# Creating and disrupting verbal connections in the Targumic stories of Hagar and Ishmael

The biblical story utilizes the associative meanings of words, connotations, recurring motifs, as well as allusions to create connections with other stories in the Bible. Some of the story’s messages are conveyed by means of these same associations, connotations, analogies, and motifs.

When the Targum selects which word is the most appropriate to translate a certain biblical word, it does not always do so consistently and in accordance with the Bible’s own lexical choices; sometimes in the same chapter, two identical Hebrew words will be translated by two entirely different Aramaic terms, or two different Hebrew words will be translated by the same word in Aramaic. Thus, even as the Targum unravels connotations and allusions woven by the Bible, it also creates others that are not found in the original text.

In this paper, I will attempt to reveal the web of connections and connotations that the Targum creates within this story and between it and other sources, and the differences between the Bible’s own semantic network and that of the Targum—both in cases where the Targum disrupts biblical connections and where it creates new ones.

The connections made or broken by the Targum are instructive of how the Targumic audience studied the story and linked together its various parts.

While the paper focuses on Targum Onkelos, it also includes a comparison with other Targums from that period, with literature from Qumran, and with rabbinic midrash, In order to learn about the affinities between different traditions within the Targumim and late antique Jewish literature generally, which share a similar semantic network.