NOTES AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. BIBLICAL VARIANTS IN MEDIEVAL HEBREW POETRY

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Apart from the ancient MSS and Versions, the quotations of the Bible in the Talmuds and Midrashim are an important source for the study of the history of the text. There is hardly a verse of the Bible that is not quoted somewhere in this vast literature, so that these quotations in their entirety constitute almost an independent Massorah. In many cases the exegesis built upon the quotations fixes the precise text with which its author was familiar. Another such collection of quotations, closely allied to the former in origin, is to be found in the Piyyuṭ and in medieval Hebrew poetry. The explicit quotations and the use of fragments of verses in mosaic fashion together reproduce a considerable part of the Hebrew Bible. The form in which the text appears there was of course that with which the author was familiar. Indeed, we might say that the value of such quotations for the history of the text is greater than that of MS readings. A variant reading which appears in a MS may have had little or no currency, while for a variant woven into a poem we must assume that it was the reading current in the community to which the poet and his immediate public belonged, since otherwise the allusion would have failed in its purpose.

In the form in which the liturgical poems appear in the festival prayer books (*Maḥzor*), the deviant readings have often been corrected by the printers so as to conform to the accepted Bible text, and few original variants have survived. MSS, on the other hand, have preserved many of them. Recent editors of piyyuṭim have recognized the importance of these variants, and have explicitly drawn attention to them by listing them. Lists of such readings in texts published by them have been drawn up by P. Kahle[1], M. Zulay[2], R. Edelmann[3], and M. Wallenstein[4], while M. Zeidel[5] presented us with the discussion of a reading as it appears in a piyyuṭ of R. Eleazar Haqalir, in halakhic works, and in medieval Jewish commentaries.

1   *Masoreten des Westens* I, Stuttgart 1927, pp. 85–6.
2   *Piyyuṭe Yannai*, Berlin 1938, p. 423 f.
3   *Zur Frühgeschichte des Maḥzor*, Stuttgart 1934, pp. 59–60.
4   *Some Unpublished Piyyutim from the Cairo Genizah*, Manchester 1956, pp. 98–9.
5   ״מידכם היתה זאת לכם״ *Sinai* 44 (1959), 147–51.

Our first example is from one of the earliest authors of Piyyuṭ, Yannai. In a *qerobah*[6], he quotes Isa. lvi, 1 in the form כי כה אמר ה׳ שימרו משפט "*For* thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgment", *i.e.* with an added *kī*. This does not appear in any of the ancient versions or other sources I have consulted. It does, however, make its appearance also in DSIa[7]: כי כוה אמר ה׳ שמורו משפט. For this reason we cannot dismiss the addition in Yannai as a copyist's error, as we might well have done before the Qumran scrolls were discovered.

Our second instance comes from the "Golden Age" of Hebrew poetry in Spain, from the works of Jehudah Halevi (ca. 1080 — ca. 1145). One of his poems[7a] opens with the words:

.אלהי משכנותיך ידידות   וקרבתך במראה לא בחידות

"My God, thy habitations are love[8], and thy proximity is plainly, not in riddles."

The last three words are quoted from Num. xii, 8: פה אל־פה אדבר־בו ומראה ולא בחידות "With him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles".[9] In the standard MT[10], *mar'eh*, though according to the current interpretation[11] used adverbially, has no preposition, but only conjunctive *wāw*, while in the poem we have *be-mar'eh*. Was this the form in which the poet was accustomed to read the word in his Bible, or did he in fact also read *u-mar'eh*, but changed the word for some reason in his poem?

The same Jehudah Halevi used this verse in another poem, where he writes[12]:

.ואולי הם במראה לא בחידות   ואולי צדקו הם החלומות

"Perhaps they[13] were plainly, not in riddles, and perhaps those dreams were true."

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6   M. Zulay, *op. cit.* (*supra* n. 2), p. 104.
7   ed. M. Burrows, New Haven 1950, Pl. xlvi,
7a   *Diwan Jehuda ha-Levi's*, ed. H. Brody, Berlin 1896–7, II, 160.
8   Cf. Ps. xlv, 1.
9   The translation is taken from *The Torah*, Jewish Publication Society Translation, 1962. The substitution of לא (in one MS או) for MT ולא is due to the exigencies of the quantitative metre, while *u-mar'eh* and *be-mar'eh* scan the same in Spanish Hebrew poetry, and the substitution in this case has therefore no metrical grounds.
10   So also in MS L (= BH) and in the edn. of N.H. Snaith, which is based upon Spanish MSS (see *Textus* 2 (1962), 12). The word is not commented upon in Norzi's *Minḥath Shai*, from which we may conclude that this 16th-century author was not aware of any variant reading.
11   See, however, Baḥya b. Asher's interpretation, below.
12   ed. Brody, I, 103.
13   viz. "the likenesses I saw in my sleep".

In this case the construction seems to demand *be-mar'eh*, so that we might argue that it provides no evidence also for a reading *u-mar'eh* in the biblical text. However, another Spanish Hebrew poet, Jehudah Alḥarizi (ca. 1165 — ca. 1235) uses *be-mar'eh* without any apparent syntactical necessity[14]:

בחזיון שיר במראה לא בחידות   ופה אל פה נבואה דברה בם

"Prophecy spoke through them mouth to mouth, in poetic vision, plainly, not in riddles."

If any doubt remains whether this was a recognized reading or an arbitrary artistic preference on the part of Jehudah Halevi and Alḥarizi, we have only to turn to their compatriots, the poet and commentator Abraham Ibn Ezra (1092—1167), who in his commentary on Num. xii, 8 writes *be-mar'eh* in the lemma, and Maimonides (1135–1204), who writes in his *Code*[15]: "As it is written 'and he beholds the likeness of the Lord' (Num. xii, 8), that is to say that it is no allegory, but that he saw that thing properly, without any riddle or allegory, as the Torah further attests by adding במראה לא בחידות that, is to say, he did not prophesy through a riddle but plainly (במראה) as one who sees a thing properly."

The variant is by no means restricted to Spanish sources. The Tannaitic Midrash *Sifre* to Num. xii, 8[16] opens with the words במראה זו מראה דיבור "plainly, that is with the plainness of speech". In this form the statement is repeated in the midrashic anthology *Yalquṭ Shim‘oni* (Germany, 12th–13th cent.).[16a] *Midrash Leqaḥ Ṭob* (Bulgaria, 12th cent.)[17], under the lemma ומראה לא בחידות gives the statement of *Sifre* in a corrupt form, as has been pointed out by the commentary of Aaron Moses Padwa of Karlin *ad loc.*

Rashi (1040–1105) on Num. xii, 8 quotes the statement of *Sifre* under the lemma *u-mar'eh*.[18] In the commentary the word is repeated; in this case, too, the usual Rabbinic Bibles print *u-mar'eh*, but Berliner's edition and the Rabbinic Bible printed Amsterdam 5587 (1827)[19] have *mar'eh*, without any prefix. This seems to me to indicate that the copyists or printers, seeing the unusual reading *be-mar'eh*, assimilated it to the *textus receptus* to the extent of omitting the prefix altogether.

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14 *Taḥkemoni*, ed. I. Toporowski, Tel Aviv 1952, p. 186.
15 *Hilkhoth Yesode ha-Torah*, vii, 5.
16 Ed. S. Friedmann, p. 27b, par. 103; ed. Horovitz, p. 101, line 5. The form *be-mar'eh* also occurs in the text Friedmann prints in brackets.
16a *Beha‘alothekha*, sect. 739.
17 By Tobiah b. Eliezer; printed Wilna 1884, fol. 104a.
18 Thus also in ed. Berliner, 2nd ed., Frankfurt a.M. 1905, p. 303.
19 חמשה חומשי תורה תקן סופרים. ed. Gabriel Falk.

In the context of a different midrashic statement, many MSS at Leviticus Rabba i, 14 write *be-mar'eh*.[20] At Lev. R. i, 4, where the same verse is again quoted, the author of the commentary *Mattenoth Kehunnah*, Issachar b. Naphtali Katz, writes: במראה דהיינו בחזון *"be-mar'eh* means in vision".

Among the ancient versions, a reading *be-mar'eh* is suggested by Onkelos' בחזו, the Peshitta's *b-ḥezwā*, and the LXX's ἐν εἴδει. BH cites the Hebrew variant *be-mar'eh* from ten MSS and the Samaritan Hebrew text.

Yet it seems to me that in spite of all this evidence there are no grounds for accepting the reading *be-mar'eh*. The present reading tradition among Jews is uniformly *u-mar'eh*, and this tradition has persisted notwithstanding the occurrence of the other reading in some widely-read books. We should therefore accord greater weight to the tradition. Moreover, there is some good early evidence for the reading *u-mar'eh*. It must have been the *Vorlage* for Targum Jonathan's וחיזו R. Saadiah Gaon's *wa-ru'yā* and the Vulgate's *et palam*. The verse is quoted in this form in Midrash Aggadah on Num. xii, 8 and the *Introduction* of the Zohar, fol. 6b. The Spanish Bible commentator Baḥya b. Asher Ibn Ḥalawa (d. 1340) *ad loc.* clearly presupposes the reading *u-mar'eh*, as he explains it as a verbal form (participle active in the sense of the present tense), viz. כלומר ומראה אני לו הדבר כמת שהוא "and I show him that thing as it really is".[21]

The clearest evidence, however, we obtain from the grammatical work *Sefer ha-Riqmah* of Jonah Ibn Janāḥ of Cordova (ca. 990 — ca. 1050)[22]:

ותהיה במקום הבי״ת בכמו: ומראה לא בחידות   <עינינו: במראה וכו'>

"And at times it (the *wāw*) takes the place of a *beth*, as in 'plainly and not in riddles', where *u-mar'eh* means the same as *be-mar'eh*." We are thus led to the reasonable assumption that the versions which, as it were, translate *be-mar'eh*, did not in fact necessarily read so in their Hebrew *Vorlage*, but followed a traditional interpretation of the unusual phrase.

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20   Ed. M. Margulies, Jerusalem 1953, p. 31, line 3. Ibid. i, 4 all of M.'s sources, however, have *u-mar'eh*.

21   Since this is clearly based on Maimonides' above-mentioned interpretation (M. writes על בוריו where Baḥya has כמות שהוא), its importance for establishing the reading is even greater.

22   Ed. M. Wilensky, Berlin 1930, p. 71.