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**EXODUS 34:29-35:  
MOSES' "HORNS" IN EARLY BIBLE  
TRANSLATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

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## ABSTRACT

Exodus 34:29-35 contains an ambiguous Hebrew phrase that describes the peculiar condition of Moses' face after his encounter with God on Mt. Sinai. The iconographic tradition of Moses in religious art includes many depictions of him as "horned," yet the early exegetes described his condition as some kind of radiance, Divine glory, or as a metaphor for strength. How, then, is this iconography of horns based on the biblical text or early biblical exegesis?

The primary sources evaluated for this study encompass more than two thousand years of biblical interpretation, but the subject of this thesis comprises exegetical material from the time of the canonisation of the Bible until Jerome in the fourth century. This material includes selections from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Jewish and Christian post-biblical narratives, rabbinic midrash, and translations of the Pentateuch into Aramaic, Greek and Latin.

## RÉSUMÉ

L'Exode 34:29-35 contient un expression ambiguë en Hébreu qui décrit la condition du visage de Moïse après sa rencontre avec Dieu. La tradition iconographique de Moïse dans l'art religieux le représente parfois avec des cornes, malgré les commentaires des premiers interprètes que le faisait paraître comme la rayonnement, la gloire divin, ou une métaphore de la force. Alors, quelle est la liaison entre cette tradition iconographique et le texte biblique ou les premiers commentaires bibliques?

Les sources primaires qu'ont évalué pour cette étude renferme plus de deux milles ans d'interprétations bibliques, mais le sujet de cette dissertation comprends les matériaux d'interprétation depuis les années de la canonisation de la Bible jusqu'au temps de Jérôme dans le quatrième siècle. Ce material inclus des sélections de la Bible Hébraïque, le Nouveau Testament, le Pseudépigrapha de l'Ancien Testament, les narratives post-bibliques des Juifs et Chrétiens, la midrash rabbinique, et des traductions du Pentateuque en aramaïque, grec et latin.

## **DEDICATION**

My grandmother Dorothy Mark, ז"ל, was always ready to talk long-distance when I needed a friend. She taught me everything about determination and strength and how we must appreciate the people that are a part of our lives. I know that she was proud of my accomplishments, just as I am of hers. I dedicate this thesis to her memory.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### I. Resources

- BarIlan-CD* *Bar Ilan University Responsa Project* [CD-ROM database].
- BDB* *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, ed. Francis Brown.
- B-M* *The Old Testament in Greek*, ed. Alan E. Brooke and Norman McLean.
- CHB* *Cambridge History of the Bible: From the Beginnings to Jerome*, vol. 1, ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans.
- EncJud* *Encyclopaedia Judaica*
- HAR* *Hebrew Annual Review*
- Jastrow* *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature*, ed. Marcus Jastrow
- JJS* *Journal of Jewish Studies*
- JPS-Tanakh* *The Tanakh: The New JPS Translation*.
- JQR-NS* *Jewish Quarterly Review - New Series*
- Koren-JB* *The Jerusalem Bible*, ed. Harold Fisch
- Mikra* *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Martin Jan Mulder.
- OAB-RSV* *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, Revised Standard Version*, ed. Herbert May and Bruce Metzger.
- ODCC* *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*
- OED* *The Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition*, ed. J. A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner
- OTPseud* *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, two vols, ed. James H. Charlesworth.
- PatLat* *Patriologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, ed. J. P. Minge.
- PatGraec* *Patriologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, ed. J. P. Minge.
- PAAJR* *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*

### II. Ancient texts

Apoc. Zeph.	Apocalypse of Zephania	Lam. Rab.	Lamentations Rabbah
Bib. Ant.	Biblical Antiquities (Ps.-Philo)	Matt.	Matthew
Cor.	Corinthians	Mid. Ps.	Midrash Psalms
Eccl.	Ecclesiastes	Mid. Sam.	Midrash Samuel
En.	Enoch	Mid. Tan.	Midrash Tanḥuma
Ex.	Exodus	Num.	Numbers
Ex. Rab.	Exodus Rabbah	Num. Rab.	Numbers Rabbah
Deut. Rab.	Deuteronomy Rabbah	PDRK	Pesikta de-Rab Kahana
Gen.	Genesis	Ps.	Psalms
Gen. Rab.	Genesis Rabbah	Rom.	Romans
Hab.	Habakkuk	Sifre Zut.	Sifre Zutta
Jer.	Jeremiah	Tan.-Yel.	Tanḥuma-Yelamdenu

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### I. Summary and Objectives

Ex. 34:29-35 contains the record of Moses' descent from Mt. Sinai with the second set of tablets inscribed with the Decalogue received from God. The Masoretic text of Ex. 34:29 states: ויהי ברדת משה מהר סיני ושני לחת העדת ביד משה ברדתו מן ההר ומשה לא ידע כי קרן עור קרן עור פָּנָיו (And so, Moses came down from Mt. Sinai. As Moses came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, Moses did not know that קרן עור פָּנָיו since his speaking with Him).<sup>1</sup> However, the Masoretic text enlists an ambiguous Hebrew phrase to describe the peculiar condition of Moses' face that resulted from his conference with God. During the past two thousand years of Bible translation and interpretation, interpreters have understood the phrase קרן עור פָּנָיו to mean that Moses' face became radiant or glorious, or even horned. The interpretation of Moses' face as "horned" is significant to the iconographical tradition of the image of Moses and is one of the motivating elements of this thesis.

Based on the fourth-century Latin translation of קרן עור פָּנָיו as *cornuta esset facies* (his face was horned)<sup>2</sup> by Jerome in what is known as the Vulgate, the image of "horned Moses" has often been attributed to a mis-translation by Jerome. However, I suggest that this attribution comes from a gross mis-understanding of the history of Bible interpretation in general and of Jerome's exegetical techniques in particular. To write a Latin version of the Old Testament based on the Hebrew text and not on the Septuagint or on any of the available Latin versions, Jerome first studied biblical Hebrew and philology from his Jewish contemporaries. His acquired Hebrew knowledge would have pressed him to translate conjugations of the root קרן in Ex. 34:29-35 etymologically, as references to "horns." On the other hand, through scholarly interactions with his Jewish

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<sup>1</sup>Ex. 34:29; *Biblia Hebraica*, seventh edition, ed. Rudolf Kittel (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt Stuttgart, 1937), p. 133.

<sup>2</sup>Ex. 34:29; *Biblia Sacra - Iuxta Vulgatem Versionem*, vol. 1, ed. Robertus Weber (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1975), p. 126.

contemporaries Jerome was exposed to their biblical interpretations and learned that קרן עור פניו was consistently understood by Jews to refer to “radiance” or “rays of light.” Therefore, in his Bible commentary, he explained that *cornuta* was meant to be understood metaphorically.

Jerome’s combined etymological and exegetical treatment of קרן עור פניו illustrates the complexity of the Hebrew phrase. He was limited by the linguistic constraints of Latin and was unable to translate the ambiguity of the Hebrew text with an equally complex Latin idiom. Therefore, his challenge was to maintain the original etymological language of the Hebrew and yet still convey the “correct” meaning of the verse. To achieve this, Jerome enlisted both his Latin translation and his Bible commentary. He may have rendered קרן עור פניו etymologically as *cornuta esset facies* in the Vulgate, thus appearing to portray Moses as “horned,” but he explained in his early commentary on the biblical book of Amos that *cornuta* was a metaphoric reference to “glorification.” In several of his other commentaries, including those on the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel and in his *Dialogue against the Pelagians*, Jerome presented Moses’ horns as a metaphor for strength or might and for knowledge from God. Thus, Jerome’s own comments make it clear that he did not interpret Ex. 34:29-35 as a reference to a “horned Moses.” Nevertheless, if the Vulgate is read without the explanations contained in his biblical commentaries, Jerome’s Latin version of קרן עור פניו starkly suggests that Moses was indeed horned.

The iconographic tradition of Moses at Mt. Sinai includes illustrations depicting rays or beams of light encircling his head, but also illustrations in which Moses appears to have actual horns sprouting from his head or face. This thesis will show that the former image corresponds to the early interpretive history of קרן עור פניו and Ex. 34:29-35. The latter image evolved out of a misunderstanding of Jerome’s Latin translation of this phrase in the Vulgate and produced a deliberate iconographic tradition in which Moses was horned. This imagery is treated at length by Ruth Mellinkoff in a book dedicated to the subject of Moses’ horns, *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought*.<sup>3</sup> In this study, Mellinkoff presents a vast selection of artistic representations of Moses, with particular emphasis on depictions of Moses as horned and their context in the history

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<sup>3</sup>Ruth Mellinkoff, *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970).

of Bible illumination and Church art. Mellinkoff demonstrates that the earliest of these images of Moses with horns were based on texts of Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible or on other translations made from his Vulgate.<sup>4</sup>

By tracing the history of the interpretation of Ex. 34:29-35 through numerous ancient exegetical sources and relevant theological issues, some of the original problems with the text will hopefully be clarified. Furthermore, the exegetical and theological issues surrounding the ambiguity of this image of Moses provide the opportunity for a closer study of these interpretive documents in their historical context. Ultimately, both shall become more familiar; the exegetical techniques of the ancient world, and the history of the transmission and interpretation of Moses' image and the ambiguous phrase, קרן עור פניו.

Religious politics also play a role in the overall history of this text, which is why it is so important to address the historical context and agenda of each translation or commentary included in this study. Initially, the general issue of the history of Moses' horns encompasses early techniques of textual exegesis and some polemics, but eventually the artistic imagery and resultant social stereotypes also become important components of this issue. While the latter is addressed in numerous books on Jewish-Gentile relations in the Middle Ages and Medieval Art,<sup>5</sup> the former is the subject of this study.

By studying early translations and interpretations of Ex. 34:29-35 and related issues in their historical and exegetical context, this thesis will show that Jerome's fourth-century Latin rendering of קרן עור פניו as *cornuta esset facies* (his face was horned) was not a mistake of interpretation,

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<sup>4</sup>This thesis is not the place for a discussion of whether or not Moses actually did acquire horns at Mt. Sinai. It is a complicated question without one answer. However, the theory of how and why קרן עור פניו in the biblical account might, indeed, have been intended to record that Moses actually "became horned" is outlined in the introduction to Mellinkoff's book and is explained at length by several other modern scholars whose writings shall be examined shortly in my historical overview of the topic.

<sup>5</sup>Although Mellinkoff's *Horned Moses* is the only book to address these issues as they specifically relate to Moses' horns, for other polemics-related material and general discussion of some religious stereotypes, see Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, Inc., 1961); David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages: A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1996); Hyam Maccoby, ed. *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (London: Littman Library of Civilization, 1982). For relevant discussion of art and iconography, see Heinz Schreckenberg and Kurt Schubert. *Jewish Historiography and Iconography in Early and Medieval Christianity*, with an introduction by David Flusser (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

but rather a conscious attempt to preserve the complexity of the Hebrew idiom. Furthermore, I will attempt to demonstrate that Jerome's interpretation of this phrase was common to the majority of Jewish and Christian exegetical sources since the canonisation of the Bible until his time, although many contain revealing and noteworthy variations of this common theme.

## II. Methodology

The first essential element of this study is a presentation of the question's historical background. Given that the issue of Moses' horns spans many centuries of Bible translation, interpretation and illumination, it is necessary to outline several other aspects of this topic. If this study were to address them all adequately, we would be faced with enough material for several theses and numerous volumes. This thesis, then, is only one small part of a much larger whole, a taste of which I shall give in the historical overview to this issue.

The background information presented in Chapter One is drawn from a variety of current publications including Mellinkoff's research into the history of artistic and exegetical depictions of Moses with horns, as well as Joshua Trachtenberg's research into Devil imagery and the observations of its implications for medieval Jews by Trachtenberg, Jeffrey Russell, Jacob Katz and others. Due to the limited scope of this work, only an abbreviated discussion of Ex. 34:29-35 in the writings of the medieval Jewish commentators is possible. Nevertheless, this part of the historical overview includes material from the writings of Rashi, Rashbam and Ibn Ezra; three exegetes whose unique treatment of **קַרְן עוֹר פָּנָיו** warrants a thesis devoted entirely to a closer study of their comments about Moses' "horns" and how this issue relates to their exegetical techniques and their polemical activities at that time.

The section of this historical overview that is devoted to the status of Ex. 34:29-35 in post-Reformation Bibles describes relevant information from this fascinating period of change in the history of Bible translation. It was during the sixteenth century that the Vulgate's horned image of Moses at Mt. Sinai was among those interpretations that were edited out of subsequent translations. Finally, this introduction also reviews numerous recent articles containing modern, critical approaches to the issues surrounding Moses' image and the meaning of this ambiguous Hebrew text in its ancient Near Eastern context.

Chapter Two introduces Ex. 34:29-35 in Hebrew and English along with some of the other passages from the Hebrew Bible that are significant for other sections of this thesis and the lengthy history of the interpretation of this text. The subjects of Chapters Three and Four are biblical narratives and early translations that contain valuable exegetical information about the interpretation of Moses' image in the first few centuries of the first millennium. They contain a survey of documents from a variety of Jewish and Christian sources, including the New Testament, the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, rabbinic midrash and numerous early translations of the Pentateuch. The focus of these chapters is on interpretations of Moses' image at Mt. Sinai, as well as the relevant historical information that they provide about their exegetical techniques and the theological issues that can generally help us understand their writings and their time period. Expansions on the brief account of Moses at Mt. Sinai and references to Moses' Divine light or glory are common to both the Jewish and Christian sources. Textual imagery specifically associating Moses' radiance with Christ's transfiguration is common in the Christian sources.

Chapter Four also contains an analysis of the text-tradition surrounding Aquila's Greek translation of the Bible, since his version of Ex. 34:29-35 reportedly depicts Moses as actually horned. This lengthy discussion is warranted by the peculiar lack of details surrounding the extant fragments of this Greek text, as well as conflicting versions of the Greek itself and Jerome's Latin citation of this interpretation attributed to Aquila.

In the main body of this thesis, I shall attempt to discuss narratives and commentaries separately from biblical translations although some comparison of their content is inevitable and often extremely valuable. Although they are arranged in the chronological order that has been most widely accepted, the precise dates of these compositions have been the object of speculation and scholarly analysis for centuries, and little is certain. For the limited purposes of this paper, it would be far too speculative to intersperse and arrange all of this material and risk suggesting influences between translations and narratives or commentaries where there may not have been. Therefore, I have attached some footnotes about dates of composition as well as some specific points from these debates, but I leave it to the reader to assess each document individually. I do not mean to suggest that translations and narratives or commentaries were ignorant of each other. These works depended on each other since each was a tool of the other's trade. Occasionally, these scholars engaged in both

exegetical enterprises. Jerome, for example, wrote translations *and* commentaries, a fact that is pivotal to the history of the interpretation of Ex. 34:29-35.

The thesis concludes with a chapter dealing specifically with the Latin translation and Bible commentaries of Jerome. By citing relevant passages from Jerome's writings, Chapter Five demonstrates that a metaphoric reading of *cornuta esset facies* was definitely his intention. The passages selected from Jerome's biblical commentaries explain the different metaphors that he applied to קרן עור פניו in Ex. 34:29-35. They debunk the myth that Jerome meant "horned Moses" in his Vulgate to be understood or illustrated literally. These results show that the medieval imagery depicting Moses with actual horns can only be attributable to Jerome through a mis-understanding of his Latin translation of קרן עור פניו.

On the question of how this investigation of ancient primary sources can benefit from the wealth of modern critical scholarship that is currently available, my preference is to intersperse material from these modern sources where relevant. However, my primary allegiance lies with the ancient sources that are the true subject of this study. Therefore, much of the secondary information that might otherwise be discussed in the main body of this thesis has been relegated to the footnotes.

Wherever possible, I have also tried to cite texts in the original language of the author with a translation attached. Due to the multi-lingual nature of the sources consulted for this study, this includes citations of phrases or terms in biblical and rabbinic Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin. In the case of whole stanzas, phrases or infrequent foreign terms, an English translation follows the text in parentheses or in the footnotes. In the case of more common Hebrew terms and a few Greek and Latin terms, the English translation accompanies only the first occasion of the reference. These translations are sometimes repeated later or are re-explained in the body of the text when they are particularly relevant to the general discussion.

Due to the ambiguous nature of the Hebrew root קרן and the phrase קרן עור פניו, which is entirely the subject of this study, I have chosen to retain the Hebrew version throughout, rather than suggest a translation. I hope that this will not prove too distracting for the reader, as it has enabled me to retain the integrity of the Hebrew text without introducing my own biased translations and interpretations. After nearly two years of investigating this topic, my understanding of the Hebrew text and my attitude toward its inherent ambiguities has changed or been altered many times,

often as a result of reading some new article or an ancient narrative or translation. The history of Jewish and Christian interpretations of Moses' appearance based on this ambiguous text spans several thousand years of biblical exegesis. In short, the issue of Moses' glorious, radiant or horned countenance exemplifies the complex history of Bible translation and interpretation.

### III. Historical Overview

#### *i. Medieval iconography of Moses*

Any discussion of the image of Moses in art, in particular his "horns," must begin with the extensive material that Ruth Mellinkoff has already compiled and published in *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought* and in her more recent article containing additional examples and observations.<sup>6</sup> In her introductory chapter, Mellinkoff summarises the iconographic content of ancient portrayals of Moses and concludes that images depicting Moses with actual horns did not emerge before the mid-eleventh century in England. While a number of other biblical motifs appeared in these ancient works, including Moses striking the rock to miraculously produce water and Moses receiving the tablets of the Law from God, Mellinkoff suggests that the artistic portrayal of Moses as shining or with radiating beams or rays only emerged around the same time as the images containing actual horns. It appears that the earliest portrayals of Moses as shining or radiant after receiving the tablets are the Byzantine Octateuchs of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, although Mellinkoff concedes that her "examination of this theme has been cursory."<sup>7</sup> She does not attempt to draw any historical or polemical link between the closely-timed emergence of these contradictory images or exegeses, and she emphasises that the textual image of Moses as "radiant" or "glorified" was standard to Bible interpreters throughout the ancient world.<sup>8</sup>

According to Mellinkoff, the first known visual depictions of Moses with horns appear in Aelfric of Eynsham's illuminated *Paraphrase of the Pentateuch and Joshua* in early eleventh-

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<sup>6</sup>Mellinkoff, "More about Horned Moses," *Jewish Art* 12/13 (1986-1987), pp. 184-198. Also interesting is her book on the iconographic tradition of the peculiar disfigurement or "marking" of Cain by God in Gen. 4:15. See *The Mark of Cain* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1981).

<sup>7</sup>Mellinkoff, *Horned Moses*, p. 144, n. 31.

<sup>8</sup>See Mellinkoff's "Introduction," pp. 1-9, and chapter seven, "The Commentary of the Theologians," *ibid.*, pp. 76-93.

century England. In this Old English translation of the Bible based on Jerome's Latin version, Aelfric rendered Jerome's *cornuta* as *geheyrned* (horned).<sup>9</sup> Paul Szarmach notes that Aelfric's approach to Bible exegesis was extremely literal, which is exemplified by this manuscript of more than four hundred illustrations including many depictions of Moses with horns. Mellinkoff describes this artistic and exegetical enterprise as "an attempt to translate literally - into pictures - the narrative, textual context."<sup>10</sup> Indeed, some of these horns appear on depictions of Moses in biblical passages prior to the events of Ex. 34:29-35 when Moses would have become horned. Mellinkoff also suggests that these earlier horns appear super-imposed onto already-completed drawings as if they were added on later, perhaps once the artist "discovered" the imagery in Ex. 34:29-35 and then returned to apply it to earlier depictions of Moses.<sup>11</sup> This kind of hyper-literalism or estrangement from the content of the biblical narrative may raise questions about the knowledge-level of the illuminators hired to create these visual exegeses, which cannot be discussed further at this time.<sup>12</sup>

In the mid-twelfth century, there is "an almost simultaneous reappearance" of images of

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<sup>9</sup>The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists *hyrned* as the Old English origin of the modern English word "horned." Several examples of texts referring to the "horns" of Moses appear under the *OED* definition for "horned": "having, bearing or wearing an appendage, ornament, etc., called a horn; having horn-like projections or excrescences." Among these examples is Wyclif's 1382 translation of Ex. 34:29, and an earlier text (*Cursor M.* 6655, ca. 1300) that states "Quen moyses had broght þe lagh... þam thoght him hornd apon farr," s.v. "horned," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Second Edition, vol. 7, ed. J. A. Simpson and E. Sc. C. Weiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 391.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 16. Also see Paul Szarmach, "Aelfric as Exegete: Approaches and Examples in the Study of the *Sermones Catholici*," *Hermeneutics and Medieval Culture*, ed. Patrick J. Gallacher and Helen Damico (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989), pp. 237-247.

<sup>11</sup>Mellinkoff, *Horned Moses*, pp. 13-17.

<sup>12</sup>This kind of hyper-literal illumination in which actual horns are attributed to Moses, especially the retroactively-added horns that contradict the textual imagery of the earlier parts of the biblical narrative, might indicate the illuminator's lack of familiarity with the biblical narrative or its exegetical history. A marginal illumination in the fifteenth-century Cincinnati Haggadah is one much later example of this kind of hyper-literalism, in which the illustration does not accurately represent the content of the text but merely one part of one sentence. In this example, the text of the Haggadah states: "Go forth and learn what Laban, the Aramean, designed to do to thy father," and then elaborates on the intentions of Laban to destroy Jacob and all of his future generations by citing a biblical reference for corroboration. However, the marginal illumination merely depicts a young wayfarer walking across a field, book in hand, as if on his way to his studies; literally, "Go forth and learn." Franz Landsberger cites this example and discusses its literalism in "The Illumination of Hebrew Manuscripts in the Middle Ages," in *Jewish Art: An Illustrated History*, ed. Cecil Roth (Tel Aviv: Massadah - P. E. C. Press, Ltd., 1961), pp. 377-422. Also see Bezalel Narkiss, "The Relationship Between the Author, Scribe, Massorator and Illuminator in Medieval Manuscripts," *La Paléographie Hébraïque Médiévale* (Paris: Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, 1974).

Moses with horns after nearly three-quarters of a century since Aelfric's *Paraphrase*.<sup>13</sup> These images appear in the Bury Bible, the Shaftesbury Psalter and the psalter of Henry of Blois, all illuminated in England, and in the Gebhardt Bible from Salzburg, Austria. However, Mellinkoff is uncertain of any connection between the English and the Austrian images. In contrast, she places particular emphasis on the evidence of artistic relationships between England and France. She cites examples of a horned Moses in the twelfth-century portal sculptures of Saint-Benigne Church in Dijon, and of Moses with horns and a halo in a Corbie manuscript and in the Manerius Bible, although she notes that the latter was probably illuminated by an Englishman. In the thirteenth century this horns imagery spread to Bohemia, Switzerland and Spain, although it was only during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that "this motif seeped into the program of Italian artists."<sup>14</sup>

Within a similar time frame and geographical location, there are also instances of Moses portrayed as radiant, or depictions of other known iconographies associated with Moses, including Moses standing on a mountainside with bare or sandalled feet, or with his hands outstretched to receive the tablets of the Law. John Elsner describes a sixth-century apse mosaic that depicts Moses receiving the tablets of the Law at Sinai. In this mosaic Moses is barefoot, with his hands outstretched and his head inclined, but there is no indication of any radiance, halo or nimbus around his head or face. Elsner suggests that the three main images of this apse represent a hierarchical "trio of theophanies" centred on Mt. Sinai and the confrontations with God that occurred there. The mosaic depicting the transfiguration of Christ is in the centre of the apse which, according to Elsner, fulfils this hierarchy and establishes the link between Moses and Christ through the Sinai connection.<sup>15</sup> The absence of an illuminated or transfigured Moses in this apse is almost inconsequential because of the association established between Moses and Christ's transfiguration.

Mellinkoff suggests that various iconographies for Moses were simultaneous, so there was no "smooth transition from horns to rays."<sup>16</sup> For example, images of Moses as radiant appear in the

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<sup>13</sup>The following three paragraphs contain a brief and rather inadequate summary of the material presented in Mellinkoff's chapter "The Spread of the Horned Moses Image," *Horned Moses*, pp. 61-75. Please refer to it and to her more recent article for reproductions of these images and for any relevant bibliographic information.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid*, p. 71.

<sup>15</sup>John Elsner, "The viewer and the vision: The case of the Sinai Apse," in *Art History* 17, 1 (March 1994), pp. 81-102.

<sup>16</sup>Mellinkoff, *Horned Moses*, p. 91.

fourteenth-century paintings of Fra Angelico and the sixteenth-century paintings of Raphael and Perugino, but the motif of Moses with horns was “retained” in the art of fifteenth-century France and the German-speaking areas of Europe. The horned Moses motif generally begins to diminish after the sixteenth-century, although it does not disappear from art entirely.<sup>17</sup> Mellinkoff refers briefly to the medieval association of the Jew with the Devil but does not attempt to investigate the possible relationship of the horned Moses motif to such cases of early anti-Semitism.<sup>18</sup>

In her Israel Museum catalogue on illustrations of stories from the Bible depicted in Islamic painting, Rachel Milstein reports that the first illustrated biblical stories appeared in a Persian historical composition in the fourteenth century. Milstein also notes the general importance of light and flames in Islamic iconography.<sup>19</sup> However, though types of flame-like halos “are used to denote holy images” in Islamic art after the fifteenth century, she recognises the presence of halos in other artwork from the ancient Near East, Christianity and Chinese or Buddhist art.<sup>20</sup> In her article, “The Iconography of Moses in Islamic Art,” Milstein suggests that an iconography of “light” or “fire” in different forms is most often associated with Moses, seldom horns. She cites numerous narratives as examples, including a tradition that Moses’ mother hid him in the oven when the servants of Pharaoh were searching for Israelite babies, and “his face shone like fire and the Egyptians believed that he was burning”; another example suggests that Pharaoh’s wife covered the shining baby Moses with a veil when she was blinded by his light.<sup>21</sup>

In one Qur’anic reference to Moses, he is described as having been struck by a thunderbolt or lightning. The Qur’an states in *The Cow* 2:55: “And when ye said: O Moses! We will not believe

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, pp. 72-75, 90-91.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, pp. 133-135.

<sup>19</sup>Rachel Milstein, *Biblical Stories in Islamic Painting* (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1991), p. 16.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, p. 15; id., “The Iconography of Moses in Islamic Art,” *Jewish Art* 12/13 (1986-1987), p. 204.

<sup>21</sup>Milstein, in “The Iconography of Moses,” p. 204. Her examples are cited from B. Heller, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, s.v. “Musa”; and D. Sidersky, *Les Origines des Légendes Musulmanes* (Paris, 1933), pp. 73-103. In her article, “The Battle Between Good and Evil in Islamic Painting,” Milstein describes an alternate iconography for Moses: “...other manifestations of the Evil Power take part, one by one, in a long and eventful series of battles against Mūsa, who is often depicted in the paintings with light in his hand,” in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabia and Islam* 18 (1994), p. 209. This image may be related to the biblical verse Hab. 3:4, which contains a possible reference to rays of light radiating from a hand. This biblical verse is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

in thee till we see Allah plainly; and even while ye gazed the lightning seized you.”<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Milstein offers one example of a “horned” Moses in a nineteenth-century tapestry in which Moses’ staff turns into a dragon and Moses is depicted with two horn-like shapes protruding from his head. Milstein suggests that this particular image suggests some Christian or “European” influence on Islamic art and explains that “since Moses is rarely depicted with horns in Islamic paintings, this is clearly an imitation of the European tradition.”<sup>23</sup>

ii. *Anti-Semitic implications of Moses’ “horns”*

Jacob Katz points out that many scholars view the period of the Crusades as a major turning point in Jewish history, and emphasises the vulnerability of the Jewish position as it was subjected to persecutions and massacres at that time and afterwards.<sup>24</sup> Whether this period or particular event also plays a role in the development of the “horned Moses” imagery, and eventually its demonic overtones for all Jews, is not suggested explicitly. Nevertheless, Katz provides an adequate description of the difficult position of the Jews in early Medieval Europe. In his study of Jewish-Gentile relations in medieval and modern times, he explains that official protection was sought by and extended to these Jews in a political, economic and theological gesture of the complex attitude of Christianity toward its religious forbearers.<sup>25</sup> In an attempt to clarify the official attitude of the Church in particular toward Jews, Joshua Trachtenberg suggests that there were two Churches that were often in disagreement; “the hierarchy which laid down and defined general principles, and the lesser clergy and the laity who translated principle into practice.”<sup>26</sup> The conflicting Christian

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<sup>22</sup>*Qur’an, The Cow 2:55; The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, trans. Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall (New York: Penguin Books, [n.d.]), p. 37. Note that the Dawood Penguin edition renders this phrase as “When you said to Moses: ‘We will not believe in you until we see God with our own eyes,’ a thunderbolt struck you whilst you were looking on,” *The Koran*, trans. N. J. Dawood (London: Penguin Books, 1990; Fifth edition) p. 14.

<sup>23</sup>The image appears in “Carpet with Scenes from the Life of Moses,” by Mir Muhammad Husayni Sadiq Za’adeh (Iran, Tehran, 1294/1877) in Milstein, *Biblical Stories*, p. 86.

<sup>24</sup>Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup>Katz provides a detailed study of this issue, contrasting Jewish-Gentile interactions on different levels, particularly economic, with descriptions of their religious segregation, and the delicate overlap of their social and domestic activities as both integrated and separate. Katz also presents some of the theological doctrines of each group that explain these conditions, *ibid.*, pp. 3-63.

<sup>26</sup>Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1943), p. 7.

responses to Jews often resulted from this complex situation, especially since the latter group was often less-educated than the former and more inclined to physical action based on these principles.

In relating his study of modern anti-Semitism to specific medieval attitudes toward the Jew, Trachtenberg points to early manifestations of “anti-Jewish prejudice” as the predecessor of modern anti-Semitism. With emphasis on associations of Jews with the Devil, Trachtenberg suggests:

Anti-Jewish prejudice is older and more extensive than Christendom... But its unique demonological character is of medieval origin, with premonitions in earlier times of the turn it was destined to take: the “demonic Jew” was born of a combination of cultural and historical factors peculiar to Christian Europe in the later Middle Ages.<sup>27</sup>

According to Trachtenberg, one such “premonition” is the medieval association of Jews with horns, including the artistic tradition of portraying Moses with horns. Jeffrey Burton Russell describes the Devil portrayed as different animals including apes, dragons or serpents, and with different animal characteristics such as horns, wings and a tail. Russell notes that after the eleventh century the Devil’s “most common animal characteristic... was horns, which still carried the ancient connotation of power.”<sup>28</sup> Russell refers to Mellinkoff’s work in imagery and iconography regarding these horns of power, to emphasise that “the symbol was widely misunderstood. The horns of Moses were thought to represent the evil of the Jews, and the Jews themselves came to be depicted as horned.”<sup>29</sup> Trachtenberg seems to defer to these ancient traditions to suggest the horns of power as what may have been “at the bottom of” Michelangelo’s horned Moses, but he also recognises the influence of “Aquila and the Vulgate” on the textual tradition of the image of Moses.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, Trachtenberg strongly suggests that the association of medieval Jews with horns is nothing less than an association

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>28</sup>Russell refers to Mellinkoff’s *Horned Moses* here, “for the continuation of the iconography of the horns of power into the Middle Ages,” in Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 211, esp. n. 10. These “ancient connotations” of horns include the Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek concepts of “horns” as symbolic of deity, which shall be discussed in greater detail in the section on modern scholarship.

<sup>29</sup>Russell, *Lucifer*, p. 211. On the subject of a fourteenth-century French manuscript illumination depicting Moses with a dozen beams or horns of light protruding in a circle from around his head, Russell notes: “The horns of Moses were originally horns of power; later Christian tradition made them the symbol of the supposed alliance between the Jews and the horned Satan, in Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 177.”

<sup>30</sup>Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, p. 44.

of the Jews with the Devil.<sup>31</sup>

In general, Trachtenberg focuses his attention on official decrees associating medieval Jews with horns and on their sociological repercussions, which included sculptures and etchings portraying Jews standing alongside the Devil in dealings with him, or even with horns themselves.<sup>32</sup> Trachtenberg offers the example of the decree of the Vienna Council in 1267 that Jews had to wear a *pileum cornutum* (horned hat), and that French Jews in the time of Philip III were required to “attach a horn-shaped figure to the customary Jewish badge.”<sup>33</sup> Based on this general attribution of horns to ordinary medieval Jews, Trachtenberg suggests that the origin of the image was “more... than a faulty translation” and that it most likely originates from the longstanding theological association of Jews with Satan which dates back to sources as early as the New Testament.<sup>34</sup>

The tenuous position of the Jews in Medieval Europe illustrates the dangers of this kind of demonic association for the common Jew. These dangers are confirmed in historical records of the general persecution of European Jews and more specific problems involving accusations of “Host Desecration” and “Blood Libels,” the myth of Jewish ritual murder which suggested that Jews murdered Christians for the use of their blood in preparing the Passover matzot.<sup>35</sup> Artistic representations of these phenomena depict Jews in demonic grimaces, often performing unspeakable

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<sup>31</sup>Trachtenberg presents a closer study of the association of the Jews with images of the Devil in his chapter, “With Horns and Tail,” *ibid.*, pp. 44-53.

<sup>32</sup>One irony of these associations of Jews is made eminently clear in Trachtenberg’s description of various Jewish rituals enacted to ward off the Devil, and of specific occasions believed to harness a greater “immunity against the powers of [such] evil.” Included in these rituals is the blowing of the *shofar* (ram’s horn) at the conclusion of Yom Kippur which “confuses and confounds the devil,” a day itself on which “Satan is powerless,” in *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Atheneum, 1939; sixth printing 1982), p. 154.

<sup>33</sup>Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>34</sup>The quote is from p. 44, but Trachtenberg treats this theological attitude in greater detail in his earlier chapters, “Devil Incarnal,” pp. 11-31 and “Antichrist,” pp. 32-43. He cites John 8:44, in which the Jews are described as the progeny of the Devil: “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires...”; and Revelations 2:9 and 3:9 which refer to the “synagogue of Satan,” *ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>35</sup>For more on “Host Desecration,” see Trachtenberg, *ibid.*, pp. 109-123; for more on the myth of “Jewish ritual murder” and “Blood libels,” see Trachtenberg, *ibid.*, pp. 124-155, especially the sixteenth-century images on p. 112 depicting Jewish girls desecrating the host “at the devil’s instigation,” and p. 136 depicting a Jew “conjuring the Devil from blood secured through “ritual murder.” Also see R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), esp. pp. 212-215.

perversions involving animals, excrement and the drinking of blood.<sup>36</sup> Although only some of these images depict the Devil alongside the Jew, or the Jew as the Devil himself, the general demonic association of the Jew in Medieval Europe was cause for tremendous concern. Similarly, any contemporary textual link between the Bible and such imagery as Moses' horns was cause for concern.

### *iii. Moses' "horns" in Medieval Jewish commentaries*

The exegetical material on Ex. 34:29-35 that was consulted for this study includes more than fifty rabbinic commentaries from the past one thousand years whose information extends beyond the limited time frame of this thesis. In truth, one of my main interests at the outset of this study was the issue of medieval Jewish-Christian polemics. This involved studying their responses to the negative imagery of Moses, written at a time when these artistic representations were becoming known and when scholarly interactions were frequent through theological disputations. My original objective was to expose their treatment of the exegetical, theological and polemical issues sparked by attestations of Moses' horns or transfiguration. Although I had expected to uncover an overwhelming Jewish voice that forcefully denied these images of horned Moses and lashed out at Christians for perpetuating them; instead, the silence was deafening.

David Berger notes that examples of anti-Christian works by Jews "are virtually non-existent before the twelfth century."<sup>37</sup> Berger explains that the Jews living under Islamic rule were not under any threat where they lived, therefore they were not internally motivated to write polemics against Christians. However, the literature of the Jews living under Christian rule was subject to heavy scrutiny by the Church and often censorship.<sup>38</sup> Berger and Erwin Rosenthal both note that despite this censorship some anti-Christian remarks did survive in manuscripts of a few exegetes including

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<sup>36</sup>For examples, see the previous note. Also, see the early seventeenth-century images of the *Judensau*, p. 8 and the collection of satiric illustrations in which Jews are pictured alongside or interacting with the Devil (the second-last frame contains another depiction of the *Judensau*), *ibid.*, pp. 28-29; and in Mellinkoff, *Horned Moses*, figs. 123, 125, 127, 128.

<sup>37</sup>David Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages, A Critical Edition of the Nizzahon Vetus* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1996), p. 7.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8. Erwin Rosenthal discusses this scrutiny and censorship in his article, "Anti-Christian polemic in medieval Bible commentaries," *JJS* 10 (1959), pp. 115-116.

Rashi, Rashbam, Abraham Ibn Ezra, David Kimḥi (Radak) and Naḥmanides (Ramban).<sup>39</sup>

With the exception of the few commentaries that I shall now explain in some detail, the medieval rabbinic sources overwhelmingly support interpretations of קרן עור פניו as radiance and power just like their exegetical predecessors. However, they add nothing to the specific resolution of the issue of the iconography of Moses as horned. I suggest three possible explanations for this silence. Perhaps the Jewish non-response was a conscious, collective attempt to ignore the demonic associations of the Jews by Christians and hopefully avoid lending dignity to their persecutions. Or perhaps their general emphasis on Moses' radiance and power represents a kind of "passive" polemic. That is, by offering a consistent alternative to portraying Moses as horned, they actually were denying this demonic imagery. A third possibility is that their invective was reserved for the forum of the theological disputations and thus not to be included in their Bible commentaries, written for other Jews. Rosenthal proposes that their exegetical concerns were not polemical but mainly internal, and suggests that they were "less concerned with convincing Christians than with reassuring and fortifying Jews."<sup>40</sup> However, an achievement of this collective strength required providing for Jews the necessary exegetical responses with which to respond to anti-Judaic claims should they encounter them. Indeed, the few commentators who dealt openly with this issue in their writings are evidence enough that Ex. 34:29-35 was a source of some concern for the Jewish and exegetical community.

Based on my investigations into the general state of medieval Jewish commentaries on this issue, I shall discuss three exegetes whose comments stand out from the others: Rashi, Rashbam and Ibn Ezra. Because he was writing in Hebrew, Rashi's problematic use of the ambiguous קרן may have perpetuated the image of Moses with horns, despite his emphasis on light with the word אור. Rashbam explicitly directed harsh criticism at "anyone" that might think that קרן עור פניו meant actual horns. Ibn Ezra attacked a particular Jewish heretic for explaining how it is possible that Moses' face actually became scaly or horn-like.

It is my opinion that three factors play important roles in affecting these comments. First,

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<sup>39</sup>Berger, *The Jewish-Christian Debate*, p. 24; Rosenthal, "Anti-Christian polemic," p. 116.

<sup>40</sup>Rosenthal, "Anti-Christian polemic," p. 119.

it has been reasonably demonstrated by Ruth Mellinkoff that visual representations of Moses with actual horns first appeared in Bible manuscript illuminations and Church art in Europe during the middle of the eleventh century. Second, significant advances in the scientific or philological approach to biblical exegesis in Spain generated a total revolution in the traditional methods of Jewish interpretation of Scripture. These advances initiated an exegetical challenge of peshat over derash, of literal over allegorical interpretation of the Bible, which affected the commentaries of all Jewish Bible scholars in Europe from the eleventh century on.<sup>41</sup> Third, documentation of the theological disputations between medieval Christian theologians and Jews indicates that biblical polemics and apologetics were prominent in both oral debates and written commentaries from that time.<sup>42</sup> The aforementioned Jewish exegetes, Rashi, Rashbam and Ibn Ezra, appear to have been addressing aspects of each of these three factors in their comments on Ex. 34:29-35.

In eleventh-century France where the rational and scientific academia of the Spanish intellectual renaissance was still unfamiliar, Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes (Rashi) attempted to bridge the gap between traditional midrashic scholarship and peshat. Rashi dedicated himself to deriving the peshat, the simplest or most straightforward meaning of the text, while he maintained a loyalty to the traditional rabbinic teachings and interpretations. As a result of the latter, he also continued to use material from the rabbinic midrashim in his work; for example, *Midrash Tanhuma* and *Sifre Zutta* in his commentary on Ex. 34:29-35.<sup>43</sup>

In the section of his commentary on Ex. 34:29-35 that is more relevant to the current discussion of Jewish-Christian interaction, Rashi explains the visual aspect of the ambiguous phrase קרן עור פניו as a kind of horn that is a light-ray. In this comment, Rashi explains that this

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<sup>41</sup>See Uriel Simon, "The Religious Significance of the Peshat," transl. Edward L. Greenstein, *Tradition* 23, 2 (Winter 1988), pp. 41-63.

<sup>42</sup>Two such Jewish compendia of anti-Christian Polemic are the thirteenth-century *Nizzahon Venus*, trans. David Berger, and the undated *Sefer Nestor Hakomer*. See Joel E. Rembaum, "The Influence of *Sefer Nestor Hakomer* on Medieval Jewish Polemics," *PAAJR* 45 (1978) pp. 155-186; Joseph Dan, "Polemics and Polemical Literature," *EncJud* vol. 13, cols. 790-795.

<sup>43</sup>As there is ongoing research into the authenticity of current "Rashi" manuscripts due to the many discrepancies between them, these following comments "of Rashi" must be viewed with a degree of caution. At this time, it is safest to say that they originate from the School of Rashi, and may reflect additions or changes made by his students or disciples. For more on "Rashi's" historical milieu and the particular exegetical techniques attributed to him, see Sarah Kamin, *Rashi: Peshuto shel Mikra u-Midrasho shel Mikra* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986); Aaron Rothkoff, Menahem Zevi Kaddari, Jona Fraenkel and Israel Moses Ta-Shma, *EncJud*, vol. 13, cols. 1558-1566.

ambiguous phrase implies: לשון קרנים שהאור מבהיק ובולט כמין קרן, (that the language implies a kind of קרנים such that the light radiates like a kind of קרן).<sup>44</sup> Rashi suggests that even if the terminology of the passage *did* refer to horns, it was to a kind of radiating horn like a ray of light. Nonetheless, Rashi's use of the ambiguous Hebrew root קרן to explain קרן עור פניו is problematic because some medieval Christian theologians studied and cited Rashi's biblical commentaries in their own work, in some cases quite extensively. They may have perceived Rashi's use of קרן in this comment as a perpetuation of the "horns" image, despite Rashi's explanation about light.<sup>45</sup>

Interestingly, Rashi also appears to have translated עור (skin) as אור (light) in this comment, which would suggest recourse to the style of the midrashic literature even though there is no specific midrash on Ex. 34:29-35 that suggests this interchange of letters or meanings.<sup>46</sup> Alternatively, Rashi was using אור (light) to communicate the traditional idea of interpreting קרן as radiating rays, even though there is no explicit Hebrew reference to light anywhere in Ex. 34:29-35. In general, Rashi remained devoted to the midrashic sources and the peshat, so he probably tried to glean the most practical and relevant details from often cumbersome and usually non-literal midrashim.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>These Rashi texts were verified in *Torat Hayyim*, vol 2, pt. 2, and in the *BarIlan-CD* database of biblical commentaries (Jerusalem 1959, based on the 1859 Vienna rabbinic Bible). In this comment, קרן and קרנים might be read as a reference to either horns or rays.

<sup>45</sup>For more information on the issue of Christian use of Rashi's Bible commentary, see Herman Hailperin, "De l'utilisation par les chrétiens de l'œuvre de Rachi (1125-1300)," in Manès Sperber, *Rachi: Ouvrage Collectif*. (Paris: Service Technique pour l'Education, 1974), pp. 163-200; Sarah Kamin, "The Relation of Nicholas de Lyre to Rashi in his Commentary on Song of Songs," in *Ben Yehudim le-Notsrim be-farshanut ha-Mikra* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991), pp. 62-72. Gilbert Dahan gives examples of Judaic interpretations from the writings of Peter Comestor, Andrew of St. Victor and others, in "Les interprétations juives dans les commentaires du Pentateuque de Pierre le Chantre," in Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood, eds. *The Bible in the Medieval World, Studies in Church History, Subsidia 4: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 131-155. On the interaction of Jewish and Christian commentators in general, see Kamin, "Affinities Between Jewish and Christian Exegesis in 12th Century Northern France," in *Ben Yehudim le-Notsrim*, pp. 12-26.

<sup>46</sup>The issue of interchangeable letters such as א and ב is discussed in much greater detail in the midrash section of Chapter Three.

<sup>47</sup>According to the claims of his own grandson, Rashbam, Rashi saw advances in the field of literal interpretation during his own lifetime that apparently led him to consider modifying some of his original exegetical comments to conform further with literalist advances. This alleged conversation between Rashi and Rashbam from which this observation is drawn is described by Rashbam in his commentary on Genesis 37:2. Cited in Barry Holtz, ed., *Back to the Sources* (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p. 243. If, indeed, this was the case, it was probably too late in Rashi's life for him to have taken any substantive action toward the desired "modifications" to which Rashbam was alluding. Thus, despite the radical position that Rashi took favouring the peshat in his own time, he nevertheless suffered criticism for not being literal enough in the eyes of later followers of the peshat like Rashbam

Rabbi Samuel ben Meir, also known as Rashbam, was Rashi's grandson. In his brazen and more extreme approach, Rashbam insisted on peshat and rejected the inclusion of the extra layers of midrashic interpretation. He consulted and cited French language glosses and early Spanish dictionaries for definitions and seems to have preferred citing biblical passages directly for his parallels, though did quote rabbinic sources when he may have had no specific recourse to the biblical text.<sup>48</sup> In the case of his comments on Ex. 34:29-35, Rashbam demonstrates knowledge of all of these sources; biblical, rabbinic and scientific. Most importantly for this study, Rashbam was the first Jewish commentator to use his commentary to attack the interpretation of קרן עור פניו as horns. Martin Lochshin suggests that Rashbam was mocking his Christian contemporaries for thinking that Moses literally had horns since this imagery was already a "familiar figure in art" in Rashbam's time. Lochshin cites Nahum Sarna's commentary on Exodus as his source for this reference to horned Moses in art.<sup>49</sup>

Rashbam's commentary on Ex. 34:29 begins by clarifying the phrase קרן עור פניו to be a reference to לשון ההוד (the language of majesty), similar to Rashi's commentary where the term הוד appeared in the question זכה משה לקרני ההוד? from *Midrash Tanhuma* and *Exodus Rabbah*.<sup>50</sup> Rashbam then cites Hab. 3:4, a biblical verse that was also used by the Spanish grammarians,<sup>51</sup> for a seemingly parallel biblical usage of the root קרן that defined it as "rays of light." Rashbam concludes his comments on this passage with the observation that the Torah is rife with homonyms. It would follow that he considered the ambiguity of קרן עור פניו to be one such case. Ultimately, Rashbam has the following harsh reprimand for anyone who might want to suggest that קרן עור פניו actually refers to the horns of an ox, just as the root קרן is used in Deut. 33:17.

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and Ibn Ezra, who took much more extreme stances in their need to seek out the literal meaning of the text.

<sup>48</sup>A. Grossman, "Samuel ben Meir," in *EncJud* vol. 14, cols. 810-818; also see the introduction to *Rashbam's Commentary on Exodus: An Annotated Translation*, ed. and trans. Martin I. Lochshin (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997).

<sup>49</sup>Lochshin, *ibid.*, pp. 422-423.

<sup>50</sup>This issue will be discussed in a later section devoted to analysing rabbinic midrashim on Ex. 34:29-35. These Rashbam texts were verified in *Torat Hayyim*, vol 2, pt. 2, and in the *Barllan-CD* database of biblical commentaries (Jerusalem 1959, based on the 1859 Vienna rabbinic Bible).

<sup>51</sup>Including Menaḥem Ibn Saruk and Jonah Ibn Janah, though Rashbam states specifically that he consulted "Menaḥem" here.

Rashbam states: המדמהו לקרני ראם קרניו אינו אלא שומה (one who compares this [phrase] to 'the horns of the wild-ox' [Deut. 33:17] is nothing but an idiot).<sup>52</sup> While it is not certain that Rashbam was responding directly to a particular incident or commentator, his reprimand is not unjustified. Mellinkoff records the presence of illustrations depicting Moses with horns in England during Rashbam's lifetime, in particular in Aelfric's *Paraphrase* and the Bury Bible. It is reasonable to suggest that Rashbam was exposed to this imagery of horns, or at least that he was aware of it. This might explain Rashbam's harsh invective in his commentary on Ex. 34:29-35.

Abraham Ibn Ezra of Spain, a contemporary of Rashbam and similarly a proponent of literal Bible interpretations, also responded forcefully to an exegetical source that suggested a horned Moses. The difference in the case of Ibn Ezra's response is its direction at a specific individual, whereas Rashbam's target is unnamed or universal. In general, Ibn Ezra is recognised for his attention to etymology, grammar and establishing the literal meaning of the text, but also for his loyalty to the explanations of the talmudic sages on legal matters. Ibn Ezra wrote two different commentaries on some books of the Pentateuch,<sup>53</sup> in which he often digressed and moralized, and which are characterised as thought-provoking, witty and enigmatic, as well as brusque and critical. His commentaries on Ex. 34:29-35 are exemplary of these characteristics.<sup>54</sup>

In his *Short Commentary on the Pentateuch* on Ex. 34:29, Ibn Ezra generally agrees with the traditional rabbinic exegesis, even though his fidelity to peshat often brought him into conflict with rabbinic exegesis over other verses. Here, Ibn Ezra suggests that the phrase קרן עור פניו was meant as a reference to splendour, בטנים זוהר, or to a splendid light. He also cites Hab. 3:4 to support his case. In doing so, not only does Ibn Ezra concur with the Spanish linguists who cited this verse from Habakkuk, but he also reaffirms the link between קרן עור פניו and biblical verses that define this use of קרן as a reference to some kind of shining light. Either Ibn Ezra believed that earlier rabbinic

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<sup>52</sup>Rashbam, Ex. 34:29; translation based on Lochshin, *Rashbam's Commentary on Exodus*, p. 422-423.

<sup>53</sup>Ibn Ezra's commentary on Exodus is written in two versions, one long and one short. Not all rabbinic Bibles contain both versions, although the *Torat Hayyim* (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1988) is one such edition that does. Also, Ibn Ezra's *Short Commentary* was published as a separate volume in Prague in 1840. Citations from Ibn Ezra's comments are taken from *Torat Hayyim*, vol. 2, pt. 2.

<sup>54</sup>Tovia Preschel, "Ibn Ezra, Abraham," in: *EncJud* vol. 8, cols. 1163-1168; Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy*, pp. 104-112.

interpreters had uncovered the true peshat of the verse despite their penchant for midrash, or he was simply concurring with the conclusions of the linguists who suggested that this use of קרן referred to light. His sources are not cited in these comments, so either explanation is possible.

In his *Long Commentary* on Ex. 34:29, Ibn Ezra attacks a Jewish heretic named Ḥiwi<sup>55</sup> for suggesting that Moses' face became shrivelled up and horn-like from fasting while on the mountain. Ḥiwi's conclusion does not necessarily originate from the Christian imagery of Moses with horns, yet the very fact that Ḥiwi suggests a kind of horns to be the correct interpretation of this verse and a possible attribute of Moses is obviously abhorrent to Ibn Ezra. In response to Ḥiwi's suggestion that the Israelites were afraid to come near Moses because of his appearance, Ibn Ezra curses Ḥiwi that his bones should rot: *יִשְׁתַּקוּ עֲצָמוֹת חוּי הַפּוֹשֵׁעַ*.<sup>56</sup>

John Bowman's English translation of assorted Samaritan documents includes a short discourse by the eleventh-century Samaritan writer Abū'l Ḥassan al-Ṣūri that agrees with Ḥiwi's explanation of the cause of Moses' condition although not with the interpretation of the condition itself. This discourse from al-Ṣūri's *Ṭabbākḥ* discusses Moses' ascent to Mt. Sinai and the "marvels" that God wrought upon him there to show the people below that he was a "work of the Lord."<sup>57</sup> These comments exemplify the Samaritan perception of Moses as some kind of deified or elevated being, and contain a clear interpretation of קרן עור פניו as a kind of radiant light. Moses' forty-day fast while on the mountain is the first of these marvels, which al-Ṣūri describes as "such as that no

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<sup>55</sup>Footnotes in the *Torat Hayyim* suggest that Ḥiwi was a heretic living in the time of Saadia Gaon (882-942), see Ibn Ezra (Long Commentary), in *Torat Hayyim*, p. 231, n. 75. This is a reference to the tenth-century Bible critic Ḥiwi al-Balkhi, who wrote *Two Hundred Questions Concerning the Scripture*. For more on Ḥiwi in the time of Saadiah Gaon, see Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy*, p. 26. In a list of exegetical texts related to Ḥiwi al-Balkhi, Israel Davidson cites six examples of Ibn Ezra cursing Ḥiwi in his commentaries: in his *Short Commentary* - Ex. 23:20; in his *Long Commentary* - Gen 1:1, Gen. 3:9, Ex. 14:27, 16:13, 34:29. In these examples, Ibn Ezra refers to him disparagingly as חוּי הַפּוֹשֵׁעַ and חוּי הַבֵּלְבֵי, Ḥiwi the sinner and Ḥiwi the dog. See Israel Davidson, *Saadia's Polemic Against Ḥiwi al-Balkhi* (New York: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1915), pp. 100-102.

<sup>56</sup>Ibn Ezra, in *Torat Hayyim*, p. 231.

<sup>57</sup>John Bowman, trans. and ed., *Samaritan Documents Relating to their History, Religion and Life* (Pittsburgh, PA: The Pickwick Press, 1977), pp. 241-242.

human being could do.”<sup>58</sup> The first marvel relates causally to the second, which al-Ṣūri describes as: “the acquiring of the light on his face, which is referred to by ‘with a ray of light’ after his abstaining from food.”<sup>59</sup> It is interesting to note that the link made here between Moses’ forty-day fast and the subsequent condition of his face is similar to that of Ḥiwi, yet al-Ṣūri’s interpretation of Moses’ condition produces a totally different visual result.<sup>60</sup> What Ḥiwi interprets as horns, al-Ṣūri interprets as light, yet both notions are suggested to have been caused by Moses’ fast.

William Propp is Ḥiwi’s best modern supporter for an interpretation of horn-like skin for Moses. Propp presents the textual and historical issues of Moses’ image from several perspectives, but concludes that “there are weaknesses in interpreting *qaran* as either ‘shone’ or ‘was horned.’ Neither accounts adequately for the reference to Moses’ skin.” Propp prefers an interpretation closer to Ḥiwi’s, which he describes as “eminently reasonable.”<sup>61</sup>

Uriel Simon contends that it was Ibn Ezra’s fidelity to the peshat-method of interpretation that led him to criticise Ḥiwi’s comments and not any fear that Ḥiwi was perpetuating an anti-Judaic image or myth. According to Simon, Ibn Ezra was angry at Ḥiwi for mis-stating the peshat of the verse, a response that can be understood from what is known of Ibn Ezra’s exegetical style. In the lengthy critique that follows his initial attack of Ḥiwi, Ibn Ezra stipulates the improbability of Ḥiwi’s interpretation and confirms that his own treatment of this textual ambiguity is an attempted solution to an exegetical problem and not a polemical statement.<sup>62</sup>

The subjects of Jewish-Christian polemics and the theological disputations in the Middle Ages occupy enough material and questions for another thesis. One sociological aspect of this

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp. 241-242.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid, p. 242.

<sup>60</sup>I was unable to verify al-Ṣūri’s comments in their original language since the manuscripts have not been published and reside in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, England.

<sup>61</sup>William Propp, “Did Moses Have Horns?” *Bible Review*, vol. 4 (Feb 1988), p. 36. This article will be discussed in greater detail in the section on modern scholarship below.

<sup>62</sup>My appreciation to Professor Uriel Simon for personal conversations on this issue, July 1997. For more on Ibn Ezra’s exegetical techniques, see Simon’s article “Toward the exegetical style of R. Abraham Ibn Ezra through three of his commentaries on one verse (article in Hebrew),” *Annual of Bar Ilan University: Studies in Judaica and the Humanities*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer Ltd., 1965), pp. 92-138.

material is related to the implications of Moses' "horns" for the European Jewish community at that time. Two intrinsic theological aspects are Moses' presence on Mt. Sinai at the transfiguration of Christ and his role as representative of the superseded Old Law of the Jewish Bible. All this would involve further investigation into the portrayal of Moses in the exegetical and polemical writings of medieval Christian theologians and interpreters. Because of these various exegetical and theological issues, the interplay of literal interpretation and metaphorical or spiritual interpretation are important to any study of the exegesis of *קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי* in any time period.

#### iv. *Exodus 34:29-35 in post-Reformation Bibles*

To the best of my knowledge, there is no modern Jewish or Christian translation of the Pentateuch that describes Moses with actual horns. This assertion is supported by the comments of various modern scholars who describe the text-tradition of depicting Moses with horns as now corrected or "fixed." Nehama Leibowitz's translator, Aryeh Newman, lists the numerous current Bibles he consulted that concur with a rendering of *קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי* as radiance or shining.<sup>63</sup> James Strachan describes the process of change that this verse underwent in Protestant Bible translations of the sixteenth century. Strachan notes that William Tyndale's 1530 English translation was one of the first Christian Bibles to portray Moses as radiant since the translations that were made before Jerome's Vulgate.<sup>64</sup> Tyndale's version of Ex. 34:29 states: "the skynne of his face shone with beames," although his Pentateuch met up with great resistance and eventually he was executed for his reformist beliefs.<sup>65</sup> Martin Luther's German version of Ex. 34:29 states: "vnd wuste nicht das

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<sup>63</sup>Newman cites the following modern English Bible translations: "cf.: JB [*Jewish Bible, The Holy Scriptures* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1956)]: '...sent forth beams while He talked with him'; NJB [*New Jewish Bible, The Torah, A New Translation* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962)]: '...was radiant since he had spoken with Him'; NEB [*New English Bible* (England: Oxford University Press; Cambridge University Press, 1970)]: '...shone because he had been speaking with the Lord'; Hirsch [*Judaism Eternal* (London: Soncino, 1956)]: '...had become luminous when He spoke to him'; RSV [*The Revised Standard Version*]: '...shone because he had been talking with him,'" in *Studies in Shemot* (Jerusalem: The WZO Department for Torah Education in the Diaspora, 1981), pp. 629-630.

<sup>64</sup>James Strachan, *Early Bible Illustrations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 14.

<sup>65</sup>*William Tyndale's five books of Moses called the Pentateuch, being a verbatim reprint of the edition of MCCCCXXX*, ed. J. I. Mombert, new introd. F. F. Bruce (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press; Sussex: Centaur Press Ltd, 1967), pp. 268-269.

die haut seines Angesichts glentzen.”<sup>66</sup> The version in Tyndale’s Pentateuch is partially comparable to Thomas Cromwell’s 1539 Great Bible, which states “Moses wüst not that the skinne of his face shone in the maner of a home...”<sup>67</sup> According to Strachan, it was only in the Geneva version of 1560 “that Moses’ irrational horns were withdrawn from English bibles.”<sup>68</sup> By the time of the 1611 printing of the Authorised Version or King James Bible, whose “general tone” was influenced by Tyndale’s translation,<sup>69</sup> the notion of a horned Moses in Ex. 34:29-35 was permanently removed. The King James Bible states: “And Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone.”<sup>70</sup>

Ex. 34:29-35 in the Vulgate has a different history of transmission than the Protestant Bibles; the Vulgate still contains Jerome’s original translation of קרן עור פניו as *cornuta esset facies*.<sup>71</sup> The many variant texts of Jerome’s Latin Vulgate were assembled and revised on a directive from the Council of Trent (1543-1563), the completion of which took almost half a century and was concluded under Clement VIII in 1592. Jerome’s Vulgate was recognised as the official *Biblia Vulgata* at the Fourth Session of the Council of Trent in April 1546.<sup>72</sup> Despite these revisions, their Vulgate retained Jerome’s original rendering of קרן עור פניו. The 1609 Douay Old Testament was the first official English translation of the Bible by the Catholic Church and was based on the Vulgate. It preserves Jerome’s etymological rendering of the verse: “And he knew not that his face was homed.”<sup>73</sup> However, the current Catholic Bible in French, *La Bible de Jérusalem*, concurs with the interpretation of Moses’ image now found in Protestant and Jewish translations of the Bible. The French version of Ex. 34:29 renders קרן עור פניו as *la peau de son visage rayonnait*.<sup>74</sup> The modern English Bible *The Jerusalem Bible*, which is based on the French version, states: “...he did not know

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<sup>66</sup>Ex. 34:29; *Die gantze Heilige Schrift Deudsch* (Wittenberg 1545), transl. D. Martin Luther (Munich: Rogner & Bernhard, 1972), p. 190.

<sup>67</sup>Strachan, *Early Bible Illustrations*, p. 14.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Cf. “Authorised Version of the Bible,” in *ODCC*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>70</sup>Ex. 34:29; *The Holy Bible*, King James edition (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1900), p. 95.

<sup>71</sup>Ex. 34:29; *Biblia Sacra*, vol. 1, p. 126.

<sup>72</sup>The history of the evolution of the text of Jerome’s Latin Bible translation is outlined succinctly in “Vulgate,” *ODCC*, pp. 1431-1432.

<sup>73</sup>Ex. 34:29; *The Holy Bible, Douay version* (“first published by the English College at Douay, 1609”), (New York: P. J. Kenedy, 1914), p. 100.

<sup>74</sup>Ex. 34:29; *La Bible de Jérusalem* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1984), p. 122.

that the skin on his face was radiant after speaking with Yahweh.”<sup>75</sup> Overall, it appears from the modern Bibles surveyed that current biblical texts agree in their interpretation of Moses’ condition as some sort of light or radiance, despite any of their links to earlier versions describing Moses as horned.

v. *Contributions of modern commentaries and archaeological scholarship*

Several current Bibles contain footnotes briefly indicating the history of translation of Ex. 34:29-35. They often mention Jerome’s original etymological Latin translation of קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו as *cornuta esset facies*, although they consistently neglect to mention his biblical commentaries. Does this mean that they are generally ignorant of his relevant commentaries, or that they regard the content of these commentaries as irrelevant or unimportant? The latter seems unlikely, but if correct it may only reflect their priority to record the textual source of Moses’ horns and not the exegetical significance or intended meaning of that Latin passage. Some of these footnotes or commentaries also include specific information about the artistic tradition of portraying Moses with horns, and often cite Michelangelo’s fourteenth-century sculpture as an example. In one such note, Nahum Sarna mistakenly and ironically cites Jerome’s commentaries as the basis for *cornuta* in the Vulgate. Sarna states:

The association of *karan* with *keren* gave rise to the mistaken notion that Moses grew horns... The rendering of *karan* by *cornuta* in the Vulgate translation, based on the commentaries of Jerome (ca. 347-ca. 419), helped foster the error, and a horned Moses later became a familiar figure in art from the eleventh century on.<sup>76</sup>

Sarna refers to Michelangelo’s sculpture as evidence of this, and cites Mellinkoff’s *Horned Moses* as his source. Other footnotes are more accurate about the history of the interpretation of this text, though mostly because they are so concise that they exclude most of the often-confused details of

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<sup>75</sup>Ex. 34:29; *The Jerusalem Bible*, ed. Alexander Jones (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 122. The introduction and notes of this edition are based on *La Bible de Jérusalem*, the multi-volume French edition by the Dominican Biblical School in Jerusalem and the subsequent 1956 one-volume edition. According to editor Alexander Jones, the biblical text of this English version was sometimes based on the French then “compared word for word to the Hebrew or Aramaic,” or was made directly from the Hebrew or Greek and “simultaneously compared with the French when questions of variant reading or interpretation arose,” in “Editor’s Foreword,” *The Jerusalem Bible*, p. v.

<sup>76</sup>Nahum Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus* (Philadelphia; New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), p. 219, note on Ex. 34:29.

this issue. For example, J. H. Hertz suggests the link between the Vulgate and the medieval artists, but misrepresents the Vulgate with an English translation of Jerome's Latin version that includes the word "light" as well as "horns." According to Hertz, "The Latin translation of the Bible, the Vulgate, translated, 'his face sent out horns of light.'"<sup>77</sup> His comments suggest that the medieval artists were misled by this version of Ex. 34:29-35, so he was obviously familiar with the artistic tradition of Moses with horns. However, Hertz's English translation of Jerome's Vulgate obscures the problem of Jerome's original words when it suggests that the translation of *cornuta esset facies* is "horns of light."

Some secondary works also limit their entire explanation of the iconography of Moses' "horns" to a single sentence or paragraph that oversimplifies or mis-states the complex history of the interpretation of קרן עור פניו. How ironic that in a book entitled *Images of Moses*, which addresses many different issues related to Moses, the author only briefly mentions the issue of Moses' ambiguous condition in a short comment related to Michelangelo's sculpture. In this comment, David J. Silver describes his personal attitude to the issue of Moses' horns as "slightly amused."<sup>78</sup> Perhaps some modern scholars are so far removed from the era in which it was necessary to defend the image of the Jew against demonic associations that nowadays a medieval image depicting Moses with horns is irrelevant or undramatic. Silver states:

A rather impressive marble copy of Michelangelo's Moses sits in a corridor just outside my office... I am slightly amused, certainly not seriously disturbed, by the horns, the result of Jerome's limited Hebrew vocabulary and the acceptance of his Vulgate translation by the Roman Church.<sup>79</sup>

Silver avoids judgemental words like "mistake" or "mistranslation" to explain this image based on the Vulgate, but does suggest that "Jerome's limited Hebrew vocabulary" was one of its causes.<sup>80</sup> Based on the historical information that describes Jerome's Hebrew studies, including Jerome's own comments about this lengthy and difficult process, Jerome's Hebrew vocabulary was probably much

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<sup>77</sup>J. H. Hertz, ed., *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs, Hebrew Text, English Translation and Commentary*, second edition (London: Soncino Press, 1987), p. 368, n. 29. In his 1936 preface, Hertz notes that he was assisted by A. Cohen in the preparation of this part of the commentary, p. vii.

<sup>78</sup>David J. Silver, *Images of Moses* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1982), p. 140.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

better than Silver imagines.<sup>81</sup> Ultimately, Silver explains that he finds a different aspect of Michelangelo's statue disturbing. He is disturbed by the blank tablets held by Moses that, according to him, are a result of Michelangelo's carving of a Christian Moses and not the bearer of God's Law to the Jews. In *Images of Moses*, Silver disregards the entire issue of the physical image of Moses for what he describes as a "total" lack of biblical descriptions of Moses' physique and of ancient artistic portrayals of Moses. Silver asserts that "the Biblical report... does not contain a single line of physical description [of Moses]."<sup>82</sup> However, this assertion might be questioned in light of the imagery suggested by קרן עור פניו in Ex. 34:29-35.

Modern scholars who discuss these verses as a possible reference to a "horned" Moses often attempt to show that in ancient Near Eastern context it was normal to associate a leader with horns.<sup>83</sup> Given the degeneration of this image into its demonic implications in the Middle Ages, these scholars are diligent to point out that such horns in the ancient world were a positive image, a symbol of divinity and power. In other cases, however, some modern scholars propose that these passages imply divinity and power through ancient imagery of light and sun, and not horns.

On both sides of this issue, modern scholars use historical and archaeological information to explain the physical phenomenon of Moses in its ancient context, as "radiant" or "horned." Examples supporting "rays of light" include Sarna's association of Moses' radiance with *melammu*, an "encompassing, awe-inspiring luminosity...taken to be a characteristic attribute of divinity" in ancient Mesopotamia;<sup>84</sup> Gunther Plaut's assertion that "although the verb is related to the word קרן (*keren*), its figurative meaning is well attested in Akkadian prayers";<sup>85</sup> Julian Morgenstern's association of Moses' "shining face" with the light of God from the Assyro-Babylonian tradition of the sun god Shamash depicted on the "Hamurappi-stone";<sup>86</sup> and Benjamin Scolnic's reference to the

<sup>81</sup>This subject is discussed in much greater detail in Chapter Five.

<sup>82</sup>Silver, *Images of Moses*, p. 5. For Silver's discussion of this issue, see *ibid.*, pp. 3-13, esp. 4-6 and 9.

<sup>83</sup>See Mellinkoff's chapter "Ancient Use of Horns on Helmets Reflected in the Horned Headdress of Moses in the Aelfric Paraphrase," *Horned Moses*, pp. 37-57. Mellinkoff cites numerous examples from ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, and also Northern Europe, i.e., Viksø helmets (ca. 800 - 400 B.C.E.) from Scandinavia.

<sup>84</sup>Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus*, p. 221.

<sup>85</sup>Gunther Plaut, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981), p. 661.

<sup>86</sup>Julian Morgenstern, "Moses with the Shining Face," *HUCA* 2 (1925) 8-9.

Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, which describes the gods as “those shining ones who live in rays of light,” and to depictions of gods with rays of light emitting from their hands.<sup>87</sup> William Propp’s article discusses numerous ancient explanations, including the Mesopotamian radiance mentioned above, known in Akkadian as *melammu*, and that in the Sumerian language “the word *SI*, ‘horn,’ betokens ‘radiance’ as well.”<sup>88</sup>

Examples supporting “horns” include material from Mellinkoff’s research on the symbolism of horns as “divinity, honor, power” throughout the history of civilisation;<sup>89</sup> and Propp’s association of Moses’ “horns” with the horned *agū*, “the crown of the gods” worn by Naram-Sin of Akkad (c.2250 B.C.E).<sup>90</sup> Propp’s own conclusion, however, stems from the suggestion of Hiwi al-Balkhi that Moses’ fast on the mountain caused his skin to become dried up and hardened like a horn. Propp submits that this hardened skin was a result of a skin condition called keratosis,

contracted from prolonged exposure to radiation such as sunlight... caused by a thickening of the layer of skin called keratin. Interestingly, the words ‘keratosis’ and ‘keratin’ derive from the Greek word *keras*, meaning ‘horn’. Since exposure to radiation causes horny skin, we are nearing a correct interpretation of the Exodus passage.<sup>91</sup>

While Propp does not claim to have solved the argument over the interpretation of קֶרֶן, he adds his own interpretation to the fodder of a debate that he does not feel can be explained away as easily as some commentators have attempted. In my opinion, Propp’s two articles on this subject contain the broadest assemblage of sources on the history of interpretation of this ambiguous passage, and he makes a strong argument for his preferred interpretation of a physical skin disfigurement.<sup>92</sup> However, it is not my intention here to seek the “most correct” interpretation of קֶרֶן עוֹר פְּנֵי or to debate others, rather simply to report on the modern scholars who address Moses’ image. Although the various scholarly conclusions described above do not all agree, particularly noteworthy is their

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<sup>87</sup>Benjamin Scolnic “Moses and the Horns of Power,” *Judaism* 40 (1991) pp. 576.

<sup>88</sup>Propp, “Did Moses Have Horns?” pp. 33-34.

<sup>89</sup>Mellinkoff, *Horned Moses*, esp. pp. 3-5, 37-57 and figs. 27-46;

<sup>90</sup>Propp, “Did Moses Have Horns?” p.32.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 37; Also see *idem*, “The Skin of Moses’ Face - Transfigured or Disfigured?” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987), pp. 375-386, for a more detailed exposition of Propp’s views.

common historical approach to this ancient Near Eastern ambiguity.

Some modern scholars address moral and theological aspects of this passage. These publications are not fixated on obtaining a rational definition of the terminology of Ex. 34:29-35 in the context of the ancient Near East; rather they explore other aspects of Moses' image in the biblical narrative. David Gelernter discusses the theme of Moses' concealment in this narrative, based on the veil with which Moses covers his face after discovering that the Israelites are afraid of his condition.<sup>93</sup> Gelernter focuses on notions of Moses' strength character as a leader, in response to Scolnic's article, "Moses and the Horns of Power." S. Dean McBride describes Moses as a "faithful mediator... transformed into the human executor of God's sovereign presence," with emphasis on this role as a model for his people.<sup>94</sup>

Other scholars apply a variety of modern critical methods of analysis to Moses and the events of his life. S. A. Nigosian writes about perceptions of Moses' character in the various streams of this critical approach, but makes no mention of the issues surrounding the interpretation of Moses' physical appearance in Ex. 34:29-35.<sup>95</sup> In his article "Moses in Contemporary Theology," Frederick Herzog addresses the perceptions of Moses in the writings of several hermeneutical giants of the modern era, including Friedrich Scheleiermacher and Karl Barth.<sup>96</sup> Herzog also returns to the specific issue of Moses at Sinai in his discussion of Moses' significance as a "patriarch" in light of "feminist theological concerns" regarding the gender of God and pro-male biases inherent in Mosaic Law. Herzog paraphrases the argument of Judith Plaskow that from a feminist perspective Moses' position of authority at Sinai "gets Israel off on the wrong foot."<sup>97</sup> Plaskow suggests that the "living memory" of Sinai perpetuates the patriarchy of this covenant.<sup>98</sup> However, neither Herzog nor

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<sup>93</sup>David Gelernter, "Who is the Man Beneath the Veil?" *Conservative Judaism* 47, 3 (1995), pp. 13-23.

<sup>94</sup>S. Dean McBride, "Transcendent Authority: The Role of Moses in Old Testament Traditions," *Interpretation* (Richmond) 44 (1990), p. 236.

<sup>95</sup>S. A. Nigosian, "Moses as They Saw Him," *Vetus Testamentum* XLIII, 3 (1993), pp. 339-350. Nigosian's footnotes are extensive.

<sup>96</sup>Frederick Herzog, "Moses in Contemporary Theology," *Interpretation* (Richmond) 44 (1990), esp. pp. 253-256.

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 260-261.

<sup>98</sup>Judith Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990) p. 25-31.

Plaskow has any comment on the visual image of Moses. Martin Noth applies the principles of the documentary hypothesis to ascertain the source of these verses, but mostly concludes that they reflect a “special tradition” used to explain Moses’ veil. Noth suggests that this veil is directly linked to the priests’ masks of ancient Egypt, but that the entire concept of Moses’ radiance and his veil was developed to avoid a problem that “the Old Testament belief in God could not of course accept the original significance of the mask.”<sup>99</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

This introduction provided an ample overview to the broad history of treatment of Moses’ horns through its appearance in medieval religious art and possible origins in other ancient Near Eastern trends, as well as its impact on the social history of the Jews and its renewed importance to modern scholars. Most of the exegetical materials that comprise the rest of this study are from the period of scholarship that Harry Orlinsky and Robert Bratcher refer to as “the first great age of Bible translation (200 B.C.E. - 400 C.E.),”<sup>100</sup> and they are intrinsically linked to the references outlined in the pages above. Despite the fact that the medieval and modern writers often base their own conclusions on these early texts and exegetical materials, these later presentations are limited. Thus a closer investigation of each subsequent period of scholarship is warranted.

There are several defining questions for which answers shall be attempted in the upcoming chapters. In general, what is the early exegetical tradition in Jewish and Christian scholarship on the ambiguity of פָּנָיו עוֹרָה קֶרֶן in Ex. 34:29-35 and on the appearance or condition of Moses’ face at Mt. Sinai? Were there *any* early commentators or translators in Jerome’s purview who portrayed Moses as horned, or was this exegetical and iconographical depiction an anomaly to all of them? Most specifically, was “Moses with horns” Jerome’s intended image, or was it simply the mistake of the later medieval artists who mis-used the information contained in his translation and biblical commentaries?

In short, this thesis is about the early history of Jewish and Christian Bible translation and

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<sup>99</sup>Martin Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962) p. 267.

<sup>100</sup>Harry M. Orlinsky and Robert G. T. Bratcher. *A History of Bible Translation and the North American Contribution* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 1-10.

interpretation, viewed through the limiting scope of the issue of Moses' "horns." The historical overview in this introduction should suffice to demonstrate the breadth of this issue in all of its theological, sociological and iconographic aspects. My principal objective is to enlist relevant historical information in the analysis of these early exegetical documents and to attempt to understand how different exegetical and theological issues affect their translations and interpretations of Ex. 34:29-35, קרן עור פניו, and the peculiar condition of Moses' face.

## Chapter Two

### קרן עור פניו in the Masoretic text

#### I. Introduction

This chapter will present evidence from the Masoretic text that builds an argument for the complexity and ambiguity of the phrase קרן עור פניו in Ex. 34:29-35 to begin to explain Jerome's use of *cornuta errat facies* to convey his etymological Latin translation of the Hebrew text. This evidence includes other Hebrew Bible passages that contain different conjugations of the ambiguous root קרן. However, there are no other biblical appearances of this phrase against which its actual meaning might be compared.

#### i. Inner-biblical exegesis and inter-textuality

The exegetical technique of pointing out similarities between biblical verses is known to some modern academics as "inter-textuality" and was called גזירה שוה by rabbinic interpreters. Anthony Thiselton attributes the origin of the term inter-textuality to Julia Kristeva in her work on semiotics, stating:

The term intertextuality denotes this transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another; but since this term has often been understood in the broad sense of 'study of sources' we prefer the term transposition because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation.<sup>1</sup>

Inter-textuality, or transposition, is similar in premise to the phenomenon of "inner-biblical exegesis" that Michael Fishbane has identified to describe the use of biblical texts by each other, though Kristeva's phenomenon addresses a much more vast body of literature.<sup>2</sup> Fishbane describes the urgency of such biblical exegesis as the response to some sort of "practical crisis" such as "the

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<sup>1</sup>Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, (Eng. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 59-60 (author's italics), cited in Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992) pp. 42 and 81-82.

<sup>2</sup>Fishbane summarises "inner-biblical exegesis" in the first chapter of his collection of essays, *The Garments of Torah* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 3-18, and treats this topic at great length in his earlier book, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

incomprehensibility of a word or a rule, or the failure of the covenantal tradition to engage its audience.”<sup>3</sup> Fishbane’s “inner-biblical exegesis” helps to explain ambiguous words or phrases, but also clarifies the ancient transmission of historical information and the practical application of biblical laws at that time.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of קרן עור פניו, inner-biblical exegesis might constitute a later biblical document in which part of the original verse or event was expanded on or enlisted in some other religious or cultural circumstance. However, the ambiguous phrase קרן עור פניו is unique to the Bible except for its three occurrences in Ex. 34:29-35. There are no such “later verses” to which our phrase may be definitively compared, despite the assuredness of many exegetes in enlisting biblical verses to lend support to a particular interpretation of it.

To the scrupulous scholar, the “correct” meaning of that phrase remains elusive.<sup>5</sup> However, the root קרן is polysemous, and the different meanings of its usages throughout the Bible emphasise its ambiguity and potential for revision and mis-use. These other usages play an important role in the history of the interpretation of Ex. 34:29-35.

## II. The Masoretic text

The first objective of this section is to examine Ex. 34:29-35 and to discuss the phrases that are most important to this study. This will introduce the second objective of this section, which aims to discuss some other biblical verses that contain usages of the root קרן, especially those later cited as proof texts. Indeed, since Ex. 34:29-35 contains the sole three instances of קרן עור פניו in the Bible and since the noun קרן is so often translated as ‘horn’,<sup>6</sup> it is helpful to look at other biblical verses when attempting to delineate the possible meaning(s) of קרן עור פניו.

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<sup>3</sup>Fishbane, *The Garments of Torah*, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>One example of this is Jer. 17:21-22, which Fishbane refers to as “exegetical addenda to Sabbath rules,” which he compares to the earlier passage Deut. 5:12-14, in *The Garments of Torah*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>5</sup>Propp expresses this point most succinctly: “I realize that my explanation of *qāran* is unlikely to put the argument to rest. But it will, I believe, enrich the debate,” in “Did Moses Have Horns?” p. 37.

<sup>6</sup>See *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (hereafter *BDB*), ed. Francis Brown (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publ., 1979), pp. 901b-902a:7161, p. 1111b:7162; Alcalay, *Dictionary*, cols. 2350-2351.

i. *Exodus 34:29-35*

In the seventh edition of *Biblia Hebraica*, a twentieth-century critical edition of the Masoretic text, Rudolf Kittel does not record any textual variants for the phrase קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו.<sup>7</sup> The Masoretic text of Ex: 34:29-35 states:

וַיְהִי בְרִדְתָּ מֹשֶׁה מֵהַר סִינַי וְשָׁנִי לַחַת הָעֵדוּת בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה בְּרִדְתּוֹ מִן הַהָר וּמֹשֶׁה לֹא יָדָע  
כִּי קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו בְּדַבְּרוֹ אִתּוֹ: וַיֵּרָא אֶהָרֶן וְכָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת מֹשֶׁה וְהָנָה קָרַן עוֹר  
פָּנָיו וַיִּירָאוּ מִגֹּשֶׁת אֱלֹהִים: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֵלָיו אֶהָרֶן וְכָל הַנְּשִׂאִים בְּעֵרָה  
וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֱלֹהִים: וְאַחֲרָי כֵּן נִגְשׂוּ כָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּצְוּם אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ה' אִתּוֹ  
בְּהַר סִינַי: וַיִּכַּל מֹשֶׁה מְדַבֵּר אִתָּם וַיִּתֵּן עַל פָּנָיו מַסּוּהָ: וּבִבְאֵ מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָיו ה' לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ  
יָסִיר אֶת הַמַּסּוּהָ עַד צֵאתוֹ וַיִּצֵא וְדַבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת אֲשֶׁר יָצָה: וַרְאוּ בְנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת פָּנָיו מֹשֶׁה כִּי קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו מֹשֶׁה וְהִשִּׁיב מֹשֶׁה אֶת הַמַּסּוּהָ עַל פָּנָיו עַד  
בֹּאוֹ לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ:

(And so, Moses came down from Mt. Sinai. As Moses came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, Moses did not know that קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו since his speaking with Him; Aaron and all of the Israelites saw Moses and that קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו, and they were afraid to come near him; Moses called to them and Aaron and all of the elders in the assembly returned to him and Moses spoke to them; And afterward, all of the Israelites came near and he instructed them with all God had said to him on Mt. Sinai; When Moses finished speaking to them, he placed a veil over his face; When Moses went before God he removed the veil from his face until he went out, and when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded; And the Israelites saw the face of Moses, that קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו Moses' face, so Moses replaced the veil over his face until he went in to speak with Him.)<sup>8</sup>

Despite Kittel's claims of "the greatest possible thoroughness,"<sup>9</sup> many scholars including Harry Orlinsky have demonstrated the unreliability of the information in Kittel's critical apparatus. Orlinsky calls the *Biblia Hebraica* "a generally misleading work" and includes the following problems in his criticism: "Nearly every line of the footnotes in Kittel's Bible has errors of omission and commission, as regards both the primary and the secondary versions, and the quality

<sup>7</sup>Kittel does note, however, a midrashic expansion of Ex. 34:35 in the Aramaic targum Pseudo-Jonathan, in *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 133, n. 35. This expansion will be addressed in the section on targumim in Chapter Four.

<sup>8</sup>Ex. 34:29-35; *Biblia Hebraica*, ed. Kittel, p. 133.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p. xxviii. In this 1929 introduction, Kittel outlines the complex process of verification undertaken in the preparation of the *Biblia Hebraica*. Kittel emphasises Alexander Sperber's use of additional evidence from the targums, Samaritan and Syriac texts, as well as Greek and Latin translations of the Bible, to determine variants.

of the Hebrew emendations there proposed is all too frequently inferior.”<sup>10</sup> Despite these criticisms of Kittel’s work, there are also no textual variants noted for קרן עור פניו in any other Hebrew Bible consulted for this study.<sup>11</sup>

Linguistic science has enabled medieval and modern scholars to address the grammatical nuances of קרן עור פניו in Ex. 34:29-35. Another exegetical technique also common to scholars of this century and medieval linguists such as Menahem Ibn Saruk and Jonah Ibn Janah is the comparison of verses containing textual ambiguities to other biblical verses with similar roots or conjugations. The exegetical techniques of linguistic science are familiar to the history of Bible scholarship and seem to reflect a rationalistic attempt to veer away from theology to explain the language of the text. Some modern scholars attempt to blend the philological and the theological. R. Moberly points out that the root קרן appears in verbal form only four times in the Bible: Ex. 34:29, 30, 35 and Ps. 69:32,<sup>12</sup> and explains that “it is natural to interpret the Qal as ‘have horns’” since the *hiph’il* of the root קרן in Ps. 69 “is ‘bring forth horns’... and the noun in the OT always means ‘horn.’”<sup>13</sup> However, Moberly is unsatisfied with the conclusion emerging from his philological investigation and thus relies on the “context” of the verse to bring it into agreement with normative theological interpretation: “On philological grounds the use of קרן in Ex. 34 should mean that Moses had horns yet the context demands the sense of ‘shine’.”<sup>14</sup> Moberly’s parallelistic techniques require further attention, but what is most evident from his statements is the scholarly blending of philological techniques with theological conclusions, since his recourse to the “context” of the verse seems to be a reference to the exegetical history of the text.

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<sup>10</sup>Harry Orlinsky, “The Hebrew Text and the Ancient Versions,” in *Essays in Bible Translation* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974), p. 395.

<sup>11</sup>See the Bibliography attached for full references of Hebrew Bibles consulted for this study.

<sup>12</sup>Ps. 69:31, in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, Revised Standard Version* (hereafter *OAB-RSV*), ed. Herbert May and Bruce Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 708.

<sup>13</sup>R.W.L. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1983), pp. 106-109, 210. Despite Moberly’s assertion here of the consistency of the meaning of “horn” in the Hebrew Bible, modern scholars have pointed out ancient (Mesopotamian, Sumerian, and Assyro-Babylonian) images and ideas and suggest, that in its historical context, קרן may have referred to “horns” or “radiance” or “power.” See the earlier discussion of historical context in the introductory chapter.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 108.

ii. *Psalms 69:32, Psalms 89:25 and Habakkuk 3:4*

Ps. 69:32, to which Moberly refers, states: וְהִיטֵב לַיהוָה מִשׁוֹר פֶּר מִקָּרִין מִפְּרִין (That will please the Lord more than oxen, than *bulls with horns* and hooves.). In this verse, the use of the root קרן in the participle פֶּר מִקָּרִין conveys the not-unusual image of a horned bull, while its *hiph'il* conjugation presents a concrete and legitimate example of the root קרן in an active, verbal form. If a philological parallel is applied to Ex. 34:29-35, the verb קָרַן should mean 'became horned' even though the resulting visual image attributed to a human seems extremely unusual. Nevertheless, Ps. 69:32 appears to offer concrete textual support to this philological reading of קָרַן עוֹר פִּנְיוֹ. Because the example from Psalms is so clear and the use of this imagery there is not unusual, it does not require us to address issues of figurative language in Psalms, though the appearance of this "horned" imagery in Exodus has been cause for concern throughout two thousand years of biblical interpretation.

Ernest Klein defines the verb קָרַן in two ways: (1) to grow horns; (2) to send out rays, to beam, radiate; and provides a list of various conjugations for each definition, though he distinguishes that the *hiph'il* conjugation of the former applies only to the passage from Psalms, and the *qal* conjugation of the latter applies only to these three verses from Exodus.<sup>15</sup> These definitions are similar to those in the biblical dictionary of eleventh-century grammarian Menaḥem Ibn Saruk, who offered the same two definitions by providing biblical verses to support his claim.<sup>16</sup> Amos Ḥakham appears to have a working definition of "rays of light" in his explanation of the *qal* conjugation of קָרַן in Ex. 34:29-35. He suggests that Moses was not actually *giving off* rays of light, but was *receiving* them instead, since the former would have required the *hiph'il* conjugation. Ḥakham explains this 'receipt' of rays with a theological polemic about Moses' light and greatness both

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<sup>15</sup>Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1987), p. 595.

<sup>16</sup>See: Menaḥem Ibn Saruk, *Mahberet Menahem (Hevrat Me-'orerey Yeshenim, Jerusalem 1854)*, root: קָרַן. While Klein's dictionary does not profess to limit itself to biblical sources, the main difference between them is Klein's sophistication in linguistic science, including assembling a list of related words from other ancient languages, grammatical notes and lists of derivatives for each term. In contrast, Ibn Saruk's *Mahberet Menahem* comprises rudimentary lists of biblical verses containing examples of each definition of that root.

originating from God, irrelevant to the matter above though in keeping with normative Jewish exegesis.<sup>17</sup>

Several other biblical verses also use “horn” metaphorically as an idiom meaning power and prosperity, and not as a reference to actual horns: Ps. 89:25, *ואמונתו וחסדו עמי ובשמי הרום קרנו* (My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; his horn shall be exalted through My name),<sup>18</sup> and Lam. 2:3, *גדע בחרו אף כל קרן ישראל* (In blazing anger He has cut down all the might of Israel...).<sup>19</sup> It is surprising that rabbinic commentators on Ex. 34:29-35 did not enlist these verses more frequently to support metaphoric readings of forms of *קרן*, unless, perhaps, they considered “rays” or “glory” to be the literal reading of the verse and wanted to avoid an association with metaphoric exegesis and its theological issues.

Notably absent from Klein’s definition of *קרן* as “to send out rays” is any reference to Hab. 3:4: *וגנה כאור ההיה קרנים מידו לו ושם חביון עזה* (It is a brilliant light which gives off rays on every side - and therein His glory is enveloped),<sup>20</sup> a verse frequently listed as biblical support of this definition, in particular by Ibn Saruk and others. This is the only biblical verse in which any form of the root *קרן* and *אור* (light) appear together. Nehama Leibowitz points out the parallelism in this verse from Habakkuk to explain the reliance of the rabbinic commentators on it in their explanations of *קרן עור פניו*: “A brightness as the light appeared/ rays from His hand to him...”<sup>21</sup> This parallelism attributes total significance to the presence of *אור* in a verse describing *קרנים*, which would thus be interpreted as rays of light. But perhaps the greater parallelism is between the description of the brilliant light (in the first half of the verse) and the glory of God (in the second

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<sup>17</sup>Amos Hakham, *Da'at Miqra': Sefer Shemot*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1991), pp. 347-348.

<sup>18</sup>Ps. 89:25, translation from *JPS-Tanakh*, p. 1214. The *Koren-JB* translation of this verse is almost identical (Jerusalem: Koren Publishers, 1989), p. 770.

<sup>19</sup>Lam. 2:3, translation from *JPS-Tanakh*, p. 1429. Or *Koren-JB*: “He has cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Yisra’el...,” p. 870. This verse, as well as the previous verse, demonstrates the English translators enlisting the word ‘horn’ for *קרן* or *קרנו* without implying actual horns, thereby requiring a figurative reading of the English.

<sup>20</sup>Hab. 3:4, translation from *JPS-Tanakh*, p. 1067. Please note that the JPS footnotes to this verse state: “meaning of Heb. uncertain,” n. c-c.

<sup>21</sup>Nehama Leibowitz, *Studies in Shemot (Exodus)*, part 2, trans. Aryeh Newman (Jerusalem: The WZO Department for Torah Education and Culture in the Diaspora, 1981), p. 632.

half of the verse), reinforcing the association of Hab. 3:4 with traditional interpretations of Moses' קרניים as God's light or glory.<sup>22</sup>

However, while Hab. 3:4 does recur as a proof-text in rabbinic commentaries,<sup>23</sup> other modern scholars have expressed uncertainty over its translation and interpretation. Jean-Christophe Attias returns to the option of a literal interpretation of קרניים in this verse, pointing out that *corne* (horn) in biblical language often symbolises *puissance* (power or force).<sup>24</sup> Propp describes Hab. 3:4 as “a dangerous proof-text, since it is manifestly corrupt,” and lists a number of philological problems with interpreting this verse as a reference to rays of light.<sup>25</sup> These scholars raise concerns that Hab. 3:4 should not be considered a reliable proof-text for Ex 34:29-35 since there is uncertainty over its own meaning.<sup>26</sup>

### iii. Psalms 34:6 and Numbers 6:24-26

Since Moses' קרן עור פניו occurs after an encounter with God on Mt. Sinai, Propp discusses the visual imagery of biblical verses in which there is a direct reference to shining following an encounter with God, namely Ps. 34:6, הִבִּיטוּ אֵלָיו וְנִהְרָו וּפְנֵיהֶם אֶל יְהוָה (Men look to Him and

<sup>22</sup>For more on “parallelism,” see Robert Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature* (USA: Basic Books, 1992), esp. pp. 14, 73, and his chapter on poetry, pp. 171-190.

<sup>23</sup>Including Rashi, Rashbam, and Ibn Ezra.

<sup>24</sup>Noting that Hab. 3:4 is a problematic verse, Attias discusses both interpretations as ways of understanding Hab. 3:4: *Il est certes bien question de <<lumière>>, ou d'<<éclat>>, au début du verset - ce qui semble autoriser une traduction de karnayim par <<rayons>>. Mais n'est-il pas question aussi, dans la dernière partie de ce même verset, de <<force>> ou de <<puissance>>, et pourrait-on pas justement en tirer argument pour traduire littéralement par <<cornes>>, sachant que la corne, dans la langue biblique, est régulièrement symbole de puissance?* in “Moïse Cornu?” *Études Mongoles et Sibériennes* 26 (1995) pp. 128-129.

<sup>25</sup>Propp “Transfigured or Disfigured?” p. 380. Propp cites W.F. Albright's rejection of interpreting ‘rays’ instead of ‘horns’ in this verse, in “The Psalm of Habakkuk,” *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy Presented to Professor Theodore H. Robinson* (ed. H. H. Rowley; Edinburgh: Clark, 1950) 14, n. 1.

<sup>26</sup>Aside from Propp and Attias, these critics of Hab. 3:4 include the JPS - *Tanakh* (as noted in the earlier footnote); Benjamin Scolnic: “Keren has a range of meaning from “horn” to “power,” but it does not usually seem to have any associations with “rays of light,” except perhaps in the problematic Habakkuk 3:4,” “Moses and the Horns of Power,” *Judaism* 40 (1991) p. 572; Benno Jacob: “...the extraordinary idea and portrayal of two fiery bundles of raylike horns which came from the forehead of Moses. This cannot be justified by citing *qar-na-yim mi-ya-do lo* (Hab 3:4), which no one has been able to understand,” *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus*, Walter Jacob, trans. (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1992) p. 1005.

are radiant; let their faces not be downcast).<sup>27</sup> Although “neither uses *qāran* or refers to skin,” Propp suggests that “based on these texts, we could expect that Moses’ face likewise shone when he saw God.”<sup>28</sup> However, to introduce his own rebuttal, he adds: “Yet there are objections to this view, too.”<sup>29</sup> In keeping with the ancient traditions of the sun god and with the rabbinic midrashim that link Moses’ light with God’s glory, Propp’s analysis offers some support for the idea that God’s face shone. But, he also draws our attention to this peculiarities of the word choice in Ex. 34:29-35 and to a possible explanation of the author’s intent. He states that in Num. 6:25:

God’s shining face is a blessing, indicating his beneficent disposition. This is a positive, reassuring shining, not a frightening one - it hardly explains why the Israelites were frightened at Moses’ face when he returned from seeing God... If *qāran* does mean “shone,” perhaps the author of the Exodus passage chose this rare word precisely to avoid the usual positive connotations of “his face shone.”<sup>30</sup>

In this case, Propp explains a literal reading of the text depicting God’s face as actually shining as a metaphor for God’s beneficence.<sup>31</sup> However, Propp’s speculation about the intention of “the author of the Exodus passage” in choosing the rare קָרַן raises literary and theological issues beyond the scope of this discussion.

### III. Conclusion

The ambiguity of קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו is not easily answered by looking at other biblical usages of the root קָרַן, since in every case the meaning of the comparable verse is not directly applicable to Ex. 34:29-35 or is unclear itself. Yet each of these verses contains general information about the use

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<sup>27</sup>Ps. 34:6, translation from *JPS-Tanakh*, p. 1144. Propp identifies Isaiah 60:1-5 as another example of this, in “Did Moses Have Horns?” p. 35.

<sup>28</sup>Propp, *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>30</sup>Propp is referring to the text of the priestly benediction (Num.6:24-26):  
 יְבָרֶכֶךָ ה' וְשִׁמְרֶךָ: יֵאָר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶךָ: יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשַּׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:  
 (May the Lord bless and protect you; May the Lord shine his face upon you and be gracious unto you; May the Lord lift up His face to you and grant you peace), *ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>31</sup>Alternatively, Julian Morgenstern does perceive the priestly blessing as a reference to the radiance of God’s face. Morgenstern states: “...another interesting development of the concept of Yahwe with the radiant countenance, is the idea that he upon whom Yahwe would let His countenance shine would enjoy His favor,” in “Moses with the Shining Face,” *HUCA* 2 (1925) p. 27, n. 51.

of קרן in an ancient context that gives some insight into the interpretation of קרן עור פניו. This kind of inner-biblical intertextuality is particularly useful if a verse contains an idea or an image that reflects an ancient Near Eastern tradition or image. This is not definitely the case with Ex. 34:29-35, but it remains a possibility.

On the other hand, much can be learned from looking at how biblical verses are interpreted in some of the earliest exegetical documents after the Bible, such as the New Testament and the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. Similarly, rabbinic literature contains many insightful biblical exegeses although they are mostly farther removed from the biblical period. Each of these documents reflects different theological and exegetical biases, which is why recourse to biblical examples is often preferable. Nevertheless, these early documents contain much relevant information about these theological and exegetical biases. What, then, do these documents suggest, and how are they important to the history of the interpretation of Ex. 34:29-35 and to the iconography of Moses?

## Chapter Three

### קֶרֶן עוֹר פְּנִי in Early Narratives

#### I. Introduction

Since its canonisation approximately two millennia ago, the Hebrew Bible has been the source of countless translations and interpretations. The purpose of this chapter is to assess some of the earliest of these texts within their historical and theological contexts, in an attempt to understand better their role in the history of interpretation of Exodus 34:29-35. Since it is widely accepted that the fourth-century Latin translation of the Bible by Jerome constitutes a major turning point in the history of the interpretation of the phrase קֶרֶן עוֹר פְּנִי, it is the post-biblical narratives and historical documents that lead up to this point to which we now turn.

Given the recent popularity of studying biblical history in its ancient context, it has been extremely common among modern scholars to describe the images and traditions from the ancient world that help to clarify the image of Moses described in Ex. 34:29-35. Many of these ancient references correspond with the peculiar “horned” image of Moses found in Jerome’s Vulgate and in later art, though, as already demonstrated, other ancient images convey notions of radiance and regal power. While the value of these historical studies is not to be challenged at this time, the result of studying Ex. 34:29-35 has been that modern scholars pay much less attention to post-biblical interpretive documents like the New Testament, the Pseudepigrapha, and the rabbinic midrashim. All of these documents represent the visual image of קֶרֶן עוֹר פְּנִי מֹשֶׁה as some kind of “light” or “glory,” but each has its own exegetical techniques and theological agenda that makes its particular interpretation worthy of further study. This chapter studies the interpretation of קֶרֶן עוֹר פְּנִי and Ex. 34:29-35 in these post-biblical narratives and uses the general issue of this ambiguity regarding Moses’ image to investigate their historical contexts and their exegetical interactions.

#### II. The New Testament

The material from the Hebrew Bible in the New Testament gives us a unique opportunity to observe early biblical interpretation, though coupled with Christological theology. The New

Testament's accounts of Moses and Elijah's presence at Christ's transfiguration and the explanations of its significance by Christian theologians provide us with tremendous insight into early Christian attitudes toward the Hebrew Bible and Mosaic Law. In a recent article on the "traditional response" to the question of Moses' role at Christ's transfiguration, Rodney Hutton suggests that Moses and Elijah are representative of Israel's "torah tradition" and "prophetic heritage" respectively.<sup>1</sup> However it is the theological spin on their presence at Sinai that seems to convey early Christian attitudes toward the Hebrew Bible, as "both of Israel's major canonical traditions are invoked as witnesses to the truth claims manifest in Christ."<sup>2</sup>

In this manner, the role of the Hebrew Bible in early Christianity was to help assert the Christological claims of the New Testament and the authority of Christ. Beryl Smalley's definition of *omnia in figura contingebant illis*, when the Old Testament prefigures the New Testament, distinguishes between the philosophical, apologetic allegory of Philo, and the kind of allegory eventually called "typology." According to Smalley, in typology "both the sign and the thing signified are conceived as historical and would have no significance if they were not,"<sup>3</sup> which attests to one of the historical and theological roles of Moses in Christianity. This literary and theological phenomenon will become clearer through specific examples of typologies relating to Moses.

The theological ramifications of inter-textuality here emerge in Michael Fishbane's discussion of post-biblical exegesis and typologies. Fishbane defines "typology" as a hermeneutical process of seeing "in persons, events, or places the prototype, pattern, or figure of historical persons, events, or places that follow it in time."<sup>4</sup> He associates this practice particularly with classical Christian exegesis, as well as the New Testament, emphasising that in post-biblical typologies the later events "will never be precisely identical with their prototype, but inevitably stand in a hermeneutical relationship with them."<sup>5</sup> Fishbane strongly asserts that typological exegesis is both

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<sup>1</sup>Rodney Hutton, "Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration," *HAR* 14 (1994) 99-120.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basic Blackwell, 1952), pp.6-7. Smalley's chapter here on "the letter and the spirit" in the Church Fathers succinctly outlines the issues of allegory from Philo to Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and between Antiochian and Alexandrian exegesis in general, esp., pp. 1-26.

<sup>4</sup>Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 350.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 351.

an exegetical activity and “a religious activity of the first magnitude,” and suggests that the process “celebrates new historical events insofar as they can be correlated with older ones.”<sup>6</sup> This hermeneutical relationship establishes the typological function of Moses and his light or glory as a prototype of Christ found in the Hebrew Bible. For example, Hutton describes some of the typologies associated with Moses’ appearance at Christ’s transfiguration, and emphasises the primacy of portraying Moses in the New Testament as “the eschatological prophet” and “the suffering prophet.”<sup>7</sup> It appears that, for Hutton, each portrayal is intrinsically linked to the coming reign of Christ and Christ’s own suffering.

Rowan Greer explains the adoption and adaptation of Hebrew Bible sources for Christological purposes as indicative of their acceptance of its authority. Greer maintains that these efforts should not be viewed as a “departure from the true meaning of the text,” but rather an attempt to correlate the existing sacred texts with their own religious beliefs and practices.<sup>8</sup> To explain how these transformations helped to disclose the true meaning of the sacred books, Greer states that

all Christians during the formative period before Irenaeus were obliged to come to terms with the Hebrew Scriptures by interpreting them in a “Christian” sense. The writers of the New Testament assume the authority of the Hebrew Bible and make use of it not only by citing it but also by using its categories to explain Christ and his significance.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, Greer emphasises the importance of the religious identity of these writers who were “almost certainly converted Jews” and asserts that their underlying assumption in writing these new treatises was that they could adapt for Christian purposes any of the approaches to Scripture that they had formerly used as Jews.<sup>10</sup> As the authors of the New Testament, these new Christians introduced their knowledge of rabbinic techniques of interpretation, and in some cases traditionally Jewish

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 352.

<sup>7</sup>Hutton, “Moses on the Mount,” pp. 107-110, 117-118.

<sup>8</sup>James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer, *Early Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986), p. 126.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 128. One relevant example is in Greer’s discussion of Paul’s use of the imagery of Moses’ veil (Ex. 34:33ff) in II Cor. 3:12-18 as a metaphor for Jews not understanding their own Scriptures. This is associated with the fulfilment of prophecy by Christ’s removal of the veil, which enabled Christians to “read Scripture and understand its true meaning for the first time,” p. 134.

interpretations also, into the newly developing Christian scriptural tradition.<sup>11</sup> What, then, are the specific interpretations of קרן עור פניו by these Jews at the time around the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, and how is the adaptation of the Hebrew Bible for Christians evident through these examples from the New Testament?

*i. 2 Corinthians 3:7-8*

The New Testament contains two related elements of the interpretation of קרן עור פניו and Moses' visual image in Ex. 34:29-35. The first concerns references to the "brightness" of the light of Moses and is linked to specific verses that convey this image, such as 2 Cor. 3:7-8. Paul seems to understand קרן עור פניו as signifying some sort of splendid, bright light, albeit "fading." He uses this fading light as a basis for comparison with the greater splendour of the "dispensation of the Spirit," and states:

Now if the dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such splendour [ἐν δόξῃ] that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness [διὰ τὴν δόξαν], fading as this was, will not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendour?<sup>12</sup>

In these verses, Moses' veil is represented as an attempt to conceal his fading splendour, which would have revealed to the Israelites the impermanence of the old covenant or "dispensation of death." "Death," here, probably refers to any existence under the Law of Moses whose prohibitions give actual examples of sins which the New Testament contends would not otherwise have been known.<sup>13</sup> Most importantly for this discussion of the interpretation of קרן עור פניו, this text records an early post-biblical interpretation that subscribes to the tradition that Moses was adorned with some kind of splendour or bright light.

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<sup>11</sup>E. Earle Ellis' article outlines some of these techniques and influences by correlating material from the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic midrashim with examples from the New Testament, in "Biblical Interpretation in the New Testament Church," in *Mikra*, pp. 691-725. Also see Ellis' comparison of Ex. 34:30 to II Cor. 3:6-11 to demonstrate the New Testament's use of Rabbi Hillel's exegetical rule of *qal va-homer* ("an inference drawn from a minor premise to a major and vice versa,"), pp. 699-700.

<sup>12</sup>2 Cor. 3:7-8; *OAB-RSV*, p. 1400.

<sup>13</sup>Rom. 7:7: "What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin. I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, *You shall not covet.*" This idea is further explained in the corresponding footnotes, in *OAB-RSV*, p. 1368.

The Christological significance of these references evokes a classic typological argument in which certain episodes associated with Christ, especially his transformation or transfiguration and specific references to the Law, are prefigured by Moses. In a discussion of the language of transformation in the writings of Paul, Alan Segal demonstrates this association of Christ with Moses by citing several New Testament sources that employ similar language for *קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי* and Christ's transfiguration.<sup>14</sup> The discussion of transformation in Segal's citation from 2 Corinthians refers to veiled and unveiled faces, and to "splendour."<sup>15</sup> The Greek term *δόξα* (glory) is attributed to Moses and Christ in other similar verses in the Greek New Testament, and similarly to Moses in Ex. 34:29, 30, and 35 in the Septuagint.<sup>16</sup> These verses demonstrate an exegetical process of Scriptural intertextuality that gives evidence to both early interpretations of *קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי* as a kind of splendour or glory, as well as to Christological associations of Moses and Christ regarding this imagery.

ii. *Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36, and Matthew 17:1-8*

The second element of the New Testament's treatment of Exodus 34:29-35 concerns Moses' apparent 'presence' at the transfiguration of Christ, as described in three first-century apostolic records of the event: Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36, and Matt. 17:1-8. While this thesis will show that *קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי* was generally understood at that time as a reference to the brightness or glory of Moses, these texts establish the essential link between Moses' glorious light and Jesus' glorious light. The attested presence of Moses at Christ's transfiguration, combined with the language of the text that suggests that Moses was also transfigured in some way, further strengthens the typological argument of prefiguration. Furthermore, by contrasting Moses' faded light and flawed old covenant with Jesus' brilliant light and the endurance of the new covenant, as Paul did in his second letter to the Corinthians, the dispensation of the Spirit is elevated above Mosaic law which may be perceived

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<sup>14</sup>Alan F. Segal, "Paul and the Beginning of Jewish Mysticism" in *Death, Ecstasy, and Other Worldly Journeys*, John J. Collins and Michael Fishbane, eds. (Albany, NY: SUNY press, 1995), pp.108-112.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, p. 110.

<sup>16</sup>In the Septuagint, *δεδοξασται* corresponds to *קָרַן* in Ex. 34:29, *The Old Testament in Greek*, vol. 1, pt. 2 (hereafter *B-M*), ed. Alan E. Brooke and Norman McLean (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), p. 275.

as an anti-nomian polemic.<sup>17</sup> Using language that is strikingly reminiscent of Exodus 34:29-35, the transfiguration of Christ is described in Matt. 17:2-3:

And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone, like the sun, and his garments became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.<sup>18</sup>

In this text, Moses is simply recorded as present at the event, and the language describing Christ's transfiguration is not related to *δόξα*, which is generally used in the Greek texts to describe Moses' radiant glory.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it is the language of the Lukan version that is most important to this discussion, since it also describes the image of Moses using the term *δόξα*. In this passage, Moses and Elijah are recorded as having "appeared in glory" (Luke 9:29-31):

And as he was praying, the appearance of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became dazzling white. And behold, two men talked with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory [*ἐν δόξῃ*] and spoke of his departure, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.<sup>20</sup>

The version recorded in the Gospel according to Mark is more like the description in the Gospel according to Matthew, since it does not use the term *δόξα* nor does it contain any specific reference to Moses' glory although it records the transfiguration of Christ.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, while the three accounts of the transfiguration of Christ are similar, the version in the Gospel according to Luke contains the only specific reference to Moses' glory. By using the term *δόξα* as a link between Luke 9:28-36 and 2 Cor. 3:7-8, the glory of Moses at Christ's transfiguration can be compared to the description of the brightness of Moses' face found in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians.

The presence of Moses in the accounts of the transfiguration of Christ is integral to the recurrence of references to Moses, light, and glory in the Christian literature of the subsequent

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<sup>17</sup>Fishbane speaks directly to this issue when he asserts of the difference between inner-biblical exegesis and the post-biblical exegesis found in the New Testament: "The position of inner-biblical exegesis is unique among the foundational documents of the Western religious tradition: neither the Gospels nor the Pauline writings... are quite like it. The dominant thrust of these documents with respect to the Hebrew Bible is their proclamation that they have fulfilled or superseded the ancient Israelite *traditum*," Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup>Matt. 17:2-3; *OAB-RSV*, p. 1193.

<sup>19</sup>Note that the Greek word that describes Christ's garment of "dazzling white" is *λευκά*, not *δόξα*, in all three versions of the transfiguration.

<sup>20</sup>Luke 9:29-31; *OEB-RSV*, pp. 1257-1258.

<sup>21</sup>Mark 9:2-8; *OEB-RSV*, p. 1225.

centuries. These examples from the New Testament naturally lend themselves to the dialectic surrounding the theological significance of the image of Moses. For example, the presence of Moses in Paul's anti-nomian polemic gives the modern reader with the benefit of hindsight a glimpse at an early adaptation of the image of Moses to suit Christian theology and religious politics.

These two themes, specific references to the "brightness" of Moses' face as in 2 Cor. 3:7-8 and to Moses' "glorification" at the transfiguration of Christ as in Luke 9:29-31, are drawn together in an article by Julian Morgenstern. Morgenstern studies the Lukan version of the transfiguration of Christ in which both Moses and Elijah appeared "in glory" and notes that in each of the three accounts Jesus' garments are further described as white, dazzling, or glistening.<sup>22</sup> This imagery is particularly reminiscent of an Aramaic phrase in one of Daniel's dreams, לְבוֹשֶׁתָּהּ כְּהַלֵּג חֹנֶה, "his garment was like white snow."<sup>23</sup> Although Morgenstern avoids any of the theological and polemical issues of the text, he also concludes that these New Testament sources are "a very remarkable expansion of the early legend of Moses with the shining face."<sup>24</sup> The preservation of this image of Moses in the literature of the New Testament renders the study of "inter-biblical exegesis"<sup>25</sup> so important, despite inherent polemical biases.

There is also much exegetical information contained in other post-biblical writings that paraphrase historical material from the Bible and the biblical period, or that contain relevant philosophical and theological musings. Among them are the writings of Philo of Alexandria, the Pseudepigrapha, and the body of rabbinic literature known as midrash. What exegeses do these post-biblical writings convey through direct and indirect references to aspects of the interpretation of Moses' image in Ex. 34:39-35 and the ambiguous phrase קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו?

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<sup>22</sup>Mark 9:2-4: "...and he was transfigured before them and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses; and they were talking to Jesus"; *OEB-RSV*, p. 1225.

<sup>23</sup>Dan. 7:9; transl. *JPS-Tanakh*, p. 1482.

<sup>24</sup>Julian Morgenstern, "Moses with the Shining Face," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 11 (1925) p. 27. Morgenstern makes no mention here of any other early interpretations or legends regarding Moses' visage.

<sup>25</sup>"Inter-biblical exegesis" is not a term that I have found in any of the aforementioned secondary literature. I suggest it here to represent the general presence of interpretations of (and references to) the Hebrew Bible in the New Testament. "Inter-biblical exegesis" blends Kristeva's principles of "inter-textuality" and Fishbane's principles of "inner-biblical exegesis."

### III. Philo of Alexandria

First-century Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria retold the biblical narrative in two volumes named after Moses. In the first volume of *On the Life of Moses*, Philo's narrative remarkably omits the Sinai episode. Samuel Sandmel suggests that this omission is intentional, since Philo does describe the Sinai episode in the second volume in which he deals mostly with the different "offices" held by Moses: lawgiver, high priest, and prophet.<sup>26</sup> In the section of this volume that is devoted to Moses as priest, Philo presents a very dramatic description of Moses' appearance upon his descent from the mountain. After explaining that Moses required no nourishment or material sustenance while on the mountain, Philo states:

Then, after the said forty days had passed, he descended with a countenance far more beautiful than when he ascended, so that those who saw him were filled with awe and amazement; nor even could their eyes continue to stand the dazzling brightness that flashed from him like the rays of the sun.<sup>27</sup>

This is an articulate and ennobling description of Moses' radiance that conveys a sense of Philo's esteem for Moses as author of the Torah.<sup>28</sup> Yehoshua Amir explains that Philo's writing often associates wisdom with light, and that "Divine wisdom" specifically is that which can only be perceived by the eye.<sup>29</sup> This is a fitting image for Philo's Moses as God's channel for Divine instruction and oracles. Furthermore, these are the same images of radiance and glory that recur throughout the exegetical literature current in Philo's time. Particularly noteworthy is Philo's reference to the flashing rays of the sun, which is a specific image that also appears in the early

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<sup>26</sup>Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria, An Introduction* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 48-49.

<sup>27</sup>Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2:70; in *Moses II*, vol. 6, trans. F. H. Colson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1929), pp. 484-485. Cf. the similar English translation in *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, vol. 3, trans. C.D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855), p. 89. Furthermore, Philo's description of Moses' radiance is equally dazzling in its French translation: *...et il redescendit quand les quarante jours en question furent écoulés, beaucoup plus beau à regarder qu'au moment de l'ascension, au point de frapper les assistants de stupéfaction et d'effroi, et de les rendre incapables de soutenir plus longtemps du regard les jets d'une lumière aussi intense que celle du soleil qu'il dardait comme des éclairs*, in *Les Œuvres de Philon D'Alexandrie, De Vita Mosis I-II*, trans. Roger Arnaldez, Claude Mondésert, Jean Pouilloux, and Pierre Savinel (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967), pp. 224-225.

<sup>28</sup>James L. Kugel discusses this passage from Philo's *Moses* 2:70 in his analysis of the episode of the golden calf at Sinai, in *The Bible as it Was* (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 435-437.

<sup>29</sup>Yehoshua Amir, "Scripture in the Writings of Philo," in *Mikra*, pp. 429-434.

midrashic literature.<sup>30</sup>

Philo's textual recourse was to a Greek version of the Bible rather than the Hebrew,<sup>31</sup> yet his short note on Moses' radiant appearance at Mt. Sinai does not use any of the terminology that is present in the Septuagintal account of Moses at Mt. Sinai, nor in the accounts of Christ's transfiguration in the Gospels of the New Testament. Furthermore, this is the only apparent reference to this imagery in Philo's two volumes on the biblical narrative and the lifetime of Moses, despite his eloquence in describing Moses' radiance in the brief account of the Sinai episode. Coupled with the apparent lack of reference to Moses' radiance in the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius,<sup>32</sup> Philo's eloquent yet slight treatment of this issue might reflect its insignificance during the Greco-Roman period of biblical scholarship. Indeed, there is more to be learned about general attitudes toward Moses in the writings of the Jewish writers of the Greco-Roman period, however there is minimal Jewish exegesis in Greek extant from this period.

#### IV. Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

##### *i. Biblical Antiquities*

The Pseudepigrapha is generally silent on the issue of Moses' radiant appearance at Mt. Sinai, with the exception of Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*. This narrative is a loosely paraphrased history of Israel from Adam to the death of Saul, extant in Latin manuscripts though it was most likely written first in Hebrew and subsequently translated into Greek before being preserved only in Latin.<sup>33</sup> Demonstrating its slight impact on Jewish and Christian history, Daniel

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<sup>30</sup>A midrash in *Sifre Zutta*, based on the biblical verse Num. 27:20, associates Moses with both sunbeams and fiery torches. The content of this midrash is discussed in greater detail in the section of this Chapter devoted to the rabbinic midrashim.

<sup>31</sup>Sandmel expresses sincere doubts over Philo's knowledge Hebrew, *Philo*, p. 131. Amir discusses Philo's use of the Greek text rather than the Hebrew, in "Scripture in the Writings of Philo," in *Mikra*, pp. 440-444.

<sup>32</sup>Indeed, there is not even a passing reference to Moses' radiance in Josephus' Sinai account recorded in *Jewish Antiquities*, bk. 3, although Josephus offers much description of the general mood of the Israelites at Sinai and of their dramatic responses to Moses' absence and return, with particular emphasis on efforts made by Moses to boost their morale, in *Josephus*, vol. 4, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1926), pp. 352-365 [III. 75-101 in the Greek text].

<sup>33</sup>See Daniel J. Harrington's introduction to Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* for more on its authorship and historicity, in "Biblical Antiquities," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (hereafter *OTPseud*), two volumes, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985), vol. 2, pp. 297-303. Harrington suggests the earliest possible

J. Harrington notes that the earliest Christian references to *Biblical Antiquities* are medieval,<sup>34</sup> and the only Jewish reference to it before the nineteenth century was in the sixteenth-century writing of Azariah dei Rossi. Pseudo-Philo incorporated rare legends and motifs that are generally not found elsewhere. Harrington offers a few examples of these legends in his introduction, explaining the cultural significance of Pseudo-Philo as “a witness to the understanding of the Bible in the Palestinian synagogues prior to A. D. 70 and as a link to the material later gathered in the traditional midrashic compilations.”<sup>35</sup>

While Gary Porton claims that Pseudo-Philo’s narrative is midrash, Frederick J. Murphy asserts that this is implausible except through a very “broad” definition of midrash.<sup>36</sup> Instead, Murphy prefers to clarify this definition with Charles Perrot’s distinction between *texte expliqué* and *texte continué*. Whereas *texte expliqué* focuses on explaining “the written biblical text,” Murphy suggests that the broader focus in *texte continué* on “sacred history known through both the Bible and other traditions” is more reflective of early narratives like those of Josephus and pseudepigraphal texts including the *Testament of Moses* and Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities*.<sup>37</sup>

The treatment of Exodus 34:29-35 in Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities*, although also minimal, stands out from the writings of his contemporaries because of its deliberate position in this part of the narrative. It is necessary to point out that Pseudo-Philo recounts the events of Exodus 34:29-35 anachronistically in this narrative; after the receipt of the first set of tablets instead of the second set and before the sin of the golden calf (Bib. Ant. 12:1-2):

And Moses came down. And when he had been bathed with invisible light, he went down to the place where the light of the sun and the moon are; and the light of his

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date for its composition as 135 B.C.E. and the latest possible date around 100 C.E., p. 299. G.W.E. Nickelsburg suggests that it may have been written slightly later: “the *Biblical Antiquities* has usually been dated shortly before or after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. ... The emphasis on the necessity of good leaders would have been especially appropriate after the chaos of the years 66-70,” Nickelsburg, “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period*, ed. Michael E. Stone (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) p. 109.

<sup>34</sup>Harrington lists Rhabanus Maurus, Rupert of Deutz, and Peter Comestor as examples of this, in “*Biblical Antiquities*,” in *OTPseud*, vol. 2, p. 302.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>Frederick J. Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 4. Murphy’s reference to Gary Porton’s definition of midrash is cited from “Defining Midrash,” in *The Study of Ancient Judaism I*, ed. Jacob Neusner (New York: Ktav, 1981), pp. 55-92.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

face surpassed the splendour of the sun and the moon, and *he did not even know*<sup>38</sup> this. And when he came down to the sons of Israel, they saw him but did not recognize him. But when he spoke, then they recognized him. And this was like what happened in Egypt when *Joseph recognized his brother but they did not recognize him*.<sup>39</sup> And afterward, when Moses realized *that his face had become glorious*,<sup>40</sup> he made a *veil*<sup>41</sup> for himself with which to cover his face.<sup>42</sup>

The idea that the Israelites did not recognize Moses when he came down off the mountain is new to the narrative of this event, despite the inner-biblical reference that is cleverly made to Joseph and his brothers. Harrington points out that this notion of non-recognition is “unique” to Pseudo-Philo.<sup>43</sup> Thus, aside from his re-arranging of the historical order of the biblical account and his aforementioned creative liberty, there is no indication that Pseudo-Philo considered these passages as carrying any more notoriety than any others. Murphy offers one explanation for Pseudo-Philo’s insertion of this reference to Moses’ radiance into his narrative describing the episode of the golden calf. Murphy suggests that this insertion “emphasises the reality of Moses’ contact with God and do underscores his ability to act as a divine spokesperson.”<sup>44</sup>

One later reference to Moses’ glory appears in the description of the ascension and death of Moses. Murphy cites this passage as “another instance of the importance of human appearance to Pseudo-Philo” and notes its particular stress on Moses’ glorification.<sup>45</sup> Bib. Ant. 19:16 states:

And when Moses heard this, he was filled with understanding and his appearance became glorious; *and he died in glory according to the word of the Lord, and he buried him* as he had promised him...<sup>46</sup>

The italicized words indicate the words cited from Deut. 34:5-6 to describe the death of Moses,

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<sup>38</sup>Ex. 34:29. The following footnoted references to biblical verses in the citation above are taken from Harrington, *ibid*, pp. 319-320.

<sup>39</sup>Gen. 42:8.

<sup>40</sup>Ex. 34:30.

<sup>41</sup>Ex. 34:33.

<sup>42</sup>It is the continuation of this passage that describes the Israelites’ sin with the Golden Calf and thereby demonstrates the anachronism of the narrative: “And while he was on the mountain, the heart of the people was corrupted, *and they gathered together to Aaron, saying, ‘Make gods for us [Ex. 32:1] whom we may serve, as the other nations have.’*” Translation by Harrington, in “Biblical Antiquities,” in *OTPseud*, vol. 2, pp. 319-320.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid*, p. 319, note a.

<sup>44</sup>Murphy, *Pseudo-Philo*, p. 68. See pp. 68-73 for the rest of Murphy’s discussion of Chapter Twelve.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>46</sup>Harrington, in “Biblical Antiquities,” in *OTPseud*, vol. 2, p. 328.

although the notion of glory is not present in the biblical account of this event. This addition seems to have been carried over by Pseudo-Philo from his earlier notes on Moses, light and glory.

ii. *2 Enoch 22:8 and the Apocalypse of Zephania 5:1-4*

In all of the literature collected in Charlesworth's edition of the Pseudepigrapha, the only apparent, explicit mention of the event of Exodus 34:29-35 is in these short passages from *Biblical Antiquities*. However, a few indirect references to the condition of Moses' face have been proposed by the modern translators of *2 Enoch* and the *Apocalypse of Zephania*. In each case, these translators attempt to link the notion of Moses' shining face to the Christian transformation motif that they perceive in these pseudepigraphal documents. These proposed references to a motif of Moses' shining face are not blatant since Moses is not specifically mentioned in these documents, but the implications of this Christological symbolism warrants a few cautious remarks. For example, the following appears in the J recension of the anointing of Enoch in 2 En. 22:8:

And the Lord said to Michael, "Go and extract Enoch from [his] earthly clothing. And anoint him with my delightful oil, and put him into the clothes of my glory." And so Michael did, just as the Lord had said to him. He anointed me and he clothed me. And the appearance of that oil is greater than the greatest light, and its ointment is like a sweet dew, and its fragrance myrrh; and it is like the rays of the glittering sun.<sup>47</sup>

In his notes on this passage, F. I. Andersen suggests that the symbolism is compatible with Christian tradition, perhaps linked to the practice of baptism. Anderson links "the effulgent oil that gives Enoch the radiant countenance," to the motif of Moses shining face that "was a reflection of God's magnificent glory."<sup>48</sup> This reference to "glory" might also link 2 En. 22:8 to the *δόξα* attributed to Moses by the transfiguration accounts in the New Testament. This reference to "the rays of the glittering sun" might originate from the interpretation of *קֶרֶן עוֹר פְּנֵי* as radiating beams of light, but without the original Hebrew version of this document it is an uncertain explanation.

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<sup>47</sup>Translated and annotated by F. I. Andersen, in "2 Enoch," in *OTPseud*, vol. 1, pp. 138-139. Please note that the A recension of this verse is almost identical.

<sup>48</sup>Anderson, *ibid*, p. 138, note O. Erwin Goodenough also links this pseudepigraphal text with the motif of Moses' shining face, in "Greek Garments on Jewish Heros," *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, Alexander Altmann, ed., (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 231.

O. S. Wintermute uses a description of the transformation of an angel recorded in *Apocalypse of Zephania* to speculate about the Judaic origins of the Christian transfiguration motif. He cites Apoc. Zeph. 5:1-4, "Then the angel of the Lord transformed himself beside me in that place,"<sup>49</sup> and suggests that "the account of Moses' shining face in Ex. 34:29,"<sup>50</sup> is a similar instance of angelic transformation in the Bible. In this clear attempt to link Judaic figures, particularly Moses, with Christological motifs and rituals, Wintermute's interpretation of this passage is a recurrence of the exegetical practices of early Christian theologians who commonly taught the Hebrew Bible in a Christological light. That the pseudepigraphal texts themselves do not seem to lend themselves explicitly to these associations with Christological motifs belies their early (pre-Christian) composition as well as their Jewish authorship. Indeed, the better source for early Jewish exegesis including specific responses to קרן עור פניו is the body of rabbinic narrative broadly referred to as midrash.

## V. Midrash

The largest source of early Jewish responses to Ex. 34:29-35 is rabbinic midrash. This vast literature includes collections of rabbinic anecdotes, homilies and explanations of biblical texts and issues in which the literary fruits of early, post-canonisation Judaism and Jewish creativity are preserved. However, their relative dates of compilation do not necessarily reflect their authorship since much of this material stems from older midrashic traditions that were transmitted orally and written down much later.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, through the midrashim it is possible to get a sense of early rabbinic ideas on Jewish faith, practice, and the Bible in general. Naomi Hyman presents a succinct outline of assumptions underlying the midrashic process. She emphasises the pedagogical function of the Bible as a source of moral and legal instruction, and that midrashic interpretation was

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<sup>49</sup>Translated and annotated by O. S. Wintermute, in "Apocalypse of Zephania," in *OTPseud*, vol. 1, p. 512.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger confront the difficult task of attempting to date any of these midrashic collections, very often with few 'certain' conclusions. The introduction to their chapter on midrash discusses the complexity of this process (esp. pp. 255-262), as do their notes on the halakhic midrashim (esp. pp. 270-273), the homiletic midrashim, and each of the midrashic collections. For detailed scholarly notes on the categories of midrash and on individual midrashic collections, see H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 254-394.

considered a sacred activity for which a combination of faith and reason were necessary for 'correct' interpretations.<sup>52</sup>

The earliest objectives of midrash recognised the need to eliminate obscurities in the biblical text. Geza Vermes defines these early exegetical enterprises as "pure" exegesis originating from four principal problems with the biblical text: (1) it contains words whose exact meaning escaped the interpreter; (2) sufficient detail is lacking; (3) it contradicts other biblical texts; (4) its apparent meaning is doctrinally unacceptable.<sup>53</sup> Each of these problems is treated regularly in midrashic exegesis, although the first two seem to occur most frequently in the midrashim related to Ex. 34:29-35 and the ambiguous Hebrew idiom describing the image of Moses. Vermes suggests that

the aim of primitive midrash was to render every word and verse of scripture intelligible, the whole of it coherent, and its message acceptable and meaningful to the interpreter's contemporaries. 'Pure' exegesis is organically bound to the Bible. Its spirit and method, and in more than one case the very tradition it transmits, are of biblical origin or may be traced back to a period preceding the final compilation of the Pentateuch.<sup>54</sup>

The midrashim below address all of these concerns, especially attempting to provide scriptural clarity and to make the text meaningful to the reader. However, the interpreters' concern to find a meaningful message in the text verges on what Vermes calls "applied" exegesis. This is a more sophisticated approach to exegesis, an attempt to justify customs and beliefs as a response to changes in religious society around the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>55</sup> There is no doubt that midrashic exegesis is organically bound to the Bible, as is clear from their abundant use of biblical verses in their exegeses. However, the influence of the changes in religious society to which Vermes refers may also be found in these examples of midrashim dealing with the ambiguity of קרן עור פניו and

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<sup>52</sup>These assumptions are outlined in the second introduction to Naomi Mara Hyman, *Biblical Women in the Midrash*, (Northvale, N. J.: Jason Aronson Inc., 1997) pp. xxviii-xxix, cited in Gary G. Porton, *Understanding Rabbinic Midrash* (Hoboken, N. J.: Ktav Publishing House, 1985), pp. 9-11. For more on the definition and principles of 'midrash', see Neusner, *What is Midrash* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987); James L. Kugel, "Two Introductions to Midrash" in *Midrash and Literature*, Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick, eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 77-103.

<sup>53</sup>For more on each of these "principal" problems, see Geza Vermes, "Bible and Midrash: Early Testament Exegesis," in *Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1 (hereafter *CHB*), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), (1) pp. 203-204; (2) pp. 205-208; (3) pp. 209-213; (4) pp. 214-220.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 221-227.

Moses' appearance in Ex. 34:29-35. These midrashim cover several different themes related to Moses' appearance, but all agree that Moses' face was radiant with some kind of light.

Midrashic material on קרן עור פניו appears in a number of collections including *Exodus Rabbah*, *Leviticus Rabbah*, *Deuteronomy Rabbah*, *Midrash Zutta*, *Pesikta de Rab Kahana*, *Midrash Tanhuma*, *Lamentations Rabbah*, *Midrash Psalms*, *Midrash Samuel*, and *Numbers Rabbah*. Since there is a great deal of repetition between them, it will be possible to outline and discuss specific issues and explanations that emerge from both the midrashim on קרן עור פניו and from other midrashim that used information or phrases from Ex. 34:29-35 to solve a problem unrelated to the ambiguity there. Often, however, the information provided by a discussion of a seemingly tangential issue actually contains valuable insights into our own topic. It should be noted that some of these midrashim use the same biblical verses and may even be quoting each other, so it is difficult to know which midrashim pioneered which ideas or if they were all drawing on much earlier oral traditions.<sup>56</sup>

### *i. Sunbeams and Fiery Torches*

*Sifre Zutta*, an early halakhic commentary on Numbers that is extant only in fragments, contains a short midrash describing the condition of Moses' face in Ex. 34:29-35 as sunbeams and fiery torches.<sup>57</sup> Based on Num. 27:20, ונתתה מהודך עליו למען ישמעו כל עדת בני ישראל (Invest him with some of your authority, so that the whole Israelite community may obey),<sup>58</sup> this midrash

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<sup>56</sup>The start of the exegetical process of midrashic interpretation is often associated with the canonisation of the Bible when the content of the Hebrew Scriptures was formalised, since biblical interpretation became the chief scholarly activity thereafter. However, Michael Fishbane challenges this turning point in posing the question "Do we in fact cross a great divide from the Hebrew Bible to its rabbinic interpreters, or is the foundation text already an interpreted document - despite all initial impressions to the contrary?" (*Garments of Torah*, p. 4). Fishbane demonstrates how the ancient interpretive activity which he refers to as 'inner-biblical exegesis' enlists some principles of midrashic exegesis within the Hebrew Bible itself, particularly in the later biblical books. For more discussion of "inner-biblical exegesis" and midrash, see *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (1988) esp. pp. 281-291, 429-433, and *The Garments of Torah* (1992), esp. pp. 3-32, and relevant footnotes in the previous chapter. Strack and Stemberger also point to the beginnings of midrashic exegesis of Scripture "already contained within the Bible," citing the books of Chronicles as an example of this, *Talmud and Midrash*, pp. 256-257.

<sup>57</sup>*Sifre Zutta*, Horowitz edition (Jerusalem, 1965/1966), *BarIlan-CD*, Halakhic Midrashim database. Strack and Stemberger suggest that this midrash should be dated close to the redaction of the mishnah at the beginning of the third century. For more on the date and exegetical style of *Sifre Zutta*, see Strack and Stemberger, *Talmud and Midrash*, pp. 269-273, 293-294.

<sup>58</sup>Num. 27:20; transl. *JPS-Tanakh*, p. 256. הודך is more often defined as glory or majesty. See Reuben Alkalay, *The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary* (Hartford, CT: Prayer Book Press, 1965), cols. 498-499.

contains two descriptions of the nature of this הוד (glory, majesty, or authority) that Moses received from God. The first description is that “קרניים were radiating from Moses’ face like קרניים from the orb of the sun,” and cites Hab. 3:4 as its proof text. This would suggest that the authority received by Moses from God in Num 27:20 is symbolised by the light of the קרניים. As discussed above in Chapter Two, the meaning of Hab. 3:4 is no more certain than that of Ex. 34:29-35. However, the appearance of Hab. 3:4 as a proof text in this midrash promoting Moses as radiant suggests that the קרניים מידו לו<sup>59</sup> should be understood as a reference to “rays of light.” This midrash, therefore, is an important early example of the biblical verse Hab. 3:4 promoted as a textual basis for interpreting קרן עור פניו as radiance.

In the second description in *Sifre Zut. 27:20*, Moses resembles an אבוקה (a blazing torch): משה דומה לאבוקה שהיא דולקת ודלקו ממנה כמה נרות אבל אורה של אבוקה לא חסרה כלום (Moses resembles a blazing torch that burns, and from whom candles are lit, but the light of the blazing torch does not diminish at all).<sup>60</sup> It continues: כן לא היתה חכמתו של משה חסרה כלום (thus neither did the wisdom of Moses diminish at all).<sup>61</sup> The blazing torch imagery presented here is extremely powerful. The implied question seeks the significance of this great fire to the Israelites and its relevance to their descendants, the contemporary readers of these exegeses. Therefore, the midrash itself explains that the sunbeams and the blazing torch are metaphors for Moses’ great and undiminishing authority and wisdom. The midrash establishes that the relevance of this powerful fire is that it symbolises their Law, too, which was transmitted from God through Moses at Sinai. This midrash from *Sifre Zutta* is reminiscent of one in *Ecclesiastes Zutta* that uses Ex. 34:29 to explain Ecc. 8:1, חכמה אדם האיר פניו ועז פניו ישנא (A man’s wisdom illuminates his face, and his impertinence changes).<sup>62</sup> The midrash in *Ecclesiastes Zutta* describes how Moses’ face lit up

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<sup>59</sup>Hab. 3:4.

<sup>60</sup>*Sifre Zut. 27:20*, in *BarIlan-CD*, Aggadic Midrashim database.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>Ecc. 8:1. This translation is based on Alkalay’s definition for the idiom עז פנים (impertinence, shamelessness, insolence), *Dictionary*, col. 1876. *JPS-Tanakh* translates this verse: “A man’s wisdom lights up his face, so that his deep discontent is dissembled,” 1450. *Koren-JB* translates this verse: “A man’s wisdom makes his face to shine, and the boldness of his face is changed,” p. 881.

suddenly during his instruction from God: מִיַּד נִשְׁתַּנָּה זֵיו פְּנִים שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה.<sup>63</sup>

These examples demonstrate how the early rabbinic interpreters perceived Moses' appearance in Ex. 34:29-35, but they also tell us a great deal about the significance of his condition in ancient times and how its theological meaning and personal relevance was transmitted homiletically to Jews at that time. These early rabbinic exegeses emphasize the authority and majesty of their Law. They also function as an important opponent to the early Christian perception of Moses as the bearer of a flawed covenant to be superseded by Christianity and the New Testament.

## ii. *What caused Moses' "condition"?*

Some midrashim emphasize the glory and divinity of Moses' condition but also attempt to expand on details seemingly absent from the biblical account. Some of the information gaps they address include the particular occasion and location at which קֵרַן עוֹר פִּנּוּ happened to Moses, as well as various explanations for what actually caused Moses' face to radiate. Parts of these answers appear in three very similar midrashim: Ex. Rab. 47:6, Deut. Rab. 3:12, and Mid. Tan. 20:20. The fact that all three midrashim are usually associated with the ninth/tenth century homiletic genre referred to as *Tanhuma-Yelamdenu* partially explains their similarities.<sup>64</sup> While two of these three midrashim are almost identical, all three basically agree on the responses they list to address the origin of Moses' condition. Either it resulted from when he was in the cave and from speaking with God,<sup>65</sup> from the tablets themselves, or from the fiery ink of the quill with which he wrote the Torah.

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<sup>63</sup>*Midrash Zutta*, Buber edition (Vilna, 1924/1925), *Barllan-CD*, Aggadic Midrashim database. Moshe D. Herr dates this midrash as late as the tenth century, in "Midrash," in *EncJud* vol. 11, cols. 1511-1512.

<sup>64</sup>Although Strack and Stemberger date the *Tanhuma-Yelamdenu* genre to around the ninth or tenth century, the dates of specific collections vary, pp. 329-333. They suggest that *Exodus Rabbah* should be dated no earlier than the tenth century (pp. 335-337), but offer much more imprecise dates (c. 450-800 C.E.) for *Deuteronomy Rabbah* (pp. 333-335). Herr places all three into the same period (775-900 C.E.), in "Midrash," in *EncJud* vol. 11, cols. 1511-1512. Editions used: *Exodus Rabbah* (Jerusalem, Vilna edition 1877/1878; and Shinan edition: Jerusalem, 1983/1984); *Deuteronomy Rabbah* (Jerusalem, Vilna edition 1877/1878; and Lieberman edition, Jerusalem: 1939/1940), in *Barllan-CD*, Aggadic Midrashim database.

<sup>65</sup>Ex. Rab. 47:6 and Mid. Tan. 20:20 suggest the former, Deut. Rab. 3:12 suggests the latter. Edition used: *Midrash Tanhuma* (Jerusalem 1957/1958; Warsaw edition, 1874/1875; and Vilna edition, 1884/1885) in *Barllan-CD*, Aggadic Midrashim database.

In the typical style of this genre of homiletical midrash, which Strack and Stemberger describe according to a basic formula,<sup>66</sup> Deut. Rab. 3:12 opens with a halakhic issue related to its overall message about the tablets being a symbol of the marriage of God to Israel. This first part of the midrash enlists two verses from Exodus (19:10 and 34:29) in a legal debate over one of the obligations of a bridegroom entering into a marriage. The midrash offers the “parallel” case of the holy union of God and Israel described in Ex. 19:10 and uses Ex. 34:29 as the proof that God gave Moses זיו הפנים (a radiant countenance) as the שכר (remuneration or reward) for writing the Torah, the contract of this union. This part of the midrash instructs the bridegroom that he, too, must offer a remuneration for the writing of his marriage contract. The relevance of this midrash for this discussion about Moses is not in its legalistic use of Ex.34:29, rather in its explicit interpretation of קרן עור פניו as radiance.<sup>67</sup> The answers to the questions outlined in the previous paragraph, the “when” and the “how” of קרן עור פניו, are addressed in the proems comprising the middle section of Deut. 3:12.

Once Deut. Rab. 3:12 establishes that a radiant countenance was the remuneration or reward that Moses received from God, the midrash responds to the questions of when and how it happened. Simultaneously, a visual image of קרן עור פניו emerges from the description of the circumstances. Among other explanations, all three of these midrashim explain the peculiar phenomenon of Moses’ זיו הפנים or his קרני ההוד (horns or rays of glory) as the fiery ink of the Torah that spilled on his hair at the time of the writing of the Law. Deut. Rab. 3:12 states:

אמר ר"ל - בשעה שכתב את התורה נטל משה זיו הפנים כיצד: אמר ר"ל -  
 התורה שנתנה למשה עורה של אש לבנה וכהובה באש שחורה וחתומה באש  
 ומלופפת באש ועם שכתוב קינח את הקולמוס בשערו ומשם נטל זיו הפנים  
 (Rabbi L. said: How is it that Moses acquired his radiant countenance when he wrote  
 the Torah? Rabbi L. said: The Torah that was given to Moses, its parchment was  
 made of white fire, it was written in black fire, it was sealed with fire and it was  
 wrapped in fire. So, when he wrote [it], he wiped the quill in his hair and from that  
 he acquired his radiant countenance.)<sup>68</sup>

Deut. Rab. 3:12 is the only one of these three midrashim to expressly state that the Torah was made

<sup>66</sup>Strack and Stemberger, *Talmud and Midrash*, pp. 334-335.

<sup>67</sup>See Menahem Kasher’s notes for more on this particular midrash, *Torah Shelema*, v. 22, p.111, n. 235.

<sup>68</sup>Deut. Rab. 3:12, in *BarIlan-CD*, Aggadic Midrashim database.

of fire, an image which is remarkably reminiscent of the blazing torches and sunbeams described in Sifre Zut. 27:20. However, each midrash contains the explanation that this pen or quill transferred its peculiar ink onto Moses thereby causing his condition.

Mid. Tan. 20:20 explains this phenomenon slightly differently: ר' יהודה בר נחמיה אומר: כשמשח כותב את התורה נשתיר בקולמוס קימעה והעבירו על ראשו ומשם נעשו לו קרני ההוד (Rab Yehuda ben Neḥemia says: 'When Moses wrote the Torah some ink remained in the quill and he passed it over his head and from this his קרני ההוד were made).<sup>69</sup> Given the modern reader's cognizance of the imagery of Moses' horns in later Church art and Bible illuminations, there is an inevitable irony in the use of the term קרן in this midrash almost as if Moses drew the horns on himself. The version in Ex. Rab. 47:6 is closer to this than to the version in Deut. Rab. 3:12, however all three make the same basic point about the ink spilling onto Moses' hair or head.<sup>70</sup>

The fact that *Exodus Rabbah* and *Midrash Tanhuma* refer to this condition as קרני ההוד, rather than the זיו הפנים suggested in *Deuteronomy Rabbah*, creates a linguistic dilemma for the reader. This dilemma is actually the same as that caused by the original biblical verse, the ambiguity of the term קרנים in this situation. The meaning of זיו הפנים (radiant countenance) is fairly straightforward. However, even with emphasis on the subject הוד (glory, majesty or splendour) in קרני ההוד, the קרנים may still be perceived as either actual horns *or* beams or rays of light causing radiance. Or they might be a reference to actual horns that are intended to be understood as a symbol of something else, such as glory or power. It is most significant that there does not appear to be *any* extant midrash that clearly portrays Moses with actual horns, except for those that merely use the ambiguous vocabulary of עור פניו like קרן עור פניו like קרני ההוד in Ex. Rab. 17:6 and Mid. Tan. 2:20.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Mid. Tan. 20:20; *Midrash Tanhuma* (Jerusalem 1957/1958; Warsaw edition, 1874/1875; and Vilna edition, 1884/1885) in *BarIlan-CD*, Aggadic Midrashim database.

<sup>70</sup> All three midrashim cite different rabbinic sources for this: *Deuteronomy Rabbah*, as above; *Exodus Rabbah*, "Rabbi Judah bar Nahman in the name of Rabbi S. bar L.," *Midrash Tanhuma*, as above.

<sup>71</sup> *Shiur Qomah* is a Hebrew mystical work containing many descriptions of the visual dimensions and adornments of God and is generally dated between the third and tenth centuries. At least two manuscripts, *Sefer Raziel* and *Sefer Haqqomah*, describe God wearing an inscribed gemstone located between קרניו (his horns): ואבן יקרה שבין קרניו ישראל עמי ישראל עמי לי חקוק עליה דודי, from *Sefer Haqqomah*, line 115, in *The Shiur Qomah: texts and recensions*, ed. and trans. Martin S. Cohen (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), p. 149. The same Hebrew text appears in *Sefer Raziel*, lines 185-186, with only slight spelling differences, p. 97. Any association of

### iii. *The theological significance of Moses' condition*

Several midrashim enlist Ex. 34:29, 30 or 35 as a proof text for a point they are trying to make about any issue other than the explication of קָרַן עוֹר פְּנָיו. This is basically a midrashic adaptation of inter-textuality using apparently unrelated biblical verses as proof texts for each other.<sup>72</sup> In doing so, these midrashim sometimes provide the reader with inadvertent information about their interpretation of Ex. 34:29-35. In such cases, the interpretation of קָרַן עוֹר פְּנָיו is not always explicit, although the language or message of the midrash sometimes alludes to it. Related to the issue of the ambiguous קָרַן עוֹר פְּנָיו, these include midrashim that use Ex. 34:29-35 to demonstrate that the Israelites were less worthy after their sin with the Golden Calf.<sup>73</sup> For example, the following statement attributed to R. Aba bar Kahana conveys the ferocity of Moses' condition in a midrash that demonstrates the difference in the Israelites before and after they sinned. *Numbers Rabbah* and *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* state:

Seven walls of fire were arranged around each other -- which the Israelites saw and were not afraid, but once they sinned they were not even able to look upon the face of the messenger, as it is written: "Aaron and all of the Israelites saw Moses and that קָרַן עוֹר פְּנָיו and they were afraid to come near him" (Ex. 34:30).<sup>74</sup>

Although Moses' actual condition is not explained, a parallel between the fires that did not frighten the Israelites and "the face of the messenger" that did frighten them could be enough to explain Moses' countenance as fiery or shining.<sup>75</sup> This notion is strengthened by the link between Moses and fire present in other earlier midrashim, especially *Sifre Zut.* 27:20 and *Deut. Rab.* 3:12.

Another midrash emphasises the divine aspect of Moses' condition by drawing a parallel

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these texts with the iconography of Moses' with horns is speculative at best.

<sup>72</sup>Hyman points to the technique of comparing verses in her notes on midrashic method in: *Biblical Women in the Midrash*, pp. xxviii-xxix.

<sup>73</sup>See *Num. Rab.* 11:3; *Song Rab.* 3:5; and *PDRK 5*, lemma: "Rabbi Ishmael taught." Editions used: *Numbers Rabbah* (Vilna: 1877/1878; reprint Jerusalem); *Song of Songs Rabbah* (Vilna: 1877/1878; reprint Jerusalem); *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* (New York: Mandelbaum [JTS] 1961/1962), in *Barllan-CD*, Aggadic Midrashim database.

<sup>74</sup>*Num. Rab.* 11:3; *PDRK 5*.

<sup>75</sup>Neḥama Leibowitz cites this midrash from its appearance in the eleventh-century commentary of Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi) on Ex. 34:30, to highlight an association of "the dazzle of the Divine presence" and the image of Moses "whose holiness shone forth from his countenance," in *Studies in Shemot*, vol. 2, p. 634.

between the creation of the first man in the image of God and the image of קרן עור פניו described of Moses in Ex. 34:29. This midrash comprises a list of biblical verses with parallels or similarities to aspects of Creation.<sup>76</sup>

Some midrashim see קרניים as a biblical metaphor for “greatness” or “power” and include the case of Moses among their examples. Each of the lists recorded in Midr. Sam. 4:3, Lam. Rab. 2:3, and Mid. Ps. 75:5<sup>77</sup> contains a reference to Moses as one of the proof texts on their list of biblical examples of קרנות עשר (ten horns, or ten instances related to some form of the root קרן).<sup>78</sup> However, none of the three midrashim explains the explicit, physical nature of these קרנות עשר except by the scriptural context of each of the examples provided. While the three lists of examples are not identical, they are very similar and use the same biblical verses as proof texts when their examples do match. Their examples of ten קרנות include Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Torah, prophecy, priesthood and the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, which they demonstrate for each by citing a biblical verse containing a conjugation of the root קרן, and which is related to that individual or general category. Mid. Ps. 75:5 is the more elaborate of the three and adds a more blatantly religious significance to its list of קרנות. It does this by introducing its examples of קרנות with an additional note, עשר קרנות הן שנתן הקב"ה לישראל (These are the ten קרנות that the Lord gave to Israel), instead of simply stating עשר קרנות הן like the other two midrashim. While this additional note about God gives us no assistance in the “correct” visualisation of קרן עור פניו or indeed any of these קרנות, the general link to the involvement of God here is important. The divine origins of

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<sup>76</sup>*Otsar ha-Midrashim* (New York: Eisenstein 1914/1915), p. 174:3, in *Barllan-CD*.

<sup>77</sup>According to the Herr's time line of midrashic periods, *Lamentations Rabbah* (400-500 C.E.) is the earliest document of the three, followed by *Midrash Samuel* (640-900 C.E.) and *Midrash Psalms* (900-1100 C.E.), in “Midrash,” in *EncJud* vol. 11, cols. 1511-1512. Strack and Stemberger agree on this date for *LR*, attributing to it a “most likely... date of origin in the fifth century, probably in its first half,” though they assert that the text was treated very “liberally” due to its popularity, *Talmud and Midrash*, pp. 310-311. They are no more specific about *Midrash Samuel* (*Talmud and Midrash*, pp. 390-391), and offer no conclusions about *Midrash Psalms* other than the variety of opinions and that “one must undoubtedly assume an extended period of development,” *Talmud and Midrash*, pp. 350-351.

<sup>78</sup>Mid. Sam. 4:3 lists קרנות עשר including Moses and a reference to Ex. 34:29, in a midrash about 1 Sam 2:1: רַמָּה קַרְנֵי בְהִי: (My horn is high through the Lord). A similar list appears in Lam. Rab. 2:3 and Mid. Ps. 75:5. Editions used: *Midrash Samuel* (Cracow: 1892/1893, reprint Jerusalem: Buber edition, 1967/1968); *Lamentations Rabbah* (Vilna: 1877/1878, reprint Jerusalem; and Vilna: Buber edition, 1898/1899); *Midrash Psalms* (Vilna: Buber edition, 1890/1891), in *Barllan-CD*, Aggadic Midrashim database.

these קרנות, including those of Moses, is valuable to the commentator who attempts to explain the theological significance of Moses' appearance and not merely his physical condition. Furthermore, this kind of comment about God's involvement in different aspects of קרן עור פניו is obviously common to many of the midrashim on this topic.

The קרנות in the previous three midrashim appear to be a metaphor for God-given power and the strength of the righteous, yet the specific notion of ten קרנות may also be linked to Daniel's disturbing dream in which he envisioned a beast with ten horns and for which he then sought an explanation.<sup>79</sup> In the few lines of explanation included at the end of their lists of קרנות, the midrashim from *Lamentations Rabbah* and *Midrash Psalms* both make reference to this dream recorded in Dan. 7:2-14. The overall moral message of these midrashim emerges most clearly from their formulaic explanation of the ten קרנות: Israel received these קרנות from God, then lost them when they sinned, and only through repentance will they re-acquire the קרנות and, ultimately, attain redemption. While this message is only tangentially linked to the explication of the ambiguous phrase קרן עור פניו, it certainly demonstrates one of the theological agendas of midrashic Bible exegesis and the abundant use of biblical verses for that purpose.

#### iv. Interchanging letters for exegetical purposes

A midrash discussing כהנות עור in Gen. 3:21, the clothing of the first man and his wife, points to textual issues that some scholars have also related to Ex. 34:29-35. This midrash in *Genesis Rabbah*<sup>80</sup> reports that Rabbi Meir possessed a Torah scroll which said כהנות אור instead of כהנות עור.<sup>81</sup> This variant would change the meaning of the biblical verse from "clothes made

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<sup>79</sup>Of all of the midrashim reviewed for this study, this is the closest midrashic association between Moses or Ex. 34:29-35 and an explicit reference to real (animal) horns .

<sup>80</sup>Strack and Stemberger date the final redaction of *Genesis Rabbah* to first half of the fifth century, rejecting dates as early as the third century and as late as the sixth century, in Strack and Stemberger, *Talmud and Midrash*, pp. 303-304. Edition consulted: *Genesis Rabbah* (Vilna: 1877/1878, reprint Jerusalem and Berlin: Theodor-Albeck edition, 1903; 1912; 1929), in *Barllan-CD*, Aggadic Midrashim database.

<sup>81</sup>Gen. Rab. 20:12: "In the Torah of Rabbi Meir, they found written כהנות אור." This is the same in the Vilna edition and the Theodor-Albeck edition of *Genesis Rabbah*, both available on the *Barllan-CD*. also used this database to search for other midrashim or commentaries in which the interchanging of עור and אור might be discussed. Despite searching for עור and אור in the database of Bible commentaries as well as the databases of both

of skins (or leather)” to “clothes of light (or herbs<sup>82</sup>).” Similarly, this kind of variant would change the ambiguity of קרן עור פניו in Ex. 34:29-35 to an explicit reference to light, but no such variant is extant.<sup>83</sup>

One technique of midrashic exegesis, however, carries the authority to introduce such a variant into the tradition of the text for the purposes of interpretation. Menaḥem Kasher suggests that the Aramaic translators of Ex. 34:29-35 used this technique, called אל הקרי (don't read it that way, rather this way), when they read קרן עור פניו.<sup>84</sup> This would have enabled them to translate the verse as if it actually said קרן אור פניו, as a reference to the radiating light of Moses' face. This actually was their exegetical consensus, as shall be demonstrated in the section on the Aramaic targumim in the next chapter, but Kasher's theory of the particular techniques they used in this case cannot be confirmed. However, אל הקרי is not unusual in midrashic activity and recurs frequently in the talmud as well.<sup>85</sup> In this case, by proposing the interchanging of two letters, the technique of אל הקרי facilitates harmony between a difficult, ambiguous text and the interpretive tradition. Furthermore, by basing the interpretation of קרן עור פניו as “radiance” on a reading of עור as “light” and not as “skin,” the focus is shifted off exegetical attempts to demonstrate that the ambiguous verb קרן means “to radiate.”

The interchanging of letters, such as נ and ע in this case, is also a matter related to the history of the Hebrew language. While among modern speakers of Hebrew it is less common to differentiate between the pronunciation of נ and ע, in the ancient world they were treated as distinct

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aggadic and halakhic midrashim, with a possible distance of up to ninety-nine characters between them, this midrash at Gen. Rab. 20 was the only example.

<sup>82</sup>The midrash about Rabbi Meir's variant Torah scroll seems to interpret the variant as “clothing of herbs” not light, as it describes different aspects of shrubbery. Both definitions are given in *BDB*, “light” and “herb”, pp. 21-22; Strong's #216-219.

<sup>83</sup>According to Kittel, there is no such Hebrew variant known for Ex. 34:29-35, in *Biblia Hebraica*, seventh edition p. 133. See notes in the previous chapter on the quality and reliability of this work. However, this kind of variant in Ex. 34:29-35 is not indicated in any Bible or biblical commentary consulted for this study. See the attached Bibliography for specific references.

<sup>84</sup>Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, vol. 22, p. 109.

<sup>85</sup>The *Barllan-CD*, Babylonian Talmud database found ninety-eight cases under a search for the expression אל הקרי. There were none found in the Mishnah and Palestinian Talmud databases.

consonants and thus pronounced very differently. Propp notes that there is strong historical evidence to show that the inadvertent interchanging of א and ע would have been rare if not nonexistent at that time, even though the midrashic literature takes such liberties by using the principle of אל הקרי to suggest כהנות עור as כהנות אור.<sup>86</sup> This does not, however, explain the possible existence of and alternative version of כהנות עור as claimed of Rabbi Meir's Torah scroll in Gen. Rab. 20:12. Ultimately, there is no extant example of such a variant for Ex. 34:29-35, nor does any midrash record the principle of אל הקרי being applied to the ע in קרן עור פניו.<sup>87</sup> All this seems peculiar, given the traditional interpretation of קרן עור פניו as a kind of radiance, and lends plausibility to Kasher's theory about the use of אל הקרי by the Aramaic translators.

## VI. Conclusion

All of the texts presented in this chapter agree that קרן עור פניו in Ex. 34:29-35 is a reference to the glory or radiance of Moses. The manner in which they each present this interpretation indicates a great deal about early Bible interpretation, especially since they each explain the image of Moses using their own theological or philosophical brand of exegesis. The early Christian writers portray Moses' radiance as a symbol of Divine glory that prefigures Jesus' transfiguration. Philo emphasises the notion of light as symbolic of Divine wisdom, and describes Moses dazzling radiance with greater eloquence than the other Greek writers at that time. The Jewish authors of the midrashim also interpret Moses' light as a sign of Divine glory, but they put more emphasis on explaining the details surrounding the origins of this light and the general significance of Moses as God's representative for the teaching of the Law. Paul's portrayal of that Divine Law as flawed, for the purposes of his anti-nomian polemic, is an excellent example of the way that similar textual images were adapted for different theological contexts.

One important body of Jewish literature not discussed in this thesis is the Talmud, because its treatment of Ex. 34:29-35 is minimal, extremely tangential, and does not actually contain an interpretation of the ambiguous קרן עור פניו. Furthermore, the final compilation of the Talmud

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<sup>86</sup>Propp, "Did Moses Have Horns?" p. 44, n. 6, and, "Transfigured or Disfigured?" p. 377, n. 10.

<sup>87</sup>This was verified in all the databases of the *Barllan-CD*, libraries: A-C.

around the seventh century actually post-dates the time frame of this study, even though the materials contained within it are derived from oral rabbinic traditions that are usually dated to earlier periods. There are only two talmudic references to the verses containing קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי and each one reports the same rabbinic teaching of Rabbi Hama in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina on how to deal with an halakhic issue concerning the giving of gifts to a friend. Shabbat 10b and Beitza 17a, in the Babylonian Talmud, address the question of whether an individual giving a gift to a friend is required to inform him of it. The question is solved with a reference to Moses' ignorance of the condition of his face in Ex. 34:29-35, which functions as a biblical precedent for not informing the receiver that he has received a particular gift. In the case of Moses, his "gift" from God was the condition of his face, and the proof that he not informed of this when it was given to him is the biblical statement קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי בְּדַבְּרוֹ אֵתוֹ (Moses did not know that קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי since his speaking with Him).<sup>88</sup> Indeed, there is little in these citations that relates directly to the issue at hand.

Ultimately, this picture is incomplete without a discussion of the many translations of the Bible that were current at that time; Aramaic, Greek, Latin, and others. It is only for organisational reasons that the historical narratives and Bible commentaries here are not discussed together with the early translations of the Bible that are discussed in the next chapter. A careful investigation of both genres of scholarship is essential to the history of biblical exegesis, just as they are both essential to the exegetical process itself.

It is apparent thus far that קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי was generally interpreted as a reference to the glory or radiance of Moses' visage, which occurred on Mt. Sinai. However, when these biblical translators attempted to communicate the true sense of the Bible in functional vernacular editions of the biblical texts, they confronted additional linguistic issues including the idiomatic limitations of the various languages in which they were working. They enlisted a variety of exegetical techniques and were often influenced by the theological agendas of their time and their circumstances. What, then, were these specific issues that they confronted in attempting to translate the Bible and the ambiguity of קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי in Ex. 34:29-35 in particular? How did they choose to render the idiom of the biblical

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<sup>88</sup>Ex. 34:29; Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 133.

text yet also manage to communicate their own interpretations or the exegeses that were current at that time? Finally, what role did each of these translations play, if any, in the interpretive history leading up to Jerome's etymological Latin translation of קרן עור פניו that depicted Moses as actually horned, but which was intended metaphorically?

## Chapter Four

### קרן עור פניו in Early Translations

#### I. Introduction

The Masoretic Hebrew text, the oldest and most authoritative version of the Hebrew Bible, contains the controversial phrase קרן עור פניו in Ex. 34:29, 30 and 35, to describe Moses' visage after his encounter with God on Mt. Sinai. The focus of this chapter is on early translations of those verses, including the Aramaic targumim Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, Neophyti, fragments of the Yerushalmi Targum, Samaritan texts, the Greek Septuagint, Aquila, and Origen's Hexapla, and the Old Latin. Where necessary, this discussion also examines their exegetical techniques and how they rendered other verses, in an attempt to better understand why they may or may not have rendered קרן עור פניו as a kind of "glorious radiance."

The variations between their renderings of Ex. 34:29-35, whether slight or substantial, reflect contemporary interpretive traditions and theological attitudes toward the Hebrew text and the Hebrew Bible in general. One responsibility of these translators was to choose the most appropriate words available to represent the original idiom or the meaning of the text, even when an exact equivalent was not available. These translations served the practical purpose of making the content of the Hebrew text accessible to individuals in communities where Hebrew was not read. It is particularly noteworthy when specific translations resolve an ambiguity contained in the original text, or when they promote one interpretation over another. In the case of Jerome's translation of קרן עור פניו, the limitations of the Latin language required him to clarify its ambiguity with the unambiguous *cornuta esset facies*, even though it meant proposing a translation that contradicted the accepted literal interpretation of Ex. 34:29-35. This rendering of the Hebrew verse into Latin by Jerome is both a translation and an interpretation. Indeed, any translation must also be regarded as an interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For further discussion and examples of this point, see E. A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: with special reference to principles and procedures involved in Bible translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964); and John Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature: An Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 3-28.

## II. Aramaic

An Aramaic translation of the Torah was recited during the ancient synagogue service for the practical purpose of transmitting the Bible in the vernacular, since Hebrew was increasingly alien to the Jewish population in the post-Second Temple era.<sup>2</sup> Thus the Aramaic targumim<sup>3</sup> also served an important exegetical purpose, translating and clarifying verses in the biblical narrative and often incorporating the interpretative ideas or texts of rabbinic midrashim. Strack and Stemberger note that:

the relationship between Targum and Midrash indeed cannot be clearly delimited... Neh. 8:8 is frequently cited as the point of departure, or even as the first instance, of both genres. There it says of the reading of the Torah under Ezra, 'And they read from the book, from the Torah of God, in paragraphs and with explanations, so that they understood the reading.' The Targum in any case is not merely a translation, but also an explanation and often expansion of the Bible by means of haggadah.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, while no translation can be regarded simply as such, the Aramaic targumim are an especially important repository of early rabbinic interpretations and techniques.

Several different Aramaic translations are addressed in this study: Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan, Neophyti 1, a fragment of Targum Yerushalmi and three different versions of the Samaritan Targum. While the wording is slightly different in each, they share a basic interpretation of קרן עור פניו as a kind of "radiance" or "shining glory." Targum Onkelos renders it as 'קרא דאפודה' (the radiating glory of his face had increased)<sup>5</sup>, similar to אשהבהר זיו איקונין דאנפוי (the radiant image of his face shone)<sup>6</sup> in Pseudo-Jonathan and נהר זיו איקרהון דאפודה דמשה (the radiant glory of the

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<sup>2</sup>Philip S. Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures," in *Mikra*, pp. 238-241, 248.

<sup>3</sup>Targum is related to the Akkadian word *ragamu* (to talk). The responsibility of the *meturgeman* was to repeat or read the text aloud, and the *targumim* were the translated biblical texts that were read.

<sup>4</sup>Strack and Stemberger, *Talmud and Midrash*, p. 257.

<sup>5</sup>Onk. Ex. 34:29; Alexander Sperber, ed. *The Bible in Aramaic*, vol. 1, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), p. 151. Translation from Israel Drazin, *Targum Onkelos to Exodus* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1990), p. 318.

<sup>6</sup>Pseud-Jon. Ex. 34:29; E. G. Clarke, ed. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance* (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1984), p. 110; David Reider, ed. *Pseudo-Jonathan: Targum Jonathan ben Uziel on the Pentateuch, copied from the London MS* (Jerusalem: Salomon's Printing Press, 1974), p. 136; M. Ginsburger, ed. *Pseudo-Jonathan, Targum Jonathan ben Uziel zum Pentateuch, Londoner Handschrift* (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1903), p. 162. All three editions are based on the same manuscript; British Museum add. 27031. Particularly interesting about the word-choice in the Aramaic is איקונין, etymologically linked to the Greek word "icon," which is used here to convey the reference to Moses' visage or the Hebrew עור.



is described at the time of his death, Drazin observes that Onkelos deals with them similarly.<sup>13</sup> The Hebrew phrase **וְלֹא נִסַּח לְחָה** (his vigour did not abate)<sup>14</sup> in Deut. 34:7 is translated into Aramaic as **וְלֹא שִׁנָּא זִיו יְקָרָא דְאַפּוּדָי** (the radiating glory of his face was unchanged)<sup>15</sup> in this targum. They are obviously the same Aramaic words with which Moses' appearance is described in Ex. 34:29, **וְלֹא שִׁנָּא זִיו יְקָרָא דְאַפּוּדָי** (the radiating glory of his face had increased)<sup>16</sup> even though the two Aramaic examples are not translations of a similar Hebrew phrase. Philip Alexander calls this phenomenon “associative translation,” and explains:

Associative translation occurs where in translating text A the meturgeman [the translator] is influenced by similar phraseology in text B... In some cases the influence of the parallel text seems to be subconscious: there is no deliberate harmonisation; the parallel simply echoes at the back of the translator's mind. In other cases the association may be more calculated, perhaps triggered by a linguistic problem.<sup>17</sup>

So while the Hebrew base texts are different, the use of an associative translation in the Aramaic may point to a jointly resolved issue in the Hebrew text, or, as in our specific example, to a standard or common interpretation of the glorified image of Moses appropriate to that time. Jacob Neusner suggests that Targum Onkelos contains the least amount of rabbinic midrash, while Targum Pseudo-Jonathan contains the most.<sup>18</sup>

## ii. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*

The Aramaic in the Palestinian Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, **אֲשֶׁתְּבִהֵר זִיו אִיקוּנִין דְאַנְפִּי** (the

<sup>13</sup>Drazin, *Targum Onkelos to Exodus*, pp. 318-319. In a brief comparison of these translations, he further suggests that “it is possible that ‘radiance’ and ‘glory’ are doublets... Ps[eudo]-Jonathan has only ‘radiance...’ However, N[eophyti 1] has both ‘radiance’ and ‘glory,’” p.319.

<sup>14</sup>Deut. 34:7; Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 319.

<sup>15</sup>A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, vol. 1, p. 352.

<sup>16</sup>Onk. Ex. 34:29; A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, vol. 1, p. 151. Translation from Drazin, *Targum Onkelos to Exodus*, p. 318.

<sup>17</sup>Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations,” in *Mikra*, pp. 227-228. Alexander points to some of the problems and limitations of analysing the “translation-techniques” of *targumim*, especially highlighting the subjectivity of associative translations where “we find ourselves trying to guess what was going on in the minds of the meturgamim,” pp 228-229.

<sup>18</sup>Neusner discusses the presence of rabbinic midrash in the Aramaic targumim, in his chapter “Midrash in the Septuagint and the Targumim,” in *What is Midrash?* pp. 26-30.

radiant countenance [image] of his face shone),<sup>19</sup> is especially interesting for at least two reasons. The first point to observe in this case is the use of the word אִיקוֹנִין, which means “image” but is built on the same Greek *εἰκέναι*, which forms the word “icon.”<sup>20</sup> Perhaps it is only a modern perspective on the iconographical history of the “horned Moses” imagery that highlights the irony of this word choice, but אִיקוֹנִין nevertheless stands out as unique to Pseudo-Jonathan. Also, the use of אִיקוֹנִין to translate the word עוֹר seems to indicate a conscious attempt at a close, word-for-word translation of the Hebrew verse even though Pseudo-Jonathan is often regarded as the most paraphrastic of the targumim.<sup>21</sup>

The second, more important, general observation about Pseudo-Jonathan is its tendency to incorporate rabbinic midrash. Alexander estimates that it is “about twice the length of the original Hebrew text.”<sup>22</sup> In the case of קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵיו, Pseudo-Jonathan contains an additional phrase spliced directly into the translation of Ex. 34:30 to explain the origins of Moses’ light according to rabbinic midrash: דְּהוּת לִיה מִן זִיו אִיקָר שְׂכִינְתָא דֵּה (…which he received from the radiant glory of God…).<sup>23</sup> Alexander explains the paraphrastic method of translation:

…When expansions occur they are presented in such a way that they can be bracketed out, leaving behind a viable one-to-one rendering of the original. This is the distinguishable characteristic of type A targum: it consists of a base translation + detachable glosses… The narrative lacuna in the Bible provides the meturgeman with the chance to read into Scripture some of his own theological concepts.<sup>24</sup>

Alexander also notes that the midrashic material in Pseudo-Jonathan “is a highly mixed tradition, an amalgam of interpretations from widely different periods… Some of its aggadic traditions are not

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<sup>19</sup>Pseud-Jon. Ex. 34:29; *Pseudo-Jonathan, London MS* (Brit. Mus. add. 27031). J. W. Etheridge translates the second half of this verse as: “...that Mosheh knew not that the visage (form) of his face shone with the splendour which had come upon him from the brightness of the glory of the Lord’s Shekhinah in the time of His speaking with him,” in *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch (with the fragments of the Jerusalem Targum)*, vol. 1 (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1968), p. 561.

<sup>20</sup>From Greek *εἰκέναι*, to resemble.

<sup>21</sup>Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations,” in *Mikra*, p. 218-253.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>23</sup>Pseud-Jon. Ex. 34:29; *Pseudo-Jonathan, London MS* (Brit. Mus. add. 27031).

<sup>24</sup>Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations,” in *Mikra*, p. 231. A “type B” targum is also paraphrastic, but “a base translation can not be recovered: the translation is dissolved in the paraphrase,” p. 234. Also see Levy’s discussion of this and other translation procedures in his introduction to *Targum Neophyti*, vol. 1, pp. 25-51.

attested elsewhere in rabbinic literature.”<sup>25</sup> The explanation presented in this particular verse, however, is not unfamiliar to us, since the notion of Moses receiving light from God appears in many of the midrashim about קרן עור פניו, both by associating Moses’ receipt of the radiance with an act of God and by actually calling them קרני ההוד. This includes *Midrash Tanhuma - Ki Tissa* and *Exodus Rabbah* 47:6, but especially *Leviticus Rabbah* 20:10 which specifically discusses Moses’ association with השכינה. Based on what is known about the proliferation of midrashic exegesis in Palestine, it is not unusual that this targum should be the only one to blend such a midrashic addition into this Aramaic version of the text.<sup>26</sup>

### iii. *Targum Neophyti*

The Palestinian targum found in the Vatican codex Neophyti 1 contains a targum that Philip Alexander describes as more “restrained and sober, the aggada being less extensive”<sup>27</sup> than Pseudo-Jonathan. Nevertheless, the evidence of rabbinic exegesis incorporated into this translation plays a role in determining its dates of authorship and recension. B. Barry Levy summarises the numerous theories that have been developed about the composition and the text-tradition of Neophyti 1 and proposes W. F. Albright’s second-century date of final recension for this targum. However, Levy also notes an awareness of its various stages of development, including a later date of recension based on “much evidence of rabbinic influence on the present recension of the targum.”<sup>28</sup> With emphasis on its’ word-for-word translation style, Jacob Neusner demonstrates how the Neophyti targum is able to incorporate midrashic exegesis “with little disruption to the exact translation of the

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>26</sup>Strack and Sternberger also point out that “almost all midrashim, except for the late compilations, originated in Palestine. Babylonia developed no midrashic material of its own...It is still entirely unclear why the Babylonian rabbis were not more creative in midrashic literature (and also in the Targum),” in *Introduction to Talmud and Midrash*, p. 262.

<sup>27</sup>Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations,” in *Mikra*, p. 218.

<sup>28</sup>On the subject of the date of Neophyti, Levy states: “W. F. Albright... placed the date of final recension in the second century. Díez Macho and others have accepted this proposal, but have moved the original date of composition back to the pre-Christian era,” Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1*, vol. 1, p. 1. Neusner’s sources lead him to date the composition of all of the targums between 300 and 700 C.E., though he admits that there is evidence of Aramaic translations dating earlier than 300 C.E. in “Midrash in the Septuagint and the Targumim,” in *What is Midrash?*, p. 26, n. 3.

original text.”<sup>29</sup>

In the case of Ex. 34:29-35, the rendering of קרן עור פניו in Neophyti places a double stress on shining and glory with its word-for-word response to the original Hebrew verse. On Ex. 34:30, Neophyti states: נהר זיו איקרהון דאפוי דמשה (the radiant glory of the face of Moses), and Ex. 34:29 and 34:35 are the same.<sup>30</sup> Unlike Pseudo-Jonathan, there are no midrashic insertions to explain the text here. Instead, this Aramaic rendering of Ex. 34:29 is more like Targum Onkelos. Levy points out that although the Neophyti targum

does not stand out consistently as an attempt at tight literalness, many of the paraphrastic translations betray a hyper-literal reading of the Hebrew. In these cases, the translations are not literal and make perfect sense in Aramaic, but the differences between them and the underlying Hebrew point to a problem in the latter that had to be eliminated.<sup>31</sup>

This, however, does not appear to be a case of hyper-literalism in Neophyti, particularly given its similarity to the other targumim and to the rabbinic literature on קרן עור פניו in general. In this case, the rendering of Neophyti might be regarded as an expansive translation, though not aggadic like the translation of Ex. 34:29-35 in Pseudo-Jonathan.

#### iv. *Fragmentary Targum (Yerushalmi)*

This fragmentary Palestinian Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch is alternately referred to as the Fragmentary Targum, *Targum Yerushalmi*, or the Fragmentary Palestinian Targum. Abraham Tal dates these fragments to the middle of the third century, around the same time as the targum of the Samaritan community.<sup>32</sup> While their exegetical system includes both aggadic expansions and literal translations, Philip Alexander notes that the verses *not* represented by any of these fragments are usually rendered “more or less literally” in the complete recensions of the Palestinian Targum.

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<sup>29</sup>Neusner’s example of this kind of midrashic word-for-word translation is Deut. 29:9 [Heb. 29:8], although he also provides examples of more paraphrastic translations in Neophyti where the targumist added words and whole phrases to the Aramaic version, ie: Gen. 2:15, in “Midrash in the Septuagint and the Targumim,” in *What is Midrash?*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>30</sup>Neoph. Ex. 34:30; Diez Macho, *Neophyti I*, vol. 2, pp. 231-233. Translation from Levy, *Targum Neophyti I*, vol. 1, p. 432.

<sup>31</sup>Levy, *ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup>Abraham Tal, “The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch,” in *Mikra*, pp. 189-190.

Thus, Alexander suggests that it was a systematic, “deliberate abridgement of complete recensions of the Palestinian Targum... collated against Onkelos” to preserve the aggadic material of the Palestinian Targum, because Onkelos was generally non-aggadic.<sup>33</sup>

The Aramaic rendering of Ex. 34:29 in the Fragmentary Targum is most similar to the version found in Pseudo-Jonathan, although only a fragment of this verse is extant. The fragment states: אַרְוֹם שְׁבַחוּ [שְׁבַהֲרָ] זִיּוּהוֹן דְּאַנְפִּי׃ (That the splendour of his face shone).<sup>34</sup> In contrast with the version in Pseudo-Jonathan, which contains an aggadic addition that is *not* preserved in this fragment, only the first part of Pseud. Jon. Ex. 34:29 is similar: אֲשֶׁהֱבִיחַ זֵי אִיקוּנִין דְּאַנְפִּי׃ (the radiant image of his face shone).<sup>35</sup> If, indeed, these fragments were preserved to convey an aggadic message of the text other than the version of Onkelos, then perhaps it is not always the case. Either way, the basic message about Moses’ radiant countenance is the same here, too. In short, all of the Jewish Aramaic translations present “radiance” or “glory” as the normative interpretation or sense of קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו.

#### v. Samaritan Targum and Memar Marqah

The ancient Samaritan community in Palestine interpreted this ambiguous phrase in the same way as the rabbinic aggadists and the Jewish Aramaic translators by retaining virtually the same Hebrew wording for Ex. 34:29-35 in their Torah and by consistently portraying Moses as “radiant” in different versions of their Aramaic targum.<sup>36</sup> The significance of these similarities is the shared tradition of the two communities. Furthermore, in a discussion of the critical relationship of the Septuagint with the Samaritan Pentateuch, Emanuel Tov points out that they share many similarities.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Alexander, “The Jewish Aramaic Translations,” in *Mikra*, p. 221.

<sup>34</sup>Jerusalem Targum Ex. 34:29; Ginsburger, *Das Fragmententhargum*, p. 44.

<sup>35</sup>Pseud-Jon. Ex. 34:29; *Pseudo-Jonathan, London MS* (Brit. Mus. add. 27031).

<sup>36</sup>Sidney Jellicoe discusses the different versions of the Pentateuch produced by the Samaritan community; Hebrew, Western Aramaic, and the *Samariticon*, a Greek translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch, in Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 243-245.

<sup>37</sup>Emmanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem: Simor Ltd., 1981), pp. 267-270.

In August Freiherrn von Gall's critical edition of the Samaritan Pentateuch, *Der Hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner*, the Samaritan Hebrew text is the same as the Masoretic text for the parts of Ex. 34:29-35 that relate to the ambiguous phrase קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, von Gall's critical apparatus does not record any variants relevant to this discussion.<sup>39</sup> There are three noteworthy versions of the Samaritan Targum included in this study. These are the two manuscripts juxtaposed by Abraham Tal in his recent critical edition and the edition of Adolf Brüll, of which Tal is extremely disparaging for being merely a transliteration of an inaccurate reproduction of a manuscript published in the seventeenth century.<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, Brüll's text of the Samaritan Targum, וּמֹשֶׁה לֹא חָכַם הִלָּא נִצְנַץ זַיִן אִפִּיּוֹ (And Moses did not know that the splendour of his face shone),<sup>41</sup> is noteworthy for its lexical difference from the Jewish Aramaic translations in its use of the verb נִצְנַץ for the Hebrew קָרַן. According to the *BDB Hebrew-English Lexicon*, נִצְנַץ is from "New (Late) Hebrew" and corresponds to נָעַץ, to shine or sparkle, in targumic Aramaic.<sup>42</sup> While Tal describes the linguistic character of the Samaritan Pentateuch as "virtually identical to the Jewish version," referring to the Palestinian Targum composed around the same time, it is curious that none of the other Aramaic translations enlists the term נָעַץ to convey Moses' radiance, not even the Palestinian Targum.<sup>43</sup>

The British Museum manuscript in Tal's critical edition contains the only examples of the term קָרַן in the Aramaic translations of Ex. 34:29-35. Because of the borrowing of קָרַן from Hebrew in this Aramaic manuscript, the Aramaic version וּמֹשֶׁה לֹא עָבַם הִלָּא קָרַן עוֹר אִפִּיּוֹ (and

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<sup>38</sup>Abraham Tal, *The Samaritan Pentateuch, edited according to MS 6 (C) of the Shechem Synagogue* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1994), p. 91; August Freiherrn von Gall, ed., *Der Hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner* (Berlin: Verlag von Alfred Töpelman, 1918), p. 191.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>They are British Museum Ms Or 7562 and Shechem Synagogue Ms 3. These comments by Tal appear in the foreword to his critical edition, *Samaritan Pentateuch*, p. v.

<sup>41</sup>Sam. Targ. Ex. 34:29; Brüll, *Das samaritanische Targum*, p. 108. Tal records this variant (נִצְנַץ) in his critical apparatus and attributes it to Shechem Synagogue Ms 6, in *Samaritan Targum*, p. 369.

<sup>42</sup>*BDB*, p. 665, n. 2020. Also see נִצְנַץ in *Jastrow*, pp. 907-908. The association of the Hebrew נִצְנַץ with the Aramaic נָעַץ exemplifies the interchangeability of certain consonants between Hebrew and Aramaic, in this case נ and צ. For more on this aspect of Aramaic phonemics and phonetics, see Kutscher, "Aramaic," *EncJud* vol. 3, col. 263.

<sup>43</sup>Tal, "The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch," in *Mikra*, p. 190.

Moses was unaware that the skin of his face (קרן)<sup>44</sup> is remarkably similar to the language of the Masoretic Text. The manuscript from the Shechem Synagogue published by Tal is much more like the other Aramaic targumim for its use of the expression זיב אפיו (the radiance of his face) to convey Moses' condition: ומשה לא חכם הלא יקר זיב אפיו (And Moses did not know that the radiance of his face was glorified),<sup>45</sup> although זיב is the spelling found in the other targumim.<sup>46</sup> The use of the term יקר to refer to Moses' "glorification" is also reminiscent of the other targumim, since it was conveyed similarly in Targum Onkelos with the term יקר א and in Neophyti 1 with אִיקרהון. Given their similarity in content to the rabbinic tradition, what is particularly remarkable or significant about the Samaritan Aramaic renderings of קרן עור פניו in Ex. 34:29-35?

In a discussion of theories underlying Samaritan exegesis, Simeon Lowy explains the significance of light, especially Divine Light, which acts as a metaphor for the transmission of the Samaritan Torah tradition.<sup>47</sup> The image of radiance attributed specifically to Moses in the Pentateuch is particularly significant, in light of the degree of Moses' authority over Samaritans as the source and instructor of this knowledge.<sup>48</sup> This is evident in some of the writings of the third-century Samaritan scholar Marqah, especially his most famous treatise, *Memar Marqah*.

In his *Memar*, Marqah describes the revelation of the glory of the prophet, Moses, when he received the tablets of the Law at Mount Sinai. Marqah's Aramaic description is striking because of his choice of the term אִיקרה, which is also used by the targumim Onkelos and Neophyti, to

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<sup>44</sup>Sam. Targ. Ex. 34:29; British Museum Ms Or 7562, in Tal, *Samaritan Targum*, p. 368.

<sup>45</sup>Sam. Targ. Ex. 34:29; Shechem Synagogue Ms 3, in Tal, *ibid.*, p. 369.

<sup>46</sup>The confusion of ב and ו was common among scribes. See Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1*, vol. 1, pp. 3-4.

<sup>47</sup>Lowy discusses the significance of light in the Samaritan tradition, in *The Principles of Samaritan Bible Exegesis* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), pp. 76-83. Lowy suggests a even broader significance, "that the Samaritan doctrine of 'light,' although construed literally, was invested with the same characteristics as the 'divine spirit' of Philo or the 'Holy Spirit' of the Rabbis, which prompts the Prophet to prophecy," pp. 80-81.

<sup>48</sup>Ruairdh Bóid discusses this aspect of the authority of Moses in the Samaritan tradition in his chapter, "Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in the Samaritan Tradition," in *Mikra*, pp. 595-599. One specific example of the Samaritan attribution of superhuman qualities to Moses is the discourse of Abū'l Ḥassan al-Ṣūri discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis. In this discourse, al-Ṣūri emphasises the superhuman aspect of Moses' forty-day fast on Mount Sinai, in Bowman, *Samaritan Documents*, pp. 241-242.

convey the glorification of Moses in Ex. 34:29-35.<sup>49</sup> Marqah links Moses intrinsically to the light of the perfection of Creation and of the Torah, and explains that the Torah

was established from Creation; it was made in the light... A prophet received it, who was full of this glory. From his very birth he was revealed as the saviour of the congregation of the Hebrew. The glory was revealed for his sake to magnify him... Holiness appeared and anointed his body, Faith came and set out laws for him.<sup>50</sup>

This comment is reminiscent of the midrashic associations of Moses with the Divine Light or glory of the Spirit of the Lord, הוֹרֵר הַשְּׁכִינָה, from Moses' encounter with God on the mountain. It also replicates the association of Moses with the Law that was prominent in the writings of both Jewish and Christian commentators. However, Lowy cautions against claims of "common origin" based on similarities between exegetical traditions recorded in various ancient documents.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, these similarities do suggest a widely accepted interpretation at that time, including the Samaritan exegetical tradition that interprets Moses' image as nothing other than "radiance" or "glory."

Indeed, all of the Jewish Aramaic translations, and the Samaritan Targum, enlist Aramaic terminology that conveys "radiance" or "glory" as the normative interpretation of the ambiguity of קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי and of Moses' image in Ex. 34:29-35. However, their precise language is different in every case, because Aramaic possesses several different terms or phrases that could convey the radiant image of Moses. These include: נַהַר זֵיִו אִיקְרֵהוֹן דְּאַפּוּי (Onkelos), נַהַר זֵיִו אִיקְרֵהוֹן דְּאַפּוּי (Neophyti), שְׁבַחֵו [שְׁבַחֵהוּ] זֵיִוְהוֹן דְּאַפּוּי (Pseudo-Jonathan), נַצְנִיץ זֵיִו אִפּוּי (Fragmentary Targum), קָרַן עוֹר אִפּוּי and יְקָר זֵיִב אִפּוּי (three different versions of the Samaritan Targum). Given the variety of terms used in the Aramaic translations to convey a similar interpretation, how, then, did the various translations of the Greek versions of the Pentateuch render קָרַן עוֹר פְּנֵי and the ambiguity of Moses' image in Ex. 34:29-35?

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<sup>49</sup>Marqah's comments on Moses's receipt of the Torah, in Aramaic: וְקִבְלָהּ נְבִיאָהּ הוּא מְלֹא בְּאֵהוּן אִיקְרֵהּ (a prophet received it, who was full of this glory), in *Memar Marqah, The Teaching of Marqah*, ed. John Macdonald (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelman, 1963), vol. 1, p. 134 (Aramaic); vol. 2, p. 219 (English). The English is cited in Lowy, *Samaritan Bible Exegesis*, p. 81.

<sup>50</sup>*Memar Marqah*, *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>Lowy, *Principles of Samaritan Bible Exegesis*, pp. 30-48, esp. p. 33.

### III. Greek

#### i. Septuagint

The earliest translations of the Hebrew Bible are the Greek-language texts commonly referred to as the Septuagint,<sup>52</sup> produced in Alexandria between 300-100 B.C.E.<sup>53</sup> Most likely, these translated texts met the needs of the Egyptian Jewish community who could no longer adequately understand Hebrew.<sup>54</sup> While there is scholarly debate over whether the Palestinian or Alexandrian Jewish communities were first responsible for translating the biblical texts into Greek, the Septuagint has been described as “by far the most important and fruitful source for the understanding and restoration of the Hebrew Bible when the text is not clear as it stands.”<sup>55</sup> The Septuagint is one of the earliest Jewish documents attesting to the interpretation of קָרַן עוֹר פְּנִי as glorious radiance.<sup>56</sup>

The Septuagint translates קָרַן עוֹר פְּנִי in Ex. 34:29 as *δεδοξασται ἡ ὄψις τοῦ προσώπου*

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<sup>52</sup>The Septuagint is also often abbreviated to “LXX,” based on the tradition that the Greek translation of the Jewish Law (the Pentateuch) was originally composed by thirty-six pairs of Palestinian Jewish elders at the command of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.E.), a legend that is recorded in the *Letter of Aristeas*. At some point, the seventy-two were colloquially associated with various references to seventy, hence LXX (seventy). Harry Orlinsky discusses the origins of the Septuagint and mentions some of these references in his article, “The Septuagint: The Oldest Translation of the Bible,” in Harry Orlinsky, *Essays in Bible Culture and Bible Translation* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974), pp. 364-367.

<sup>53</sup>Since the translation of the ‘Jewish Law’ described in the *Letter of Aristeas* is only of the Pentateuch and not the entire Hebrew Bible, there is much debate over the dating of the Greek translations of the other books of the Hebrew Bible, which eventually came to be included in the Septuagint. An excellent summary of this debate appears in Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. - 135 A.D.)*, English Version, vol. 1, pt. 1, ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar and Martin Goodman (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., 1986), pp. 474-480.

<sup>54</sup>Jellicoe notes Paul Kahle’s disagreement with the fabled Ptolemaic origin of the Septuagint (as well as its Palestinian origin entirely), though Jellicoe concedes that “although the *Letter of Aristeas* contains a good deal of literary embellishment, it may be taken as embodying a certain amount of reliable material on Septuagint origins, a view which commands the consensus of scholarly opinion.” Jellicoe further summarises Kahle’s theory that the Septuagint should not be considered the original Greek translation, but merely “a revision which had recently been made of Greek translations already in existence... the ‘standard edition’ of the Greek Law,” in Jellicoe, *Septuagint and Modern Study*, p. 59. Also see the excellent article by Dominique Barthélemy, “Pourquoi la Torah a-t-elle été traduite en Grec?” in *On Language, Culture and Religion: In Honour of Eugene A. Nida*, ed. Matthew Black and William A. Smalley (Paris: The Hague, 1974), pp. 23-41.

<sup>55</sup>Orlinsky, “The Hebrew Text and the Ancient Versions,” in *Essays*, p. 392. Also see Tov’s evaluation of the method of the Septuagint, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*.

<sup>56</sup>Septuagintal citations are from *B-M*, which records no relevant variants for these verses. See Alan E. Brooke and Norman McLean, eds. *The Old Testament in Greek [hereafter B-M]*, vol. 1, pt. 2. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), pp. 274-275.

(the appearance of the skin of his face had been glorified),<sup>57</sup> where *δεδόξαται*<sup>58</sup> refers to “glory” or a “glorious light.” This indicates that an interpretation of Moses bathed in some kind of light crossed certain language barriers to become prevalent both in ancient Egypt and in Palestine, which may account for its presence in the early exegetical literature; both Christian and Jewish. The interpretation of קָרָן as a kind of “glory” in the Septuagint is furthered by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda’s suggestion that the translator of this verse in the Septuagint employed the midrashic technique of אֵל הַקָּרָן, although not on the letters נ and ו as was demonstrated in the rabbinic midrash on Gen. 3:21, or even as Kasher suggested of the Aramaic translators. In the case of this אֵל הַקָּרָן, Ben-Yehuda suggests the following in his *Thesaurus*: “They [the LXX] do not translate, in fact, the word *qrn*, but interpret in *'al tiqrê* fashion: Do not translate *kī kārān*, but *kīykarān* ([like] the glory of the beasts of [Yahwe’s] chariot, or the like).”<sup>59</sup> Again, the idea that Ex. 34:29-35 was approached midrashically to achieve an interpretation of ‘radiance’ or ‘glory’ suggests that such an interpretation was not to be found philologically. The “numerous” instances of disagreement between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text as to whether a word should be read with an נ or an ו are often attributed to either inadvertent confusion over the consonants or exegetical motivation.<sup>60</sup>

The Septuagint is viewed by some as a concrete link between Jewish and Christian exegesis, or as a sort of bridge for transmission of shared interpretations, since it survived primarily as a Christian document. Sidney Jellicoe notes that already in the first two centuries A.D., the pre-Christian era, it is clear that “the Greek Old Testament was to be held as the Scriptures of the infant Church and in the writings of the fathers.”<sup>61</sup> Thus, despite the Judaic origin of the Septuagint, it was adopted and preserved by the early Christian community, and was adapted for their purposes. Emil

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<sup>57</sup>*B-M*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 275. This critical edition is based on the Codex Vaticanus (B), the oldest most-complete extant version of the Septuagint.

<sup>58</sup>From Greek *δόξα*, glory or light, in the sense of effulgence.

<sup>59</sup>The English translation of this reference to E. Ben-Yehuda, *Thesaurus totius hebraeae veteris et recentioris* (16 vols.; Jerusalem: Ben-Yehudah Hozaa-La’Or, 1940-1958) 12.6190 is cited from Propp, “Transfigured or Disfigured?” p. 379 and n. 20.

<sup>60</sup>Propp, *ibid.*, n. 18. See the earlier discussion of the interchanging of נ and ו for more references on this subject. Neusner discusses midrashic activity in the Septuagint and provides examples of differences between the Hebrew and the Old Greek, including paraphrastic readings of the Hebrew Bible, in his chapter “Midrash in the Septuagint and the Targumim,” in *What is Midrash?*, pp. 23-26.

<sup>61</sup>Jellicoe, *Septuagint and Modern Study*, p. 41.

Schürer suggests:

The fact that Christians and other Jewish non-conformists had used the LXX as a polemical weapon in disputes, contributed to its gradual discrediting among Jews... and to Aquila's new translation which at the time of Origen was held in higher esteem by the Jews than the LXX.<sup>62</sup>

A Christianized Septuagint included allegorizations and changes in the text specifically introduced to serve the Christian exegetical agenda.<sup>63</sup> The example of קרן עור פניו does not seem likely to have been at issue in this disparity between Christians and Jews over allegorical translations and re-interpretation of the Bible, since their basic renderings of קרן עור פניו as a kind of radiance seem to be in agreement. Where their interpretations were rendered incompatible was in choosing to explain the significance of the light differently, with the Christians linking Moses' light to the transfiguration of Christ in the writings of the New Testament.

## ii. Aquila

Aquila, a second-century proselyte to Judaism, translated the Bible into Greek in an attempt to offer his co-religionists an alternative to the Christianized Septuagint.<sup>64</sup> Origen later included Aquila's translation of the Bible as one of the Greek columns in his Hexapla, but most of this document is extant only in fragments. Discovered only in the past century, some Cairo Geniza palimpsests with Greek "underwriting" also preserve fragments of the Hexapla and some of Aquila's translation.<sup>65</sup> Other fragments of Aquila are extant as citations in other scholarly works, though not always in the original form.<sup>66</sup> The scarcity of extant Aquila fragments makes it impossible to draw

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<sup>62</sup>Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, p. 480.

<sup>63</sup>Jellicoe notes that the Jewish-Greek Bible went through a process of "gradually assimilating 'corruptions,'" until it was eventually adopted by the Christian and abandoned by the Jews, in *Septuagint and Modern Study*, p. 353. Emanuel Tov notes that few specific examples of these Christian changes are extant, but does cite one "much quoted" example of ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου (from the wood), inserted into Ps. 96 [95]:10 to as a reference to the cross, in "The Septuagint," in *Mikra*, p. 163.

<sup>64</sup>For more on the discrediting of the Septuagint and how this led to Aquila's version, see Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 480.

<sup>65</sup>These palimpsests are discussed in Paul E. Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*, second edition. (Oxford: Basic Blackwell, 1959), p. 11.

<sup>66</sup>For example, Jerome's *Commentary on Amos* (ch. 6, v. 12-15) contains a Latin reference to Aquila's translation of Ex. 34:29. This example is studied in more detail in the section of this thesis dealing with Jerome.

firm conclusions about Aquila's content or style. However, some general observations are possible.

Based on the data collected from extant fragments, Aquila's fidelity to reproducing the Hebrew idiom precisely is noteworthy. This approach to the text resulted in an extremely literal translation of the Bible that often concedes the accepted meaning of the original text for the sake of etymology and linguistic exactitude, including many texts rendered contrary to Jewish interpretation. Sebastian Brock states that "Aquila, who incidentally had an exceptionally good knowledge of Greek, was continually prepared to sacrifice Greek syntax."<sup>67</sup>

Despite this extreme literalness and the aforementioned scarcity of extant fragments, the extent to which the proselyte Aquila was well-versed in rabbinic exegesis is noted by several modern scholars, who emphasise his fidelity to Jewish traditions found in targumim, midrashim and the Talmud. In defence of the numerous cases in which Aquila rendered the biblical text differently from Jewish tradition, Joseph Reider suggests that "it is probably due to the fact that the traditions in question have not been preserved."<sup>68</sup> Harry Orlinsky agrees that Aquila incorporated contemporary Jewish interpretations in his Greek translation, and adds that Aquila also "avoided the Christological elements which had been introduced into the Septuagint text."<sup>69</sup> It has also been noted that the Church Fathers' criticism of Aquila's translation was "for its tendency to obviate christological interpretations of certain passages through a literal and oftentimes etymologizing rendering."<sup>70</sup>

Reider suggests that the historical context of Aquila's literalism amplifies its profoundness, and describes Aquila's translations as "a barrier against the unsound methods of dogmatic and allegorical interpretation which culminated in Philo and disregarded the literal sense."<sup>71</sup> Reider further proposes that Aquila's literalism "pav[ed] the way for the modern historical and philological

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<sup>67</sup>Sebastian Brock, "The Phenomenon of Biblical Translation in Antiquity," in Jellicoe, *Studies in the Septuagint*, p. 561.

<sup>68</sup>Reider provides seven pages of such examples where Aquila rendered the text contrary to rabbinic traditions, in "Prolegomena to an Index to Aquila," *JQR-NS*, iv., p. 619. See A. E. Silverstone, *Aquila and Onkelos* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931), p. 68, and the footnotes there, for more on Aquila's fidelity to Jewish exegetical traditions.

<sup>69</sup>Orlinsky, "The Hebrew Text and the Ancient Versions," in *Essays*, p. 393.

<sup>70</sup>Reider, "Prolegomena," p. 599. Reider describes Aquila's literalness as "pedantic," p. 352.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 600.

methods of interpretation.”<sup>72</sup> However, Reider’s emphasis on Aquila’s importance in the history of biblical scholarship is tempered by the words of caution of other scholars. They suggest some of the practical limitations of this Greek version. For example, Jellicoe suggests that Aquila’s version would not have been intended for popular circulation, rather was written for a pedagogically-inclined readership. In his discussion of this Greek translation Jellicoe states: “It was essentially a teacher’s book, aimed at giving an exact rendering of the Hebrew and useable only by one who already understood that language.”<sup>73</sup> Claude Cox is even more critical of Aquila’s literalism and questions its usefulness. Cox states: “Aquila’s translation can only be called woodenly faithful to the Hebrew text... He used stereotypical renderings of Hebrew words at the expense of context and sense of the original.”<sup>74</sup>

It is not certain if any of this information can be useful in our attempts to understand Aquila’s rendering of Ex. 34:29-35, since so much of Aquila’s version of the Bible has been lost. According to some sources, Aquila’s Greek translation of Ex. 34:29-35 is among those fragments that have been lost. One of these sources is Migne’s 1857 collection of hexaplaric fragments based on the 1713 de Montfaucon edition from Paris, which contains a note at Ex. 34:29 in the ΑΚΥΛΑΣ (Aquila) column that states: *Græce abest.* (the Greek is missing).<sup>75</sup> Similarly, Frederick Fields’ 1875 collection of hexaplaric material also lacks an Aquilan version of Ex. 34:29-35 in Greek, and contains a footnote that explicitly states: *Aquila Graeca vox ignoratur* (the Greek voice of Aquila is not known).<sup>76</sup>

In their general preface to the Cambridge Septuagint, Alan Brooke and Norman McLean explain that their third apparatus contains new material that did not appear in Field’s Hexapla. This new material is based on hexaplaric material found in the margins of manuscripts that they consulted for this critical edition of the Old Testament in Greek.<sup>77</sup> The third apparatus to Ex. 34:35 cites a Greek rendering that they attribute to Aquila (α’): *κεκερατωτο η εντ...ωται δερμα προσωπου*

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 601.

<sup>73</sup>Jellicoe, *Septuagint and Modern Study*, p. 77.

<sup>74</sup>Claude Cox, *Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion in Armenia* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996), p. 5.

<sup>75</sup>Origen, *Hexaplorum Quae Supersunt*, in *PatGraec*, vol. 15, sec. 3, col. 496.

<sup>76</sup>Origen, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*, vol. 1, ed. Fridericus Field (Oxford: Clarendoniano, 1867-1875), p. 145, n. 31.

<sup>77</sup>*B-M*, vol. 1, pt. 1, p. iv.

μωσει (the skin of the face of Moses was horned).<sup>78</sup> This rendering would be the earliest extant Jewish or Christian example of Moses portrayed as actually, physically “horned.” It also contradicts the information published by Migne and Field.<sup>79</sup>

There is an extant precedent for an Aquilan citation in Greek in the philological thesaurus written by Wilhelm Gesenius, but it is not the same as the citation in Brooke-McLean. In the notes on קרן from Ex. 34:29-35 in his 1835 *Thesaurus philologicus Criticus Linguae Hebraeae*, Gesenius suggests: *Ridicule Aqu. κερατώδης ἦν* (Ridiculously, Aquila renders] “was horned”).<sup>80</sup> It appears that Gesenius did not have a very high regard for this rendering, although it is not clear whether he doubts Aquila’s interpretation of “horned” or the possibility that this rendering is too ridiculous to be an authentic citation. Field cites Gesenius’ proposed Aquilan Greek rendering of this phrase, and concludes rather critically that: *est merum ex Hieronymo figmentum* (it is a pure fiction out of Jerome).<sup>81</sup> It would seem that Field regards *κερατώδης ἦν* as an attempt by Gesenius to propose a Greek version of Aquila’s פניו עורן קרן although he only translated it from the Latin version of Aquila found in Jerome’s *Commentary on Amos*.<sup>82</sup>

Both Migne and Field record a Latin version of Ex. 34:29 that is similar, but *not* identical,

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., pt. 2, p. 275. The Greek word *εντ...ωται*, translated here as “horned,” contains a lacuna. Torrance Kirby suggests that if this word is actually from the Greek *εντυνω*, the meaning is closer to bejeweled or decorated. Please note that the diacritical marks for this phrase are absent in *B-M*.

<sup>79</sup>This appears to be a previously-unknown fragment of Aquila. Due to the fact that I can find no reference to a specific manuscript for the Aquilan fragment cited in *B-M*, and due to the lack of corroborating evidence from Migne and Field, I am hesitant to depend on this citation to determine conclusively Aquila’s rendering of this verse.

<sup>80</sup>Following his citation of this Greek phrase “from” Aquila, Gesenius cites “from” the Vulgate: “*Vulg. cornuta erat (facies)*,” although this Latin citation resembles Jerome’s Latin version of Aquila in his *Commentary on Amos* rather than the *cornuta esset facies* of the Vulgate itself. Gesenius explains how these versions containing *cornuta erat* and *κερατώδης ἦν* are the origin of the imagery of Moses’ with horns: *quo factum est, ut pictores Mosen cornutum depingerent* (that from this it has come about that the painters depict Moses as horned). Gesenius cites Solomon Deyling, *Observationum Sacrarum*, s. III (Leipsig : Sumptibus Hiredum Frid. Lanckisii, 1735-1748), p. 81 ff, as his source for this point, in Wilhelm Gesenius, *Thesaurus philologicus Criticus Linguae Hebraeae* (Leipsig: Sumtibus Typisque Fr. Ch. Guil. Vogelii, 1835), p. 1238.

<sup>81</sup>Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum*, vol. 1, p. 145, n. 31.

<sup>82</sup>Gesenius’ introduction to his *Thesaurus* does not contain any information about Aquilan fragments, manuscripts or marginal Aquilan-hexaplaric material to confirm that he obtained this citation from a source of Aquila actually in Greek. Therefore, Field’s conjecture is plausible.

to Ex. 34:29 in the Vulgate; Migne, in his column of Aquilan sources translated into Latin,<sup>83</sup> and Field, in his footnotes: *Unde et in Exodo juxta Hebraicum et Aquilae editionem legimus: 'Et Moyses nesciebat, quia cornuta erat species vultus ejus'* (And Moses was not aware that his face [had] a horned appearance), which he cites from a biblical commentary by Jerome.<sup>84</sup> This Latin remnant of Aquila's rendering of Ex. 34:29 is found in Jerome's *Commentary on Amos*.<sup>85</sup> As part of a discussion about Moses, seemingly unrelated to Ex. 34:29-35, Jerome wrote: *Vnde et in Exodo iuxta Hebraicum, et Aquilae editionem, legimus: 'Et Moyses nesciebat, quia cornuta erat species vultus eius'* (And in the Hebrew text of Exodus and the Aquila edition, we read: And Moses did not know that the face of his countenance was horned).<sup>86</sup> While it has already been stated that there is no Aquila manuscript against which to verify this citation,<sup>87</sup> the issue is further complicated by Jerome's translation of Aquila into Latin instead of preserving it in Greek as he did often with other citations in the same work.<sup>88</sup> Ultimately, we do not have a conclusive record of Aquila's rendering of this verse, despite the Greek citations in Gesenius's *Thesaurus* and in the third apparatus of the Brooke-McLean *Old Testament in Greek*. The Latin citations of Aquila are also inconclusive.

There is a circular aspect to Jerome's use of Aquila that warrants concern. His Latin citation of Aquila's rendering of קרן עור פניו (*cornuta erat facies*) matches his own etymological

<sup>83</sup>Migne's *Vulgata Latina* column contains the corresponding phrase from Jerome's familiar rendering of Ex. 34:29: *Et ignorabat quod cornuta esset facies ejus, Hexaplorum Quae Supersunt*, in *PatGraec*, vol. 15, sec. 3, cols. 495-498.

<sup>84</sup>Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum*, vol. 1, p. 145, Ex. 34:29.

<sup>85</sup>Jerome *Commentary on Amos*, in *PatLat*, vol. 25, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: Venit Apud Editorem, 1845), col. 1067.

<sup>86</sup>Cited from Jerome *Commentarii in Prophetas Minores*, in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera*, vol. 76, pp. 311-312. The version from Jerome's *Commentary on Amos* in Migne's *PatLat*, vol. 25, col. 1067, is slightly different. Aside from a few differences in spelling it also suggests an alternative reading for *species*: *Unde et in Exodo juxta Hebraicum, et Aquilae editionem, legimus: Et Moyses nesciebat, quia cornuta erat species [A] facies] vultus ejus* (Exod. xxxiv, 29), which makes it closer to the Vulgate: *cornuta esset facies*. The translation of Ex. 34:29 in the citation above is based on Mellinkoff, *Horned Moses*, p. 78.

<sup>87</sup>Richard Saley suggests that the discovery of Aquila palimpsests in the Cairo Geniza may indicate an Aquilan text-tradition independent of Origen's Hexapla, but, again, Aquila is only extant in fragments. My appreciation to Annette Reed at Harvard University for making Professor Saley's comments known to me.

<sup>88</sup>For example, in his *Commentary on Amos* (and others), Jerome refers to other translations that he consulted, including Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus. While in many cases he cites and discusses their work in Latin, Jerome does sometimes insert Greek citations. For example, on the same page as Jerome's comments about Aquila on Ex. 34:29 (in either edition) there is a citation in Greek from Symmachus. See the citation from Jerome's *Commentary on Isaiah* discussed later, for another example of this.

translation of קרן in the Vulgate. Since Jerome only uses Latin here, rather than the original languages of these documents, his representation of the Greek is suspect. Not only does *cornuta* seem to contradict all of the Jewish interpretation that we have already seen, Jerome provides no other references to support his claim of Aquila's version except his own Latin version of the Bible, and his own Latin version of Aquila which we are unable to verify. As well, given Aquila's use of rabbinic interpretation in his work, any other Jewish traditions that did support this rendering have obviously not been preserved.<sup>89</sup> While it is not impossible that Aquila's version may, indeed, be similar to Jerome's *cornuta esset facies*, at this juncture it appears that Jerome's claims indicate his own translation of the Bible and no other.

Another aspect of this dilemma is a theory proposed by A. E. Silverstone that the translator who penned the Aramaic Targum Onkelos was the same individual responsible for the Greek by Aquila, that is, that Onkelos and Aquila were the same person.<sup>90</sup> Theoretically, this would yield an additional ancient translation of the Bible against which the extant fragments of Aquila could be studied. If we are prepared to assume that the various citations of Aquila in Jerome, Gesenius, and Brooke-McLean are conclusive, Silverstone's theory is damaged by the inconsistent renderings of קרן עור פניו in Onkelos and Aquila; in Onkelos it is a reference to "radiance" while Aquila seems to support the notion of Moses with horns. Silverstone points to textual similarities between the two versions in support of his thesis,<sup>91</sup> yet he also defends blatant differences between them by presenting them as Greek emendations of an imperfect Aramaic translation.<sup>92</sup> In a more moderate version of this theory of authorship, Dominique Barthélemy proposes that Onkelos and Aquila (named *Aqilas*, in the Talmud) are the same name, but does not link the two translations.<sup>93</sup> Ultimately, the issue of

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<sup>89</sup>This allusion to lost Jewish traditions comes from Reider in an earlier citation, "Prolegomena," p. 619.

<sup>90</sup>Silverstone, *Aquila and Onkelos*. In this work, Silverstone also discusses similarities between the styles and translations of Jonathan (Aramaic) and Theodotion (Greek). For more on the association of Jonathan with Theodotion, see relevant discussion in Dominique Barthélemy, *Les Devanciers d'Aquila* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963).

<sup>91</sup>Silverstone, *ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>93</sup>See Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*, pp. 191-194; Barthélemy, *Les Devanciers d'Aquila*, pp. 148-154. Barthélemy asserts: "D'ailleurs on s'accorde généralement aujourd'hui pour reconnaître que c'est une même personne que le Babli et la Tosephta appellent Onkelos, tandis que le Jérusalmit l'appelle Aqilas et la tradition grecque 'Αχύλας," pp. 152-153. Barthélemy accepts an equation of the names Onkelos and Aquila, and asserts their shared relationship to "la traduction grecque de la Torah par Onqelos-Aquila" (p. 153), but does not accept an equation of

this theory does not contribute substantially to the present discussion.

Interestingly, several modern scholars refer to Aquila's rendering of this verse.<sup>94</sup> Flusser and Propp refer to Aquila as the basis for proposing an early Jewish connection to the interpretation of Moses with horns.<sup>95</sup> However, it is puzzling that no evidence exists to indicate that Jews used Aquila in their exegesis. Lester Grabbe points to this lack of references to Aquila in Jewish exegesis as a possible "accident of history" since there is such a lack of Greek-language Jewish commentaries from this period.<sup>96</sup> As a result of this dearth of Jewish sources in Greek, we are unable to determine the extent to which Aquila's translation was actually accepted and used by Jews from this period. In light of all of this, I feel that it would be irresponsible to base a theory of a Judaic origin for Moses' horns on unsubstantiated references to Aquila's translation of Ex. 34:29, even though the interpretive tradition suggests that it would have been intended as a metaphor for radiance anyway.

### *iii. Origen (Hexapla)*

During the first half of the third century, Origen (ca.185-ca.254) revised the text of the Septuagint (LXX) to bring it more into accord with the Hebrew text. For the practical purposes of entering into dialogue and debate with the Jews and for preaching, Origen explains that he familiarised himself with Jewish texts:

I make it my endeavour not to be ignorant of their various readings, so that in my controversies with the Jews I may avoid quoting to them what is not found in their copies, and also may be able to make positive use of what is found there, even when it is not to be found in our scriptures. If we are prepared for discussions with them in this way, they will no longer be able, as so often happens, to laugh scornfully at Gentile believers for their ignorance of the true reading which they have.<sup>97</sup>

Origen undertook the study of Hebrew to facilitate this project, and describes how he compared the Hebrew and different Greek versions of the text against the Septuagint: "When I was uncertain of

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the Aramaic targum with the Greek version of Aquila.

<sup>94</sup>Including Mellinkoff, Propp and Flusser.

<sup>95</sup>Flusser, "General Introduction," in *Jewish Historiography and Iconography*, ed. Schreckenberg and Schubert, pp. xv-xvi, Propp, "Did Moses Have Horns?" p. 32.

<sup>96</sup>Lester Grabbe, "Aquila's Translation and Rabbinic Exegesis," *JJS* 33 (1982) 534.

<sup>97</sup>From Origen *Ep. Ad Afric. 5*; cited in M. F. Wiles, "Origen as Biblical Scholar," *CHB*, p. 456.

the Septuagint reading because the various copies did not tally, I settled the issue by consulting other versions and retaining what was in agreement with them.”<sup>98</sup> Origen then recorded this edited Greek text in the fifth column of his great work, the Hexapla. According to Emil Schürer, the version of the Septuagint that Origen prepared for Col. V of the Hexapla used specific markings to indicate any phrases that were absent from the Hebrew (that is, additions to the Septuagint) or any phrases that were present in the Hebrew but absent from the Septuagint.<sup>99</sup>

While the Hexapla is not extant in its entirety, remnants show that the other columns of the Hexapla contained the Bible in Hebrew characters (col. I) and transliterated into Greek (col. II), plus the Greek translations of Aquila (col. III), Symmachus (col. IV), and Theodotion (col. VI). Orlinsky speculates on the order of these columns and on the way they each contained specific information that contributed to Origen’s plan for the Septuagint in the Hexapla. Orlinsky explains:

There appears to be good enough reason to believe that Origen arranged the columns of this Bible so as to make it possible for Christians to learn by themselves to read and understand the Hebrew of the Bible. Col. II enabled them to read Col. I, Aquila in Col. III enabled them to translate Hebrew literally, and sometimes even provided the etymology of the Hebrew word; Symmachus in Col. IV made intelligible the ofttime unintelligible Hebraized Greek of Aquila. By then the Christian reader was ready to tackle the all-important Septuagint in Col. V.<sup>100</sup>

Orlinsky also suggests that Theodotion was only put in Col. VI because his translation “did not serve Origen’s pedagogic purpose earlier.”<sup>101</sup> This great endeavour by Origen later led to independently edited versions of the Septuagint containing ‘hexaplaric’ additions.<sup>102</sup>

The hexaplaric Greek rendering of קָרַן עוֹר פְּנִיָּו attributed to Origen, provided in Field’s

<sup>98</sup>From Origen *Comm. in Matt. XV*, 14; cited in Wiles, “Origen as Biblical Scholar,” *CHB*, p. 457.

<sup>99</sup>Schürer discusses two theories regarding the Greek text in Col. V: “[It] was *probably* Origen’s own critical reconstruction of the ‘standard’ LXX text with reference to the Hebrew and the use of diacritical marks to show divergences from the Hebrew text. However, it has been noted correctly by Kahle that there is no evidence for diacritical signs being used actually *in* the Hexapla, so that the columns may have been intended as the foundation of Origen’s criticism of the LXX text rather than its culmination,” Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People*, vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 481-482. In the continuation of the earlier citation from Origen’s *Comm. in Matt. XV*, 14, Origen himself confirms the use of these diacritical signs or marks, Wiles, “Origen as Biblical Scholar,” *CHB*, p. 457-458. For more on the Hexapla, see also *ODCC*, p. 634.

<sup>100</sup>Orlinsky, “Jewish Influences,” *EBT*, p. 428.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup>For more on later editions of the LXX containing Origen’s hexaplaric additions, see Schürer, pp. 481-481; Wiles, “Origen as Biblical Scholar,” *CHB*, pp. 458-459.

edition of Origen's Hexapla, matches the Septuagint's *δεδοξασται η δψις του*.<sup>103</sup> With its tendency toward allegorical and mystical exegesis, Origen's grounding in the Alexandrian exegetical tradition may have strongly influenced his rendering of קרן עור פניו, even when Aquila's hyper-literal translation might have influenced him otherwise. Furthermore, Origen's exegesis is often noted for its "tripartite division" of the meanings of Scripture into carnal, moral, and spiritual interpretation as part of a spiritual process upward to perfection in which allegorical or typological interpretation was its' ultimate.<sup>104</sup> According to N. R. M. de Lange, Origen's *allēgoria* comprised two senses: (1) a literary device by which one thing is made to stand for another; and (2) the interpretation of a text as meaning something other than what it seems to mean.<sup>105</sup> Where Origen rendered קרן עור פניו as a kind of "glory," his sense of *allēgoria* seems to have been the latter.

Origen's theosophic rendering of קרן עור פניו also reflects the exegesis of his Jewish contemporaries and fellow scholars, who have already been demonstrated to interpret this phrase as a kind of "light" or "glorious radiance." Origen visited Palestine once in 215 C.E. and eventually settled in Caesaria in 231 C.E. where he lived, wrote and preached until his death.<sup>106</sup> De Lange describes Origen's consultations with Jewish scholars and his use of Jewish traditions in his work, and points out an unusual duality in Origen's attitude. De Lange explains that although Origen recognised the importance of Jewish exegetical traditions for Christian scholarship, he also endorsed "the accepted patristic view of Judaism, which was on the whole unfavourable."<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, evidence of Origen's scholarly interactions with Jews and Jewish exegesis is apparent in his own writings around the time of the compilation of the Mishnah and the tannaitic midrashim. For example, de Lange cites Origen's apologetic work against Celsus to emphasise Origen's familiarity with the work of Jewish scholars on the interpretation of Scripture. It states:

Both Jews and Christians believe that the Bible was written by the holy Spirit, but we

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<sup>103</sup>Origen, Ex. 34:29; Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum*, p. 145.

<sup>104</sup>N. R. M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews, Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 83. However, de Lange also notes that Origen very often reverted "to the older distinction between literal and spiritual," p. 109.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>106</sup>ODCC, p. 991-992; de Lange, *ibid.*, pp. 1-2, 7-8.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

disagree about the interpretation of what is contained in it. Nor do we live like the Jews, since we consider that it is not the literal interpretation of the laws which contains the spirit of the legislation.<sup>108</sup>

Since the traditional Jewish interpretation of קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו was seemingly allegorical, Origen's own theosophic, allegorical approach to Ex. 34:29-35 might be seen as an example of his familiarity with rabbinic exegesis and acceptance of it. At that time, however, Jewish interpretation was generally perceived by Christians as extremely literalistic because of its fidelity to biblical law. Thus, Origen's rendering of קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו as a kind of "glory" might be viewed as a general rejection of (or an alternative to) Jewish literalism and even as a direct response to Aquila's apparently etymological rendering of this phrase. As well, this approach may have been Origen's means of emphasising the association of Ex. 34:29-35 with Paul's condemnation of the Law of Moses in the New Testament.

Aside from the Hexapla, Origen wrote many commentaries and homilies most of which "survive only in fragments or in Latin translations,"<sup>109</sup> including *scholia* (brief notes) on Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. In one of these, Origen wrote at length about the glorification of Moses. To convey a kind of hermeneutical hierarchy, Origen suggests that to behold Moses' glory is tantamount to attaining the spiritual sense of the text, but only to perceive his veil symbolises attaining the mere literal sense of the text. With an explicit reference to Paul, Origen further suggests that the language of the Law is represented by the glory of Moses' face, but it is hidden behind a veil that can only be lifted through conversion.<sup>110</sup> These comments reveal the conflicted position of the Jews in Origen's work, much like what emerges from the Christological typologies of the New Testament. Nevertheless, de Lange asserts that, "with the exception of Jerome, no other Church Father knew the Jews as well as Origen," and that "much of what Origen says cannot be understood without a knowledge of the Rabbis."<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup>Origen *Cels.* v. 60; cited in de Lange, *ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>109</sup>Origen's other important works include his theological work, *De Principiis* (*Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*), two ascetical works, an apologetic work against Celsus, and full commentaries on most books of the Bible, *ODCC*, p. 992.

<sup>110</sup>Mellinkoff cites and summarises this source, calling it "one of the earliest and most extensive commentaries on the glorification of Moses," *Horned Moses*, p. 80. See Origen *Homily XII*, in *PatGraec.*, vol. 11, cols. 382-387.

<sup>111</sup>De Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, p. 7. For more on Origen's interaction with Jews, see de Lange, *Origen and the Jews*, pp. 1-28, 49-61.

## IV. Latin

### i. Old Latin (*Vetus Latina*)

Although the use of Greek continued into the third century in Rome, the spread of Latin required Bibles be translated into that language in North Africa and Southern Gaul before the end of the second century. These translations were made from the Septuagint and not from the Hebrew Bible itself, as were most Christian Bible translations in the ancient world.<sup>112</sup> As can be seen in the Latin biblical citations in works from that time, the MSS of Old Latin versions were hardly uniform, and it has been suggested that the term *Vetus Latina* is merely a collective reference to all such versions in circulation.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, modern scholars regularly alternate the blame for their inconsistencies between careless copyists and revisers or independent and unskilled Latin translators, depending on if that scholar subscribes to the theory that there was once a single genuine version.<sup>114</sup> It has been suggested that Jerome undertook the preparation of his Vulgate to remedy this situation.<sup>115</sup>

Benjamin Kedar notes that it is difficult to discern influences or traces of Jewish tradition in Old Latin translations, but suggests that there is some evidence of Jewish Bible translations into Latin. He notes that there are some scholars who suggest that “the OL has at its base pre-Christian translations made from the Hebrew” by pointing to isolated cases of Jewish idioms or targumic

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<sup>112</sup>Orlinsky gives examples of Christian communities whose Bible translations were not made from the Hebrew Bible, including Africa, Syria, Rome and Byzantium, thus such translations as “the Old Latin, the Coptic, the Syriac, the Gothic, Armenian, Arabic and other(s)...,” in “Jewish Influences on Christian Translations,” *EBT*, p. 428.

<sup>113</sup>Jellicoe asserts that no “authoritative” Old Latin text existed, referring to the “infinite variety of the Latin translations,” in *Septuagint and Modern Study*, p. 249. For a discussion of these different Latin versions, see C. K. Barrett, “The Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New,” *CHB*, pp. 370-374, and for notes on Augustine’s preference for the *Itala* version as the authoritative Old Latin translation, see Gerald Bonner, “Augustine as Biblical Scholar,” *CHB*, pp. 541-545.

<sup>114</sup>Kedar outlines these opposing theories, and points out that Jerome apparently believed that there was once such a “genuine” version that had been corrupted by copyists (*scriptorum vitio depravata interpretatio antiqua; Prol. in Iob*), though he also complained of incompetent translators (*imperiti translatores; Praef. in Prov.*) and too much variety between copies of scriptures available (*exemplaria scripturarum toto orbe dispersa... inter se variant; Prol. in Evang.*), Kedar, “The Latin Translations,” in *Mikra*, pp. 300-301, esp. n. 9.

<sup>115</sup>*ODCC*, pp. 980-981. Kedar suggests the works of Tertullian (c. 130-230 C.E.) to demonstrate this lack of textual consistence in biblical renderings, of whom it is thought that either there are two different versions of his work, or that he was offering “ad-hoc renderings from the Greek Bible,” Kedar, *ibid.*, pp. 299-300.

renderings.<sup>116</sup> Rather than an indication of Jewish-Latin influence, Kedar suggests that the apparent examples of influences from a Hebrew-text tradition point more to the possibility of “later corrections and insertions” made by individuals who were knowledgeable enough to treat some of the many imperfections of the Latin version although not its entirety.<sup>117</sup>

In the 1751 *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae* published by D. Petri Sabatier, the *Versio Antiqua* recorded in this document stops at Ex. 34:28 and resumes at Ex. 35:1; Sabatier seems to have had no Old Latin translation of Ex. 34:29-35.<sup>118</sup> A systematic analysis and reconstruction of pre-Vulgate Latin texts is currently underway by “the *Vetus Latina* project” at Beuron Abbey in Germany,<sup>119</sup> but no volumes are available yet.<sup>120</sup> Due to this, there is currently no Old Latin version of Ex. 34:29-35 against which the Latin Vulgate by Jerome could be compared.

## V. Conclusion

It is impossible to know the intentions of any translator, but it is evident from the sources examined in this study that these translators were attempting to convey an almost overwhelmingly common image. The image of Moses as glorified or radiant with some kind of bright light beaming from his face is constant, even though it carries different theological connotations for the Jewish and Christian translators based on exegetical and theological issues current to them.

With the exception of the uncertain version of Aquila, the Jewish translations of Ex. 34:29-35

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<sup>116</sup>Kedar, *ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 310-311.

<sup>118</sup>*Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae Versiones Antiquae seu Vetus Italia et Ceterae quaecunque in Codicibus Mss. & antiquorum libris reperi potuerunt: Quas cum Vulgata Latina, & cum Textu Graeco comparantur*, ed. D. Petri Sabatier (Parisii: Franciscum Ditot, 1751), p. 207. My appreciation to Todd Hanneken and Annette Reed for tracking down this volume in the Rare Books Department of Widener Library at Harvard University.

<sup>119</sup>This information is contained in the notes on Augustine’s *Elements of Christianity* located on the Internet at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/twayne/aug2notes.html>. This project of the *Vetus Latina* Institut of Beuron is described in greater detail by Barrett, in “The Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New,” *CHB*, pp. 370-372.

<sup>120</sup>The Old Latin version of Ex. 34:29-35 may be extant, but this will only be confirmed with the publication of the research from the scholars at Beuron. Several books have been published more recently than Sabatier’s, which provide details about extant Old Latin manuscripts and fragments. However, none that I consulted contained any information about the content of these fragments. See Hermann Josef Frede, *Kirchenschriftsteller: Verzeichnis und Sigel 3, neubearbeitete und erweiterte Aufl. des Verzeichnis der Sigel für Kirchenschriftsteller/ von Bonifatius Fischer* (Freiburg: Herder, 1981); and Bonifatius Fischer, *Verzeichnis der Sigel für handschriften und Kirchenschriftsteller* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1949).

reflect exegetical traditions contained in the rabbinic midrashim by describing the brilliant radiance of Moses' face and even attributing it directly to his interaction with God. The particular differences between them highlight various individual techniques or scholarly influences, but do not suggest alternate interpretations. The Greek rendering attributed to Aquila may simply be explained by his tendency toward extreme literalism and fidelity to Hebrew idiom. None of the translations discussed in this chapter, nor any of the narratives in the previous chapter, provides evidence that Aquila was adhering to an interpretation of Moses' visage as actually "horned." As seen in the earlier discussion of the rabbinic midrashim, the closest possible midrashic reference was to Moses' קרני ההוד (horns of glory) that symbolised power or the glory of the Divine. Most rabbinic references to the קרניים of Ex. 34:29-35 represent them as rays or beams of light if anything physical at all, and not as actual horns. The Samaritan interpretation of Moses' image concurs with Christian and Jewish notions of radiance but also conveys the general importance of the concepts of light and illumination in their exegetical tradition.

Through the Greek translations and, as seen in the previous chapter in examples from early Christian narratives, the Christian emphasis is on Moses' "glory" and probably reflects a combination of multiple theological issues. Most obviously, the idea of Moses as "glorified" or "bright with glory" serves the tropological agenda as a reference or parallel to Christ's transfiguration in the Hebrew Bible. The significance of Moses' glorious light originating from God is most evident in the comments of those Christian theologians who portray it as fading and hidden to emphasise the superseding of the "old" Law of Moses by the "new" Law of Christ. There is no evidence to suggest that early Christian translators or interpreters had any exegetical or theological notion of Moses with actual horns. Indeed, the possibility that Moses actually became "horned" at Mt. Sinai is even more remote in these Greek and Latin documents than in the Hebrew midrashim that had to work around the physical implications of the ambiguous Hebrew root קרן.

Much general knowledge of early exegetical techniques and theological issues can be attained by studying these early renderings of קרן עור פניו, but the textual origin of the medieval artistic depictions of Moses as "horned" has not yet been discussed. How, then, did Jerome deal with the complexity of Ex. 34:29-35 in his attempt to render a word-for-word Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible? Furthermore, in what way did Jerome's commentaries on the Bible and his theological

treatises enable him to explain his interpretation of קרן עור פניו and the image of Moses without compromising his fidelity to the Hebrew text?

## Chapter Five

### Jerome

#### I. Introduction

Jerome (ca. 331–420 C.E.<sup>1</sup>), Church Father and exegete, wrote extensive commentaries on the Bible and produced the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible that was ultimately proclaimed authoritative by the Church.<sup>2</sup> Jerome travelled and studied in communities throughout the Roman Empire and in 386 C.E. settled in Palestine, where he lived until his death and where he completed his new Latin translation of the Bible. As a result of these travels, Jerome’s scholarly sources were diverse and ranged from the literalist school of Antioch to the more spiritual, homiletic Alexandrian school and direct influences from the Jewish tradition and rabbinic exegesis. It has been suggested that while he did not always adopt their interpretations, Jerome borrowed from each of these schools. While he often began his exegesis by speaking of the literal sense of a text, he spent a greater effort on explaining its spiritual message.<sup>3</sup> Another description of Jerome’s scholarship asserts his “tireless occupation with philological material.”<sup>4</sup>

#### II. Jerome’s Latin revision and Hebrew studies

One of Jerome’s most important works is his revision of the *Vetus Latina* version of the

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<sup>1</sup>There is debate over the precise year of Jerome’s birth with a variance of about sixteen years. See the analysis of J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* 1, 337-339, on this matter, cited in Jay Braverman, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel* (Washington: Catholic Bible Association of America, 1978), p. 2. They prefer 331 C.E., although Braverman also notes 347 C.E. as “more commonly accepted.” *ODCC* prefers ca. 342 C.E., p. 719.

<sup>2</sup>This version was not officially named *textus auctoritate plenus* (the authoritative text) until the Council of Trent in 1546, a status which resulted from its gradual rise to popular use and eventual acceptance in the centuries that followed the death of Jerome. See Kedar, “The Latin Translations,” in *Mikra*, p. 321; Eugene F. Rice, *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, (Baltimore; London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985) pp. 185-186.

<sup>3</sup>Braverman articulates this clearly in his summary of Jerome’s interaction with both of these schools of the Church and in his lengthy section on Jerome’s exposure to rabbinic tradition, *Commentary on Daniel*, p. 2-10.

<sup>4</sup>Kedar, “The Latin Translations,” in *Mikra*, p. 314.

Bible.<sup>5</sup> He began this project using the Septuagint as the basis for his revisions, but “perforce was brought to the Hebrew,”<sup>6</sup> and shortly undertook the study of the Hebrew language. Although Jerome also consulted other versions of the Bible, including Origen, Aquila and Symmachus, it is well-documented that Jerome used the Hebrew text as the primary source for his revision of the Latin.<sup>7</sup>

Jerome’s great struggle to learn the Hebrew language is attested in his writings. Jerome described his early experiences studying Hebrew as “a bitter seed of learning [from which] I now pluck sweet fruits.”<sup>8</sup> Harry Orlinsky summarises the difficulties and frustrations of Jerome’s effort to learn the Hebrew language, and describes how Jerome’s determination emerges from his private letters:

His private letters... reveal a very dramatic, even melodramatic, personality, who was determined to learn the Hebrew language if it killed him, and it very nearly did. Jerome tells us how he would study the difficult - to him at least - Hebrew language, all day, and then go to sleep exhausted. Lo, the morning came, and with it the realization that he had forgotten during the night all that he had learned the day before. He knew that it was the work of evil spirits who wanted to keep him from learning the ways of God. And he persisted, deep in the wilderness of Judea, until he had begun to master it.<sup>9</sup>

For example, to achieve this kind of mastery, while Jerome spent several years in Chalcis he studied Hebrew with a Jewish convert to Christianity, upon returning to Rome he connected with a Jew who, according to Benjamin Kedar, “supplied him with Hebrew texts, taken secretly from the

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<sup>5</sup>Kedar states that Jerome “dedicated fifteen years” (ca. 390-405) to this project, and that he did not follow any general sequence in the order of the books that he translated, *ibid.*, p. 320. H.F.D. Sparks assigns a length of time “upwards of twenty years” to Jerome’s translations, beginning ca. 382 C.E. when he arrived in Rome and participated in the council of Damasus, in “Jerome as Biblical Scholar,” in *CHB*, pp. 513-514.

<sup>6</sup>Jellicoe, *Septuagint*, p. 160.

<sup>7</sup>It is recorded that Jerome “issued no less than three revisions of the Psalter - the ‘Roman’, the ‘Gallican’, and the ‘Hebrew’,” *ODCC*, p. 719. Despite Jerome’s revision of his Latin translation of Psalms to suit the parameters of his Hebrew-based efforts, it was the first Psalter that was ultimately recognised by the Church as the official Latin version of Psalms. On the subject of Jerome’s textual sources, Sparks notes that for his 381 C.E. treatise *On the Seraphim in Isaiah 6*, “Jerome based his interpretation on the Hebrew original and carefully compared it with the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, as well as the Septuagint, thus displaying a mastery of textual material, and opening up an approach that was altogether new in the Church of the West, in Sparks, “Jerome as Biblical Scholar,” in *CHB*, p. 513.

<sup>8</sup>From Jerome *Epistulae* 125:12, cited in Braverman, *Commentary on Daniel*, p. 5. Also cited in Kedar, “The Latin Translations,” in *Mikra*, p. 315.

<sup>9</sup>Orlinsky, “Jewish Influence on Christian Translations of the Bible,” in *Essays*, pp. 429. This passage is also cited in Orlinsky, *History*, pp. 15-16, n. 10.

Synagogue,”<sup>10</sup> and in Bethlehem he was taught at night by a Jew named Baraninas.<sup>11</sup> Since Hebrew was not in use among Christians, Jerome’s Hebrew studies required enlisting the services of these Jews and others.

Some scholars emphasise that Jerome would have had very little contemporary support for turning away from the Greek text in favour of the Hebrew which, at that time, was virtually unknown in Christian circles.<sup>12</sup> Not only did this endeavour require philological studies with Jews, but also resulted in tremendous exposure to Judaic teachings and biblical interpretations. Jerome himself admitted to such extensive consultations in the preface to his revision of Chronicles based on the *Vetus Latina*: “I procured a former teacher of the Law from Tiberias, who was held by the Hebrews in admiration and I conferred with him from the top of the head to the bottom toenail, so to speak.”<sup>13</sup> Jay Braverman presents an erudite summary of Jerome’s extensive interactions with Jewish scholars and rabbinic traditions, citing numerous statements from Jerome’s writings that confirm this.<sup>14</sup> In one such document, Jerome defends his scholarly associations with Jews, and his use of their teachings:

Shall I not be permitted to inform the Latins in the work of my commentaries of what I have learned from the Hebrew?... I would now show you how useful it is to tread on the threshold of the Masters and to learn the art from the artists.<sup>15</sup>

As a result of this interaction, Jerome acquired much knowledge of Jewish exegesis, and introduced much of it into his writings. Braverman asserts that there are “hundreds of Jewish traditions

<sup>10</sup>Kedar, “The Latin Translations,” in *Mikra*, p. 315.

<sup>11</sup>Sparks, “Jerome as Biblical Scholar,” in *CHB*, p. 515.

<sup>12</sup>Although Jerome was not the only Christian scholar with recourse to the Hebrew text of the Bible, Jellicoe notes that Origen had a “special purpose” for using the Hebrew in the Hexapla and that ultimately Origen’s esteem - along with that of Justin Martyr and Augustine - lay with the Septuagint in lieu of the Hebrew, in Jellicoe, *Septuagint*, pp. 160-161. Kedar emphasises that Church authorities, including Augustine, “strongly opposed Jerome’s abandonment of the Septuagint and his unconditional acceptance of the Hebrew text,” whereas they had “whole-heartedly favoured” revisions of the NT, in Kedar, “The Latin Translations,” in *Mikra*, p. 320.

<sup>13</sup>*PatLat*, 29:401, cited in Braverman, *Commentary on Daniel*, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Braverman, *Commentary on Daniel*, pp. 3-10. Kedar provides several pages of examples from Jerome’s writings where words were translated according to rabbinic interpretations, in “The Latin Translations,” in *Mikra*, pp. 331-334. Orlinsky contends that as a result of the considerable knowledge of rabbinic exegesis that Jerome acquired from his Jewish teachers, the Latin translation that he produced had a “predominantly Jewish spirit,” *History*, p. 16, n. 10. Also see Albert Condamin, “L’influence de la tradition juive dans la version de Saint Jérôme,” *Recherches de science religieuse* 5 (1920) pp. 1-21.

<sup>15</sup>From Jerome’s *Apology Against Rufinus*, 1.20 (*PatLat* 23:414), cited in Braverman, *ibid.*, p. 5.

preserved in [Jerome's] commentaries referring to all aspects of biblical interpretation," though he also emphasises that there are also many instances where Jerome clearly (and sometimes harshly) articulates his rejection of a particular Jewish interpretation.<sup>16</sup>

Jerome's self-declared agenda was to understand the Hebrew Bible and then to interpret it, and he saw his process of involvement with Jews as a clear stepping stone to his own commentaries. For example, in a prefatory note explaining that he had hired a Jewish teacher from Lydda to help him translate Job, Jerome wrote:

Whether I advanced any by his teaching I do not know. But this one thing I do know - that I would not have been able to interpret something if I had not first understood it.<sup>17</sup>

Braverman concludes his study of the Jewish influence on Jerome with an assertion of the strength of Jerome's preference for the Hebrew text over the Septuagint and the *Vetus Latina*, demonstrated by his frequent use of the phrase *hebraica veritas* (Hebrew truth) when referring to the Hebrew text.<sup>18</sup> For Braverman and for the purposes of this study, it is sufficient to contend that the most important consensus between Jewish scholars and Jerome was respect for and fidelity to the Hebrew text of the Bible.

### III. The Influence of Aquila's version on Jerome

One of the Greek versions that Jerome is said to have consulted extensively is the etymological Bible translation by Aquila the proselyte. Some scholars view Aquila's translation as an important source for Jerome because of its extreme literalness and fidelity to the underlying Hebrew. This includes instances where Jerome quoted Aquila's precise phraseology, preserving Aquila's version in its original Greek and, as noted earlier, sometimes in Latin. Jellicoe asserts that "[Jerome] makes use of Aquila's interpretations of obscure Hebrew words and in a few cases borrows readings from him direct."<sup>19</sup> However, to the suggestion that Jerome was strongly

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<sup>16</sup>Two examples of Jerome rejecting Jewish interpretation are his *Commentary on Zechariah* 10:11-12 and in his Letter 121.10, both cited in Braverman, *ibid.*, pp. 8-9. Quote above from p. 6.

<sup>17</sup>From *PatLat* 28 (ed. 1845): 1081; (ed. 1889): 1140, cited in Braverman, *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup>Braverman, *ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup>Jellicoe's notes on this also include a list of some of these instances, from the writings of Jerome and Origen, to demonstrate the impression made on them by Aquila's fidelity to the Hebrew, in *Septuagint*, p. 80, n. 5.

influenced by Aquila's work, Sebastian Brock responds in the negative. Brock asserts:

Jerome was no imitator of Aquila: he intended that his version should be comprehensible to his readers, who had no knowledge of Hebrew, and accordingly some compromise with the 'sense' at the expense of 'the word' had to be made, although Jerome considered his work to be of the 'word for word' rather than the 'sense for sense' type of translation.<sup>20</sup>

These criticisms that Brock levels against Aquila in contrast with Jerome - incomprehensibility and inflexibility - are typical observations about that version.<sup>21</sup> His observations about Jerome's "word for word" style are valid, yet Jellicoe also asserts that even though the Greek versions of Aquila and Symmachus were useful to Jerome, he was more influenced by the "Alexandrian version."<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, Jerome's translation of קָרַן עוֹר פְּנָיו in Ex. 34:29-35 is not one of those cases where the Vulgate matched the Septuagint. Indeed, Jerome's Latin rendering of these verses seems closer to Aquila's version than to any other extant ancient document.

#### IV. Vulgate: Exodus 34:29-35

In the Vulgate, Jerome rendered Ex. 34:29 as follows: *Cumque descenderet Moses de monte Sinai, tenebat duas tabulas testimonii, et ignorabat quod cornuta esset facies sua ex consortio sermonis Dei* (And when Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he held two tablets of the testimony, and he was not aware that his face was horned on account of the conversation of the Lord). His rendering of קָרַן עוֹר פְּנָיו as *cornuta esset facies sua* corresponds with *cornutam Mosi faciem* in Ex. 34:30, and *faciem egredientis Mosi esse cornutam* in Ex. 34:35.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Brock, in Jellicoe, *Septuagint*, p. 564.

<sup>21</sup>See the earlier discussion of Aquila's techniques for references on this point.

<sup>22</sup>Jellicoe, *Septuagint*, pp. 80-81. This term seems to refer to Septuagintal texts in general, as opposed to later translations such as Aquila. However, some confusion is raised by the fact that there is an uncial named Codex Alexandrinus which is mostly Lucianic and by the fact that the Old Greek/kaige text-tradition represented in Codex Vaticanus (the uncial that provides the base text of B-M) and its related minuscules is often termed "Egyptian." Given the context of Jellicoe's statement, it is best to assume that "Alexandrian version" does not refer to any specific family of Septuagintal texts. To explain Jerome's use of the Septuagint, Kedar states: "[Jerome] grew more and more critical of the LXX, and yet, having refuted it on philological grounds, he usually still explains its wording in full." According to Jerome's own testimony, he used both the Hebrew and the Greek "so that they would elucidate each other," cited in Kedar, "The Latin Translations," in *Mikra*, p. 319, esp. n. 39.

<sup>23</sup>All three citations from: *Biblia Sacra*, vol. 1, p. 126. The critical apparatus there notes differences in the spelling of Moses' name (alternative: Moysi) and one case where God is translated as Domini instead of Dei. However, there are no recorded textual variants for the Latin phrase *cornuta esset facies*.

It has been pointed out that Jerome dropped the word “skin” from his translation of the Hebrew phrase,<sup>24</sup> but perhaps the most jarring aspect of this translation is his rendering of קרן as *cornuta*. It has already been demonstrated that, until this time, קרן עור פניו was usually read as a reference to radiance or glory, perhaps with the solitary exception of Aquila’s version. However, there is little philological recourse for reading *cornuta* as anything other than a reference to actual horns or as a metaphor for power or strength,<sup>25</sup> so it would appear that Jerome, like Aquila, chose to render the Hebrew etymologically rather than convey the accepted sense of the passage. This peculiarity must be discussed, since most of Jerome’s exegetical influences would have pushed him toward a non-literal, spiritual or metaphorical rendering of קרן עור פניו .

As shall be illustrated shortly, specific statements in Jerome’s biblical commentaries indicate that he most likely meant *cornuta esset facies* to be read metaphorically, as a reference to glorification or strength, despite his apparent reference to actual horns. Thus, the question that remains concerns Jerome’s particular use of *cornuta* in his Latin translation of this passage. Perhaps this rendering is most in harmony with his exegetical technique of beginning with the literal interpretation but concluding with the spiritual,<sup>26</sup> even though to propose this explanation requires a compilation of information contained in several discrete works by Jerome.

Many scholars support the idea that Jerome based his Latin translation of Ex. 34:29 on the similar Greek rendering by Aquila, especially since Jerome is known to have referred to Aquila often.<sup>27</sup> Jerome even cites Aquila’s unique translation of Ex. 34:29 as a proof text in a discussion of a different issue altogether in his *Commentary on Amos*. Kedar rejects the idea that *cornuta esset facies* is merely an error by Jerome, and proposes that this passage is among those cases frequently declared as mistakes in the Vulgate but which were actually intentional renderings by Jerome based

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<sup>24</sup>Propp states: “Jerome adopted Aquila’s interpretation... by dropping the word ‘skin’; evidently Jerome was bothered by the incongruity of skin growing horns.” See Propp, “Did Moses Have Horns?” p. 32.

<sup>25</sup>S.v. “Cornu” in *A Latin Dictionary*, ed. Charlton Lewis and Charles Short (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962; first edition 1879), p. 471.

<sup>26</sup>For references, see the earlier summary of Braverman’s suggestions on this point about Jerome’s exegetical techniques and influences.

<sup>27</sup>The following modern scholars discussed in this study are among those that mention Aquila’s version of Ex. 34:29 and associate it with Jerome’s version: Flusser, “General Introduction,” in Schreckenberg and Schubert, *Jewish Historiography*, p. xv; Propp, “Transfigured or Disfigured?” p. 382; Mellinkoff, *Horned Moses*, pp. 77-78.

on “philological notions current in his times.”<sup>28</sup> Kedar states:

As is well known, Jerome derived the verb *qrn* (Exod 34:29) not from *qeren* ‘a ray’, but from *qeren* ‘horn’, and thus aided in creating the image of a ‘horned’ Moses: his face was horned (*cornuta*). This, however, is not a haphazard rendering: Jerome could have copied the LXX (‘glorified’), had he wanted it. Yet his way of translating is a replica of Aquila’s etymologizing rendition and was *meant* as a glorification of Moses: horns are the insignia of might and majesty.<sup>29</sup>

It is not obvious if Kedar is aware of the specific comments in Jerome’s own commentaries that explained that he meant this rendering metaphorically, although Kedar enlists a suitable ancient horns-based metaphor to explain Jerome’s *cornuta* as symbolic of “might and majesty.” Either way, Kedar’s earlier assumptions are correct: Jerome would have had the option to copy the Septuagint’s rendering of the verse, which was the standard rabbinic interpretation of the time conveyed through the midrashim and the targumim, and which was also the standard Christian interpretation conveyed through the Septuagint and various New Testament references. Therefore, Jerome’s use of *cornuta* must have been intentional.

Challenged by the phraseology of Ex. 34:29 and its inherent multiple meanings in Hebrew, Jerome translated קרן עור פניו with *cornuta esset facies* emphasising the more animalistic imagery associated with the verb rather than the allegorical or spiritual sense. His knowledge of biblical Hebrew and his familiarity with the philological complexity of the root קרן present in this passage enabled him to choose a Latin idiom that preserved the etymology of the original language of the text. Since the limitations of Latin prevented him from using idiom with a similar hermeneutical complexity, Jerome resorted to his own exegetical tools to preserve the complexity of Ex. 34:29-35 through an allegorical or spiritual interpretation of the original text. In other words, Jerome’s text said “horns,” but meant something else. This is evident in the following examples from his commentary on the Bible and in one of his final treatises.

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<sup>28</sup>On the subject of Jerome’s “mistakes,” Kedar suggests that “most of the so-called mistakes, if not all, commonly adduced are definitely not blunders but conscientiously chosen renderings in agreement with philological notions current in his times,” in “The Latin Translations,” in *Mikra*, p. 317. Kedar continues his discussion with some legitimate examples of errors by Jerome, observing that “in his commentary Jerome not only corrects these mistakes... but appears astonished at the erroneous translations,” p. 318.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 317. The emphasis on “meant” is mine.

## V. Biblical Commentaries and Treatises

### i. *Commentary on Amos*

After returning to Palestine in 386 C.E. and settling in Bethlehem, Jerome wrote and completed his commentary on the Minor Prophets by 406 C.E.<sup>30</sup> It is in the following citation from *Commentary on Amos* that Jerome cites Aquila's rendering of Ex. 34:29, albeit in Latin. This commentary contains a general comparison of men who are just with men who are unjust and excessively proud, centred upon two biblical prooftexts that demonstrate each one's understanding of pride and strength.<sup>31</sup> Jerome suggests that Ex. 34:29 is the basis for linking Moses with the just man, and subsequently a praiseworthy usage of *cornu* as pride:

*Qui hoc faciunt, laetantur in nullo uerbu bono, siue frustra..., et erecti in superbiam dicunt: 'Nonne in fortitudine nostra habuimus cornua?' Cum e regione iustus in Domino gloriatur, et dicat: 'In te inimicos nostros uentilabimus cornu'... Vnde et in Exodo iuxta Hebraicum, et Aquilae editionem, legimus: 'Et Moyses nesciebat, quia cornuta erat species uultus eius' [Ex. 34:29], qui uere dicere poterat: 'In te inimicos meos cornu uentilo' [Ps. 43:6].<sup>32</sup>*

(Those who do that delight in no good word, except in vain... and puffed up in their pride they say: 'Did we not have horns in our courage?' Meanwhile the just man will glory in God, and says: 'In you we will raise up the horn among our enemies'... And whence in the Hebrew text of Exodus, and in the Aquila edition, we read: 'And Moses did not know that the face of his countenance was horned,' who truly was able to say: 'In you we will raise up the horn among our enemies.')

As discussed in the earlier section on Aquila, this is also the commentary in which Jerome presents his own Latin rendition of the words of Aquila on Ex. 34:29. Although the Greek text is not preserved here, Jerome's use of *cornuta* to represent the edition by Aquila makes it clear that the Greek there was very different from the Septuagint's *δεδοξασται*. Therefore, the importance of Jerome's mention of Aquila here is his claim of another Bible translation concurring with his rendition of קרן עור פניו as *cornuta esset facies*, even when the standard interpretative tradition

<sup>30</sup>Sparks, "Jerome as Biblical Scholar," in *CHB*, pp. 514-516; Kedar, *ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>31</sup>Ps. 43:6 and Is. 5:20. The verse from Psalms does not appear in any of the current editions of the Bible consulted for this study. Since the numbering system of the Bible has not always been consistent, it is reasonable to suggest that Jerome possessed a copy of the book of Psalms that *did* contain Ps. 43:6.

<sup>32</sup>Jerome *Commentarii in Prophetas Minores*, in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera*, vol. 76, pp. 311-312; also in *PatLat*, vol. 25, col. 1067.

<sup>33</sup>Translation based on the Latin cited above, and on the English in Mellinkoff, *Horned Moses*, p. 78.

for that passage taught otherwise.

Using a reference to Jerome's *Homily on Psalms* where Jerome also interpreted "horn" metaphorically, Ruth Mellinkoff suggests that his use of *cornu* in his *Commentary on Amos* is a metaphorical reference to pride, "alluding to the sin of exalting one's horn, that is, to the exhibition of pride."<sup>34</sup> Mellinkoff's citation and analysis of this passage from *Commentary on Amos* stops, however, before the end of Jerome's treatment of the issue. Jerome's comments continue briefly with a few more relevant biblical examples:

*Legimus et in alio loco: 'Et exaltabit cornu populi sui' [Ps. 148:14], et: 'Exaltauit cornu Christi [sic] sui' [I Kings 2:10], et cornu altaris, et munda animalia atque cornuta, quae sola offeruntur Deo, quorum interpretatio non huius est temporis.*<sup>35</sup> (We read in another place: 'And he will exalt the horn of his people,' and 'He has exalted the horn of his anointed one,' and the horns of the altar, and the beautiful and horned animals which alone are offered unto God, the interpretation of which is not for this time.)

The first two examples are biblical passages in which *cornu* is not meant to be read literally, but rather as a reference to power or strength. The continuation of Ps. 148:14 "...for the glory of all His faithful ones," is a psalm of praise describing the power and the splendour of the Lord. The second verse may also relate to the pride discussed earlier in this commentary, though which kind of pride is not clearly stated. Jerome's ideas on the relevance of different kinds of pride will become clearer below, in the discussion of his *Commentary on Isaiah*. Similarly, on the passage from *Homily on Psalms 91*, in which Christ is described as a horn, Mellinkoff responds: "Jerome is not saying that Christ is a *real* horn. He expressed a religious concept in language appropriate for the period in which he lived. Similarly, he did not imply that Moses had *real* horns."<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, although Jerome's commentary here does not explore the interpretation of the horns of the altar and these horned animals - the only animals that are allowed for sacrifice to God - it becomes eminently clear that even when discussing the actual horns of beasts, these horns are still symbolic of exaltation, Divine power and glory. Through Jerome's biblical proof texts, and despite the ambiguous

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<sup>34</sup>See Mellinkoff's comments there, *ibid.*, pp. 78-79, esp. n. 11.

<sup>35</sup>Jerome *Commentarii in Prophetas Minores*, in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera*, vol. 76, p. 312. The biblical citations inserted above in brackets are taken from the apparatus of this edition. The citation from Kings does not correspond to the Bible's current numbering system.

<sup>36</sup>Mellinkoff, *Horned Moses*, p. 79.

etymology of קרן and *cornuta*, it is clear that he intended *cornuta esset facies* to be understood as a metaphor for something else more in agreement with the generally accepted sense of the passage.

## ii. *Commentary on Isaiah*

This treatise was written after Jerome completed his work on the Minor Prophets,<sup>37</sup> and it contains a Latin reference to Ex. 34:29 that clearly matches the Latin citation of Aquila above in his earlier *Commentary on Amos*. It is reasonable to suggest that Jerome was simply repeating the reference to Aquila from his earlier notes, although it is curious to note that he continued to preserve it in Latin here, despite quoting another interpretation from Aquila in Greek just a few lines later. In a short comment about strength, pride and the glory of martyrdom, Jerome states:

*Fortitudo autem gentium triumphus est martyrum. Et nos in eorum [g]loria superbi sumus, non ea superbia quae in uitio est, cui Deus resistit, ut humilibus det gratiam; sed ea quae pro potentia et gloria accipitur. Vnde et Moysi cornuta facies erat, qui dicere poterat: 'In te inimicos nostros cornu uentilabimus.' Et pro superbia gloriae interpretatus est Aquila: καὶ ἐν δόξῃ αὐτῶν πορφύρα ἐνδύσεσθε, id est: purpura uestiemini, ut insigne regii decoris ostenderet.*<sup>38</sup>

(The strength of the nations has triumphed as a witness and we are proud in the martyrs' glory, not that kind of pride which is in vice, which God resists in order that he may give grace to the humble; but that kind of pride which is accepted for power and glory. [For example]: 'And when the face of Moses was horned,' about which it is possible to say: 'In you we will raise up the horn among the enemies.' [Ps. 43:6] And on the pride of glory, Aquila has interpreted: καὶ ἐν δόξῃ αὐτῶν πορφύρα ἐνδύσεσθε, that is: 'you clothe them in purple,' that it may show forth as a sign of regal decoration.)

While the source of this interpretation by Aquila is not immediately apparent from Jerome's comments, nor from Moreschini's apparatus, it is nevertheless noteworthy that Jerome should use Aquila's reference to *δόξη* (glory) here as a proof text in a discussion containing references to horns and glory. While Aquila's comments do not speak directly to the issue of interpreting this "horn" that is raised up among the enemies, Jerome seems to be attempting to apply or associate a metaphoric interpretation of this horn with Aquila's version as well as with his own. Based on the

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<sup>37</sup>Kedar dates Jerome's *Commentary on Isaiah* to 408-420 C.E., in "The Latin Translations," *Mikra*, p. 319; Sparks offers the narrower dates of 404-410 C.E., in "Jerome as Biblical Scholar," *CHB*, p. 516.

<sup>38</sup>Jerome *Commentariorvm in Esaiam*, XVII, lxi, 6/8, in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera*, pars I, 2A, vol. 74, p. 710.

associations made here by Jerome, it is clear that he related Moses' horned face to power and glory and, perhaps, even majesty since the "purple glory" referred to by Aquila evokes images of royalty and riches.

The presence of a Greek citation from Aquila cannot go unmentioned, because of the absence of Aquila's Greek in the earlier citation from Jerome's *Commentary on Amos*. It is unclear why Jerome cited Aquila in Greek in one place and in Latin in the other, but it certainly demonstrates that Jerome used Aquila's version in his treatises. And, it strengthens the earlier question of why Jerome would have translated Aquila into Latin on such an ambiguous phrase as קרן עור פניו instead of preserving the Greek proof, especially when Aquila's version appeared to contain the only other textual support for an etymological translation of the phrase.

### iii. *Commentary on Ezekiel*

Jerome's reference to Ex. 34:29-35 as a proof text in his *Commentary on Ezekiel* contains one of the simplest confirmations that he was rendering a metaphor when he used *cornuta esset facies* to translate קרן עור פניו. Jerome states:

*Unde et Moyses in nubem ingressus est et caliginem ut possit mysteria Domini contemplari, quae populus longe positus et deorsum manens uidere non poterat; denique post quadraginta dies, uultum Moysi uulgus ignobile caligantibus oculis non uidebat, quia 'glorificata erat', siue, ut in hebraico continetur, 'cornuta', facies Moysi;*<sup>39</sup>

(And Moses ascended into the cloud and the mist so that he could contemplate the mysteries of the Lord, which the people, who were situated far off and remaining down below, were not able to see. Then, after forty days, the multitude with their misted eyes were not able to see Moses' face because it had been glorified, or, as it is construed in the Hebrew, Moses' face was horned.)

In these comments, Jerome indicates that *glorificata erat* and *cornuta* are synonymous by drawing a parallel between them through the word *siue*. While *siue* can be read in numerous ways depending on the circumstance, in this comment it plays the role of a disjunctive conditional particle denoting an interchangeability of the two phrases.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, it is clear that Jerome interpreted Moses'

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<sup>39</sup>Jerome *Commentariorvm in Hiezechielem XII*, xl, 5/13, in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera*, vol. 75, p. 557. Cited in Mellinkoff, *Horned Moses*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>40</sup>S.v. "Siue," in *A Latin Dictionary*, ed. Lewis and Short, p. 1713-1714.

*cornuta* as a kind of glorification, a kind the Israelites were not able to see after Moses' encounter with God.

#### iv. *Dialogue against the Pelagians*

Jerome's *Dialogue against the Pelagians* is said to be "his last controversial treatise" (416 C.E.), although he continued to produce commentaries until his death in 420 C.E.<sup>41</sup> In the following citation from this treatise, Jerome accuses the Pelagians of attempting to be masters of the Law before even being students of it. This section is based on two statements of principle on the subject of wisdom: *Sapientiam et intellectum Scripturarum, nisi qui didicerit, scire non posse* (Unless you dedicate yourself, it is not possible to have knowledge of the Scriptures), and *Scientiam legis usurpare non debere indoctum* (The unlearned ought not to usurp a knowledge of the Law). In this case, it appears that Jerome relates the *cornuta* of Moses in Ex. 34:29 to the knowledge he acquired from God:

*Nisi forte humilitate solita magistrum tui iactitas Deum, qui docet hominem scientiam, ut cum Moyse in nube et caligine facie ad faciem audias uerba Dei et inde nobis cornuta fronte procedas.*<sup>42</sup>

(If you are strongly accustomed by humility, you proclaim God [to be] your master - namely the One who teaches knowledge to men - just as when Moses in the cloud and the mist heard the words of God, face to face, and from there [Moses] proceeded before us with horns on his brow.)

In this example it is clear that, for Jerome, Moses' horns are evidence of the knowledge he acquired during his audience with God. However, Jerome's treatise does not say anything else here about the physical nature of these horns, even though this is Jerome's most vivid description of Ex. 34:29-35. Thus, it is still not certain if Jerome believed קרן עור פניו to mean that Moses had acquired visible, actual actual horns also or that קרן was only a textual metaphor and not a physical disfigurement at all. What remains is the simple conclusion that in *Dialogue against the Pelagians*, Jerome's reference to *cornuta* symbolises knowledge from God, regardless of whether they were actual horns

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<sup>41</sup>Sparks, "Jerome as Biblical Scholar," in *CHB*, p. 516. It is also noted here that Jerome's very last treatise was *Commentary on Jeremiah*, incomplete at the time of his death. Rice suggests 415 C.E. for the completion of Jerome's *Dialogue against the Pelagians*, in *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup>*Dialogus adversus Pelagianos* I, 30, in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera*, vol. 80, pp. 37-38.

or not.

## VI. Conclusion

Based on Jerome's own comments relating to Ex. 34:29-35 in his biblical commentaries, it is plausible to suggest that he intentionally rendered קרן עור פניו etymologically as *cornuta esset facies*, although he understood the verse actually to be referring to something else. These commentaries suggest to us that he perceived the biblical account of Moses becoming "horned" as a metaphor for several different things, including power or strength, praiseworthy use of pride, majesty, glorification, and knowledge from God. It appears that Jerome was attempting to retain as much of the original Hebrew text as possible, though constrained by the limitations of the Latin language. So, he rendered קרן עור פניו etymologically in his translation of Exodus but explained its intended meaning most clearly in his *Commentary on Ezekiel*. He also used that verse metaphorically in several other exegetical works, including *Commentary on Amos*, *Commentary on Isaiah*, and in *Dialogue against the Pelagians*. While the existence of different applications of Ex. 34:29 by Jerome may only increase the confusion over the "true" meaning of קרן עור פניו in the biblical narrative or in Moses' time, they also emphasise the complexity of biblical interpretation and the need to consider many aspects of an exegete's work before declaring his "one" answer to a ambiguous text.

## Chapter Six

### General Conclusion

Many scholars regard Jerome as the origin of the iconography of Moses with horns, but this blame is attributed too casually. Although this thesis has demonstrated that Jerome's Vulgate was the Latin text at the heart of the problem, he was not the source of the images of Moses with horns. Jerome could not have known that, more than five hundred years later, his translation of Ex. 34:29-35 would be taken out of its exegetical context and misinterpreted with such dramatic iconographic results.

Above I examined a sampling of biblical narratives, exegetical documents and translations that were current from the canonisation of the Bible until the time of Jerome. As I learned more about the scholarly approach that Jerome undertook in his translations and interpretations, and about the exegetical context of his work, I found it increasingly difficult to attribute the artistic treatment of this passage in Exodus to a mis-interpretation by Jerome. Jerome's interaction with rabbinic scholars at that time is recognised; he was quite familiar with their interpretations and used them. The interpretation of Ex. 34:29-35 is one such case, where the general content of their exegeses agreed to the extent that they all meant to depict Moses as radiant or metaphorically horned with power or glory.

With the possible exception of Aquila, none of the early sources evaluated in this study promotes a physical image of Moses with horns; not the Greco-Roman Jewish writings, the early Christian writings, the rabbinic midrashim, nor any of the vernacular translations. Jerome's biblical commentaries confirm link him to the consensus on this matter. At the time of Jerome's Latin translation, the hermeneutical debate preferring the literal interpretation of Scripture over the allegorical was not yet pervasive. So, while Jerome's linguistic and philological techniques and his fidelity to the Hebrew Bible were significant, he nevertheless operated in a milieu of allegorical interpretation and confidently presented a version of Ex. 34:29-35 that allows for two readings: an etymological sense and a metaphoric one.

Jerome's commentaries interpret קרן עור פניו in Ex. 34:29-35 as a metaphor for power and strength, just as the early Christian and Jewish interpretations emphasise Moses' radiance and Divine

glory. Ultimately, they do not promote any interpretation that suggests that Moses had actual horns growing from his head. That any of their work was mis-understood as such is a feature of the diverse history of Bible interpretation. Judging from the number of publications that address this subject during the twentieth century alone, the question of whether the Hebrew Bible was indeed referring to actual horns is still unresolved and may never be.

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