

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: REFLECTIONS ON EZEK 43:3, NUM 12:8 AND 1 COR 13:8

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The role of visions dominates the Book of Ezekiel. Apart from the prophet's inaugural vision in chap. 1, and the related vision of the divine Glory in chap. 10, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, there is, of course, the guided heavenly tour of the New Temple which Ezekiel receives in chaps. 40–42. In addition to these cosmic or meta-historical visions, a whole series of historical visions makes up the texture of Ezekiel's prophecies. Generations of scholars pondered their *Sitz im Leben* and speculated about their authenticity. In this context, we may simply recall the diverse discussions concerning the content of the vision of the abominations in Jerusalem found in chap. 8.¹ In addition, many other of Ezekiel's predictions (like the vision of the Valley of Bones and the Gog and Magog prophecy) are rendered in a highly descriptive and visual imagery. Ezekiel is thus a seer: a seer of the future and of transcendent realities. Moreover, like his ancient counterparts, the key verb used in Ezekiel's visions is the stem *rā'āh*;² and the key expression describing the intensity of divine influence is that the "hand of YHWH" was "upon" him.³

1. Cf. the commentaries of Cooke (1936), Greenberg (1983) and Zimmerli (1979, 1983) *ad loc* (with literature cited); and also Gaster (1969), pp. 607–11.

2. For this verb in the book of Ezekiel, cf. 1:1, 3; 2:9; 8:2, 6, 9–10, 12–13, 15, 17; 10:1, 22.

3. For this expression in Ezekiel, cf. 1:3; 3:12, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1. The phrase is sometimes linked with a type of spirit possession, as in 1:14; 3:22–24 and 8:1–3, although accounts of possession are mentioned without the "hand" image (cf. 11:5, 14). Elsewhere, the "hand" image as a sign of the overwhelming force of the divine presence for prophecy is found without the reference to possession (cf. Isa 8:11; Jer 15:17). It has been observed by Wilson (1980, pp. 283f.) that this element of possession links Ezekiel with the Ephraimite

It is not my intention here to discuss any of Ezekiel's visions *per se*. My concern is rather to isolate one exegetical feature embedded in these texts and to follow it through a series of subsequent transformations. The trajectory of my discussion will take us through Ben Sira and the Septuagint to some early midrashic texts, and from there to a well-known passage in the Pauline corpus whose meaning will be reassessed.

I

I should like to center the first part of my discussion on the opening verses of Ezekiel 43. I dealt with the section concerning the return of the divine Glory to the Temple in an earlier study devoted to scribal features in the Book of Ezekiel (see Fishbane and Talmon, 1976, pp. 138–53). I shall not return to those considerations here, though it will be clear that my present remarks on the exegetical nature of Ezek 43:3 may be construed as having a quasi-scribal quality. Let us see what is involved.

As the end of an ecstatic vision of the future Temple, whose details were explicated to him by an angelic guide (Ezekiel 40–42), Ezekiel comes to the eastern gate (43:1). He there experiences the divine Glory approaching: “and its sound (*qôlô*) was like the sound of mighty waters (*mayîm rabbîm*), and the earth was illumined by His Glory” (v. 2). This description of the light and sound of the Glory is, of course, reminiscent of Ezekiel's earlier experience in chaps. 1 and 10. In the first case, the Glory came as “a huge cloud and flashing fire, surrounded by a radiance” (*nôgāh*; 1:4); and in the center of the fire there was a gleam of amber—with fire-flashes and radiance (*nôgāh*) shining from the cherubs, from the wheels, and from the image of a man that were part of the flying throne-complex. Moreover, in addition to this light, the sound of the cherub's wings were “like the sound of mighty waters (*mayîm rabbîm*), like the voice (*qôl*) of Shaddai” (1:24). In the second vision, the Glory of YHWH also cast a brilliant radiance (*nôgāh*)—though in this case the light irradiated the Temple courtyard when the Glory alighted from the cherub-throne upon which it rode (10:4). Finally, as in the first vision, the “sound” of the cherub's wings was “like the voice (*qôl*) of El Shaddai when He speaks” (10:5).

prophetic tradition; and Zimmerli (1979, pp. 134–36) has stressed the role of spirit in the prophecies of Ezekiel. On the “hand” motif more broadly, see Roberts (1971, pp. 244–51). As might be expected, the Targum routinely softens the spirit-possession language by the paraphrastic rendering, “the spirit of prophecy from before the Lord;” and in a more striking transformation, translates “spirit” as “will” in 1:14 and 20. On this last point, cf. Levey (1975, pp. 153f.).

Now, however personal these experiences of the divine Glory or the Chebar canal in chap. 1, and of the divine Glory in the Temple in chap. 10, Ezekiel's imagination conforms to an ancient complex of imagery—undoubtedly known to him, a priest, through the hymns and psalms of the shrine. Thus, for example, in a victory hymn attributed to David, the divine warrior is depicted as riding upon a cherubic throne, swooping forward on their beating wings (Ps 18:11).⁴ Moreover, as in Ezekiel's visions, the deity is portrayed here as encased in dense clouds out of which shoot flashing fire. A bright "radiance" (*nōgāh*) thus attends this advent (v. 13), together with the thunderous roar of the divine voice (*qôlô*; v. 14). Quite clearly, this is a vision of the Lord as rider of the storm clouds, shooting forth His shafts of lightning to save His favorites (v. 15). In this particular case, however, the speaker of the hymn has transferred the cosmic imagery of "mighty water" (*mayîm rabbîm*) to his own destitute situation, from which he was rescued (v. 17). The prophet Habakkuk also draws from this mythic scenario when he describes the God of Israel as riding forth on His chariot of clouds, stirring the "mighty waters" (*mayîm rabbîm*; v. 15) and shooting firebolts amid an awesome radiance (*nōgāh*; v. 11).

In shrinal hymns, the kinetics of the battle imagery are more restrained, and the ancient language is used to exalt the majesty of God. Thus, in Psalm 93 the image of God as king enthroned on high is followed by an image which would be strange were it not seen against the mythopoetic

4. The image of God as a divine warrior, who is a rider of clouds and cherubs, occurs elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible—both in poetic renderings (e.g., Ps 99:1) and the very depiction of the ark of battle (e.g., 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2). It is an old *mythologoumenon*, with deep roots in the West Asian sphere (cf. the Ugaritic employment of the epithet in *ANET*, pp. 130–31. In the line which follows Ps 18:11, there is a further depiction of storm imagery (v. 12). The phrase "He made darkness his secret place (*sitrô*) roundabout Him. His pavilion (*sukkâtô*) is dark thunderheads, thick clouds of heaven," is an old *crux*—particularly because of the absence of *sitrô* in the parallel rendering of this hymn in 2 Sam 22:12, and the general redistribution of the phrasing. Without entering into the whole debate, it may help to note that the phraseology of Ps 18:12 clarifies the phrase "I answered you" (*bēsēter rā'am*) in Ps 81:8. This passage has been subject to much confusion; but in the light of Ps 18:12 should be retained and rendered as "I thundered forth (understanding the verb *ʿānāh* as the "reverberation" of the thunder [*rā'am*], as in 1 Kgs 18:26, 29, where there is the wonderful pun on "answer") from (understanding the *beth* as partitive—not uncommon in old poetry) the recesses (of the stormclouds)." The reference in Psalm 81 is thus obviously to the Sinai theophany, as the sequence of historical moments and, indeed, the very decalogical imagery (of vv. 10–11) make clear. Observe, too, that the theophanic account *also* speaks of the "reverberation of thunder" in Exod 19:19—"Moses spoke and God *yaʿānennū bēqôl*, responded with thunder."

scenario we have been describing. For the throne image (vv. 1–2) is directly succeeded by the statement that the rivers raise “their voice” (*qôlām*) aloud (v. 3), but that the divine might (*ʿaddîr*) is greater “than the sounds of mighty waters (*qôlôt mayîm rabbîm*) and mighty (*ʿaddirîm*) sea-breakers.” Clearly the roar of the cosmic waters, above which the Lord sits, is the background for understanding the simile used by Ezekiel in his visions, when he says that the sound of the cherub’s wings is “like” the sound of mighty waters (1:4). This background is further assured from Psalm 29. There the divine pantheon is invoked to ascribe “glory” to YHWH who sits enthroned over the cosmic waters (v. 10), and whose “voice” (*qôlô*) thunders over the “mighty waters” (*mayîm rabbîm*; v. 5). Indeed, for the psalmist, the divine *qôl* overawes all creation and blasts high above the sound of the cosmic deep. Ezekiel’s further statement in 1:24 and 10:5, which equates the sound of the approaching throne-Glory to both the roar of mighty waters and Shaddai’s voice, backs off somewhat from the *Magnificat* of the psalmist. In any event, it is certainly not fortuitous that Ezekiel invokes his mythopoeic simile in connection with the visions of the enthroned Glory in chaps. 1, 10 and 43.⁵

Having alluded to his earlier visions by the references to the Glory’s light and sound, Ezekiel then specifically says (43:3) that his present vision was like both: it was like the “vision” (*marʿeh*) of God before the destruction of Jerusalem (chap. 10); and like the visions (*marʾôt*) of the throne-complex at the Chebar canal (chap. 1). The particular terminology used here (43:3) supports the studied nature of the remark. As regards the first cross-reference, the noun *marʿeh* alludes to 11:24 and the verb “to destroy” (*šahēt*) refers back to the destruction imagery in 9:1, 6, 8 (and the nouns *mašhēt* and *mašhît*). And, as regards the second cross-reference, the reference in 43:3 to the *marʾôt* on the Chebar canal specifically recalls the language of 1:1. So far, so good. But only so far; for the abrupt transition in 43:3a to a cross-reference to earlier visions—*after* describing the new advent and *before* the statement in v. 3b that “forthwith I fell on my face”—introduces a puzzlement. The prophet’s reaction should naturally have followed directly upon his experience of the overwhelming Glory—just as in 1:28b, after the vision is described. The literary pattern in the two instances is clearly similar. Moreover, the further fact that 43:3a is not only parenthetical to the action but is itself

5. Given the special and individual character of the theophany of the Glory in Ezekiel 1, 10 and 43, it may be of interest to note here, at least in passing, anticipations of a more public—even universal—manifestation of the Glory in relatively contemporary materials; cf. e.g., Isa 40:3–4 and Ps 97:1–6.

syntactically awkward reinforces the sense that the cross-references constitute an exegetical note. These were presumably introduced by Ezekiel or one of his disciples in the course of recapitulating the Temple visions in literary form. The deletion of *kēmar^{eh}* in 43:3a, so that the convoluted phrase *ūkēmar^{eh} hammar^{eh}* (“and like the vision, the vision”) at the beginning of the verse would read *vēhammar^{eh}* (“and the vision”; with the LXX καὶ ἡ ὄρασις and many moderns)⁶ only resolves the syntactical problem of the passage. It does not solve the literary-historical issue here under discussion.

What brings us closer to a solution is the fact that similar exegetical comments also occur in chaps. 3 and 10 of the Book of Ezekiel. In the first instance, after the inaugural vision, the prophet is overcome by the “hand of YHWH” (3:22; cf. 1:3) and bidden to go to the valley. “And behold the Glory of YHWH was standing there—like the Glory which I saw on the Chebar canal—and forthwith I fell on my face” (v. 23). As is quite evident, the cross-reference here is part of the prophet’s shorthand description of a second vision—after the fact. For without describing the second vision in detail, Ezekiel or a tradent simply tells the reader that the appearance of the Glory in the valley did not vary from its appearance at the canal.⁷ Strikingly, the cross-reference does not even refer to the entire *mar^{eh}*, but simply singles out the Glory aspect—which hereby serves metonymically for the whole (viz., the cherubic transport *and* the divine Glory enthroned above). The parenthetical nature of the cross-reference is further indicated by the fact that it interrupts the event (“and behold”) and the response (“I fell on my face”). As will be recalled, the same interruption is found in 43:3, but is of course missing in the inaugural vision of 1:28 (where no cross-references occur or would be expected).

A second exegetical comment of this type occurs in chap. 10. It, too, is designed to correlate a later vision with an earlier one. Thus in 10:15, after Ezekiel says that the *kērûbîm* alighted, we find the phrase: “it is

6. The full LXX rendering has: “And the vision which I saw was like the vision.” The New Jewish Publication Society translation (*Tanakh*) has a somewhat similar construction. Zimmerli (1983, p. 407) reconstructs: “And his appearance was exactly like the appearance.” *The New English Bible* has a somewhat similar rendering (“The form that I saw,” etc.). Given the visionary framework emphasizing the manifest Glory, a specific reference here to the avenging angel is to be doubted.

7. I am persuaded from these and other features that the book of Ezekiel was anthologized as a book for readers’ eyes, and not simply as a collection of oracles for the ear. For reflections on the literary nature of prophecy in late biblical antiquity, see the text discussion in Fishbane (1985, pp. 487–99 and the conclusions on pp. 519–21).

(*hî*²) the living creature (*ḥayyâ*) which I saw at the Chebar canal.”⁸ The description then continues with the movement of the *kêrûbîm*. Then, again, upon portraying the alighting *kêrûbîm* and the complex they support, we find the passage: “it is (*hî*²) the living creature (*ḥayyâ*) which I saw under the God of Israel at the Chebar canal, and I understood that they were *kêrûbîm*” (v. 20). No matter that the creatures in chap. 1 are described by the plural noun *ḥayyôt*, and not collectively as *ḥayyâ*. The point for present purposes is that the narrative is twice broken by deictic particles which introduce cross-references: exegetical comments less necessary for an immediate report of the event than for its literary transformation—one also concerned to correlate the newer vision with the inaugural epiphany.⁹ Similarly, the description in chap. 10 of the faces of the four creatures as being four apiece (and not one face *per* creature that says that the countenances which Ezekiel now envisages were precisely the ones he saw at the Chebar canal (v. 21). Through this revisionary clarification of the inaugural vision, the diverse details of the second vision are justified and harmonized with the first one.

The exegetical comments in Ezek 3:23 and 10:15, 20f clearly contribute to an understanding of the final form of the vision of the Glory in chap. 43. However, unlike the comments in chap. 10, those in 43:3a are not concerned to correlate stray details among the visions. Much more like the comments in 3:23, the language of 43:3a is concerned to project a unified series of divine visions that span the lifetime of the prophet. Its function is thus to give legitimacy to the new vision while allaying any suspicion that the Glory now reentering the Temple is in any way different from the one first seen in heaven at the Chebar canal, or the one later seen departing from Jerusalem. Whether Ezekiel himself is the author of this and the other comments, or whether they are the handiwork of later disciples of the prophet, can hardly be known: for they have all been penned as first person reports.

8. In a recent full discussion of secondary exegetical features in Ezekiel 10 (with references there to earlier opinions), Halperin (1976, pp. 131–32) includes v. 15 among the “identification” verses. In fact, the use of the deictic particle *hî*² links this phenomenon with similar features of inner-biblical scribal exegesis; on which see Fishbane (1985, pp. 44–46, with reference to the case, also in Ezek 31:18, and p. 446 n. 3 for my proposal regarding the life context of such commentaries as are found in Ezekiel 10).

9. Regarding deictic particles generally, and the ‘literary’ character of Ezekiel’s correlations, see above, nn. 7–8. A comparable phenomenon would be the ongoing correlations in the book of Jeremiah—via references and plays on the stem *šāqad* and the phenomenon of divine protection—to the inaugural vision in chap. 1. On some literary aspects of the latter, see Fishbane (1979, pp. 94–101).

As earlier in chaps. 1 and 3, when after the divine vision and Ezekiel's prostration God spoke to the prophet, now again, after the vision and prostration, a divine voice speaks to Ezekiel (43:6). It begins: "O son of man: this is¹⁰ the place (*mēqôm*) of My throne (*kis'î*), and the place for the soles of My feet, where I shall dwell . . . forever" (v. 7). There follows a castigation of the abominations which have polluted the shrine, and an exhortation to the prophet to describe the Temple (*bayît*) to the Israelites—that they might measure its design and build it to scale (vv. 10ff.) (see Fishbane and Talmon, 1976, 143–53). One can hardly miss here a polemical interaction with another exilic viewpoint, preserved through the mouth of a prophet known as Isaiah. He said, also in the name of YHWH: "The heaven is My throne (*kis'î*) and the earth is My footstool: what manner of Temple (*bayît*) could you build for Me, and what could be the place (*māqôm*) of My abode?" (Isa. 66:1) Isaiah then goes on to describe the true sacrifices as humility and obedience, and condemns all false worship (vv. 2–3). Finally, as part of his more lenient cultic prognosis, he envisages a future advent of God to the nation. As in Ezekiel's vision, God will "come with fire," and "His chariots are like a storm" (v. 15). However, at this time, announces Isaiah, "all nations" shall "come and behold My Glory" (v. 18), and *from among them* "will I take some to be levitical priests" (v. 21).¹¹ This latter point is also directly rebutted by the prophet Ezekiel in 44:9–16 (see Fishbane, 1985, pp. 138–43).

II

Let us return to Ezek 43:3. Among the features showing a deliberate concern to refer to the earlier visions is the use of *mar'ôt*, "visions" (used in the inaugural vision, 1:1) to help identify the final *mar'eh*, "vision." But later tradents were less comfortable with this comparison: either the new vision was a *mar'eh* or *mar'ôt*—but not both. And so the LXX, the Targum and the Vulgate eliminated the offending plural form and read, conveniently, "vision." But this is not the end of the matter. For upon

10. The use of *'et* here is difficult; and I have followed the interpretation found in the Targum and Kimhi. The particle does frequently have a deictic force in the Hebrew Bible, and is also used in scribal exegesis (cf. Fishbane, 1985, pp. 48–51 and the reference in n. 15). R. Eliezer of Beaugency follows suit, through more paraphrastically, rendering "insofar as this is."

11. On the public and universal character of the manifest Glory, see above, n. 5. The difference of opinion regarding the possibility of a Temple as found in Ezekiel and Trito-Isaiah is built into the strata of Solomon's Dedication Prayer—whose final layers, as generally agreed, are exilic. Cf. 1 Kgs 8:13f and 26f.

closer examination the LXX reading points us yet further into the religious-exegetical life of the times.

In its full rendering of Ezekiel's first vision, the LXX to 43:3a refers to ἡ ὄρασις τοῦ ἄρματος. This phrase must be understood as something like "the vision of the throne-carriage." That is, the whole complex was a type of divine *merkābā*, or "chariot." Now, certainly, this image is embedded in the oldest strata of the mythopoeic imagery examined earlier, as we can see from the use of the verb *rākab* to describe the divine advent in battle (Ps 18:11; Hab 3:8). But it is only in the relatively late passage found in 1 Chron 28:18b that an explicit identification of the entire divine complex as a chariot is made. In the context of stating the types of overlay (silver and gold) to be used for the shrinal appurtenances, the archivist says ולתכנית המרכבה הכרוכים זהב לפרשים וסככים על-ארון ברית ה' . It would seem that this passage is to be rendered: "and as regards the blueprint of the chariot—the *kērūbīm*—gold shall be overlaid on those with outstretched wings covering the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH." While some aspects of this rendition may be queried,¹² it nevertheless seems certain that by this time the ancient Temple complex of cherubs which surrounded and overarched the Ark (Exod 37:7–9; cf. 1 Kgs 6:23–28) were understood as the "mounting" or "base" or "vehicle" of the Ark. The association, which is exegetically stressed in our Chronicles passage, was presumably quite widespread—though this seems to post-date the Ezekielian tradition.

In any case, the source of the LXX rendering of Ezek 43:3, which considers the heavenly vehicle to be an ἄρμα or *merkābā*, need not be directly related to the iconographical identification of the *kērūbīm* and the vehicle-chariot in 1 Chr 28:18. Quite possibly, Ben Sira (49:8) is a middle link in this chain: for he says that "Ezekiel saw a vision (*mar'eh*)/ and reported types (!) of chariot" (*zēnē merkābā*). The parallelism of this comment seems to me significant and suggests that, when it was rendered, the overall vision was somewhat separable from the iconographic feature of the "supports" (i.e., the angelic beings) of the divine structure. By the time of the LXX, however, the angelic supports of the throne were transformed metonymically into a term for the whole complex—the divine superstructure *and* the Glory included. And just

12. Cf. the recent renderings of *The New English Bible* and The New Jewish Publication Society (*Tanakh*) which variously recognize the exegetical character of "the *kērūbīm*;" and cf. already the comment of Rashi. Kimhi speaks of "the chariots of the holy creatures," an interpretation which anticipates the phrase "the chariot of cherubs" of Myers (1965, p. 188).

this reference to the whole as a *merkābâ* is the metonym which became a commonplace in early Jewish mystical circles. Like these visionaries, the LXX to 43:3a refers to the entire vision as “the vision of the *merkābâ*.” Whether the translator was himself in any way indebted to mystical understandings of the *mar^{ôt} ʿēlōhîm* (“divine visions”) mentioned in 1:1 cannot be determined.

III

In another priestly source, Exod 38:8, the noun *mar^{ôt}* has the sense of “mirrors.” This usage is found in connection with the donation of such objects by certain women, for the making of shrinal objects (cf. Exod 36:3–7). The homonym was not lost on early midrashic exegesis, which exploited it in connection with the exaltation of the divine visions of Moses over those of other prophets. For example, in an early homiletical poem to Lev 1:1 found in *Leviticus Rabba* (I.14),¹³ the question is posed, “What is the difference between Moses and all (other) prophets?” and two answers are put forward. According to Rabbi Judah bar Ilai, “all the prophets saw (God) through nine *ʿaspaqlaryôt* (“mirrors”) . . . but Moses saw (God) through one *ʿaspaqlaryâ*.” The opinion of the sages, on the other hand, was that all the prophets saw God through a tarnished or blurred *ʿaspaqlaryâ*, whereas Moses saw Him through a polished or clear one. In support of his position, Rabbi Judah adduced Ezek 43:3 and Num 12:8a as prooftexts. He used the first passage, with the plural word *mar^{ôt}*, to support the opinion that other prophets employed many mirrors; and he used the second passage, with the singular noun *mar^{eh}* (“with a *vision* and not with riddles”), to back up the position that Moses saw God through one mirror only. What is unstated in the homily, but is crucial to Rabbi Judah’s proof, is the midrashic verbal play involved. For him, the nouns *mar^{ôt}* and *mar^{eh}* are adduced *as if* the first were the plural form of *mar^{āh}* (“mirror,” as in Exod 38:8), and *as if* the second were read *mar^{āh}* (“mirror”), plain and simple. Presumably, Num 12:6 may have influenced the process. In any event, the final result is that Scriptural passages referring to visions are understood by the midrashist as proving a point about prophets seeing God through mirrors. A parallel source to *Leviticus Rabba* I.14 actually reads *mar^{āh}* for *ʿaspaqlaryâ* (see Enelow, 1933, I, p. 115).

Now as regards the second position, that of the sages, two different prooftexts are adduced: Hos 12:11 (“and I spoke to the prophets, and I

13. Following the critical edition of Margulies (1972, I, pp. 30–32).

multiplied visions, etc.”) and Num 12:8b (“and the form of YHWH he [Moses] beheld”). These prooftexts do not focus on the mirror symbol *per se*, but on the clarity of the vision. This point is not immediately clear from Hos 12:11a, which seems to belong more appropriately with Rabbi Judah’s position (of multiple mirrors). But as the issue of the clarity of Moses’ prophetic perception does come through clearly from the second prooftext (Num 12:8b), one should perhaps look to the continuity of the Hosean passage. To be sure, the midrash only adds “etc.”; but it is a commonplace that many rabbinic proofs depend on a part of a verse only alluded to in the citation. And indeed, in our very case, the whole line is in fact cited in a later midrashic anthology on the book of Hosea (see Greenup, 1924–25, p. 205, *ad* Hos 12:11). But still, at first glance, all this does not appear promising; for Hos 12:11b only adds “and by prophets *ʔādammeḥ*, I (God) spoke parables.” A more suggestive approach would be to assume that, in citing this clause, the sages did not construe it literally *but midrashically*—i.e., *as if* the phrase read “and by prophets *ʔiddāmeḥ*, I (God) was imagined.” Such an implicit repointing of the verb would go along with the implicit repointing of *marʔeh* as *marʔāh* in Rabbi Judah’s proof, noted earlier.

The hermeneutical technique which is presumably involved in this poem is the so-called *ʔal tiqrē* method of midrashic construction.¹⁴ Normally, the midrashist is quite explicit about his intentions, and will, after citing a scriptural lemma, say: “do not read (*ʔal tiqrē*) *x* (as written) but (as if it read) *y*.” This statement (or its variant) may precede, but will more commonly conclude, the midrashic innovation. However, implicit uses of the *ʔal tiqrē* technique are also known. Among the instances that occur in one of our earliest rabbinic homilies, I shall choose one which has special assonantal pertinence to the *marʔeh/marʔāh* correlation in *Leviticus Rabba*, and for the discussion to follow. The case I have in mind is from the old midrash on Deut 26:5–8, preserved in the Passover Haggadah. Commenting on the phrase, “And the Lord brought us forth from Egypt . . . with great terribleness (*bēmôrāʔ gādôl*),” the midrashist says: “This (viz., *bēmôrāʔ gādôl*) refers to the visible manifestation of the Divine Presence.” This comment is an utter *non sequitor* until one realizes that the homileticist *implicitly* read *bēmarʔeh* for *bēmôrāʔ*—i.e., “with a great *vision*.”¹⁵ It is my contention that just such an implicit *ʔal tiqrē* technique is involved in the present proem from *Leviticus Rabba*.

14. See, simply, s.v. “Al Tikrei,” *Encyclopedia Judaica*, II:776, with bibliography.

15. See Finkelstein, 1938, p. 297, with n. 16 (for medieval recognitions of this reading), and pp. 310f. For another example of an implicit *ʔal tiqrē* in this text, see p. 300. An antique reading of *mōrāʔ* as “vision” also underlies Tg Onq and Tg JI *ad* Deut 4:34.

But we may go further. In the foregoing implicit *ʿal tiqrê* proof, the homileticists nevertheless do cite the scriptural lemma; so that what we are missing is the middle link of the argument, which would connect the homily to the proof-text. A more covert instance of this midrashic procedure would be cases where the cited scriptural lemma is *already* transformed by a midrashic reading of it. In fact, examples of such midrashic expositions occur in the Gospels (see Gertner, 1962, pp. 267–91). All this considered, I should like to turn, by way of conclusion, to a hitherto unnoticed example in the Pauline writings wherein the cited text has been transformed by the *ʿal tiqrê* technique. My example will build on the midrashic play between *marʿeh* (“vision”) and *marʾāh* (“mirror”) just considered. Specifically, I propose to take a close look at a later use of Num 12:8, where the noun *marʿeh* was read *as if* it were *marʾāh*.

Since the midrashic text in question occurs in Greek, let us first consider the LXX to Num 12:8. The relevant passage reads that God spoke to Moses “mouth to mouth, ἐν εἶδει in a (clear) vision (i.e., a *marʿeh*) and not in riddles, δι’ ἀνιγμάτων.” Now, given the technical language, there can be little doubt that this is the main Pentateuchal source of in 1 Cor 13:8. And so it is commonly understood by most commentators (see Conzelmann, 1975, p. 227). In this famous passage, Paul is speaking of the fragmentary nature of present knowledge and prophesying, as against the clarity and fullness of future knowledge. For, Paul says, “at present we see ἐν ἀνίγματι enigmatically, δι’ ἑδόπτρου through a mirror, but then face to face.¹⁶ Leaving aside, first, the shift from the uniqueness of Moses’ vision (in Num 12:8) to the public revelation to be granted in the final days (*per* 1 Cor 13:8); and also disregarding in this context the fact that the Pauline homily substitutes “face to face” (πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον) for “mouth to mouth,” which further alludes to how Paul believed the unique revelation to Moses (see Deut 34:10, πρόσωπον κατὰ πρόσωπον) to be extended in the *eschaton*, our attention is drawn to the mirror image. In Num 12:8, Moses sees God in a *marʿeh*, not δι’ ἀνιγμάτων; whereas in 1 Cor 13:8, the fellowship is promised that it will soon have divine knowledge with the clarity of what is seen in a mirror, not ἐν ἀνίγματι. Recalling the implicit *ʿal tiqrê* technique found in *Leviticus Rabba* I.14, whereby the phenomenon of divine visions through mirrors was justified by citing Num 12:8, we are now in a position to explain the language of Paul’s text.

16. For other considerations of these terms, and a new proposal, see Gill (1963, pp. 427–29).

I would suggest that, quite apart from the trend to see Greek ideas about mirrors (whether in divination or as a literary-philosophical trope) as the influence upon this passage,¹⁷ a midrashic reading of *mar²eh* ("mirror") as *mar²ah* ("vision") has entered the homily of Paul. Presumably, this *2al tiqrê* rereading of Num 12:8 preceded both Paul and the sages (referred to in *Leviticus Rabba* I.14)—but this is not certain. The position of the sages may be much older than the position of Rabbi Judah (mid-2nd century), though it only became known through the later anthologizing of these oral positions in the midrashic proem. Thus, the midrashic reading of Num 12:8 may have preceded Paul or have been common coin among ancient homileticists. In any case, the form in which we have it in Paul's homily is older than the tradition preserved anent the sages (in *Leviticus Rabba* I.14), *even though* it is just the more expansive midrashic version of the latter which allows us to understand Paul's imagery and his exegetical technique.

Paul's image is doubly opaque. For in it the *2al tiqrê* method of midrashic exposition underlies the scriptural lemma embedded in the homily. The full purport of the speech emerges once we are aware that the wider referent of the mirror image is prophetic knowledge, and that these two features were commonly integrated through a rereading of the language of Num 12:8. For his part, Paul anticipated a time when all would know divine truths directly, "face to face," like Moses. The rabbis cited in *Leviticus Rabba* I.14 backed off from the possibility of such a public and unmediated vision of God—presumably on the basis of Biblical texts themselves, which also excluded this experience to Moses as well (cf. Exod 33:20 and Duet 4:12). For them, the highest state of prophetic knowledge was limited to the greatest of the prophets—Moses; and even he could only aspire to envisage God through one clear mirror, not directly. Paul was aided in his more daring homily of hope by an exegetical reflection.

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17. See Conzelmann (1975, p. 227) and Gill (1963, p. 428).

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