used in preparing the edition. The bulk of the volume comprises the running text of the four Gospels in Old English, with an apparatus indicating places of variation among the surviving manuscripts. A plate of Corpus Christi College MS 140, fol 45r, serves as a frontispiece. The forthcoming second volume will present notes and commentary on the text and a glossary.

Bart D. Ehrman
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Lexical Tools to the Syriac New Testament, by George Anton Kiraz. JSOT Manuals 7. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994. Pp. vi + 137. £25.00/\$37.50 (paper).

Derived from data collected for his magnificent *Concordance to the Syriac New Testament* (6 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1993), and modeled on Bruce Metzger's *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek* (published by Metzger and distributed by the Theological Book Agency, Princeton, 1969), this soft-cover, comb-bound (similar to spiral-bound) volume will be a useful tool and valuable acquisition for students of Syriac, a language of special importance for the study of the NT and early Christianity.

The volume is divided into ten sections. The first three are Syriac word lists, given in declining order of frequency. The British and Foreign Bible Society's 1920 edition of the Peshitta is the base text; since the Peshitta (the Syrian "Vulgate") lacks 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Revelation, these have been supplied from the Philoxenian and Harclean versions. The first section is a list of Syriac words, the second contains proper nouns, and the third gives Greek loanwords. The information is presented in five columns: (1) an