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Review Essay

A POET'S BIBLICAL EXEGESIS[1]

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PAUL FENTON. *Philosophie et exégèse dans le Jardin de la métaphore de Moïse Ibn ʿEzra.* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997. Pp. xiii + 459.

After a successful career as a Hebrew poet, Moses Ibn Ezra (c. 1055–1138) devoted two expository works written in Judeo-Arabic to his other interests, including literary criticism, philosophy, and biblical exegesis. The more unique of the two works, *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wal-Mudhākara (The Book of Discussion and Conversation)*, a Hebrew poetics based on the Arabic model, has received a good deal of scholarly attention, including two critical editions with modern Hebrew and Spanish translations.[2] The less fortunate *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa fī Maʿna l-majāz wal-Ḥaqīqa (The Treatise of the Garden on Figurative and Literal Language)*, a philosophical-exegetical treatise, remains available only in manuscript and has not been translated into a modern language, compelling many modern readers to rely on fragments of the medieval Hebrew translation (entitled *Sefer ʿArugat ha-Bosem*) published in the 19th century.[3] Paul Fenton first addressed this imbalance

[1] This essay was completed while I was a Research Fellow at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, which provided a stimulating and congenial atmosphere for my research. I would like to thank Wolfhart Heinrichs, Meir Havazelet, Meira Polliack, Naomi Grunhaus, and Shifra Schapiro for their insightful comments on an earlier draft of this essay. The following abbreviations are employed in the text and notes below:

BDB	*Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
BH	Biblical Hebrew
EI	*Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2d edition
HBOT	*Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: History of its Interpretation*, ed. M. Sæbø (Göttingen, 2000), vol. I/2
PEPP	*Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, eds. A. Preminger, F. Warnke, and O. B. Hardison (Princeton, 1974).

[2] *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wal-Mudhākara* (*Sefer ha-ʿIyyunim we-ha-Diyyunim*), ed. and trans. into Hebrew A. S. Halkin (Jerusalem, 1975); *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wa-ʾl-Mudhākara*, ed. and trans. into Spanish M. Abumalham Mas (Madrid, 1985).

[3] MS Sassoon 412, now in the Hebrew University National library (MS 8°570). My references to *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* are to the pagination in this manuscript. Recently,

in his doctoral dissertation, which he has now published in an expanded and updated version as *Philosophie et exégèse dans le Jardin de la métaphore de Moïse Ibn ʿEzra.*[4] As well as describing Ibn Ezra's work in detail and translating excerpts into French, Fenton illuminates its intellectual context, drawing upon a wide range of Arabic and Hebrew sources in such diverse fields as medicine, poetics, linguistics, and qurʾanic exegesis. Since Fenton has demonstrated his mastery of Moses Ibn Ezra's heretofore neglected philosophical-exegetical work in his own impressively wide-ranging study, we eagerly await his forthcoming edition of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* with a modern Hebrew translation.[5]

In his introduction (pp. 3–61), Fenton describes Ibn Ezra's writings, his cultural milieu, and the extant manuscripts of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* (including fragments from the Cairo *genizah* he has discovered). The introduction concludes with a valuable table of the contents of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*'s two sections. The first section, on philosophy, defines the interpretive concepts *majāz* and *ḥaqīqa*, and analyzes such topics as God's unity, incorporeality, and unknowability, and creation, man's nature, and the commandments. The second section, devoted to exegesis, is arranged like a dictionary in which Ibn Ezra catalogues the literal and figurative meanings of biblical words associated with the human body, and reinterprets anthropomorphic depictions of God so that they do not contradict the philosophical tenets established in the first section of the *Maqāla*. Fenton (pp. 240–242) composes a detailed outline of this dictionary and shows that it follows an Arabic Aristotelian medical categorization. The two parts of Fenton's book correspond roughly to the primary division of the *Maqāla*: in part one he discusses Ibn Ezra's philosophy (pp. 65–234); in part two, his exegesis (pp. 235–388), including an analysis of the *majāz-ḥaqīqa* dichotomy.[6]

Philosophie et exégèse includes four important appendices. The first is comprised of twenty-six passages of the lost Arabic original of Ibn Gabirol's

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small sections of the text, one on the *miṣvot*, the other on music, were published with translations: (1) A. S. Halkin, "Moses Ibn Ezra's Conception of the Commandments" (Heb.), *Arabic and Islamic Studies* 2 (1978) 26–40; (2) A. Shiloah, "The Musical Passage in Ibn Ezra's *Book of the Garden*," *Yuval: Studies of the Jewish Music Research Centre* 4 (1982) 211–224; repr. in *The Dimension of Music in Islamic and Jewish Culture* (London, 1993), chap. 4. The 19th century translation is by L. Dukes in *Ṣiyyon* 2 (1842–43) 117–123; 134–137; 157–160; 175.

[4] Although *Philosophie et exégèse* reflects the hand of a mature scholar, the cautious and deliberate writing in Fenton's 1976 Sorbonne dissertation occasionally yields greater precision; see, e.g., below, n. 45.

[5] Scheduled for publication by Mekize Nirdamim (Jerusalem) in 2004.

[6] For a more detailed summary, see A. Schippers' review of *Philosophie et exégèse* in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 58 (2001) 272–277.

Fons Vitae cited in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa.*[7] Appendix II is an index of Hebrew, Arabic and Greek authors and works cited in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*. The lines of medieval Hebrew poetry cited by Ibn Ezra are listed in Appendix III, Arabic poetry in Appendix IV. Many of these are cited anonymously in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*. Fenton has traced their authorship with the help of Ezra Fleischer (Hebrew), Arie Schippers (Arabic), and Geert Jan van Gelder (Arabic). Unfortunately Fenton has not included an index of biblical references in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, an omission which is surprising, since he did so in his dissertation. The extensive bibliography is divided into three sections: (1) Moses Ibn Ezra: *l'homme et son siècle*; (2) *Philosophie Juive et Arabe*; (3) *Exégèse et rhétorique*. While this division is reasonable and helpful, it is sometimes applied in a confusing manner.[8]

The philosophical portion of *Philosophie et exégèse* has been reviewed by S. Harvey, who questions Ibn Ezra's acumen in this field and considers the first part of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* little more than a patchwork of citations.[9] He agrees with Fenton that this eclectic anthology is valuable for the sources cited in it, sources that influenced later thinkers, especially kabbalists, a topic Fenton has since revisited in a separate article.[10] But Harvey considers it more significant that Ibn Ezra's philosophy was out of date, since *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* reflects the Neoplatonic thought of the "Brothers of Purity" (*iḫwān aṣ-ṣafā'*) and Ibn Gabirol, rather than the newer Aristotelian outlook of Ibn Sīnā (d. 1036) and Ibn Bājja (d. 1138). Although Ibn Ezra cites the great Aristotelian philosopher al-Fārābī (d. ca. 950), Harvey

[7] Some of these passages have been identified by Fenton, others by earlier scholars. See Fenton, *Philosophie et exégèse*, p. 39.

[8] The following titles in section one might be better placed in "*Exégèse et rhétorique*": J. Dana, *Poetics of Mediaeval Hebrew Literature according to Moshe Ibn Ezra* (Hebrew); D. Pagis, *Secular Poetry and Poetic Theory: Moses Ibn Ezra and His Contemporaries* (Hebrew); M. Zohari, "*R. Moshe Ibn Ezra ke-Ḥoqer ha-Miqra.*" The first two of these works deal primarily with Ibn Ezra's poetics; the third with his exegesis. I. Efros, *Philosophical Terms in Moreh Nebukim*, listed in section one, is better suited for inclusion in *Philosophie Juive et Arabe*, as is D. Baneth, "On the Philosophical Terminology of Maimonides," which appears in section three. At times, the bibliography's division leads to unnecessary repetition that highlights inconsistencies. E.g., Schippers' *Spanish Hebrew Poetry and the Arabic Literary Tradition* is listed as having been published in Leiden in 1994 (p. 421) and also Amsterdam in 1993 (p. 440); Brann's *Compunctious Poet* in 1990 (p. 418) and 1991 (p. 434). Other small errors crop up in the bibliography: Scheindlin is misspelled as Schindlin (p. 421); Sefer ha-Galui was written by Joseph Kimhi, not David Kimhi (p. 439; cf. p. 437); the reference to "H. Wolfart" (p. 441) should be corrected to W[olfhart] Heinrichs (p. 436).

[9] *Pe'amim* 73 (1997) 147–152 (in Hebrew).

[10] P. Fenton, "Traces of Mōšeh ibn 'Ezra's *'Arūgāt ha-Bōsem* in the Writings of the Early Qabbalists of the Spanish School," *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature* 3, eds. I. Twersky and J. M. Harris (Cambridge, MA, 2000), pp. 45–81.

challenges Fenton's claim that he truly understood his philosophy. By contrast, Maimonides, born at the time of Ibn Ezra's death, fully integrated the work of those Arab Aristotelians in his system of Jewish philosophy. Even Judah Halevi, Ibn Ezra's poetic protégé and himself a Neoplatonist, knew enough about that Aristotelian intellectual trend to reject it strongly in his *Kuzari*, written soon after *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* (Harvey, 151).

Harvey's sound review of the work's first section frees us to focus on the second part of *Philosophie et exégèse* and to evaluate how it illuminates Ibn Ezra's biblical interpretation, which, in this reviewer's opinion, represents his more profound intellectual contribution. In philosophy, Ibn Ezra may have been out of his element; but as a skilled poet he was well equipped to elucidate the language and literary style of Scripture. To be sure, Ibn Ezra is heavily indebted to his sources, both Jewish and Arab, as Fenton meticulously documents, but this hardly diminishes his importance in the exegetical tradition.[11] Modern scholarship on other medieval authors—Abraham Ibn Ezra (Moses Ibn Ezra's younger contemporary, but not a relative) and Maimonides come to mind—underscores their debt to earlier sources without questioning their achievements.[12] Moses Ibn Ezra likewise made his mark in three exegetical areas: philosophical, linguistic-philological, and aesthetic.[13] In *Philosophie et exégèse*, Fenton meaningfully addresses all three of these areas. Subsequent scholars of Ibn Ezra's exegesis will be heavily indebted to his ground-breaking contribution. It is in this spirit of indebtedness that I will highlight below what I consider to be the author's most important insights into Moses Ibn Ezra's biblical exegesis and offer some further perspectives, especially on the great poet's unique aesthetic approach to Scripture.

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[11] Here I take issue with Harvey (p. 151), who suggests in passing that Ibn Ezra's exegesis is a patchwork of citations from his great linguistic predecessors, especially Ibn Janaḥ, a conclusion he seems to have drawn by analogy with the philosophical section of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*. Ibn Ezra, in fact, uses the works of these predecessors critically, as Fenton demonstrates (see below, p. 541).

[12] On Abraham Ibn Ezra, see U. Simon, "Abraham Ibn Ezra," *HBOT*, pp. 377–387; M. Perez, "The Criticisms of Jehuda Ibn Balaam of Moshe Ibn Gikatila according to New Fragments of their Commentaries on the Psalms (Hebrew), *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A: The Bible and Its World*, ed. Ron Margolin (Jerusalem, 1999), pp. 43–51. On Maimonides, see I. Twersky, "Did R. Abraham Ibn Ezra Influence Maimonides?" (Hebrew), in *Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra: Studies in the Writings of a Twelfth Century Jewish Polymath*, eds. I. Twersky and J. Harris (Cambridge, MA, 1993), pp. 21–48 [Hebrew section]; S. Klein-Braslavy, *King Solomon and Philosophical Esotericism in the Thought of Maimonides* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1996).

[13] These are delineated in my recent essay, "The Aesthetic Exegesis of Moses Ibn Ezra," *HBOT*, pp. 282–301.

1. PHILOSOPHICAL EXEGESIS

Even if Ibn Ezra's philosophy was not up to date, he participated meaningfully in the medieval "philosophical" exegetical movement that aimed to reconcile Scripture with reason, which was his motive for writing *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* in the first place.[14] Ibn Ezra argues that the language of Scripture must be taken literally, that is, as *ḥaqīqa* (truth), unless it contradicts sense perception, philosophical reflection, or beliefs transmitted by tradition, in which case it must be taken as *majāz* (non-literal language, on which see below) and reinterpreted (Fenton, pp. 299–332). The resulting interpretation is also called *ḥaqīqa*, since it reveals the "true" meaning of the *majāz* expressions. This program was applied especially to anthropomorphic depictions of God, about which Ibn Ezra comments:

> One must treat these *majāz* expressions delicately and realize that the true matter (*al-maʿna al-ḥaqīqi*) is too subtle and exalted for us to know it in its true nature. The intelligent person must strip them [the *majāz* expressions] of these husks . . . to reach the desired [matter] according to the ability of his discernment.[15]

The interpreter's role is to get behind Scripture's *majāz* language, which hides its true meaning (*ḥaqīqa*).

Fenton cites a wide range of earlier sources that represent the philosophical exegetical tradition Ibn Ezra inherited. After identifying precursors in rabbinic literature (pp. 257–258), Fenton cites Arab (pp. 258–266) and Jewish authors (pp. 266–298) who developed elaborate exegetical theories based on the *majāz-ḥaqīqa* dichotomy. Fenton goes far beyond the standard references to Saʿadia's well-known four rules of non-literal interpretation, to which Ibn Ezra was clearly indebted. He shows, for example, that Ibn Ezra's programmatic exegetical statement cited above is adapted from a passage in Baḥya's philosophical work, *Duties of the Heart.*[16] Picking up

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[14] On this school, see R. Brody, "The Geonim of Babylonia as Biblical Exegetes," *HDOT*, pp. 80–88; S. Klein-Braslavy, "The Philosophical Exegesis," *HBOT*, pp. 302–320.

[15] *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 45–46 (cited by Fenton, p. 118). On the theoretical exegetical implications of this passage (and the slightly different formulation in *Sefer ʿArugat ha-Bosem*), see M. Cohen, "'The Best of Poetry': Literary Approaches to the Bible in the Spanish *Peshat* Tradition," *The Torah u-Madda Journal* 6 (1995/6) 27–28; idem, "Radak vs. Ibn Ezra and Maimonides: A New Approach to *Derekh Mashal* in the Bible" (Hebrew), *Proceedings of the Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A: The Bible and Its World*, ed. Ron Margolin (Jerusalem, 1999), p. 32.

[16] Fenton, *Philosophie et exégèse*, pp. 118n, 292n. By contrast, S. Rawidowicz cited these two important passages from Baḥya and Ibn Ezra separately, without pointing out the connection between them; see "*Beʿayat ha-hagshama le-Resag ve-la-Rambam*," *Hebrew Studies in Jewish Thought* (Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 182, 188.

where M. Zucker left off in his studies of this exegetical school, Fenton places the Jewish tradition of philosophical biblical exegesis within the context of Arab studies of the Qur'an (pp. 243–255). He also cites comments, including some from newly identified genizah manuscripts, by the Karaite authors Qirqisāni and Yeshuʿa ben Yehuda, and the Rabbanite authors Samuel ben Ḥofni and Hai Gaon, whose discussions parallel Ibn Ezra's and may have influenced him.[17]

2. PHILOLOGICAL EXEGESIS

Although the principles of *majāz*-based exegesis were well established by Ibn Ezra's time, there was ample room for him to develop this exegetical mode. He applies the philological style and rigor of Ibn Janaḥ's general dictionary to the philosophically sensitive issue of biblical anthropomorphism, which was treated in passing in the broader philosophical and exegetical works of predecessors such as Saʿadia, Samuel ben Ḥofni and Baḥya Ibn Paquda. By contrast, *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* is a thoroughly linguistic work that treats an entire segment of the Hebrew lexicon comprehensively with respect to *majāz* usage. Its entries span the spectrum of biblical terms associated with human beings (male, female, heart, child, sister, brother, body, birth, youth, old age, head, face, eyes, tongue, teeth, voice, hand, etc.), and each lists literal, figurative, and idiomatic usages, which Ibn Ezra determines with the help of Rabbinic Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic cognates (Fenton, pp. 309–341). By demonstrating that *majāz* analysis reflects a typical feature of Biblical Hebrew and is not simply an incidental strategy devised for alleviating ideological dilemmas, Ibn Ezra makes a stronger case for his philosophical exegesis than his predecessors did.

It is conceivable that this linguistic format appealed to Maimonides and inspired him to write the so-called "lexicographic" section of his *Guide for the Perplexed* (I:1–49).[18] That section, which may have originally been composed as an independent work, is likewise arranged as a dictionary of anthropomorphic terms that includes literal and figurative usages, with the latter being applied to verses about God.[19] Although Fenton (pp. 338–339, citing

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[17] On the possibility of Karaite influence on Ibn Ezra, see below, n. 33.

[18] See M. Cohen, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor: From Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimhi* (Leiden 2003), pp. 202–203. The suggestion that Moses Ibn Ezra influenced Maimonides' project in the *Guide* was raised by W. Bacher, who had only fragments of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, in *Die Bibelexegese Moses Maimûni's* (Budapest, 1896), p. vi.

[19] See H. Kasher, "Is There an Early Stratum in the *Guide of the Perplexed*?" *Maimonidean Studies* 3, ed. A. Hyman (New York, 1992/3) 105–29, and L. Strauss, "How to Begin to Study the *Guide of the Perplexed*," *Moses Maimonides: The Guide of the*

S. Pines) does suggest that Maimonides was influenced by *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, he points only to their identical explanation for the appellation of Hebrew as "the sacred tongue" (*leshon ha-qodesh*). But the shared lexicographic format is also noteworthy and could lead to a fruitful comparative study of the two dictionaries. In fact, it is interesting to consider the possibility that Maimonides was thinking of Ibn Ezra when he wrote this programmatic statement:

> When we mention one of the equivocal terms in this Treatise, it is not our purpose to cite all the senses in which that particular term is used, *for this is not a treatise on language*. Of those senses we cite only such as we require for our purposes and no others.[20]

Even seemingly superfluous definitions in the lexicographic chapters, Maimonides informs us, serve his philosophical program elsewhere in the *Guide*.[21] With which "treatise on language" was Maimonides contrasting his work? Though Ibn Janaḥ's influential dictionary naturally comes to mind, especially because Maimonides often relied on it, it is conceivable that Maimonides was referring to *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*.[22] By contrasting the lexicographic section of the *Guide* with another philosophically oriented philological work, Maimonides could define his own more specialized genre of philosophical exegesis. Like the *Guide*, *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* is philosophically motivated, but in Maimonides' opinion it digresses too much and blurs its focus by including study of language for its own sake, as one might expect from the work of an ardent poet.

Indeed, a distinctively digressive and wide-ranging style characterizes the dictionary section of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, reflecting its author's erudition in poetry, philosophy, medicine, art and music. Fenton (pp. 321–332) gives his readers a taste of this discursive style by translating the long entry on the heart (לב) and shorter one on knowledge (דעה). The former (*Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 224–233) begins with Hippocrates' medical descriptions of the heart, followed by one poetic view of the heart as "the lamp of the body" and another as its "ruler," with the arteries its provinces and the limbs its servants. Ibn Ezra himself views the heart as fertile land that must be cultivated

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Perplexed, trans. S. Pines (Chicago, 1963), pp. xxi–xlvii; Klein-Braslavy, *HBOT*, pp. 312–316. Like Ibn Ezra, Maimonides also draws upon parallels from Rabbinic Hebrew and Arabic, as well as biblical language.

[20] *Guide of the Perplexed* 1.10, trans. Pines, p. 35.

[21] On the implications of this passage for understanding Maimonides' biblical exegesis, see S. Klein-Braslavy, *Maimonides' Interpretation of the Story of Creation*, 2nd ed. (in Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1987), pp. 52–59.

[22] For Maimonides' use of Ibn Janaḥ's dictionary, see Klein-Braslavy, *Maimonides' Interpretation of Creation*, p. 55.

to yield its bounty.[23] Turning to non-literal (*majāz*) usages, Ibn Ezra notes that BH לב can mean *intellect* ("my heart has seen much wisdom and knowledge" [Qoh 1:16[24]]), a sense that pertains when Scripture speaks of God's "heart"; for instance, "the Lord said in His heart" (Gen 8:21). When observing that לב means the *middle* of an inanimate object, as in the BH expression "the *heart* of the sky" (לב השמים; Deut 4:11), Ibn Ezra points to the identical Arabic idiom (קלב אלסמא), as well as a similar one, "the *liver* of the sky" (כבד אלסמא), which does not occur in Hebrew. Digressing, he cites the line of Arabic poetry, "the sun is ill in the midst of the sky," which implicitly relies on this anatomic analogy, as if the sun were the sky's heart or liver.[25] To illuminate Ps 12:3, "Man speaks falsehood . . . with heart and heart they speak," Ibn Ezra cites the Arabic saying "he has two hearts and two tongues," meaning that he "says something other than what he thinks."

This entry of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* illustrates Ibn Ezra's use of Arabic to understand BH. Boldly engaging in a centuries-old controversy, he is an ardent comparativist in many areas—grammatical, philological and literary (Fenton, pp. 341–374). Ibn Ezra uses Arabic to account for anomalous biblical grammatical forms and to explain rare or otherwise difficult BH roots and words. Despite the controversy, those strategies were already entrenched in the Hebrew lexicographic tradition;[26] but Ibn Ezra also draws on Arabic expressions and turns of phrase to illuminate biblical idiomatic usages, building on a precedent set by Ibn Janaḥ.[27] Ibn Ezra's unique contribution to the medieval discipline of comparative semitics is his liberal use of medieval poetry, both Hebrew and Arabic, to advance novel biblical readings.[28]

Apart from his own engagement in comparative philology, Ibn Ezra was in a position to take stock of this trend. He audaciously argues that the Jews

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[23] These analogies are called *tamthīlāt* in Arabic poetics and generated a type of derivative metaphor; see the discussion of metaphor below, p. 549.

[24] The reference here to Eccl 1:12 (Fenton, p. 326) should be corrected.

[25] Instead of rendering וסט אלסמא in this line (see Arabic on p. 407) ". . . *coeur du ciel*," as Fenton does (p. 326), I prefer to render it literally, i.e., "the *midst* of the sky," in order to distinguish it from the more vividly metaphorical BH expression לב השמים and its Arabic equivalent קלב אלסמא.

[26] See A. Sáenz-Badillos, "Early Hebraists in Spain: Menaḥem ben Seruq and Dunash ben Labrat," *HBOT*, pp. 103–104; A. Maman, "The Linguistic School: Judah Ḥayyūj, Jonah ibn Janaḥ, Moses ibn Chiquitilla and Judah ibn Balʿam," *HBOT*, pp. 261–281.

[27] For example, Ibn Janaḥ (*Kitāb al-Lumaʿ* 315; *Sefer ha-Riqmah* 331) had already noted the Arabic parallels to the BH expression לב השמים (Fenton, p. 326).

[28] See A. Schippers, *Spanish Hebrew Poetry and the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 37–40. To be sure, Moses Ibn Ezra was not the first to cite Arabic poetry to illuminate Scripture (something Ibn Janaḥ, for example, does), but he does so more regularly than other Hebrew linguists. Given the significance of this distinctive feature of Ibn Ezra's work, Fenton's Appendices III and IV (see above, p. 535) are especially important.

did not adequately understand the workings of the Hebrew language until they were exposed to Arabic (*Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 29b; Fenton, pp. 347–348). He argues that Ḥayyuj, who (silently) drew upon Arabic grammatical thought, had a better understanding of Hebrew than all earlier authorities, including Saʿadia, and that he alone was the true father of Hebrew linguistics (*Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 30a–b). On the other hand, Ibn Ezra expresses mixed feelings about Isaac Ibn Barun's *Book of Comparison between the Hebrew and Arabic Languages*. Although he sees value in the work and uses it himself, he criticizes its wholesale application of the comparative method, which extends to finding alleged Latin and Berber cognates of biblical words (*Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 21b–22a; Fenton, pp. 346–347).

In learned notes throughout *Philosophie et exégèse* and in a chapter entitled "Sources and Influences," Fenton traces Ibn Ezra's linguistic insights to earlier authors and influence on later ones (pp. 375–388). Ibn Ezra most frequently drew upon Ibn Janaḥ, to whom he refers as the foremost authority on Hebrew language.[29] Other predecessors whose works Ibn Ezra used include Saʿadia, Ibn Balʿam, and Ibn Gikatilla. As a linguist in his own right, Ibn Ezra critically evaluates their views and is willing to disagree even with Ibn Janaḥ. Of equal importance are reflections in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* on the relative impact of these authors in 12th-century Andalusia, an exegetical landscape that would soon be lost, when the school of Andalusian authors writing in Judeo-Arabic disappeared as a result of the Reconquista.

Ibn Ezra's philological exegesis also reflects a variety of cultural tensions that challenged the Andalusian school. As Fenton (pp. 243–352) observes, Jewish authors—among whom he includes Moses Ibn Ezra—were threatened by the notions of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān* (the stylistic inimitability of the Qurʾan) and *ʿarabiyya* (the superiority of Arabic over other languages), and tended to reject them in favor of the Hebrew Bible and its language. Although Ibn Ezra expresses this sentiment as a matter of national pride, his overall attitude is more complex, as R. Scheindlin and R. Brann have shown.[30] Those scholars worked primarily with *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, in which Ibn Ezra uses Arabic poetics as an absolute literary yardstick applicable even to Scripture, a view that has led some modern authors to accuse him of "assimilationism" in comparison with more nationalistic Hebraists like Judah Halevi.[31] From the vantage point of his own detailed study of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, Fenton might have explored Ibn Ezra's tacit acceptance of *ʿarabiyya* further.

Another tension that merits further study is Ibn Ezra's attitude towards Karaite thought. As a Rabbanite Jew, he nominally rejects the motto attributed

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[29] *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 236; *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 74a (Fenton, p. 377n).

[30] R. Scheindlin, "Rabbi Moshe Ibn Ezra on the Legitimacy of Poetry," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 7 (1976) 101–115; R. Brann, *The Compunctious Poet* (Ithaca, 1991), pp. 16–17; 69–71.

[31] For references, see Brann, *Compunctious Poet*, p. 16n.

to ʿAnan, to "examine Scripture diligently and do not rely upon my view" (*Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 63), which grants every reader of Scripture independence from earlier, that is, rabbinic, tradition. This maxim encapsulates the ideology of *peshaṭ* exegesis, which employs scientific linguistic analysis rather than the methods of midrash.[32] This motto characterizes Ibn Ezra's exegesis as well, since the very intellectual freedom it implies allows for his novel interpretations, his rejection of rabbinic readings (as noted by Fenton at pp. 257–258; 318–321; 362; 379), and his project of interpreting Scripture through the prism of Arabic poetics. Ibn Ezra thus tacitly accepts an axiom of Karaite exegetical methodology, and it would be interesting to explore how he reconciles this acceptance with his Rabbanite allegiance.[33] But since Fenton does not cite Ibn Ezra's rejection of ʿAnan's motto, he is not compelled to address the conflict it created.[34] One way to do so would be to explore Ibn Ezra's use of rabbinic exegesis[35] and how he relates it to his philological-historical method, as H. Shy, for example, has done for Tanḥum ha-Yerushalmi.[36] Ibn Ezra's attitudes on this matter might shed light on later more explicit attempts by Abraham Ibn Ezra and David Kimhi to define the *peshaṭ-derash* dichotomy.

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[32] On this so-called "scripturalism" within the Karaite school, and the motto attributed to ʿAnan (which may actually be a later development), see H. Ben-Shammai, "The Karaite Controversy: Scripture and Tradition in Early Karaism," in *Religionsgespäche im Mittelalter*, eds. B. Lewis and F. Niewöhner (Wiesbaden, 1992), pp. 13–24; M. Polliack, "The Emergence of Karaite Biblical Exegesis" (Hebrew), *Sefunot* n.s. 7 (1999) 302–311; D. Frank, "Karaite Exegesis," *HBOT*, p. 112.

[33] It is interesting to consider whether Moses Ibn Ezra himself used Karaite exegesis. The mere fact that he criticized the Karaites does not exclude this possibility. Abraham Ibn Ezra, for example, did both; see E. Z. Melammed, *Bible Commentators* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 676–678. Moses Ibn Ezra cites Karaite scholars very rarely, primarily for polemical purposes (see, e.g., Fenton, p. 288). Fenton occasionally raises the possibility that he used Karaite scholarship without attribution (see, e.g., pp. 306–308), but he does not reach a definite conclusion.

[34] The reference to ʿAnan alone appears in the list of "authors cited in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*" in appendix II (p. 405).

[35] Fenton (pp. 136, 320) does show that Ibn Ezra seized opportunities to cite rabbinic literature to support his readings. Of special interest are cases in which he finds precedents for rhetorical figures in rabbinic literature (see, e.g., pp. 337–338). To the examples that Fenton cites, we can add Ibn Ezra's citation (*Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 251) of "the *derash*" (with no further reference) on Exod 32:6 that "they arose to play (לצחק)" refers to sexual activity, an explanation he seems to accept, classifying it as an example of euphemism (*kināya*; see below). By contrast, Ibn Janaḥ (*Kitāb al-Uṣūl*, s.v. צ-ח-ק) takes this term literally.

[36] *Tanḥum Ha-Yerushalmi's Commentary on the Minor Prophets: A Critical Edition with an Introduction, Translated into Hebrew and Annotated* (Jerusalem, 1991), pp. xxvii–xxx.

3. AESTHETIC EXEGESIS

Ibn Ezra develops his aesthetic exegesis most fully in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, where he seeks precedents in Scripture for twenty Arabic poetic ornaments.[37] In that work he cites biblical examples of literary devices such as metaphor, simile, hyperbole, ellipsis and word plays, not to interpret them, but simply to demonstrate Scripture's poetic quality. *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, on the other hand, is devoted to interpretation, to getting at Scripture's true meaning (*ḥaqīqa*), which its *majāz* expressions conceal. The two works reflect distinct streams of Arabic learning: *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* parallels qur'anic exegesis (Fenton, pp. 258–266); *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* draws on Arabic poetics, particularly works devised to define the ornate, so-called *badi*ʿ (lit. new) style of poetry.[38] Accordingly, in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* the twenty poetic ornaments are classified under the title *badi*ʿ, whereas many of the same ornaments are presented as subtypes of *majāz* in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*.

The uniqueness of *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* stems from the fact that Jewish authors did not participate in *badi*ʿ-inspired scholarship. By comparison, *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* is essentially a traditional Jewish work, because the *majāz-ḥaqīqa* dichotomy, originally applied in qur'anic exegesis, had been embraced by Jewish exegetes in Muslim lands since the 9th century. Yet, as Fenton (pp. 332–341) indicates, Ibn Ezra maintained his unique poetic perspective in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, which is replete with references to Scripture's aesthetic qualities and poetic techniques. Fenton describes twelve major subcategories of *majāz* featured in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, listed here with his French translations:

Al-majāz aḍ-ḍarūrī	*La métaphore categorique*
Al-majāz ar-rūḥānī	*La métaphore spirituelle*
Istiʿāra	*La métaphore*
Tašbīh	*La comparison*
Ghuluww, Ighraq	*L'hyperbole*
Īghāl	*L'hyperbole finale*
Mubālagha	*L'exagération*
Badal al-mujāwara	*La métonymie par association*
Badal al-guz' min al-kull	*Hypallage ou la substitution d'une partie pour la toute*
Maqlūb	*L'inversion*
Kināya	*Synecdoque*
Iḍmār	*L'ellipse*

[37] See Fenton, p. 299; M. Cohen, "Aesthetic Exegesis," 289–300.

[38] See J. Dana, *Poetics of Medieval Hebrew Literature according to Moshe Ibn Ezra* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1982); W. Heinrichs, "*Istiʿārah* and *Badī*ʿ and Their Terminological Relationship in Early Islamic Literary Criticism," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch Islamischen Wissenschaften* 1 (1984) 187–192.

Fenton shows how these techniques relate to poetic figures listed in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, and offers references to Arabic poetic handbooks that help define Ibn Ezra's poetic terminology.[39]

Yet, having so effectively demonstrated this fascinating point of contact between Arabic poetics and biblical interpretation, Fenton's brief analysis of the literary figures themselves leaves the reader with a need for more information and some unanswered questions. For example, we read in a number of places that Ibn Ezra points to the literary excellence of specific verses: "Death and life are in the hand of the tongue" (Prov 18:21) is a "wondrous metaphor" (*istiʿāra ʿajība*; p. 333); "your neck is like an ivory tower" (Song 7:5) is "a beautiful simile" (*ḥusn at-tašbīh*; p. 334); "like a scarlet thread are your lips" (Song 4:3) is a model of "succinctness and eloquence" (*ījāz wa-faṣāḥa*; p. 340).[40] But Fenton does not attempt to explain the literary criteria for Ibn Ezra's judgments, a task one could reasonably perform in light of the literary standards set in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* and perhaps the lines of Hebrew and Arabic poetry adduced in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* (listed in appendices III and IV).[41]

Indeed, Fenton's relatively brief treatment of Ibn Ezra's aesthetic exegesis does not meet the same high standard he sets in the other two areas, to which he devotes the bulk of the second section of his book. Without faulting the author for choosing his emphases, the remainder of this essay reflects my own interest in attempting to add further clarification to the literary techniques Fenton identifies in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*. In my opinion, this step is necessary for rightly assessing Ibn Ezra's place in the exegetical tradition, since his aesthetic exegesis represents his unique contribution, as opposed to his typically Andalusian philosophical and philological exegesis. Moreover, as Fenton notes, Ibn Ezra's work can be viewed as a "precursor of modern literary criticism of Scripture" (p. 237), a reason for contemporary readers to take special interest in his poetic perspective on biblical interpretation.[42]

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[39] Fenton (p. 340) also briefly lists another six subtypes of *majāz* mentioned in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* that can be viewed as literary embellishments, although they do not correspond to specific poetic techniques listed in *Kitāb al Muḥāḍara.*

[40] See Fenton, p. 341, for other examples, including a list (n. 309) of references to *faṣāḥa* in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa.*

[41] As done on a smaller scale, e.g., by A. Schippers, *Spanish Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 37–39. To explain Ibn Ezra's praise for Song 4:3, one might turn to the discussion of this verse in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*; see M. Cohen, "Aesthetic Exegesis," p. 289.

[42] To Fenton's list of three works that illustrate this trend, we should add some other basic references. One important work is *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, eds. R. Alter and F. Kermode (Cambridge MA, 1987). In addition, many introductions to the Bible now include sections on the literary approach, with bibliographies. E.g., C. E. Hauer and W. A. Young, *Introduction to the Bible: A Journey into Three Worlds* (Upper

Metaphor

A glance at Fenton's list of literary techniques in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* reveals that he uses "*métaphore*" to render two terms: *majāz* and *istiʿāra*. But only the latter properly denotes metaphor, whereas *majāz* is a broader category for designating language that deviates from normal semantic, syntactic, or grammatical usage.[43] True, Fenton follows other scholars who have rendered *majāz* as metaphor, most notably M. Zucker; but H. Ben-Shammai has shown this to be an incorrect translation.[44] This distinction may be less than crucial in discussing philosophical and philological exegesis, since the labels *majāz* and *istiʿāra* both connote non-*ḥaqīqa* language, which requires reinterpretation. But an attempt to explore Ibn Ezra's aesthetic exegesis requires greater precision in rendering his literary categories.[45] Thus it is

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Saddle River NJ, 1998), pp. 389–391, lists over thirty books that illustrate "the explosion of works that reflect the new literary approaches to the Bible." Instead of relying on König's 1990 work, "the first rhetorical analysis of Bible" (Fenton, p. 238n), we might compare Ibn Ezra with more up-to-date studies on biblical stylistics such as L. Alonso Schöckel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics* (Rome, 1988) and W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield, 1986). The modern literary approach to Scripture has generated new interest in its medieval precursors; see, e.g., J. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry* (New Haven, 1981); A. Berlin, *Biblical Poetry Through Medieval Jewish Eyes* (Bloomington, 1991). In a more recent essay, Berlin observes that modern literary theory, by virtue of its inherent plurality, has made the academic world more receptive than ever before to premodern studies of biblical literature; see A. Berlin, "On the Use of Traditional Jewish Exegesis in the Modern Literary Study of the Bible," in *Tehillah le-Mosheh: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, eds. M. Cogan, B. Eichler, J. Tigay (Winona Lake IN, 1997), pp. 173–183.

[43] Fenton admits this in a footnote (p. 259, n. 63), in which he explains that his translation of *majāz* as "*métaphore*" is for the sake of convenience (*commodité*) and that, in fact, "this term signified any semantic deviation from the normal usage of the word." Medieval Hebrew translators (e.g., Judah Ibn Tibbon and his son, Samuel) rendered *majāz* as *haʿavarah* (lit. going beyond, i.e., beyond the literal sense; see below, n. 46) and reserved *hashʾalah* (lit. borrowing, i.e., metaphor) specifically for *istiʿāra*; see Cohen, *Three Approaches*, pp. 42n, 98n, 137n. For an overview of the definition of *majāz* in Arabic literature, see *EI*, s.v. See also W. Heinrichs, "On the Genesis of the *Ḥaqīqa-Majāz* Dichotomy," *Studia Islamica* 59 (1984) 112–140.

[44] "Saadya's Introduction to Isaiah" (Hebrew), *Tarbiẓ* 60 (1990) 381. Fenton (p. 273) actually cites Zucker's translation of a key passage in Saʿadia about *majāz* and adopts his translation of this term as "*sens métaphorique*."

[45] At times, Fenton must render *majāz* more broadly as "figurative language," e.g., when faced with a subcategory of *majāz* clearly unrelated to metaphor such as inversion (*maqlūb*; p. 337), or the compound expression *istiʿāra majaziyya*, which he

best to reserve the term metaphor for *istiʿāra* alone and translate *majāz* as *unusual* or *non-literal language.*[46]

If Fenton had formulated and observed this rule of translation he could have cleared up a confusion in *Philosophie et exégèse* that may plague readers interested in the theory of metaphor. Not only was metaphor, that is, *istiʿāra*, celebrated in Arabic poetics as the basis of the *badiʿ* style,[47] it is also viewed in modern literary studies as the fundamental ingredient of poetry.[48] And as a special linguistic phenomenon, it has attracted attention recently in philosophy and psychology.[49] Readers from all of these fields understandably might turn to *Philosophie et exégèse dans le Jardin de la métaphore de Moïse Ibn ʿEzra* for an in-depth study of metaphor.[50] Indeed, "*métaphore*" is the largest entry in the subject index (pp. 454–455), corresponding to dozens of excerpts and citations from *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*. What readers will not realize—unless they consult the original Judeo-Arabic text—is that most of these references are to Ibn Ezra's discussions of *majāz*, not *istiʿāra*.[51]

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renders "*métaphore figurée*" (p. 333). As a result, Fenton's translation of *majāz* is inconsistent and confusing, at times gratuitously so. E.g., on p. 302, in translating a key passage in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* on the definition of *majāz* (in contrast to *ḥaqīqa*), Fenton renders it alternatively as "*le sens figuré*" and "*la métaphore*" / "*sens metaphorique*," giving the reader the false impression that Ibn Ezra here alternates his terminology. In his dissertation, Fenton was more careful to translate *majāz* consistently as "*le sens figuré*" (e.g., on pp. 83, 238–245), and reserve the French term "*métaphore*" for *istiʿāra* (e.g., on pp. 244, 247, 250, 251).

[46] This translation is more inclusive than "figurative language." W. Heinrichs, *The Hand of the Northwind: Opinions on Metaphor and the Early Meaning of* Istiʿāra *in Arabic Poetics* (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 18, 45, 63, renders *majāz* as "that which goes beyond the proper meaning and use of words," in an attempt to reflect the literal sense of this Arabic term ("to pass," or "to go beyond").

[47] As Fenton, on pp. 299–300, notes; see also below, n. 67.

[48] A view well represented in literary studies of Scripture; see M. Weiss, *The Bible from Within* (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 130–240, which includes references to general literary theory; Alonso Schökel, *Manual of Poetics*, pp. 95–141; Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, pp. 263–272; R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York, 1985), pp. 185–203.

[49] See, e.g., A. Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought* (London, 1993) and numerous references cited there.

[50] J. Stern, e.g., in his *Metaphor in Context* (Boston, 2000), writing from the perspective of the philosophy of language, mentions Ibn Ezra's *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* and cites *Philosophie et exégèse* in a footnote (p. 355).

[51] As it turns out, *Philosophie et exégèse* contains only a very minimal treatment of *istiʿāra*, nine lines on p. 333. Nowhere else in the book is *istiʿāra* discussed. The sections on "*métaphore catégorique*" (*al-majāz aḍ-ḍarūrī*; p. 332) and "*métaphore spirituelle*" (*al-majāz ar-rūḥānī*; p. 333) are not about *istiʿāra*. Likewise, Ibn Ezra's lengthy theoretical discussion in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 27–30 (cited in Fenton, pp. 302–

Given Ibn Ezra's exceptional poetic perspective, it is not surprising that he does, in fact, have much to say about metaphor proper. In *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, he boldly drew upon Arabic literary theory to introduce a conception of metaphor unique in Jewish tradition.[52] Though Ibn Ezra was hardly alone in using the term *istiʿāra* (literally, "lending or borrowing"; compare the Hebrew translation, *hashʾalah*) to denote metaphor, he did offer a striking alternative to the better-known traditional concept of this literary technique in Judeo-Arabic literature. Ibn Janaḥ, for example, uses the term *istiʿāra* in a manner defined by Ibn Qutayba (d. 889) in *Taʾwīl muškil al-Qurʾan* (*Interpretation of the Difficult in the Qurʾan*):

> The Arabs "borrow" (*tastaʿīru*) one word and then put it in the place of another word, provided the thing named by it (i.e., the first word) is related causally to the other one, or adjacent to it or similar [to it].[53]

Accordingly, Ibn Janaḥ frequently speaks of BH words "borrowed" to be used in a new sense.[54] A similar model is attested in Maimonides, who uses the term *istiʿāra* as defined by al-Fārābī,[55] who himself adapted Aristotle's

304) supposedly devoted to "*la métaphore*" turns out to be about *majāz*, not *istiʿāra*. Sometimes other factors account for the term *métaphore* in Fenton's translation without a basis in the Arabic text. E.g., on p. 300, he refers to Ibn Ezra's supposed response to critics of metaphor ("*. . . je fais peu des cas de l'opposition répendue parmi nos docteurs et nos légistes contemporains contre la metaphore*"). But in that text (from *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 119b), Ibn Ezra mentions neither *istiʿāra* nor *majāz*; he is simply defending his citation of qurʾanic material. Fenton (see p. 301n) seems to have relied on the (incorrect) interpolation of metaphor into that passage by R. Brann, *Compunctious Poet*, pp. 79–83. This is surprising because elsewhere (p. 346) Fenton translates the same passage without the interpolation ("*Comme je viens de citer le Coran des Arabes, je n'ai pas fait cas de l'austérité stupide que les hypocrites parmi les juristes coreligionnaires ont adoptée à notre époque*").

[52] See M. Cohen, "Moses Ibn Ezra vs. Maimonides: Argument for a Poetic Definition of Metaphor (*Istiʿāra*)," *Edebiyât: Journal of Middle Eastern and Comparative Literature* 11 (2000) 1–28.

[53] Heinrichs, *Hand of the Northwind*, p. 30.

[54] See, e.g., *Kitāb al-Uṣūl*, s.v., בגד, עזב, עמם, רחם; *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ* 315 (*Sefer ha-Riqmah* 331); see also W. Bacher, *Leben und Werke des Abulwalid Merwan Ibn Ganah* (Budapest, 1889), p. 31n.

[55] The Farabian model of *istiʿāra* is well attested in Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*; see M. Cohen, "Logic to Interpretation: Maimonides' Use of Al-Farabi's Notion of Metaphor," *Zutot: Perspectives on Jewish Culture* 2 (2002) 104–113; idem, *Three Approaches*, pp. 100–118, 213. Even more strikingly, a definition of *istiʿāra* almost identical to al-Fārābī's appears in *The Treatise on Logic*, a work traditionally attributed to Maimonides; see Cohen, "Poetic Definition," pp. 4–6, 10–13. Recently, however, H. Davidson has challenged the attribution of the *Treatise on Logic* to Maimonides; see his essay, "The Authenticity of Works Attributed to Maimonides," *Meʾah*

notion that "metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else."[56] According to this model, *isti'āra* means temporarily "borrowing," or "transferring" (the literal sense of Greek *metaphora*), a word that normally "belongs" to one thing and using it to designate something else. The commonly cited example of this "name transfer" is the term "lion" (Ar. *asad*) used to denote a courageous man.[57]

Ibn Ezra works with a different type of "borrowing" in the chapter he devotes to *isti'āra* in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, as we see in his analysis of a line of verse by the Umayyad poet Dhū r-Rumma,

> She stayed there until the stalks withered in the soil and the dawn *in its white gown* drove away the Pleiades.[58]

Ibn Ezra comments:

> He lent (*fa-sta'āra*) a gown to the dawn though it has no gown. (*Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 121a)[59]

Ibn Ezra does not tell us that the expression "white gown" has a new meaning; he simply observes that the poet *lent* a gown to the dawn. W. Heinrichs calls this "imaginary ascription," a conception

> of *isti'āra* . . . [that] does not consist in "borrowing" a name from its original "owner" and transferring it to a new one . . . on the contrary,

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She'arim: Studies in Medieval Jewish Spiritual Life in Memory of Isadore Twersky, eds., E. Fleischer, G. Blidstein, C. Horowitz, and B. Septimus (Jerusalem, 2001), pp. 118–125. On the implications of Davidson's view with respect to Maimonides' Farabian notion of metaphor, see Cohen, *Three Approaches*, p. 101n. On Maimonides' overall debt to al-Fārābī's linguistic notions, see A. Hyman, "Maimonides on Religious Language," *Perspectives on Maimonides*, ed. J. L. Kraemer (New York, 1991), pp. 177–179.

[56] *Poetics* 1457b; *PEPP*, s.v. "Metaphor." Al-Fārābī and Ibn Qutayba represent two branches of Arabic learning (the so-called logical tradition and the tradition of qur'anic hermeneutics) that were normally quite distinct; see W. Heinrichs, "Literary Theory: The Problem of Its Efficiency," *Arabic Poetry: Theory and Development*, ed. G. E. von Grunebaum (Wiesbaden, 1973), pp. 30–33. It is conceivable, however, that their shared conception of *isti'āra* reflects some mutual influence; see Cohen, pp. 10–13, 21–22.

[57] See "Maimonides' Arabic Treatise on Logic: *Maqāla fī Ṣinā'at al-Manṭiq*," ed. I. Efros, *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 34 (1966) 37 (Hebrew section) and Cohen, "Poetic Definition," p. 5; see also S. A. Bonebakker, "Aspects of the History of Literary Rhetoric and Poetics in Arabic Literature," *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 1 (1970) 95.

[58] *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 121a. See Heinrichs, "*Isti'ārah* and *Badi'*," p. 185, whose English translation I adopt.

[59] This example of *isti'āra* and commentary are drawn from Arabic literary criticism; see Dana, *Poetics of Medieval Hebrew*, p. 117; Cohen, "Poetic Definition," p. 9.

> it means "borrowing" an object from an owner who possesses it in our real world and giving it on loan to one who does not.[60]

This type of *isti'āra* is best illustrated by the genitive construction (A of B), as in the qur'anic example, "the wing of humility" (*janāḥ adh-dhull*; Sura 17:25),[61] which Ibn Ezra (*Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 119b) borrows from earlier Arabic handbooks on poetics. This construction prompted the typical formulas in Arabic literary criticism: "the poet lent A to B" and "B has no A," both used by Ibn Ezra in the gloss of Dhū r-Rumma's verse above. Imaginary ascription also guided him when devising his list of forty biblical examples of *isti'āra* (*Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 119a–b), all in the genitive construction. This list includes *isti'ārāt* that do not readily lend themselves to Aristotelian analysis, for example, טל ילדותך ("the dew of your youth"), כובע ישועה ("the helmet of salvation"), and כנפי שחר ("the wings of the dawn"). Ibn Ezra does not attempt to tell us what these metaphors "really mean"; in fact, he gives no explanations for them whatsoever, relying on his reader to supply the implied gloss, "Scripture lent A to B, though B has no A."

Name transfer depends on an implicit simile: Y can borrow the term "x," which normally denotes X, because *X is like Y.*[62] For example, the simile, "a courageous man is like a lion" allows us to substitute the term "lion" for "a courageous man." But in Ibn Ezra's type of *isti'āra*, A is *attributed* to B, not compared with it.[63] This model is based on what Arab theorists call a *tamthīl*, a broader analogy between the new recipient and implied original owner of the borrowed thing.[64] In Ibn Ezra's examples, Scripture imagines the dawn as a bird with wings (כנפי שחר), salvation as a helmet-clad warrior (כובע ישועה), and youth as the morning accompanied by pleasant dew (טל ילדותך).

The Aristotelian metaphor is a new name for an existing entity and is therefore well suited for interpretation: it can be decoded by identifying "that second entity," the Y that borrowed the word originally assigned to X. Qur'anic exegetes such as Ibn Qutayba, followed by their Jewish counterparts, thus classified *isti'āra* as a type of *majāz* and analyzed it by seeking its underlying *ḥaqīqa* (see above, p. 537).[65] But imaginary ascription is not just a creative use of language; it is a mental process that frees the poet from the bounds of empirical reality and allows him to create new entities in his

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[60] Heinrichs, *Hand of the Northwind*, p. 9.

[61] See Heinrichs, "*Isti'ārah* and *Badi'*," p. 190.

[62] This condition is included in Ibn Qutayba's definition of *isti'āra*; see also Heinrichs, *Hand of the Northwind*, p. 22. In Aristotle's work, metaphor and simile are linked; see *PEPP*, pp. 490–491.

[63] This explains why early Arabic works on poetics did not link *isti'āra* and simile (Ar. *tašbīh*); see Heinrichs, "*Isti'ārah* and *Badi'*," p. 182.

[64] Heinrichs, *Hand of the Northwind*, pp. 6–8; see also above, n. 23.

[65] See Heinrichs, *Hand of the Northwind*, pp. 14, 31, 41–42; Cohen, *Three Approaches*, pp. 64–65.

imagination, a process described in a famous passage by the English poet Sir Philip Sidney (1554–89):

> Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection [to nature], lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in nature . . . so as he goeth hand in hand with nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit.[66]

This creativity was celebrated by Arab adherents of the fanciful *badiʿ* style, of which *istiʿāra* was a key element.[67] But it frustrated rational-minded authors, as we can perhaps see from a colorful anecdote about the poet Abū Tammām. In response to the clever metaphor "water of reproach" (*māʾ a-l-malāmati*) that he devised,

> one of his mockers sent to him a bottle and said: "Put herein some water of reproach." Abū Tammām answered him: "If you send me a feather of the 'wing of humility,' then I will send you some water of reproach."[68]

Instead of divulging the *ḥaqīqa* of his metaphor, the poet dismisses such analysis by citing the completely imaginary qurʾanic "wing of humility."

In *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, Ibn Ezra likewise mentions unnamed rational-minded authors who eschewed *istiʿāra* and responds by noting the poetic beauty of this creative technique.[69] He also invokes an imposing biblical precedent by devising his list of forty biblical *istiʿārāt*, much as Arab authors defended the *badiʿ* style by turning to qurʾanic precedents. Since Ibn Ezra's intent is to validate the license of poets to fabricate imaginary scenes, it is not surprising that many of the metaphors he cites cannot readily be translated into *ḥaqīqa*. What, for example, are the "*helmet* of salvation," "*wings* of the dawn" and "*dew* of youth"?[70] When addressing such meta-

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[66] "The Defence of Poesy," *The Oxford Authors: Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. K. Duncan-Jones (Oxford, 1989), p. 216; see also Cohen, "Poetic Definition," pp. 15–16.

[67] In early Arabic treatises on poetics, the term *badiʿ* itself referred primarily to the imaginary ascription type of *istiʿāra*; see Heinrichs, "*Istiʿāra* and *Badiʿ*," pp. 190–200, 202–204.

[68] A. Schippers, "The Genitive-Metaphor in the Poetry of ʿAbū-Tammām," *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the Union Eropéene Des Arabisants et Islamisants* (Leiden, 1981), p. 258.

[69] *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 118b–119a; see Cohen, "Poetic Definition," p. 3.

[70] To be sure, a *ḥaqīqa* can be found for some genitive metaphors. For example, אם הדרך ("mother of the road") means a fork in the road; בני אשפתו ("sons of his quiver") are arrows. The type of genitive metaphor without a *ḥaqīqa* was termed by

phors, *badi*ʿ inspired Arab critics would instead explore the fanciful combinations they imply.[71] It was this analytic mode Ibn Ezra applied to Dhū r-Rumma's *istiʿāra*, as he does to a line of verse by Ibn Gabirol.[72] These explicit commentaries suggest that he would similarly analyze the biblical metaphors he lists, although, as mentioned above, they are presented in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* without any elucidation.

Now we can see the importance of tracing Ibn Ezra's treatment of *istiʿāra* in his exegetical work, an investigation that can offer answers to the following questions: Does the poetic analysis implied in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* find its expression in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*? And, if so, how does it contribute to Ibn Ezra's exegesis and appreciation of Scripture's poetic qualities? I hope to address these questions more fully elsewhere, but for now we can at least explain the issues they raise and suggest the outlines of likely answers. While we might expect consistency from a single author, we must recognize that his two works have different goals and flow from different streams of Arabic and Jewish learning (see above, p. 543). And indeed, the exegetical focus of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* and the tradition it draws on dictated that Ibn Ezra treat metaphor as a type of *majāz* and seek its *ḥaqīqa* according to the name transfer model. Yet at times his poetic interests emerge, revealed as he applies instead the imaginary ascription model, by noting how Scripture poetically lends elements from one realm of reality to another.[73] A study of *istiʿāra* in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* can thus be used as a gauge for measuring Ibn Ezra's success in integrating a poetic perspective into his interpretation of Scripture.

Metonymy

Closely related to metaphor is the concept of metonymy, which is well attested in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, where it is referred to alternatively as *badal* (lit. substitution), *mujāwara* (lit. proximity), and *kināya* (lit. naming). Ibn Ezra defines metonymy as "one thing being called by the name of another that is closely related to it (*mujāwiran lahu*)."[74] For example, קרן (horn) in

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some Arab theorists as *istiʿāra takhyīlīya*, an imaginative or make-believe metaphor; see Heinrichs, *Hand of the Northwind*, p. 14.

[71] See Heinrichs, "*Istiʿārah* and *Badiʿ*," pp. 193–198; Cohen, "Poetic Definition," pp. 15–17.

[72] *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 121b; see Cohen, "Poetic Definition," pp. 7–8.

[73] Ibn Ezra also lays emphasis on the imaginative possibilities opened by biblical *tamthīlāt*, i.e., analogies that generate imaginary ascription *istiʿārāt* (above, nn. 23, 64).

[74] וכאן אלשי יסמא באסם אלשי אד׳א כאן אלמג׳אורא לה; *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 253, cited by Fenton, pp. 320, 338. (Curiously, his French translation differs slightly in the two places.) Compare Ibn Janaḥ, *Kitāb al-Uṣūl*, s.v. ע-ו-פ: תסמיה׳ אלשי באסם אלשי אלמג׳אור לה (*Shorashim*: קריאת שם הדבר בשם הקרוב אליו והשוכן בצדו).

Job 15:16, "I made my קרן enter into dust," means *head* and is a case of *badal al-mujāwara* (lit. substitution of that which is nearby).[75] Similarly, לב (heart) can be used as a metonym for (*kināya ʿan*) intelligence (Ar. *ʿaql*) and "blood of grapes" for wine.[76] In light of our discussion of *istiʿāra*, we can now see that Ibn Ezra uses the terms *badal*, *mujāwara*, and *kināya* specifically to denote the name transfer model of metaphor. In fact, his definition of metonymy matches Ibn Qutayba's definition of *istiʿāra*.[77] Interestingly, some examples of *istiʿāra* cited in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* are classified as metonymy in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, implying a philological-exegetical, rather than poetic, analysis. In *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 189, for instance, Ibn Ezra comments that the "the doors of his face" (דלתי פניו; Job 41:6) means the *lips* by way of metonymy (כנאיה ען אלשפתאן); but this same expression is cited in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* as one of the forty examples of *istiʿāra*, implying that Scripture poetically "lent" doors to a face, as though it were a house.[78]

Though Ibn Ezra uses the terms *badal*, *mujāwara*, and *kināya* practically interchangeably, Fenton confuses matters by assigning specific translations to each (see above, p. 543). His translation of *badal* as "metonymy" is fine, but *kināya* is not "synecdoche." Synecdoche (i.e., calling a part by the name of the whole or vice versa), a type of metonymy, is what Ibn Ezra has in mind when speaking of *badal al-juzʾ min al-kull* ("substitution of part for the whole"; e.g., אזן שומעת means *a person* who listens [MS 179]), a figural category that Fenton lists separately (pp. 336–337). Evidently Fenton recognizes that "synecdoche" does not always fit Ibn Ezra's use of the term *kināya*, and so renders it "*euphémisme*" when discussing actual examples.[79] But even that translation is too narrow, since *kināya* does not always involve euphemism.[80] It is preferable to view *badal*, *kināya*, and *mujāwara* together under the rubric of metonymy,[81] after which it is helpful to specify the notions of synecdoche and euphemism that Ibn Ezra at times expresses.

Indeed, as Fenton (p. 338) shows, the notion of euphemism is critical for understanding why Scripture uses metonymy. As Ibn Ezra explains, this tech-

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[75] *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 155; Fenton, pp. 335–336. Ibn Ezra goes on to cite Lam 2:10 ("They put dust on their heads") to show that this was a practice of mourning.

[76] These examples, cited by Fenton, p. 338, are from *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 125 and 138 respectively. (Fenton's reference to 135 must be corrected.)

[77] Derivatives of the term *badal* (*ibdāl* and *tabdīl*; lit. "substitution") were actually used in the Arab Aristotelian school (e.g., by Averroes) interchangeably with *istiʿāra* to denote metaphor; see D. Black, *Logic and Aristotle's* Rhetoric *and* Poetics *in Medieval Arabic Philosophy* (Leiden, 1990), p. 243.

[78] For another example, see below, n. 84.

[79] E.g., on p. 338; there Fenton evidently intends to differentiate between *kināya* and *mujāwara*, which he renders "metonymy."

[80] On *kināya* in Arabic poetics, see *EI*, s.v.; see also below n. 82.

[81] Fenton's choice to place *maqlūb* (p. 337) between his discussion of *badal* and *kināya* is especially confusing.

nique is made necessary by the paucity of the Hebrew vocabulary for sexual organs and activities. This quality of "our distinguished [Hebrew] language and pure tongue" (לגתנא אלפאצ'לה ולסאננא אלטאהר), he explains, forces Hebrew to resort to what the Rabbis call לשון נקיה ("clean language"), or euphemism (*Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 250).[82] For example:

> "Your *navel* is [like] a round cup" (Song 7:3) refers to the sexual organ, designated by the term *navel* that is related to it metonymically (*mujāwiran lahu*; lit., neighboring it), as we have explained in connection with other organs spoken of metonymically (*al-mutajāwira*).[83]

This feature of Hebrew, he argues, justifies its label as "the holy tongue" (לשון הקודש), the same distinctive explanation for this epithet that Maimonides would later adopt (see above, p. 539).

While metonymy can sometimes be attributed to linguistic necessity, Ibn Ezra hints at another possible motive in an entry not atypical in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*:

> The *majāz* expressions for manna [include]: "and the grain of heaven (דגן שמים)[84] he gave to them," for it was a substitute for grain. It is also called "bread of heaven" (לחם שמים). All of these are eloquent metonymies (*kināyāt faṣīḥa*).[85]

As Fenton (pp. 340–341) observes, Ibn Ezra's use of the term *faṣīḥ*[86] in this context implies that a desire for literary elegance motivates Scripture's choice to use a metonymic *majāz* expression rather than the proper term "manna."

Not surprisingly, metonymy played a critical role in the linguistic tradition *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* represents. Most notably, Ibn Janaḥ devoted a lengthy chapter of his comprehensive work on Biblical Hebrew (*Kitāb al-Luma*ʿ, chap. 27; *Riqmah*, chap. 28) to "a word used in the sense of another," a principle he applies to numerous biblical examples. His liberal stance was criticized by later authors, most notably by Abraham Ibn Ezra, who consigned

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[82] דעת אלצ'רורה אלי תסמתהא לם תדכר אלא באלאשאראת ואלכנאיאת ואלמג'אוראת. (Fenton here translates *kināya* as "euphemism" and *mujāwara* as "metonymy.")

[83] *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 253. Fenton cites this passage twice (pp. 320, 338; surprisingly, it is translated differently in the two places).

[84] This expression is cited as an example of *istiʿāra* in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 119a, among other cases of imaginary ascription. Here Ibn Ezra labels it as *kināya*; see above, n. 78.

[85] *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 137.

[86] On the use of this term, which properly means pure or correct language, in the sense of literary elegance, see E. Goldenberg, "On the ʾ*Egron* of Seʿadya Gaʾon" (Hebrew), *Leshonenu* 37 (1972/3) 122. This sense is attested, e.g., in Ibn Janaḥ, *Kitāb al-Luma*ʿ 289 (*Riqmah* 303). Medieval Hebrew authors commonly used its Hebrew cognate, צחות, to mean literary elegance.

to flames the books of the scholar who so freely relied on such lexical "substitution" (חילוף, a translation of *badal*).[87] Moses Ibn Ezra casts his vote on this matter in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara*, where he comments that Ibn Janaḥ abused this principle to such an extent that it undermined his exegetical integrity.[88] This debate, in which many medieval authors participated, is discussed in an important article by M. Perez,[89] who defines a middle position devised by Moses Ibn Gikatilla (and adopted by Abraham Ibn Ezra) that accurately portrays the balance Moses Ibn Ezra struck: he applies *badal* primarily where it can be justified in literary or stylistic terms (i.e., as *fa-ṣaḥa* or לשון נקיה), that is to say, when he can explain why a biblical author chose to use one word in the sense of another.[90]

Hyperbole, Poetic Fancy, Emphasis

In celebrating the imagination, Arabic poetics emphasized the importance of hyperbole, a literary technique referred to alternatively as *ghuluww, ighrāq, īghāl,* and *mubālagha*.[91] Ibn Ezra devotes two of his twenty chapters

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[87] Fenton (p. 336, n. 290) cites "Provençal exegetes" who referred to the exegetical strategy of *badal* as חילוף. Although this is how Abraham Ibn Ezra and others referred to it, Ibn Janaḥ himself never actually characterized his method as *badal*, which he reserved for another use (see below, n. 89); see M. Perez, "Substitution of One Word for Another as an Exegetical Method Used by Medieval Scholars" [Hebrew], in *Studies in Bible Exegesis*, ed. U. Simon (Ramat Gan, 1986) 2:207–228. On Abraham Ibn Ezra's view, see U. Simon, "Who Was the Proponent of Lexical Substitution Whom Ibn Ezra Denounced as a Prater and Madman?" *The Frank Talmage Memorial*, ed. B. Walfish (Haifa, 1993), 1:217–232.

[88] *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 134b; see Cohen, "Aesthetic Exegesis," p. 286n.

[89] Perez, "Substitution" (above, n. 87), an article which Fenton, surprisingly, does not mention. Instead, he refers (p. 336, n. 290) to J. Derenbourg, *Opuscules et traités D'Abou'l-walid Merwan Ibn Djanah* (Paris, 1880), p. xcvi, whose discussion *of "substitution d'un mot à un autre,"* based on the above-mentioned chapter of *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ*, is helpful but outdated. In the same note, Fenton refers to *Lumaʿ* 99 (chapter eight); but Ibn Janaḥ uses the term *badal* there in the sense of *apposition*, not metonymy.

[90] This pattern of selectivity may explain why Moses Ibn Ezra only rarely uses the term *badal* by itself (see, e.g., *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 135, 160, 174); it is usually accompanied by the term *mujāwara* (see references in Fenton, p. 336, n. 288), which implies an association between the two terms that justifies the substitution.

[91] These terms are often used interchangeable in Arabic literary criticism; see *EI* 7:277, s.v., "Mubālagha." It is not clear whether Fenton intended to distinguish between *ghuluww* and *mubālagha* by rendering one "*hyperbole*" and the other "*exagération*" (see above, p. 543). In the course of citing examples, he translates all four terms as "*hyperbole et exagération*" (pp. 334–335). On p. 334, n. 277, Fenton states that Hebrew גיזום was used by later "Provençal" exegetes—presumably Radak—to denote hyperbole. The correct term is גוזמא, to which we can add הפלגה (see Melammed, *Bible*

on the poetic ornaments in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* to these techniques, which he defines as depictions that "exceed the domain of the possible and enter the domain of the impossible."[92] In *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*, as Fenton (pp. 334–335) documents, Ibn Ezra notes many biblical examples of these techniques, such as the wise counsel "A gentle tongue can break bones" (Prov 25:15), and Joel's description of the locusts "with teeth like teeth of a lion / with the fangs of a lion's breed" (Joel 1:6).[93] Ibn Ezra records (*Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 137b) that the Rabbis disparagingly called hyperbole לשון הבאי ("vain talk"), but he emphasizes the usefulness of this literary strategy in making prophetic rhetoric most effective. In so doing, he alludes to an earlier discussion (*Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 62a) on the propriety of using hyperbole in poetry in general. While some literary critics, Ibn Ezra notes, disparaged hyperbole because of its inherent "falsehood," the majority maintained that it adds elegance, lends power to poetic imagery, and sharpens literary depiction in the spirit of the motto, "the best of poetry is its most false," viz., its most hyperbolic and fanciful.[94] This parallel between Ibn Ezra's discussion of the role of hyperbole in poetry and prophetic rhetoric illustrates how he applies his literary perspective to Scripture.[95]

In addition to the usual sense of hyperbole, the term *mubālagha* also had a more technical usage in Ibn Ezra's poetics, which reveals the fundamental nature of this technique in his thinking. Following Arab experts on poetry such as Qudāma b. Jaʿfar and al-Ḥātimī, Ibn Ezra defines this technique as a

Commentators, pp. 859–861); גיזום means *threat*, not hyperbole; see Radak on Amos 4:4 and E. Ben-Yehuda, *A Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew* (New York, 1960), s.v. גזם.

[92] This is the definition of *īghāl* in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 137b; the English translation is from Y. Mashiah, "The Terminology of Hebrew Prosody and Rhetoric with Special Reference to Arabic Origins" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1972), p. 168. In *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 62a, Ibn Ezra offers an almost identical definition for *ighrāq* and *mubālagha* taken from the Arab literary critic Qudāma b. Jaʿfar, on which, see Mashiah, p. 164.

[93] Ibn Ezra labels the first example as *ghuluww* and *īghrāq* (*Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 196) and the second as *ghuluww* (*Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 191–192). For an example that Ibn Ezra classifies as *īghāl*, Fenton points to Isa 1:18, "Be your sins like crimson, they can turn snow white; be they red as dyed wool, they can become like fleece" (*Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 195). An example of *mubālagha* is Nah 3:16, "You had more traders than the sky has stars" (*Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 210).

[94] *Aṭyab-aš-šiʿr akdhabuhu* = Heb. מיטב השיר כזבו. On this motto, see Cohen, "Poetic Definition," pp. 15–17; Brann, *Compunctious Poet*, pp. 72–76. On the controversy over hyperbole in Arabic poetics, see Mashiah, pp. 161–168; *EI*, s.v. "Mubālagha."

[95] Ibn Ezra thus implies that the biblical prophets were also poets; on this analogy, see R. Scheindlin, "Rabbi Moshe Ibn Ezra on the Legitimacy of Poetry," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 7 (1976) 101–115.

poetic addition at the end of a line that serves to intensify an idea (*Kitāb al-Muḥā-ḍara* 131a).[96] He comments, for example, on Mal 3:17, "I will spare them, as one who spares his son who serves him":

> In saying "his son" the intended idea is complete, whereas [the phrase] "who serves him" is a marvelous addition and beautiful intensification (*tablīgh* [= *mubālagha*] *ḥasan*). (*Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* 131a)

Here *mubālagha* does not mean hyperbole; it is better rendered emphasis, strengthening or heightening, as noted in recent studies of Arabic poetics.[97] A similar observation holds for *ighāl*, which Fenton renders *l'hyperbole finale* (based on the definition of the literary critic Ibn Rashīq in *Kitāb al-ʿUmda*[98]), though the cases he cites (pp. 334–335) exhibit the more general notion of emphasis through descriptive detail. For example, the concluding *ighāl* in Ps 1:4, "Not so the wicked, who are like chaff *that the wind drives away*" (noted in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* 97), intensifies the idea of the transience of the wicked through a graphic portrayal. This broad usage of the terms *mubālagha* and *ighāl* by Ibn Ezra suggests that, like his Arab predecessors, he saw hyperbole as a specific substrategy within the overall poetic endeavor of composing more descriptive, detailed, and vivid language than plain prose employs. In taking the time in *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa* to observe the proficiency of biblical authors in using *mubālagha* and *ighāl*, Ibn Ezra demonstrates that Scripture manifests these literary qualities.

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In conclusion I would like to return to Fenton's work in order to highlight the important scholarly contribution it represents. *Philosophie et exégèse* tells us a great deal about Ibn Ezra's philosophical and philological exegesis, which are the central themes of *Maqālat al-Ḥadīqa*. Fenton masterfully evaluates these aspects of Ibn Ezra's work in light of their Arabic and Jewish background. Fenton's survey of the poetic techniques is also a useful reference, though specialists in this field would look for greater precision in defining Ibn Ezra's literary terminology. This reservation notwithstanding, *Philosophie et exégèse dans le Jardin de la métaphore de Moïse Ibn ʿEzra* will certainly become a standard reference for Ibn Ezra's exegesis, something that has been sorely missing until now. Paul Fenton has made this great poet's hermeneutics accessible to the academic world in a pioneering work that will, no doubt, inspire further studies on this multifaceted medieval author, a reward worthy of the finest scholar.

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[96] See *EI*, s.v. "Mubalāgha"; also Dana, *Poetics of Medieval Hebrew*, p. 143.

[97] See *EI*, s.v. "Mubālagha."

[98] Indeed, Dana, *Poetics of Medieval Hebrew*, p. 143 notes that Ibn Ezra's use of the term *mubālagha* in *Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara* corresponds to *ighāl* in Ibn Rashīq's system.