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## Scripture, Targum, and Talmud as Instruction: A Complex Textual Story from the *Sifra*

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A common question in the practice of translation is whether or not, or to what degree, the translation text shares in the authority and status of the translated text. This is acutely problematic when the translated text is understood to be sacred, inspired, or revealed, as in the case of Scripture. For example, we know from the various versions of the story of the translation of the Hebrew Torah into Greek (the Septuagint), that there circulated within the Alexandrian Jewish community different understandings of how close the Greek translation was – in accuracy, authority, and inspiration – to its Hebrew original.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the many rules and narratives found in early rabbinic literature regarding the practice of Aramaic translation of Scripture (targum) seek to delineate the status of the translation and translator relative to the Hebrew original and its reader.<sup>2</sup> The question of the status of targum pertained not only to the context of the synagogue, where targum was recited as an accompaniment to the Sabbath scriptural lection, but also to the context of rabbinic study, where targum served as a bridge between scriptural

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It is a pleasure for me to include this study in a volume honoring Ernest Frerichs, my first academic teacher of the Hebrew Bible (then Old Testament), albeit in translation.

<sup>1</sup>For a comparison of the three major accounts (Aristobulus, Aristeas, and Philo), and their rhetorical implications for scriptural interpretation, see Janowitz 1991.

<sup>2</sup>See Fraade 1992.

text and its oral interpretive instruction.<sup>3</sup> Its status, as both text and discursive practice, needed to be defined not only in relation to Scripture, but to the various types of rabbinic oral teaching with which it interfaced. Here I would like to examine one rabbinic passage that bears on this question, a passage which in its own difficult textual history attests to the problematic status of targum, vis-à-vis Scripture on the one hand and rabbinic instruction on the other.

The text is from the early rabbinic commentary *Sifra*, interpreting Lev 10:10-11, which after forbidding the priests alcoholic beverages at the time of their service in the Tent of Meeting, states: "That you will be able to distinguish between holy and profane, between the impure and the pure, and that you will be able to teach the children of Israel all the laws which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses." Let us begin with the commonly printed version of the *Sifra*,<sup>4</sup> which I have divided into numbered lines to facilitate analysis and comparison with other versions:

- [1] ולהבדיל בין הקדש ובין החול אילו הערכים.  
 [2] בין הטמא ובין הטהור אילו הסמאות והטהרות.  
 [3] ולהורות את בני ישראל אילו ההוראות.  
 [4] את כל החקים אילו המדרשות.  
 [5] אשר דבר ה' אליהם אילו ההלכות.  
 [6] ביד משה זה המקרא.  
 [7] יכול אף התרגום תלמוד לימר ולהורות.

- [1] "To distinguish between holy and profane": These are the valuations (of Temple offerings).  
 [2] "Between the impure and the pure": These are purities and impurities.  
 [3] "To instruct the children of Israel": These are the (juridical) instructions.  
 [4] "All the laws": These are the interpretations.  
 [5] "Which the Lord has spoken to them": These are the laws.  
 [6] "By the hand of Moses": This is Scripture.  
 [7] Could targum also (be included in this prohibition)? (No.) Scripture teaches, "to instruct."

<sup>3</sup>For targum as a component of rabbinic study, positioned between Scripture (*miqrā*) and rabbinic oral teaching (*mišnā*), see its only other occurrence in the "tannaitic" midrashim: *Sifre Deut.* 161. On this text, and for further bibliography on the status and function of targum in study, see Fraade 1992: 262-63.

<sup>4</sup>*Semini, paraša* 1:9. For text, see Weiss 1862: 46d. Weiss's text is identical to that of the editio princeps (*Sifra* 1545: 24c).

In typically midrashic fashion, our commentary atomizes the biblical passage so as to attribute specific meaning to each of its components in turn. In lines 1 and 2, parts of the verse are taken to denote specifically priestly functions relevant to sacrificial worship: valuating offerings dedicated to the Temple and determining states and degrees of ritual purity and impurity. For both of these functions the priest's mental alertness cannot be compromised by alcoholic beverage, since a misjudgment could have significant cultic consequences. Line 3 makes a transition from specifically priestly expertise to juridical instructions (*hōrāyôt/hōrāyôt*) more generally, which in Second Temple times were principally the purview of the priesthood, but which thereafter (and retrospectively) were claimed as rabbinic prerogatives.<sup>5</sup> These too were of serious consequence since they directed people's practical observance of the commandments, i.e., what was permitted and what was forbidden. In lines 4-6, the successive scriptural phrases are understood to refer to other types of instruction which were part of the rabbinic curriculum of study: laws derived by means of reasoned scriptural interpretation (*midrāšôt*), laws stated independently of scriptural interpretation (*hālākôt*), and laws stated plainly in Scripture itself (*miqrā*). Following upon (and perhaps viewed as subtypes of) "juridical instructions," it is presumed that these too could not be enunciated by someone who was intoxicated, again because of the serious practical consequences of possible error. Finally, the commentary asks rhetorically whether targum, the Aramaic translation of Scripture, is similarly to be included in the scriptural prohibition. The very asking of this question is significant, since, in contrast to the preceding declarative interpretations, it implies an uncertain attitude toward targum: Was it too a type of rabbinic instruction with practical consequences that should not be performed by one who was intoxicated? The rhetorical way the question is asked (*yākôl*) anticipates a negative response, which is given by citing the verse's verb "to instruct": targum does not fall within the rubric of juridical instruction (*hōrā'ā*) and hence is excluded from those types of teaching prohibited to one who had drunk alcohol. Presumably, the reasoning is that targum, as an *aid* to study and understanding of Scripture, is not itself a *source* of legal teaching which might lead people to err.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Maimonides (*Mishneh Torah, Hilkot bi'at hammiqdash* 1:3) draws a clear distinction between the prohibition of the priests from entering the sanctuary drunk, and that of "any person, whether priest or Israelite" from rendering decisions (*lēhōrôt*) when drunk.

<sup>6</sup>For this understanding, see the commentary of R. Abraham b. David of Posquières (Rabad; 1125-98) to the *Sifra* (in Weiss 1862: 46d): "This (targum) is not

Thus far, I have interpreted the text of the *Sifra* as it appears in the printed edition, and as it has been explained by most medieval and modern commentators. However, when we examine the earliest extant manuscripts and attestations of the *Sifra*, we find versions of our passage that are significantly different, particularly in lines 6 (Scripture) and 7 (targum). In fact, not a single manuscript confirms the text of the printed edition for these two lines together.<sup>7</sup> Let us look at one such manuscript, which has the advantage of being attested in several later sources as well: MS Oxford Neubauer 151.<sup>8</sup> Since lines 1-5 are essentially identical to the

*hōrā<sup>ā</sup>*, but a case of 'go and learn it (from the Bible) in the school'" (cf. *b. Keritot* 13b). In other words, should the translator make a mistake, people of minimal scriptural knowledge would not be misled to follow it. In this regard, even though targum is clearer than Scripture, neither is a direct source of *hōrā<sup>ā</sup>*. Weiss, in commenting upon Rabad's comment, makes the following interesting observation: "In his view, targum was, already in the days of the *tannā<sup>īm</sup>*, written." Thus, the reciter of the targum would have been following a set text, just like the reciter of Scripture. The problem with all of this, as I shall show presently, is that the text of the *Sifra* which Rabad was interpreting (unlike Weiss's printed edition) most likely included targum as *hōrā<sup>ā</sup>*, presumably because it was not a fixed written text, but a form of oral interpretation, more akin to midrash than to Scripture. Weiss goes on to suggest that perhaps the *Sifra* is not referring to the targum of Scripture, but to that of the *mētūrgēmān* of the sage (otherwise known as an *ūmōrā<sup>ā</sup>*), who publicly broadcast the sage's homily. However, this is highly unlikely since the term *targum* is, to my knowledge, never used in this sense in early rabbinic sources.

<sup>7</sup>Line 6 of the printed edition appears in MSS Vatican Assemani 66, London Margoliot 341 (British Museum Add. 16.406, a film of which was kindly provided to me by the British Library), and Breslau (now Jewish Theological Seminary) 2171; whereas line 7 appears in MSS Vatican Assemani 31 and Parma de Rossi 139 (where it probably reflects a scribal error; see below, n. 11). However, an interlinear gloss to MS Parma concords with the printed edition at line 6. For the possibility that the printed edition represents a scribal error of homoioteleuton, see below, n. 9. Wherever possible I relied on photographs or facsimiles of the manuscripts. Otherwise, I consulted Finkelstein (1945: 212-213), whose textual reconstruction, however, I found unfounded and unconvincing. For a catalogue with descriptions of the manuscripts and printed editions of the *Sifra*, see Kahana 1995: 60-88. According to Kahana's inventory, no Geniza fragments have been identified that include our passage. For a chart of the principal manuscript variants, see the end of this article.

<sup>8</sup>A film of this manuscript was kindly provided to me by the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The text of this manuscript appears to have been identical to that of the *Sifra* used by Rabad in his commentary (even though he understands the text's meaning differently). It is also identical to the text of *Midrash Haggadol* to Lev 10:10 (E. N. Rabinowitz 1932: 201; Steinsaltz 1976: 236-37; but see Steinsaltz's critical apparatus for manuscript variants), which presumably drew upon the *Sifra*. *Yalquṣ Shim'oni* r. 529, both according to the Oxford MS and the Salonika printing, has the same reading, except that it has *yākōl* ("is it possible") instead of

printed edition, as to the other manuscripts, I will not repeat them. But note that an additional line (8) is included at the end:<sup>9</sup>

[6] ביד משה זה תלמוד. [6]

[7] יכול זה המקרא תלמוד לומר ולהורות. [7]

[8] ר' יוסי בר' יהודה אומר מנין אף הדרגתם תלמוד לומר להורות. [8]

[6] "By the hand of Moses": This is dialectical study (*talmūd*).

[7] Could this (include) Scripture? (No.) Scripture teaches, "to instruct."

[8] R. Jose b. Judah says: From whence (do we know that this includes) also targum? Scripture teaches, "to instruct."

Unlike the printed edition, this manuscript includes talmud among the types of teaching prohibited to one who has drunk alcohol.<sup>10</sup> The word *talmud* here refers not to a defined corpus of mishnaic commentary (the *gēmārā<sup>ā</sup>* of the Babylonian or Palestinian/Jerusalem Talmud), but to a method of oral legal study characterized by its dialectical method. Furthermore, unlike the printed edition, the *Sifra* according to this manuscript asks rhetorically whether Scripture might be included in the prohibition, *excluding* it on the grounds that the recitation (or teaching) of Scripture does not fall within the verb "to instruct," not being a form or direct source of juridical instruction.<sup>11</sup> Finally, in the name of R. Jose b.

*minnayin* ("from whence") in line 8, resulting in the *exclusion* of targum from the prohibition.

<sup>9</sup>The absence of this line in the printed edition alone is most easily explained as an error of scribal homoioteleuton, skipping from the word *yākōl* of line 7 to that of line 8, according to some manuscripts (see below, n. 12). However, only the text as represented in the interlinear scribal corrections of MS Parma could have been the direct basis for this error in the printed edition. Alternatively, the printed edition could have been the product of homoioteleuton deriving from a text such as MS Vatican 66 (see below), jumping from the word *ap* in line 7 to the same word in line 8. In either case, a good case can be made for viewing the printed edition's omission of line 8 and consequent reading in line 7 as a corruption.

<sup>10</sup>The manuscripts and attestations are fairly evenly divided between interpreting "by the hand of Moses" to refer to Scripture or to talmud. In the former category, besides the printed edition, we have MSS Vatican 66, London, and Breslau, as well as *Pesiqta<sup>ā</sup> Zufrata<sup>ā</sup>* (*Midrash Leqah Tov*), *Midrash Hakhhamim*, and an interlinear gloss to MS Parma. In the latter category, besides MS Oxford, we have MSS Parma and Vatican 31, *Midrash Haggadol*, *Yalquṣ Shim'oni*, the text of the *Sifra* as cited in Rabad's commentary, as well as *b. Keritot* 13b, to be discussed below.

<sup>11</sup>The same text (line 7) is found in Rabad's commentary to the *Sifra*, *Midrash Haggadol*, and *Yalquṣ Shim'oni*. Those manuscripts and attestations which had Scripture in the previous line here rhetorically exclude talmud (MSS Vatican 66, London, Breslau, *Midrash Hakhhamim*, and MS Parma in an interlinear gloss). The reading in MSS Vatican 31 and Parma in line 7 (excluding targum) is most likely

Judah (ca. 200 C.E.), a scriptural warrant is sought for including targum in the prohibition, such warrant being provided from the word "to instruct," thereby including targum as a form or source of juridical instruction with practical consequences.<sup>12</sup> Thus, this manuscript, in excluding Scripture and including targum as forms of juridical instruction, presents opposite views to those of the printed edition (lines 6 and 7 respectively). Its logic would appear to lie in the distinction between the recitation of the *fixed* text of divine Scripture and the orally *fluid* performance of rabbinic talmud and targum. The chances for making an error in teaching and causing an error in practice is greater in the latter two cases than in the former.

The placement of line 8 in this version functions first of all to contrast targum with, or distinguish it from, Scripture. Rhetorical questions are asked of both, their answers being opposite. But the placement of line 8 also serves to distance targum somewhat from the preceding types of oral instruction. Its status alone is determined by a rhetorical question attributed to a named sage, raised almost as an afterthought at the end of the passage, rather than being decoded directly and declaratively from

the product of a scribal error, since line 8 in these manuscripts excludes targum again, using the same language. It is likely that they derive from a text that had יכול אף/זה דמקרא in line 7 (like MS Oxford) and that their present texts are the products of scribal error.

<sup>12</sup>Despite differences as to whether to exclude or include Scripture and talmud in the previous two lines, the vast majority of witnesses rhetorically include targum in the prohibition: MSS Oxford, Vatican 66, London, Breslau, *Midrash Haggadol*, *Yalqut Shim'oni*, *Pesiqta' Zufrata*, and the text quoted in Rabad's commentary to the *Sifra*. Only *Yalqut Shim'oni* and MSS Vatican 31 and Parma rhetorically exclude targum here. Whereas the rhetorical *yākōl* ("is it possible") of line 7 anticipates a negative (excluding) answer, the rhetorical *minnayin* ("from whence") of line 8 assumes a positive (including) response, as is consistently the force of this terminology in the *Sifra*. Rabad's interpretation of this passage as excluding targum (see above, n. 6), might presume that line 8 is derivative of line 7, especially in light of the word *'ap* ("also") following *minnayin*: "From whence (do we know that) targum is also (excluded)?" Although this interpretation is highly unlikely given the rhetorical conventions of midrash halakhah, it must be admitted that it derives from a certain ambiguity in the Hebrew of our text which allows an inverse interpretation. Compare *Pesiqta' Zufrata* (Buber 1880: 56), where the equivalent of line 8 appears without being preceded by the equivalent of line 7, supporting thereby the presumption that the force of *minnayin* in line 8 is to include targum, along with the other forms of oral teaching, in the prohibition. Elsewhere in the *Sifra*, there are three other cases in which a *minnayin 'ap* clause directly follows a *yākōl* clause (*Wayyiqra' dibbura' denedabah, parašah 6:3; Šemini, parašah 3:3; 'Ahare mot, parašah 6:3*), in each of which the *minnayin 'ap* clause comes to include what might have been thought excluded by the preceding *yākōl* clause. However, in none of these are the structure and exegetical rhetoric identical to that of our passage.

the scriptural verse, as are the other forms of oral instruction. Its inclusion in the prohibition appears less certain than the others, its status more liminal.<sup>13</sup>

Three other early manuscripts of the *Sifra*<sup>14</sup> similarly include targum in the prohibition of teaching while intoxicated, even though they differ from MS Oxford with respect to Scripture and talmud (including the former and excluding the latter):<sup>15</sup>

[6] ביד משה זה המקרא.

[7] יכול אף<sup>16</sup> התלמוד תלמוד לומר ולהורות.

[8] ר' יוסי בר' יהודה אומר מנין אף התרגום תלמוד לומר להורות.

[6] "By the hand of Moses": This is Scripture.

[7] Could this also (include) talmud? (No.) Scripture teaches, "to instruct."

[8] R. Jose b. Judah says: From whence (do we know that this includes) also targum? Scripture teaches, "to instruct."

Although this recension agrees with that of MS Oxford in including targum in the prohibition in line 8, its reversal of Scripture and talmud in lines 6 and 7 requires some explanation. I would suggest two factors: First, the scriptural phrase "by the hand of Moses" might be taken more simply to refer to the written Torah received and transmitted by Moses at Mount Sinai.<sup>17</sup> In providing this interpretation, these manuscripts, like the printed edition, include Scripture among the teaching practices, which, if performed under the influence of alcohol, would have practical legal consequences.<sup>18</sup> Second, the rhetorical exclusion of talmud in this

<sup>13</sup>On the ambiguous relation of targum to Scripture, in terms of its halakhic status, see Fraade 1992: 256, and texts cited there.

<sup>14</sup>MSS Vatican 66, London, Breslau.

<sup>15</sup>This is similar to the reading of *Midrash Hakhhamim* and two manuscripts of *Midrash Haggadol* (according to the critical apparatus in Steinsaltz's edition, "Q" and "L"). Shlomo Naeh informs me that manuscript "M" of *Midrash Haggadol* (the manuscript upon which Steinsaltz is supposed to have based his edition), similarly includes Scripture (line 6) and excludes talmud (line 7).

<sup>16</sup>MSS London and Breslau have זה rather than אף here, as do the manuscripts of *Midrash Haggadol* referred to in the previous note.

<sup>17</sup>However, elsewhere the *Sifra* (*Behuqqotay, pereq 8: 12*) emphasizes that not just the written Torah, but its accompanying laws and interpretations, were revealed "by the hand of Moses" (Lev 26:46).

<sup>18</sup>A recently published text from the Dead Sea Scrolls attests to a similar concern: One (from the context, presumably a priest) who does not read the Book of the Torah loudly and clearly is disqualified from so doing "lest he cause an error in a capital matter." See 4Q266 5 ii 1-3; 4Q267 5 iii 1-5; 4Q273 2 1. For discussion, see Baumgarten 1992. Elsewhere, Baumgarten (1996: 51) refers to J. T. Milik's

set of manuscripts might result from the influence of a later, Babylonian version of our passage that is more ambivalent regarding the teaching of talmud as *hōrā'ā*. The talmudic text (*b. Keritot* 13b), in the form of a *bāraytā* (introduced by "our masters have taught"), reads as follows:<sup>19</sup>

- [6] ביד משה זה תלמוד.  
 [7] יכול אף תלמוד לומר ולהורות.  
 [8] ר' יוסי בר' יהודה אומר מנין אף התרגום תלמוד לומר ולהורות.

- [6] "By the hand of Moses": This is talmud.  
 [7] Could this also (include) the Mishnah? (No.) Scripture teaches, "to instruct."  
 [8] R. Jose b. Judah says: Could this also (include) talmud? (No.) Scripture teaches, "to instruct."

Line 6 agrees with MSS Oxford, Parma, and Vatican 31, and several early medieval witnesses in including talmud in the prohibition of teaching while intoxicated.<sup>21</sup> However, line 7, excluding the Mishnah, is unique to the talmudic version.<sup>22</sup> Mishnah (here referring not to oral tradition overall, but to *the* Mishnah) is excluded from the prohibition, presumably since the Mishnah is not considered here a direct source of practical legal instruction. Unique to this passage is the revisiting, in line 8, of the status of talmud, thereby focusing attention on its contested status as a form of juridical instruction, or a source thereof: the anonymous view of line 6 includes it in the prohibition of instruction by one who is intoxicated, while the view attributed to R. Jose b. Judah in line 8 excludes it. Significantly, with this shift of emphasis to the contested status of talmud, targum here (and only here) has entirely dropped out of the discussion. As the ensuing talmudic discussion (and later talmudic commentaries) make clear, the dispute is now over whether teaching talmud in a state of intoxication has any practical legal

restoration of 4Q266 to include the disqualification of one who is not "quick to understand" as a Torah reader.

<sup>19</sup>Lines 1-5 of the *Sifra* remain constant in the talmudic version, notwithstanding some slight variation in wording. Note that in MS Munich, lines 7-8 do not appear, even though line 8 is presumed by the talmudic discussion (found in MS Munich) that follows the citation of the *bāraytā*. Furthermore, line 7 (the exclusion of Mishnah) is missing entirely from several manuscripts (MSS Florence II I 79, British Library Add. 25717, and Vatican 120) according to the Helkind Talmud Text Databank of the Saul Lieberman Institute of Talmudic Research. For other variants, see Mirsky 1966: 82-83.

<sup>20</sup>MSS London and Breslau have  $\text{וזה}$  rather than  $\text{אף}$  here, as do the manuscripts of *Midrash Haggadol* referred to in the previous note.

<sup>21</sup>See above, n. 10.

<sup>22</sup>But note its absence in some manuscripts, for which see above, n. 19.

consequences as *hōrā'ā*. According to Rav (ca. 230), the halakhah follows the view of R. Jose b. Judah, except in the case of an authoritative teacher (such as himself), whose teaching of talmud would be assumed to have practical halakhic consequences of *hōrā'ā*, even if not articulated as such.<sup>23</sup>

There are several grounds for regarding this talmudic partial parallel to our *Sifra* passage as a Babylonian (or fictitious) *bāraytā*, that is, less as a witness to a variant Palestinian tannaitic recension of the *Sifra* than as a transmutation of that tradition in (and for the purpose of) a later, Babylonian discursive context.<sup>24</sup> Here alone (at least in some versions of the passage), mishnah is considered, not as an expression for rabbinic oral tradition overall, as is the semantic practice in the tannaitic midrashim, but as a particular type of rabbinic teaching, as exemplified in the text of the Mishnah (of R. Judah the Patriarch).<sup>25</sup> Here alone, the question of the possible status of targum as instruction receives no attention, perhaps because of the fact that targum became earlier among the Babylonian sages than their Palestinian colleagues a fixed, official text of translation, rather than a more fluid oral performance.<sup>26</sup> Finally, the focus in this *bāraytā* alone on the *contested* status of talmud may reflect the debate among the Babylonian *amora'im* as to whether talmud as a form of *study* was also a form or source of *hōrā'ā*, juridical instruction. If I am correct, the version of the tradition found in the Babylonian Talmud cannot be used as a direct witness to the textual history of the *Sifra*. However, the Talmud's transformation of that tradition for its own context could have exerted influence, whether direct or indirect, on the subsequent transmission of and commentary to the *Sifra* text by virtue of the authority eventually gained by the talmudic text.<sup>27</sup> Such influence *might* be witnessed in those versions of the *Sifra* that omit or deny talmud and/or targum as forms or sources of juridical

<sup>23</sup>See as well the addition to the *Sifra* parallel in *Midrash Haggadol* (probably deriving from Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilkot bi'at hammiqdash* 1:4): "They only forbade one (intoxicated) from juridical instruction [*lēhōrôt*]. But teaching [*lēlammēd*] is permitted. But if he was an established sage [*hākām qābū'a*], he should not teach, for his teaching is (considered) juridical instruction [*hōrayā*]."

<sup>24</sup>For this phenomenon see Jacobs 1971; Goodblatt 1979: 286-88.

<sup>25</sup>However, several talmudic manuscripts lack entirely this line (7) of the Babylonian *bāraytā*. See above, n. 19.

<sup>26</sup>See Fraade 1992: 264-65. See also above, n. 6.

<sup>27</sup>For example, R. Elijah of Wilna (1720-97), in his emendations to the *Sifra*, suggests correcting it to agree with the talmudic text. Similarly, it is common for medieval commentators to the *Sifra* to discuss the better known parallel in the Babylonian Talmud and thereby to ignore completely the *Sifra*'s comment on targum. See, ad loc.: Ibn Ḥayyim 1608-9; Koleditzky 1960-61; *Sifra* 1959; Kahan 1911; Malbim 1860.

instruction. The *only* recension of our *Sifra* tradition to omit or deny both talmud and targum (like *b. Keritot* 13b) is that of the printed versions.<sup>28</sup> The only recension that shows no such influence – including both talmud and targum – is MS Oxford and its attestations.<sup>29</sup> However, the possibility of there having been other versions of the *Sifra*, which have not survived, and other influences that might have shaped diverse attitudes to these forms of teaching and their authority, should caution us against being too confident in reconstructing the lines of textual transmission and filiation.

I have shown that the textual variants in the recensions of our *Sifra* passage, especially with regard to the status of Scripture, targum, and talmud as forms or sources of legal instruction, reflect the ambivalent and shifting attitudes toward those forms of teaching as sources of juridical instruction. I have suggested that the earliest recoverable stage in the transmission of that tradition might have been that reflected in MS Oxford, in which talmud (as a type of study) was included as a form or source of such instruction, while Scripture was excluded. Targum, still fluid and performatively poised between Scripture and talmud, was included, but with some hesitation. Eventually, as the discourse of rabbinic learning became more widespread and textually accessible, juridical authority was institutionalized in the offices of rabbinic leadership, and talmud and targum (as performative texts) too ceased to be considered forms of authoritative legal instruction. In the end, the complex, nonlinear nature of these developments in the shifting nature of rabbinic teaching and authority in its several forms is reflected in the great variety of variants to our passage of the *Sifra*, irreducible as they are to a single “correct” text or textual history. Each variant, if given a fuller voice, might have a larger story all its own to tell.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup>But this might reflect a more innocent scribal error of homoioteleuton, on which see above, n. 9. Those versions which omit or exclude talmud, but include targum (in the attribution to R. Jose b. Judah) are: MSS Vatican 66, London, Breslau, Parma (interlinear), some manuscripts of *Midrash Haggadol*, *Midrash Hakhamim*, and *Pesiqta<sup>3</sup> Zutrata<sup>3</sup>*. Those which include talmud, but omit or exclude targum are: MS Parma, Vatican 31 (both seemingly corrupt as they exclude targum twice, probably due to a scribal error), and *Yalqut Shim<sup>c</sup>oni*.

<sup>29</sup>These attestations include the commentary of Rabad and *Midrash Haggadol* (but not all manuscripts). In raising this possibility, I am aware that overall, MS Oxford tends to display more influence from the Babylonian Talmud than does MS Vatican 66, generally thought to be the oldest manuscript of the *Sifra*. See Kahana 1995: 62-65. However, in addition to such overall tendencies, each textual case needs to be evaluated in its own right.

<sup>30</sup>Several colleagues read an earlier version of this paper and offered valuable comments and correctives: Christine Hayes, Martin Jaffee, Shlomo Naeh, Richard Sarason, and Avigdor Shinan.

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Chart of Variants to *Sifra Šemini, paraša 1:9*

[8]	[7]	[6]	
	יכול אף הַרְגוּם	ביד משה זה המקרא	Ed. Venice 1545
מניין אף התרגום	יכול אף התלמוד	ביד משה זה המקרא	MS Vatican 66
מניין אף התרגום	יכול אף התלמוד	ביד משה זה המקרא	MS Parma interlin.
מניין אף התרגום	יכול זה התלמוד	ביד משה זה המקרא	MS London
מניין אף התרגום	יכול זה התלמוד	ביד משה זה המקרא	MS Breslau/NY
מניין אף התרגום	יכול זה התלמוד	ביד משה זה המקרא	Mid Haggadol (var.)
מניין אף התרגום	יכול זה המקרא	ביד משה זה תלמוד	MS Oxford
מניין אף התרגום	יכול זה המקרא	ביד משה זה התלמוד	Midrash Haggadol
יכול אף התרגום	יכול זה המקרא	ביד משה זה תלמוד	Yalqut Shim'oni
יכול אף התרגום	יכול אף התרגום (?)	ביד משה זה תלמוד	MS Vatican 31
יכול אף התרגום	יכול אף התרגום (?)	ביד משה זה תלמוד	MS Parma
יכול אף התרגום	יכול אף המשנה (missing in some mss)	ביד משה זה תלמוד	BT Keritot 13b

## Notes:

To facilitate comparison, minor differences of orthography (e.g., מניין/מניין) are not shown here. In lines 7 and 8, all end with ת"ל להורו, and in line 7, all begin with ר' יוסי בר' יהודה אומר, however abbreviated.

On the absence of line 8 in the printed edition (ed. Venice 1545), see n. 9.

On the questionable version of line 7 in MSS Vatican 31 and Parma, see n. 11.

On the variant version of Midrash Haggadol, see n. 15.

On variants to line 7 in BT Keritot 13b, see n. 19.